



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

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Newsbeat

- Stuyvesant's Speech and Debate Team, led by English teacher Julie Sheinman, placed first in the Columbia University Invitational Tournament held on the weekend of Saturday, January 26.
- For the second straight year, computer science coordinator Michael Zamansky has been invited to attend Mayor Michael Bloomberg's State of the City address, which will take place later in February.
- 54 Stuyvesant students received honors in the Scholastic Writing Awards Competition. Gold keys were awarded to 23 pieces, which will be considered for National Scholarship awards. 24 other works received silver keys.
- All students can receive free lunch through the months of February and March, thanks to the federal hurricane relief waiver, which grants free lunch to schools in certain districts.

By COBY GOLDBERG
and DAVID MASCIO

Stuyvesant's attendance system, the Comprehensive Attendance Administration Security System (CAASS), has been updated for the 2013 spring term. The cornerstone of the update was the introduction of new student IDs, which were distributed in homes on Thursday, January 31.

The previous edition of the IDs displayed the student's photo and basic personal information, such as name and date of birth. A barcode at the bottom was utilized for scanning in for lunch, scanning in in the morning, borrowing textbooks, and paying for lunch in the cafeteria. This barcode was associated with the student's Office of Student Information Systems (OSIS) number, a number unique to each student within the New York City public education system.

On the new IDs, the administration decided to move the

OSIS barcode to the top of the card and add a new barcode on the bottom. This new barcode is linked to a new CAASS number constructed exclusively for the updated attendance system. Unlike a student's OSIS number, the CAASS number is unique to the ID rather than the student, changing every time a new ID is printed for the same student.

Furthermore, the CAASS number is used only for swiping in and out of school, while the OSIS code is still used for checking out library books and paying for school lunch.

In the fall, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) informed Stuyvesant that there would be an update to the attendance system that would require an additional barcode on ID cards. However, due to time constraints regarding the printing of IDs, the change had to be delayed until the spring term.

The DOE issued an ultimatum that we would need to update the system immediately

or pay a fine," Assistant Principal of Programming Edward Wong said. However, by contacting the DOE, the administration was permitted to update the attendance system at a later time, saving the school thousands of dollars in fines.

The new attendance system allows the administration to keep better track of the number of ID replacements that students receive throughout the year by noting the new CAASS numbers that are printed. Though the details are unclear, the system also provides better control over who enters the building. "Data from CAASS schools shows that better control at the school entrance helps reduce the opportunity for intruders or other non-students to enter the building," an official DOE report stated.

Despite evident confusion from the student body, the administration does not intend to simplify or further change the new attendance system. "We don't have any plans to alter the



New identification cards lined with two barcodes were administered to students for attendance purposes.

Jennifer Leung / The Spectator

uses of the new ID cards that have already been established by the DOE," Assistant Principal of Student Affairs and Parent Engagement Brian Moran said.

CStuy Opens New Opportunities for Students



Justin Strauss / The Spectator

Computer Science and Technology for Urban Youth (CSTuy) invited 75 Stuyvesant students to their inaugural event at NY TechStars on Wednesday, February 6. Guest speakers included (clockwise from bottom center) Tim Novikoff, Gerry Seidman, John Lee, Spike Gronim, and Moisey Uretsky.

By AIMEE LI

Computer science students from Stuyvesant listened to and connected with notable alumni in the field on Wednesday, February 6, at an event dubbed "CStuy." Organized by Computer Science (CS) Coordinator and alumnus Michael Zamansky ('84), the event offered students a window into the world of CS through a series of speeches. CStuy is the first in a series of events this year designed to introduce students to CS opportunities.

It took place at 6:30 p.m. at the Tech Stars Office on 36 Cooper Square. Zamansky took the stage first, introducing himself, welcoming students, and going over the program. The lineup of speakers included alumni John Lee ('03), Moisey Uretsky ('00), Spike Gronim ('02), and Gerry

Seidman ('77), as well as Tim Novikoff, who is not an alumnus.

Lee's presentation was titled "Big Data is Awesome." After graduating from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he worked at Google for four years, focusing on Google Search and Android development. However, his passion lies in artificial intelligence (AI), the study of the potential intelligence of robots and machines. "We're thinking less and less about how to build bigger and faster computers—we have those already—and we're starting to look at processing using those giant computers," said Lee. At Google, Lee spent a lot of time developing search algorithms that would provide direct answers to search queries. He "sidestepped all these problems that researchers have been spending twenty years to figure out, and we just

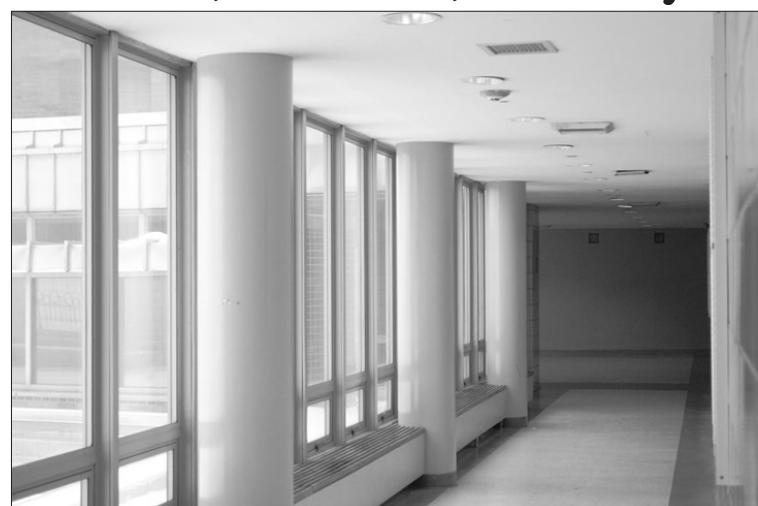
threw tons of data at it. We used a really simple algorithm that doesn't even require the computer to know English," Lee said.

Up next was Uretsky, who explained his journey from graduating high school to starting a company. "Like most things in life, it just starts with a couple of steps that seem very innocent, that make no sense, and then ten years later, here you are," Uretsky said. After dropping out of college, he and his brother decided to start their own hosting company, which grew from stolen back alley servers and a shoebox full of cash to a successful tech company. Later, after a disastrous security breach, Uretsky and his brother began a second company, Digital Ocean, which now hosts the Stuyvesant CS website (stuycs.org). In conclusion, Uretsky said, "It was just random chance that I wanted to go to work with my brother, random chance that I decided to get a car, [...] so you never know how life turns out."

Following Uretsky, Gronim presented a slideshow, titled "Three Reasons to be Excited about Computer Science." The first reason he gave was cloud computing. Gronim first worked at Amazon, which provides a cloud service, Amazon S3. "It launched in the beginning of 2006, and at the end of 2006 there were just under three billion files in the system. And seven years later, there are over a trillion," Gronim said. His next point focused on data science, emphasizing that data representation was important and that it could help people understand data better. Lastly,

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"First, Second, Library"



With Stuyvesant's new policy of disallowing students from remaining outside the cafeteria during lunch and free periods, the fifth floor has become unfamiliarly quiet throughout the school day.

Emma McIntosh / The Spectator

teachers and deans had supervised students on the fifth floor, the policy of completely disallowing them from staying there is new to Stuyvesant. The introduction of this new policy was spurred by teachers and assistant principals who believed that the loud students posed too much of a distraction to the learning environment and classrooms on the floor.

"Teachers in the department have always expressed their concern about noise coming from the fifth floor because students had essentially extended the cafeteria into the halls," Assistant Principal of World Languages Arlene Ubieto said. Like Zhang, Ubieto emphasized that the hindering of teaching was a problem. "It was especially frustrating when students were taking exams and the racket outside was distracting them and preventing them from

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A&E

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Forgotten Film Reel: Falling Through A Fantasia

The powers of storytelling and a child's imagination come together in the 2006 fantasy film "The Fall."



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Re-evaluating Square One



Stuyvesant students weigh in: Is the SHSAT in need of change?

Opinions

News

CStuy Opens New Opportunities for Students

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Gronim spoke about how to get a fulfilling job. He advised students to learn about a subject that "fires you up," to build interesting projects, and to network with companies in their fields.

Without slides to display, Novikoff jumped straight into his speech. He was originally an actor, majoring in theater at NYU. He later taught at Stuyvesant and eventually created his own business. "Technology and a startup can inspire research," Novikoff said. "Everybody thinks about how there are people who fund their research and academia, and it comes out of Stanford or Harvard, and then people will apply it." He argued that real life problems can sometimes lead to theoretical research. Novikoff wanted to write a flashcards app that would help students memorize SAT words. He applied the "timesteps spacing effect," which predicted the ideal order of cards that would allow users to learn words quickly, based on the words they missed. He would later write his dissertation on the effect. His presentation ended with a quote from Walt Disney: "Great things happen when you stop talking and start doing."

The last speaker, Seidman, opened his talk by saying that he didn't "have time to talk about anything, so I decided to talk about everything." In college, Seidman changed his major six times, and said that it was "the best thing I could have done." He studied acting, math, chemistry, physics, and German literature, and finally graduated with a degree in chemical physics. "Different disciplines think different ways," he said. His fast-paced lecture quickly outlined his life, his four companies, his failures, and his company today. Seidman has toured the world lecturing about Java, started an animation company, and built robots. Today, he is the CEO of Tactonic Technologies, which developed the Tactonic sensor, a touch technology that focuses on pressure-sensitive imaging.

After Seidman ended his lecture, Zamansky returned to the podium to conclude the event with an informal question and answer session between the students and the guest speakers.

"We're trying to bring different opportunities to [the students]. And then I could get the feedback from this," Zamansky said. "This is hopefully going to

"It's amazing that we could have a hundred kids show up to hear lectures about computer science."
—Spike Gronim, speaker

kick off more lectures, more talks, and more mini classes." Zamansky has developed an internship program that offers even more opportunities to Stuyvesant students. He plans on expanding this program so that it includes students from schools in the city other than Stuyvesant.

The speakers also had a positive impression of the event. "It's amazing that we could have a hundred kids show up to hear lectures about computer science," Gronim said. "That kind of interest level is amazing."

"First, Second, Library"

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performing their best," she said.

The World Language classes were not the only ones affected by this situation. Assistant Principal of Physical Education Larry Barth explained that, for his department, the problem was less the amount of noise than the students' presence itself. "When kids were sitting around outside the locker room where some of our classes do their work, it was a hindrance," Barth said.

While Barth clarified that he had not gone to the administration to express his concerns regarding the noise, he supported the new policy on principle. "I was a proponent because it looks like a zoo up here with all the garbage. People would eat their lunch out in that back hallway and leave their trash everywhere. It was not a quiet study area. It was instead loud, noisy, and filthy. The problem affected the school as a whole," Barth said.

Though students who used to stay outside the cafeteria must now go elsewhere, Librarian DeLisa Brown does not think that the new policy will have a significant effect on the library. While the number of students using the library every day has gone up, the fact that it is the beginning of the semester adds other variables and possibilities. "We naturally are going to have rising numbers of students in the library, and it will keep going up until we hit a point where it just gets too noisy or too crowded," Brown said. Recently, approximately 1,700 to 2,000 students have been using the library every day.

Furthermore, Brown believes that the students displaced from the fifth floor will most likely relocate to the first or second floors. "The students on the fifth floor weren't on the fifth floor because they wanted to study," she said. "They wanted to relax. They want to chat with their friends and have some fun. Those aren't necessarily the students who are going to be coming into the library."

Some students have expressed their

disappointment toward this new restriction. "The reasons [for this new policy] make sense, but this change also limits the space that people can be in when they're not in class. It is also a lot nicer to be up on the fifth floor than it is to be on the first and second floors," freshman Jake Brimberg said.

Many faculty members, on the other hand, are pleased with the change and believe that it has been effective in promoting a quieter learning environment.

Librarian DeLisa Brown believes that the students displaced from the fifth floor will most likely relocate to the first or second floors.

"Everyone is very happy at this point," Ubrieta said. "It's been heaven."

Nevertheless, Zhang, who made the final decision to enforce the new policy, is open to student feedback. She explained that she is aware of the various opinions regarding the newly enacted policy as well as the student petition for permission to leave the school building during free periods. "We will always welcome student input; I am not here to inconvenience them," Zhang said.

Bus Strike Ends After Four Weeks



School bus drivers recently returned to work after a month-long strike.

By SAM MORRIS

Over 8,000 New York City school bus drivers and transit employees were recently on strike for four weeks, protesting a planned elimination of job security measures. As a result, over 100,000 students citywide who normally receive busing were forced to find alternative means of commute. The strike ended on Friday, February 15 with no concessions made to the union.

The strike, which was held by Local 1181 of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), was a reaction to the Bloomberg administration's plan to eliminate Employee Protection Provisions (EPPs), which require new bus contractors to hire workers employed by the previous bus route contractor. The union

strongly favors EPPs because they enable workers to keep their jobs when the contractor for a bus route changes. EPPs also remove incentives for employers to terminate busing contracts for the sake of hiring cheaper labor.

The strike ended without any negotiations between the union and the city. The workers' EPPs will be eliminated from their contracts as planned. The union resumed work at the advice of five democratic mayoral candidates, including City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and Comptroller John Liu. The candidates promised to revisit the issue of worker protections in office if elected.

The elimination of EPPs stems from an initiative to reduce the Department of Education (DOE)'s \$1.1 billion annual busing budget. The city plans to end job

protection for current members of Local 1181 in February, opening up jobs on bus routes to workers without EPPs. "If the EPP is not inside the contract, then we just lose our jobs, and that's that. They'll just hire a hundred drivers at a lower rate without the experience, and we'll lose everything," Sergio Fuentes, who escorts special-needs children to school, told a local newspaper.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has said that a decision by the New York Court of Appeals made it illegal to include EPPs in worker contracts. "The City cannot legally offer what the unions are demanding," Bloomberg said. The ATU's Fall 2012 newsletter stated that the city is misinterpreting the Court's ruling, claiming that the ruling stated that EPPs are allowed if they are shown to be "in the best interest of the city."

Workers protested at bus depots around the city and in front of the Tweed Courthouse, where the DOE headquarters are located. When asked what measures it would take for the return of the normal work cycle, one worker protesting outside City Hall said, "right now, Bloomberg says he has nothing to say to us, that he can't give us EPPs. If they come to the table to start negotiating again, we will go back to work."

During the strike, more than 110,000 students, including some from Stuyvesant, had to find new ways to commute to school. Junior Eun Oh, who normally receives busing due to her restricted mobility, did not miss a day of school even with her disrupted commute, but many students attending other schools were unable to uphold the same level of attendance. Many special education programs had very low attendance due to the strike.

The DOE stated that it would reimburse families for cost of car services or driving while the strikers persisted. However, the out-of-pocket cost of transportation was still a strain on many families. "My family gave me rides for a few days, but they had to work, so I

"The union members want to secure their jobs, and furthermore their lives, which is understandable. It's just that the strike is dragging on for a long time."

—Eun Oh, junior

am currently taking cabs each morning and afternoon which is a lot of expense," Oh said during the strike.

Despite the difficulties she experienced, Oh sympathized with the strikers' cause. "The union members want to secure their jobs and furthermore their lives, which is understandable. It's just that the strike is dragging on for a long time. I just hope they reach a compromise soon so the strike is over," she said.

Though a defeat for Local 1181 workers, the end of the strike was welcomed by thousands of parents and students who normally rely on school transportation.

Fourteen Seniors Named Presidential Scholar Candidates

By JULIA MENDELSON

Fourteen Stuyvesant seniors were selected as candidates for the prestigious United States Presidential Scholars' Program, making Stuyvesant one of the schools with the most candidates.

The U.S. Presidential Scholars' Program is one of the most prestigious academic honors for high school seniors.

lie Xu said. "It feels good knowing that all my hard work has paid off."

The U.S. Presidential Scholars' Program is one of the most prestigious academic honors for high school seniors. The program was founded in 1964 to recognize the most distinguished American students.

Every year, 2,600 candidates are selected for exceptional SAT or ACT scores. The Commission on Presidential Scholars selects 20 males and 20 females from each state with the highest standardized test scores. The candidates then submit personal essays, lists of extracurricular activities, transcripts, and self-assessments as part of a competitive application process. In April, the Commission will select 500 semifinalists based on these applications; then in May, 141 of these semifinalists will move on to be honored as Presidential Scholars. The 141 chosen and recognized include 15 students chosen at large and one male and female from each state, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and families living abroad.

In June, upon selection, the Scholars attend National Recognition Weekend in Washington D.C., where they will have the opportunity to meet President Barack Obama. "National Recognition Week is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Presidential Scholar candidate Matthew Moy said. "Being a Presidential Scholar is one of the highest honors for high school students, so it would be great for our school to have at least one."

dates nationwide. These students were among 2,600 selected as the top seniors in the country. In early May, up to 141 of these candidates will be chosen to become Presidential Scholars.

"I am deeply honored to be a candidate for such a prestigious award," Presidential Scholar candidate Wil-

Eleanor Archie Retires



Courtesy of Stella Cao

By EDRIC HUANG

Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie retired on Friday, February 1. Her retirement comes after nearly 10 years as an assistant principal and countless other years as a guidance counselor at Stuyvesant High School. Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang and Assistant Principal of Student Affairs and Parent Engagement will temporarily fill in the void she has left behind, overseeing the guidance department during the Spring 2013 term. Archie and other school officials declined to comment.

Six Students Advance in Junior Science and Humanities Symposium



Sora Kim/The Spectator



Seniors Amanpreet Kandola (right), Tamara Kahan (left), Miranda Li, and Antara Majumdar qualified for the next round of the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium competition.

By JERRY XIA

This year, 12 Stuyvesant students applied to compete in the Junior Science and Humanities Symposium (JSHS). Upon evaluation by a panel of judges, six of these students advanced to compete in the regional level of the competition.

Sophomore Kelly Chen, junior Danny Kim, and seniors Tamara Kahan, Amanpreet Kandola, Miranda Li, and Antara Majumdar qualified to present research projects in the regional symposia at York College on Sunday, February 10. The contestants were judged on their unique, innovative, and

creative contributions to the research problem as well as their approach in the investigation. Students were also expected to demonstrate a sound understanding of the scientific principles underlying the research.

Sponsored by the Department of Defense, the JSHS is a national program that promotes original research and experimentation in the sciences, engineering, and mathematics at the high school level, and publicly recognizes students for outstanding achievement. According to their website, the program "connects talented students, their teachers, and

research professionals at affiliated symposia, and by rewarding research excellence, JSHS aims to widen the pool of trained talent prepared to conduct research and development vital to our nation."

More than 10,000 high school students every year participate in the JSHS. The initial application includes the submission of a scientific paper that explains the student's research problem and attempts to answer it. After their reports are evaluated by a panel of judges, students are chosen to advance to one of the 48 regional symposia, each held in a sponsoring university. Five finalists are then selected from each of the 48 regional symposia and travel to Dayton, Ohio to compete in the National JSHS. Significant undergraduate tuitions scholarships worth a total of \$24,000 are awarded to the first, second, and third place finalists at the National JSHS.

"Stuyvesant students have been participating in the program every year," biology teacher and research coordinator Dr. Jonathan Gastel said. He, along with numerous faculty members within the biology, chemistry, physics, and social studies departments, served as an auxiliary mentor for many of the students during their research and preparation periods. For most of the students, their projects were significant commitments that required approximately a year of study and preparation under mentors in university or institute laboratories.

"Ms. Schweitzer encouraged me to submit it to the JSHS and the application mostly required me to submit the paper that I already wrote for Intel," said senior Tamara Kahan, whose research is on confirmation bias

"Presenting my research at JSHS was a meaningful experience in itself, but it also served as practice for other competitions in the future."

—Danny Kim, junior

"Of course the scholarship would be really nice, but the process of doing the research was a great experience as well, and I'm glad I did it."

—Tamara Kahan, senior

and hostile media bias in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict. "I reviewed my Power-Point with Ms. Schweitzer and practiced the oral presentation multiple times. Of course the scholarship would be really nice, but the process of doing the research was a great experience as well and I'm glad I did it."

"Presenting my research at JSHS was a meaningful experience in itself, but it also served as practice for other competitions in the future," said junior Danny Kim, who intends to submit his work to the New York City Science and Engineering Fair and the Siemens Competition.

Features

Success In Computer Science: An Iterative Process



By STANLEY CHAN

His mind blazing from consecutive all-nighters, the coder persists to hunch over his inefficient program. Surrounded by stacked pizza boxes and coffee-stained mugs, he has continuously plowed through trial after trial, typing code into the interactions panel only to receive error messages thrown back fiercely. However, it is exactly through these failures and reworkings that the coder makes his way toward a working code. The computer science depart-

ment has done just this, constantly experimenting to create the ideal curriculum and, ultimately, program at Stuyvesant.

The computer science program took its first steps toward this goal with its experimental course during the spring term of last year. "There are things we can't do in one semester in computer science that are critically important for the Stuyvesant population to give you an advantage for the rest of your life. I was advocating for many, many years that we need a year of computer science," comput-

er science coordinator Michael Zamansky said. "Then two years ago, all of a sudden, Principal Teitel said, 'We're going to do a year of computer science.'"

Taught by Zamansky and computer science teacher Peter Brooks, last year's two pilot classes focused on HTML and Python, coding languages that both teachers intended to imbed into the curriculum of the class. "[The Computer Science program] picked two random classes, and made those students take a second term," junior Andy Zhang said in an e-mail interview. "We did HTML, then Python, [which is] a lot more useful than Scheme and NetLogo, and a much more legitimate programming language." After learning basics, such as recursions and iterates, each student selected a specific subset of the language to focus on as a project. Zhang, for example, chose pygames, eventually coding a game titled Crab Ball.

Despite positive reviews from many students, Zamansky and Brooks' initial expectations did change as the class progressed. For example, while Zamansky intended to cover "The Prisoner's Dilemma" for its versatility in application, it did not match the framework of the curriculum. However, the teachers did create a research unit mid-semester, which was successful and is now formally part of the curriculum. "These courses are

honest to goodness a certain vision of teaching computer sci-

"These courses are honest to goodness a certain vision of teaching computer science that is unique to here, so you know you have to be flexible."
—Michael Zamansky, computer science coordinator

much more practical understanding of the field in students. "[The students] weren't walking away with a practical language," Zamansky said. "It means that now, in that one year, you can walk away, and you would have that solid foundation no matter what field you go into. And you only have to go into AP Computer Science if you want to go further."

With that practicality comes evident advantages in the real-world setting. "The world is on the web, and we want the students to have basic understanding of HTML and know how to teach themselves. It also turns out that the generation of web pages is a very bankable skill and is very important in presentation and communication," Brooks said.

As the computer science program has gradually developed, so has an insatiable demand for more computer science classes in Stuyvesant. The administration has adjusted accordingly, as seen from the introductory course's progression from an elective to a mandatory one-term course and finally to a year-long course. Instead of playing with turtles and patches, students can now leave with knowledge of industrial programming languages, which is only the beginning of the computer science staff's iterative process of experimentation and improvement.

ence that is unique to here, so you know you have to be flexible," Zamansky said.

Zamansky believes that a whole year's background in computer science fosters a

Splatter, Mix, and Smudge Your Way to an A

By ARIELLA KAHAN and MAISHA KAMAL

Paint, plaster, and pencil are just a few sights and smells that you'll encounter when you enter room 1010. Canvases are scattered around, brushes are lying in the sink, and works of art hang on the old walls. Teenagers are busy working; surprisingly, they're not protesting. As you enter, a student with ink on their arms might pass you by, or sounds of classic radio may intrude your ears; all of this is common in a typical Mixed Media classroom. After a four-year hiatus, the Mixed Media elective is back with new twists and turns, offering sophomores, juniors, and seniors a break from the intensive academic learning at Stuyvesant.

The history of the Mixed Media elective is choppy. The class was first discontinued four years ago for unknown reasons. However, due to a shift in graduation requirements that led to the absence of the introductory drafting course this year, room for an extra art elective opened up. "Once we were told that we might have some room for some extra art courses next year, I said great. [Art teacher Jane] Karp and I discussed which sorts of classes we'd like to offer; we came up with a bunch of different options which we brought to the Parents' Association," Mixed Media teacher Leslie Bernstein said.

Stuyvesant's Parents' Association (PA) was eager to add an art elective and had advocated for such an addition at numerous School Leadership Team meetings. Once Bernstein and art teacher Amy Cappell approached the PA, Mixed Media

was ultimately chosen to be the new elective over numerous other options, such as sculpturing and bookmaking. Unlike the other options, Mixed Media has immense diversity, because it encompasses numerous techniques and the use of many mediums and materials. For example, students make use of exacto knives and linoleum cutters in addition to the basic paint and markers. Logistical reasons, such as the lack of storage space necessary for other possible art electives, also played a role in the selection process. The classroom in which Mixed Media is taught is also used by two other studio classes, thus eliminating the option of a sculpting class.

While many of the additional course ideas, such as bookmaking, have been added as smaller projects in the Mixed Media class, Bernstein supports offering more art electives to students. "I believe in a holistic education and a world view, and I do believe that if you are going to succeed in life you need to have knowledge in many different things, not just one thing. So I feel like classes like this are really important and hopefully we will have more in the future," Bernstein said. Despite Bernstein's eagerness, though, the probability that her hopes will be met is low. In fact, the opposite might be the case; Mixed Media may not be offered next year due to the return of drafting.

Students expressed concern over the removal of Mixed Media next year. "Why would they cut this class? It's actually a great class, and not just from the art techniques. Everyone is always trying to help each other, [and]

it enforces a strong tight knit community within the student body. Cutting this class out is like cutting off all your fingers," senior Laura Jeung said.

Other students echo Jeung's sentiment. "It is extremely valuable [to have art electives]. I think cutting our art programs is a really bad idea," junior Sylvia Cheever said. "Learning how to express yourself through art is a skill that everyone should have a little bit of. Even if you aren't an artist, you should still know how to put your feeling, your ideas, and your emotions in something physical."

Throughout the course, students complete four larger projects. The first project of the year involves stamping, or the use of inks and stamps to recreate an image. The next, a printing project, gives students the opportunity to carve designs on a linoleum block in layers, cover it with ink, and then print it on paper. In this project, students created a wide range of scenes from a woman dreaming to a deer jumping. The third project offers an option: students can either create a plaster sculpture or a sculptural box. With the plaster option, students learn how to carve precisely; with the box sculpture, there is more room for individual and creative expression. Students created a variety of different scenes in these projects. "In the found sculpture project, I collected various objects and arranged them in a box. Mine was about drugs and alcohol, so it included broken glass, 'pills' (they were actually candy), matches, and beer bottle caps," junior Zara Leventhal said.

The final project is to make a book using a plethora of tech-

niques developed over the term, including watercolor, collage, pop-outs, and printmaking. The only restriction is that the book must have some theme or narrative as well as a set amount of pages. "I [created] an accordion book with the topic of the four seasons. I needed two hard covers for the front and back of the book, so I used watercolor to paint a picture that signified all four seasons. Within the pages of the book, I painted a different season on each page," sophomore Anna Gugeshashvili said.

After much positive feedback from her Mixed Media students in the fall semester, Bernstein plans to maintain the original curriculum. "I had students asking me to fail them so that they could take it again. It was apparent that this was a therapeutic period. Most of the students, not all, but most came in and really got down to work. They really seemed to enjoy it, and there was very little issue trying to get people to make art," she said.

Furthermore, Bernstein said the bulk of the students who took the class were already interested in art and grabbed at the chance when they saw an art elective. "I asked them early on why they decided to take the class, and many of them said, 'I don't even know what Mixed Media is, but I saw there was an art elective and I jumped on it,' so that just shows how thirsty they are for art. They don't care what art it is they just want to take it."

The freedom of interpretation and expression distinguishes Mixed Media from many other electives at Stuyvesant. "It was a really great opportunity for me to express



The Mixed Media elective, taught by art teacher Leslie Bernstein, integrates various art mediums to create projects ranging from stamping to plaster sculptures.

myself. Stuyvesant is math and science-y and you don't have a lot of opportunities to be creative and unique," Cheever said. "For a lot of the students the class was a way to express themselves in unique and original ways."

Other students agreed with this calming component of Mixed Media. "It is more relaxing [than other classes]. It is not pressuring at all, and for the most part you can bring music to the class and talk to people while doing art," senior Lulin Peng said.

Providing time away from the rigid academics of Stuyvesant, the Mixed Media elective is surely a step removed from our focus on science electives. Rewarded with the freedom of expression many desperately crave, students who take the class have nothing to lose. The worst that can possibly happen is a stain on that Hollister sweatshirt.

Features

Thirty Ways to Charm Your Crush



Irene Elias/The Spectator

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By SCOTT MA

Every year on February 14, Stuyvesant students, from young, innocent freshmen to seniors with their minds on prom, can wholeheartedly agree that love is in the air. Lovers exchange presents with each other, students purchase flowers to display their affections, and the Hudson stairwell experiences a surprising amount of congestion.

Despite the giddy consensus, finding love may prove difficult for students more accustomed to academic, rather than romantic, pursuits. While this year's Valentine's Day may have been yet another disaster for them, they still have a chance at romance if ushered in the right direction. This compilation of pickup lines hopes to help these students find that chance. So what if it isn't Valentine's Day anymore? Make your crush think of you as both charming and intelligent.

Best of luck from The Spectator's Features Department.

1. Do you know what temperature my CPU is running at? Hot enough to break the ice!
2. How can I know hundreds of digits of pi and not the 10 digits of your phone number?
3. Are you the square root of negative two? Because you're making me feel real irrational.
4. Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation states that you're attracted to me.
5. I want to be Adenine so I can be paired with U.
6. I lost my library card, but do you mind if I check you out?
7. Life without you is like a broken pencil: pointless.
8. Are you the tangent of 90 degrees? I simply cannot define you.
9. Are you made up of 11 protons? Because you are sodium fine.
10. You're hotter than a Bunsen burner at full power.
11. I don't know if you're in my range, but I sure want to take you back to my domain.
12. You must be the sun and I must be the earth, because the closer we get, the hotter you become.
13. You're so hot, you denature my proteins.
14. Are you an electron looking for a positive relationship with some great chemistry?
15. According to the Inverse Square Law, if we halve our distance, we'll quadruple the intensity.
16. You must be kryptonite, because being around you makes my knees weak.
17. I just checked my system preferences, and you're in them.
18. Are you a rare candy? Because you're taking me to the next level!
19. You must be infinity and I must be a power expression because when I approach you, you take me to my limit.
20. You must be made of Fluorine, Iodine, and Neon, because you're looking real FINe!
21. If I were sine squared and you were cosine squared, together we'd be one.
22. You remind me of a dictionary: you add meaning to my life.
23. I wish I were your derivative so I could lie tangent to your curves.
24. I wish I were a start codon so I could turn you on.
25. Our love should be like pi: irrational and never-ending.
26. A HUG without U is just mercury.
27. Are you a sophomore? Because I think we have chemistry together!
28. Hey girl, are you charged? 'Cause I always got my ion you!
29. You have nicer legs than an isosceles right triangle.
30. Can I be the derivative of your natural log? Because I want to be the 1 over U!

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Features

Robert Weldon: Bullfighting His Way into the Spanish Culture

By SANAM BHATIA
and WEI HOU WU

Olé! He was the center of the attention of thousands. For the first time, the danger was real, but so was the energy, the excitement. Amid the cheers, he heard the pounding of his heart; the sudden adrenaline coursing through his body allowed him to focus on his target. Facing his bestial partner, he held out and waved a vibrant red cape, attracting the animal's attention. The crowd erupted into cheers as the animal charged, and the two were now engaged in a violent and languid dance. This vivid scene is merely one of many memories for Spanish teacher Robert Weldon, who bullfights as a side hobby to his teaching career at Stuyvesant.

Weldon's path to becoming a Spanish teacher was far from expected. In fact, he originally intended to pursue an acting career. After graduating from the University of North Carolina of the Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, Weldon moved to New York City because of its acting opportunities and acquired an agent who would stay with him for the next seven years. His acting career took him all over the United States, as he performed in classical and contemporary plays in cities such as Dallas, Cleveland, and Hartford.

Weldon experienced something truly life-changing, however, when he visited his sister

in Spain, where he "fell in love [with] the cities around Madrid like Toledo, Segovia, Ávila and Aranjuez," Weldon said. "I was in heaven exploring the regional food, music and festivals." He studied Spanish language, culture, and art at the Universidad de Antonio Nebrija in Madrid. What truly appealed and stood out to him during this time was bullfighting, an important component of the Spanish culture often misunderstood for its superficial violence.

"I instantly connected to the aesthetic beauty, to the emotional depth of the risk and danger, and to the tradition and ritualistic tragedy of the death of the bull that sometimes converts into high art and a celebration and affirmation of life," Weldon said.

Weldon's first "torrida de coros"—Spanish for bullfight—involved three of the best matadors at the time and was even attended by the king of Spain. Being a spectator of this amazing event inspired him to continue his bullfighting pursuits. In the next few years, he saw more bullfights and visited bull ranches in Spain, France, and Mexico several times. Finally, Weldon decided to try his hand at bullfighting by training with matadors. He entered "festivals designated for 'aficionados prácticos' or amateur fans or retired novice bullfighters who had a desire to face smaller bulls in the ring," Weldon said. In a 2006 festival, Weldon did so

well against a 500-pound bull in Mexico that a newspaper critic wrote, "The North American showed the Mexican amateurs how it's done!"

This further encouraged him to immerse himself in Spanish culture. "I began taking literature classes simply because I was interested in and passionate about the culture and history," Weldon said. He then decided to obtain a master's degree from Hunter College and begin teaching. A few years into his teaching career, he became a teacher at Stuyvesant High School.

"I feel very lucky to be surrounded by such hard working, motivated, and talented students," he said. "[It is] very gratifying to see students who begin to use the language in real and meaningful ways."

As a non-native speaker, Weldon understands the experience of learning the basics of Spanish in a classroom environment. To replicate the experience he had while learning Spanish in Spain, Weldon often strives to go beyond the textbook in teaching his classes. He finds ways to incorporate Spanish culture and history in his instruction, since understanding the traditions of the many autonomous states in the nation helps students to connect more with the world behind the language. This is why Weldon makes it a point to decorate the walls of his classroom with flags of Spanish-speaking



Spanish teacher Robert Weldon arrived at his teaching career at Stuyvesant after a past comprised of acting and bullfighting.

nations, art of famous Spanish artists like Francisco Goya, and images of important landmarks of Spain, such as the Alhambra. Alongside these posters are also ones that display his continued interest in and passion for bullfighting.

"One of the most important aspects for any student who wishes to bring their Spanish communication and comprehension to a higher level is to seek opportunities and learning experiences outside the classroom that [support] what we do in the classroom," Weldon said. Whether it be communicating with the Spanish security guards in the school or using Spanish to order food with the caterers at the Gourmet Market, Weldon encourages

students to apply their Spanish education to a more everyday context. "Every day you expand on your conversation, you will learn something new or solidify why you already know by using it in a real world context," Weldon said.

As a person with a diverse past leading up to his teaching career, Weldon understands the importance of experience in learning and growing as students. His story inspires students to recognize that there's more than a straightforward path toward one's life interests and goal career. This lesson, in addition to the importance of Spanish, is what Weldon hopes to pass on to his students.

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By the Photo Department

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Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Debugging Programming

The spring semester once again began with an unfortunate, semi-annual ritual: several hundred students glutted the first floor, exhausted guidance counselors filled the auditorium, and administrators scrambled for order amidst the chaos. These are programming changes. Welcome to the front.

The programming process not only lacks uniformity but also is full of absurd regulations and unfair policies. Official "request" forms are required but seldom completed, assistant principal signatures are often ignored, and special exceptions are always made. Cunning students are able to take advantage of the system. The gift of a flexible guidance counselor or a persistent parent can generate an unfair advantage, creating an incentive to play the system.

Perhaps the most lasting image and legacy of the current system, though, is the suffocating visit to the auditorium. Every student wishing to change his or her schedule, even for the slightest tweak, must jostle with thousands of classmates for the ability to talk to a guidance counselor for mere seconds. Urgency, necessity, and convenience for programming changes are ignored. Schedule changes have become the survival of the loudest, fastest, and fittest.

We need to abolish this archaic system and replace it with a more modern one.

Moving programming online is the first step. The administration ought to create a website that lists every class and the corresponding instructor, period, and number of vacant seats. Students would be able to obtain required information efficiently, without piling additional work on guidance counselors or having to traverse multiple social media outlets, thereby conserving time for everyone.

Upon opening, the programming process should offer the opportunity to request classes and teachers rather than simply select the generic

courses we do now. After the traditional placement process, the programming office should host an online "trading floor" to accommodate students wishing to exchange classes, periods, and teachers. Painless changes could occur online automatically. Students could optimize their schedules and the administration could avoid the hassles that plague the current system. To prevent users from identifying themselves on the trading floor (and hence from edging toward a dangerous trend of selling classes), the website would enforce anonymity, centering program changes around an unbiased, balanced, and efficient system.

Another change worth considering is the release of schedules at least two weeks before

Schedule changes have become the survival of the loudest, fastest, and fittest.

the beginning of the new semester. Under the current system, programs are released on the first day of the semester, during homeroom. Allowing students access to their programs beforehand, however, would eliminate some of the unnecessary congestion while allowing every student to start

off on the same foot. In the current system, students, after receiving schedules in homeroom, must dishearteningly await their grade's after-school programming changes session. Earlier schedules and program changes eliminate the disadvantage students experience when entering classes often a week after every other student has already settled in.

Luckily, the administration is headed in the right direction. Most notably, the active participation of Interim Acting Principal Jie Zhang in helping students with programming is representative of a small change in philosophy received warmly by the student body. (See Jack Cahn's Op-Ed, titled "We Want Ms. Zhang.")

A lot of the solutions that The Spectator has proposed are easier said than done. The task of designing algorithms and supplementary programs to handle the scheduling issues of more than three thousand students should not be underestimated. Furthermore, the programming office is not a cloistered world; many programming officers, including Sophia Liang and Rosa Mazzucco, teach classes on top of their programming duties. Scheduling takes time, effort, and skill, and as we are caught up in our own frustrations, we overlook the amount of work that the programming staff dedicates to building optimal programs.

It is precisely out of respect for the programming office, however, that The Spectator offers this plan of action. The time is ripe for experimentation. Just as importantly, it's time to be rid of the lines of students waiting in the auditorium, the number of transfers made during the first days of a new semester, and the pervasive stress resulting from competition for coveted teachers and electives. None of this chaos is fair for anyone involved, especially not the programming staff. So let us move the present inefficiency and uncertainty to the past and propel to the future of programming with 21st century changes.

When To Announce Results: A Request From The Spectator To The Administration

One year ago, the administration introduced a new rule that ended the SING! tradition of students having a celebratory mosh pit in the hour-long gap between the end of the Saturday performance and the announcement of results. This was in reaction to an incident two years ago, in which a student was injured and an ambulance had to be called. The banning of the mosh pit, a safety hazard with serious legal implications, was an understandable move by the administration.

But it didn't stop there. The tradition of announcing the results in school after the mosh pit was also ceased, forcing students to leave the building at the end of the performance and find the results by checking the Student Union website. This was an additional precau-

tion taken by the administration out of fear that the crowd of students, riled up after the SING! performances and with nothing to do during the counting of results, would turn rowdy and ultimately engage in roughhousing.

This idea is simply unsound. Stuyvesant students are, on average, well behaved and inclined to listen to rules set by authorities. The notion that, in the heat of the moment, large numbers of students would openly disobey the administration's rules shows a warped view of students' behavior. Moreover, it assumes that we, the students, can't be mature and control ourselves.

But most importantly, this rule stifles an important part of the student culture. The last few days of SING!, culminating in the announcement of

results, are for many the most exciting part of the tradition. SING! is a saturnalia of sorts for Stuyvesant – the peak of student unity and the only time a significant amount of school spirit is apparent in the student body. To trample on the final, celebratory moments of SING! is to stifle an important cultural expression.

And so, the board of The Spectator requests that the administration revoke its rule concerning the announcement of results. It does not request a reinstatement of the mosh pit, it only asks that results be announced immediately following the Saturday performance with students still in the building. Doing so will appease the student body and restore a cherished tradition.

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.

We are looking for issues published before 1995.

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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.

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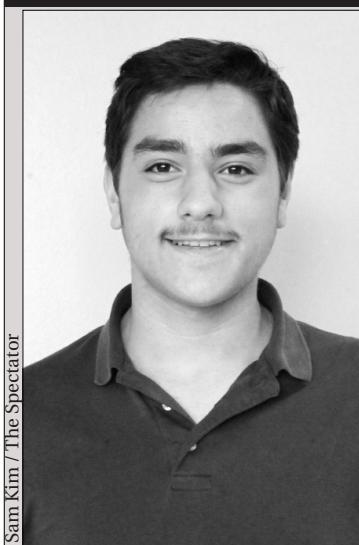
Write a letter to the editor and e-mail it to letters@stuyspectator.com or drop it in The Spectator box in the second-floor mail room.

FOR THE RECORD

- The artist of the art in the Opinions column titled "Geography is More Than a Map" is Lydia Wu.
- The artist of the art in the Opinions column titled "Desolation Row" is Mauricio Moreyra.

Opinions

Please, May I Have Some More?



Sam Kim / The Spectator

**By JACK CAHN
and RISHAM DHILLON**

With more than 50 different courses ranging from Oceanography to AP Statistics, four full years of education, and nine instructional periods per semester, it may seem as if Stuyvesant has the perfect combination of factors: a variety of courses to choose from and a large chunk of time. And yet, as we enter into our second term of junior year, the clock is ticking. There are so many amazing courses and such little time left in our Stuyvesant careers to complete them.

Nine periods are just not enough.

The majority of instructional periods are used to complete graduation requirements, leaving students with a mandatory

lunch period and approximately one to two free periods. Students who wish to fill up their lunch period in order to learn more have only two options: take band or orchestra lunch, or sit around and mope because taking classes during lunch is not an acceptable scheduling route at Stuyvesant.

But it should be.

Many of us came to Stuyvesant for challenge and opportunity, lured by the variety of APs and electives offered here. We were under the impression that Stuyvesant would be the place where we would not only get our basic curricula education, but also a chance to explore. Stuyvesant's lunch/class policy limits this ability to explore, and it's high time that the administration considers a revision to this rather ill-conceived policy.

Consider the benefits. Students who opted to take an elective class during their lunch would be given the opportunity to take approximately 33 percent more electives during their Stuyvesant career than they would otherwise be able to. Allowing students the freedom to choose whether to take lunch or an elective class creates a win-win situation, in which the entire student body benefits.

And contrary to popular belief, taking classes during lunch is allowed, according to the Department of Education policy. Provided that students have written consent from their parents,

they may use their lunch period to take non-required courses such as APs, electives, and extracurricular activities. The Stuyvesant administration is thus free to allow students this option if they so choose because there is no city-wide policy in place that prevents them from doing so. Furthermore, other specialized high schools in New York City allow students to opt out of lunch as well. For example, Bronx Science's website provides its students with an easy-access "Drop Lunch" form.

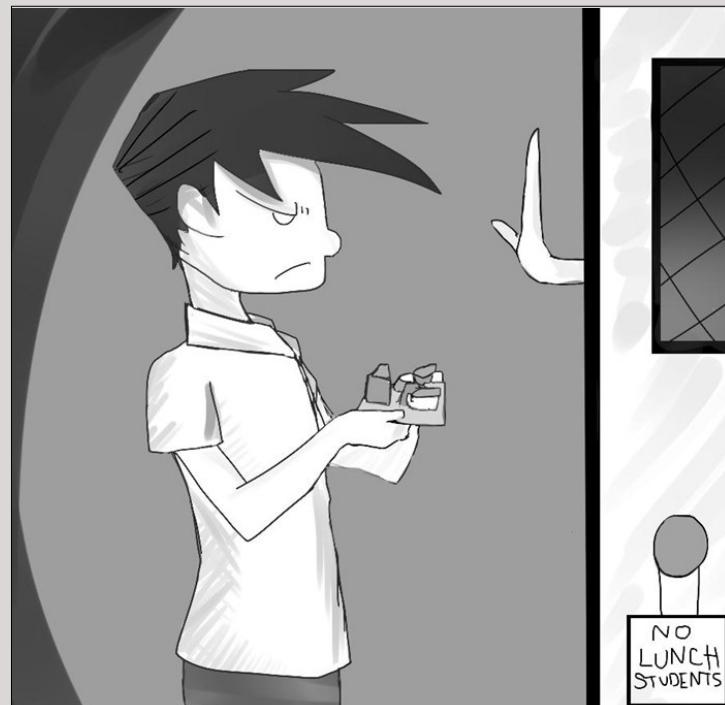
We know that the administration has our best intentions at heart, and, as the student body, we appreciate that. We realize the importance of eating lunch and agree that such an option may not be suitable for everyone. In fact, most students will probably choose to continue taking lunch, valuing the break in their day.

We aren't asking that you take away certain required courses so that we have more time to take the courses we want to take. We aren't asking you to extend the school day. We aren't asking for anything drastic. We are only asking that the administration trust the student body and begin giving us the ability to make this decision on our own.

The equation is pretty simple: Nine instructional periods plus 40 more minutes of class time equals our version of getting the best out of Stuyvesant.



Maggie Wu / The Spectator



MSamantha Luangkhot / The Spectator

SING!: An Unnecessary Sacrifice



Carol Deng / The Spectator

By OLIVER LIPTON

Few events in Stuyvesant receive the same level of excitement year after year as SING!. While sports events, theater shows, and SU elections pass with relatively little attention from the student body, during the month of February it is nearly impossible to go a day without overhearing some discussion about the upcoming performances. What makes SING! so much more popular than similar events is that it's not only a chance for students to showcase their talents, but also a competition between grades. Each performance after the first is judged in several categories, such as set design, script writing, and acting. It's sad that the competitiveness that makes SING! so popular is also the source of its greatest flaw.

Every SING! over the last several years can be placed in the same category. The variety of themes aside, every show has been a Broadway-style musical comedy with a script filled with pop culture references and a varied selection of dance routines. Given the chance to display its originality, every class has instead chosen to model its

show after the performances of previous years. Regardless of whether the shows are skillfully executed, it has been a long time since a SING! production team has broken out of the formula.

This is not entirely due to a lack of creativity on the students' part; rather, it's the competitive nature of SING!. As the students chosen to lead the production, the producers are given the first chance to decide the direction their show will take. Rather than create their own vision, however, it is often much safer to imitate

If any of the scriptwriters were to attempt a to write a more original script, they would have to work against the producers, whose minds are now set on a musical comedy, and their fellow script writers, who may not have their same aspirations.

the previous year's winner. They view it as their responsibility to give their grade a solid chance at winning. As the producers choose scriptwriters, they now look at potential candidates' abilities to imitate successful SING! scripts of previous years.

If any of the chosen scriptwriters were to write a script that deviates from the persistent SING! show paradigm, they would need to work against the goals of the producers and their fellow script writers, who may not have the same aspirations.

About a week later, producers choose the cast directors, who will have the most direct influence over the theatrical aspect of the show. (The crew directors have an entirely different role, with more direct control over very specific areas of the show. For the most part, they are given free reign in their fields and produce very creative pieces. However, they have little to no control over how their pieces fit into the show, which is usually very formulaic.) Sadly, the directors are now constrained by both the producers and the script, in addition to a cast that may or may not be willing to accept any change to the familiar SING! formula.

And when it comes to pushing for creative change beyond the scope of their own characters, the members of the cast lack the organization or authority to make any real change. This means that even if some of the cast were entirely on board with an innovative show, members who would rather stick to a standard SING! show would overpower those who are more open-minded. It all comes down to peer pressure: a single writer or director with a strong, creative vision of how to make a show will be drowned out by the majority of people who insist the show be similar to the previous SING! shows, out of fear

that the judges and their peers may not be receptive to anything besides a musical comedy.

The similarity between SING! shows is something that most Stuyvesant students now take for granted, and not without justification. At its heart, SING! is not about creating art: it's a chance for a grade to bond over the experience of creating. The art is only there to aid in the primary purpose: the social experience. While this is a great thing in and of itself, artistic creativity has become an unnecessary sacrifice because the very talented, creative Stuyvesant students of each grade waste their artistic potential in the name of a social gathering and friendly competition. It's an unnecessary sacrifice because a truly artistic show can be a strong bonding experience by itself, even among complete strangers. The social aspect of SING! could easily follow the artistic. Grades squander their potential to create a completely unique, original show by constructing a performance directed towards receiving the highest scores.

This is not necessarily an easy problem to fix; it would require an upheaval in the way that

producers, writers, and directors perceive SING! and roles they play in its production. The first step, however, would be simple: the old grading rubric must be completely reworked. Rather than testing a class's abilities in very specific categories, the new rubric must focus on originality. Its goal would be not only to encourage creative ideas, but also to discourage creating the formulaic show that every Stuyvesant student has come to expect. This would encourage grades to focus less on being better versions of previous shows and more on creating something original, without abolishing competition entirely.

This change may frighten some people, especially the older grades, who have become so familiar with the nature of SING! that they think of creativity as the ability to write pop culture references. However, it would result in a much greater variety of SING! performances. It's worth noting that this new rubric is much more similar to how real theater is judged: We would not lose the experience of creating something with our classmates; instead, we would amplify it with the new level of creativity.



Michele Lin / The Spectator

Opinions

Re-evaluating Square One

There are no makeups for this test, there is no extra credit, and there are no second chances. This is the SHSAT: the test that makes or breaks us.

This year and in previous years, people and organizations have brought up the fact that there are racial discrepancies in specialized high schools, supposedly propagated by the SHSAT. In light of these accusations, we have asked the Opinions Department's writers to consider ways to improve the test and ultimately address the question, "Should we change the SHSAT?" These are their thoughts.

Changing the Rubric

The current system under the SHSAT is flawed and must be changed. To begin with, the SHSAT is a standardized test and, like all other standardized tests, gives students who can afford test prep an upper hand. The test is not outwardly racist—it does not take race into account when admitting students, but those who lack the resources to prepare are put at a disadvantage. Consider the fact that minorities come from underprivileged families. According to a 2012 study by the Census Bureau, the median household net worth for black families was \$4,995; for Hispanic families, about \$7,424. Compare those figures to those of Asian-Americans and white-Americans, and the wealth gap is almost frightening. The median household net worth for Asian-Americans was \$69,590, and for white-Americans, \$110,729. Just take a look at the Stuyvesant student body for confirmation: does this seem like an environment that fosters racial diversity? Granted, there are relatively inexpensive test prep books out there, but let's be honest: How can a test prep book compare to the interactions between student and teacher?

The Department of Education should also take middle school grades into consideration. While it is true that different schools may have different standards, there are not many different ways to assess students. Interviews could possibly provide a broader view of students, but interviewing all of the twenty-thousand students that take the test each year is simply not a feasible plan. Middle school grades are difficult to standardize, but keep in mind that, like the SHSAT, grades would only be one factor in the admissions process. It is impossible to expect one exam, the SHSAT, to provide an accurate measure of a student's potential, but a look at the student's achievements throughout their middle school years will provide a better picture. In middle school, I had a friend who missed the Stuyvesant cutoff by around five points. She ended up going to Bronx Science because she was not "qualified" enough to attend Stuyvesant, but I know for a fact that she would have excelled just as much, if not more, than many students who were admitted. She was motivated and intelligent, and her academic record would have demonstrated that. You can get lucky on one test, but you can't get lucky for three whole years of schooling.

—Agnes Shin, Junior

Hell on Earth

For students across New York City, myself included, the weeks leading up to the SHSAT were Hell on Earth. We attended repetitive and boring test preparation classes, we took irksome and time-consuming practice tests, and we stayed up every night sweating bullets about test day. We tested this, we tested that, all for the purpose of unscrambling one or two more paragraphs correctly. While I am glad that the test turned in my favor, the SHSAT ought to be removed altogether and replaced with a more comprehensive system encompassing middle school grades, interviews, recommendations, and extracurricular activities. As of now, the SHSAT creates a huge amount of stress for students, emphasizes the necessity for rote test prep, and is a terrible indicator of success in high school and beyond.

None of the sections of the SHSAT evaluate the qualities of good high school students. Will a prospective employer ever slam sentences in my face and ask me to order them? Will a life-or-death situation ever demand that I know the angle measures in an octagon? The short answer is no. People who make a difference in this world are not always the best test-takers or the best at memorizing facts; qualities such as leadership cannot be quantified. The SHSAT isn't even good at testing hard work, because of the fact that it is only a single test. I know people who worked for years to prepare for the SHSAT and received poor scores because they were having a bad day. I also know people who put in very little, if any, effort and then waltzed into the school of their choice. The SHSAT needs to be abolished quickly, lest these issues persist.

—Winston Yee, Freshman

No Favors, No Bias

The SHSAT is far from perfect, but it is the most practical and effective way of evaluating all of New York City's eighth and ninth graders. Walking into the one of the specialized high schools on test day, nothing matters except for your performance on that one exam—not your race, gender, previous grades, personality, or origins. Your ability to arrange five scrambled paragraphs, answer ten logical reasoning questions, thirty reading comprehension, and fifty math questions is all that matters. In doing this, the SHSAT levels the playing field for everyone regardless of background, creating a system that can't be manipulated.

A majority of those admitted to specialized high schools belong there. The SHSAT emphasizes important high school skills, such as the ability to perform well in high-pressure, high-stress situations. Regardless of whether testing is the right way to evaluate students, it's how it's done, and SHSAT selects those who can thrive in test-heavy environments.

Though performance on the SHSAT can be greatly increased by exposure, seemingly benefiting those able to pay for expensive test prep, resources to study are available for everyone. While I took multiple test prep classes, most of my improvement can be attributed to sitting at home or in a library taking practice exams that cost me nothing. In addition, multiple free exams and test strategy seminars were given at every Kaplan and Princeton Review building around the city. The SHSAT rewards students who can take advantage of those resources and use them to their advantage, not only privileged students. If awareness is the issue, our fix shouldn't be to change the exam, but instead to get the word out. New York is a city designed in so that even if you were to live far from any test prep center or library, you could hop on a bus or ride the subway there.

Many of the flaws in the SHSAT are unavoidable for any kind of testing, but the SHSAT seems to minimize this error in a fair and efficient way.

—Emma Bernstein, Freshman

More than a Test

October 29 wasn't just any day; it was SHSAT day. I can still remember waking up two hours earlier than usual to prepare, eating the perfect healthy breakfast, stuffing ten pencils into my pencil case, and checking for the admission ticket in my bag. So many things were on my mind because it was the day that would decide my future. The day that I had to do my best in order to get into my dream school.

Some people criticize the SHSAT, highlighting that its two sections are not enough to test students' acuity. These topics, however, test the basic skills of logic and reasoning that may reveal a student's commitment. They allow students to challenge themselves by studying for a subject that they may not be good at. Stuyvesant is a math and science school, yet those who are admitted have all had to do well in the English section. My math skills are far more honed than my English comprehension, but that just made me work harder to achieve a better score in that section. Thus, for its ability to reveal any student's scholarly dedication, the SHSAT is a good indicator of those who have the willingness to learn.

—Rebecca You, Freshman



Laura Eng / The Spectator

Diagnosing the Disease

While the SHSAT is by no means ideal, it is virtually impossible to create a system that is more meritocratic and that does not overextend the quantity of resources required to admit students to the specialized high schools. The nature of the test's format (multiple choice) has been stigmatized for creating a machine-like student body. However, empirical evidence shows that this is not true: the depth of talent at Stuyvesant and other specialized high schools continues to be diverse, housing Intel finalists, lauded young writers, and accomplished dancers.

Furthermore, the test as it is allows certain brilliant students access to a high quality, free education from which they may be barred if admissions included an interview or other such criteria. The SHSAT is one of the few purely meritocratic admissions systems still existing today, particularly because holistic admissions systems serve the purpose of increasing diversity, often putting the highest-performing demographics at a disadvantage. According to Robert Unz, top private universities under-represent Asian-Americans by 300 per cent along the proportions of academic merit, while they over-represent other minorities by many times that amount. While racial diversity is an explicit and justified interest of universities, the interest of the specialized high schools is to give top-performing students the opportunity to study at a caliber determined by merit and not by socioeconomic means or otherwise.

While we should work towards creating racial diversity, changing the SHSAT is not the way to do so. The racially skewed results of the SHSAT seem to be the symptom of a more troubling disease: weak primary education in the neighborhoods of those underrepresented minorities and the failure of our education system to inspire scholarly enthusiasm across all our youth.

—Nancy Ko, Senior

From the Archives

The Spectator presents an opinions page from the last issue of the 2003-2004 school year.

The Spectator • June 7, 2004

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Opinions

The End of Endurance

By MICHAEL GSOVSKI

It is 3:12 in the afternoon on Thursday, May 27, and I am in gym class, my last class of the day, doing step aerobics.

I am keeping up with the beat as well as I possibly can. Since I have no rhythm, ever filling the niche of the uncoordinated nerd, I am having problems with this relatively simple task. My legs ache as if they were stretched on a medieval rack. The sweat from my forehead drips into my right eye and it burns. It burns!

The blood is draining from my brain and I don't care. "You can worry later, when your feet are stationary," I tell myself. "Three more minutes of this and you'll be free," I repeat. "You'll be able to put the aerobic step away and get a cool, crisp drink of water."

It's almost the end of school, and I am knee deep in it. What I am knee deep in requires no explanation, for we are all wading in the same substance.

School is now a sick joke, as the weather warms, and my mental endurance wanes: read textbook, regurgitate information, study for test, place self at mercy of test, and repeat. It takes effort to pull myself away from the AOL Instant Messenger icon to the Microsoft Word icon on my computer and do my work.

As I drag myself along in these last painful days of the

academic year, SAT IIs and Regents loom just over the horizon. As I lean over the abyss, and the tide of work threatens to push me off the brink, I keep up the exhausting struggle. "One month, and you'll be free," I tell myself. "You'll be able to put the textbooks away and be lazy, creative, and slothful for two full and blissful months."

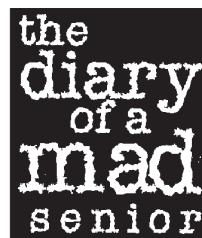
Of course, I am never completely free. Over the summer, each square on the calendar brings me closer to the September day when I must return to this building.

As with this gym class, no matter how relieved I am when the period ends and I can finally get that longed-for drink, I know the hours are passing. The countdown has started again, each second bringing me closer and closer to the aerobics step where I bounce up and down every gym day, turning redder than the Soph-Frosh SING! Kool-Aid Man.

When the beat finally ends, and we can leave school to cool off and get our brains a much-needed drink, we must keep in mind the short span of our escape. The summer break lasts only so long. Too soon, the aerobics will start again, and Stuyvesant will step to its workaholic beat once more.

Make the most of your summer. It's your only break in the nine long months of endurance.

Drink up.



The second term of my senior year (which I'd like to call the Fun-Begins-Now term) has brought me to the understanding that for a good portion of my time at Stuy, I didn't do things because I wanted to. Rather, I did them because I needed to.

Now I stand on the cusp of breakthrough. I have come to realize that, for most of my high school experience, what I (and other students) lacked was a sense of control over what we were doing. For me, this led to a lack of control over myself, and my emotion.

Toward the end of my senior year, I have finally begun to take control. For me, control is based upon three postulates:

*Postulate 1:
Learning How to Be Alone*

Solitude is not an exercise in detachment from someone or something. It means learning how to depend on yourself, instead of others. In four years, Stuy hasn't taught me lessons in community bonding and strong ties, but in the importance of

being alone. Not in the sense of reverting to hermitage, but in the sense of being content with being alone. Reading a book, biking, or walking home are all examples of knowing when to take time out for yourself. By having this time to yourself, you become better able to bring your actions and emotions under your own control.

*Postulate 2:
Experiencing Everything Possible*

Although, for various reasons, senior year has been my least favorite year, it has encompassed a cornucopia of events. Each experience is another notch on my stick: another emotional situation successfully handled and learned from. I dropped in, out, and back into friendships. I had my first kiss with my first girlfriend. I reeled from my first breakup. I had my heart broken twice (and possibly three times). I had my first go with substances. I made month-long, day-long, hour-long, and 15-minute-long friends. Depression. Elation. No pressure.

I took a test for the first time with no worries of how I was going to do. I found people who could relate to many of my problems and one who could relate to all of them. I went through Stuy knowing hundreds of people and making countless friends and only now do I realize that in the end I may leave only

knowing three or four of them completely. I try to take it all in stride.

*Postulate 3:
Being Frivolous*

Frivolity leads to a detachment in its own way: Nonchalant enjoyment lessens the gravity of events. There is nothing better than being frivolous—not indefinitely, but for a sustained period of time. The summer is the best time to experiment with this flippant mood.

The summer of my senior year, which I hope to call the Summer of One Last Times, I intend to be as frivolous as possible. It will be a culmination of four years of regret and missed opportunities seasoned with new experiences. I'll read books. I'll take bike rides. I'll have more time (for the last time) with my friends.

My four years at Stuy have been colored by one of two feelings: either that the world and I were breaking down together, or that I was falling apart as the world stood firm.

And now, for the first time, I feel like the world is spontaneously combusting, as I stand firm, laughing. I know I'm finally in control.

-Don John

Junior Ramblings

The Campaign Trail: Election Fever!

Just like SING!, Stuy election season charges the air with competitive tension. Screaming campaigners deafen the ear with their chants and insults. Hastily folded leaflets litter the ground, and brightly colored signs slather the bulletin boards.

Such are the two weeks of Stuyvesant High School's Student Union elections. Enemies are made, friendships are questioned, and campaign flyers are stuffed into every possible crevice: hands, pockets, trash cans, or ceiling ventila-tors.

I remember coming to Stuyvesant as a freshman and instantaneously wanting to be class president. I was young, idealistic, and convinced that I could shake things up. Unfortunately, I was not alone in my ambitions. 18 other pairs of candidates decided to rain on what I viewed as my parade.

I will never forget that election. I was funded by my childhood piggy bank: my own personal slush fund. My campaign consisted of a lengthy letter in tiny font printed on fluorescent orange paper.

The ballot for that election was ridiculously long, full of candidates that I had not once seen campaigning. To my dismay, some of them managed to

beat me anyway.

Over the years, I have seen my share of weird elections. For instance, I have seen people shave their heads and write messages on their shiny craniums.

My favorite campaign has to be that of two members of *Broken Escalator*. Despite their senior status, they ran for Junior Caucus last year. Their flyers stated that they had been rejected or thrown out of just about everything they'd tried to get into, and arrested on various criminal accounts. And they almost won, based on write-in ballots.

As I write this, I am awash in campaign literature collected from all campaigns during my time at Stuyvesant. Still an aspiring politician, I've collected every piece of campaign literature possible since day one of freshman year.

To this day, I've kept a large FedEx box in my closet that I open only once a year to dump the literature of past elections on my kitchen table for deep analysis. I always look for design inspirations for my own flyers, and issues and ideas of others that should be carried on.

My campaigns have changed over time, just as I have. Freshman year I was an

attack dog, ruthless and mean. (That didn't work at all). Sophomore year, I tried a more balanced campaign, integrating issues and people from all parts of the school into my platform. I did better, and got second place by 40 votes.

Now as I sit here thinking about the upcoming election, I am not optimistic. Three times I have given it all I had, and, though I went into this election knowing that I am unlikely to win, I'm glad to be running.

Most people view elections as the worst time of year, when everyone's after your vote, and brightly colored trees are being chopped down at an alarming rate to make campaign posters. For me, elections have always been a time to reflect on the past and how we have all changed.

Even so, my heart still beats with indignation when I come across my freshman campaign literature, sporting the slogan "Achieve with Nick and Steve!" and think: I know I had the best platform!

I mean, an in-school ATM machine! How cool would that have been?

-Nick Greenough

Nick Greenough ran for Senior Class President in the 2004 SU election.

It's the Time of the Season

After tenth period ends, you go to your locker, take some books out, and put other books in. You kindly decline offers to hang out. You walk out of the bridge doors and cross the bridge with determination. You swipe your MetroCard at the turnstile. You get on the train, and go home.

But this isn't about you, it's about me...and my after-school ritual is different. At least three days a week, I go to my locker, exchange books, and leave the school. But instead of crossing the bridge, I make a sharp right and go to the park.

Going to the park isn't just a hobby—it has filled the lives of so many Stuyvesant students with laughter and relief. Every time I go there, I know to expect an hour-long game of Ultimate Frisbee, a slew of sunbathers, relaxed TriBeCa residents, and a couple hundred Stuy students who always seem to find something they can do. Volleyball, soccer, frisbee, backgammon—you don't need to be on a team. These sports are all open to the public.

The park has become a place to seek refuge, but not just for us Stuyvies. The tanners provide great diversity (Not everyone can be active—some people just need to relax.), but they also provide obstacles for the sports players.

We often find ourselves avoiding the mostly-naked men and women who reside near the trees and benches, or shouting "HEADS!" at them, which means "Don't move an inch unless you want a concussion!"

The most amusing incidents I've witnessed in the park have been encounters between the sports players and the peo-

ple sitting innocently on the grass.

One time, this woman was lying on the grass, reading, and talking on her phone. She was a very chic woman with sunglasses and a flowing dress; you would think she'd be very nice and rational (not that we judge books by their covers).

At the same time, there was a game of Frisbee going on; her being situated exactly where the Frisbee decided to land every time a throw was not caught. Apparently, she got fed up with this pattern because she took the disk in her hand and refused to give it back. She just sat there, scolding the Frisbee players. As one of the park employees was walking by, she called him over. An exchange occurred, the Frisbee was returned to its owners, and the game continued.

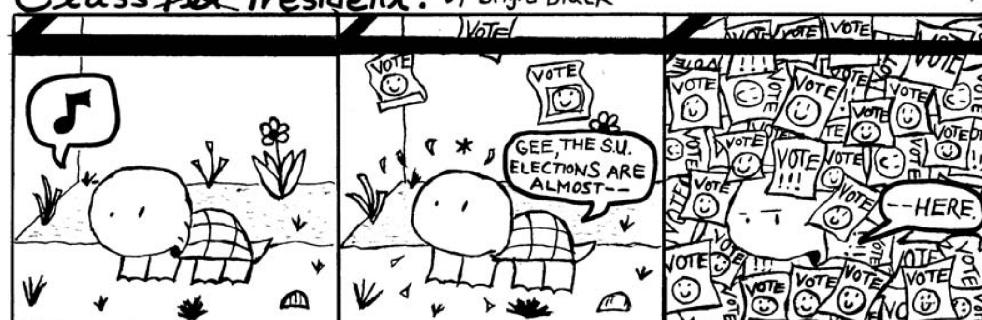
I think the woman and the park employee eventually became friends, because I later saw them walking away together.

This unifying aspect of the park is part of what makes Stuyvesant so unique. TriBeCa is a wonderful neighborhood, fostering community amongst us by providing a place for us to hang out after school. And in the relaxed atmosphere of the park, unexpected friendships can spring up, as between Ms. Sunglasses and the park employee. Dodging and tossing frisbees, we're brought together with people from our school to whom we wouldn't ordinarily speak.

Go to the park. You'll be amazed at how many people in our school play sports.

-Jeremy Wooster

Class Pet President! by Brigid Black



Opinions

Recycling is Not a Chore



Phillip Shin / The Spectator

By SUNNY ZHANG

It's not that we don't want to save the planet, or that we don't know how to. The Earth is dying simply because its inhabitants are too indifferent to bother. We are all citizens of the world with the responsibility of protecting our planet, and there are countless ways to make a difference. Knowingly choosing not to act is unacceptable. In fact, it's suicidal.

The idea of going green isn't new to Stuyvesant. Every floor in the school has separate bins for bottles and cans, paper, and trash. All the bins are clearly marked with inscriptions or specially shaped openings; people simply have to discard objects in the proper bins. Yet among the few who even know the bins exist, even fewer actually use them.

This year, the Stuyvesant Environmental Club has implemented a series of school-wide waste-reduction programs: the electronics drive, year-round Terracycling, and the current ongoing cafeteria recycling program. For the Terracycling program, old

electronics, chip bags, shampoo bottles, and drink pouches, etc. that would have otherwise gone to a landfill are being collected, and are then shipped to a company for recycling. Not only is the Earth spared, but the club also benefits by receiving donations as

If Stuyvesant can successfully start recycling and significantly reduce our waste output, we can set an example for public schools across the city.

We've all heard for years about saving the Earth, but when confronted with it ourselves, most of us fail to fulfill our duty toward our own planet.

a reward. The cafeteria program seeks to reduce the number of garbage bags the school produces. The space taken up by trays in the garbage bags is eliminated by disposing them separately. This is also a step in the process of composting leftovers, which the club hopes to implement next year. Separating and composting trash would eliminate practically our entire cafeteria waste output.

As a member of the Environmental Club, I have worked extensively on encouraging mass participation in our programs. We've tried to disseminate the message with announcements in the mornings before the pledge, on the school website and with numerous posters around the school. Special blue Terracycling bins with clear signs were placed in the cafeteria, and lists of recyclable products were posted on the website and around the

school. Everything was simple, straightforward, and accessible.

Despite our 3000 students, the response was disappointingly low. Most of the contributions to the electronics drive in the beginning of the year came from teachers and school departments. The Terracycling bins are virtually empty. None of the students seem to care to voluntarily bring in old broken calculators or empty chip bags. The only program that is succeeding is the cafeteria program. Let me point out that this is the only program that students have no choice but to participate in. We've all heard for years about saving the Earth, but when confronted with it ourselves, most of us fail to fulfill our duty toward our own planet.

How many of you call yourselves "liberal" or "progressives"



Michelle Guo / The Spectator



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

By JACK CAHN

With over 3,200 students, Stuyvesant can often feel busier and more overwhelming than a train station during rush hour. The first days of freshman year are often dominated by two words: "get out." Whether you're being pushed around by upperclassmen rushing to get to class on time or told by teachers and administrators that they don't have enough time to deal with your small, relatively unimportant problems, it's

easy to get lost at Stuyvesant.

There are some people who make the transition easier. I'll always remember Senora Ubieta stopping me in the halls, smiling at me and telling me about her twin sons, or when Mr. Teitel stood outside of Stuyvesant on the first day of school and guided us into the building welcomingly. It's these small things that make a huge difference for new students.

When Principal Jie Zhang was appointed our interim

We Want Ms. Zhang

principal, there was a murmur of curiosity for the first few days, but it eventually died down. Many students, including myself, assumed little would change. But we were wrong.

Zhang has begun somewhat of a revolution at Stuyvesant—a revolution of kindness. There is a general consensus among the students with whom I've spoken that she has done a superb job as principal, not only in her official duties, but more importantly, in making Stuyvesant a welcoming community for the student body.

These past few weeks, Zhang has both literally and figuratively had an open door policy, allowing students to visit her in order to address programming concerns or problems they were facing. The line to speak to her has extended out the door of her office on most days.

This open door policy has a few major benefits.

First and foremost, it gives students an opportunity to have their problems addressed.

Second, it gives the student body a sense of administrative efficacy, increasing the trust the student body has in the administration because there is an increasing sense that it genuinely cares about the student body. The first article I ever wrote for the Spectator addressed the fact that I felt lost, with nowhere to go with issues I faced. Today, I am confident that Zhang's door will be open to hear my voice and those of my peers.

Third, and most impor-

tantly, Zhang's actions signify a shift in administrative decision-making that could have prolonged effects. While her changes are currently exclusive to her office, the kindness and concern that she exhibits for the student body has the potential to spread and dramatically shift the culture at Stuyvesant—from a general 'you're on your own' culture to one of intimate relationships between administration and student body.

Zhang's policies extend



Sam Kim / The Spectator

These past few weeks Zhang has both literally and figuratively had an open door policy.

even further. As principal, she has signed on as teacher advisor for many clubs that otherwise could not exist. Junior Glib Dolotov, president of StuyRave, explained that that Zhang not only signed on as official

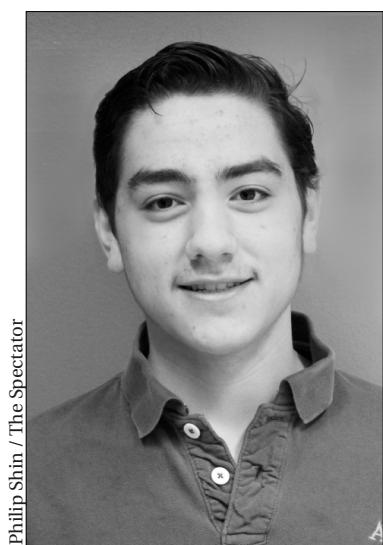
Teacher Advisor but also genuinely cares about the club, frequently asking him about how the club is going and attending some club meetings. Other students have expressed similar gratitude that Zhang voluntarily agreed to take legal liability to many of Stuyvesant's clubs in order to improve the quality of life for the student body.

While many students assumed Zhang would be complacent in her first year in office, she has far exceeded expectations. When things go wrong, I'm the first one to call for change. Today, I want to be the first one to commend our principal, Ms. Zhang, for doing a fantastic job of making Stuyvesant a more welcoming community for our newer students, and for our upperclassmen as well.

Thank you, Ms. Zhang.

Opinions

Time to Reconsider Citizens United



Philip Shin /The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

During the month of January, I spent more than twenty hours debating the Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission (FEC) decision. What I learned from hundreds of hours of research radically changed my opinion, from believing it to

Requiring speakers to obtain permission before speaking was prior restraint and therefore a form of censorship, according to the Court.

be the worst Supreme Court decision in my lifetime to seeing it as a glowing protection of our basic freedoms.

In Citizens United vs. FEC (2010), the Supreme Court found that corporations had the right to donate unlimited amounts of money to Super PACS from their general treasury funds for the purposes of political communication. This

decision built off of precedent in Emily's List vs. FEC (2009), which established the right of unlimited individual spending in elections. Public response to these decisions has been extremely negative. According to the Brennan Center for Justice, "65 percent of Americans said that they trust government less because big donors to Super PACs have more influence than regular voters." Meanwhile, 76 percent of Americans oppose the Citizens United decision, arguing that the government should be able to limit the amount of money corporations or unions can donate.

That Citizens United creates inequality among the American population is impossible to ignore. But mandated equality of speech, property, and privacy were never part of the American plan—freedom was. Despite its unpopularity, the evidence proves that Citizens United did indeed accomplish its goal: protecting freedom of speech and the integrity of the Constitution.

In Austin vs. Michigan Chamber of Commerce (1990), the case that Citizens United overturned, the Supreme Court found that the undue influence generated by corporate expenditures in elections was substantial enough to warrant governmental intervention to prevent corruption and/or the appearance of corruption. Their argument was logically flawed for two reasons.

First, the Austin decision was inconsistent. If the Court believed that large expenditures had the power to corrupt, then it should have capped donations of wealthy individuals as well. By banning corporate and union expenditures but legalizing large donations from the rich, the Court effectively discriminated against these groups simply on the basis of their corporate identity, a clear violation of the Constitution and an act of arbitrary lawmaking.

Second, unlike traditional spending limits on candidates, Austin banned unlimited corporate expenditures on electioneering communication. The Court in Citizens United found this to be a basic infringement on the free speech rights of corporations. Corporations, the majority argued, had the right to spread their ideas like any other group. Banning them from writing books about political issues or candidates, publicizing their opinions about an election, or buying television ads to spread their ideology was a violation of their Constitutional rights.

The Supreme Court cited

two major cases to support this logic. In Buckley (1976) and Bellotti (1978), the Court decided that "undue influence" generated by a speaker's large

Citizens United restored freedom of expression to the election process. Meanwhile, it also helped increase competition in elections.

Reason Magazine finds that incumbents in elections have a huge advantage, winning reelections at rates of more than 90 percent. Empirically, the incumbent advantage was found to be worth between seven and eight percent of the vote, and in 80 percent of cases, incumbents didn't face general election challengers, according to Politico. A University of Pittsburgh study explains that "dollar for dollar, challenger spending seems to exert more influence on election outcomes than incumbent spending... [therefore] limiting campaign spending would eliminate the challenger's best hope for overcoming the sizable advantages of incumbency."

The Center for Competitive Politics quantifies this benefit, noting that by ending campaign limits for corporate spending, Citizens United increases challenger's prospects by 50%. Writes Politico, "PACs are equalizers in the race—helping challengers to overcome the inherent financial advantages held by incumbents."

Creating competition in American elections, by increasing the number of candidates running for office is good for the American people because

expenditures was outweighed by the loss of democratic processes resulting from the restrictions upon free and full public discussion. Deeming a group "too powerful" was not a justification for withholding First Amendment rights.

A second, less commonly known, indictment of Austin was its violation of the bright line doctrine of the 14th Amendment. The bright line doctrine of the 14th Amendment states that all laws should be clearly composed of objective factors that leave little room for varying interpretation. In Citizens United, the Court found that the solution created by Austin violated this doctrine. The FEC used an eleven factor to determine what constituted "express advocacy" and, hence, which speech was banned. This test was so subjective that speakers had to ask the FEC for prior permission to speak because they did not know what speech was banned. The Court held that subjective factors violate the principle of a bright line test. Requiring speakers to obtain permission before speaking was prior restraint and therefore a form of censorship, according to the Court.

By overturning Austin,

Citizens United increases challenger's prospects by 50 percent.

writes that Citizens United freed unions to campaign to the 89 percent of Americans who don't belong to unions. SEIU

Creating competition in American elections, by increasing the number of candidates running for office is good for the American people

officials say they are targeting "tens of thousands" of doors beyond their 18,000-strong membership and have logged over 100,000 door knocks, 88 percent more doors than they could have pre-Citizens United. Additionally, in the last five days of the campaign, the AFL-CIO's political program knocked on 5.5 million doors, made 5.2 million phone calls and passed out two million leaflets. The Journal of Politics at Yale University finds that canvassing increases voter turnout by 7 percent.

The Accountability Project concludes that, "organized labor has taken advantage of Citizens United to a degree that exceeds what the business community has."

All of us are deeply entrenched in our own political views. I'm no different. Until a month ago, I would have told any advocate of Citizens United that he or she was crazy. But intense research and hours of back-and-forth with my peers from across the country have proven my initial opinion wrong. I encourage you, too, to reconsider Citizens United. You might find it's not as evil as the mainstream media would have you think.

The Spectator Opinions Department is hosting our first Op-Ed contest. Please submit an article (800 words maximum) answering the following question:

If there was one thing you could change about Stuyvesant, what would it be?

The best submission will be featured in Issue 10.

All submissions must be emailed to StuyvesantSpectator@gmail.com by Saturday, February 23 at 11:59PM

Arts and Entertainment

Food

Good Things Come in Small Sizes

By EMILY LEE

When it comes to cupcakes, the bigger, the better, right? Not in Melissa Bushell's opinion. In her bakery Baked by Melissa, Bushell offers tiny cupcakes with the idea that one should be able to sample many differ-

to miss, with nine locations dispersed throughout New York City. Each cupcake is the size of a quarter with a base cake of chocolate, vanilla, or red velvet. On top of these quintessential base flavors, however, is a perky dollop of frosting and exclusive embellishments specific to the flavor. There are 10 regular flavors, from the classic red velvet to their signature tie-dye, as well as one mini-of-the-month flavor. The cupcakes may seem unreasonably expensive at \$1 each, but they are certainly worth the splurge; Baked by Melissa presents flavors that cannot be found in any other bakery.

Like their cupcakes, Baked by Melissa is a small bakery with a modern feel. The shop is pristine with white counters and glass doors. Hundreds of their cute, bite-sized cupcakes are showcased behind a glass window with colorful frostings and toppings popping out against the surrounding white walls.

While this certainly dramatizes the allure of their outer appearances, the true appeal of these bite-sized novelties comes from within the cupcakes. Stuffed with complementary toppings or frosting, each cupcake plays off of a different combination of textures and flavors, including classics and customer favorites like red velvet and tie-dye. Baked by Melissa does the traditional red velvet cupcake justice by keeping the traditional proportions rather than experimenting with unnecessary ingredients that distort the original taste.

The moist light-chocolate cake is nicely complimented by a rich cream cheese frosting that slowly melts and fuses with the burgundy flakes. Meanwhile, though their tie-dye cupcake is simply a vanilla cake dyed blue, pink, green, and orange, its multi-colored sugar crystals give it a nice crunch to balance out the tender cake. Its alluring colors make it undoubtedly deserving of its title as the bakery's signature cupcake.

Moving to the more classically unique flavors of Baked by Melissa, a peanut butter cup cupcake brings together salty peanut butter and rich chocolate icing to create a silky texture that glides over your tongue. The s'mores cupcake features a chocolate cake topped with

While this certainly dramatizes the allure of their outer appearances, the true appeal of these bite-sized novelties comes from within the cupcakes.

ent flavors without the guilt of consuming a whole batch of calories.

Despite their diminutive size, Bushell's cupcakes are hard

Although the sizes are small, Baked by Melissa manages to pack much flavor into each cupcake.

graham cracker fluff. Though it is heavier in chocolate than your average s'mores, its sweetness does not overpower the delicate marshmallow garnish. The mint chocolate chip



Neatly organized arrays of miniature cupcakes stand out against the pristine white décor of Baked by Melissa, located at 110 Fulton Street.

Eva I / The Spectator

cupcake stands apart from its mundane counterparts made by other bakeries. It is topped with a sweet icing infused with mint, tickling two senses with the same sensation, as the cupcake smells exactly as it tastes.

Of the stuffed cupcakes, highlights include their cinnamon and cookie dough cupcakes. With one bite, the sweet stuffed cinnamon center quickly bursts into a mixture of vanilla frosting and cinnamon. Its rich cinnamon flavor brings back memories of the gooiest and softest cinnamon bun. The cookie dough cupcake is sweeter than most cakes due to its chewy cookie dough center, but it remains texturally pleasing as a result of the careful balance between the rough, crumbly cookie dough and the soft vanilla cake encasing it.

Although the sizes are small, Baked by Melissa manages to pack much flavor into each cupcake. With a seemingly per-

fect cake to frosting ratio, it can be hard to resist these cute des-

With a seemingly perfect cake to frosting ratio, it can be hard to resist these cute desserts.

serts. In addition, at under fifty calories each, anyone can release their inner cupcake connoisseur and try every flavor, as Bushell intends. There certainly are perks to being small.

Baked by Melissa is located at 110 Fulton Street.

Clever Puns and Crunchy Offerings

such bland presentation. With crunchy carrots and savory pork rolled inside a baguette, the self-named "baoguette" is similar to a crispy and refreshing Vietnamese sandwich. What distinguishes baoguettes from traditional Vietnamese sandwiches, though, are the different types of meat included and the novel amalgam of textures that results: the smooth terrine and chunky pork roll join with snappy cilantro.

The Baoguette at 75 Nassau Street is just the second of a family-run chain of Vietnamese stores; the first can be found at 61 Lexington Avenue. Opened by owner Thao Nguyen and her husband Stanley Nguyen in 2009, the store's popularity has since skyrocketed. When asked about the origin of the name, Thao Nguyen said, "[I] wanted to call the store by my name, but it was too difficult to say, so we use Bao, my husband's name." In addition, the traditional Vietnamese sandwich, or bahn mi, is typically served on baguettes, making the store's name a clever portmanteau of Bao and baguette.

Baoguette is great for a bite to eat, but it's best to take your meal outside of the store, which can get stuffy with so little space. Decorated with fake wood wallpaper and little stools accompanying the store's small countertops, the inside of

Baoguette isn't very conducive to relaxed meals. When ordering, chefs prepare each meal right behind the cashier, but their space is more like the be-

(\$6.25), sloppy baoguettes (\$7.50) and cat fish baoguettes (\$7.50). Each sandwich can be enhanced by adding a fried egg for \$1, and a customer can

The way Baoguette shows off its dishes is simple – sandwiches on plain paper plates, noodles and peanuts in brightly colored plastic bowls – but the flavor shines through such bland presentation.

hind-the-scenes to a pizza store – chefs in aprons hurry to make each meal, creating an ambience quite different from the "front" of the store, where customers eat their sandwiches.

Each sandwich is immediately filling and is created by Thao Nguyen, who calls every one of them a "special take on traditional Vietnamese food." Some signature dishes are the classic, trademark baoguettes

add different levels of spiciness based on his or her taste. Other notable offerings in Baoguette include the green papaya salad with shrimp (\$6), the chicken salad (\$6), and chicken and shrimp summer rolls (both \$6).

Though Baoguette is a bit far from Stuyvesant, just a quick jump on the subway over to the Fulton Street station will reap flavorful rewards for brave adventurers.



Though closed due to inclement weather conditions caused by Snowstorm Nemo, Baoguette Vietnamese Sandwich, located at 61 Lexington Avenue, is typically a bustling hub of "bahn mi" fanatics.

By EDA TSE

The way Baoguette shows off its dishes is simple – sand-

wiches are on plain paper plates, noodles and peanuts in brightly colored plastic bowls – but the flavor shines through

Carolyn Fisher / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

Food

Taste (Or Lack Thereof) of Tandoor



Taste of Tandoor, located at 149 Church Street, offers combination plates combining meat and vegetarian dishes from Bangladeshi, Indian, and Pakistani cuisines.

By JAMES BESSOIR

I only vaguely remember the first time I went to eat at Taste of Tandoor. I was not even a freshman then; I was visiting Stuyvesant for an open house. Even though Bangladeshi and Indian cuisines are some of my favorites, I did not even think to return to this restaurant until over two years after. Remembering the existence of this small eatery, I wondered why this was the case.

Taste of Tandoor is located next to the E train station right

off of Chambers Street, an ideal location for Stuyvesant students looking for a bite. So why is the restaurant not bustling with hungry pupils arguing over the latest political debate or a controversial question on their last exam? Is it the lackluster food? Is it costly? Or is it just not commodious, with an unappealing atmosphere? It only took me a few minutes after stepping through the door to realize that my dinner there was going to consist of all three.

The restaurant offers special combination plates with the

choice of either three vegetarian items (\$8) or two vegetarian items with the choice of one meat (\$9-\$14.25, depending on choice of meat), combined with either basmati rice or Nan and a fresh garden salad. Having the option of only one meat is already limiting when considering the wide array of appetizing meat choices offered in this type of cuisine. Having the choice between basmati rice and Nan imposed upon me was just another disappointment, for both are crucial parts of a fulfilling dinner at any Indian eatery—except this one. Even worse is what is advertised as a “fresh garden salad,” which is actually a microscopic container containing about a spoonful of dry coleslaw with one single thin slice of old, plain, and dry-tasting carrot.

Since many Indian buffets cost around \$10 and consist of a very wide variety of meats, vegetarian dishes, and desserts, this restaurant instantaneously became a source of frustration as it unworthily ate up my wallet. One seemingly redeeming quality of Taste of Tandoor, though, is its portions. The special combination plate came with a very large serving of the meat and vegetarian dishes, on top of an even larger helping of basmati rice. However, a popular and growing trend in Indian restaurants and buffets is large portions, thus leaving Taste of Tandoor back at square one. The displeasure of overpaying can be more or

less shrugged off when followed by a fulfilling and tasteful meal, but that is far from what this restaurant offered. Although the Boneless Lamb Curry (\$13.25) was tender and the sauce tasted authentic, the rather dry Chicken Makhani (\$9) ultimately fell flat. Advertised as mildly spicy, it was just the opposite: overly sweet. The blend of yogurt and tomato sauce was not well-proportioned or well-spiced. In fact, it was overly salty, with even a slight taste of chemicals and cleaning products.

The vegetarian dishes were much more fulfilling compared to the meat dishes, a complete reversal of the true colors of Indian and Bangladeshi cuisine. The Extra Spicy Vegetables were indeed spicy and delectable, though there were too many peppers and onions in the mix. The Aloo Zeera (potatoes with cumin flavoring) was executed perfectly with not a touch too much salt, and while the Sweet Potatoes lacked the onions, green peppers/peas, and traditional Indian spices that they were advertised to have, they were nevertheless decently appetizing and lush. However, the Chana Masala (chick peas cooked in a thick spicy sauce) was far from spicy, adapting an almost completely bland taste if not for the slight taste of onions. While three of these four vegetable dishes are recommendable, a vegetarian dinner is hardly enough to satisfy any Indian cu-

sine fanatic. It is almost always the soft buttery Nan coupled with a bite of rough, crispy, and well-spiced tandoori chicken or the sweet taste of milky rice pudding with raisins and nuts that really hits the spot.

At least it can be easily said that this hole in the wall does not try to play itself off as higher quality than it is: the already small eatery is crowded with an unnecessarily large amount of small two-seater tables. Both the walls and floors are quite dirty, and the large water jugs available are also suspicious. The restaurant does not attempt to mirror a traditional middle-eastern aspect, nor does it fit into the upscale Tribeca neighborhood. Without a theme, the restaurant easily renders itself neither memorable or worth returning to. While the décor is far from promising, the service is not much better; the men behind the counter don't seem to understand English.

With multiple Halal food carts around the Tribeca serving savory and flavorful dishes for around \$5 each, it is not a wonder that Taste of Tandoor is regarded with such distance and distaste. With customers' sole approving nods derived from its large helpings, Taste of Tandoor is a long way from becoming a frequent hangout for Stuyvesant students, or for that matter, anyone else in Tribeca.

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Arts and Entertainment

Film

Forgotten Film Reel: Falling Through a Fantasia

By SHAHRUZ GHAEMI

The exploration of the psyche and imagination of children has a rich and diverse history in art, from the Grimm brothers to Freud to, more recently, Mexican director Guillermo del Toro with "Pan's Labyrinth." Released in the same year as "Pan's Labyrinth," Tarsem Singh's 2006 movie "The Fall" continues such explorations into both child and adult psychology.

The main characters are both recovering invalids in a hospital outside Los Angeles in 1915. Alexandra (Catinca Untaru) is a young Romanian native who now works in the orange groves of California with her family and Roy (Lee Pace) is a depressed and suicidal stuntman whose lover recently left him for another man. Both are admitted to the hospital due to injuries from falls, and they strike up a fast friendship.

The bedridden Roy communicates with the young girl through storytelling. His first tale, merely a quick attempt to prevent his new friend from leaving is about Alexandra's namesake, Alexander the

Great. When this entices her to visit him again, he begins his real story, "an epic tale of love and revenge," about a band of mismatched outcasts led by Roy's alter ego, the Masked Bandit, and seeking revenge on the man who wronged all of them, Governor Odious. Alexandra's imagination conjures up visuals to go along with Roy's overly serious narration, and half of the movie is told through the perspective of her imagination.

As an immigrant and a child laborer, she has been through a lot, but as a child, her mind and imagination are still soaking in new experiences and transforming them into fantastical scenes. To realize the exotic scenery that Alexandra imagines, the film was shot in more than 20 different countries. Tarsem Singh's choice of location paired with Colin Watkinson's cinematography makes for a visually stunning film. From aerial shots of the heroes on the isolated Butterfly Reef in Fiji, to panning shots of them running through the Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, the film is worth watching for the cinematography alone.

Childlike curiosity and naïveté are focal points of the movie. For instance, Charles Darwin and his simian companion and conversation partner Wallace are two of the more ridiculous figures in the hunt for Odious. Their motivation, the quest for a rare species of butterfly kept captive by Odious, is entirely provided by input from Alexandra. More interestingly, a lot of screen time is devoted to dialogue between Roy and Alexandra as he tries to figure out what she is saying in her still-developing English. Like a true child, Alexandra is forever asking questions such as "Where do you go to the potty?" and "Is your friend a pirate?" to Roy, who considers these questions infantile, but answers nonetheless.

The Masked Bandit's tale is a meeting place for Roy and Alexandra, where a depressed actor and an immigrant child can converse at the same level. Roy is forced to consider a child's point of view in order to communicate with her. For her part, Alexandra can get an adult to listen to her and respond to her requests in a way that most adults would never do.

However, the impact of this experience is much more profound for Alexandra because it starts her transformation from childhood to awareness of adult values. Like most adults, Roy has an ulterior motive. While he certainly enjoys Alexandra's company and telling her stories, he ultimately just needs a friend. This initially manifests itself innocently. At an early point, he stops the story abruptly to get Alexandra to prick his toes in order to test his recovery's progress, promising to resume the story afterward. But as Roy pines over a broken heart, he becomes more and more manipulative. He uses bits and pieces of the story as rewards for Alexandra as long as she gets him morphine pills, which he plans to use to commit suicide. Roy drags Alexandra down with him in his spiral of depression, but as the child she is, she doesn't really know what's happening.

There are many falls in the film: Alexandra and Roy are hospitalized because of falls; Alexandra suffers another injury while trying to reach a cabinet; and the one clear shot of the Masked Bandit's twin



brother is of him falling off a bridge, escaping from Governor Odious. Yet the most important fall, one that is never directly mentioned, is the Fall of Man, in which Adam and Eve lose their innocence by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In one telling scene, Alexandra silently witnesses the terrible grief of a mother beholding her dead son on an operating table. By the end of "The Fall," Alexandra, like Adam and Eve, has fallen from the grace of childhood, as must all.

A Knight Triumphant

By GEOFFREY LUU

Gotham City has fallen into chaos, and the Batman has not been seen in a decade. This is

turns," based on Frank Miller's 1986 miniseries of the same name. The film, directed by Jay Oliva, follows the exploits of a 55 year-old Bruce Wayne, who has returned to crime-fighting after a ten-year retirement.

The beginning of the film provides us with some background: in the years preceding the events of the film, Wayne gave up his second life after the death of his partner, Jason Todd. However, Gotham City is now being terrorized by a new group of criminals called the Mutants and Wayne's nemesis Two-Face. Wayne realizes he must reclaim his mantle to save Gotham.

The film mostly stays true to Miller's series, save for a few changes that allow it to stand out as an original film. Because it is split into two parts, events in the film are rearranged. Incidentally, the changes provide a greater dramatic effect and

work to the film's advantage. For example, in the original series, the Joker's awakening takes place shortly after the return of

the characters less one-dimensional, and would have allowed the film to be truer to Miller's series. For example, including Batman's monologues would have revealed many of the motives behind his actions and would also have allowed us to understand his emotional turmoil.

The action sequences, however, are an improvement from their comic book counterparts, as the moving image allows for more elaborate and impressive scenes. For example, Batman's battle with Superman, only a few pages long in book form, is extended to almost ten minutes of detailed, intense combat on screen. Although this duel is the highlight of the film, Batman's confrontations with Two-Face, the Mutant leader, and the Joker are no less exciting. This is due in part to the film's staying true to Miller's animation style, which consists of dark and faded colors to create a grim-looking setting. In addition, the animation is smooth and flexible, alternating between fast and slower pacing to suit the mood. The music, composed by Christopher Drake, complements the atmosphere of the darker, more chaotic setting.

The film's cast includes Peter Weller, famous for his role in "RoboCop," as the voice of Bruce Wayne, Ariel Winter as Wayne's new sidekick Carrie Kelley, Michael Emerson as the Joker, and Mark Valley as Superman. Each actor voices his or her respective character effectively, particularly Weller, who brings more bitterness and weariness to Batman than traditional interpretations have done. Emerson's portrayal of the Joker is reminiscent of Mark Hamill's in "Batman: The Animated Series," but is noticeably more sinister and far less co-

medic, and is appropriate for a more violent depiction of the character.

"Batman: The Dark Knight"

The action sequences are an improvement from their comic book counterparts, as the moving image allows for more elaborate and impressive scenes.

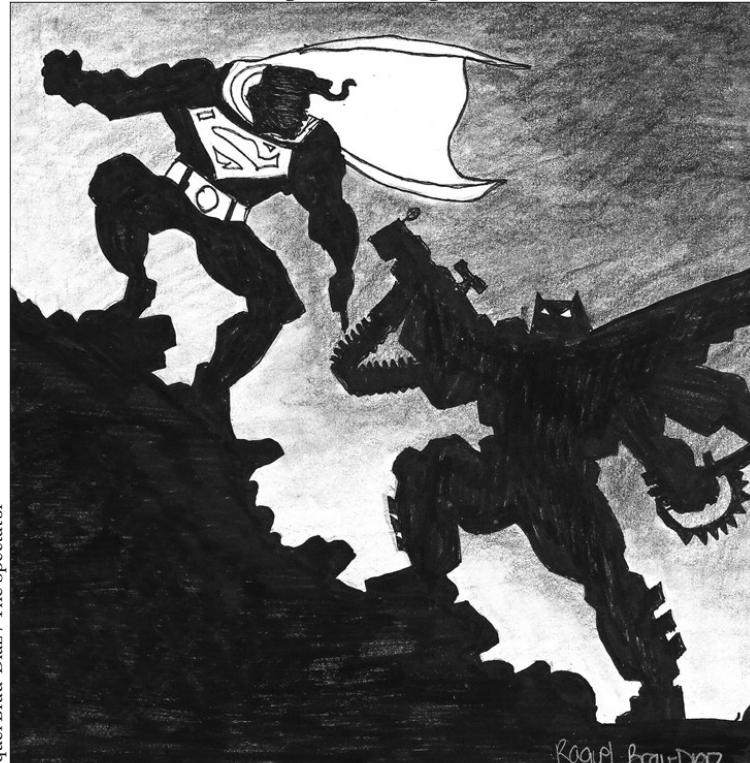
Two-Face. The film places this at the end of part one, after Batman's victory over the Mutants, providing a looming sense of dread to contrast with Batman's triumph and building up anticipation for part two. However, there is one change that works against the film—the omission of the characters' internal monologues. While some of their more notable lines are retained as dialogue, many others are not included. Being able to listen in on characters' thoughts with voiceovers could have clarified events and made

Though not without its flaws, "Batman: The Dark Knight Returns" keeps almost all of what made the miniseries so successful and improves upon many of those elements.

"Returns" is not only a welcome addition to the Batman series, but also an enjoyable film on its own. It provides an interpretation of Batman not seen before, with a more serious plot and more violent imagery and animation. Fans of the Dark Knight will not be disappointed by this new perspective on a classic series.

The film mostly stays true to Miller's series, save for a few changes that allow it to stand out as an original film.

the premise of the two-part direct-to-video animated feature "Batman: The Dark Knight Re-



Arts and Entertainment

Music

What Echoes Down the Concert Halls

By NICOLE SANCHEZ

Stand up, start moving, and let loose! Those were the words to live by in Carnegie Hall when mambo music started playing. Though it has historically passed its golden period, mambo still seemed to be in its prime when children and elderly alike got up out of their seats and started dancing to mambo's lively beat.

The establishment of mambo as a genre of music can be attributed to Ar-



Michele Lin / The Spectator

senio Rodriguez in the 1930s, and since then it has become an integral part of Cuban culture. Mambo celebrates the simple joy of living another day to love with lyrics like, "Beautiful bird of dawn! How wonderful the sun of dawn when we hear its song!" However, what we consider mambo is really only a variant of salsa. It was thus refreshing to hear Eguie Castrillo, his orchestra, and special guest Gilberto Santa Rosa revive the original in a family concert held in Carnegie Hall titled Mambo Mania! Deviating from the typical solemnity and controlled appreciation for a performance's artistry commonplace at Carnegie Hall, Mambo Mania! had everyone clapping, bouncing in their seats, and sometimes outright dancing.

The show kicked off with Tito Puente's "Para los Rumberos" as a harmony of trumpets and saxophones intertwined with the deep congas and bongos to create a lively, snazzy tune. Percussion played a prominent role in such mambo songs, with other instruments frequently taking the backseat to allow for solos. The pianist would bang out notes fiercely as the superfluous vocalists struggled to raise their voices above the clamor.

Other numbers like Roberto Yanes'

"Te Desafio" stood in contrast to the wild clapping and fiery dancing, adapting a much slower and more romantic character. Unlike the other vocalists, Santa Rosa's singing was the make-or-break element of these songs; his wide, rich timbre filled the stage, easily reaching the balcony seats. The audience swooned whenever he belted out the lyrics; even the clapping ceased. Dancers in bright reds and blacks spun in and out of the stage lights; their coordinated footwork and wild twirls helped hold the audience's interest by adding a dramatic visual element to the musical performance.

Both Castrillo and Santa Rosa's love for mambo can perhaps be attributed to their own pasts. Castrillo has been involved in music ever since he was a child growing up in Puerto Rico. With his family's support and inspiration from Tito Puente and Giovanni Hidalgo, Castrillo quickly mastered congas, bongos, and other percussion instruments, such as the bata drums. This enabled him to properly voice the rhythms of various Latin homelands like Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Trinidad. After finding much success in Puerto Rico, Castrillo moved to New York in 1993. Here he would give birth to the Eguie Castrillo

Orchestra, a contemporary 17-piece band that alludes to the days of the New York Palladium and the seemingly lost era of dance hall mambo or Latin jazz.

Gilberto Santa Rosa, also known as "El Caballero de la Salsa" (The Gentleman of Salsa), is a Puerto Rican band-leader and prominent salsa and bolero figure in Latin America. He too first discovered his interest in music as a schoolboy. In 1976, he made his recording debut as a backup singer with the Mario Ortiz Orchestra; soon afterwards he was recruited by La Grande Orchestra as the lead singer.

Castrillo and Santa Rosa's past experiences and passion for mambo are evident through their talented performance in Carnegie Hall. They successfully engaged the crowd and evoked a longing for the place where it all started. Cuba may be over a thousand miles away, but for those few moments, the dancing, singing, and laughter of the audience brought the artistry and excitement of the Cuban tradition to NYC. Although the concert may be over and Castrillo and Santa Rosa are long gone, the experiences of Latin America and the mambo music that tells those stories continue to echo down the now-silent concert halls.

Web

"Style" of a Different Kind

By NICOLE SANCHEZ

For many, Psy was the one who put South Korean culture on the international radar. But what people don't realize is that there's much more to the little tiger nation than a slightly overweight man with sunglasses. That's where Eatyourkimchi comes in.

Eatyourkimchi is a cultural video blog (vlog) run by Simon and Martina Stawski, a Canadian couple striving to make Eatyourkimchi the best unofficial guide to Korean life and culture. Though they currently run three YouTube channels, the majority of them, including their Wonderful Adventure Now Korea (WANK) and Food Adventure Program for Awesome People (FAPFAP) series, are uploaded on the channel simonandmartina. They also have a finished series titled Wonderful Treasure Find (WTF) dedicated to all the strange and quirky items they happened to find in Korea, such as robot love messengers.

The WANK and FAPFAP series are the Stawsks' efforts to show a deeper side of Korea that cannot be found in guidebooks. While some WANK episodes focus on famous landmarks, others are geared toward showing viewers differ-

ent insights of life in Korea, such as their video explaining different pastries commonly found in a Korean bakery. The FAPFAP videos explore the two sides of South Korea's culinary scene: the traditional sphere, encompassing delicacies as soondubu jjigae (soft tofu stew), and the foreign sphere, which consists of foods that typically have a Korean twist in it like sweet potato crust pizza.

The simonandmartinabonus channel is where the couple uploads their blooper footage and their Too Long; Didn't Read (TL;DR) segments, in which they answer viewers' general questions regarding Korean culture. Meanwhile, their Open the Happy channel is devoted to miscellaneous subjects like Martina's makeup tutorials.

Despite the wide span of topics the Stawsks cover in their other series, the Music Mondays series is where their magic is truly revealed. Armed with their wit, raunchy jokes, and a giant stuffed banana, the two try to balance an appropriate amount of fangirling with seriousness and silliness. What really sets them apart, though, is their adamant refusal to sugarcoat their opinions. While other reviewers merely hint at their more scathing opinions for fear of vicious fan at-

tacks, the Stawsks continue to put their most honest opinions out there for the world to see. If they think the dubstep break of one song ruins it, they'll say it outright. They complain about how awful pastel pants are on musicians, nitpick the "Engrish" in the songs, and freely admit to their own biases toward certain idols. Their blunt approach brings a fresh voice of reason and waves of intrigued viewers to the world of Korean music.

Their honesty doesn't only extend to negative reviews, though; it also results in true affection and more personal presentations of South Korea. They may be business partners, but first and foremost the Stawsks are a married couple unafraid to show their affection for each other on-camera. In addition, when answering questions for their TL;DR segment, they draw from their own experiences or gather information from friends to provide the most genuine answer possible. They go out of their way to show the different aspects of Korea to curious viewers, as is apparent in their TL;DR videos regarding the Korean LGBT community and racial perceptions in South Korea. The extra effort they put into the videos showcases both their dedication to their cause and viewers.



Simon and Martina Stawski started Eatyourkimchi in 2008 as a way to show their families in Canada that they were safe and happy in South Korea. In 2013, Eatyourkimchi has emerged as a booming business and source of educational enjoyment. As both their technical skills and their knowledge of the country grows, so does their audience and the relationship between them and their fans. Everything that they display in their videos, however, eventually bubbles down to the kitchen dance parties, extended movie sprees, and self-proclaimed awkward sense of humor that make up what truly is the essence of "Eatyourkimchi" style."

Film

I Ate Your Boyfriend's Brain, So I Think I Love You

By NINA WADE

Necrophilia. Hollywood, has it really come to this? Is this what happens when we allow "Twilight," "True Blood," and the like to succeed: the living and the dead locking lips? And yet, "Warm Bodies," directed by Jonathan Levine, is a clever and wholly adorable rom-com—even if the hero can't exactly take his love interest out for dinner.

"Warm Bodies" tells the story of R (Nicholas Hoult), a stunningly thoughtful zombie, and Julie (Teresa Palmer), the human girl he falls in love with after eating her boyfriend's brain and gaining his memories; she happens to be the daughter of the zombie resistance chief. To be honest, the weakest part of the film is its premise, simply because of its absurdity. There's dramatic slo-mo, zombie conversations consisting entirely of moaning, and ridiculously

self-aware inner monologues. And some clichés are a little too much. A scene that sees Julie on a balcony and R hiding in the bushes—can you say painfully obvious Romeo and Juliet reference? But once you accept its absurdity, you can't help but be won over.

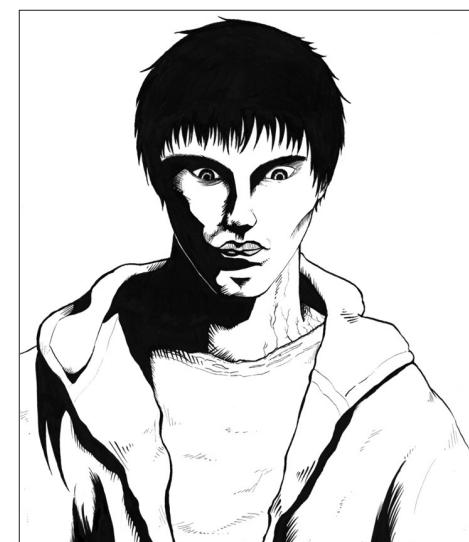
Hoult is the star by far, giving R (pardon the pun) heart, and, astonishingly, a personality. His home, an abandoned airplane, is filled with a collection of human items, including a record player and a large selection of vinyl. His inner monologues give us even more insight into his ennui-filled mind, and his apathy at being a zombie. Palmer is perfectly fine as Julie, but not particularly special. Her strongest scenes are in her first few days with R, when she goes from fearful confusion to unexpected friendship. It's a little bit like Stockholm Syndrome, but it feels genuine; R truly cares for her, draping a blanket over her when she sits

down and putting on music he hopes she'll enjoy.

Rob Corddry and Analeigh Tipton, as R and Julie's best friends, respectively, manage to steal their limited scenes. Corddry's character, M, is the second zombie whose heart begins to beat, and he helps R lead their fellow zombies to re-discover their humanity. He's a gifted physical actor, telling more with a shuffle and a grimace than with his words. Tipton, better known to many as the babysitter from "Crazy, Stupid, Love," here plays that same character with a side of kick-butt awesome. She's snarky and knows her way around a gun, as well as providing a much-needed voice of reason.

This movie is camp done right. It's silly and over-the-top, but has enough heart to ground it, and a cast that embraces its inanity with enthusiasm and aplomb. If rom-coms are too sappy for

you, then try one that spatters blood and gore between the kisses.



Bonny Truong / The Spectator

Humor

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

Intel Finalist Jamie Lee Solimano Creates Talking Fruit

By DENNIS NENOV

Senior Jamie Lee Solimano has been recognized as one of forty finalists in the prestigious Intel Science Talent Search Competition for her project, titled "The Application of Asseonoonecaresaboutinteldullary and Adenylyl Cyclase III Signaling in Intraflagellar Transport to Induce Cannabis indica to Produce Speaking

Fruit and to Show the Floccinwhocaresacation of Hepatintelisreallyboringstomies in Curing Pseudodonotdointeldism or Pneumoitisnotcoolkoniosis (commonly referred to as Funky Piriformis)." Solimano obtained several specimens of the Cannabis indica plant for her experiment from sophomore and renowned botanist Gordon Yang. "After months of hard work applying the con-

cepts I learned in [biology teacher Shangaza] George's Living Environment class, such as drawing Punnett squares, using crayons, and analyzing food chain diagrams, I managed to genetically engineer a Cannabis indica plant that could bear talking fruit as equally cynical, pessimistic, unethical, and socially introverted as Stuyvesant students," Jamie said.

continued on page 314

Stuyvesant Students Have Imaginary Girlfriends

By EAMON WOODS

Stuyvesant High School, while unable to establish a prestigious football program, does have a few similarities to the world of elite college football. For instance, both expect to receive high rankings from major newspapers every year, and both would love to see reform of the Bowl Championship Series. Yet the similarities continue: it has recently been found that many Stuyvesant students in fact have imaginary girlfriends, just like Notre Dame linebacker Manti Te'o.

"When I took a break from Pokémon to browse some online forums, I saw news of Manti Te'o's imaginary girlfriend," sophomore Dennis Nenov said. "While obviously my rigorous academic schedule makes having a real girlfriend out of the question, an imaginary girlfriend sounded like a perfect fit."

Various studies have been conducted to find the most popular activities Stuyvesant students do with their imaginary girlfriends. 47% of the students

interviewed said that homework was more enjoyable with an imaginary girlfriend, while 86% were gracious enough to take their imaginary girlfriends to dinner and a movie.

"My girlfriend loves to come over and watch "The Devil Wears Prada" with me," senior Timmy Levin said. "It's crazy how often she makes me watch that film."

Some fortunate students have even managed to develop relationships with two pretend women at the same time. "Physically, it's a major burden," senior and Wrestling City champion Matthew Moy said. "Luckily I've got the strength and speed to make it work." Moy admitted that his girlfriends occasionally become very upset that their relationship is not exclusive.

Imaginary girlfriends, however, do not come without a price. "I can't help feeling that Katie is trying to move our relationship along too quickly," said senior Ian Outhwaite. "I'm not looking for something that serious right now." Freshman Chris Grant added that, while he did enjoy some quiet times with his imaginary girlfriend, she often

became too controlling and did not allow him enough time to focus on his schoolwork. Conflicts between parents and their children over these rapidly arising romantic relationships are another source of trouble. A plethora of Stuyvesant parents drive their children quite far in pursuit of academic excellence and have equally meticulous plans for their romantic future. "My parents snuck into my room and read my diary entries about Helen. They were irate, as my arranged marriage is set to take place in only two months," junior Thomas Duda said. Other parents simply do not feel that their child's fake girlfriend is worthy of their brilliant young academic.

The good news is that even if things fall through with their girlfriends, the Stuyvesant students all have exciting futures to look forward to. "If Kayla turns out to be a troubled man with a really hard-to-spell name, at least I will still have my budding career as a linebacker," senior and football star Nathaniel Biggs said.

Why We Really Need Guns



By JEREMY KARSON and ROBERT MELAMED

Beloved civil rights speaker Martin Luther King Jr. once said, "I have a dream that one day everyone will own a gun."

Some people think guns represent danger and violence. I think they represent the ethos of 'Murica.

All over America, the liberal media has been fear-mongering over what they call "a growing epidemic of gun violence in America." What these socialists don't understand is that murder is the only way to uphold the truly American way of life.

Guns have always been a fine point of expression for most Americans. As it says in the Bi-

ble, "Ye shalt carry guns, and ye shalt bear them with pride." (Republicus 20:12). Furthermore, the Constitution, the omnipotent document on which world democracy is founded, clearly indicates that gun possession is not just legal but encouraged. Nearly all of the amendments say this.

Guns are a testament to our nation's glorious history. I grew up playing with my father's guns and I want my kids to have the same opportunity. Shooting small to mid-sized animals is important to the social and neurological development of a child. Detailed scientific research has been done in this field, and the numbers speak for themselves. For example, Wikipedia says that "children not exposed to gun-culture at an early age are much less likely to make civilian arrests." If that's not number-crunching evidence, I don't know what is.

Something most people don't realize is that guns increase lust in men. According to National Rifle Association CEO Wayne LaPierre, the top authority on all gun control issues, almost 50% of gun owners are forcing women to have sex with them daily. While some liberals call this rape, we are optimists and we look at the positive side of

this—at least it wasn't sodomy.

A huge misconception in society is that guns cause violence. I walk around equipped with my firearms every day and I have never shot anyone without a very good reason. But America doesn't just discriminate against gun-owners; it discriminates against guns themselves. Eliminating assault weapons would be like a modern equivalent of racism. Separate is not equal, and we cannot accept a world in which hunting rifles are accepted but assault rifles are not.

The very same government that is now trying to strip us of our freedom once used guns to settle its disputes. "Politicians" these days waste weeks at a time debating major bills or issues, when the argument could be quickly settled with a duel. These tactics were used 150 years ago, but died down when liberals complained that they were too afraid to die for their country. Alexander Hamilton was the last real politician.

Now, I urge you, communist America, don't take away my guns. Hunters, gangsters, and Dick Cheney form the backbone of American society. If you love America and you love Jesus, you will let us keep our beloved firearms. If not, we might just shoot you in the face.

Rocking Chair Selected as Big Sib Chair

By SHINDY KOO

The Big Sib Association has announced the final selections for the 2013-2014 Big Sib Chairs. These five people are selected for their friendliness, over-the-top enthusiasm, and ability to avoid hooking up with freshmen at the SING! after-party. One of the more controversial issues was the revolutionary decision to give a rocking chair a position as one of the Big Sib Chairs. Some freshmen have questioned the true intentions of the chair. Sophomore Jean Werner, one of these pessimists,

doubts that the rocking chair really wants to help freshmen adjust to their new environment. "It just wants something that looks good on its college application," Werner said.

However, Fiona Woods, a current Big Sib Chair, believes that the rocking chair is perfect for the job. "I have faith that Bertha—I mean, the rocking chair—will be a nurturing presence among the freshmen," Woods said, pulling a splinter out of her thigh. The rocking chair respectfully declined to comment.

continued on page 2718

Dear Ms. Leading

By SPENCER WEISS and BILL CHANG

Dear Ms. Leading,

My boyfriend broke up with me recently! Valentine's Day is coming up and he's seeing this bimbo named Brittany, and it's like we never had anything special. I want to sabotage this relationship, or maybe just get back at him for being such a jerk. Do you have any plans in mind?

Sincerely,
Helga Knipl

Dear Helga,

When you see him outside with his new fling, don't hesitate to throw around all the vulgarities you can think of. Bring up her promiscuity and how her parents never loved her, playful little things like that. And if she gets too close to you, give her a warning by throwing a right hook at her jaw. By the end of the week, she'll have departed and your ex will remember all those special times you had together.

Cheers,
Ms. Leading

Dear Ms. Leading,

I've been absolutely taken by this girl who's way out of my league for the longest time now but I've never had the nerve to ask her out. She doesn't send any signals and doesn't make for a good conversation partner, but I've talked to her sparsely about the weather and such. Our eyes have met from across our classroom, so you could say that it's gotten pretty intense recently. I'm going to ask her out on Valentine's Day.

Des Perrit

Dear Des,

It's Valentine's Day, man! This should be a breeze! First, buy her a heart shaped box of chocolates. Tell her that you think she needs to lose weight, so she should share them with her friends. Since it's Valentine's Day, get her a bouquet of roses. Don't trim the stems off, though—that's her responsibility and you don't want to prick yourself. Lastly, if Cupid's too distracted by the quality of your proposal to fire his arrows at

her, tell her that you're crazy about her and that you dream about her and you follow her home from school sometimes because you hate being away from her. It'll make you seem passionate, and girls dig that. If she doesn't fall for you, then forget her. I hear this girl Molly is nice, you should try her instead.

Best,
Ms. Leading

Dear Ms. Leading,

I'm a straight 'A' student and I got into LaGuardia for piano, clarinet, tap dance, and kazoo. I swim and play volleyball and participate in many crews in SophFrosh SING!, including step, band, and both genders of hip-hop. Unfortunately, I feel lacking in one respect. I have yet to find a companion for these long winter nights. I make for an exquisite sleep partner, as the fat in my stomach and hair on my chest, arms, and legs make me feel like a woolly blanket. I'm so irresistible, I think guys are a bit intimidated by me. How might I go about attracting a guy?

Sincerely,
Gori Lah

Dear Gori,

Do you wear long-sleeved clothing? If so, you should wear more revealing clothing to make everyone aware that you have a sweet bod. Put on a lot of makeup to cover any flaws you might have, since that's what all the popular girls do. Wear a TON of perfume, too—if a little bit smells good, how amazing is a lot of it going to smell? Cupid's got a ton of arrows with your name on it, so go out there, slugger. Get that special man!

Cheers,
Ms. Leading



Michelle Lin / The Spectator

Girls' Gymnastics**Felines Discover Their Inner Beasts**

By DAVID ROTHBLATT

Coming into the 2012-2013 season, similarities were abundant for the girls' gymnastics team—the same coach, the same practice schedule, and ultimately the same opponents.

However, a few obstacles did hinder the team from the very beginning, particularly the absence of last year's strongest competitors. "[Alumnus] Shelby Hochberg ('12), the captain last year, graduated, and Anna Ruta, currently a junior, had shoulder surgery so she was not going to be competing this season," senior and co-captain Alisa Emag said. "Both were consistently our highest scoring gymnasts."

Nevertheless, the Felines were motivated to work hard and fill in the gaps. "I was completely blown away by the progress I saw in the girls this year, especially the new girls," Emag said. "Usually during warm-up when we do certain skills, half of the girls require spotting to be able to successfully complete the skill. This year, within the first few weeks of practice, the girls were doing the skills on their own."

In competition, the Felines exhibited a fair balance of strengths and struggles. Stuyvesant excelled in floor exercise and vaulting, winning five and four out of

seven times respectively. On the other hand, the team struggled with balance beam and uneven bars, losing four times in both.

"We got the highest score, and that was our goal—to make it our best meet, and they did. So I was very, very pleased."
—Vasken Choubaralian, coach

"I remember the first couple meets, they were very nervous [and made] a lot of silly mistakes that we don't normally make,"

Choubaralian said. "We dramatically reduced those mistakes towards the end of the season and it mainly had to do with calming our nerves."

The Felines were able to grab the last spot in the city finals, entering the meet in eighth place and ultimately finishing the season at sixth in the city. When considering the season's difficulties, Choubaralian was proud of the result. "Sixth place is good. It's not as good as we've done in the past. Again we have to consider the fact that we lost a lot of talent and we have a lot of new talent that we had to train. So considering that, sixth place is very good," Choubaralian said. "[The finals] was our best meet of the season. We got the highest score, and that was our goal—to make it our best meet, and they did. So I was very, very pleased."

With another successful season in the books, the team is already looking forward to next year. "I know the girls are going to continue pushing themselves and working hard," Emag said. "The nerves will be less of an issue next year as well, as a lot of the girls have a year of competing already under their belts. I'm confident that the team will be doing [even] better."

A Player, a Teacher, a Coach*continued from page 24*

For two years, Blake attended Hudson Valley Community College, where he made the football team as a walk-on during his sophomore year. The next year, Blake transferred to the State University of New York at Cortland, where he played as a wide receiver for the Cortland Red Dragons for another two years. At the conclusion of his time with the Red Dragons, Blake received the Dragon Heart Award for being the heart and soul of his team. In fact, the camaraderie Blake built with his teammates and their successes still remain with him now. "It was great being part of a family with the team and knowing that you are part of a tradition, especially at my school," Blake said.

"Playing on a collegiate level was one of the most incredible experiences of my life," Blake said. "Competing at this level is a whole different ball game from high school because the competition is better, so you always need to find a way to get better daily." Blake, standing at only five feet six inches tall, is small when compared to the taller wide receivers, but he managed to overcome his disadvantage and continue to compete.

"The highlight of my foot-

ball career has to be the first college touchdown I caught," Blake said as he reminisced about his favorite moments on the field. Sports, especially football, became a passion for Blake—a passion that benefited the slightly unmotivated Peglegs earlier this year.

As he looked back on the previous semester, Blake emphasized his admiration for the students and athletes at Stuyvesant. "What I enjoy most about coaching both the Peglegs and the Rebels is that I feel that the athletes really are respectful and listen to the coaches," Blake said. "I just appreciate how much respect you athletes have towards coaches and that you really want to learn how to become great players. It makes my job so easy knowing that the players will listen attentively because you want to get better."

With the second term underway, Blake is no longer teaching at Stuyvesant. However, both he and those he has coached look forward to his potential return to Stuyvesant in the coming years.

"The best thing about coaching at Stuyvesant is the athletes," said Blake. "You guys are great kids and really are about being student-athletes."

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Sports

Girls' Basketball

Phoenix Blaze Through End of Regular Season



Megan Yip / The Spectator

Senior Sarah Duncan scores two points as junior Marie Frolich boxes out a defender from the School of the Future Bulldogs during a home game on Monday, February 4.

Phoenix Win Rematch Against Lady Bears

By ERIC MORGENSTERN and ANNIQUE WONG

Stuyvesant's girls' basketball team waited in the back room of Seward Park High School's gym, anticipating a competitive game on Wednesday, January 30. The Phoenix had faced the Seward Park Lady Bears earlier in the season, losing by a slim margin of two points, and looked to avoid making the same mistakes. Ultimately, history did not repeat itself, and the Phoenix won their rematch 54-47.

The first half of the game started off sloppily, as if reminiscent of their first match in November. The Phoenix forced many passes to teammates who were not open and attempted to score while in the paint despite being outnumbered by

the Lady Bears' defenders. As the game progressed, however, it seemed as if this forced playing was a strategy rather than a series of mistakes.

"We knew that if we went in for a shot they would try to block and foul us so we did plan on taking shots as much as possible," senior and co-captain Sarah Duncan said. "Some were semi-sloppy but we were trying to get some free throw shots and maybe foul some girls out."

By the half, the Phoenix were up 23-14. Despite their lead, coach Michelle Fleming knew that the team needed to make more foul shots, pushing her team to throw free throws during half-time. The second half of the game moved much quicker—both sides fouled less and engaged in more court-based action. Some of this action was instigated by Lady Bears coach Sonia Colon's en-

tering of Carol and Karen Yu, who scored 14 and 13 points respectively during their last encounter with the Phoenix. "[The Yu sisters] were definitely a threat," Sobota said. "But we stepped up the defense and we were more careful about our passes and shots."

Phoenix Set Fire to the School of the Future

By RAYYAN JOKHAI and LOUIS SUSSER

On their quest to close out the regular season on a high note, the Stuyvesant girls' basketball team comfortably blew out the School of the Future Bulldogs 45-14 on Monday, February 4.

Despite a rough start with sloppy offensive plays, the Phoenix were able to compensate with their relentless de-

fense on the other end of the court. After a first quarter timeout, the Phoenix came back strong and contested all of the opposing team's shots, allowing zero points during the second and third quarters. By putting up 23 points on offense during the Bulldogs' offensive drought, the Phoenix led by a margin of 33 points by the end of the first half.

With 56 total rebounds, Stuyvesant's work on the defensive end led to easy points and multiple stops. The team moved the ball around the court and found open players

for easy conversions. In total, the Phoenix had 15 assists, 9 of which came from sophomore and point guard Lauren Sobota.

The Phoenix also had many plays that only took a few passes to get the ball up court and score. In the third quarter, junior Marie Frolich stole the ball from an opposing player and made the long pass down court to junior Yenny Ng, who converted on the open layup. "We pushed the ball up [the] court a lot and [we] were better than the [other] team skill-wise, which we took advantage of," senior and co-captain Elektra Oates said.

During the final two minutes of the fourth quarter, the School of the Future gained a bit of momentum, scoring for the first time since the first quarter. Fortunately for the Phoenix, though, the lead they had built up was insurmountable for the Bulldogs.

Although the Phoenix won by a convincing margin of points, coach Michele Fleming still felt that they could improve upon certain areas into the future. "Press breakers are key and [we should] minimize the number of turnovers," Fleming said.

With hopes of being successful in the playoffs, the team will need to improve on these areas, such as slow starts, while continuing to capitalize and make the most of their strengths. "We had a rough start, but by the second half we pulled together as a team and picked it up," Sobota said.

Phoenix Emerge Victorious in Last Home Meet

By SAMANTHA LAU and ERIC MORGENSTERN

Stuyvesant's girls' basketball team hosted the last game of the regular season, beating out the High School of Fashion Industries Falcons 36-17 on Wednesday, February 6. The Phoenix went into the match with high expectations given their December victory over same team by a score of 49-16. "We had played this team before so we knew this wasn't going to be the toughest competition," senior and co-captain Elektra Oates said. "We were ready for a win."

Since this was the last home meet and regular season game, the seniors had the customary privilege of starting things off. However, the Phoenix struggled to get the ball in the basket dur-

ing the first quarter, closing it out with a score of 6-4.

In the second quarter, the Phoenix tried to penetrate the Falcon's defense, but did not succeed. Inevitably, they were

"We had played this team before so we knew this wasn't going to be the toughest competition. We were ready for a win."

—Elektra Oates, senior and co-captain

forced to settle for more difficult outside shots, but to no avail. The second quarter ended no better than the first, with the Phoenix leading by a slim 12-8 margin. After the half, substitutions were made in order to increase Stuyvesant's chances of winning a significant victory.

The Stuyvesant Phoenix came in strong in the second half as senior and co-captain Zambeta Tsapos led the team with five consecutive points. The energy escalated as the Phoenix built momentum, completed passes, and made numerous layups. Applying a box and one strategy on the Falcons' best shooter, the Phoenix ended the third quarter with a lead of 28-13.

In the last quarter, coach Michelle Fleming put all the seniors back into the game as a show of respect for their last regular game, closing it out with a satisfying 36-17. "We started off slow and couldn't really put the ball in the basket [or] make any shots, but we made a comeback in the second half and closed the game," Tsapos said.

Though their regular season has ended, the Phoenix now look forward to playoffs. "We now have to work on picking up the intensity level of defense and our offenses. However, I'm very proud of my seniors and how well they played," Fleming said.

Boys' Basketball

Rebels Split Their Last Two Games on Dalton's Buzzer Beater

continued from page 24

gin in the second, cutting the lead to 37-36 by halftime.

Upon coming out of the locker rooms, the Bears tightened their grip on the game once again by adapting to the Rebels' offensive strategy. "Their team caught onto our offense and cheated our screens," senior Thomas Cui said.

Additionally, the Rebels' de-

fense became porous. As the offense also began to miss open layups and turn the ball over to their opponents, the Rebels soon began to lose steam. Nevertheless, Fisher would not let his team falter and helped restore the Rebels' energy. Cui had a huge first half, scoring 18 points; when the Bears locked him down in the second half, his teammates stepped up. Hsuan scored a fast-break

"Watching the ball go in was incredible,"
—Matthew Dalton, junior

layup, Dalton made a basket off of a pick, and junior Nick Kalantzopoulos made a reverse layup, tightening the margin. The Rebels shifted the momentum even more by drawing a charge that disrupted the Bears' tempo and knocking down two technical foul shots. Finally, the comeback was completed by Dalton's heroics.

With the win, the Rebels demonstrated strong chemis-

try and the ability to stick together through a tough game for a well-earned victory. If the Rebels can keep up their ability to win close games and get contributions from a large number of players, they will be a force to be reckoned with. Still, they don't want to get ahead of themselves. "We're going to take it one game at a time," Dalton said.

Boys' Swimming**Pirates Reach City Championship, but Falter Twice Against Brooklyn Tech***continued from page 24*

rates kept the atmosphere light and cheered on those swimming, even though they knew it was impossible to win. Coach Peter Bologna put swimmers who hadn't swum yet on the last relay, not to give up but to accept reality, as the Pirates lost 58-40. "We knew that we couldn't win," Bologna said. "So I got kids in so they could have the playoff and finals experience, especially the seniors who never would get to swim with us again."

Choking up, seniors and co-captains Steven Chu and Brian Chen agreed that the senior Pirates have no regrets regarding their season. "The Pirates have been just a big part of my life," Chen said. "There would be such a high school career for me if it wasn't for the Pirates, and I couldn't ask for more."

Other seniors were also appreciative for their time on the team. "I think that the program that Coach [Bologna] has here is very comprehensive," Zhan said. "He's a great coach, and I thank him and respect him a lot for what he's done for me."

Jiang, who has broken a PSAL record for the 100-yard breaststroke—a record that hasn't been broken for many years—was also grateful for his experience with the Pirates. "I made a bunch of new friends that I know I will stay in touch with throughout college and hopefully beyond," Jiang said. "[I've been] inspired to start working harder and eventually reach a higher level of swimming."

The seniors all look to support their younger teammates through their loss, and have hope for upcoming years. "In no way was this a bad meet. [Brooklyn Tech] had the better swimmers, but that could always change, and next year, I expect our swimmers to swim over the summer and bring back home the trophy," Chu said. "To see them throw their towels and shed every tear just shows me that they care, and that's all I can ever ask for."

**19-Year Winning Streak
Broken as Brooklyn Tech Sets Tone for Championships**

By JASON LEE,
CHRISTOPHER KIM,
and ERIC MORGENSTERN

The Stuyvesant Pirates are rarely challenged by a team as adept and fast as they are. However, the situation reversed at the PSAL Swimming and Diving Championships on Sunday, February 10. Stuyvesant finished second out of 21 schools, losing to Brooklyn Tech 382.5 to 344. Though senior David Jiang broke the PSAL record for the 100-yard breaststroke with a time of 57.64 seconds, the remaining Pirates failed to finish first in any of the other twelve events.

A big reason for Stuyvesant's defeat rested upon the Brooklyn Tech Engineers' dominance in all three relays: the mixed 200-yard medley relay, the mixed 200-yard freestyle relay, and the mixed 400-yard freestyle relay. The Pirates failed to place even second in the 200-yard relays, and despite reaching second in the 400-yard relay, they were full seconds behind. However, Brooklyn Tech's skill did not come as a surprise for Physical Education teacher and boys' swimming coach Peter Bologna.

"We knew we had a slim chance to win because when we saw the numbers that Brooklyn Tech was putting up this year, they had some very talented swimmers," Bologna said.

The pressure of maintaining a 19-year winning streak has definitely taken its toll on the Pirates for the Championship meet on Thursday, February 14. "I'd say it caused more pressure on the returners than on the rookies at first, but eventually the rookies learned what being a defending champion meant and acted accordingly. So yes, there was some extra pressure because we have always been the best and people expect us to be on top," senior and co-captain Brian Chen said.

Despite the Pirates' second-place finish, they are still determined to bring home the team

championship against Brooklyn Tech at the City Championships. Even though he knows to expect the same ferocity from the Brooklyn Tech Engineers on Thursday, Bologna remains optimistic in ruining their chances at a sweep. "We can definitely improve on making sure that we do the little things correctly to try and upset them on Thursday," Bologna said.

Pirates Advance to City Championships
By GRACE LU
and ANNIQUE WONG

In their second playoff game, Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team proved their superiority over the Bronx High School of Science in a setting other than the academic. On Tuesday, February 5, the Pirates won first place in every event except the 400 freestyle relay against the Bronx Science Wolverines for a score of 59-34, propelling them to the Division A Championships against Brooklyn Tech on Saturday, February 9.

From the first blow of the horn, the Pirates charged straight for the finish line. The A team, composed of juniors Bryan Chu, Brandon Koo, and Kevin Lee and senior Edmund Zhan, captured first place, while the Pirates' B Team, made up of sophomores Andrew Guo, Victor Gaitour, Denis Valyuk, and Kevin Kan, snagged second. These wins, which were by margins of over 10 seconds, catapulted the Pirates ahead by nine points.

There were, however, some incredibly close events. The 200 freestyle was a very close win by freshman Peter Strbik, who beat out second place Wolverine Michael Knapp by 12 hundredths of a second. The 200 individual medley, swum by junior Glib Dolotov and freshman Daniel Gutman, followed in a similar fashion. Despite a scare from Wolverine Josef Sarabia during the last 25 yards, the Pirates ultimately came out victorious, with Dolotov and Gutman touching first and

second respectively. Though Dolotov placed first in both of his events, he wasn't completely content with the outcome of the heat. "I feel good [about winning], but it was really too close. I'll be focusing on the nitpicky details of swimming [before finals] by trying to improve turns, drilling as much as possible, and resting up," Dolotov said.

The Wolverines were not the only competitors at the pool with the Pirates, though. Occurring simultaneously was the other semifinal meet, between Brooklyn Technical High School and Staten Island Technical High School, in which the Brooklyn Tech Engineers clinched the ticket to the city championships with a score of 54-44. "It's going to be a very good meet at finals. I've done research, I knew that they [the Engineers] were a very fast team—a very talented team, and I hope that finals will be close."

Regardless of the outcome against the Brooklyn Tech Engineers, the Pirates look back on their season with pride. "This team, even when my co-captain and I leave, has the potential to be something much more than what any of the past years have been. No matter the outcome, I know my team will hold their heads up high walking out," senior and co-captain Steven Chu said.

Pirates Set Records in First Round Victory
By GRACE LU
and ANNIQUE WONG

Extending their 19-year streak as Division A champions, the Stuyvesant Pirates clinched this year's first playoff win against the Francis Lewis Patriots on Friday, February 1, propelling themselves into the second round with a score of 55-38 and new personal records.

Despite their ultimate victory, the Pirates were slow in building up their momentum. The 200-yard freestyle, which was the meet's second race, is

an event in which freshman Aaron Glas typically places first. However, even with a new personal best of 1:59.75, Glas fell to second place. The 200-yard freestyle was followed by another second-place finish in the 200-yard individual medley, which was swum for the first time by freshman Peter Strbik. Though these setbacks were initially costly, the Pirates were still able to tie with the Patriots at 25 points apiece by the fifth event, the 100-yard butterfly. From then on, the Pirates surged past the Patriots, clinching first and second place finishes in both the 100-yard and the 500-yard freestyles. With times of 5:43.42 and 5:47.51 from freshman Jonathan Liu and senior and co-captain Brian Chen respectively in the 500-yard freestyle, both were happy to have broken their personal records.

With the PSAL Division A Championships and City Championships looming around the corner, the Pirates are continuing to practice and improve their performances in races. Taking lessons from this particular meet against the Patriots, the Pirates have noted the importance of touching the wall faster at the conclusion of a race. In both the 200-yard freestyle and in the 100-yard butterfly, Glas and senior Edmund Zhan were both out-touched by merely 22 milliseconds.

Fully aware of the issues the Pirates have in the pool, Chen plans on having his teammates work on "turns, touching, and tapering to maximize our talents," he said.

Looking past even their next playoff game against the Bronx High School of Science, the Pirates have their eyes on maintaining their status as City Champions against Brooklyn Technical High School. "Tech's team is stacked this year," physical education teacher and coach Peter Bologna said. "There is always pressure to win because we're expected to win since we're Stuyvesant and we've done it numerous amounts of times."

Don't Let the Media Make Jordan-Kobe a Debate — It's Not*continued from page 24*

In this category, Jordan shot above 48% from the field in all but three of his 13 full seasons, an off-the-charts number for a guard, while Bryant has never exceeded 47% shooting in any of his 17 seasons. This staggering difference can be credited to the fact that Jordan could score in a much greater variety of ways than Bryant—he posted up much better and finished dunks and layups close to the rim better than any guard who has ever played.

You may say, "Well, nobody actually thinks that Kobe Bryant is better than Michael Jordan," but that is a surprisingly incorrect statement. In the aforementioned Sportscenter poll, 39% of fans voted for Bryant over Jordan. A major reason that these fans are mistaken about this is because the media regularly makes state-

ments in favor of Bryant that ignore actual evidence.

For example, former NBA on ESPN commentator Mark Jackson said several years ago: "Kobe Bryant, at the end of the day, will go down as the greatest basketball player that has ever lived. Kobe Bryant is a better ball-handler, a better shooter, and a better scorer [than Michael Jordan]." Jackson, like so many other basketball writers and analysts, makes these sorts of claims without actually looking at the facts, which clearly point to Jordan being the finer scorer and shooter.

I'm sure you have also heard time and time again that Bryant is the most clutch player in basketball history. However, in the last 24 seconds of playoff games with the score margin two points or less, he is seven for 27 in his career. Jordan was nine for 18. Additionally, ESPN.com writer Jemele Hill wrote in

a column: "Kobe can do everything Michael did, and even a few things Michael couldn't do. Kobe is just as good a defender. His killer instinct is just as pronounced." By simply watching Lakers' games, it shouldn't be hard to realize that Bryant's off-ball defense is flawed. In addition, Jordan is fifth all-time in steals per game and was even named Defensive Player of the Year in 1988 — an award Bryant never won.

Lastly, NBA analysts have a knack for overreacting to current feats and accomplishments, while forgetting completely about even more impressive performances in the past. For example, following game six of the 2010 Western Conference Finals, a game in which Bryant scored basket after basket in the fourth quarter to bring the Lakers to victory, NBA on TNT analyst Reggie Miller called Bryant "truly the

greatest player—the greatest closer [ever]," a statement with which his fellow analysts in the studio, Kenny Smith and Charles Barkley, concurred.

Most amazing about this particular case is that all three of those analysts were NBA players themselves whose careers overlapped with Jordan's. Did they forget that Bryant's 37 points in that game was a mere fraction of the 54 points that Jordan either scored or exceeded in five different playoff games during his career?

And now that Miami Heat superstar Lebron James is going through the greatest stretch of his career, scoring 30 points on 60% shooting over six straight games, many writers and analysts are speculating whether or not this is the best streak of games any player has ever played. Not to diminish Lebron in any way, but Jordan once recorded ten triple-dou-

bles in an eleven game span.

Why does the media feel the need to find a new "greatest basketball player of all-time" when the answer is so obvious? Because they feel the need to create stories. It's their job to cover sports stories, and when a story such as Michael Jordan's greatness gets old, they create one where none exists.

Basketball fans shouldn't fall into the trap of believing media statements that are poorly supported. Just because we're tired of hearing that Jordan is the greatest ever doesn't mean that he isn't. And with the passing of his 50th birthday last Sunday, there is no better time to clarify that nobody in the game today is as good as Michael Jordan, and nobody in the media can change that.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Basketball

Rebels Split Their Last Two Games on Dalton's Buzzer Beater

**Murry Bergtraum Bears 63,
Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels 48**
By ARI HATZIMEMOS

The Rebels went into the last game of the season with a 12-3 record and looked to end it on a high note going into the playoffs. However, having lost to the Murry Bergtraum Bears earlier in the season, they knew it was going to be a challenge. The result was similar on Monday, February 11, when a game filled with bad turnovers and defensive intensity led to yet another defeat from the Bears.

With the exception of a few missed layups, the first quarter went favorably for the Rebels, who led 10-8 by the end of the period. Through the second quarter, however, their expectations were quickly reversed with bad passes and sloppy dribbling afflicting nearly every play. During one particular moment, a Rebel pass was intercepted by an opponent who raced down the court and dunked it, one of many plays contributing to the Rebels' 24-15 halftime deficit. "Too many turnovers—we played sloppy and lazy," junior Matthew Dalton said.

The third quarter was once again filled with turnovers. However, there was an ad-

ditional problem: the Rebels could not get a rebound and lent Murry Bergtraum many second chance opportunities. "We couldn't control the pace of the game the way we have to with a team that's faster than us. We got caught up in the speed of their game," boys' basketball coach Philip Fisher said. The last play of the third quarter ended with a Rebel turnover and fast break points for Murry Bergtraum, resulting in a 41-22 score.

The fourth quarter, on the other hand, took a very different turn. The Rebels cut down on the turnovers and became more aggressive on offense, led by senior and co-captain Thomas Cui, who scored 17 points. By then, however, it was already too late. Though they scored a tremendous 26 points in the fourth quarter, they still lost 63-48.

Despite not ending the regular season in the way they intended, the Rebels now have several weeks to practice hard in order to capitalize in the upcoming playoffs.

**Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels 57,
Seward Park Campus Bears 54**

By JING LIN

The score was tied at 54-54.

With seven seconds left, the Rebels huddled around Coach Philip Fisher and listened intently. The road crowd was on its feet, screaming, filling the entire gymnasium with uncontrollable energy. Play resumed and junior Imtiaz Hssan drove to the basket, drawing two defenders with him. Hssan kicked the ball out to junior and co-captain Matthew Dalton with one second left on the clock. Dalton fired a desperate three-pointer as time ran out. The ball swished through the net, and the crowd went silent. "Watching the ball go in was incredible," Dalton said.

From the first quarter of the Rebels' game against the Seward Park Campus Bears on Wednesday, February 6, the high stakes were apparent. "Seward was 6-8 going into the game. If they beat us and another team they would be able to satisfy the 0.500 record they needed to secure a place in the playoffs," Fisher said.

The Rebels had to fight for every possession, using screens and ball movement to counteract the Bears' physical prowess and speed. Though ending the first quarter 14-20, the Rebels turned it around by a slim mar-

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Don't Let the Media Make Jordan-Kobe a Debate — It's Not

By LEV AKABAS

Who is the greatest scorer in NBA history: Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant? While the former Chicago Bulls icon and the current Los Angeles Lakers superstar played in different eras, the similarities are evident—both are 6'6" shooting guards who, despite their uncanny ability to put the ball in the basket, are perhaps more illustrious winners than they are scorers. To spark a debate, just this past December, the show Sportscenter launched a poll on its Facebook page asking fans to decide who the better scorer was, the results of which aired on television. Bryant had just reached the 30,000 career points plateau, a milestone that only five players in league history have reached, bringing to many people's attention just how close he is to catching Michael Jordan's 32,292 career points.

Despite Bryant's potential to surpass Jordan's career scoring total, that there was even a vote on this question is both a travesty and an insult to Jordan; it's a perfect demonstration of how the media zeroes in on meaningless, but seemingly impressive, numbers instead of looking at the whole picture. For starters, total career points is an insignificant statistic to use when comparing these two specific players because Bryant came

directly out of high school into the NBA, while Jordan played three years of college ball, essentially giving Bryant a head start in the scoring race. Furthermore, Jordan took two hiatuses from basketball, spending much of the 1994 and 1995 seasons playing minor league baseball and sitting out 1999, 2000, and 2001 after he retired for the second time before making a return.

Thus, it is not surprising that, when the number of games played is removed from consideration, Jordan's all-time record of 30.1 points per game is far superior to Bryant's 25.5. And that's not even taking into account the fact that Jordan played before the NBA implemented the hand-checking rule that is in place today, which prohibits defenders from placing their hands on an opposing perimeter player. Even more amazing than the actual numbers is that, with the exception of his rookie season and the two years after his return to the league at age 38, Jordan led the NBA in scoring every single season of his career. In contrast with Jordan's ten scoring titles, Bryant has led the league just twice.

Yet another often-overlooked statistic regarding scoring is shooting percentage, which is a measure of how efficiently a player scores.

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A Player, a Teacher, a Coach

By SAMUEL FUCHS

Though he came in as a replacement, he left as a motivational assistant coach, and physical education teacher. Known to some as coach and to others as mister, Laron Blake was a fresh new face for two of Stuyvesant's sports teams as well as several physical education classes during the fall semester.

"What got me into teaching was the fact that I always seemed to catch the attention of children and they always seemed to come to me to want to play," Blake said. After taking several teaching courses, Blake quickly found interest in the field and set his sights on teaching physical education. "I picked PE because I like to be active and I would like to express the importance of physical activity," Blake said.

As a student teacher studying for a degree in physical education, Blake was required to work alongside a school team. A colleague put him in touch with the coaching staff of the boys' junior varsity football team, which was in need of an assistant coach. Upon receiving the job, Blake quickly assimilated into the Peglegs and immediately gained the respect of his players.

"Coach Blake is a very understanding and open person, which makes him an awesome coach. He knows when to be serious or chill," sophomore



During the Fall 2012 semester, Laron Blake was the assistant coach of both the Stuyvesant Peglegs and Running Rebels.

and offensive lineman Akira Taniguchi said.

"Coach Blake was a huge motivation factor on the field and in physical education class. He would get you excited to play football and go over the fundamentals if you make a mistake," junior and offensive lineman Robert Melamed said.

Even as the football season came to a close, Blake did not have to say his goodbyes to Stuyvesant just yet, gaining another assistant coach position for the boys' basketball team, which is now playoff-bound.

Blake's ability to adapt to coaching was due in part to his own experience playing football on the collegiate level.

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Boys' Swimming

Pirates Reach City Championship, but Falter Twice Against Brooklyn Tech

Pirates Lose Championship for First Time in Three Years
By GRACE LU
and ANNIQUE WONG

With their first loss to Brooklyn Tech a week ago at Opens still fresh in their minds, the atmosphere at Lehman College was very tense for the Pirates. They had dominated PSAL swimming for three years, but never recalled such nervousness before a meet. Prior to the Pirates' reign, Brooklyn Tech had always held the championship title, but none of the current Pirates had been present at that time. After the graduation of 12 seniors and the loss of the Stuyvesant pool, this championship meet on Thursday, February 14 tested the Pirates' strength through such obstacles.

Seeded first by the PSAL bracket, it was clear that the Pirates expected a repeat of last year's title. Excitement, however, soon turned to frustration after a disappointing second place finish in the first event, the 200-yard medley relay. Though junior Brandon Koo's starting backstroke leg was one of the fastest he'd swum all season, it was not enough to keep the Pirates afloat.

After a string of third and fourth place finishes, Stuyvesant fell further behind Brooklyn Tech. Finally, senior David Jiang scored first in the 50-yard freestyle, but the win was tempered by junior Kevin Lee's last place finish—the Pirates failed to gain any leverage, and as



Senior David Jiang breaks records during the 100-yard breaststroke race at the PSAL Open Swimming & Diving Championships on Sunday, February 10.

they grew increasingly worried, Brooklyn Tech continued to power through. Even after junior Michael Lim claimed an automatic win and four points for Stuyvesant with the seven dives he performed, the Pirates were still behind 24-14.

Though anxious, the Pirates still hoped to make a break in the second half of the meet. This plan proved futile after more third and fourth place finishes and agonizingly close races, including the 100-yard butterfly. Senior Edmund Zhan seemed to be ahead at the 75-yard mark, but as he raced through the last five yards, the Brooklyn Tech swimmers finished strong into the wall, leaving Zhan out-touched in third place.

Their hopes diminished again as the swimmers' calm exteriors gave way to frustration,

especially at the end of the 500-yard freestyle, swam by freshman Aaron Glas and sophomore Andrew Guo. Despite setting new personal records by over five seconds, they finished second and fourth, respectively.

It was not until the 200-yard freestyle relay when some Pirates began to murmur that they would not win it all. After starting off behind, Jiang gave Lee a small lead, but Lee was still out-touched by .11 seconds, after which he pushed himself out of the water and slammed his towel into the bleachers. "Our work ethic is in the trash can. Only half the team showed up to practice," Lee said. "That relay was really winnable, but some of us just didn't show up."

Nearing the last event, the Pi-

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