



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

Volume CII No. 2

September 27, 2011

stuspectator.com

Kern's Job Secured



Kernen Levigion, school machinist.

Joann Lee / The Spectator

By MAYA AVERBUCH
with additional reporting by
EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

After nearly two weeks of negotiations, school machinist Kernen Levigion's job has been secured for this year. Levigion, who has served as Stuyvesant's all-purpose handy-

man since the school's move to its current location in 1992, was previously slated for dismissal on Friday, October 7.

On Monday, September 12, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) informed Principal Stanley Teitel of Levigion's impending dismissal, even though the school was still able to cover the full cost of his salary. Teitel and Assistant Principal Randi Damesek informed Levigion about the news the following morning before attempting to rectify the situation.

Initial negotiations were plagued with confusion. When asked about the reason for his removal in the days following the announcement, Levigion said, "The Department of Education has decided to eliminate my job title. Fourteen people are going to be losing their jobs, including myself."

The 13 other machinists employed by the DOE, he said, no longer worked in schools because they "only want to do what was in their union job description - repair and maintain shop equipment." As a result, they

were all relocated to a shop in Long Island City, Queens, from where they could service individual schools in need of repair.

"Since I was willing to cross union lines and do other things, that's what kept me here in this building," Levigion said. "But now since I'm the only person still in a school, they saw no sense in keeping the job title." In an attempt to cut costs, he said, the DOE chose to fire all of the NYC school machinists.

However, after further discussion with DOE representatives, administrators learned that this was not the actual cause of the notice of dismissal. In reality, the issue was caused by Levigion's union, New York City Local 246.

Two other New York City public schools—whose names Teitel was unable to provide—did not have sufficient funds to cover the salaries of their two permanent machinists. The union was going to replace Levigion with one of these unemployed permanent machinists, because he is con-

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City Council Cancels Teachers' School Supply Funds

By EUGENIA SANCHEZ

Teachers in the upcoming 2011-2012 school year will no longer be reimbursed for the money they spend for their classes, as a result of a controversial decision by the New York City Council to cancel Teacher's Choice. The program partially refunded teachers' supply purchases in order to encourage the use of enriching classroom materials.

On Wednesday, June 29, the city council met to discuss funding for the approaching school year. Though the final city budget managed to save teachers' jobs and give more money to schools, other minor cuts had to be made, due to a limited budget.

Among these cuts was the official cancellation of the Teacher's Choice program, established in the 1980s by the City Council in accordance with the United Federation of Teachers (UFT). For years, the program reimbursed teachers for their purchase of school supplies, up to a certain dollar limit. This limit, however, had steadily decreased in the past few years.

Last year, the program received 9.25 million dollars from the council's funds, and the year before that it received 13 million dollars. In the 2010-2011 school year, the City Council provided teachers with 110 dollars to spend on supplies, though at the program's peak, teachers received 220 dollars. Guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, laboratory specialists and school sec-

retaries received even less.

"This program supports the efforts of educators to enhance the learning experiences of students by maximizing their flexibility to purchase materials for use in their classroom," according to a New York City Department of Education official statement in 2010. Teachers could choose to receive an additional paycheck on a non-paycheck day (reimbursing them for the amount they spent) or receive a special debit card (with a value of their final spending amount). They were required to hand in all of their original receipts to supervisors for inspection.

Teacher's Choice allocations were typically distributed during the month of December. Teachers who still have not used their direct payment debit cards from last year will have to do so before December of this year to avoid expiration. Otherwise, the amount on the card will not be reimbursed. As in previous years, these debit cards lasted only one calendar year.

UFT representatives have said that they hope to bring Teacher's Choice back for the 2012-2013 school year. "We're obviously disappointed in the loss of Teacher's Choice," UFT President Michael Mulgrew said in an official statement posted on the UFT Web site. "Our members always dig into their own pockets for the supplies their students need; next year, while the city carries over a multi-billion dollar surpluses and millionaires get a tax break, teachers will have to dig even deeper."

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Let the Voice of the Students Be Heard

Students, it is time for you to help determine the path of your own education.



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Arts & Entertainment

Small Bookstores, Big Reads

Discover the unique alternatives to Barnes & Noble's standard fare.

9/11 Memorials Held in Tribeca

By SHARON CHO,
ELENA MILIN,
and JOHN YUEN

Hand in Hand

September 11. Each year, people remember the events of that day: the passenger jets crashing into the towers, the people jumping out of burning window frames, the crowds running away from the cloud of dust and debris that covered lower Manhattan, leaving nearly 3,000 dead.

People from across the country and around the world who lost relatives or friends on the day of the attacks gathered at Ground Zero this year on Sunday, September 11, to pay their respects. During the ceremony, the names of the attack victims were read, flags were placed on the bronze plaques surrounding the memorial pool, the World Trade Center American flag was presented, and President Barack Obama and former President George W. Bush gave speeches about the events of that day and how they have shaped the nation.

On a smaller scale, the events still resonate for people who were close to Ground Zero when the attacks occurred. On the weekend of September 11 this year, many gathered for commemorative events in the Tribeca area. Among them were Stuyvesant students, teachers, and alumni.

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Messages commemorating 9/11 were transcribed onto ribbons.

Abe Levitan / The Spectator

News

9/11 Memorials Held in Tribeca



Alumni gathered for a memorial in the Murray Kahn Theater on Sunday, September 11, 2011.

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of commemorate without it being about a lot of hype," she said.

Charles Riggs, who attended with Obama for America, the political group behind Obama's campaign, regretted that the event was not highly publicized. "My hope was that the concept and the event would be so startling, so striking, that people would start talking about it far and wide, beyond the confines of the NYC area, and [...] that [it] might spread nationally, or even internationally," he said. "I still think it's a neat idea, but I still wish that it would have been more successful than it was in terms of notice."

"I really don't enjoy seeing all the things that are going on on television, all the recall of the tragedy of those days, and all the pictures of the fallout from the planes," said Julia Ziercher, a member of the political group Tribeca for Change. "We all acknowledge that it was a terrible thing, but I wanted to put a positive spin in some way on the remembrance, so I thought [Hand in Hand] was a lovely thing to do."

After the event, participants were encouraged to write on the Wall of Remembrance, a wall full of mementos and messages to lost loved ones, which was donated to the National 9/11 Memorial after the event.

Ribbons of Hope

Twelve white mesh panels covered with colorful ribbons stood alongside a small stand overlooking the Hudson River. People who walked passed stopped to read the messages, such as "God Bless America" and "Peace to the world," written on the multitude of ribbons.

The panels, which each stood eight feet tall as symbols of the month of September, were part of Ribbons of Hope, an interactive community art project designed to commemorate the 10th anniversary of September 11. They were placed along the Gardens of Remembrance in Battery Park from Friday, September 9 to Monday, September 12, during which time anyone could affix ribbons—which were provided at the site for those who did not bring their own—to the panels.

The art project was organized by Prepare New York, a coalition of New-York-based interfaith organizations, such as Auburn, Intersections International, Odyssey Networks, and the Interfaith Center of New York. Prepare New York has been active in the commemoration of September 11 through annual events such as the 9/11 World Trade Center Memorial Floating Lanterns Ceremony, in which people gather by Pier 40 and write messages on traditional

Japanese lanterns that they float down the Hudson River.

"You get a visceral feel when you see all these messages. You feel hopeful and optimistic that, perhaps, for all of the arguing that we do as people over things as mundane as lunch, to serious topics of theology and politics, that somehow, we can all still find a way to join hands," said Joseph Parlagreco, founder of Filmworks Inc. and the designer of the installation. "That's what the ribbons do. They know no ethnicity, or no nation, or no political or religious standing. It's an interesting way to see how people are coming together, like a tapestry, like what we're doing here with these ribbons."

Ribbons that were donated by May Arts, a ribbon wholesaler, were also shipped out across the country in kits. People wrote wishes, prayers, and messages of hope on the ribbons and sent them back to be tied to the mesh of the panels.

Some messages were submitted online via the Web site of The Groundswell Movement, a community that generates open-source social action campaigns. Volunteers at the site transcribed the messages onto ribbons.

"People have all these bottled-up emotions, and I think as people talk about it, it gets easier. It's a step in the right direction. It also advocates for people from all over the world to get involved. It's not just focusing on the tragedy that happened in NYC. The main message is peace," Volunteer Coordinator Rotsen Rocha said.

Rocha was one of the many volunteers who devoted their time to Ribbons Of Hope. Other volunteers included members of ARISTA, Stuyvesant's chapter of the National Honor Society. They transcribed online messages onto ribbons, tied ribbons to the mesh panels, and helped to promote the event by giving out little cards that described the event to passerby.

"Because September 11 has been such a tragic and heart-breaking event, we don't want to forget about it, and so we leave messages of hope. I do think ARISTA is doing a good thing by helping people cope with the aftermath of such an emotional event," ARISTA events committee member and volunteer coordinator Helen Yue said.

"This project memorializes what happened on 9/11, which is really close to us as New Yorkers, and it is a way to contribute and give back to the community in New York City, in the country, and in the world," ARISTA volunteer Derek Li said. "We will always remember these people, and by these ribbons, I think it's just one way, one expression, a memorial to the people who lost their lives."

According to the Prepare

New York Web site, on Monday, September 12, the panels were blessed by an assembly of religious figures from different faiths and sent to their permanent New York City locations in Riverside Church, Central Synagogue, St. Peter's Church at Ground Zero, and the Masjid Al-Mamoor.

Alumni Remember Together

The Stuyvesant High School Classes of 2002-2005 were in school, close to Ground Zero, when Principal Stanley Teitel made the announcement that two planes had hit the Twin Towers. Ten years later, students who were in the school at the time came back to their alma mater to reflect on how the events of that day impacted the Stuyvesant community.

Over 300 alumni gathered for a memorial in the Murray Kahn Theater from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday, September 11, 2011.

The introductions began with the event organizers, including former Student Union President Jukay Hsu ('02), who welcomed the alumni back to Stuyvesant and reflected on his own memories of the attacks ten years ago.

Subsequently, the floor was opened up to other alumni, who signed up to speak on a sheet placed by the entrance of the theater. Many who shared their experiences from that day said they decided to speak on the spur of the moment. All of the speeches were streamed live for over 400 viewers on USTREAM. They were also archived on the Alumni Association's Web site for anyone to watch.

"It was heartwarming to see all the classes come back together after a decade, reminiscing and still looking in to the future," alumnus Elizabeth Wu ('03) said. "It speaks to the power of the Stuyvesant community and what we can achieve in a short amount of time."

Throughout the event, the attendees were invited to write messages on red, white, and blue ribbons. These ribbons will be tied together in the shape of the Tribeca Bridge. The organizers hope to donate the chain to the school when it is completed in the upcoming weeks.

"The year that September 11 happened, the SU made little ribbons for everybody and started handing them out," said Wu ('03), the designer of the project. "We were brainstorming, coming up with an image people can relate to, the bridge that we pass every day. It speaks about connecting what happened in the past and what we would like to achieve in the future."

Social studies teacher Matthew Polazzo was the only faculty member present at the event. "I thought [the event] really filled a need for the alumni," he said. "That particular event was theirs alone and it was nice to share the similar experiences."

Event coordinator Jukay Hsu was pleased with how the event turned out, considering the obstacles he encountered during the planning process.

"[The memorial ceremony was] successful, but I hope this isn't just one single event. [The alumni] all deeply tied and we want to be tied to current students as well. Hopefully we can form more partnerships and reinforce this community that we have," Hsu ('02) said. "We all have these different experiences but we all share this commonality. I am still learning about how September 11 impacted my life and I think many others are as well."

Annualized Teachers Eliminated

By THOMAS ZADROZNY

Stuyvesant will not have annualized teachers for all classes except Freshman Composition beginning in the spring semester of 2012. In the past, many teachers of English and Advanced Placement (AP) classes taught the same group of students for both the fall and the spring term. After consulting with the Student Leadership Team Principal Stanley Teitel chose to de-annualize all courses because of complaints from the programming office about having fewer choices for placing students in classes.

"Instead of having perhaps 10 periods to choose from, you only have two," Teitel said. Without annualized teachers, the programming office will be able to ease the strain of formulating every student program, a task that in recent terms has grown, due to the increasing number of students in Stuyvesant's incoming classes.

term courses. "We would have to start buddying them up, which wouldn't be good," Teitel said. "You could take Detective Fiction one term, but then you would have to take Creative Nonfiction, which you don't necessarily want to." Single term courses are unaffected at the moment, but they add to the difficulties of programming for the 3500 students at Stuyvesant.

The call for ending annualized teachers has had opposition from teachers who currently teach annualized courses.

"To start over with a subset of the students from the previous class and new students [from other teachers], I would find it more difficult to reference theorems that I had taught, because I would fear I had left the other students behind," math teacher Sebastian Stoenescu said.

While Stoenescu does not feel that a new teacher second term cuts into review time for the upcoming AP exams, he suggests that the period of adjustment for students is more difficult. AP Calculus AB and BC students have in previous years had the same teacher for both terms, allowing the teacher to get to know the student, and assist them in preparation for the AP exam in the spring.

Teachers have suggested that having the same teacher for both terms allows students to learn more effectively. "The students develop a relationship with the teacher, and can consult books that were already taught in the class. This allows them to make those comparisons so that they can say, 'Oh yeah, I remember that,'" Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said. "Without the annualized teachers, the students have to learn an entire new teacher's habits and methods, who haven't necessarily taught the same books."

"You don't lose the days of getting used to class routine," math teacher Devon Butler said.

While English teacher Rosa Mazzurco agrees that it is important to have a wide range of teachers, she fears that the individualized curricula will become less convenient. "I tend to teach more unique texts, and I won't be able to anymore," she said. "I can't reference Candide, which my students had read in March, but another class may have read in January."

Other teachers note benefits to the new teacher schedule. "It gives kids a chance to start afresh. If they perhaps don't click with their teachers, they have a second chance," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said.

Suri also suggested that more teachers gave students a better chance of finding a teacher who would write them a good college recommendation.

History Teacher Robert Sandler, whose AP American History class would be deannualized, suggests that due to the size of the school, it is already difficult to get to know a student, and only having one term with the student makes matters worse. "I'm not writing recommendations for a student I've only had for one term," he said.

While all teachers interviewed express sympathy for the programming department, they felt that the benefits of annualized teachers outweighed the change.

"I would offer my free time help out the programming office," Stoenescu said. "I'm definitely in favor of annualized teachers where it's possible."

"It gives kids a chance to start afresh. If they perhaps don't click with their teachers, they have a second chance."

—Jennifer
Suri, Assistant
Principal Social
Studies

Freshmen Composition will remain annualized because "this allows our English teachers to identify any issues a student might be having in their writing and be able to fix it," Teitel said. "It would be harder to catch these problems if the teachers couldn't have a full year."

Freshman Composition teacher Emily Moore stresses the tremendous benefits of annualized teachers. "It takes one semester to truly understand a student and his thinking," she said.

Some specialized courses, primarily junior and senior classes that depend on only one teacher will remain annualized. Such courses include AP Government and Politics and AP language courses.

"[Annualized teachers] definitely makes our job hard, but we're not going to say no," Program Chair and math teacher Sophia Liang said. Other than these exceptions, it will be difficult for the school to accommodate both annualized and deannualized teachers. "We can't have both. I've told the cabinet we can either de-annualize the entire school, or we can annualize the entire school," Teitel said.

Complete annualization of all courses would affect single

Two New Guidance and College Counselors Hired



Jeaurel Wilson, guidance counselor.



Casey Pedrick, guidance and college counselor.

**By MIRANDA LI
with additional reporting by
GEORGIANA YANG**

Guidance counselor Jeaurel Wilson and guidance and college counselor Casey Pedrick were hired by Stuyvesant over the summer and started working at the school before classes began. The guidance department decided to hire the new counselors after, in May, former guidance counselor Jay Biegelson announced that he would be retiring and guidance counselor Jennifer En-

In the morning, Pedrick works in the college office with Cleary, and in the afternoon, she works in the guidance office. "Students who want to visit with me as a guidance counselor can do so best in the afternoons, when I am in [my] office. Of course, if there is an emergency with a student or a student feels their guidance [question cannot be put off] until the afternoon, I will certainly make myself available. I am also very reachable via e-mail," Pedrick said.

The application process for the positions was long and involved multiple interviews and essays. "We looked for people who were former counselors, so there won't be as much training [...] to be done. We also gave them information about an imaginary student and asked them to write an SSR essay," Archie said.

There were three applicants who passed the initial application and received interviews with Archie. However, the third, whose name Archie declined to provide, did not write a satisfactory SSR essay. Both Archie and Principal Stanley Teitel found Pedrick and Wilson to be suited for their positions. "I interviewed both counselors with Ms. Archie, and both meet my standards. I'm sure they will do an excellent job in helping the students," Teitel said.

Both counselors have had a great deal of previous experience working as counselors in their respective schools. Pedrick was both the guidance and college counselor in the High School for Arts and Business in Corona, Queens. "Ms. Pedrick has a lot of experience organizing college trips and doing other college-related work, which is one of the reasons we chose her for the job," Archie said.

Due to the differences between the schools, Pedrick has had to adjust to her new job and environment. "Arts and Business only had 800 students total, so the population is on a different scale. [Stuyvesant] also offers many more classes, so the guidance process is more complicated but also interesting," she said.

In addition, she will have to adjust to handling the college applications of Stuyvesant students. "Previously, the majority of the [Arts and Business] students went to two- or four-year CUNYs. It will be a large shift from working with that to working with Stuyvesant students, who go across the nation to well-known schools. I also

know that some students here [will attend] colleges in other countries. It'll be an exciting experience for me," she said.

Wilson previously worked as a guidance counselor in Prospect Heights Campus in Brooklyn. In 2006, the Prospect Heights High School split into four smaller schools housed on the same campus. "There, even though I was officially a [guidance counselor], I did a little bit of everything related to administrative work, like programming, scheduling, and mandated meetings with students," Wilson said.

"Because each of the schools was so small, Ms. Wilson headed more than one department and worked closely with the principal. She has definitely had to adjust to how big Stuyvesant is," Archie said.

Wilson applied for a position as a guidance counselor at Stuyvesant because she wanted to have a more focused job. "There are quite a few differences between Stuyvesant and Prospect Heights. One of them is that at Stuyvesant, I can focus on the academic, social, and emotional issues that my students might have. Before, I had to do so many different [tasks]," she said.

Wilson was also looking for

"I know that I'm taking over for someone exceptional, and I'm determined to do just as well."
**—Jeaurel Wilson,
guidance counselor**

a different type of work setting. "Since I've already worked in very small schools, I wanted to have the same position in a different environment. [Stuyvesant] is a large school and suits me well," she said.

Though the two new employees had to learn quickly about Stuyvesant's programming system and graduation requirements, their transition has been fairly smooth. "In the college office, we're preparing for interviews and presentations. Next week, I'll be attending a national conference in New Orleans," Pedrick said. "The students and staff in the guidance and college offices have been helping me learn the class codes and the Stuy way."

Wilson has a bright outlook on her role in the school. "I know that I'm taking over for someone exceptional, and I'm determined to do just as well. I've started remembering many [students'] names and faces, and getting to know them better. I'm sure that as time goes by, I'll be able to guide students perfectly through their four-year experience at Stuyvesant," she said.

Students Win Freedom of Expression Contest

By GEORGIANA YANG

Whether for freedom of speech, racial justice, or equality for all, some of Stuyvesant's young adults are standing up and fighting for their rights. Speaking out against the stereotypes in society, seniors Liam Downs-Tepper, Rudi-Ann Miller, Gerald Nelson, Cleo Nevakivi-Callahan, and Claudia Yau won first place in New York Civil Liberties Union's (NYCLU) Freedom of Expression Contest.

The contest was open to young adults 21 years and under, who were asked to respond to the question, "What do you stand for?" in one of four categories: essay, multimedia, poetry, or artwork. They had until Monday, May 16, to submit their work.

"One of things that is nice about a contest like this is that it is limited to one specific topic," social studies teacher Linda Weissman said. "The New York Civil Liberties Union is focused on civil liberty, and freedom of expression is one small aspect of that."

The NYCLU is a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that defends and promotes the civil liberties and civil rights of all New Yorkers.

"It is a great idea for NYCLU to create a competition that is so open ended," Nevakivi-Callahan said. "People [could] talk about what they wanted to talk about with a lot of freedom for creative organizing."

Nelson won first place in the essay category with his essay titled "Meaning of Color," which discussed the development of what he calls "color consciousness," an implied negative attitude toward those with darker skin.

"Although it's absurd, historical circumstances in America have caused us to unconsciously associate color with class and other forms of worth," Nelson said in an e-mail interview. "Negative color perception was a lesser known kind of discrimination that I wanted people to understand, and the contest was a good opportunity to share my understanding of certain social and political issues that might help to increase the awareness of others."

In the category of artwork, Yau, Downs-Tepper, Miller and Callahan won first place with a collage centered on women's rights entitled, "We Stand for Not Letting Stereotypes Define Us."

"It was broken down into two sections," Downs-Tepper said. "In the center was the female gender symbol. The inside of the symbol contained positive signs of society, things that were empowering. Outside of that were negative signs: sexist jokes, quotes, pictures, [and] articles about terrible events [concerning women]."

"[Their success] is absolutely wonderful," Weissman said. "They did a great job. The essay was remarkable and the visual art was amazing."

Weissman informed the students in her Intel Social Science Research class about the contest only a week before the deadline, posing some difficulty for interested students. Though it was not required of them, six of her students decided to submit their work.

The students who submitted artwork decided to work together to contribute a variety of perspectives. "We didn't think that our poster looked that great, but we hoped that our message would get across to the judges," Miller said. "Visually, it was



Senior Gerald Nelson won first place with his essay titled "Meaning of Color" in the essay category of the New York Civil Liberties Union's Freedom of Expression contest.

all over the place because we were four people with different ideas working on the same thing, but, in the end, it actually worked because we won."

Weissman, the students' Intel teacher at the time, aided them with suggestions, critiques, and supplies.

"Ms. Weissman was extremely supportive of our participation in all of the contests that we entered," Yau said in an e-mail interview. "She was immeasurably helpful by giving us a lot of useful advice, [such as] how practical our project idea was, whether the message came through well, [and] essay feedback."

Approximately 300 young adults entered the contest. First prize winners received \$500; second prize winners, \$200; and third prize winners, \$75. The group containing Yau, Downs-Tepper, Miller and Nevakivi-Callahan split the first prize.

"[This] isn't surprising because they are very talented and they have a fabulous teacher," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said.

The winners and Weissman were invited to attend NYCLU's annual Broadway Stands Up for Freedom! Benefit concert at the Skirball Center for the Performing Arts at New York University on Monday, July 25. The performance included Tony winner Nikki James from "The Book of Mormon" and Tony nominee Daphne Rubin-Vega from "Rent," along with other actors who sang, danced, and performed stand-up comedy.

Winners also attended a creative thought process workshop hosted by a NYCLU counselor. "The [NYCLU] counselor was incredible," Downs-Tepper said. "We did this one writing exercise where we wrote a line stating whatever was on our minds, folded it down, and passed it to every person along the circle. At the end, we unfolded it to read the poem that had been created."

Through their work and the subsequent workshop, the winners say they gained a new perspective on the value of freedom of expression. "My goals are simply to continue finding forums to express my ideas and opinions and to continue expanding my knowledge and understanding so they I may have worthwhile ideas and feelings to share with people," Nelson said.



(left to right) Seniors Claudia Yau, Cleo Nevakivi-Callahan, Liam Downs-Tepper, and Rudi-Ann Miller won first place with their collage titled "We Stand for Not Letting Stereotypes Define Us" in the artwork category of the New York Civil Liberties Union's Freedom of Expression contest.

News

Health Curriculum Unaffected by New Mandate



Health teacher Zhi Yuan Fang instructs her sixth period class.

By LINDSAY BU

Beginning this school year, New York City public middle and high school students will be mandated to take sex education classes for the first time in nearly two decades. The city's new decree goes beyond the state's basic requirement for middle and high school students to take one semester of health education classes; public schools must now teach a semester of sex education in sixth or seventh grade, and then again in ninth or tenth grade.

According to an article published in The New York Times, the city's Chancellor, Dennis M. Walcott, said, "We have a responsibility to provide a variety of options to support our students, and sex education is one of them."

"Having mandatory sex education will ensure that everyone will be more knowledgeable about matters that may affect their decisions in the future."
—Ezra Louvis, junior

Announced last week, the new requirement is part of the Bloomberg administration's broader plan to improve the lives of minorities living in the inner city—who, according to city statistics, are far more likely to have teenage pregnancies and contract sexually transmitted diseases than their white counterparts. This \$130 million initiative also encompasses a

number of other public health efforts, such as the mayor's push to improve unhealthy diets and reduce the intake of excess salt and sugary sodas at schools.

The new mandate suggests for schools to use out-of-the-box lessons sets, such as HealthSmart and Reducing the Risk. The curriculum will also include lessons on how to use a condom and the appropriate age for sexual activity.

As of 2004, all New York City public high school students are mandated to take one semester of daily health education in order to graduate, which includes HIV/AIDS education, general Health education, and sex education. Stuyvesant students take this course during their junior year.

"At Stuyvesant, we cover the topic in two ways: in living environment we cover human reproduction in extensive detail, and in health it is discussed in a different way just as extensively," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "Sure, there is a state curriculum that is subject to change, but that wouldn't necessarily change what we do."

There will be no separate sex education course since it is already integrated into the Health curriculum.

"I don't think it will affect Stuyvesant students too much," health teacher Zhi Yuan Fang said. "Health classes taught here have always covered fundamental sex education topics, and there really isn't much more to teach."

Students seemed to have different opinions on the soon-to-be implemented classes.

"I don't think it'll be all that useful," sophomore Mason Sansonia said. "It's just teaching what people already know, and the fact that it's mandatory will probably just annoy some students."

On the other hand, junior Ezra Louvis seemed to think that such classes would be beneficial. "I don't think there can be any harm done. Having mandatory sex education will ensure that everyone will be more knowledgeable about matters that may affect their decisions in the future," he said.

Teitel trusts that the health teachers will handle the matter appropriately. "Unlike most schools, we have dedicated teachers who are licensed to teach health," he said. "They're doing a fine job at the moment."

Kern's Job Secured

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sidered a provisional machinist.

"It took us a while to get this information. As we began to ask more specific questions we began to learn that it wasn't a large number. It was a smaller number that had to be dealt with. It was only three people," Teitel said.

Eventually, after Damesek obtained the names of the two schools that had formerly employed the permanent machinists, the DOE, the union, and the schools were able to reach an agreement. Several schools will cover the salary of the two permanent machinists, and "as long as those other two have a job, we can keep Kern," Teitel said.

In the days following the announcement that Levigion would have to leave the school, members of the Stuyvesant community came out in support of him. According to Levigion, Damesek received calls from Stuyvesant alumni from across the country asking what they could do to help and students organized various petitions, but Damesek

asked that the uproar be quelled until after further negotiations.

Senior Briana Byron organized a petition to save Levigion's job on Thursday, September 15. She taped a long sheet of white paper on the wall near the Senior Bar on which students wrote their name, ID number, and signature under the heading "Save Kern."

Senior Stacy Chun, who was the first to sign the petition, said, "Nobody can replace him. It seems like he has a minor role because he randomly pops up everywhere, but he is really the glue that holds this school together."

The petition garnered nearly 600 signatures by the end of the school day, when it was removed at the administration's request.

Byron, who also created a Facebook event page called "Keep Kern" on which 122 students posted testimonials about the importance of Levigion's presence in the school, said, "Kern goes above and beyond a machinist's duties. He helps with SING!, the theater, Wi-Fi, escalators, the SHSAT, any-

thing." The page also shared the link to an online petition, "Keep Kern for Alums and Absentees," which was signed by 608 people, most of whom included testimonials as well.

Levigion said that, given the efforts of administrators and the support of students, he had been hopeful all along. "The other day I had to buy bus tickets, and I bought a 30-trip bus ticket, and that actually would have gone through the middle of the following week past when I was supposed to be laid off. That was how optimistic I was," he said.

He posted signs in the mailroom and near the Senior Bar thanking everyone for their support, and he plans on sitting down to read all the names on the paper petition, which is stored in his office.

Members of the Stuyvesant community expressed their joy at the news. "I'm relieved and happy because with Kern, the school can function the way it should and I hope they'll keep him around so it will in the future," Byron said.



Two students sign the "Save Kern" petition located near the Senior Bar.

City Council Cancels Teachers' School Supply Funds

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said. "However, I don't see this changing what we do in the Music Department. Our spending goes toward buying new instruments or restoring them, and a hundred bucks doesn't even begin to cover that." The Music Department currently collects 40 dollars from every student in band and chorus in order to cover the cost of sheet music, instruments, repairs, and concert costs—completely independent of Teacher's Choice.

The PA and AA also provide financial aid to the department. Other department teachers used the funding to cover smaller costs. "It was like a salary supplement," said biology teacher Dr. Maria Nedwidek, who used the additional funds to purchase ink cartridges, red pens, index cards, demonstration equipment, a scanner, and books. "We could only get reimbursed for true school related or instructional expenses and must have saved receipts and filled out a report to account

for the expenses [...]. But fortunately the Bio Department has lots of materials and models, and I still have a kitchen, so we are still good for demos."

Biology teacher Dr. Hemal Pathak is not troubled by the change. "The loss of Teacher's Choice money wasn't that significant for me personally, but that's only because it never came close to covering the costs of the equipment I use. One-hundred-ten dollars is a very small fraction of the cost of the computers, projectors, and remote controls that I've been using in my classes for the past couple of years," Pathak said.

"Dr. Pathak's props made his class really fun," said sophomore Stanca Iacob, who had Dr. Pathak both terms of her freshman year. "They really enriched our experience in the classroom. We looked forward to using the controls and the buzzers, and it gave us an incentive to do better. It's a shame teachers are not getting any money to use these kinds of things anymore."

However, teachers are still

optimistic about the quality of education they can offer. "There's not much we can do about the cuts," Dr. Nedwidek said. "We are lucky to be employed at a school like Stuyvesant, where we can still have meaningful impacts on students with our innovative, out-of-the-kitchen demonstrations of complex concepts."

Despite the end of Teacher's Choice, the City Council was able to restore more than 100 million dollars to schools, childcare, libraries, firehouses, and other city institutions, using 52 million dollars of its own funds to save teachers' jobs.

"I am certainly not happy about the cancellation of Teacher's Choice," Principal Stanley Teitel said in an e-mail interview. "But if it saved teaching positions, then it was the proper move. I am confident this will not alter what Stuyvesant teachers bring into the classroom, every one of them is a professional, and will do the right thing for their students."

From the Archives



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper
www.styspectator.org

*"The pulse
of the
student
body."*

Volume XCI No. 5

December 13, 2001

To The Stuyvesant Community

Class Jolted by '93 Bombing Reunites

By JENNY LIN

It was sixth period on February 26, 1993, when the entire school heard and felt the explosion. Shocks traveled virtually unabsorbed through an undeveloped Battery Park City, shaking the windows of Stuyvesant and other nearby buildings. Stuy's path to the World Trade Center was direct and separated by only a popular grass field known to the students as the grassy knoll.

Within minutes, helicopters and ambulances arrived on the knoll, drawing Esti Iturralde away from her English test, and towards the window.

During seventh period lunch that day eight years ago, a curious Eugene Weber was able to walk with his friend Seth Harding towards the World Trade Center. Weber said, "We just stood there and saw all the people streaming out." Afterwards, the two returned back to school and finished off a full, normal day of instruction.

Terrorism close to home was all too familiar to the class of 1996, the first grade to spend all four years in the newly completed Chambers Street location. On November 24, 2001 more than 200 Stuyvesant alumni from the class of 1996, including Iturralde, Weber, and Harding, congregated for their fifth reunion. In addition to catching up with friends and reminiscing, the alumni also reflected on the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 1993. And due to the September 11 incident this year, the reunion was more poignant than usual.

Organized by newly elected Alumni Board member Andy Woo, this was the class's first official gathering since their graduation.

The '96 graduates recalled that as the day in 1993 progressed, the administration offered little explanation of what had happened. Many people initially suspected it was a generator explosion. Others suspected it was something else. "My English teacher told us that it was lightning," said Iturralde. "But I thought, how can there be lightning when it's snowing outside?"

The security precautions

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Senior Mira Rapp-Hooper carrying the American flag at the December 11 Flag Ceremony in Wagner Park to mark the opening of the Gardens of Remembrance by Wagner Park.

By ABIGAIL DEUTSCH
and LAURA KRUG

"A through Lebanon on the right hand side! Zimbabwe through Lithuania, you're on the left."

These were the instructions that Coordinator of Student Affairs Amy Katz gave to the two lines of flag-bearing Stuyvesant students assembled near the north entrance of the lobby on the morning of December 11. The students then marched in the dedication ceremony for the

redecorated gardens and benches in Battery Park City. Each of the 82 flags represented a country that had lost citizens in the September 11 attacks.

Stuyvesant kicked off the ceremony in Wagner Park, presenting the flags and then planting them in a long line surrounding a podium situated on the Hudson River. "Ode to Joy" played softly in the background and somewhere a church bell chimed. The wind flared up and buffeted the flags as several speakers, including Mayor

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Special Ed. Deals with Double Tragedy

By SAMANTHA SILVERBERG

Two months after the World Trade Center disaster, the special education school housed in Stuyvesant faced another tragedy when student Benjamin Devon died on November 13 after major back surgery, according to coordinator Neil Coffina. He was 19 years old.

Devon was the most severely challenged student in the program. The students closest to him—his home-room, which travels together from class to class—is the most challenged group, both cognitively and physically.

Parents and staff from the program attended Devon's funeral on November 15, and Bruce Herman, their guidance counselor, was in class the next day.

"The guidance supervisor and I went to classes and talked about Ben," said Herman. "We tried to celebrate his life—shared thoughts, feelings and memories of Ben. I think it was very helpful for both students and staff."

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Controversy Over Honor Code Policy

By NANDITA GARUD
With additional reporting by Laura Krug

Controversy rose over the issue of honor policies as the Student Union presented the school community on December 6 with an honor code that it had recently drafted—after such a policy had already been created following a year's work by the Academic Honesty Committee, headed by English teacher Walter Gern.

Principal Stanley Teitel said that only one of these honor codes will go into effect and that "most likely, the overwhelming portion of Mr. Gern's policy will be implemented" for the spring semester. He added, however, that the AHC's policy leaves several areas that could be

Musical's *Guys and Dolls* Have a Lot of Growing Up to Do



William B. Miles, Alex Pearlman, and Eugene Oh played Nicely Nicely Johnson, Nathan Detroit, and Benny Southstreet in *Guys and Dolls* on Friday, December 7.

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Stuyvesant Theater Community (STC), provides the fog machine during SING! and can fix nearly everything.

"His job description is really whatever we need him to do," Teitel said. "He does all kinds of things."

According to Levigion, a machinist is "supposed to repair and maintain shop equipment," he said. But what he does in a single day stretches far beyond that.

"He's our jack-of-all-trades," technology services secretary Angela Figliolo said, who radios him on a daily basis. "He knows everything mechanical, amongst other things. All of the teachers and I are always calling him."

His parents certainly named him appropriately—coincidentally, for someone who will come at one's best. "Kerneth is Celtic and means 'foot soldier,'" said Levigion, who was born and raised in New Jersey. In high

school, he was interested in electronics and participated in track and field, not committing himself to any one field of work—just as his title requires of him today. "My high school experience was pretty boring compared to this place," he said. He moved on to restore antique cars.

Levigion started out as an inventory consultant at Stuyvesant in 1992, the same year the school moved into its new building. The job was supposed to be temporary. But then-Assistant Principal Murray Kahn decided to hire him as the school's audio-visual technician in light of Levigion's knowledge of the building and of mechanics.

"I like being able to take things apart, see how they work and then being able to fix them," Levigion said. "Also, riding dollies [wheeled platforms used to move heavy objects] down the hallways isn't bad either."

Levigion deals with a variety of mishaps and problems, ranging from fixing the photocopier in the nurse's office to repairing the public address system. Since so many people in the school community rely on him for a variety of things, Levigion does not have the luxury of doing things on his own time.

"I'm usually pressed for time when I'm working on things. The way I deal with this is priority, what's most important at the time," Levigion said. "When I was in the middle of working on the tract lighting when the voicemail computer crashed, and I had to drop everything in order to work on that."

Even if he has to deal with the pressures of a demanding job, Levigion is passionate about his work. According to Levigion, his favorite part of the job is "the versatility," he said. "You're never sure for one day to the next what

you're going to do. That I enjoy more than anything else."

Despite his mysterious reputation, students involved in Stuyvesant theater have come to know him well. "Kern is often misunderstood," junior and STC lighting director Danielle Blackman said. "People think he's mean. But because he's responsible for the equipment and things he needs to be careful. Also, he's one of the faculty members that interacts a lot with students, and he's able to be closer to you than a teacher."

Stuyvesant—as a building and a school—could not function without Levigion's helping hand. "I don't know how the school would survive without him," Figliolo said.

From the Archives:
Reprinted from
the January 2008 issue

'93 Class Reunites

continued from page 1

following the '93 attack weren't nearly as strict as they have been in the past few months. After the bombing, student activities weren't restricted and all were allowed out for lunch.

Afterwards, the class resumed its usual routine, which at the time included sliding down Stuy's escalators.

Being the first class to use Stuy's new building, the class of '96 was able to enjoy luxuries never again offered to students. Before the administration realized the safety hazard, students often glided down the smooth metallic ramps between the escalator handles. Amanda Estrine said, "Sliding down from 9-7 every day was the highlight of my freshman year." This fun, however, didn't last very long and the circular safety bumps were installed before they returned as sophomores.

Although much has not changed since Stuy moved into its new home, the grassy knoll, a once popular hangout spot, and a refuge for midday class cutters, was eventually paved over for P.S./I.S. 89 as well as other surrounding buildings. Most of the other traditions practiced by the class of '96, including perching on the senior bar, have survived.

Aside from the occasional somber reflection, the atmosphere at the reunion was generally cheerful. Background music played as old friends chatted over fruit daiquiris about their years at Stuy.

Iturralde said, "In '93, I imagined what kind of explosion would make the Twin Towers fall... and when it happened, it really brought me back."

Reunion funds scholarship for Stuy senior

Many alumni flew in, from as far away as Wyoming, to revisit their high school classmates as well as the battered New York City. Instead of having the party hosted at the World Financial Center, where it was planned, the alumni were packed into the third floor atrium of South Street Seaport's Pier 17.

To the original door price of \$35, an additional minimum of \$5 was tagged on per person to be given to charity. Much of the thousands of dollars collected that night will be contributed to a scholarship being established for Stuyvesant senior Chaz Clark, whose lost his father during the World Trade Center attack.

Humor

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

Big Sib Little Sib Dance Descends Into Incestuous Chaos



Mark Zhang / The Spectator

Students at the Big Sib Little Sib Dance.

By JAMES FRIER
and WILSON STAMM

Although Stuyvesant's annual Big Sib Little Sib Dance had been intended to be a "fun, innocent occasion for Stuyvesant freshmen and their Big Sibs to get to know each other," this year's dance, held on Friday, September 16, degraded into a chaotic and sinful debacle from which the Stuyvesant community is still recovering.

The dance began at around 6:00 PM in its usual fashion, with students awkwardly standing in circles and listlessly wandering around, looking for someone they knew. However, once the music, provided by amateur DJ

and junior James Kogan, started to play, the mood of the dance began to change.

"I was completely overcome by the music," junior and big sib Nick Miller said. "It was if I had been transported from the Stuyvesant lobby to a hedonistic paradise, like a rave, or video production class."

The sensuality of the music soon even overcame the brotherly bond between Little and Big Sibs. "I stopped seeing my Little Sibs as siblings and started seeing them as targets for my advances," a senior, who wished to remain anonymous, said. "I can't believe I let myself violate those whom I was supposed to be protecting and

guiding."

Although by 9:00 PM most attendees of the dance were acting in a mad frenzy, a few students did try to seek escape from the mass of writhing, tangled limbs that had formed on the lobby floor. "I had no idea that this is what high school parties would be like," freshman Mohammed Choudhury said. "I didn't think I was ready to partake in something like that, so I decided to go tell [dance chaperone Eric] Wisotsky what was going on."

As soon as the authorities were notified, the lights were put on, the music stopped, and everyone was asked to leave. "This is such bad timing," se-

nior and Big Sib Chair Brendan Collins said. "I was just about to go mack on some more freshmen."

Disciplinary action was taken against a couple of students caught "engaging in inappropriate behavior" at the dance, but the overall attitude of the Stuyvesant administration towards the events of the dance was one of indifference. "Look, with Stuyvesant's intimate ambiance, who can blame them for getting a little too friendly with the freshmen," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "I know from experience, if you put a bunch of kids in that lobby, anything can happen."

New Dress Code Leads to Sharp Decline in Student Performance

By MUKI BARKAN

According to a recent Quinnipiac University study on school uniforms and dress codes, the recently implemented dress code at Stuyvesant may have accomplished the opposite of what it was intended to achieve. The study, released on Tuesday, September 13, has shown that school uniforms, dress codes, and other "creative impositions on students garment choice" often result in discomfort, student unrest, and a decrease in test scores. The findings come on the heels of Stuyvesant's new dress code implementation, raising questions about its effectiveness.

The study claims that test results decreased by two percent, on average, when students were subject to minor impositions, such as having

to wear shirts long enough to cover their entire upper bodies. When students were subject to stricter rules, such as being required to wear pants to school, as opposed to more revealing "short-shorts," students' scores plummeted by 3.5 percent. The study tested many schools around the city, using Beacon High School, a notoriously promiscuous school, as a baseline control group.

Stuyvesant student scores show a statistically significant drop compared to previous levels. When asked about the study, Principal Stanley Teitel said he hoped that students would find other ways to express themselves. "I have no restrictions upon facial hair," Teitel said.

Many Stuyvesant teachers were not surprised by the study's findings, stating that

they too had observed increased student distraction and declining classroom enthusiasm. "Which students?" said dean and social studies teacher Daniel Tillman when asked whether or not student performance had been affected in his classroom. "All I see in my class now are repressed souls, trapped in their textile prisons."

Even before the study was released, students noticed the detrimental effects of the dress code. "Ever since this dress code was enacted, it seems as if the teachers no longer notice me. I raise my hand, but they never call on me. Some teachers have even stopped showing up. I don't know what I'm supposed to be learning," junior Lucy Woychuck Mlinac said.

Not only has students' academic performance suffered, but so has their athletic ability

in physical education classes. Physical education teachers have reported an increased number of incidences in which students trip over their knee-length pants.

The dress code also seems to be a cause of stress for the student body. Students are constantly worrying about whether their pants are long enough, or whether their shirts completely cover their shoulders. "The stress is so overwhelming that I have started to develop a nervous tick," senior Sara Schaffer said.

Others are more distracted than ever. "It used to be that I didn't notice the exposed shoulders and the like. I never thought I'd miss it," senior Ben Koatz said. "But now I crave even the briefest glimpse of an ankle. That's my only reason to go to school these days."

Two Weeks into School Year, Physics Student Five Months Behind Curriculum

By JAMES FRIER
and ELI ROSENBERG

On Tuesday, September 20, after only two short weeks of school, it was determined that junior Michael Cheung is already several months behind the established physics curriculum.

"I knew that something was wrong when on the first day of school [physics teacher Wai Lam] asked the class to take out last night's homework," Cheung said. "When he assigned a test for the second day of school reviewing the last three units, it hit me just how much trouble I was in."

The physics curriculum, created by the Stuyvesant Chemistry and Physics department and overseen by Assistant Principle Scott Thomas, was designed to force students to be in a constant state of catch-up.

"It is a well known fact that students learn better when sufficiently challenged, and what better way to challenge them than to let them fight and struggle their way through the material?" Thomas said.

This technique is referred to by many experts as "early onset confusion," and is common among many Stuyvesant classes outside the Physics and Chemistry Department.

"This technique has gone virtually unused in recent years," adolescent education authority Marcus Peterson said. "It appears that Stuyvesant is leading the charge back to the forefront of Victorian era education practices."

"Students seem to respond strongly to this technique, in the mathematics as well as the physics classroom," math teacher Richard Ku said. "It causes my students to invest themselves in their work so much so that I often have classrooms full of students who want to spend time with me after school. They must really enjoy the learning process."

Although the practice has been effective to some students, mainly those in Ku's junior pre-calculus class, Cheung has continued to struggle. After meeting with Cheung and his parents regarding his "astonishingly subpar" performance thus far in physics, Lam devised a study schedule to get Cheung up to speed with the rest of the class. "If Michael spends about six hours a day studying and reviewing physics, he will have caught up with the curriculum just in time for the 2014 Regents," Lam said.

Despite his setbacks, Cheung remains optimistic about the remainder of physics class for the year. "I came to Stuyvesant for its math and science programs, and I know nothing prepares you better for a real world career in science than hours spent bent over an archaic and obsolete textbook," Cheung said.

Features

Stuyvesant Welcomes the New Staff

**By TASNIM AHMED,
JOANNA GAO,
and YING YU SITU**

Between practicing yoga, working in the Air Force, and dancing ballet, Stuyvesant's ten new faculty members bring a wide range of talent and experience to the school community. Though their interests and past histories are very different, they all strive to stimulate students and promote a dynamic learning environment.

**Samuel Konstantinovich,
Mathematics and
Computer Science teacher**

Mathematics and Computer Science teacher Samuel Konstantinovich comes to Stuyvesant after seven years of teaching at Francis Lewis High School in Queens, New York. A Stuyvesant alumnus himself ('95), he returns for the "opportunity to bring more [computer science] knowledge to [his] students," he said. He is impressed by the great variety of classes in the school.

Given his roots in Stuyvesant, Konstantinovich feels a special rapport with his newfound place of work. "It's nostalgic and definitely interesting to work with some of my former teachers," Konstantinovich said.

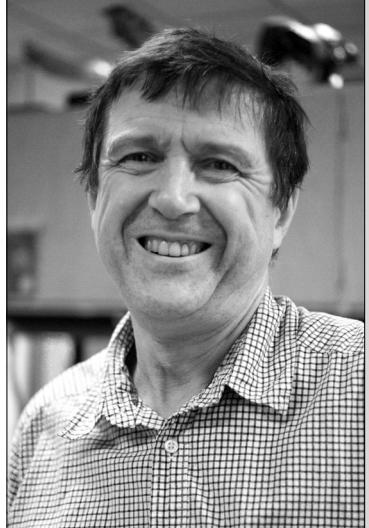


**Christopher Bowlin,
Librarian**

A lover of all things German and a yoga instructor with 12 years of experience, Christopher Bowlin has numerous interests that led him to choose a profession as a librarian. "I always had a broad umbrella of interests, and the library was one of the places to dabble in [them] all," said Bowlin, because of the access to so many resources like books and magazines that allow him to explore a variety of topics.

Bowlin's experience as a student ambassador to Germany sparked his great interest in various aspects of the country's culture such as its literature, art, and films. He also enjoys watching films from other foreign countries, going to museums, and playing soccer. In addition to teaching yoga and working in a library, Bowlin once had a stint at acting as a patient for medical students; Bowlin would pretend to suffer from any number of illnesses, and the students would attempt to make a correct diagnosis. Out of all of his experiences, Bowlin believes that being a librarian is most rewarding because, in addition to advancing his own interests, it gives him the opportunity to help students develop research skills.

**Photographs by:
Joann Lee
and Victoria Zhao**



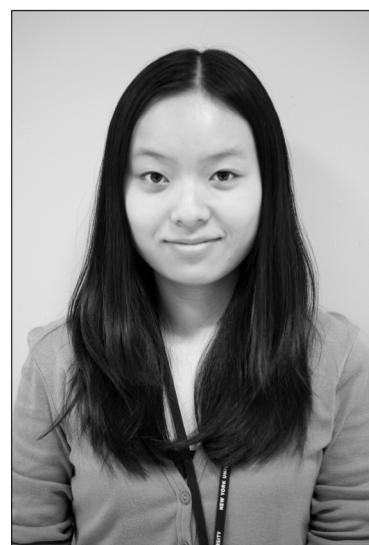
Guy De Baere, Lab Specialist

Biology lab specialist Guy De Baere comes to Stuyvesant with a

wealth of experience in the biomedical field. After graduating from high school in France, De Baere moved to New York and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force as a medical lab specialist. After his time in the Air Force, he conducted research in medical centers, clinical labs, and hospitals, with a focus on the processing and storage of peripheral blood stem cells. Since then, he has been a lab specialist at La Guardia High School for four years and James Madison High School for three years.

Although De Baere has not been in Stuyvesant for long, it has already made a lasting impression on him.

"I love it. It's everything I've been dreaming of," he said. "I'm very impressed by the resources and commitment of the school to the serious teaching of science."



Xue Pan, Chinese Teacher

Having emigrated from China two years ago, Stuyvesant's newest Chinese teacher, Xue

Pan, has been looking forward to her first full-time teaching job. While studying at New York University for her graduate degree, Pan worked as a student teacher at Brooklyn Technical High School. "If I wasn't a teacher, I'd probably be doing something in music or movies," Pan said, having often sung and performed on stage throughout high school and college.

She believes she can relate to the students at Stuyvesant because she attended high school in China. "The education system is intense. I studied until 12 A.M. everyday," she said. She is very aware of the competitive atmosphere of Stuyvesant, but she hopes to create a classroom where everyone helps each other instead of competing.

"I will try to teach as best as possible," Pan said.



Eric Ferencz, English Teacher

In college, recent arrival to the English Department Eric Fer-

encz, who now teaches Freshman Composition and Early American Literature, decided to major in English, because he loved to write essays. Ferencz taught English to university students in China for a year after graduating college. This is the experience that made him realize his love of teaching and inspired him to become a high school teacher. Ferencz has some interest in working at a university again in the future, "but I prefer [teaching] high school students, because they are able to speak their minds freely, unlike college students," said Ferencz.

In his free time, Ferencz enjoys playing the guitar and developing his talent for comedy, having spent two summers performing stand up comedy. His goal for his students in Stuyvesant is "to recognize the power to write effectively," he said.



**Lisa Greenwald,
Social Studies Teacher**

A dancer who likes to wear wigs and speak in a variety of accents may seem like a peculiar description of a history

teacher, but the idiosyncrasies of Lisa Greenwald make her all the more interesting. Greenwald, who has lived in England and France, says the time that she spent there, along with her experience studying women's history in Europe, is what led her to decide to become a history teacher.

Aside from teaching, Greenwald is very passionate about dance, especially ballet. She has practiced ballet since she was a young girl, but claims that it is not something she would pursue as a career. Before becoming a teacher, Greenwald was a consultant for non-profit and charity foundations in New York and France.

She is eager to teach students who are devoted to learning and motivated to evolve academically. "I would love students to be able to acquire a passion for history and to see the relevance of history in understanding the world in their own lives and their futures," Greenwald said.



**Thomas Strasser,
Physics Teacher**

"It was always clear to me, even from early on, that I would



**Victor Greez,
Social Studies Teacher**



**Jessica Quenzer,
Biology Teacher**

Though Jessica Quenzer comes to Stuyvesant with four years of teaching experience at Nest+M High School and the High School of Economics and Finances, she hasn't always been a science teacher. As an undergraduate at Columbia University, Quenzer was a videogame tester and was one of the first few



Lina Rocchio, Italian Teacher

Replacing Vito Recchia as Stuyvesant's only Italian teacher, Lina Rocchio has high hopes for her new students. Born in Italy and raised in Argentina, Rocchio moved to New York when she was 16 years old. After attending both the College of Staten Island and Hunter College, Rocchio began her teaching career at High

be a teacher. I would always be explaining stuff to my younger brother," Stuyvesant's newest physics teacher, Thomas Strasser, said. Born and raised in Austria, he attended the University of Vienna and later taught at a local high school. In 2003, he was recruited by the New York City Department of Education to teach at DeWitt Clinton High School.

"It's different at Stuyvesant. It's very quiet in the classroom and in the building. There's no drama," Strasser said. "Everyone is very professional." If Strasser wasn't teaching, he believes that he would still be in Austria working in a museum or teaching workshops. But as a new teacher at Stuyvesant, he hopes his students will "develop an appreciation for the sciences, in particular, physics," Strasser said.

Victor Greez's love for social studies stemmed from the conversations he and his father shared during his childhood about the daily news. He has been a teacher all of his adult life, having previously taught at Bronx Science High School. He chose to teach because it gives him the freedom to choose what to do in the classroom. "I look at myself as an artist, and I'm creating a picture of a past event as a historian," Greez said.

At Stuyvesant, he teaches Global History and United States History. When he is not teaching, Greez spends most of his time with his two years old twins. In addition, Greez has a passion for bicycling, having once led a bicycle tour across the United States and another in Europe.

to search for bugs in games like the first Sims and God of War.

"When testing out the Sims, I was able to get the characters to die ten minutes after generation," she said. "That's not supposed to happen."

After college, Quenzer did research in bioengineering, having conducted successful experiments on mice to test the effectiveness of a drug for brittle bone disease. She has also done work with cryogenic freezing, which entailed freezing the embryos of genetically engineered mice and injecting their DNA into surrogates.

For Quenzer, teaching at Stuyvesant is another exciting experience to be had. Although it's taking some time to adjust to "such a big school, I am definitely happy and excited to be here," she said.

School for Environmental Studies in 1993. "I like the students [at Stuyvesant]. They are very focused and treat the staff and each other with respect," Rocchio said. "They are diligent and want to learn. Overall, I have a very positive first impression."

In her spare time, she works with her son to gather information about rural people in the Italian town of Gallo Matese. She uses this information to create videos explaining their songs, tools, traditions, and food. Her main focus is studying the usage of pillow or bobbin lace in the village.

Rocchio hopes to inspire some interest in Italian culture in her students. During her 17 years at High School of Environmental Studies, she headed a Heritage Club that hosted cultural dance performances and other cultural events. She also headed a club that focused on vintage clothing—members would organize events for which they came to school dressed up in styles from the 20's to the 80's. "I hope that at Stuyvesant there can be a focus and direction towards the preservation of culture," Rocchio said.

Features

Alumnus and Friends Create T-shirt for Japan



The t-shirt for Japan design includes a cluster of red chrysanthemums in the shape of a circle.

Courtesy of teesforjapan.com

By KAREN ZHENG

After an earthquake shook Japan on Friday, March 11, several clubs sprang into fund-raising action. Stuyvesant Red Cross members sold bracelets to and collected donations from the Stuyvesant community, as did members of the Japanese Honor Society. The school contributed \$5,500 dollars in total.

For some members of the Stuyvesant community, the relief effort is not over. In March, alumnus Kamiu Lee ('03) met with two friends, musician Wyatt Sweet and graphic designer Emily Schwartz, to discuss how

they could do their part for Japan. They decided to design and sell T-shirts.

"After everything happened in Japan, we thought it'd be interesting to do something that was creative that would raise awareness and also raise funds," said Lee, who works as an associate in investment banking for HSBC Securities. "Each of us had friends or acquaintances either from Japan or who had family there, so for us, [the earthquake] wasn't a direct impact, but it made an impact on us."

Sweet seconded this rationale. "We're doing this for all of

them, for those people that we don't know who were affected and hurt. We're just trying to use our skills to make a small impact," Sweet said.

The shirt design, by Schwartz, is a cluster of red chrysanthemums in the shape of a circle—in reference to Japan's flag—on a gray background.

"It's a hopeful image for Japan. We wanted to focus on the positive outlook, on going forward, instead of the destruction," Lee said. "And we wanted it to be something simple that people would want to wear."

After the design was finalized, the trio selected American Apparel as their T-shirt vendor, and SHINE Humanity as their donation recipient. SHINE Humanity is a California-based, non-profit organization founded in 2009 by Comprehensive Disaster Response Services CEO Todd Shea. It provides medical and humanitarian relief after international disasters through volunteers and donations.

Shine Humanity was chosen because it is "very efficient with donations and very transparent. The money goes directly to the cause that people actually donate to," Lee said.

Thus far, 60 Tees for Japan

have been sold. Lee attributes this to low-key marketing.

"Our plan is to extend outside of the friend and family

age, making garnering support all the more difficult.

"Although it's not in the mainstream news anymore, we're still trying to inform people and approaching shops and people with our shirt. Persistence is important when you're doing something like this," Wyatt said.

Lee believes that her high school experience instilled the importance of giving back in her. She was involved in Smile Train, a non-profit organization that raises awareness and funds for corrective surgery for children born with cleft lip and palate, and Big Sibs while at Stuyvesant.

"You have a certain amount of hours in a week. At some point, you have to prioritize what's most important to you. For students, if there is a way you can see to get more people aware and more people involved, that's always a good thing. You can post an article to make your friends aware of a situation. You can forward an e-mail. Even if it's that simple, that says something," Lee said.

T-shirts can be purchased at www.teesforjapan.com for \$20-22 each.

"We're doing this for all of them, for those people that we don't know who were affected and hurt. We're just trying to use our skills to make a small impact."

—Wyatt Sweet,
musician

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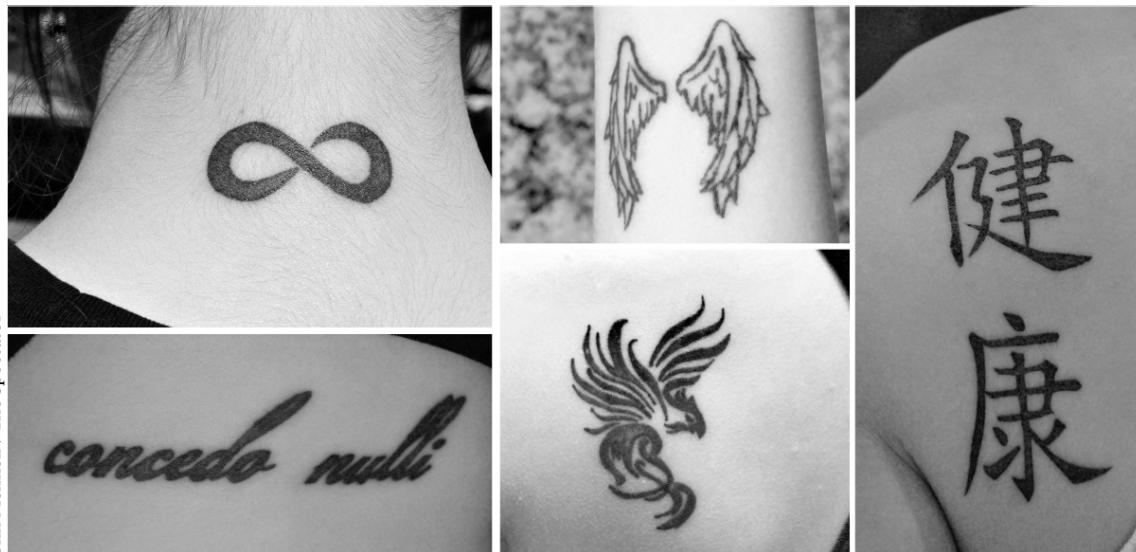
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Features

Taboo Tattoo



John Mennell / The Spectator

(clockwise from upper left) Seniors Jessica, Mary, Connie Lu, Cecelia Shao, and Kevin Han all got tattoos.

By LIBBY DVIR

Ink on skin is a familiar sight as Stuyvesant. Many students frequently doodle on their hands, arms, and ankles, and hands are often used as a makeshift planner. But with a quick wash with soap and water, the marks can be removed. The same is not true, however, for a tattoo. Once ink is pierced into the skin, it usually takes a laser to remove it, making the decision to get one serious and complicated. For this reason, according to the New York State Department of Health, it is illegal for minors under the age of 18 in New York to get tattoos, regardless of parental permission. This is also due to health risks -- use of contaminated needles and equipment can lead to transmission of bloodborne diseases, such as HIV and variants of Hepatitis. In fact, a Hepatitis scare in 1961 made tattoos completely illegal in New York State until 1997. Tattoos also carry with them social risks. Visible tattoos can make it harder to get a professional job, as the image that many employers would like to project of their employees is not compatible with a tattoo.

Despite these obstacles and risks, six Stuyvesant seniors, two of whom wish to remain anonymous, made the decision to permanently illustrate their skin, for reasons cultural and personal.

To Infinity and Beyond

For a year, she says, a senior, whom we will refer to as "Jessica," had been marking herself in pen with the symbol she would later get in ink on the back of her neck: the infinity sign. "I was in love with the concept [of infinity]. You constantly hear about friendships ending and families breaking apart and marriages falling apart. So, I guess the infinity sign represents hope to me, as in there is a slight chance that someday, we'll all find infinity with someone," she said. Jessica said that she would definitely like to get more tattoos, citing her experience at the New York Tattoo Museum, a year-old establishment in Staten Island featuring dioramas and artifacts that illustrate the history of tattoos.

"Someone [there] explained to me the whole history of tattoos. It used to be considered a sign of royalty, but over time, as more and more lower class people got tattoos, it became a taboo and it remains that way to this day," Jessica said.

Take These Wings and Learn to Fly

Lines from the Beatles song "Blackbird" provided some of senior Connie Lu's inspiration to have a pair of wings tattooed on her wrist.

"There's a billion messed up

things in this world we live in, but those problems don't tie anyone down. There is always some way out, and everyone has it in them to cut those strings and set themselves free, but that's easy to forget, because it gets lost in the stress, the worry, the pressure, the anger, the negativity. So the tattoo is a constant reminder of freedom, that no matter how bad life gets, I can always fly," Lu said.

The tattoo's permanence especially appeals to Lu. "A lot of people shy away from the permanence of a tattoo, but I actually love the fact that it is, because so many things in this life are temporary: people come and go, and everything changes with time, so it's nice to have something that I know will always be there," Lu said.

Victorious

Having grown up in a predominantly Greek neighborhood, senior Nicole Radova fell in love with Greek culture. Her Greek name, she learned, is "Nike," the name of the goddess of victory. After confirming the spelling with a Greek friend, she had "Nike" tattooed on her right shoulder blade in Greek letters.

"This means a lot to me because it shows that my name has a powerful meaning. Plus, I think everyone should know what their name means," Radova said.

Healthy Han

This summer, senior Kevin Han and his three friends, also Stuyvesant students, traveled to Thailand to do some community service. It was there that Han got the word "health" tattooed in Chinese characters on his upper back following a tragic accident.

"I was inspired to get the tattoo when I survived an almost fatal motorcycle crash in Thailand, combined with the fact that I'm always watching out for my health in terms of diet and exercise. I also wanted something to resemble my heritage," Han said. His parents, who did not accompany Han and his friends abroad, do not know about their son's tattoo. Legally, Han did not need their permission to obtain it because the law is much less strict overseas. Thai law prohibits tourists from getting tattoos involving Buddhist imagery, but other than that, Thailand has very little restrictions surrounding tattoos, and there is no minimum age.

Although he did not tell his parents, he's "going to tell them eventually. I don't think they'd be that upset about it," Han said.

She Yields to None

One student, who we will refer to as "Mary" because she got her tattoo illegally, also chose to get a tattoo written in another

language. Her tattoo, located on her ribs, reads "Concedo nulli," meaning "I yield to none" in Latin.

A senior we will call "Mary" said she had two reasons for getting the tattoo, "Concedo Nulli" (in Latin, I Yield to None). "I like to know that I have control over my own body, I have a lot of self esteem issues and am self conscious about my body, so to know I can do something to it aesthetically makes me feel like I have some control over that," Mary said. It reminds her, she said, to "always take that step to get closer to what I want and let no obstacles get in my way." As to whether or not it hurt, Mary said that though she discovered that ribs are some of our more sensitive places, it didn't hurt her.

"A lot of people shy away from the permanence of a tattoo, but I actually love the fact that it is because so many things in this life are temporary."

—Connie Lu, senior

"I guess it depends on whatever your pain tolerance is," she said.

Fiery Phoenix

The inky blue phoenix on senior Cecelia Shao's left shoulder blade is unique to her alone--she designed the image herself before giving it to the tattoo artist.

The inky blue phoenix on senior Cecelia Shao's left shoulder blade is unique to her alone--she designed the image herself before giving it to the tattoo artist.

"I got it because I felt like it. Because tattoos look awesome," Shao said. What bothers Shao, she said, is that people are surprised by her youth and think that she will one day be sorry she got a tattoo at such a young age, especially when she enters the job market. But Shao believes differently. "I don't think I'll regret [the tattoo]," Shao said. Ironically, while the artist tattooed Shao, she only felt a slight tickling, just what one would imagine from a phoenix's feathers.

Harry Potter at Stuy: The Success of a Magical Franchise

By REBECCA GAEBLER and BEN VANDEN HEUVEL

For freshman Aden Lui, sorting hats and owl-delivered mail defined his childhood. "I started reading [the Harry Potter series] when I was in fifth grade, around 10 years old," Lui said. "From there, every time a new book came out, I would buy it, and when the movies first came out I would always go watch them."

Lui is not alone. The Stuyvesant community is full of students who have been able to relate to J.K. Rowling's seven-book series over the course of their lives. As students grew up struggling with their own independence, there was Harry, offering an oh-so-magical escape.

Since its 1997 debut, the series has grown to encompass eight wide-screen movies, multiple video games, board games, and collectibles, as well as a theme park in Florida and a museum exhibit in Times Square. Pottermore, a Harry Potter fan site offering bonus components to the novels, audio versions of the stories and other activities, has also been released.

The biggest change, however, is its meaning to readers. Serious Harry Potter aficionados see parallels to the Bible, or Homer's Iliad. Many have managed to use Harry Potter for every practice SAT essay. The adventures have developed more meaning than action filled entertainment. "Harry Potter is a book which everybody has read and everyone can connect too. We all have our special bonds with it," said sophomore Eddie Zilberbrand.

To Zilberbrand, Harry Potter is a household name. He was just one year old when the first book, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," hit the shelves. It was some six years later, in second grade, when Zilberbrand's mother introduced the series to him. Since then, he has read every book at least twice, seen each movie in theaters and on DVD, and has come to think of Harry Potter as a defining element of his young life.

"My brother equally loves Harry Potter, maybe even more than me," Zilberbrand said. "When the last book came out we fought over it and my mom had to settle the dispute with a game of flip a coin."

While Zilberbrand was an avid reader of the books and a big Ron Weasley fan, some Harry Potter fans have engaged in other parts of the Harry Potter franchise. Junior Dhrupad Mamun, for example, has enjoyed playing the many Harry Potter video games released over the years. Some, like senior Hema Lochan, are collectors of Potter souvenirs. From her visit to the Orlando theme park, she has a Harry Potter robe, wand, broomstick, golden snitch, Gryffindor scarf, bag and stationery. Others, like junior Brian Chen, eagerly await new book releases in full costume. "I waited until midnight for three of the book releases and dressed up as Lupin with a really bad werewolf costume, Ron as a werewolf, and Harry, of course."

Despite these new additions, the magic still remains

in the book. "I love re-reading the series because sometimes, you come across a small detail that has so much importance that you never even realized before," Lochan said. "Like in the fifth book, they just mentioned the locket in a sentence, and it turned out to be a horcrux!"

Rowling's attention to detail and innovative storytelling turned the old-as-time magical creatures of fairytales into modern day heroes. Many say her writing was so relatable the magic felt real. Everyone believed. "Her success with the series is making the whole world seem so real, and the wizards and witches humans rather than wizened old sages, poring over ancient lore," Mamun said.

Students see not only themselves, but also the world around them, in her writing. Zilberbrand saw the house elves as both important characters and symbols of racial inequality. He sees Harry's relationship with Dobby as a call to transcend racial barriers. "These books are classics of modern times. They tell the story of the world in some ways you might not see it, and that right there is truly magical."

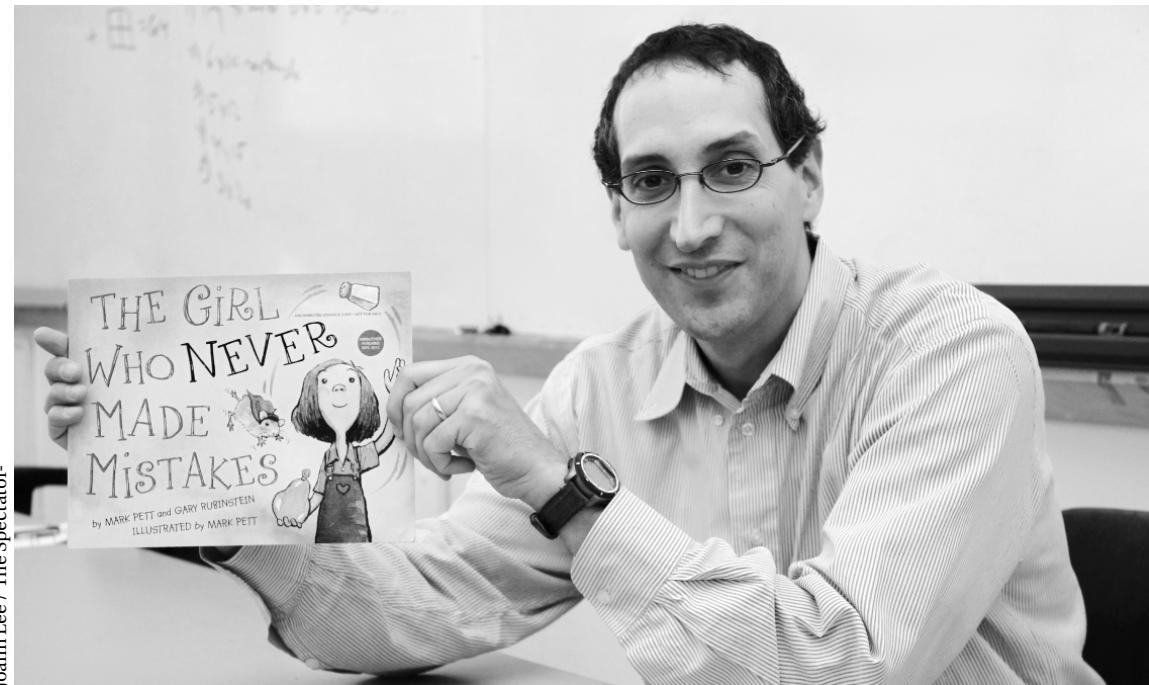
As students grew up struggling with their own independence, there was Harry, offering an oh-so-magical escape.

The book's influence on Lui, however, is much more personal. An immigrant from China, he moved here with his parents and four sisters when he was three. "When I was growing up, I didn't have a really fun childhood. I spent more of my time working because we were the first generation here," Lui said. "All the pressure was on me." Though his parents never trapped him under the staircase like Harry's aunt and uncle, he did take on a lot of chores, from vacuuming to washing the dishes. The series presented an escape. With a love for Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape, Lui was further pulled into the fantasy genre. "It brought me into a new world that I didn't expect to get into."

Though the series has finished with the release of the final movie, Stuy students are extremely hopeful that Harry-Potter mania is something even the Killing Curse cannot end. This generation of Harry Potter fans sees it as being intertwined with their entire childhood. Zilberbrand will never forget when he first opened the first book that day eight years ago. Hema Lochan will never stop waiting for her letter. And Mr. Potter will always have us under his spell.

Features

It's OK to Make Mistakes: The Writing of Gary Rubinstein



Joann Lee / The Spectator

Math teacher Gary Rubinstein co-authored a children's book titled, "The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes".

By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

Take a walk across the fourth floor and you will most likely run into math teacher Gary Rubinstein. Whether he is helping students scan out calculus textbooks, drawing the graphs of logarithmic equations, or explaining how to calculate the digits of Pi, it is clear that he has marked his territory in the Math Department. But if you browse the aisles of your local book store, you will find that he has staked his claim as a writer as well; he has published two books, written multiple short stories, and co-authored a children's book.

"Somehow when it comes to writing, I have this knack for it, and it just comes out like a muse," Rubinstein said. "I try to write about my life and find interesting connections or funny coincidences to share with other people."

In 2004, Rubinstein sat in every day for the discussions of two books on an Advanced Placement Great Books class, which was then taught by Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman. Though there

was no assignment, at the end of the class he wrote a humorous essay called "The Importance of Being Mr. Rubinstein," in which he reflected on his experience in the class.

"It's such a good model to see teachers interested in what happens in classrooms outside of their discipline, as a way of fostering collegiality among departments," Grossman said. "The essay he wrote for my class was delightful. He wrote about the dynamics of not always loving the books we were reading, but engaging in and appreciating the discussions."

In addition to writing a regular blog about education, Rubinstein has published two books, had multiple short stories printed in "Chicken Soup for the Soul," and written several humorous personal essays that he has shared with Stuyvesant students.

Rubinstein presented his short stories to last year's Advanced Placement American Studies class. "His profession belies his personality," senior Ahlam

Rafita said. "You'd expect that as a math teacher he'd be very strict given the rigidity of the topic, but he actually has a great, sarcastic sense of humor that he shares with everyone else."

Last year, he shared his story "A Guy for All Seasons" with his pre-calculus class. The story was "about how his family members would say 'I've got a guy' for everything and how that connected to his life growing up," said senior Kathleen Escoto, who had Rubinstein for three terms. "It was really funny and well written. I did not expect him to also be a writer, but the story I read definitely reflected himself as a person."

Rubinstein's most recent work is of a different genre; he has co-authored a children's book with his friend Mark Pett titled, "The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes," which will be available in Barnes and Noble on Friday, September 30.

The book focuses on the fictional character Beatrice Bottomwell, who has never made a mistake. From being polite and doing

all of her math homework to winning her school's talent show every year, she can do no wrong. Though she ends up making her first mistake in a very public way, she deals with it gracefully. Her actions remind kids and parents alike that it is okay to make mistakes.

"Parents might read it and wonder if they're pushing their kids a little too hard, but it's really for the kids," Rubinstein said, "Hopefully they will read it and get the basic message that if you don't take risks, you're missing out on a lot of life and it's okay to make mistakes."

Amy Wang, a writer for The Oregonian, commended the book in her online review: "In an age when parents berate teachers who dare to give out B's and children receive blue ribbons just for entering an art show, Gary Rubinstein's tale of a 9-year-old perfectionist is a refreshing fable that assures kids it's OK to mess up once in a while – but doesn't beat them over the head with the moral," she wrote.

Creating a children's book was no easy task for Rubinstein and Pett. The pair met at a Teach for America gathering 15 years ago and began swapping comic strips and essays to get feedback. Both had children at around the same time as well.

"We ended up reading a lot of children's books and we began to think that even the pretty famous ones weren't very good," Rubinstein said. "We thought we could do better."

They started testing ideas two years ago until they agreed on the premise of the book, and Rubinstein wrote the first few drafts. They traded drafts for four months to get the story down, complete with rough illustrations, and sent it out to many agents until one took on the project. From there, the publishing company Sourcebooks Jabberwocky picked it up quickly.

The editing process took

about a year's worth of collaboration to condense and simplify the story into 32 pages. "Working with somebody else is difficult because you have to compromise on different things," Rubinstein said. "I'll look at some things and think that I didn't want them to be that way, but then I'll see other things and know that they were fully my invention."

Rubinstein's book contains a message that relates not only to his intended audience, but to his students as well. He recognizes he teaches a subject where the smallest mistake could cost you points and there is not a lot of room for experimentation.

Rubinstein's book contains a message that relates not only to his intended audience, but to his students as well.

Junior Tiffany Chan, who is in Rubinstein's pre-calculus class, appreciates Rubinstein's style of teaching. "He knows that he makes mistakes, so when we do too, he will explain the concepts to us and encourage us to ask questions," she said.

"I'm constantly making errors, procrastinating, and improvising at the last minute," Rubinstein said. "I try to make my classroom a place where it's okay to get an answer wrong, because we're all here to learn and mistakes are just a part of the process."

4	7	3	3	6	1
Number of cars Kern owns	Number of bicycles Kern owns	Number of motorcycles Kern own	Number of scooters Kern own	Pairs of rollerblades Kern own	Box of rubber duckies Kern owns

Thanks to Kern Levigion

10.23	3.8	2.2	75
Length of the Senior Bar (ft)	Height of the Senior Bar (ft)	Width of Senior Bar (ft)	Number of lockers in and around the Bar

Thanks to Libby Dvir

17	2.1%	9.2%	28
Number of lockers in the Bar	Chance seniors had of getting a locker in the Bar	Chance seniors had of getting a locker around the Bar	Number of seniors that can fit on the Senior Bar

Thanks to Libby Dvir

Neighborhood Profile: Union Square

by the Photo Department



Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

It's The Economy, Stupid

Welcome to the new school year. Now, please, pay up.

\$14 for your regular locker, \$14 for your physical education locker, \$40 for your band fees, \$100 for your photography lab fees, \$35 for your biology lab fees, and \$100 for your AP Psych textbook.

Next to broken escalators, numbers like these are the primary cause of grumbling Stuyvesant students. And the complaints seldom end there; we also grow tired of pestering APs as we attempt to get into oversubscribed electives. It seems, simply put, that the school is suffering from a vital lack of funding. While that, in fact, is true, we often forget that the money we are asked to contribute is what essentially bridges the gap between what the school has and what the school needs to provide for our education. Multiply all the above fees by the 3,000-plus students in our school, and what we have is a deceptively large number. Yet we often overlook how deeply rooted our financial problems are. The truth is, the problems trickle down from above, all the way from the national level.

It's no secret that the United States economy needs some work. The nation's deficit grows larger, seemingly by the minute, while the unemployment rate hovers just below 10 percent, leaving many with record levels of debt. It is the war cry of every candidate, politician, and pundit: our economy is failing, and something must be done. But solutions take time, and sacrifices have to be made at even the lowest levels in order to stay afloat.

The federal government, struggling with the tax revenue decrease caused by the high unemployment rate and pay cuts in many jobs, cannot provide much-needed additional funds to individual states. As the downturn has dragged on for over three years, the state governments have had less and less money to give to essential

institutions—including the public school system.

Lawmakers struggle to keep schools funded, and while they avoid slashing across the board, schools must still cut costs. This year, Stuyvesant received about \$17 million from the city, and while this is about as much as it has received in previous years, the freshman class has grown tremendously. This year, the total student enrollment is 3,319 students, which is nearly 200 students more than in 2007-2008, when enrollment was 3,125 students. Though the Department of Education allocates additional funds to the school for every additional student through the Fair Student Funding Program, the school still struggles to accommodate the entire student body, leading to classrooms jam-packed with students, limited class offerings, and more extenuated resources.

However, while the news may seem grim, the administration has taken steps to allocate funds in a fair manner. At the end of last year, several teachers who had not yet received tenure were on the chopping block. Now, not only have their jobs been saved, but the English and Physics Departments have hired new teachers as well. This was possible partially because of the \$1.6 million in Title I funding that the school received from the federal government last year. Rolling over \$1 million of those funds to this year's budget has allowed Principal Stanley Teitel to save several teachers' jobs, arguably the most important elements in advancing children's education.

Consider the number 18,000,000. That's the total amount of dollars our school is given yearly. But how exactly is that number divvied up?

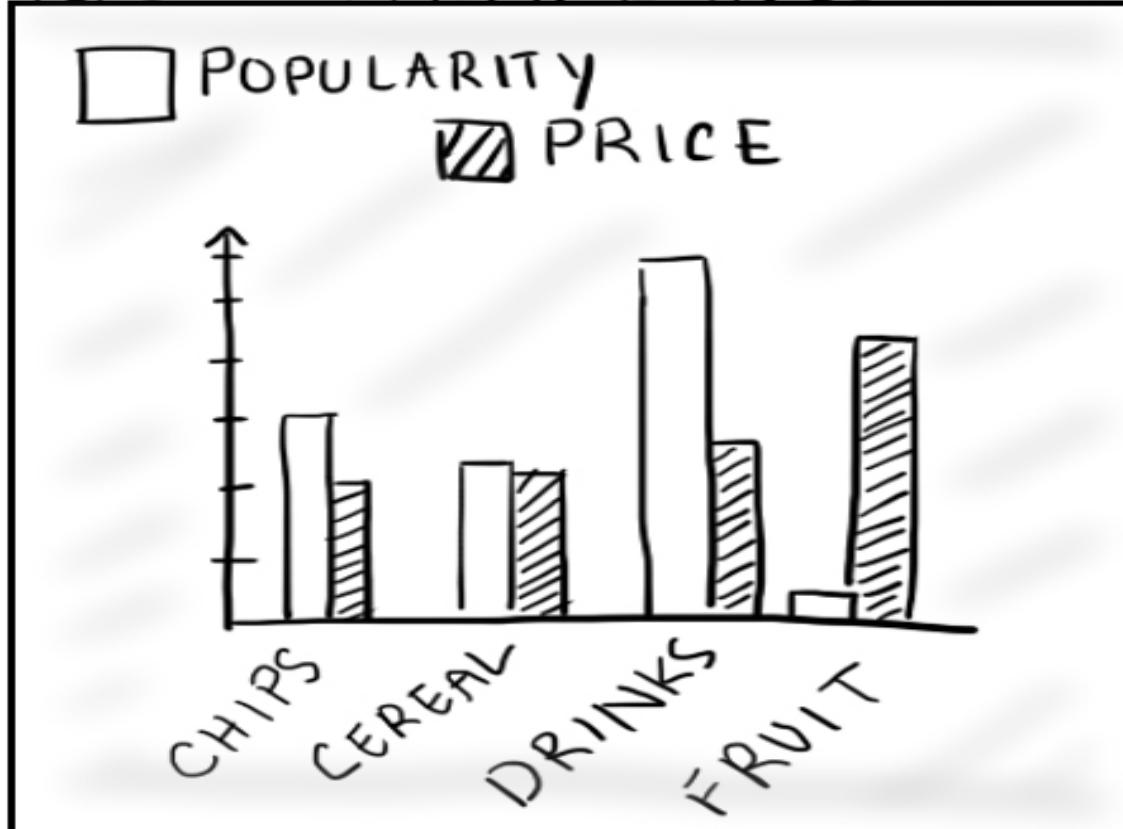
A lot of the discontent of the student body seems to stem from being left in the dark about key budgetary issues, whereas the simpler problem is our own ignorance. Despite

the lack of giant billboards detailing the finer points of the school's budget breakdown, we hold on to the false notion that there is a drastic lack of transparency. However, the truth is that the information is all out there. On their website, the Department of Education offers budget glossaries for every school's fiscal year. Accessible online are the allocations of every school's budget toward each specific department, as well as the additional money provided per student by supplementary funds such as Children First. Although some of the indexes are not yet updated, one can find the breakdown of a school's expenditures regarding direct services to the school, such as teachers or textbooks. Information is also provided for instructional support services, such as after-school student activities, as well as for a number of other needs, including counseling and custodial services. Finally, even further-simplified graphs are provided, outlining the total dollars spent at Stuyvesant—we can see how much is spent per student, or the salary of a classroom teacher, or even the cost of summer and afterschool programs.

There it is. Our answers are a simple Google search away. We can complain all we want, but the cold hard truth is that times are rough, so our complaints are invalidated when we fail to do the proper research, choosing instead to whine or blindly point fingers. Our administration does all that it can to provide for the necessities of the student body and maintain the standards of our education. Especially now, when the problems stem from a force that is greater than we are, the least we can do is bite our tongues, swallow hard, and reach into our pockets. Think about that the next time you are stuck in gridlock on the stairway on your way to the one elective you managed to get your senior year.

OP-ART

VENDING MACHINE INCOME



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

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Student
Body"

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The Spectator

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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.

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

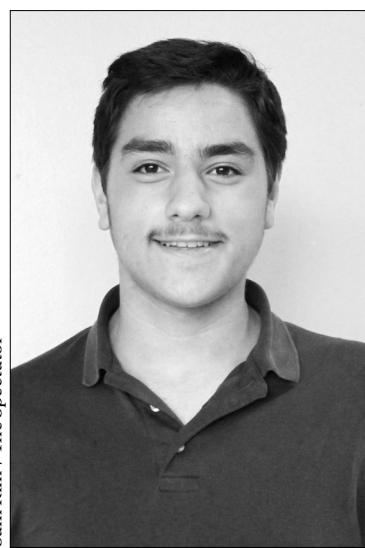
Write a letter to the editor and e-mail it to letters@stuspectator.com or drop it in The Spectator box in the second-floor mail room.

FOR THE RECORD

- Ten-Young Guh did additional reporting for the article "Alumni to Hold 9/11 Memorial at Stuyvesant."
- In "Scattering," Ben Magarik's name was misspelled.

Opinions

Let the Voice of the Students Be Heard



By JACK CAHN

When walking through a hallway at Stuyvesant, one often hears fervent debates about school issues; rarely does a day go by without complaints about broken escalators, poor lunches, or unsatisfactory teacher performance. And yet, despite all the clamor students create about these problems, we ultimately accept the status quo, because that's the way it is, and there is really no one to go to with our complaints. Stuyvesant students lack adequate political representation when it comes to academic policy decisions made by the school, the City, and the State.

Students are represented in their social issues by class presidents, who mostly coordinate fundraisers for dances and proms. In addition, the SU as a whole is supposed to work on students' behalf by granting clubs funds and organizing events like SING!, but where is their political representation in changing educational policy? Where can students go if they want to introduce a new class into Stuyvesant, or have someone listen to reasonable solutions for fixing the lunch menu or broken radiators?

All we have at Stuyvesant to address political concerns is the SLT, but most students don't even know what that acronym stands for. Did you know that the SLT (Student Leadership Team) holds meetings once a month, called Students' Forum, to hear the concerns of the student body? I didn't know that until I wrote this article, and I'm sure that the vast majority of Stuyvesant students, especially underclassmen, don't either. This is a major issue. We live in a democracy, in which people are supposed to have a say in their own future and are not ultimately led by a select few.

Implementing a system of student representation is not impossible. As a matter of fact, such a system of student representation is in place in Massachusetts, where every school in the state elects student representatives to politically represent the student body to the school board, city board, and the state department of education. Dea Dodi, a 16-year-old sophomore in Somerville, said, "Many students are informed that they have the power to raise their concerns to those in charge. They have the power to take these concerns, in written or verbal form, to the High School Committee, City School Committee, and/or the State Board of Education." Such a system allows the voices of the students to be heard, leading to eventual improvements in the school and a more content student body.

This system of representation is what we need in New York State, not just Stuyvesant. We need elected representatives who can first find out and then relay the concerns of the student body to those in power. We would have a place to go when the school doesn't turn the heater on in the brink of winter because it "costs too much" or refuses to allow enough rehearsal time in the building for SING! participants. Not only would this create a sense of democracy, but also it would lead to the accumulation of small changes within

the school that could lead to great improvement over time.

To get started on the path to such a system, we must revolutionize the SLT. First, we should have them elected as student representatives by the entire student body, not appointed by the SU board, so that they genuinely represent—by definition of the word—the entire student body. Second, we should publicize student forums on the Stuyvesant Web site, all around the school on posters, and via word of mouth, so that they are widely attended by students.

Annarose Jacobs, junior and SLT representative, said, "It's through the Students' Forum that the student SLT representatives gain insight to what the student body is really thinking. If we have more students attending the Students' Forum, the quality of their representation will be even better than it already is. We serve as the connection between the students and the administration to ensure that the students get the information they need." We need an increased connection between students and their decision makers; revitalizing the SLT serves this purpose.

Let the students of Stuyvesant be trailblazers. Let us lead the rest of the city of New York, and even the state of New York, in a movement towards increasing student representation. We are nearly 3,300 students who have concerns, suggestions, and a voice. It's time for that voice to be heard within the school, within the city, and within the state. Our recommendations can do a world of good for Stuyvesant High School, and over time, if we succeed, we can try to implement a system of student representation, like that of Massachusetts, in our own state, so that the New York education system can improve and we can receive the representation we deserve, and improve the education system that is an integral part of our lives.

A New Summer Plan

By JILL CHOW

Spending entire summers taking prep courses has become a fact of Stuyvesant life. Whether it is for the Specialized High School Admissions Test or the SATs, many students' summer plans revolve around these strenuous programs. Rising juniors start scrambling in May and June to register for the classes without thinking twice about using the summer as a time to focus on other areas. While some test prep may be beneficial for students, dedicating an entire vacation to practice problems and worksheets is not the healthiest way to spend your time.

Sure, scoring high on the SAT test is a step forward in the college process. Many think of it as one of the most crucial components of a stellar application—and test prep is not a bad thing. It bolsters your academic skills and helps you perform better. But colleges do not just consider test scores. Volunteering, as well as being involved in the community, is another important component of an application.

The summer before sophomore year, I put in my time doing test prep and focused mainly on my studies. I did volunteer, but it was difficult for me to put in many hours, given the three hours a day, five days a week



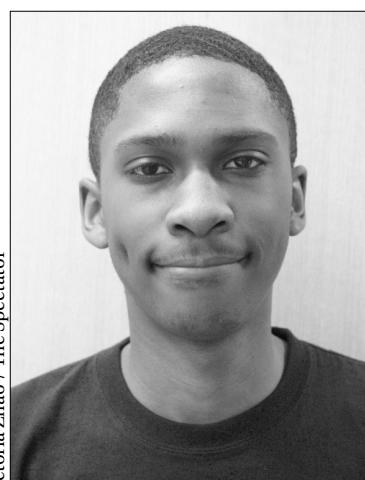
own summer, to having different options for exploring my own interests. I want to be a lawyer, so I signed up for a weeklong program at Columbia in which I built up courtroom experience and got a glimpse of college life. We learned about the basics of the law, along with how to properly perform a trial, and also about standard forensics. We were given a crime scene to investigate, along with affidavits to read. The students were split into groups of witnesses, and attorneys for either the defense or the state. In one week, we had to attend lectures from nine to ten, and put together a court case. All in all, I felt like a new person when I came back. One week helped to develop my skills and leadership in more ways than months of dull, extraneous test prep; it encouraged me to speak up more and to voice my opinions. The newfound leadership qualities are not only the kind that colleges look for, but the kind that I can carry past high school and throughout my life.

I also went back to Garden of Hope. This time, I was able to put in six hour shifts and properly get to know the children. I was able to form solid relationships with them, and lasting memories. Working with them opened my eyes to how fortunate I was to have what I did. The first summer I did this volunteer work, it felt like I was only doing it for college. It was on a limited time and I didn't get a lot out of the experience. However, this summer I was able to form bonds with the people there. I learned to have more patience and I used the leadership qualities I acquired from the Columbia program and applied it to helping the children.

Summer is two months of free time when we can transform who we are and branch out to try new things. By enrolling in consuming prep courses, it takes away a lot of opportunities to explore other aspects of our lives. We can focus on career-building activities, volunteering, or jobs. Certainly, doing well on the admissions test is crucial for our futures. However, it is not worth it if we take away the opportunity for new undertakings.

Stuyvesant students, put aside your fears of failing on the SATs. We study enough. It's about time that we explore other possibilities and get to know ourselves better. Look past the old myth that a 2400 is the golden ticket to Ivy League colleges. Fighting the lure of those daily test prep courses will allow you to branch out and develop in ways that will help you in society. Break the yearly cycle and learn the true key to success: a well-rounded summer.

The Nihilist Education



By GERALD NELSON

Quite famously, we are often told that the best thing we can do for ourselves is to "get an education." Education is supposed to be a continuous process of growth as we gain new knowledge and skills that redefine us and broaden our perspectives. If this is true, and if in school we are living out this process of personal growth and becoming more intelligent, knowledgeable, and skilled individuals, then how many of us are actually happy to be here? Our lives are permeated by uneasiness. There is a constant anxiety, an overcast of despair, a shadow of dissatisfaction that follows us. Though education is supposed to be for our own benefit, we are strangers to it. We approach the classroom with an academic nihilism that is a result of a conflict between what school is supposed to be and how it actually affects our lives. There is a phenomenon of discontent among students that has completely changed how individuals relate to the process of education.

A fundamental problem at the origin of students' discontent is the

contradiction between what school is supposed to be and how it actually operates. What initially convinces kids to drag themselves out of bed and up the school steps is the prevailing belief that education helps to improve us intellectually and make us more useful to society and to ourselves. We yield to the words of our parents and the narrative of society that schooling is fundamentally a good thing. However, students suffer from a feeling of alienation towards education in school because it's a process that deprives them of the right to be the directors of their own actions and assigns tasks that they often see no value in. Measuring student performance through grading is highly impersonal and reduces each student and what he has learned to a numerical evaluation. If fact, grades overtake actual curriculum content as the only thing with decisive value in the learning process, and students focus all their energy on maximizing their graded performance, rather than maximizing their retention of course material. Students become apathetic towards education because they see no value in what they learn. This feeling of apathy and alienation detaches students from a personal relationship with learning, which is a fundamentally meaningful aspect of life. This process of detachment is shown through the way students approach their studies. When a student is assigned biology homework, for example, she does it not because she wishes to become more knowledgeable in biology, but rather because she wants to get a good grade. Biology is not meaningful to that student and she learns it as an assigned exercise. She seeks not to understand biology any more than she needs to pass the next exam. Biology means nothing to her; she learns it to get a grade. It's the grade that matters.

This attitude excludes an important trait of human existence. Learning is a process that allows human beings to change and become better than they were before. It is a process of growth that alters us internally and constantly changes the manner in which we exist. If people no longer have a relationship with learning, then a fundamental aspect of human nature is lost. People are now fundamentally different in that they no longer claim proprietary rights over the things that go into their heads. They see the whole process of education as meaningless, and therein live much less meaningful existences.

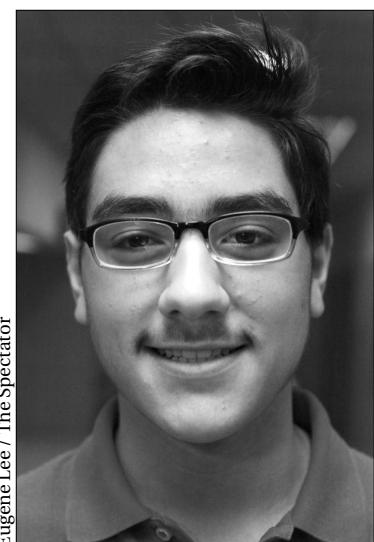
It becomes an automatic decision, a near addiction almost, to just sign up.

taken up by studying. I was only able to go to the summer camp for two days in a week, with limited hours. I just couldn't squeeze in the time due to juggling various volunteer works along with SAT classes. I was unable to get close to the children at Garden of Hope, a program that aids victims of domestic violence, or campaign successfully for congressional candidate Carolyn Maloney's congressional race. While I was able to study as well as volunteer, my volunteer work had little impact on me, as I was not able to put in all of my effort.

Last June, with only two summers left before college applications, I had a choice to build up my resume and focus on becoming a better rounded person or to focus on my test skills. I had already attended one semester of SAT prep class the year before and I realized that year after year of continuous drilling can soon become a hindrance to students who want to discover personal hobbies and experience life as a teenager outside of the constraints of an endless workload. For once, I wanted to be able to explore other possibilities.

This new sense of freedom was different for me; I wasn't used to being able to plan my

Opinions



Eugene Lee / The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

Every summer, as I shift gears between "the real world" and high school, I reconsider the value of school. I ask myself why I spent a full year of back-breaking work studying classes like biology, geometry, and art appreciation, when most of that knowledge will never be useful to me as an adult. After spending my summer at a large hedge fund, watching business in action, these questions continue to haunt me.

The reason going back to school every September pains me so much is not because I don't find it interesting—on the contrary, I'm intrigued by the wonders of science, the logic of math, and the intricacies of history—it's because

I believe that most of what I learn in school won't be necessary for me to be successful in life. In my office this summer, the math geeks crunched numbers, the analysts did research, the "techies" built software, the communications team talked to investors, and the lawyers complied with SEC regulations. Everyone in the office had a different purpose. Different people need different skills in life, but we don't need to know everything.

In a world of teams, like the hedge fund, specialized knowledge is necessary contribute to an overall successful whole. Just like every member of an orchestra is expected to practice his individual part, each person has his own role in his school, company, industry, and global economy. Working to fulfill that role most effectively, rather than trying to fill every role, would make us more productive and effective members of the global community.

In his book *Practically Radical*, entrepreneur William Taylor explains, "It's not good enough to be "pretty good" at everything. You have to be most of something... The middle road has become the road to nowhere." Businesspeople have learned this lesson—but our schools are lagging behind.

The current education system promotes mediocrity

in many fields as opposed to excellence in a few fields. We believe one's overall grade average is more important than individual grades. A student who excels at math but doesn't perform well in English class is pressured to improve his or her writing before moving on to perfecting his or her math skills. What we miss is that, in life, it is more important to excel in one field than to try to

in specific areas. Moreover, this would allow students who are unsure of what they want to do sample a variety of courses they find attractive. These advanced classes already exist, but, due to the vast number of required courses, many students miss out on these great opportunities. For courses that don't already exist, like civics or negotiation, the Board of Education should develop curricula.

On a systemic level, the result of such a change would be outstanding. Students would be more motivated to learn, and more excited for their classes. With more interested students in the class, teachers would be able to teach at a higher level, and go more in depth, without fear of losing the attention of students who are simply taking the class because they are required to do so. Genuine interest will lead to higher quality learning. Higher quality learning will lead to a United States with stronger leaders, and a more powerful economy.

We live in a time of shifting geopolitical power, during which Chinese technology, science, engineering and entrepreneurship are surpassing those of the United States, and the United States struggles to remain the world's dominant power. Our future is dependent on our students; if we allow them to continue justifying their mediocrity with self-ag-

grandizing terms like "well-rounded," then our country is doomed to the abyss of igno-

Different people need different skills in life, but we don't need to know everything.

tackle hundreds of fields and, at best, be average in most.

Students should have fewer required classes, and instead be allowed take more advanced electives, which would facilitate the achievement of excellence

The current education system promotes mediocrity in many fields as opposed to excellence in a few fields.

rance, and consequently, failure as a nation. On the other hand, if we instead embrace the beauty of lopsided genius, the United States will remain the global trailblazer, trend-setter, innovator, and leader of world affairs.

The Logic Hidden in Religion

By SOHAM DAGA

Bad grades, sleepless nights, a bad relationship, or unexplainable irritation; every student in Stuyvesant experiences these problems sooner or later. We can't find the answers within ourselves, with our friends, or even with our guidance counselors. So, perhaps it's time to look somewhere else: namely,

can, in many cases, be positively implemented. The religion that allowed for me to control my thoughts, emotions, and manage my time is Jainism.

As the sixth largest religion in the world, Jainism is based on non-violence, truth, and the concept of a soul. Unlike other religions, a god or other sort of supreme-being is not part of the belief system because it is deemed illogical. The first known Jain leader, Lord Rishabhdev, lived around 6500 BCE and was, according to some theories, the founder of the Indus Valley Civilization. Some traditions established back then are still followed today.

From Thursday, August 25, to Monday, September 5, Jains celebrated their most important festival, "Payurshana," which is similar to Judaism's Yom Kippur or Islam's Ramadan. The festival encompasses two primary aspects: fasting and a ceremony called "Pratikrama." The translation of "Pratikrama" is "returning from violations." In essence, this means looking back at the previous year and analyzing the mistakes we made so we do not repeat them in the future. This core idea behind "Pratikrama" can be to every student's life and act as a beneficial experience.

Analyzing one's actions allows one to avoid making the same mistakes twice. If a certain study method for a test does not work and we do not think about it after receiving the bad grade, we will continue repeating the mistake and getting bad grades.

But by analyzing the method after employing it once, we can better tailor it for a successful outcome and be better planners for the future.

To identify your mistakes, look through the lens of three main vows of Jainism: Non-Violence, Truthfulness, and Non-Attachment. Non-violence simply means not obstructing anybody's life physically or mentally. Examples include insulting someone verbally, bul-

lying, and fighting. To practice non-violence is simply to treat all creatures and persons with the utmost respect and care. Following this practice would allow students to interact more openly with the people around them and build friendships, as

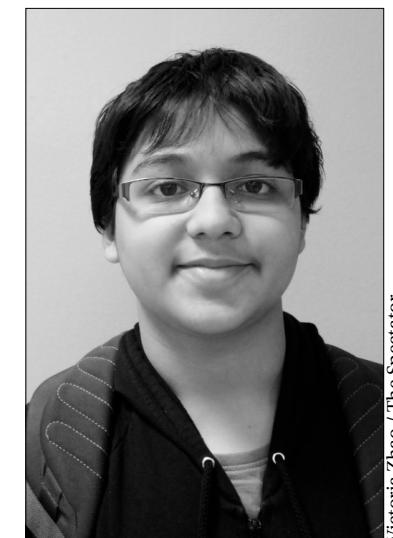
well as useful connections. Offering respect to teachers will earn a student greater respect in return—which can be helpful when report cards come around.

Truthfulness, though seemingly clichéd, actually has a distinct meaning in Jainism. Truthfulness is defined as being completely aware of one's conscience and being careful of everything one says. One's conscience in Jainism is defined as our ability to be completely aware of the reasoning behind each thought, each emotion, each action, and also our ability to control these things. For example, saying, "The jeans have become too small for you," is technically a lie. In reality, the height of the person increased and the jeans size remained the same. Though trivial, it illustrates how we do not understand everything we say. Truthfulness decreases mistrust and suspicion, allowing teachers and friends to believe and understand you in situations where there is a capacity for doubt, such as when your printer is actually broken.

Lastly, Non-Attachment means only using or buying what we will actually use and controlling our endless desires. This is probably the hardest vow of Jainism to follow, but there exist vast number of benefits as well. It allows someone to save and be more responsible with our money, avoid negative feelings like jealousy, and have less cluttered rooms. Controlling one's desires also allows one to

Distractions, obsessions, and panic are all attachments or emotions that non-attachment can solve.

lying, and fighting. To practice non-violence is simply to treat all creatures and persons with the utmost respect and care. Following this practice would allow students to interact more openly with the people around them and build friendships, as



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

control one's volatile emotions and reactions, which Jainism states are at the root of all major problems. Distractions, obsessions, and panic often lead to stress and are all attachments or emotions that practicing non-attachment can solve.

Just this short analysis of one festival in one religion gives a lot of guidance in how to go about our work and improve social interaction. Learning more about one's religion or any religion can teach one even more. I am not saying that everyone should learn the mantras and prayers involved in their respective religions; simply trying to understand the logic behind certain practices and beliefs is enough. Do not think of religion as a superstition, but as a philosophy of living, think of religion as a superstition, but as a philosophy of living.

Truthfulness is defined as being completely aware of one's conscience and being careful of everything one says.

Often, we think of religion as being superstitious or a spiritual supplement to our daily lives. However, the logic behind the tenets of a religion

Opinions

The Solomon Column: Primary The President



Mosaffa Elmahdy / The Spectator

By DANIEL SOLOMON

Everyone has a breaking point, a certain amount of frustration he is willing to bear before he sticks his head out the window and yells, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore." I had my very own Howard Beale moment this week after President Barack Obama's address to a joint session of Congress on jobs and the economy. Coming on the heels of a summer of wild stock market swings and disappointing employment numbers, he proposed a small-potatoes package of tax-credits and modest infrastructure spending that won't put enough people back to work and is unlikely to nudge our stubbornly stagnant GDP upward.

If you listened to the cable-news post-mortems, you heard the reasoning behind Obama's lackluster speech: the president couldn't push for a second stimulus or any major initiative because the Republicans control Congress, the key to victory in 2012 is hewing close to the center, and a bunch of other lame excuses. Of course, for us progressives, this isn't anything new.

We have watched in horror over the past three years as the president fumbled the ball on every issue that mattered, giv-

ing up the game before he was even tackled by the other side. First there was the health-care debacle. Obama initially embraced Medicare-for-all, then supported a public option, a compromise that the left was okay with. But he reneged on that too, championing a giant give-away to insurance companies instead, a bill that didn't purge medicine of what was really ailing it: the profit motive.

Next came the fin-reg overhaul, which failed to end the casino culture of large banks and brokerage houses and did little to address the root causes of the 2008 economic meltdown, not to mention that the modest improvements it did make are currently being undermined by lobbyists from organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. Finally, we witnessed the fiscal policy fiasco, a pitched battle that started with skirmishes over the Bush tax cuts in December and concluded with the debt-ceiling surrender in August.

The repeated routs are certainly upsetting, but not as much as the fact that some fights were never fought. In the wake of the BP oil spill, the administration passed on an opportunity to advance a cap-and-trade scheme that would have gone a long way to protecting our environment and future from the devastating

effects of climate change. It punted on its promises to Hispanics and never introduced a comprehensive immigration reform bill that would permit the undocumented to come out of the shadows and begin down the path to citizenship. It ran away from the workers of Wisconsin earlier this year as they struggled to preserve their collective bargaining rights.

I don't know about you, but I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired, of the betrayals and travails, of having to turn to Bill Maher every Friday night to stop my head from exploding. I refuse to accept one more cop-out from Obama, and no else should either. Three years ago, the president presented himself as a populist-progressive, the second coming of FDR. And we elected him, overwhelmingly. He's morphed into a wishy-washy centrist, a warmed-over version of Jimmy

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Carter. All the while, America has big problems that require

big solutions, but an administration that seems unwilling or unable to think big.

In a way, my criticism may resemble that of the Tea Partiers. It, however, differs from theirs in two respects: I don't want a person from that cadre of Know-Nothings called the Republican presidential field to ever darken the door of the White House; I prefer executive impotence to executive stupidity. I don't rejoice in seeing the President stumble; I truly want him to succeed.

Rather, I would like Obama to move back to the left. That won't happen unless liberals mount an insurgency against him, so, let's do it, let's primary the president and make him earn back the faith we placed in him in 2008. One might automatically think that such a challenge is self-destructive and would weaken the Democratic Party. History tells a different story.

FDR almost faced a similar fate in 1936, when Huey Long planned to throw down the gauntlet, a scrap prevented only by the Louisiana senator's assassination. Before his untimely death, though, the threat he posed compelled Roosevelt to seek passage of the Second New Deal, a program that brought us Social Security, unemployment insurance, the Works Progress Administration, and the Wagner Act.

The question then becomes not a matter of if, but a matter of who, who will be Obama's Huey Long? I have two people in mind: Bernie Sanders, the Democratic Socialist senator of Vermont, and Russ Feingold, the former Democratic senator from Wisconsin. Sanders became an icon to many of us on the left when he filibustered an extension of the Bush tax cuts for the rich in an eight-hour floor speech. He is a Socialist not in the tradition of Lenin and Stalin but in that of Mother Jones and Eugene Debs. He is

a man deeply committed to social justice and economic fairness with the gusto needed to back it up. Feingold, who went down in defeat in his re-election bid last year, is cut from the same cloth. He was the only legislator to vote against the Patriot Act and, post-Senate, created an organization with a mission to combat corporate control of our political system.

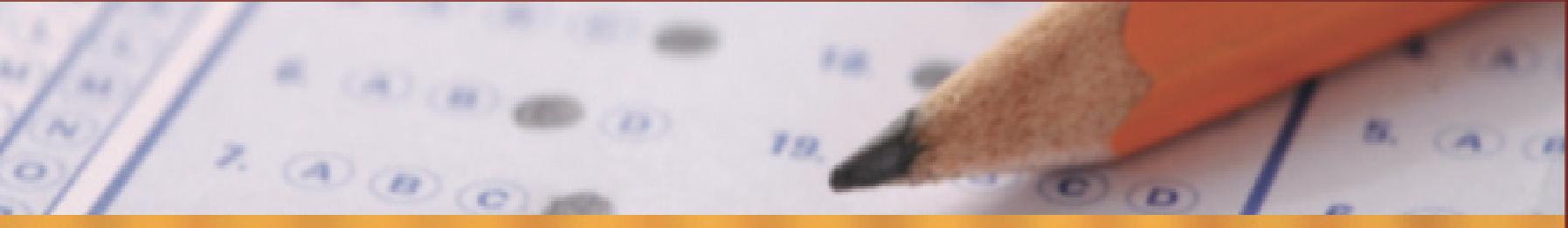
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Both men would give the President a run for his money; some might fear that they could knock him off, but that's okay too. If Obama can't be salvaged, we have to work out other options. Ultimately, the Democrats must nominate someone who can give voice to the principles we have stood by for a century, someone who is not afraid to point out the danger posed by an increasingly extremist Republican Party. Else, on January 20, 2013, we could be sitting through Rick Perry's inauguration.

Cartoon



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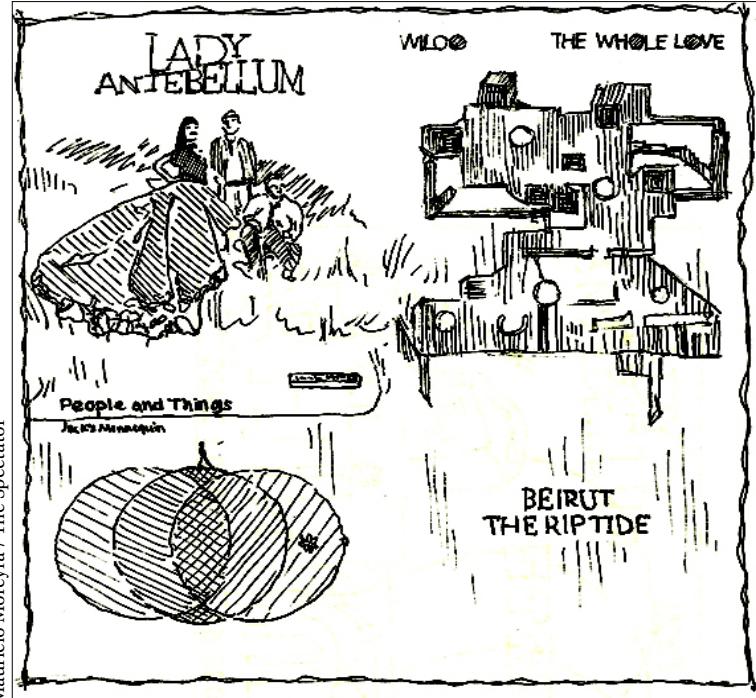
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Arts and Entertainment

Fall A&E Music Preview



Mauricio Moreyra / The Spectator

By NIKI CHEN
and PATRICK LOI

Many Stuyvesant students often don't have enough time to check out new music releases or browse through the latest albums. This column makes it easier: we've selected six varied albums that are coming out this fall that we think are worth checking out. Whether you need the scoop on the latest mainstream pop album or the hottest modern American folk band, we've got you covered.

Demi Lovato — Unbroken
Release Date: 9/21/2011

After a two year hiatus, Demi Lovato returns with her comeback third studio album, "Unbroken." The album's lead single, Skyscraper, demonstrates Lovato's growth as an artist and reflects her triumph over her personal struggles. The single is a soft ballad composed with a lonely piano accompaniment and Lovato's soft, acoustic vocals. The simple composition and general lack of post-production allow her natural voice and raw emotions to pour through the entire song. Her vocals evolve throughout; initially, her voice is constantly breathy and quivering, but later it becomes more confident as Lovato declares that she will not be torn down.

The album will contain a mix of some intense songs like "Skyscraper", "Fix a Heart," and " Mistake," as well as an abundance of fun and edgy singles. Lovato says the album will showcase more of an R&B style, a result of her experimentation with different collaborators and producers, such as Missy Elliot, Timbaland, Iyaz, Jason Derulo, and Dev. A much more mature sounding album than her previous work, "Unbroken" is sure to illustrate her departure from typical pop and prove that she is not just a Disney

star anymore.

Wilco — The Whole Love
Release Date: 9/27/11

Wilco, the alternative rock band formed in 1994, is leaving behind its old, slow, rusty guitar sound with its new album, "The Whole Love," due to come out on September 27. In its past albums, Wilco has been known to use acoustic guitars accompanied with low, toughened vocals, with most of the songs being touching and slow.

In "I Might," the album's first single, Wilco showcases its new style. Though lead singer Jeff Tweedy still croons over the instruments with the same low, scratchy voice he used in past songs, the variety of sounds in the background of "I Might" include much more than the clatter of drums and the twang of a guitar. Light, whistle-like synth can be heard ringing endearingly throughout the faster-paced, peppy, wholesome song. "I Might" is a delightful transition from Wilco's slower songs, and The Whole Love will be an album worth looking into as an excellent showcase of a newly acquired sound for the band.

Lady Antebellum — Own the Night
Release Date: 9/13/2011

Fans have been anxiously wondering whether Lady Antebellum's third studio album, "Own the Night," will be able to match the group's successful and critically acclaimed "Need You Now." What makes Lady Antebellum different from most other groups is its country-pop style and the way it beautifully contrasts and blends male and female vocals. The group states that the album strives to have an energetic, youthful, reckless-in-love feeling, with most of the

songs based on the group's personal experiences.

The new album includes the country-topping single, "Just a Kiss," which feels like a "Need You Now" retread; it follows the same formula with delicate vocal deliveries on the soft verses and catchy choruses laced with desperate passions and sexual tension between the vocalists. Through the beautiful stories conveyed in the songs, the theme of the album captures sentimental, relatable memories and intense emotions and delivers them through music.

Unfortunately, it feels like Lady Antebellum is playing it safe, both musically and lyrically, by releasing tracks with the same composition as its old songs. Nevertheless, this lack of innovation is unlikely to deter listeners and will likely be embraced by the fan community.

Kelly Clarkson — Stronger
Release Date: 10/25/2011

Though Kelly Clarkson has been somewhat absent from the music scene for the past two years, she's now ready to return with a new album this October. "Stronger" will incorporate a lot of Clarkson's signature musical elements, such as her killer vocals and her loud, sassy, and snarky rock-pop elements. Clarkson trades her powerful, poppy love songs with massive choruses like "Since U Been Gone" and "My Life Would Suck Without You" for a softer lead single, "Mr. Know It All."

Although the single isn't as pop-rock edged and dynamic as her past hits were, the song has the great quality of not "trying too hard." The simple musical composition forgoes superfluous dance beats, truly emphasizing Clarkson's flawless vocals and the emotional lyrical subtext. Subtle traces of piano and strings are meticulously laced throughout the melody, showing restraint despite serving sass and attitude.

The record is meant to capture Clarkson's raw voice as if she was singing live, which is rare among pop artists today. The album has an abundance of personal moments and Clarkson even stated that a few songs would have a country vibe. Nonetheless, it is a Kelly Clarkson record and it will satisfy millions of hungry fans everywhere.

Beirut — The Rip Tide
Release Date: 7/30/11

With the use of ukuleles, trumpets, accordions, and guitars, American world music band Beirut brings together symphonies of sound in its new album "The Rip Tide," which was released on August 30. Because of the use of more eccentric instruments, Beirut's style is unique and folky, making it something wholly exciting to listen to. Most of the band's music involves horns and strings, and it is this mix of sounds that creates a loud crash of beautiful harmonies with Zach Condon's smooth, round, voice traveling above the sound.

"The Rip Tide" features Beirut's new single, "East Harlem." The song starts off slow, with just Condon's unwavering voice and a ukulele, but instruments pile on and, by the end, it becomes a loud chorus of sound with trumpets ringing proudly in the back and accordions humming along with violins, keyboards, and a group of voices. If the rest of "The Rip Tide" is anything like "East Harlem," then the album is automatically a must listen.

Unaccustomed Earth: Stories of Indians and Bengalis in America



Niki Chen / The Spectator

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

A middle-aged woman sits in her suburban home, gazing at her wizened father, who gleefully plays with her toddler son. Though she feels a motherly joy watching the father who raised her as an American enjoy the company of his grandson, she cannot bring herself to utter the words at the tip of her tongue. The loneliness of being a stay-at-home mom looms over her like a stark shadow. She is unable to ask her father, who lives across the country, to move in with her.

"Unaccustomed Earth," a book of short stories, published in 2008 and written by Pulitzer-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri, tells eight stories about characters of Bengali and Indian descent living in America. Though the stories involve such disparate individuals as a teenager growing up in Boston, a house-wife in the suburbs of Seattle, and a man fighting his alcoholism, they all show the characters' difficulties as they attempt to fit into society while holding on to their own cultures. Many struggle to connect with younger family members who seem to have fully embraced their American identities.

The titular short story of Lahiri's compilation examines one woman's difficulty connecting to a distant father. "Unaccustomed Earth" tells the story of Ruma, who, after her mother dies, moves with her husband Adam and her son Akash to the suburbs of Seattle. She leaves most of her life behind in New York, including a multiplicity of other mothers to chat with, a job as lawyer at a successful firm, and proximity to her widower father. Her husband is often away on business, and most days she stays home and takes care of her son, too exhausted with life to pursue her legal career.

The short story takes place during her father's one-week visit, his first to the Seattle home. For weeks prior, Ruma encouraged him to move in with the family, as a favor to her mourning father. In truth, she does it mostly as a way to cure her chilling ennui.

Though it only describes a small snippet of Ruma's life, the short story shows the trials faced by a stay-at-home parent. What it does best, though, is to show the compassion Ruma begins to feel for her father as he buys Akash toys, gardens with him, or simply reads him a bedtime story. She is able to bridge the emotional and generational gap between her and her father through their mutual love for her soon.

In another of her short stories, "A Choice of Accommodations," Lahiri examines the wavering connection between Amit and Megan, a married couple that experiences great divide after many years of marriage. In the piece, they attend the wedding ceremony of Amit's old college friend, Pam. Megan is initially jealous, because part of her knows Amit was in love with the bride when they attended Columbia University together. Throughout the story, the reader can sense a stark passive-aggressiveness between Amit and Megan as a result of this rooted jealousy.

As the wedding continues, Megan and Amit grow further apart, despite pledging to stick together during the event. Amit complains about the woes of marriage to another guest, a hopeful bride-to-be who is in-

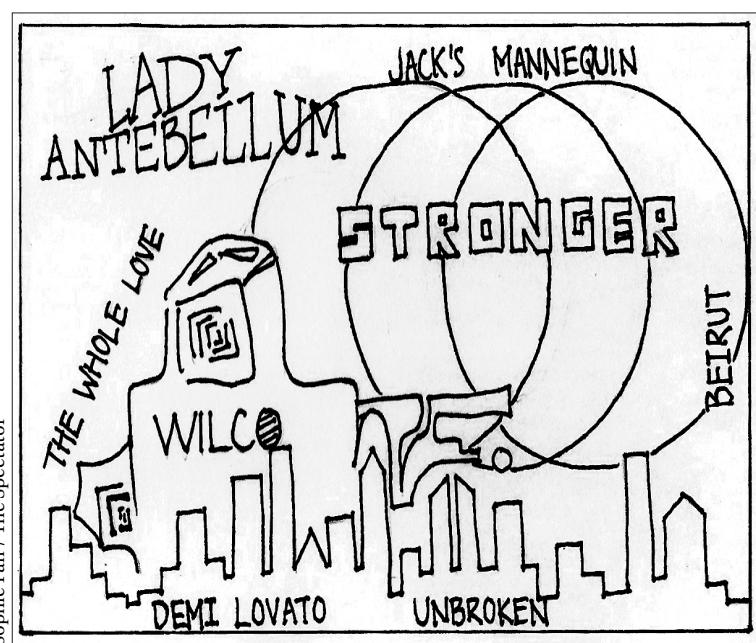
In both stories,
Lahiri shows
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members.

sulted by his cavalier attitude toward his wife. Meanwhile, Megan's flirtations with other men simply make Amit thankful that she is occupied.

Lahiri paints a realistic portrait of marriage that is refreshing and relatable throughout the text. Though the two partners are flawed in the way they treat one another—showing mutual disregard during the wedding—they put aside their trivial conflicts the day after the ceremony and rekindle their romance by re-consummating their struggling but lasting love.

In both stories, Lahiri shows the emotionally charged, yet ultimately stable, bonds that exist between family members. Through the timeless struggle between daughter and father, husband and wife, and many others, "Unaccustomed Earth" details the hardships of Indian- and Bengali-Americans as they adjust to their new identities, as all immigrants must learn to do in the overseas homes they build for themselves.

Sophie Pan / The Spectator



Arts and Entertainment

Nickel-and-Dime: Sugar Sweet Sunshine



Sugar, Sweet Sunshine, 126 Rivington Street.

By PRIA ISLAM

After roughing it in the big city, juggling corporate survival jobs and auditions, aspiring actresses Peggy Williams and Debbie Weiner decided one day to ditch the theater crowd and open a bakery. After Williams and Weiner spent a year and a half experimenting in their home kitchens, their shop, Sugar Sweet Sunshine, finally opened its doors in the fall of 2003, equipped with a menu of killer cupcakes and an abundance of charm.

The laid back Lower East Side bakery fills you with warmth from the moment you walk in. The brightness of the orange, 70's themed décor, combined with the warmth of the ovens and the smell of freshly baked cupcakes puts you into immediate sensory overload. But this is far from your run of the mill corner bakery. With flavors ranging from the shop's original Sunshine cupcake, a moist yellow cake with a vanilla buttercream, to the more daring Pistachio "Moose" and Lemon

Yummy flavors, Sugar Sweet Sunshine has a cake for every palate.

"Magnolia Bakery and Crumbs are overrated, not to mention seriously overpriced. This bakery serves up amazing cupcakes and are by far the best I've ever tasted," said senior Adriana Brau-Diaz, who regularly frequents the bakery. There are no out-the-door lines to wait on here. Just scrumptious cakes. A steal at \$1.75 each; \$1.00 for a mini.

Sugar Sweet Sunshine also sells a variety of breakfast treats, mini cheesecakes (\$1.75 each), and melt-in-your-mouth chocolate chip cookies, hot out of the oven for \$0.75 each. Not only affordable, but also convenient, Sugar Sweet Sunshine is located a block away from the independent music venue Cake Shop, which, rather counterintuitively, is not a bakery. After some cool beats and heavy dancing, Sunshine treats are the perfect snacks for the nighttime prowler or daytime cupcake enthusiast.

By PATRICK HAO

For centuries, zealots the world over have given religion a bad name by inciting violence and spewing hatred at those with differing opinions. America has its own share of fanatics, few more infamous than the Westboro Baptist Church, which has made a name for itself by protesting funerals of homosexual servicemen and brandishing lewd signs with anti-gay slurs. This type of "democracy in action" is the subject of satire in writer-director Kevin Smith's new indie horror film, "Red State."

Smith, known primarily for

Red State of Mind

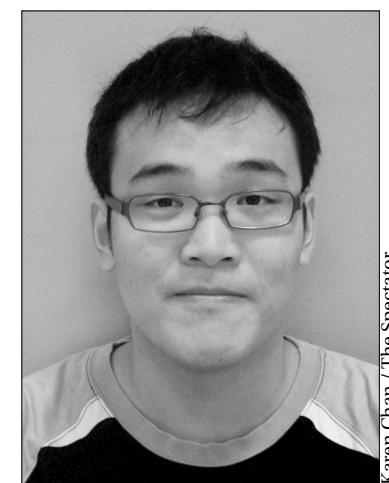
las Braun, and Kyle Gallner) in their quest for sex with an older woman through a Craigslist-type Web site. They answer an ad, but it turns out to be a ruse, and they find themselves in the hands of Christian fundamentalists. In the film, the members of the church are adamant that the boys are agents of Satan because of their promiscuous attitudes, and they decide to punish them using extreme violence.

Leading the church is Pastor Abin Cooper (Michael Parks), who delivers a 15-minute sermon to his congregation—which is made up of his family—with language so hateful against homosexuals, television, and politics that it is almost unbearable to watch. But because Parks delivers his speech with such charismatic electricity, the audience has no choice but to become wrapped up in what he is saying. Only once the audience realizes that there are actually people like Abin Cooper in the world does Smith truly achieve a horrifying effect. What these characters do, and their motivations for doing so, is so grounded in reality that the film's events could just as soon be a headline on CNN as a movie in a theater.

Parks, a magnetic performer, even at the age of 71, is most famous for his numerous roles in Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez movies. But, despite his lengthy body of work, this is his true breakout performance. It is dynamic while remaining understated, and in a perfect world, he would be an early frontrunner for end-of-the-year acting awards.

A slew of strong actors, including John Goodman, Kevin Pollak, and Academy Award winner Melissa Leo deliver strong performances as well, but they become an afterthought when compared to Park's stellar acting.

Unfortunately, Smith's directing ability does not match the film's story or acting talent, and



Karen Chan / The Spectator
this is reflected throughout the movie. Smith has always said he was more of a writer than a director, and in his previous films, such as "Chasing Amy," he used straightforward camerawork aimed at simply capturing the story. This film is a very different sort, and the action sequences are uncomfortably handled. His most egregious error is in utilizing the shaky-cam technique, made famous by "The Bourne Trilogy" and "Cloverfield," in which the camera follows a character as if it were running along with him. Unfortunately in "Red State," it proves to be clunky and awkward.

That being said, for a Kevin Smith film, "Red State" is an impressive example of a director stepping out of his comfort zone. Smith's latest work proves that he has the potential to become more than just a director who plays to his strengths.

However, this potential has yet to be realized; Smith is a great storyteller, but not a great moviemaker, making this short, 80-minute film seem a little long at times. But the cast, especially Michael Parks, elevate "Red State" from just a forgettable indie film to a unique twist on the horror genre that deserves to be commended.

Michael Parks's performance is dynamic while remaining understated, and in a perfect world, he would be an early frontrunner for end-of-the-year acting awards.

racy comedies such as "Clerks" and "Zack and Miri Make a Porno," has struck a new, deeper chord with "Red State." The film follows three horny teenage boys (Michael Angarano, Nico-

Memories & Music: The September Concert



The Table of Silence Project 9/11, a free public tribute and prayer, was performed at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts on Sunday, September 11th.

By EMMALINA GLINSKIS

The clouds are thick and gray as a guitarist strums his slow and soulful final chord, and the crowd stays completely silent. Not a clap or cheer is heard. The audience stands together, hands linked, for a moment of collective remembrance, and reflection on the attacks on 9/11, 10 years before. The shared sense of grief and unity felt by all New Yorkers following the events of September 11, 2001, and during the subsequent anniversaries, has been transformed every year through the power of music into something inspiring with The September Concert, a New York-based and now global organizational event formed after the attacks by philanthropist and New York native Haruko Smith.

The September Concert or-

ganization, which was founded on the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, hosts a series of free concerts in public and private venues throughout the city every year on September 11. Though it stands as a symbol to remember the victims of the attacks, the theme of the organization is aimed more at creating a sense of unity and hope for a better future. "[The concert has] always been about celebrating the beauty of human spirit and celebrating peace," Smith said.

This year, the organization held hundreds of concerts featuring almost every flavor of music: smooth jazz, energetic Latin, angelic choral groups, classical orchestras, and more. Every concert was open to the public, free of charge, at various locations

throughout the five boroughs. Some of the more popular performances included the one at the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center, street performances at the Union Square subway station, a jazz marathon concert at Ashford and Simpson's Sugar Bar (254 West 72nd st.), and a sing-and-dance-along to "Give Us Hope," the September Concert's theme song, which is available on the organization's YouTube channel, at the Merchants' Gate in Central Park.

"This is my first year attending the September Concert," Judith, a spectator at Lincoln Center said. "It's truly moving how we can take something so horrible and turn it into something uplifting and beautiful."

Every year, The September Concert organization grows through the help of volunteer workers and musicians, and the 10th anniversary was no exception. Cities like St. Petersburg, Rome, Poznan, Nairobi, Tokyo, and Sydney now participate in the event as well. People are encouraged to hold their own organized concert impromptu performance in their local areas as part of the series. Most submitted events are accepted as part of the organization's series, which is what makes this organization and its value of unity so wide-spread.

One of the most popular areas of the 10th annual September Concert event was in Battery Park, the heart of the memorial services on Sunday. Flags printed with all the names of lost loved ones covered the park's green lawns. At the Castle Clinton in Battery Park,

hundreds of people gathered to watch a spectacular performance by the Peace of Heart Choir, which was formed in response to 9/11. The choir sang songs of peace in various languages, with

The September Concert organization, which was founded on the first anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, hosts a series of free concerts in public and private venues throughout the city every year on September 11.

short introductory monologues in between each piece. Unfortunately, amongst the crowds cele-

brating peace and unity, the constant drone of helicopters in the distance and the excess number of wandering police officers definitely added tension to the otherwise heartwarming event.

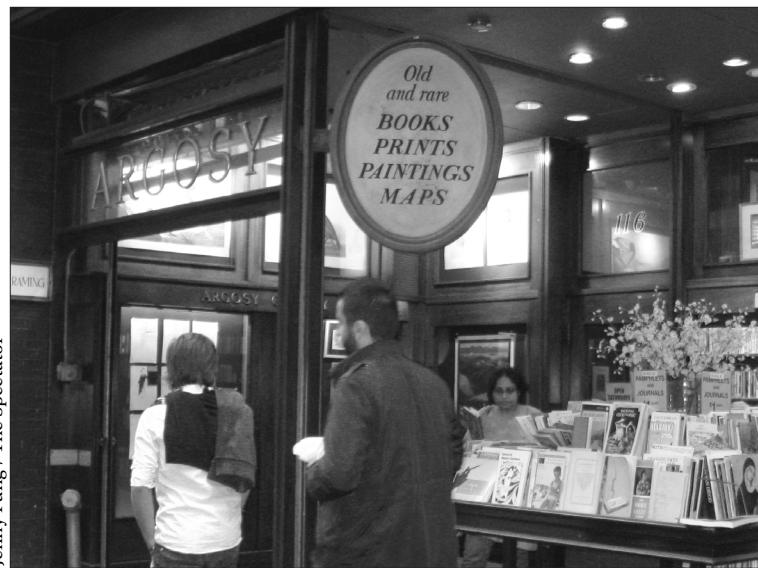
Not all the music performed in Battery Park was part of the September Concert event, but the informal music was just as memorable. Amid the masses of people snapping photos and laying down roses by the Damaged Sphere, a statue that once stood between the towers, a man by the name of John Henderson solemnly started playing "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes. Crowds instantly formed and all chatter stopped as everyone listened quietly and intently. His brief impromptu concert received massive applause.

"Eight or so years ago, this place was a ghost town," Henderson later said. "I wanted to do something to show I cared, and to show my support. Every year I come down here to play, usually around rush hour. It was always just the few ferry commuters who would stop by and listen. It's never been this big."

"It's never been this big" perfectly describes this year's concert series, which included a variety of music in celebration of human life on a day when many lives were taken. With its growing global community, The September Concert helps people around the world understand that the strength and courage of New Yorkers who withstood that tragic day should be praised and never forgotten.

Arts and Entertainment

Small Bookstores, Big Reads



Argosy Bookstore, 116 East 59th Street

Jenny Fung / The Spectator

By JENNY FUNG

You will often find Stuyvesant students sprawled across the floor of Barnes and Noble, a Grande Caramel Frappuccino in one hand and the "Fiske Guide to Colleges" in the other. While Barnes and Noble is the go-to bookstore for many, there are numerous small, independent bookstores around New York City that have much to offer in the way of unique, interesting literature. Unlike large retailers, small bookstores offer an intimate environment for customers, with staff members who give helpful recommendations about where to start looking.

Bluestockings, a bookstore and activist center located on 172 Allen Street, specializes in books that deal with feminism, queer studies, anarchism, and other leftist topics. "We are a radical bookstore in a variety of ways," co-owner and volunteer Catherine Humphreville said, "[Aside from the books,] another way in which we are radical is that we are collectively owned and all volunteer run."

Though the bookstore is managed by volunteers, its rotation schedule ensures that there is never a lack of service. There are always one to three volunteers at

the bookshop who deal with sales, arrange books, and help customers. An event coordinator sets up the free or donation-based night special events, which include everything from author readings to poetry slams.

In the afternoons, Bluestockings is lively with the discussion of the activists, which gather in the seating area. As the groups confer about community projects, members usually sip coffee and nibble on the vegan cookies sold at the store's mini-café. Unfortunately, the café is undergoing renovation and is currently not open to the store's customers. In the meantime, customers can browse through the store's special vegan cookbook section or wander over to the shelf next to the cash register stocked with environmentally friendly feminine products.

For those who prefer to read something more lighthearted, walk back into your childhood as you enter Books of Wonder. After relocating five times, this children's bookstore is now located on 18 West 18th street. The bookstore has both contemporaries and classics for young readers and teens. Whether you prefer "The Diary of a Wimpy Kid" or "Alice in Wonderland," Books of Wonder

probably offers several editions. It also has a section devoted to rare and out-of-print children's books, due to its antique bookshop origins.

"I was tired of new books. I just wanted to deal with antique books, and so I took my own store," owner Peter Glassman said. "We didn't have quite enough books to fill the bookcases, so we bought stacks of children's books and people responded very positively. The whole emphasis became equally split between new and antique children's book."

Children of all ages can be seen sitting on the carpet, hunched over old classics or contemporary storybooks. On Sunday at noon, they gather with their parents for a staff-led read-aloud. The color-

der's catalogue of old, rare, and collectible children's books. One of the books currently for sale is a signed first edition copy of "The Phantom Tollbooth" by Norton Juster. In addition, Books of Wonder is also the only bookstore that has the whole collection of the World of Oz books written by L. Frank Baum. The iconic character Dorothy appears not only in the books, but also on mugs, puzzles and cards for purchase at the store.

Another bookstore that sells antique books is Argosy Books on 116 East 59th Street. In fact, Argosy exclusively sells used and out-of-print books. Upon entering, you are greeted by the smell of old books and the sight of leather-bound editions lined up in the floor-to-ceiling shelves. The number of titles is overwhelming in the six-floored buildings, which houses everything from sheet music to old maps.

"I was really excited that they have a magic section," said senior Hema Lochan, who purchased six bargain books on her most recent trip to the store. The bargain books, which are priced at \$1 or \$3 each, are displayed in shelves and tables outside of the store. Every two or three weeks, the store changes its promotion and switches the books on the sales rack. Currently on promotion are pamphlets and journals.

The antique books locked in glass shelves inside the store run a great deal higher; rare books can cost up to \$7,000 and some old maps and prints have five-figure price tags. However, most books in the shop—which include original copies of books from the late 1400s—are priced reasonably, considering their rarity.

"We get books from private homes, anything that is old or rare. We sell books of all topics with the exception of textbooks and technical books like bioengineering and such," staff member Naomi Hample said. "After we buy the book, we have to catalogue it, mark it, and price it. There is a whole process before the book is sold."

Though selling antique books is a time-consuming task, being in business for 86 years has helped Argosy build up the collection and reputation that it has today. People from around the globe come visit to read the relics of long-forgotten literature.

So next time you find yourself bereft of a seat in Barnes and Nobles, go browse through the aisles of some small, independent bookstores. Whether you pick up a feminist novel, a children's storybook, or the first edition of "The Great Gatsby," you would find yourself lost in a different realm of the literary world.

"We are a radical bookstore in a variety of ways."
—Catherine Humphreville,
co-owner of Bluestockings

ful posters and original artworks by children's book artists that decorate the walls around them only add to the friendly vibe.

Books of Wonder is not just for tiny tots, given the many children's book enthusiasts who join Books of Wonder Collector's Club each year. By paying \$50 for a yearly membership, members enjoy 10 percent discount on all purchases, a subscription to the Collector's Club Bulletin, which announces the release of new titles, and access to Books of Wonder



Books of Wonder, 18 West 18th Street

Carolyn Kang / The Spectator

The Two Escobars: Real Violence in Soccer



By CHRISTINE LEE

The viridian soccer field is scattered with players, sweat glistening on their foreheads. A ball soars in a high arc; time seems to slow down as it travels over the goalie's head. At it hits the back of the net, the crowd explodes in wild cheering and the scoring player shouts in victory.

Tall and svelte with shaggy black hair, Andres is a prized and talented sportsman on Colombia's Atlético Nacional team. Pablo, one of the men standing in the crowd clapping, is 20 years older, with curly black hair, a Mario-esque moustache, and a

stout body. He is a powerful drug lord who controls the shady underworld of the Medellin Cartel in Colombia.

They are the two Colombian Escobars.

Underneath these superficial appearances, the two men—though unrelated—are more similar than they seem. "The Two Escobars," a documentary directed by Jeff and Michael Zimbalist, reveals the twisted fates of Andres and Pablo. Their childhood passions for soccer, their chance encounters in adulthood, and even their deaths, are closely linked. The riveting and emotionally striking film reveals the

intertwining of soccer and drugs that developed alongside the rise and fall of Colombia.

Pablo Escobar, a poor boy from the slums of 1960s Antioquia, Colombia, rose to power as a drug dealer. From his lowly beginnings, he grew to resent the wealthy and used his wealth and influence to build entire villages for those in need. But many of his crimes were as dark as his good deeds were charitable. When he felt threatened by the government, Pablo mercilessly bombed towns and murdered police officers. The sight of blood, fire, and crying families made it hard to believe that this was the man that, only scenes before, had been cheered on by the poor.

Andrés Escobar, on the other hand, lived in a middle class home in Calasanz in the 70s. A hardworking student and devoutly religious man, he loved his country and felt obliged to help it and its people through soccer.

Growing up, the two Escobars both shared a clear love for soccer, though Pablo only played for recreation. Through money laundering, he used profits from soccer ticket sales and endorsements to hide his illegal drug dealings. He also helped equip Atlético Nacional to become the best team in Colombia, and it was directly because of his financing that the team was able to rise. He brought in the best coaches and hand picked the best players to

assemble his dream team. Pablo constructed soccer fields for public use that became the playgrounds of Colombia's most talented young athletes. Players were invited to Pablo's ranch for parties and private soccer games. It was here that the two Escobars met. Andrés, with an undeniable talent, joined Atlético Nacional and

The riveting and emotionally striking film reveals the intertwining of soccer and drugs that developed alongside the rise and fall of Colombia.

later became captain.

The two Escobars' fates were entwined even at death. Pablo could not escape the unrelenting anti-drug Colombian government that had turned against

him. He was shot on December 2, 1993. With Pablo no longer controlling the Medellin Cartel, a vicious power struggle arose in Colombia's underworld. Violence exploded at every street corner, and no one escaped—not even the soccer players.

Pablo's money and influence had protected Atlético Nacional, and his death left the athletes exposed. On the night of July 2, 1994, the Gallon brothers, two powerful drug traffickers, shot Pablo for having been rude to them.

It was heartbreaking to watch the scenes of people sobbing at both Escobars' funerals and the shining eyes of those being interviewed. Pablo's death marked an end to a certain amount of peace in the nation while Andrés's tragic murder signaled the end of great Colombian soccer. Colombia's public image was tainted and the country fell into a dark period.

But life is not static. Colombia is nowhere near finished with reforms and has looked over its shoulder to remember its mistakes. It is a country full of people who err, but who also make glorious contributions to society. Using clips from interviews with members of Atlético Nacional, friends and family of both Escobars, and actual footage from the time period, the documentary reveals a universal message: we are not so different from one another.

Madeline Rivera / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

Alex and Brian Ge: Brothers In Tune



Courtesy of Alex Ge
The Ge brothers, Brian (left) and Alex (right).

**By TAHIA ISLAM
and EMMA LICHTENSTEIN**

Only rarely do people have the precise combination of potential and drive to become great musicians. For two brothers, senior Alex and sophomore Brian Ge, this exceptional mix of traits comes naturally through a common love for music. After moving to New York to pursue the city's available conservatories and music teachers, the brothers have flourished together on their own distinct paths as musicians.

Alex Ge: The Virtuosic Horn Player

While one may typically find Alex Ge leading the French horn section of the Stuyvesant Symphonic Band, his involvement in music extends far beyond the classroom.

"Classical music can be rigid, but it also contains every aspect of emotion," he said. "You can convey any feeling imaginable through it, and there's enough [music] literature to do so, which is important to me as a classical musician."

Alex started his musical career at an early age; he decided that he wanted to play the piano at the age of three, after following his mother to her private lessons. While his family lived in British Columbia, Canada, he attended a local music conservatory for piano and won third place in his age group at the national Canadian Music Competition.

When he moved to New York City, Alex took part in the Manhattan School of Music Precollege, a Saturday music school that includes private lessons in performance and instructional courses in music theory. He attended the Special Music School (SMS) at the Kaufman Center, a public middle school for musically and academically gifted children. He continued to pursue the piano until the end of his first year at SMS, when he decided to experiment with a new musical outlet, the French horn.

He drew his inspiration from Dennis Brain, the first French horn player to record every major concerto for the instrument. "I had listened to brass music before, and I was drawn to the French horn because it's the most versatile instrument with the widest range of sounds and timbres," Alex said. "You can have the bright, fanfare sound of a trumpet and the dark, mellow sound of the trombone."

Once he switched to the French horn, Alex started auditioning for more prestigious and competitive music programs. He has been attending Juilliard Precollege for French horn since the start of his sophomore year.

Juilliard Precollege is a highly competitive music program that admits students by audition at a young age and helps develop the skills of a musician at a pre-professional level. Over the past three years, he has participated in the Precollege Symphony, the Precollege Orchestra, and various brass chamber music

groups.

"Chamber music is so intimate, because you have to know what the other group members are feeling and thinking with the same emotion and heartbeat," Alex said. "Right now, we're working on the Böhme sextet, which is gorgeous, with great horn parts."

As far as performing goes, he has played in ensembles at venues across the country. From performing with renowned groups in Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fischer Hall in New York to participating in four consecutive summers of music study in Aspen, Colorado, his music has graced the halls of major classical music venues.

"My favorite performance was playing the opening solo in the second movement of Tchaikovsky's fifth symphony with the Precollege Symphony," Alex said. "Some of the greatest horn repertoire comes from orchestra excerpts, and this one can only be described as epic."

However, at the end of the day, it is not only about his achievements, but also the impact music has on him. "It's definitely made me a better person in that I've learned to communicate better," he said. "The only way to be able to show someone feelings through your music is to understand the person they are and the person you are."

Brian Ge: The Grand Pianist

Following in his brother's footsteps, sophomore Brian Ge is cultivating his own budding musical career. With his parents, grandparents, and brother all highly talented and interested in the arts, Brian grew up with a solid musical base. "I was mostly influenced by my brother because he had started playing two years before me and I just always loved to hear the music he played. I wanted to start playing too, so my mom let me take some lessons."

Brian also attended Special Music School from third to fifth grade, but was home schooled for the following three years because of his dedication to the piano. "It's very important for me

to not slack off in either piano or school, but I can't practice as much during school—only three hours a day as opposed to the five hours I did during the summer," he said.

Despite the difficulty of juggling his passion and school-work, he still enjoys practicing every day. "When you're sitting there, it's the greatest feeling.

more, Brian has performed in numerous venues throughout the world, including Aspen, Colorado, Toledo, Spain, Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Center in New York City, and all of Juilliard's concert halls. He has also performed with famous chamber pianists Wu Han and Rita Sloan. This past summer, he attended the Aspen Music Festival and played with the Aspen Concert Orchestra.

Brian also attends The Juilliard School every day after school to practice the piano as a part of its Pre-College Division. He characterizes his experience studying at Juilliard as one of the most enlightening aspects of his musical journey.

Among other mentors, Brian has studied with Yoheved Kaplinsky, a world-renowned piano teacher. "She has been the most important person in my musical development," Brian said. Having built a strong musical foundation with the help of his family and mentors, he hopes to go far with his talent and accomplishments. "Once I sit down at the piano, I can just focus and forget about everyone else."

The Ge Brothers: The Dynamic Duo

Though each of them has chosen his own musical path, the Ge brothers often collaborate to make music together. "We share a brotherly bond because we're both really musical," Alex said.

Brian accompanies Alex whenever he performs and records audition tapes. "He's the best accompanist I know with respect to musicality," Alex said. "He's very responsive in that every time I try to get an emotion from him, he'll pick it up and do it correctly."

They aid each other whenever necessary and are constantly learning from each other's work. "Our completely different paths of music don't create competition for us," Brian said.

With one another's support, the talented brothers plan to continue playing the music that has played such a pivotal role in their lives for a long time to come.

"Classical music can be rigid, but it also contains every aspect of emotion. You can convey any feeling imaginable through it, and there's enough literature to do so, which is important to me as a classical musician."

—Alex Ge, senior

You feel like you're on top of the world, and you know that you're there because the audience wants to listen to you play. This is why I practice every day; the end result is amazing," Brian said. He also has the opportunity to practice at Stuyvesant, having been appointed one of the school's lead pianists by chorus director Holly Hall his freshman year.

Though he is only a sopho-

The Movie Trifecta

the top was revealed, the screen cut to one word, "Inception," followed by the movie's credits, and deafening, seat-shaking applause. The audience had just witnessed Christopher Nolan's latest wonder, Inception, in what was, for many, an unforgettable cinematic experience. On the opposite side of the spectrum, an audience may be equally as appalled, but for different reasons. Where one moviegoer laughs hysterically at witty banter, another may be searching for an energetic movie to enjoy on the edge of his seat. Despite the increasingly widespread tastes of today's movie audience, there are some factors that please universally.

Going back to Inception, most people loved it for the way it made you question life's limits and provoked thought. By introducing a single miracle exception to real life, it created a whole detailed universe grounded in a two-layered reality. Inception really grasped the innermost desires of its audience, weaving together a plot that left audiences wonderstruck. It's been proved time and time again that the most successful movies always open your mind to a universe

of possibilities. A movie's openness to interpretation creates an experience that grows ingrained in the viewer; watching a movie

In retrospect it all seemed so obvious, but like a gem hidden in plain sight, the secret was unbeknownst to everyone until the very last moment.

that simply goes from point A to point B is only ever good for the length of its airtime at best. Past that, thought provoking movies such as Inception, Forrest Gump,

and Spirited Away have always reigned supreme.

Another pivotal element is surprise. Spontaneity and unpredictability can be the difference between being pleasantly taken aback or predictably disappointed. If a movie can be narrated by a viewer before getting a chance to finish, something is horribly wrong. Especially in recent years, a formulaic approach has mercilessly plagued the movie industry to the point where one can assume the ending of a movie as soon as it begins and still be correct half the time. Usually, a hero reaches a conflict, struggles with it momentarily, but overcomes it against all odds before saving the damsel in distress. What made The Sixth Sense infamous is the way the ending hammered every prediction the audience dared to make. In retrospect it all seemed so obvious, but like a gem hidden in plain sight, the secret was unbeknownst to everyone until the very last moment. Unquestionably, it is shock and awe that makes a movie unforgettable.

On a lighter note, the power of amusement is just as crucial as the aforementioned aspects. The significance of comedy can be argued with only two words: comic

relief. Every movie has it, good or bad. What separates the lions from the lambs is the placement of said relief. There is always that one character who is strategically placed to earn a quick laugh. It is out of these bold few moments of hilarity that good movies are wrought. Comic relief can be found even in Star Wars, a dramatic tale of heated action and conflict. In the Star Wars films, C-3PO takes the demanding role of a droid always commenting on the current fraught situation. In an otherwise serious movie, one droid quelled the tension at hand, one sharp comment at a time.

Ultimately, what all great movies share in common is the ability to shape and adhere to the feelings of its audience. Every movie experience is personalized by the wide range of interpretations available to each viewer. It is through these connections that an audience can forget and focus solely on the adventure before them. Every viewer walks into a movie theater hoping to feed their innate curiosity by taking a trip elsewhere. The silver screen is a joyous escape to many, and that is what truly makes a movie great.



Thomas Duda, sophomore.

By SHAH ALAM and THOMAS DUDA

The top just kept spinning. The hair-raising suspense grew exponentially with every twirl. Some members of the audience laughed, some gawked in sheer amazement, but absolutely everyone was having trouble absorbing the gravity of the last scene. Then, before the fate of

Arts and Entertainment

Beauty of the Gadgets



"Talk to Me," an exhibition using recent gadgets, machines, and other inventions to bring to light the understated beauty of human interaction with technology, is currently being shown at the Museum of Modern Art.

By JAMES KOGAN
and EMRE TETIK

Consider the interactivity of the world we live in—one that is populated by as many forms of technology as there are people who use them. Everywhere we go, we touch this screen, push that button, surf the web, send our emails. But, despite how often we use our devices, we seem to overlook the elegance of the interfaces that allow us to "talk" to our devices.

"Talk to Me," an exhibit currently being shown at the Museum of Modern Art, uses recent gadgets, machines, and other inventions to bring to light the understated beauty of our interactions with technology. But don't be fooled by the word "museum." The exhibit is less of an art dis-

play than it is a presentation of the way information is spread, represented, and absorbed in the digital age. It not only recognizes the importance of the medium involved in our communications, but also asks viewers what kind of impact the new technologies of the 21st century will have on society in the future. In this age in which internet interaction and online social networking are becoming more prevalent, this proves a gripping question.

At the entrance of the exhibit, the theme of interaction with technology is whimsically manifested by video displays of a singing chair, complete with eyes and mouth, being interviewed about his singing career. Another comical display (and a favorite for children) is a projection of Talking Carl, a cute animated square-

shaped creature. Prodding him on a nearby touch screen will cause his likeness to shriek and sometimes even float.

Deeper into the exhibit, the theme is more profoundly evoked with displays of emotion-sensing machines that analyze the thermal energy waves projected by the viewer. Some objects at the

"link" words underlined—if a word is "linkable," it has a string under it, which leads to another part of the page that elaborates on the word and gives more information on it, resembling a physical footnote.

There are, however, more amusing and useful things to be seen, such as a Rubik's Cube for the blind that uses Braille instead of colors. There's the portable hard drive that, upon sensing a spilled liquid, briskly raises itself on mechanical legs as to insure its own safety. Another piece, titled "El Sajjadah", demonstrates an unlikely combination of religion and technology. The work is a beautiful Muslim prayer rug, embedded with various LED lights, which lights up bright blue when aligned towards Mecca.

Not only does the exhibit display astonishing machines and artifacts, but it also creatively presents compelling facts and statistics, such as a pyramid hierarchy of what distracts people the most when they are on their computers, and a graph that uses a network of lines branching off from each other to represent the changes that have been made to Darwin's "The Origin of Species" throughout the various editions that have been released. Lines of different lengths and colors represent chapters, paragraphs, subparagraphs, and sentence changes.

Technology, in whatever shape or form it takes, is a vital part of 21st century global culture. At times, we are so immersed in it that we forget it is around us—we do not see the

Internet but there is no denying its existence. And so, this show is partly for the savvy technophile (the exhibition is packed with QR codes that one can scan with their Smartphone). However, what "Talk To Me" really drives home is the understated beauty of the skillful design that enables

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exhibit play on the theme of interaction by making the abstract concepts associated with computers tangible. "Typography Links," takes the virtual action of clicking on a word, which links you to more information on another page and makes it physical. The piece is a book with certain

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Sports

A Look Back on Hell Week

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struggling to sleep through the excruciating pain.

That night was skit night, a running tradition for the Peglegs, in which the coaches and players come up with skits to make fun of one another. Coaches often try to make fun of players who sit out from "fake injuries" or complain too much, while players try to make fun of the funny things the coaches say by accident or the mistakes they make on the field. The night was definitely the most enjoyable and humor-filled part of camp.

On the last official day at camp, we had three practices, including "The Hills." I knew I wouldn't be able to live with myself if I sat out the last day of practice, so I suited up for the very last workout at camp. After an exhausting two-hour practice, we jogged over to the nearby hills, yelling out the chants we had come up with throughout our time at camp: "I don't know what I've been told. This camp is a pure hellhole."

The Hills combines several types of workouts up and down a steep hill and involves doing sprints, bear crawls, and side shuffles and carrying each other up and down. Halfway through, I pulled the same muscle yet again while in bear-crawl position. As much as I wanted to race the rest of my teammates up those hills, I sat on the side, watching them work each other out while internal tears ran through my aching body. It was an experience I needed to have with them, and if I had the chance to re-do it, I

would have fought through that pain just to have that feeling of accomplishment.

The last night of camp was definitely the most important, moving, and emotional part of camp. After setting up a huge bon-

Despite the pain, torture, soreness, and nonstop practices we all went through at camp, the positives of the camp undoubtedly confirmed the value of hard work and dedication.

fire and eating our marshmallows, varsity members shared the most important experiences in their football careers and what football meant to them. The seniors especially described the importance

of having a successful season this year after such a productive week at camp.

Despite the pain, torture, soreness, and non-stop practices we all went through at camp, the positives of the camp undoubtedly confirmed the value of hard work and dedication. We learned our playbook, had more time to practice, bonded over the pain, and gained the discipline and conditioning we desperately needed.

Regardless, I was eager to get back on that bus and get away from Camp Scatico. I just wanted to go home to my own bed and sleep away all the pain. However, when I thought things over, I realized that camp was probably the best thing that could have happened to the Peglegs. It taught us who we are as a team. I learned that, sometimes, it doesn't matter who the better team is on paper, but rather which team works harder on and off the field. We may not be the most talented team, but we will definitely be the hardest working, most disciplined, and best-conditioned team in the league. After all, hard work is what wins championships.

Looking back at my football years with the Peglegs, I won't be remembering the tough times I had at camp with sadness or regret, because I know that those tough times paid off in the end with a successful season. Instead, I'll be looking back on the wonderful times I had with my fellow teammates, coaches, and trainers. Besides, as coach Mark Strasser always says, "Pain is weakness leaving the body."

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The Untouchables are more optimistic than Winston about the possibility of improving sufficiently in the upcoming months. "The team will be successful this year," Schorin said. "We are going to get stronger physically because that's what separates us from other teams."

The teammates have dismissed Winston's worries and display confidence that they can bring home another championship. "There is always going to be pressure to match last season," Gurvets said. "I wouldn't call it stress, but rather inspiration to succeed."

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fencers with experience who are not on the Stuyvesant team. "I am quite interested in the fresh meat we will be getting," Chen said before the tryouts.

Forty athletes competed for the four open spots on the team. Gurvets and Chen put the hopefuls through a grueling tryout which consisted of pushups, planks, wall sits, running stairs, and cardio workouts. There was no actual fencing during the tryouts because the team was only looking for contenders in good condition, as shown by the fact that a few new fencers with previous experience were not offered spots due to poor form.

After tryouts were held, the

Untouchables began to prepare for their first game, which will take place on Monday, September 26 against NEST+M.

The Stuyvesant team is in the Manhattan II Division and will not face any of its rivals in the regular season. While the team feels comfortable with the competition in its division, other schools pose serious threats to the team. McKee/Staten Island jumped ahead of many schools by starting its practices two weeks before any other team. A Bronx Science fencer added more credibility to his team by gaining an A-rank this summer.

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Boy's Fencing

Untouchables En Garde for Fifth Championship

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Boy's Football

Peglegs Win Home Opener with Slim Margin

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a fake punt play, and picked up the first down.

On the same drive, the Peglegs once again showed their resiliency, when on a fourth-and-28, senior and wide receiver Kris Lulaj caught a 28-yard pass to save the drive. Lulaj had another reception and totaled 55 receiving yards on

this drive alone, but senior and wide receiver Caelin Kaplan later caught the game-tying, 12-yard touchdown pass from Makhmudov.

Lulaj kicked the extra point to put the Peglegs up for good, 7-6. "That extra point won us the game," senior and co-captain Robert Bennett said.

The offense continued to struggle, but in the end, it did not matter. An all around solid

defense and the one touchdown scored proved to be enough for the Peglegs to pick up their first win.

"This game is a wake up call that no matter how easy we think a game is going to be, we still have to go into it thinking we're playing the best team in the league and practice with that same mentality," Biggs said.

Girls' Soccer

Mimbas Looking to Bounce Back

By GABRIELLE GILLOW

The Mimbas, Stuyvesant's girls' soccer team, ended last year's season in last place in the division with a disappointing 4-9 record, falling well short of qualifying for the playoffs. This season, however, the Mimbas are back with a new coach, new players, and new goals for a bounce-back season.

English teacher Hugh Francis will take over for Suzanne Lendzian as the team's coach this year. "Although we all love Ms. Lendzian, she really couldn't show up to our practices very much because of her job and the distance from where she works to Stuy. It's really great having Francis in school with us, because we can always reach him if we have a problem," senior and co-captain Emma Hoffman said.

Along with a new coach, the team also acquired five new players this year. Thirteen of the 20 players on the team are upperclassmen, with seven seniors, so the Mimbas definitely have experience on their side.

"[The seniors] are very helpful and supportive to the new players especially. They really help everyone else improve by leading practices and bringing the team together," junior Alicia Vargas said.

The seniors are not only helpful to the players, but also to Francis, who is still adjusting to his new coaching position. "It has been a wonderful advantage to draw upon [the seniors'] experience and knowledge. The captains have been strong leaders, and [the seniors] have all led by example," Francis said.

However, as could be expected, the team has not yet worked out all the glitches in its game and strategy. In the first game of the 2011-2012 season on Friday, September 9, the Mimbas were defeated 7-0 by the Beacon Blue Demons. The Blue Demons are by far the best team in the PSAL A-II Division; they have been undefeated for the past 39 regular season games, spanning the past three seasons.

"It was tough because some players couldn't play if they didn't have enough practices, so we had very few subs. We need to work on having more momentum and en-

ergy, so some players won't get so tired if they have to play the entire game," Vargas said.

To improve their energy and stamina levels, the Mimbas are hitting the gym and working hard in practice in hopes of acquiring a playoff berth. "This year we're definitely focused more on communicating as a team. We are up against some of the best teams in the city and it is hard going into that being known as the weakest one. We're working more on set plays and actual game plans rather than working on specific drills over and over again," senior and co-captain Zoe Goldstein said.

In addition to trying to improve their stamina, the players are also working on changing the team dynamic. Though a majority of the players on the team returned from last season, they have to learn to act as a cohesive unit again, a problem faced by many teams at the start of a new season. "We all know each other well, thanks to the preseason. The next step is get accustomed to playing together again," Vargas said.

The Mimbas began to see some of their team chemistry reemerge in the second game of the season, on Tuesday, September 13, when they defeated the High School for Math, Science and Engineering Dragons, 3-0. The Mimbas were definitely the dominant team in the match, taking 22 shots on goal compared to just two shots on goal taken by the Dragons, thanks to the Mimba defense.

The tide turned in the third game of the season on Thursday, September 15, against Hunter High School Hawks. The Mimba defense was able to stymie the Hawks offense to settle for a 0-0 tie. The Hawks took 20 shots on goal, while the Mimbas took only two shots. Despite the dominance of the Hawks offense, the Mimbas managed to keep the game scoreless thanks to freshman and goalie Sophia Gershon.

Along with experience, the Mimbas also have time on their side. With plenty of games left in the regular season, there is ample time to smooth out their rough edges.

"For every game, my goal is to score the first goal and to never hang our heads if we don't," Francis said.

Boy's Soccer

Stuyvesant FC Starts Off Season with Win Under New Coach

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using the weight room, so we're getting stronger. It's been a good change," McClean said.

Despite the fact that the team lost several offensive players due to graduation, they still hope to make it into the postseason. "The way we're playing, it's within our ability for sure," junior and goalie Maxwell Berkow said.

The team's strongest opposition in the division is the Beacon High School Blue Demons and Martin Luther King Jr. Knights, both of whom defeated Stuyvesant in last year's campaign and ended up going deep into the playoffs.

Stuyvesant FC's success this year depends on good coaching and underclassmen stepping up. "He's coaching well and we're doing better," Berkow said. "We've settled in and it didn't take long because much in the strategy of our game has changed since

last year."

The team is already 3-1, with its only defeat coming in a 4-1 loss to Martin Luther King Jr. Knights in a game that was closer than the score suggests. Several defensive miscues, particularly failure to clear the ball by the corners, led to easy scores by the Knights.

In the other games, however, the underclassmen have already stepped up. Against Lab Museum United, freshmen Mohammed Haque and Sean Fitzgerald scored two of Stuyvesant's four goals. Freshman Ethan Lochner scored three goals on seven shots in an 8-1 win over Manhattan Center for Math and Science.

"Everybody loses important seniors, and each year it happens. We really count on the younger players to come through and prove their worth, and also the older ones to be leaders on and off the field," senior and co-captain Neil Maheshwari said.

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boy's Soccer

Stuyvesant FC Starts Off Season with Win Under New Coach

By MATTHEW MOY

During the two weeks prior to the first day of school, a time when most other Stuyvesant students were vacationing or hanging out with friends, Stuyvesant FC, the boys' soccer team, was practicing through the summer heat and torrential rains.

However, after all its hard work, the team prepared itself by watching "Rocky" before its first game on Wednesday, September 7 against the Lab Museum United Gators.

The 4-1 Stuyvesant victory was the team's first game since coach Vincent Miller replaced former coach Feliks Fuksman at the start of this season.

The team was also without its top offensive player, senior and co-captain Krit McClean. McClean is serving a suspension of four games, two for participating in a fight during Stuyvesant's 1-0 loss to Francis Lewis High School in last year's playoffs, and two from Athletic Director and Assistant Principal of Health and Physical Education Larry Barth as a result of latenesses.

McClean led the team with 15 goals last season, so his presence will certainly be missed on the off-

fensive front. "I don't think it will be to the effect where we can't win without him. We still have a very good squad this year. We can still pull off some victories without him, but he is a big loss for us," Miller said.

Miller played soccer when he was younger, but the sport he spent the most time playing was baseball. However, he has worked soccer clinics with little kids, primarily of elementary school age. Furthermore, he is no rookie to coaching, as he is also the coach of the girls' softball team and was previously the coach for the girls' junior varsity volleyball team for four years.

Miller has made slight changes to the practice dynamics of the team, creating "a little more organization of practice, with a little more drills than just free play," he said. The team has responded well, and he is happy with the effort that the players have been putting in.

In addition, Miller has brought some new ideas to the table. "We have a much smaller squad of players. He's a little but tougher on us during practice. We started

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Boy's Football

Peglegs Win Home Opener with Slim Margin

By GABE SUNSHINE

The Stuyvesant High School varsity football Peglegs avenged their first loss of the season with a win in their home opener on Friday, September 16 against the Evander Childs Tigers. The win came following a tough 34-7 loss against the South Shore Vikings. The game was truly a defensive contest that saw both sides put up only 13 combined points. However, the Peglegs managed to squeeze out a 7-6 victory.

On the opening drive, Evander Childs scored on a run up the middle. However, the team's attempt at a two-point conversion was snuffed out by the Peglegs' defensive line. "This was the most important moment of the game," senior and co-captain Ian Chan said. "Because we didn't allow them to score here, we were able to win with only scoring a single touchdown."

The Peglegs came up short on their first drive, due to some "miscommunications on our offensive line as a result of blitzes," junior Nathaniel Biggs said.

However, the athletes still showed strength on the field. "[Junior and quarterback] Alen Makhmudov did a great job handling the immense pressure and throwing difficult passes,"

Chan said. "The rest of our team did a great job keeping our composure." Makhmudov was able to step in and make an immediate impact after missing last week's game as a result of a lateness suspension handed down by Assistant Principal of Health and Physical Education and Athletic Director Larry Barth.

"The team stayed cool under pressure," reiterated head coach Mark Strasser. "They were prepared from the get-go and continued to match the intensity of Evander, who overpowered us at times."

The faulty offensive line allowed Evander Childs to regain possession and put together another drive. However, the Peglegs' defense forced a fumble, and was able to recover the football. "That really changed the momentum of the game," Biggs said. "After that, our defense started making big stops." Stuyvesant scored on the ensuing drive and converted the extra point.

One of the most important moments of the game was during the second quarter. It was fourth down, with three yards separating the Peglegs from a first down. Instead of punting it away again, the Peglegs ran

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A Look Back on Hell Week

By KRIS LULAJ

Athletes often work out during the summer, keeping in shape as they eagerly count down the days to the beginning of the season. Stuyvesant footballers do the same, but they also dread the misery and exhaustion of the last week of the summer, infamously known as "Hell Week."

Football camp started on Sunday, August 21 at Pier 40. Though I didn't participate until the following Tuesday because of an incomplete medical form, I didn't find the practices to be that hard. After all, we always had our own beds to look forward to, and time to sleep off the soreness.

I was anxious about my departure to Camp Scatico in Elizaville, New York on Friday morning, but at the same time, excited to be playing football for five straight days. Little did I know that those days were going to be the most tiring and painful, yet most rewarding, of my life.

The "Hell" aspect of the week began to register the first morning, as the team was packing the bus. We ended up having more people than seats and more bags than the bus was able to hold. Unfortunately, the smallest kids on junior varsity ended up sitting on the dirty floor or being crammed into seat corners for two-and-a-half hours.

My first practice at Scatico was at 2 p.m., right after the long ride. Excited to finally be away from Pier 40, I gave it my all for the first time. Practice was fine until conditioning at the end, during which we had to do wind sprints across the field. I went 100

percent and surprisingly found myself with a headache, nausea, and shortness of breath. During the walk back to my cabin, I lagged behind and vomited over the stands. I had never felt so sick in my entire life.

The team devoured its dinner and stocked itself up for another late-night, albeit short, practice. I took it easy, afraid to suffer the same fate I had during the afternoon. If we had not gone to the Cantina to play games and eat snacks that first night after the two grueling practices, it would have been the worst start to camp I could have imagined.

Saturday morning, we woke up bright and early, ready to take a light morning jog, stretch, and do a lot of calisthenics. Following that, we had another two practices, separated only by lunch and dinner. After battling the summer heat and demanding workouts, we thought we had seen the worst, only to find out we had another hour of conditioning.

By the end of the day, we had gone through four practices lasting a total of nine hours. Lucky us. If it wasn't for Hurricane Irene, we might have all died from heat exhaustion and would have gladly accepted the escape from Hell. However, the coaches decided to give us Sunday off to ourselves due to the expected flooding. We spent most of the day inside, eagerly waiting to go to the Cantina that night.

Around 6 p.m., most of the team was gathered around the chess tables when we saw the light outside suddenly turn off. Ten minutes later, the director of the informed us that power lines



Victoria Zhao / The Spectator

went down nearby and that the whole area was out of power, putting an end to our few minutes of fun.

Instead, we all went to bed early, knowing we had four practices in store for us the next day, regardless of how bad the weather would be—mud or no mud.

Contrary to what we had thought, the weather was beautiful, and it didn't take too long for the sun to clear up the previously flooded field. However, our sweat-soaked pads and clothes, which the hurricane had not given us a chance to dry, stank up the entire camp.

That same day, I limped off the field during the second practice. I could no longer walk due to a strained hip flexor, which I could not move without assistance. I iced, stretched, and rested the muscle for almost 24 hours.

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Boy's Fencing

Untouchables En Garde for Fifth Championship

By KEVIN MOY

A three-peat is one of the most rewarding accomplishments for a sports team. A four-peat or a quat-row is so rare that the phrase has yet to catch on. A fifth consecutive championship is virtually unheard of. That is what the Untouchables, Stuyvesant's boys' fencing team, will attempt to achieve this season.

The Untouchables enter the 2011 season having won the Public School Athletic League (PSAL) Championship for the fourth consecutive time. The team was also undefeated in the regular season.

Senior and co-captain Simon Gurvets said, "We were undefeated simply because the other teams didn't match our caliber of play. All the challenges came during the playoffs."

The Untouchables adjusted well to the new multi-weapon competition. Épée competition was introduced this year, along with the standard foil competition. During the championship, points were awarded to each school depending on how it placed in épée and foil competition. The team with the highest combined score was crowned champion.

Last year, the Untouchables lost to McKee/Staten Island Technical High School 45-37 in foil. However, they defeated Bronx High School of Science in épée competition with a score of 45-29. The combined



Senior and captain Simon Gurvets prepares for the upcoming season.

foil and épée score secured the Untouchables as overall champions.

As this season fast approaches, coach Joel Winston is trying to reshape his team. The Untouchables lost Andrei Tapai ('11) and Rienzi Gokea ('11), both starters and core members of last season's épée fencers, to graduation.

"There is a lot of stepping up to do to fill the shoes of the seniors that left," Winston said. "Thank god that our foil didn't lose strength."

Winston noted that despite the success in the last four years, the team faces an uphill battle when seeking its fifth straight championship. "It's always mystifying to start your season without your full team at full strength," Winston said. "Right now, I haven't seen full

strength yet and at this rate, we are not going to get [the championship]."

The team hopes to find that strength in sophomore Phillip Shin and junior Adam Schorin. Both players started at foil and were instrumental in the last season's championship win. Sophomore Josef Omar is the only remaining épée starter from last season. As a freshman, Omar was also successful, going 16-3 in the regular season.

The teammates looked for strong athletes to add to their ranks when they held tryouts on Wednesday, September 14. Gurvets and senior and co-captain Sho Zren Chen planned to keep their eyes open for any

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