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Chancellor Celebrates Intel Success

By ANNE CHEN,
EUGENIA SANCHEZ
and THOMAS ZADROZNY

Following senior Mimi Yen's third place win in the Intel Science Talent Search competition, New York City Department of Education Chancellor, Dennis Walcott, visited Stuyvesant High School on Friday, March 16 at 9:30 a.m. to congratulate her, senior and finalist Angela Fan, and the school's 11 semi-finalists.

Yen was announced the third place winner on Tuesday, March 13, and was awarded a \$50,000 scholarship. Additionally, Stuyvesant received a total of \$13,000—\$1000 for each semi-finalist or finalist.

The gathering, which was organized by biology teacher and Intel Advisor Dr. Jonathan Gastel and held in Principal Stanley Teitel's conference room, began with students' descriptions of their respective projects. Out of the schools entered in the national competition, Stuyvesant had the most students reach the semi-finals. "I want to congratulate all of you and tell you how proud we are of you and of Stuyvesant," Walcott said. "We want to make sure the city can showcase you."

This event followed the awards gala on Tuesday, March 13 at the National Building Museum in Washington D.C. last week and the finalists' trip earlier that day to the Eisenhower Executive Office Building where President Barack Obama congratulated the Intel finalists.

Walcott asked students to explain the basis for their projects,

and then congratulated them for their diligence and hard work. Despite admitting to not understanding most of the students' research topics, he followed up their descriptions with a series of questions on the applications of their research. When he asked students whether any of their parents understood their projects and their implications, none of the participants raised their hands.

Yen, whose project focused on the mating habits of the *caenorhabditis elegans* (a type of unsegmented worm), said, she plans to continue her research during the summer. However, she does not intend to continue this study into college. Yen said she would like to study medicine, "because I want to do something that will help humans more directly," she said.

Faculty biology teachers Roz Bierig and Gastel, Assistant Principal Biology Elizabeth Fong, Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri, and Fan's mentor, Ulises Rosas, were also in attendance. Senior and Intel Social Science semi-finalist Jeremy Majerovitz was not present for the main ceremony, but arrived at the end to meet and receive congratulations from Walcott. News channel NY1 covered the event in a short video for their nightly newscast that day. The newscast can be accessed on the NY1 website.

"You're setting the ground for the future in science," Walcott said at the meeting's close. "The city is extremely proud of your work and we'll be bragging about it for a long time to come."

than is recommended with respect to his or her overall average.

These changes will allow more students to be considered for spots in AP classes than the old policy. However, the number of available spots in those classes will not change.

Currently, any student that meets the departmental requirement for a single AP course is qualified to sign up for that specific AP class regardless of his or her overall average. If a student wants to take two AP courses, he or she must have a minimum overall average of 88 percent, whereas if a student wants to take three, he or she must have at least a 93 percent average. In order to take four, a student must have a 95 percent average or higher.

"In the past, some kids who might have not had the minimum average to take AP English have still had the ability to come to me and sign up on a sheet of paper as a wait list. What we, the administration, realized was that since we were going to look at the students who came and didn't quite have the average anyway, we could just let everyone sign up online and then our lists would be consolidated into

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Changes in AP Course Selection Policy

By RISHAM DHILLON

Advanced Placement (AP) classes are some of the most popular courses at Stuyvesant, but only a select group of students are accepted into them each year. Even though other students may have the required qualifications for the classes, they are often put on wait lists due to limited space.

With this in mind, the administration has decided that, starting this semester, students will no longer be required to have the minimum average that has been set by each department to be placed on wait lists for AP classes.

In addition, students who wish to sign up for an AP class but do not meet the departmental minimum average will not have to personally visit the respective assistant principal to sign the wait list as they have had to do in the past. Instead, they will be allowed to sign up for an AP class online under a wait list option.

Furthermore, a student who wishes to take more courses than his or her average allows will not only have to get an AP waiver signed, but will also have to choose a waiver option when applying for the specific AP course online. This will let the assistant principals know that the student is applying for more AP courses

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New York Times Article Causes Stir

By SARAH MIN

The New York Times published an article on Sunday, February 25, regarding the racial makeup at Stuyvesant High School. The piece, "To Be Black at Stuyvesant High," written by Fernanda Santos, featured senior Rudi-Ann Miller, and her experience as one of the few black students at Stuyvesant.

African-Americans currently make up 1.2 percent of the enrollment at Stuyvesant, even though they are 32 percent of the city's public school students.

The article stated that lack of awareness in middle schools with high black and Latino enrollments is one of the main reasons why Stuyvesant's population has such a disparity. According to the New York Times article, when Parent Coordinator Harvey Blumm visits these middle schools, it is not rare to find students who have never heard of the specialized high school test or students who have never done any preparation for the test.

By participating in the article, Miller hoped to help raise awareness about specialized high schools. "I really wanted more middle school students and school administrators to see [the article]. I wanted schools to see it and contact BSL [the Black Student League] and for them to want us to come and speak and inspire them to want to take the test, which it has. A couple of middle schools have contacted us and want to set up meetings," Miller said.

The BSL at Stuyvesant has also taken the initiative in spreading information. For the last few years, BSL has made it an annual

tradition to visit middle schools throughout the city in order to spread information about specialized high schools. These visits are conducted in the spring and are primarily to schools in Queens and Brooklyn with significant black or Latino populations.

SPARK coordinator Angel Colon also believes that informing students and parents is crucial. "All SHSAT [Standardized High School Admission Test] information should be distributed to all middle schools along with procedure information, preparation services and the like. These schools should make a better effort in providing and servicing their students and parents," Colon said in an e-mail interview.

Miller first became acquainted with Santos when Santos's editor, who previously worked at Stuyvesant, contacted English teacher Annie Thoms to ask if she knew any students who would be willing to work with Santos on an article regarding the racial disparity at Stuyvesant. Thoms reached out to three students, but only Miller consented. Santos contacted Miller in September 2011 and conducted her first interview within the month. After getting consent from Miller's parents and Principal Stanley Teitel, Santos shadowed Miller at school, sitting in on classes and attending BSL meetings.

In the article, Santos mentions that Stuyvesant opted out of the Summer Discovery Program, an initiative that used to give disadvantaged students with exam scores just below the cutoff level a chance to study over the summer and earn a slot at the school. Both Teitel and Blumm



Senior Rudi-Ann Miller.

Catolyn Kang / The Spectator

commented that students admitted through this program would have found it difficult to succeed.

Senior Cindy Lin also disagrees with the Discovery Program's implementation. "There is a certain threshold that [Stuyvesant students hold themselves] up to and if we lower it to include certain people then it would be like we're almost cheating others," Lin said.

However, junior Cynthia Chan believes that there were some benefits to the program. "I would go along with [it]," Chan said. "The disadvantaged students who were just a few points below the cut off score should definitely get a second chance because if this is what they want for an education, they should be allowed to pursue

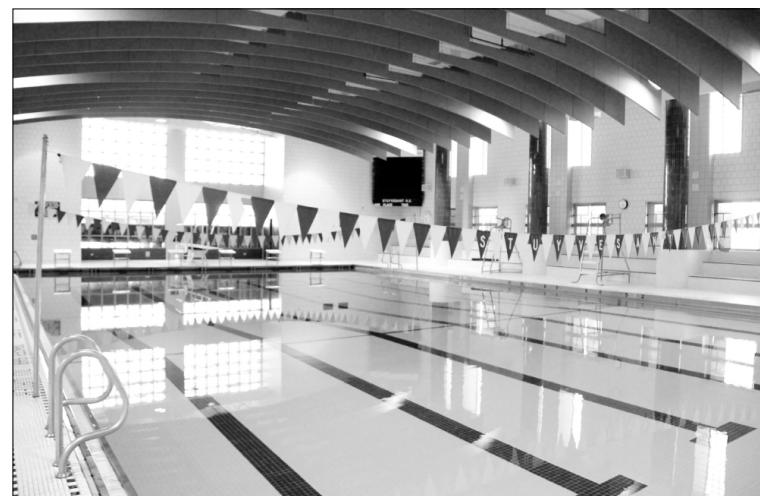
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Swimming Through The Years

By HANNAH BODHEIM

When former math teacher Mike D'Alleva first saw the Stuyvesant pool he was wearing a hard hat and being escorted by construction workers. His first sight of the pool was an incomplete one: "We walked up those steps, but they weren't steps, they were just concrete. There were no walls, there were no locker rooms [...] no office, that stuff hadn't been built yet," he said. "I stood at the edge of the pool right at the shallow end and it was just a gray hole [...] all I saw were those girders [the tiled columns next to the pool] and that hole in the ground. I was stunned, and I said 'this is going to be a really great pool!'"

One of the first things incoming freshmen learn about Stuyvesant is that it is one of few schools in the city with its very own pool. Throughout their years at Stuyvesant, students feel the pool's presence, navigating around the space it takes up on the first and second floors and smelling the chlorine wafting through the hallways. Yet despite its great presence, the swimming requirement, and life guarding elective classes, most students rarely interact with the pool during their years at Stuyvesant, and fewer students realize the immense



Stuyvesant Pool located on the first floor.

Justin Strauss / The Spectator

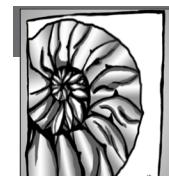
role that the pool played in the architecture of our building.

Stuyvesant's current building was constructed in 1992 due to the small size and decrepit state of Stuyvesant's former home at 345 East 15th Street. The new building was intended to be state of the art, right along the edge of the Hudson River, with a pool designed by James DeSimone, then captain of the swim team, which would provide a permanent practice facility. Battery Park City agreed to contribute money to the pool so long as it would be open to the public when school

was not in session. The contribution allowed the expensive project to proceed in a public school.

As the plans for the new building were revealed, environmental groups began to protest the unforeseen implications of the building on the surrounding ecosystem. An underground river was discovered beneath the construction site, which is home to "little one inch fish that only spawn right here," according to machinist Kenneth Levington. Fear-

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Opinions

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We Break the Law Every Day

Questioning Stuyvesant's cell-phone policies.

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Unearthed from the Slushpile: Soundscapes Reinvented From Across the Ocean

Arts & Entertainment

A Norwegian band that has post-rock all figured out.

News

Changes in AP Course Selection Policy

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one master list," Assistant Principal English Eric Grossman said.

The administration has said that the purpose of this new policy is to make the selection of AP candidates more just.

"The main intention is to be fair to everybody. In the past, some students have continued to visit assistant principals until they wind up getting what they want. That is unfair," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Currently, if a student does not pass the minimum overall average requirement to take additional AP courses but does pass the departmental requirements for that course, he or she is required to get a Parental Waiver Form signed to be considered to take the extra course. This form has to be signed by the student, the guidance counselor, and the parent.

Students who have signed the form are considered for the extra courses after students who do not require the waiver. By signing the form, the students acknowledge not just that they will be considered after selections are made from candidates applying through the regular process, but also that they cannot drop the AP course they are applying for.

The administration does not let students drop this extra course because "that wastes a seat that

other students sincerely wanted," mathematics teacher and Programming Chair Sophia Liang said.

Though the AP waivers will still stay in use, students will now have to specify online that they have signed a waiver to apply for the AP class. "What we are going to do this year is a little different in that students will be able to sign up online for whatever number of AP classes their average allows. Beyond that, you are going to have to register as having a waiver," Grossman said.

The purpose of this is to allow assistant principals to be aware of the students who have signed a waiver to register for the AP class. The assistant principals will be able to see that this AP will be one more than the student's average allows. By doing so, it is hoped that it will give the assistant principals an understanding of the number of APs that each student has applied for. This should help them make selections in a manner in which each student has a chance of getting into at least one AP class.

The administration has said that the new policy is being put into effect because it gives more students a chance to be at least considered for taking an AP course. "We try to distribute limited slots to an AP course in a manner in which many people will get an opportunity to take at least one course," Liang said.

The problem that has been

voiced over the years is that many students are unable to get into a single AP course due to a limited amount of slots and the fact that they may marginally miss average cutoffs. The new policy hopes to rid some of these problems by making the process of getting considered for a seat easier.

Some students are in agreement with the policy change.

"The option of wait listing a course online as opposed to having to go and talk to the respective assistant principal is a definite improvement. Though I did not meet the requirements to take a specific AP course last year, I truly felt as if I had ought to belong in it. By talking to the assistant principal, I was able to get in to the class and am currently taking it. This new policy will hopefully let students like me bypass having to go to assistant principals and taking up their time in order to be considered to take the course," senior Claire Adams said.

The hope is that this new policy will ease the AP course candidate selection for everyone involved. However, the administration is reluctant to permanently commit to it. This year will allow administrators to decide which system to use in the future.

"We are making no promises as this is a new policy," Teitel said. "The only way to find out its effectiveness is to try it and to see how it goes."

Faces of Israel Visits Stuyvesant



Israeli visitors Esther Solomon (left) and Gal Menasheh (right) spoke to three Stuyvesant history classes about current issues and daily life in Israel.

**By GABRIEL ROSEN
and GEORGIANA YANG**

Six guest speakers from Israel visited Stuyvesant on Wednesday, February 29, with the aim of providing students some insight into the real face of Israeli culture.

The speakers began their tours around the United States as part of Faces of Israel, an initiative to introduce diverse members of Israeli society to those who are only familiar with the Israel they see on television. It is composed of a group of volunteers from different socio-economic backgrounds, professions, and religions who have spoken to communities around the world. Their goal is to correct what they believe to be the media's flawed depiction of Israel and Israelis.

"Faces of Israel gives ordinary people in the United States an opportunity to meet one-on-one with ordinary people from Israel, to interact with them, exchange ideas, and to ask questions," social studies teacher Michael Waxman said.

Waxman organized the event after the group contacted him through e-mail. The presentation was open to all students and faculty who wished to come. Various social studies teachers attended, as well as foreign lan-

guage teachers, mathematics teachers, guidance counselors, and other members of the faculty.

"[The seminar] sounded interesting because it was a nice learning opportunity for classes to meet representatives from other countries and to get [the speakers'] perspectives," Assistant Principal Social Studies Jennifer Suri said.

Guidance counselor Audra Parris agreed. "What we usually hear on the news is about [the fighting between] Israel and the Muslims, and it's all about the violence," Parris said. "These people came in and gave a different perspective on the night life, what it's like in Israel, how people [in Israel] help one another, and how the military helps everyone, no matter what culture they come from."

The delegates introduced themselves and presented their backgrounds and experiences to the audience.

Guest speaker Kinneret Beltzner began by sharing her experience in the Lebanon war as a soldier who provided aid and relief to civilians still living in the warzone. "The most surreal moment for me was when we were boiling a pot of Turkish coffee in the streets while buildings were on fire and [bombs] were going off," Beltzner said.

Guest speaker Esther Solomon, a women's rights advocate, spoke about how her experiences growing up as an Orthodox Jew have led her to try to unite the Orthodox community. "My English is not so good because when I was a little Orthodox Jewish girl, I was learning in a school [that] was only girls. In our community, girls and boys do not learn like you," Solomon said. "It was next to a British boy's school [that] had an army camp so the principal didn't allow the girls to learn English."

Next, David Zviel shared his experiences in the Israeli Defense Force as a combat medic during the 1980s. He highlighted a relationship that he had with a handicapped Arab pre-teenager while working as a medic. "We started talking and we had this immediate connection," Zviel said. "[The bond between Arabs and Jews] is a lot of what Israel is about. On one hand, there is distrust, but on the other, it is growing."

The seminar was aided by a PowerPoint presentation that included images of daily life in Israel, maps, facts, and videos. "[Before the presentation] I never knew that the land of Israel was so culturally diverse," freshman Daniel Zabari said.

Following the presentation, the group ran a question-and-answer session, during which students asked about the Israeli military, daily citizen life, and the status of non-Jewish peoples in Israel. Waxman provided translations from Hebrew to English when necessary.

"The students looked very engaged and into the topic and discussion," Parris said. "They left with a better understanding of Israel, as opposed to the negative aspects presented in the media."

The speakers also enjoyed the experience. "They [Faces of Israel] expressed that they felt at home here," Waxman said. "The students were inquisitive and the turnout well exceeded the relatively small space provided."

New York Times Article Causes Stir

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it if they really want to go here."

In the Times article, Santos also discussed a proposal made by a Stuyvesant alumnus,

"[By doing this article] I really wanted more middle school students and school administrators to see it. I wanted schools to see it and contact BSL and for them to want us to come and speak and inspire them to want to take the test."

**—Rudi-Ann Miller,
senior**

who suggested that Stuyvesant should automatically accept the valedictorian and salutatorian of every city middle school.

The proposal was met with some criticism. "It's not a very

reasonable thing to do. There are some schools where it is extremely easy to become valedictorian, whereas if you go to a middle school that is very competitive, even if you are in the middle 50 percent you might be loads better than the valedictorian at a very bad school," senior Kevin Zhang said.

The article itself has caused some negative reactions among students.

"Although the article pointed out the issues and statistics with numbers and its ethnicity breakdowns, I felt a lot of positive outreach initiatives were just left out in terms of what the school community, faculty, parents, students, diversity clubs, etc., has done," Colon said.

"A lot of the article was true but [the writer] stretched it to a point to make it more interesting," junior Brian Lam said. One example that Lam referred to is how in the article, Santos refers to the radiators outside the fifth floor cafeteria as the "Chocolate Bar" because black students were known to hang out there. "Maybe a few people call it the Chocolate Bar, but I definitely don't. I never heard it before and I just think that they really changed the facts around a lot," Lam said.

Though Chan did not like the way Stuyvesant was portrayed, she does feel that "the article brought to mind big points like the priority of education in different families or what constitutes a good education," she said. "Like being able to test prep well or being able to think on your own."

As of now, the article has sparked a lot of discussion, which is important as well, in terms of changing the current status of blacks and Latinos in specialized high schools," Miller said. It remains to be seen, however, if there will be any concrete changes to the existing system as a result.

A Year Of Firsts For Stuyvesant JSA

By ANDREW WALLACE

After a successful Winter Congress, Stuyvesant's Junior Statesmen of America (JSA) have begun preparing for their Winter Mini-convention. Approximately 100 students from New York, Connecticut and New Jersey are expected to attend this convention, which is entirely run by the Stuyvesant chapter of JSA. The convention will be a typical JSA convention, in which students come together to discuss and debate politics and current events.

This year at the Washington, D.C. Winter Congress, one of the three major JSA conventions every year, Stuyvesant had

14 bills accepted, the most out of all the entered schools. In addition, Stuyvesant won seven out of the 27 best-speaker awards given out, the most in the whole conference.

Sophomores Jack and David Cahn each won two awards, while juniors Teddy Chassin, Hayden Karpecker, and Andrew Nell took one each.

"At the Winter Congress convention we really saw both the growth of the Stuyvesant chapter in quality of debate and in terms of becoming an organizational

community that rises up to become this powerhouse," said David Cahn, who is the NES Assistant Director of Debate and the Stuyvesant JSA director of debate.

Furthermore, two members of the Stuyvesant are running

for positions in the government. As JSA is extremely popular nation-wide, it is a special honor for a school to have a member elected to be an official. This year, Stuyvesant could have two. Sophomore Austin Ostro, director of debate of the Stuyvesant chapter, is running for Vice Mayor of the ECS, while Jack Cahn, NES Director of Public Relations and Stuyvesant Director of Internal Affairs, is running for Lieutenant Governor of the entire Northeast state. These are huge steps for the Stuyvesant chapter that, as recently as two years ago, were unable to attend Winter Congress because it lacked funds due to a shortage in membership.

Now, with an expanding membership and an invigorating win at the Winter Conference, expectations are high for the Stuyvesant mini-conference, not only for the members to do well in the competition, but also to be good hosts for their guests. This means creating all the topics that will be discussed and debated for the length of the conference.

"We write the debates, we write the blurbs, we make the agenda. We pretty much plan everything," senior and Chapter President of JSA Izzy Hechkooff,

Stuyvesant's mini-conference will be held on March 18th in the Murray Kahn Theater. All students are welcome.

Inside the New Extra Time Policy

By LINDSAY BU

Starting this semester, students who receive extra time to complete their exams will do so after school instead of extending tests into the subsequent periods. As in previous years, those who have free periods will be permitted to finish their tests then.

Additional time for tests is permitted for students who are under a 504 Plan or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The plan, backed by section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, attempts to remove barriers that may prevent students with disabilities from participating more easily in their classes. The intention is to level the playing field so that impeded students can pursue the same education as everyone else. An IEP is actually more concerned with providing educational services for students who require more assistance than the removal of external barriers, such as time extensions to complete exams. However, at Stuyvesant, time extensions are the most prominent component of the plan that administrators have to accommodate.

"In previous years, students who needed extra time completed their tests in the guidance office, taking either half of or the full period after," guidance counselor Meredith Safer (née Negrin) said. "However, there's been a gradual increase in the number of students who require additional time, and it's become logically impossible for the office to accommodate so many students each period."

Before this new policy was implemented, students were divided into groups and placed in different rooms at the guidance office to complete their exams. Though previously, the number of students and the amount of tests to proctor was manageable, this year there are approximately 67 students who require

testing accommodations. While the number of students who need to complete their exams at the guidance office differs each period, there can be as many as 13 students who need extra time in one period and an insufficient number of rooms at the guidance office to accommodate them. In addition, students with the same test have to be separated into different rooms in order to prevent cheating. Due these restrictions, those who are unable to complete their exams at the guidance office due to the lack of space are sent to Principal Stanley Teitel's conference room instead.

Furthermore, the guidance counselors must be available to proctor these exams and ensure that the students are following their teachers' instructions. This prevents them from doing their own jobs, making them unavailable to help their students.

One of the most significant issues with the previous system was that students under a 504 Plan or IEP who do not have a lunch or free period after exam-oriented classes, such as math or science, would have to complete their exams during the following period instead of going to class. "It was compromising the students' education in certain subjects to give them more time for their tests in other classes. Having students complete their exams after school prevents them from missing part, or all, of their following classes. This might make it a lot easier for the teachers, who don't have to worry about reviewing the material, and students, who don't have to makeup the work," Safer said.

Some students who receive extra time agreed with Safer and thought that missing part of their following classes due to their testing accommodations was an important issue. "Because I am given a period and half to complete my exams,

taking a test would cause me to be late to my next class, depending on how many floors I would have to go from the guidance office to get there. My tardiness would be distracting to the students in the classroom, the teacher would lose his or her

"There's been a gradual increase in the number of students who require additional time, and it's become logically impossible for the [guidance] office to accommodate so many students."
—Meredith Safer, guidance counselor

train of thought, and I would have to catch up on my work during the class to understand what was going on at the time," sophomore Spencer Weiss said.

While the new policy may ease the burden for the guidance office and prevent students from being late to their following classes, there are still other potential problems with the newly implemented system.

Students may be forced to choose between their after

school extra-curricular activities, and whether or not they want extra time to complete their exams. "Students with testing accommodations, such as myself, have two choices in regards to their extracurricular activities: they can take the test and not use the extra time they need so they can be on time to their club, or they can use the time and be late to, or even miss, their after school activities. It's really a pick-your-poison situation," junior Teddy Chassin said.

Consequently, there are some exceptions to this new policy for students who have to leave school early due to after school commitments that they must attend. These students will continue to use the previous testing system of completing their exams during their free periods or the period following when the test was originally administered, therefore missing part or all of their consecutive classes.

Additionally, many are concerned that disallowing students with extra time to take their exams in the respective periods that they are given may result in students taking consecutive exams after school, which would not have happened before under the original system.

The administration is aware of these potential holes in the new system. On February 27, 2012, Principal Teitel released a letter to all staff members explicitly stating the new regulations of this policy. If a student has two or more tests on a single day, one test should be taken during 10th period in Room 237, and a schedule will have to be worked out so that the remaining test or tests can be taken on another day after school. Moreover, teachers are expected to deliver the exams for the students with additional time to Secretary Guidance Geralin Fanelli by the end of 9th period the day the test is administered. While fel-

low students take the test during the normal class period, the accommodated student will go directly to the respective assistant principal's office, sign in, and remain in the office to complete homework or other work during while his or her classmates complete the exam. Quizzes that are longer than fifteen minutes must be called a "mini test," and will also be administered to the students with testing accommodations during 10th period on the teacher's exam day.

Another issue with this new system is that students who take their tests after school will not have anything specific to do during the period that their classmates are taking the exam in class. Many are also concerned that teachers will have to do extra work to create alternate versions of the exam. However, some teachers believe that this new policy will not greatly influence the manner in which they have always written their exams. "Generally speaking, I don't believe this administrative change will severely affect teachers. Changing a few questions around to create a different test is not that big of a deal," mathematics teacher Sebastian Stoenescu said.

Though the new testing policy for students with accommodations resolves some past issues, it is unclear whether or not the advantages of the new system will outweigh its disadvantages. "There were many problems with the previous testing system for students with accommodations and there are potential problems with the new policy the administration has implemented," Assistant Principal Pupil Personnel Services Eleanor Archie said. "Still, we have just started using this system and we'll have to wait to see if it's an improvement from what we've had before."

Third Annual Respect For All Week Held

By SHARON CHO
and ELVIN SHOYFER

Once a year, Stuyvesant holds "Respect For All Week," during which Stuyvesant's SPARK program works to highlight and build upon ongoing diversity programs and curriculum-based instruction.

Organized by the New York City Department of Education and by SPARK counselor Angel Colon, the many SPARK groups, including the Stuyvesant Anti-Defamation League, ARISTA, ASPIRA, the Gay Lesbian and Straight Spectrum, Black Student League, Cancer Society, Indian Club, Muslim Students Association, Peer Partnership, and Red Cross, promoted unity and diversity in the Stuyvesant community from Monday, February 13 to Friday, February 17.

"I knew our goals entering were to go hard in promoting, recognizing, & respecting numerous diversity, anti-bullying, and gender initiatives," Colon said in an e-mail interview.

Several special events occurred throughout the week to promote these goals. On Thursday, February 9 in the Stuyvesant Library, a representative from the Kings County District

"Going into the school year 2011-2012 planning, I knew our goals entering were to go hard in promoting, recognizing, & respecting numerous diversity, anti-bullying, and gender initiatives."
—Angel Colon,
SPARK counselor

Attorney presented the documentary "Slavery and the Law," which records the creation of a mural by two Brooklyn teenagers while examining the legal status of enslaved Africans throughout American history.

In addition, multiple lectures were given on a diverse series of topics in Stuyvesant's Lecture Hall A during the week, including "Understanding Laws on Cyberbullying" by guest speaker Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance, Jr. "The lecture was effective in giving students the realization of what was occurring around," freshman Kumaran Chanthrakumar said. "It's up to the students to act or not."

Colon felt that this year's Respect For All Week was a particularly important one. "[This week was] a test and a measurement of how far we've come together as a school community," Colon said. "It was almost a year ago that we had the racial YouTube video incident and all of its after-effects, negative news press, questions on diversity issues/support, parents, the Anti-Defamation League, etc."

Despite a successful week, Colon felt that there is still work to be done to create a better

school environment. "Diversity events like Respect For All and/or many of the past and still to come diversity recognitions

"The lecture was effective in giving students the realization of what was occurring around them, and it's up to the students to act or not."
—Kumaran Chanthrakumar,
freshman

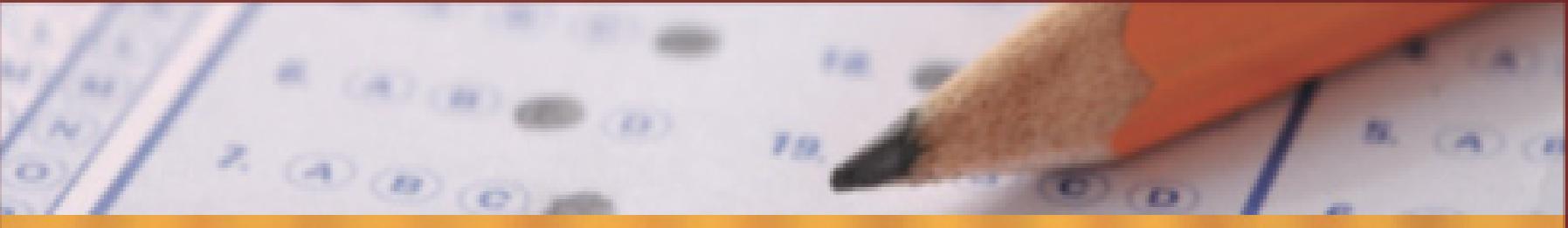
have not been fully embraced or, well, attended," he said. Though the events for Respect For All Week were advertised on the second and fifth floors of Stuyvesant, some

students still felt they were under-informed about the events. "I personally didn't see any Respect For All ads anywhere," freshman Norman Kontarovich said. "If it was advertised, it surely did not catch my attention."

In addition to Respect For All Week and Black History Month, which happened to occur at the same time, the SPARK office is planning additional events of a similar nature in the future. These include Women's History Month in March, Muslim Inter-scholastic Tournament Week in April, Earth Day "Yes! Respect For Our Planet & Environment" in April, Asian Heritage in May, and Gay Pride Month in June.

Colon and the SPARK members are optimistic about the future of Respect For All. However, they worry that the student body is not actively involved enough in the social wellbeing of the school. "Only time will tell moving forward now," Colon said. "With more school involvement [...] we hope to see improvements and break down the many negatives and anti-social behaviors that contribute to the bullying, racial mindsets, and discrimination that are still out there."

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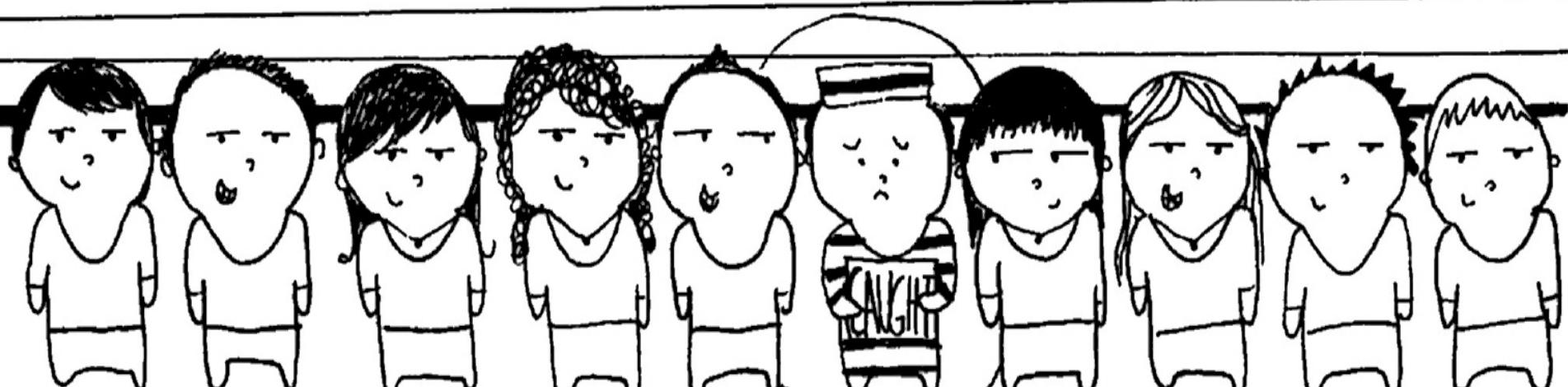
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Cheating

The Art Department draws the results of The Spectator's survey on academic dishonesty.

ONE IN TEN STUY CHEATERS ARE CAUGHT CHEATING

Niki Chen / The Spectator



Margot Yale / The Spectator



Christine Lee / The Spectator



Features

Roving Reporter: Would You Send Your Kids to Stuyvesant?

**By LIBBY DVIR
and ALIYA TUZHILIN**

Stuyvesant's Open House, held on March 5, served as an opportunity for eighth graders and their parents to experience Stuyvesant first-hand and learn about the academics, extracurricular activities, and environment that make the school unique – and influence their decisions on whether or not to attend. However, when it comes to really knowing what Stuyvesant is really like, four hours of touring and question-and-answer sessions are no substitute for the years of experience that current students already have. After experiencing Stuyvesant life, students reflected on their decision to attend and whether they would send their own child to Stuyvesant.

Nadia Saleh, freshman

I would send my kid to Stuy depending on how they do in middle school. If they're the kind of student who goes insane over one bad grade, they might stress themselves out and not be productive.

Sophie Gershon, freshman

I would allow them if that's where they wanted to go. But in terms of recommending it, I think it depends how independent they are and how self-motivated they are.

Julie Zhou, sophomore

I've gone to school all my life not far from where I've lived, so I wanted to gain some independence [by coming to Stuyvesant] -- but what teenager doesn't? Yes, I probably would [send my kids to Stuyvesant]. I mean, it's still a top school, no doubt,

and being the good parent that I want to be, I want the best for my kids. I understand the levels of stress and sleep-deprivation that the students, including myself, go through so often, but I hope in the end it's worth it for them and for me. I want them to experience the great time I had (and hopefully will have) here. I've had so much fun. I've made friends that I never want to lose. Overall, I'm happy here, and I want my kids to be happy.

Hansa Sharma, sophomore

Of course. There are so many clubs and pubs and so many ways to get involved. The students here are also so bright and diverse. We also have some very competent teachers. It would be a great way for any teenager to discover their passion and interests.

Eddie Zilderbrand, sophomore

Yes. If I still lived in New York City when I grow up I would make sure to push them to go to this school. Sure, it's a lot of work and stressful, but at the end of the day, who doesn't love this school? It's like a home away from home and something I would want my kids to experience when I grow up.

Kevin Park, junior

Yes. My experience so far has been good. I really respect the administrators, and I think the students at Stuy are very welcoming, very respectful, and very bright. It's a better group of people to be around. Combined with its academics, community, and all, it's a great school.

Lucy Woychuck-Mlinac, junior

Yeah, I would. My sister is

at [The University of] Chicago, which is one of the most intense schools, and everyone around her is flipping because in their old school, they were the top of the class, they were the smartest-- and the joy of a specialized high school is that you kind of get that reality check where you realize, "Okay, I'm not the smartest person. Not everything is going to go for me. I've kind of got to work with what I have." Also, she's exponentially less stressed because she's used to a large workload.

Derrick Choe, junior

Yeah, I really do like it because it taught me how to manage my time and really work well and become a better student, in general. It is stressful, but I definitely would recommend it to students who want to get acclimated to a more competitive atmosphere. Over here, your teachers don't really guide you. Everything is sort of self-motivated, and I kind of like that about Stuy because I get to determine how I want to do my work without teachers trying to guide me.

Jonathan Lessinger, senior

Probably not. The stressful, competitive environment contributes to poor mental, emotional, and social health. One can learn just as much and appear almost as impressive to colleges at many high schools. Academically, high school is what you make of it. I would think that smart kids tend to be more perceptive and, therefore, more self-critical as most teenagers are to a degree. Putting hundreds or thousands of them together and applying high pressure seems like a recipe for disaster.

Jake Araujo-Simon, senior

Yeah. I would send my kids to Stuyvesant, but only because it's a really stifling atmosphere, and it's a good test of character to fight to maintain your own individuality.

Tiffany Wang, senior

Basically, I guess it'll have to depend on my kid. I had a great time at Stuy and absolutely loved it, but Stuy's also been my dream high school ever since my cousin came, so I came in being pretty pumped about it. There are people who haven't enjoyed the Stuyvesant experience as much as I have, and it really all comes down to what they want out of a high school experience. I'm not sure what I want for my kids. That's a bit far down the road, but Stuy gave me a lot of experiences that helped me find and develop my interests, mainly as a result of the wide variety of classes I've been allowed to take. The only thing that worries me a little is that prospective students might not have as diverse of an experience as I've had because of the anticipated curriculum change and whatnot. It appears a lot of the classes that aren't particularly academic, but definitely worth taking, are being cut.

that said, I'm uneasy about how the school will be in the future with events like SING! being impeded by the administration.

Emma Handte, senior

I would not send my kids to Stuyvesant. I think this school has a lot of short-term problems, like a lack of communication and especially respect from the administration towards students, but I also think that the school has more deeply rooted issues, as well. This school promotes an attitude towards education which sees learning as a means to an end. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students encourage this obsession over high grades, which they hope will lead to acceptance at high status universities, and eventually to six figure paychecks. Very few people at this school promote a view that encourages learning as an end in and of itself, one that involves inquiry, collaboration, and genuine exploration of a subject that does not necessarily earn you that 99 in a class, or the perfect grade on the Regents exam that will earn the school a better Department of Education rating.

John Mennell, senior

I would not send my kids to Stuy because I feel the new curriculum is too limited. While Mr. Teitel means well, he does not know how to create a good school environment. Worse, other members of the administration do not have the students' interests at heart. I feel like Stuy is turning into a mathematician factory and losing much of its charm and appeal in doing so.

Swimming Through The Years

continued from page 1

ing that the plans as they stood would mean death for the species, the groups threatened to sue.

Eager to avoid a costly lawsuit, Stuyvesant had the plans entirely redone. The new plans raised the northernmost section of the building about six feet above water using columns. This structural change led to the creation of the small set of stairs leading up to the pool. However, just before construction on the building was to begin, the environmental groups dropped the lawsuit. Still the school went through with the modified plan.

A common misconception about Stuyvesant's pool is that it was built with the intention of including a swimming re-

quirement for graduation. This is false, according to D'Alleva, who said that when the pool was first completed in May 1993 the school's physical education teachers were not even certified as life guards. The first people to use the pool were faculty members, but they were only permitted to do this after D'Alleva petitioned Principal Teitel and agreed to act as a lifeguard. The addition of former Assistant Principal Physical Education and lifeguard Martha Singer to the staff enabled teachers to swim on weekday mornings, occasionally sharing the pool with the practicing swim teams.

Singer was the first person to approach Principal Teitel about instituting a swimming requirement. D'Alleva understands the logic, explaining that in schools such as Stuyvesant,

"Not only do they have the facility to teach people how to swim, but some people say they have the duty to teach them how to swim." Once the administration decided to institute a swimming requirement, they had P.E. teachers become certified by the Red Cross.

Another misconception about the pool is that it is Olympic sized. According to regulations, an Olympic swimming pool has a length of 50 meters and a width of 25 meters. The Stuyvesant pool, on the other hand, has a length of 22.86 meters, slightly less than half that of an Olympic pool. Still, the size is beyond adequate given the space allotted and the number of students using it.

In 1999 the pool was dedicated to James DeSimone, the former coach of the swim team, who had died of a heart attack

early that September. As coach, DeSimone had lead the boys swim team to multiple championship victories, and the team was devastated by the loss. After his death PSAL officials began giving sportsmanship awards in his name, the first going to Stuyvesant's Mike Gontar.

Before the pool was built, it was a common tradition, to the point of being noted in multiple articles in local news sources and referenced in the 1995 film "Hackers," for seniors to tell freshmen about, or even sell them tickets to, the "sixth floor pool." The school at the time had only five stories. Instead, Stuyvesant students can now only misdirect freshmen to the "tenth floor pool."

The rest of the history of the Stuyvesant pool is a history of repair. It is not surprising, considering the size, usage,

and age of the pool, that it has been shut down to be repaired many times in the past. In 2008 the pool closed for two months because of a broken acoustics baffle on the ceiling. The price of the scaffolding, which had to be built all the way from the bottom of the drained pool, and the workers, along with the time it took to fix, convinced Teitel to check all the baffles at once to avoid a future breakage.

This year, unlike most, the Stuyvesant pool will not remain functional throughout the summer. Instead, due to concerns about water consumption, the pool is going to be drained as a conservation effort. But even though the pool is to be drained, it is hard to imagine the first floor lobby without that persistent chlorine smell.

77,888,846

2,070,398

8,208,621

716,626,304

Number of views on the KONY 2012 YouTube video

Number of views on the "Obama Sings Al Green" YouTube video

Number of views on the Rick Perry "Strong" YouTube video

Number of views on Justin Bieber's "Baby" music video, the most viewed YouTube video

Source: YouTube (as of March 14, 2012)

Features

Safety Agents: The Stuyvesant's Guardians



A Stuyvesant security guard at the front desk

By ISABELLE MAHNKE

They patrol the school's hallways, prepared to take your ID if it's necessary, with walkie-talkies latched to their belts, in case a dean must be called. This is the perspective most Stuyvesant students have of our security guards, formally called School Safety Agents. Students often take the guards' presence for granted, or often usually see them as a hindrance, rather than as people who protect them. These School Safety Agents are a branch of the New York Police Department (NYPD) and police our school to ensure its safety.

The process to become a school Safety Agent begins with a number of medical, psychological, physical and character examinations that applicants must pass. If they do, they continue on to week-long training program at the School Safety Agent Recruit Training School. School Safety Agents have the authority to arrest students when necessary,

confiscate weaponry and other banned materials, and remove unauthorized persons from the school building. The only difference between them and NYPD officers is that they do not carry a gun.

Stuyvesant, unlike many other schools in New York City, sees few culpable students. Security guards at Stuyvesant agree that though Stuyvesant students break the rules, the school is orderly, compared to other schools they have worked at. Stuyvesant "students aren't [like] students everywhere," School Safety Agent Rosario Ubilla said, referring to student's focus on their studies.

"Stuyvesant is very calm. I'm going on two years at this school and I've never seen one fight," Safety Agent Tiffany Bates said. "Every now and then you may catch students sitting on a floor they're not supposed to be on as well as sitting in the staircases, and the thing about the staircases is that it's a fire hazard."

Officer Ubilla also conceded that Stuyvesant students, though generally well-behaved, do break certain rules, and she explained the rationale behind the commonly broken rules. One policy that most students resent is that they are limited to sitting on the first, second, and fifth floors during their free periods. This, coupled with the library's restrictions on the numbers of students admitted, leaves hundreds of students crammed into the designated hallways. Besides preventing distractions to classes in session, it is in place to make it easier to identify students who are cutting. It has been considered successful, because the administration has seen the number of students cutting decrease since its implementation. Another policy that Safety Agents enforce is preventing students from eating in areas other than the lunchroom. Ubilla explained that this policy was instated because students rarely clean up after themselves, which attracts mice.

Though some of these policies are justified, most students feel that Safety Agents enforce them to an unnecessary degree. Freshman Abbey Morse-Golub is often stopped by security guards when she visits her locker on the fourth floor throughout the day. "We always got in trouble by [Officer] Montgomery. He'd yell at us when we'd spend five minutes at our locker. We filed a report to Ms. Damasek and she asked us to write a letter about it and so we wrote a complaint," said Morse-Golub, adding that all of the other Safety Officers she had interacted with at Stuyvesant had been helpful, even though their presence did not make her

feel safer. Officer Montgomery declined to comment.

Some students also feel that Safety Agents try to unreasonably question students' permission to participate in clubs. Junior Sahar Siddiqui sings in a girls' group that, for religious reasons, practices privately in the prayer room, with the permission of a club advisor. "I feel like they take way too much into their own hands. I kind of feel targeted by them. They always come when we're singing and they're like 'You guys can't use this space,'" Siddiqui said. "I feel like they try to make a bigger deal out of their profession in this school than is necessary."

Despite students resenting rules, both Ubilla and Bates said they seldom, if ever, encounter students being disrespectful when they enforce the rules. Bates sympathized with students' tendency to question some rules. "Sometimes, they'll ask me questions, like 'Why do they have benches here?' [on floors other than one, two or five] which is a reasonable question. So I do understand that, but again, I'm just the messenger. I'm not the one that sets the rules," Bates said, explaining students' reaction to the policies limiting where they can sit during free time.

She sometimes regrets having to prevent students from being on floors they're not allowed on, especially if they are quiet or studying. "I feel like, if a student is studying, and they're quiet, I don't think anything should be done about that," Bates said.

Dean Gary Rubinstein has had a different experience with students being disrespectful to Safety Agents. "We see sometimes kids refusing to give them

[the Safety Agents] their IDs, or running away from them, and then we have to chase down the kid, we have to find who they are and that's a problem," Rubinstein said. In these situations, he sees his role as a different kind of enforcement, with a level of authority equal to that of the Safety Agents. According to Rubinstein, their authority is equal. "Sometimes kids are more intimidated by a dean, who might know who they are, and sometimes they are more intimidated by a security guard," Rubinstein said.

Enforcing rules like this, is a big part of what Safety Agents do. However they do not only interact with students to chastise them. Officer Ubilla also sees her role as one of guidance, because students are still maturing, and still have lessons to learn about life. "Maybe they know a lot of things about books, but they are still learning [about life] as the years pass by," Ubilla said.

Bates explained that she did not see her role as simply disciplinary, but that at Stuyvesant, it was difficult to establish any relationships with students. "There's not much activity, so I don't get a chance to interact with the students, as opposed to [at other schools] when I would have one-on-ones with them," Bates said. "I want you all to feel comfortable with me. I want you to know that you can come to me with anything, especially if you're having a problem. You don't get to see the nice side of me." It seems that students often do not share this perspective on the Safety Agent's role, but instead, primarily see them as their role as one of rule-enforcement, not guidance.

Unique Hair Styles

unique hairstyles.

Experiment Pink

Senior Natalie Fang dyed the bottom half of her hair during December of her junior year when she began to find her natural black hair slightly mundane. At the midsection of her hair, there begins an artful gradient from dark to light pink. After dyeing her hair, Fang found that "the shade changes almost every single time I wash my hair," she said. This element of surprise that accompanies the bold color gives her a different experience that is anything but boring.

"It's in the spirit of adventure and experimentation," Fang said. "I'm also planning on cutting it shorter and maybe dying it blue since I haven't done that yet."

The only negative aspect that she can think of is the harm that frequent dyeing can have on hair, but "you can always just cut it and grow new healthier hair," she said.

When asked if she would revert to her natural color in the interest of future job interviews, Fang said she would "just resort to more natural colors, but ones that I haven't yet tried."

Staying Blue to Oneself

Junior Julia Stemmer's lush, indigo hair is the latest in her frequent trends of color transformations, which in the past have included purple, blue, green, teal, black, copper, and a wide range of pinks. Initially, Stemmer had planned on dyeing it a shade of violet, but for some reason, the dye turned into its cur-

rent dark blue, which pleasantly surprised her and inspired her to dye it that color.

Those around Stemmer are generally fascinated by the variety of her hair colors, though it wasn't so easy at first. "My grandmother snidely commented, saying things like, 'Are we ever going to see your hair color again? It's so pretty,'" said Stemmer, who identifies this practice as an accessory or feature that defines the individual.

The one aspect that sometimes does bother her is that her "hair-color-induced reputation sometimes precedes [her]," she said. "My mom was also concerned about what I'm going to do for college interviews." Though Stemmer is not yet sure how to balance her fashion interests with societal opinions, she does know that for as long as possible, she'll leave it colored. "It's who I am," she said.

The Buzz of a Reminder

Because of her hairstyle, first impressions of senior Claire Adams are at times a far stretch from the truth. However, over time, classmates "find out that I'm pretty normal and nice," Adams said.

Adams's hairstyle was not decided upon by whim. Rather, it holds symbolic value for her. Her decision to shave nearly half of her head was made on the same day that she took her last SAT II. "The move was both a celebration of me [taking the last SAT II] and a bit of a rebellious act to remind myself that I am still the one in charge of all the final decisions regarding my

life," Adams said. In this way, her hairstyle serves as a constant reminder to herself of who she is.

Family and friends of Adams have always been supportive of her new look, and Adams has often been told that "it looked good," she said. "Only one adult has ever told me that it was 'uncharacteristic.'" Regardless of the opinions of others, Adams firmly stands by her initial decision and is even considering cutting all of her hair to match that length.

In regard to the potential drawbacks of her haircut, Adams hopes that any future institution that she aims to become a part of won't base its opinions of her on her haircut. Fortunately, this does not seem to be a major dilemma. "I had this haircut when I interviewed for the college that I'm going to attend next year, so that worked out well," Adams said.

Rapunzel's Gift and Curse

A rope is not necessary to play limbo when senior Hema Lochan is around—her hair is a reasonable substitute. When asked for a potential icebreaker during her Big Sib interview, Lochan stepped away from generic name memorization games and instead "suggested that they play limbo with my hair," she said. "It's really long, so someone just takes an end of it, and the other person goes under it."

Except for trimming off a small chunk of hair as a donation last year, Lochan has never had an actual haircut. Though the idea of letting her hair grow



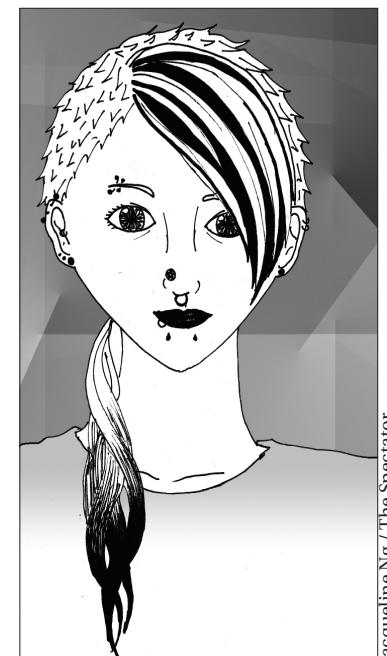
Senior Hema Lochan has Rapunzel-esque hair.

By LILY LIN

The teenage years are often characterized by a multitude of self-discoveries. Unsurprisingly, most teens adopt physical changes emblematic of these revelations and of their individuality. Some may choose to tattoo themselves with a symbol they find meaningful; others may reformat their wardrobe or pierce their skin. And others still may style their hair in a bold or peculiar manner. Due to the overpowering pressures of normality, these proclamations of individuality are, at times, not accepted quietly or approvingly by friends and family members, making the experience itself bold and peculiar. However, through distinct and valid reasons of their own, the following students have created or maintained their own

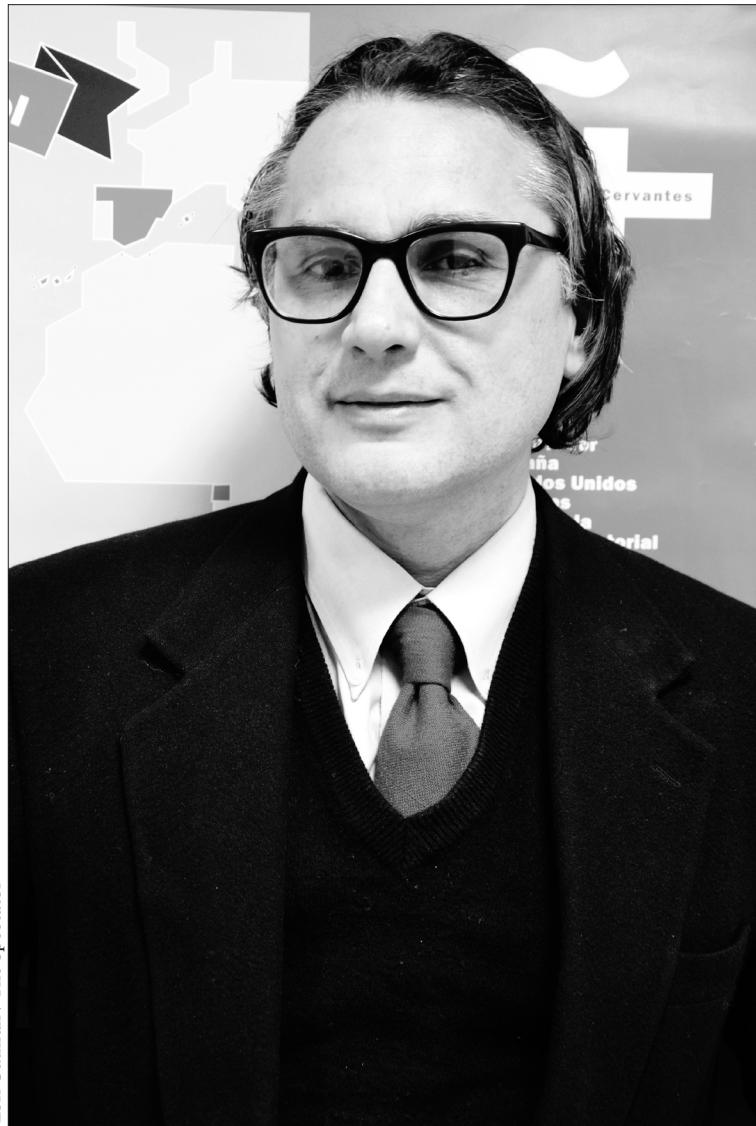
out was initially her parents'. Lochan grew to love her hair despite the minor problems that it causes.

Most prominent among these problems is its interference with her running. As a cross country runner, Lochan finds her hair to be dead weight, especially on rainy days when "my hair [weighs] me down [and slaps] people around me," Lochan said. Fragile objects also tend to meet their demise when Lochan turns her head too sharply and whips them with her lengthy locks. Though Lochan knows that cutting her hair may prove to be beneficial, her love for the individuality that it gives her overrules any true consideration of shortening it. Lochan said, "It's a gift and a curse, and I love it."



Features

Milton Diaz: Flamenco, Theater, and Spanish



Spanish teacher Milton Diaz

By REBECCA GAEBLER
and ROBERT HE
with addition reporting by
TASNIM AHMED

"Krak." Walk by room 1033, and you may hear Spanish teacher Milton Diaz casually utter what has become his trademark mantra. The phrase was invented by Diaz and an old friend. "There's no real definition to the word. It's kind of an onomatopoeia," Diaz said. Despite its shortcomings in semantics, "Krak" is one of Diaz's tricks to lighten up the class' mood.

Making Spanish class interesting and fun is another one of Diaz's trademarks. He has been teaching at Stuyvesant for over 13 years, and his interactive teaching methods have captured the attention of students and teachers alike. Diaz hopes his teaching style will help students not only learn Spanish

but also help them to appreciate the culture of Spain. He believes that learning a language should be an experience, not simply memorizing verb conjugations. To this end, he employs a variety of techniques to liven up the classroom.

Diaz emphasizes to his students that it is equally important to learn inside and outside the classroom. "We need to encourage our kids to go out there, and learning doesn't necessarily always happen in a classroom or because a kid opens a book and reads page 55 and does the exercises," Diaz said. He often takes his students on trips that can give them a greater understanding of Spanish culture. Last year, he took his students to see a play called Himmelweg (Camino del cielo), which was performed at the Repertorio Español theater. Diaz noted that the production "wasn't exactly what the students expected in

terms of a Spanish play. It wasn't a flamenco show, a tango show, it wasn't a typical thing that most people, not only Stuyvesant students, would think to see [from] a Spanish writer." From Diaz's perspective, the most important aspect of the trip was the substantial in-class discussion among the students afterward.

If the class can't go on these trips, Diaz tries to bring culture to the classroom. "We did a tribute to a Chilean writer, Pablo Neruda, and we dedicated a full week to him here in Stuyvesant. The America's Society was extremely supportive and they also brought in people from Chile to talk to students who were writers and it was a rich experience," he said. In another effort to make the class more interactive, Diaz organized a memorial called the Madrid Memorial which focused on the Madrid terrorist bombings of 2004.

Diaz's students appreciate the holistic approach he has for teaching Spanish. His class is an experience that many Stuyvesant students treasure. "He made the classroom into such an intimate setting," junior Sam McKay said on his experience with Diaz.

Sophomore Risham Dhillon extolled how Diaz supplemented the Spanish textbook curriculum with short stories and plays. "He tries different ways to get the information across to us," Dhillon said. "I'd never had a Spanish teacher that went to those lengths." Risham also liked the general atmosphere of the classroom. "That class was always a nice, relaxing treat during the school day," he said.

Diaz followed a circuitous path before becoming a teacher at Stuyvesant. He grew up in New York City and attended the Bronx High School of Science. In his senior year he was accepted in early admissions to Sarah Lawrence College. Initially he pursued a double major, which was pre-medicine and drama, but during his second year of college, Diaz changed directions after having the opportunity to study abroad in Spain.

"[Going to Spain] was something I always wanted to do since I was a little kid because I played the classic and flamenco guitar and I danced flamenco,

so Spain was a place connected to being Spanish and speaking Spanish," Diaz said. His love of Spanish language and culture was deep rooted and he owes much of this to his time abroad. Although his familial roots were in Puerto Rico, even as a young child he was fascinated by Spain and Spanish culture.

In fact, he enjoyed Spain so much that he ended up living there for twelve years. However, his Spain he lived in was not characteristic of modern Spain. His time there was during a period of great turbulence and political tension. "While I lived in Spain, Spain was going

med and drama and spent many years working in theater, Diaz decided to pursue a career as a teacher. Before working here at Stuyvesant, he taught at another specialized school, Brooklyn Technical High School. Naturally, having gone to the Bronx High School of Science, Diaz has always known about Stuyvesant, and jumped at the opportunity to teach here. "I saw that there was an opening here at Stuyvesant and I thought I would like to go to another school, in that case being Stuyvesant," Diaz said. He currently teaches Spanish 3 and Spanish Conversation and Composition. During his first nine years Mr. Diaz taught Advanced Placement (AP) Spanish Literature. In this period, he also taught the second through fourth year courses of Spanish. "I particularly like teaching the AP Spanish Literature course because my background is in literature and I feel that it's one of my strengths," Diaz said.

Diaz is constantly trying to extend his own education. Outside of Stuyvesant, he switches roles to become a student in the several college courses he attends. Last year, he took a course in creative writing. "Writing is an important aspect of my life, so I try to cultivate that outside of school," Diaz said. "I feel that no matter how old you are, if it's something you're passionate about, do it." For example, his fascination with drama and the arts led him to take flamenco and ballet lessons.

Traveling has become another one of Diaz's many passions. During the summer, he frequently visits places like Spain and France. This year he will go to Morocco to conduct a theater workshop in a Moroccan village. "It'll be a workshop that incorporates voice and a voice technique called the link letter technique. It's a vocal acting technique that I've been learning for a number of years," Diaz said.

Don't be surprised if this eventually gets incorporated in Mr. Diaz's curriculum here at Stuyvesant. A man who is always thinking of his students, Diaz will go to any length to make his classroom into a hotbed of culture, creative lessons, and of course, learning Spanish.

"We need to encourage our kids to go out there and learning doesn't necessarily always happen ... because a kid opens a book and reads page 55 and does the exercises."

—Milton Diaz,
Spanish teacher

through its own cultural revolution. It was going through a social, political, philosophical change. It was just after the death of Francisco Franco. And the country was coming out of 40 years of dictatorship, so there was an exuberance of energy and vitality and need to do things to really become a different country," he said. During this period, he pursued theater and worked with a group of professional actors.

Eventually, he returned to the United States. Though he had originally majored in pre-

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Humor

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No Magic at the Most Exclusive Party of the Year

By MARIUM SARDER

In response to complaints of overcrowding and disgusting conditions at venues for last year's SING! after party, party policies have been formally changed. The event planning board took steps to increase exclusivity at this year's annual

"To make this year's party more enjoyable, we wanted to limit the number of people who could attend. And since our theme this year was Harry Potter, we decided to sell tickets only to those who spoke Parseltongue."
—Jake Kozloski, senior and event planner

bash.

"When I went to the after party last year the place looked like a dump. There was no room to fist pump. But after I had my fifth glass of fruit punch the party started to liven up. The next day I woke up and had all my clothes, except my underwear. Who stole just my underwear?" junior Tony Scott said.

"To make this year's party more enjoyable, we wanted to limit the number of people who could attend. And since our theme this year was Harry Potter, we decided to sell tickets only to those who spoke Parseltongue," senior and event planner Jake Kozloski said. "We were aiming for a niche market, you see. Some kids will throw their money at you as long as the words 'Harry Potter' are involved. We thought this was going to be a foolproof plan."

Many students attempted to buy tickets from the vendors, but complained about the difficulty of purchasing them. "I went to buy my ticket and was handing him my money, when he started hissing at me," junior Gabriel Hurwitz said. "I thought, 'This is it, this is my calling. I am the last heir of Slytherin,' and tried to hiss back to my brethren, but he started

getting angry, as if I insulted his family or something."

Despite the complaints of students, members of the event planning board insisted that this strategy was a success. "I think our effort to make the after party more exclusive definitely worked. We were selling tickets for three weeks and only one person was actually able to buy one. I wasn't there to see the guy who got the ticket, but apparently he kept asking if unicorn blood was going to be one of the select beverages at the party," senior Oliver Willens said.

The Voldemort impersonator has been identified by sources as English teacher Kerry Garfinkel. Students claim that they saw Garfinkel roaming the halls in a dark cloak while waving around a twig and excitedly murmuring.

"They said the seven years of Parseltongue classes were a waste of my time. Well, who had tickets to the coolest, most exclusive party of the year? Tom Riddle. I mean, me, it was me. I had the tickets," Garfinkel said. "We may have overdone the exclusivity. The Voldemort dude was writhing around on the floor while the deejay played LMFAO on a loop for half an hour. Then he got tired and took a nap. We slipped out at that point," junior David Jang said.

"Only the worthy are allowed to party with the likes of me. AP Contemporaries and Classics is where you ought to be. I spit rhymes that make the snakes quiver. When I walked into the after party I made the

"I thought, 'This is it, this is my calling. I am the last heir of Slytherin,' and tried to hiss back to my brethren, but he started getting angry, as if I insulted his family or something."
—Gabriel Hurwitz, junior

whole house shiver," Garfinkel said. The party ended shortly after Garfinkel pulled out his wand.

SING! to Premiere in Theaters Later This Month as a Drama

By MARIUM SARDER

It has been announced that this year's SING! productions will be made into a new drama film set to hit theaters on April 20. News of this ambitious transition from the small stage to the big screen came after the student body was informed that producers Steven Spielberg and Francis Ford Coppola were in attendance for each of the shows.

"I left the theater feeling like I had just climbed a mountain. It was an ordeal, but a very rewarding experience overall. I initially believed the individual scenes to be pointless and irrelevant, but I soon recognized the underlying existential conflicts," Spielberg said.

"The platonic relationships between the lion and arctic fox, Gandalf and Sabrina the Teenage Witch, were some of the most tumultuous, riveting, and mysterious connections I have ever seen on stage. And when the clouds fell from Soph-Frosh set, I thought it was a Freudian analogy for an urban dystopia" Coppola said.

The Soph-Frosh play does away with traditional plot structure, instead presenting a stream of unrelated scenes. Coppola praised the show's

clever use of obscurity and called the production "abstract."

After assuring the press of hiring "only the best" actors and actresses for the movie [Spielberg] announced that Katherine Heigl and Josh Duhamel are set to play the leads.

seemingly poorly-crafted plot as a pointed commentary on the conventions of disconnectness of American culture," said Coppola.

One of the most pressing concerns about the new SING! movie was the budget. When questioned about his position on the funding of the new SING! movie Spielberg said, "I wanted to retain the emotional integrity of the production. I believe that the feeling of despair that is needed in any great film is only amplified by the shabbiness of the original SING! sets. Therefore I decided to match the original set budget of \$25."

Outrage quickly followed Spielberg's budget address. In an effort to appease the masses, he released the casting list. After assuring the press of hiring "only the best" actors and actresses for the movie he announced that Katherine Heigl and Josh Duhamel are set to play the leads.

The upcoming movie has created so much buzz that some of the biggest names in Hollywood can not contain their excitement. "I'm going to try to steal the Sabrina role. This is the big break I need right now," actress Lindsey Lohan said.

Hundreds Injured in Penny Wars

By TIMMY LEVIN

The Student Union's plans were shattered last week when the Penny Wars, designed to create competition and raise money, turned violent.

Students scanned into school on Monday with pennies in hand. Mayhem struck at around 7:55 a.m. when students began pelting each other with handfuls of currency. "In all my years at Stuyvesant," Assistant Principal Technology Edward Wong said, "I have never seen such blatant disregard for the order and sanctity that is swiping-in."

Senior and Student Union President Edward Cho, who had first declared the Penny Wars, was surprised by their negative outcome.

"The Student Union never thought that the Penny Wars would escalate to such a violent conflict. We genuinely believed that students heaving coins at each other was a fair and effective way of assessing SING! performances," Cho said.

In response to the outbreak of violence, Cho has suspended habeas corpus and initiated martial law. "Be it ordered that during the existing insurrection and as a necessary measure for suppressing the same, all rebels and insurgents, their aiders and abettors within Stuyvesant, and all persons engaging in the throwing of pennies shall be subject to martial law and liable to trial and punishment by Courts Martial or Military Com-

mission," Cho said.

After the first wave of attacks, students set up camps throughout the school. The seniors took hold of the second-floor atrium, the juniors hunkered down on the fifth floor, and the freshmen and sopho-

"We genuinely believed that students heaving coins at each other was a fair and effective way of assessing SING! performances."
—Edward Cho, senior and SU president

the senior bar for decades," Senior Michael Scheer said.

The other grades went on the defensive as well. In an effort to cut off all modes of transportation, juniors broke the school's escalators, effectively barring the seniors from floors six through ten. "We tried to make it up the stairs," senior Felicia Rutberg said. "But the task was too daunting for us second-term seniors."

In response, the seniors organized the Stuyvesant Airlift to carry supplies to the captured seniors on the blockaded floors. The recently independent Royal Seniorian Air Force flew over 200 flights in one week, providing up to three tons of daily necessities such as calculators and pizza bags.

"I haven't seen that much bravery since a freshman spoke in my class," music teacher Holly Hall said.

Following the airlift, a tentative truce between senior, junior, and soph-frosh militants was enacted on Tuesday, February 28. The cease-fire sought put an end to four days of fighting that left over 400 students wounded and resulted in the firing of thousands of dollars worth of pennies.

"I am happy that the combat is finally over," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "In addition to the copper-riddled students, the Wars cost the school nearly one million pennies. That's the biggest waste of money since we added Drafting to the curriculum."

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

Stuyvesant Activated

"How much homework will we get a night?"

"How many periods are there in a day?"

"Is it hard to meet people?"

"What kind of clubs can I join?"

At the Open House for accepted students on Monday, March 5, questions like these were veritably echoing throughout the crowded hallways. The eighth graders, so eager to determine workload and course information, failed to ask about something potentially even more important: "How active is the student body? How often do the kids take a stand against something and make a difference?"

Members of Big Sibs, ARISTA, Red Cross, and any other volunteers there that night were more than ready to speak about school-work and social life for hours on end, but would any of us have been prepared for a question like that? We gush about how our big school helps each and every student "find their niche," but these niches merely turn Stuyvesant into a web of disconnected cliques rather than a united student body. The past few years have been marked by many administrative changes (such as this year's dress code and stricter library policy), and our lack of community has hindered our efforts to react to them.

In this day and age, it's so easy to feel like an activist—did you post the viral KONY 2012 video on your Facebook page? Congratulations, you're halfway there! In all seriousness, it's hard to make actual (as opposed to virtual) change, but our lack of effort in our own environment is shameful. We whine about the school's decline, often blaming the administration, but we fail to recognize that, as students, we too have the potential to catalyze a change.

Our lack of unity can make it difficult to effect school-wide reform, from attempted sit-ins to protesting the dress code to petitions against the removal of live SING! result announcements. Subgroups aside, the greater Stuyvesant community is virtually nonexistent. Low team spirit, lack of school-wide activities, a relatively inactive Student Union (SU), and an administration that hasn't been particularly eager to work with students all factor in to ensure a lack of change. In addition, with such a huge student body, so diverse in its opinions and beliefs, it's rare to find an issue that the entire school can get behind unwaveringly.

Whether it's a combination of these things or one in particular, it's safe to say that any activist culture at Stuyvesant is startlingly inactive. And it's not like there haven't been things that have gotten us riled up—in a time of drastic policy changes, there is a lot to talk about. Yes, we've started the occasional petition—one to save Kern's job, one to repeal the dress code—and students may post an anti-stagnancy, pro-activism Facebook status every once in a while, but the fact remains that none of our calls for change have traditionally gained much traction before they get quashed by the administration.

Remember the last days of summer, right before school started? We'd just received news confirming that a dress code would be enforced, and we were outraged. Check Facebook, and you'd quickly come across a slew of self-righteous posts by students swearing to wear whatever they liked. A huge number of people joined a Facebook group that planned to violate the new rule on the first day of school in one overwhelming, cohesive act of protest, and for a while it seemed like something would happen. But sure enough, September 8 arrived with covered shoulders and knee-length skirts, the student body having chickened out en masse. Despite what was being said on the

Internet, there was no guarantee that enough people would show up in rebellious garb to stop everyone from getting in trouble. The risk of individualized punishment outweighed the collective reward, and we were unwilling to gamble lunch privileges for something that had already been decided.

So, why didn't we fight? The same reason that we never do: we're scared. Messages from the administration or through student representatives make it clear that we're to comply or suffer their wrath. We have an unhealthy relationship with the administrators, one in which we are both so unwilling to compromise that nothing ever gets done. We have the potential to make change, to form a connection that goes beyond a few disparate groups and manages to encompass an entire grade or school. At Stuyvesant, contrary to the pictures that the media consistently paints of us, students don't all form racially segregated hangout spaces or "cuddle puddles" of promiscuity. Rather, we often find ourselves in overlapping circles, a veritable Venn diagram of extracurricular activities, shared classes, and exchanged greetings in the hallway. People find themselves in "cliques" that seem to include dozens, if not hundreds, of tangentially interconnected people. We need to learn to utilize this to make a difference.

This is a pattern we see repeated again and again. It's not that there aren't issues that we, as students, care about and wish to change—it's that we don't have the unity to band together into the formidable student body we're capable of being. Cliques at Stuyvesant keep social issues confined to specific groups, not the school as a whole. Whenever issues arise that affect the entire student body, it's easy to assume that, given our immense size, some other group will take up the slack—but, more often than not, nobody does.

The problem is we see high school simply as a rest stop, a precursor to college. We breeze in and out in four short years, so for many of the upperclassmen who don't have much time remaining in their Stuyvesant careers, change doesn't matter. It's too easy to justify sitting back and complaining about something when you know the problem isn't one that will affect you for long. The student body has a short-term memory, with the slate effectively wiped clean every four years. Once a new round of students enters Stuyvesant, changes that we didn't bother to protest will have become the accepted norm, and even more difficult to reform.

However, Stuyvesant experiences an incredibly rare moment of school-wide unity every year during the month of SING!. From rehearsals that can run until 8 p.m. to the jubilant Saturday night performance, SING! yields the power to bring grades together, so that, as a unit, we all sweat as one before the final results are released. SING! is one of the few occurrences of school spirit on a huge scale here at Stuyvesant. Whether or not you've actually participated, who hasn't gone to the shows or discussed the results? Only a select group of people could tell you the details of Stuyvesant's Homecoming game, but everyone has something to say about SING!. Yet the administration is adamant about cutting our rehearsal time, citing distraction from school and late bedtimes as justification for their actions. In fact, this year SING! preparation lasted for the short month of February, a week less than last year's time and two weeks less than that of the year before. These actions are detrimental to our growth as a cohesive student body, and moreover, do little to augment our learning experience. On the contrary, because rehearsal time is shorter, we stay in school for longer hours and get home even later than normal.

We don't expect our school to be perfect, or the administration to give way to our every whim. We're aware of the logic behind the decisions to shorten rehearsal time; as students, the number one priority in our lives should be school. But with only a month to prepare, students work sorely extended days and are forced to run on little-to-no sleep with virtually no time for schoolwork. At the same time, the slashing of rehearsals sidelines one of our few chances at inter-grade bonding, and, in a school which doesn't have much spirit in the first place, any lost opportunity to form relationships with people we may not socialize with regularly is detrimental to our high school experience.

But even an event as unifying as SING! fails to stimulate the activist in each of us. Though, plainly stated, SING! is simply something that we as a student body care about, it's not enough to make all of us jump out of our seats and take a stand. Sure, a petition was made to protest announcing the SING! results online following the Saturday show, but our coordinators claimed that it would only lead to more student rights being taken away, and that the removal of results was a decision that was set in stone. We listened, hardly anyone signed, and no change was made.

Consider the SU, whose total contributions to the student body within the last year amount to little more than the failed SING! petition. Its name contains "union," but the connotations of that word—unity, advocacy, activism—are in short supply. In October of last year, The Spectator published a staff editorial titled "Managing the Masses," which asked the SU to appeal to the administration for outdoor privileges during students' free periods—something, as it turns out, that is allowed by the Department of Education, but not by the Stuyvesant administrators. Has that happened? Has anything been done? Of course not. The SU is an organization of titles and college application padding, without any real effect on the student body. (The Penny Wars don't count.) We elected these individuals, the SU president and vice president, to represent and serve the student body—can that happen now?

In a school with over 3000 students, it hardly makes sense to hold hands and sing "Kumbaya" with all 800 classmates, but the SU can help us in that respect. Uniting all 800—or maybe even all 3200—under a common goal may seem idealistic, but does it seem impossible? By the end of our four years here, we tend to end up closer to far more of our classmates than one would expect. Whether this is due to the seniors' nostalgia for their high school careers, a maturation beyond social boundaries, or a meshing of these boundaries as we accumulate more shared experiences is unclear, but as our Stuyvesant days unfold, our social webs become a blur of overlapping lines and unexpected connections. Maybe it's time to start underscoring these lines with activism, and drawing new ones in the process.

We all are part of the same adolescent pit of stress and insecurities, and indeed, many a friendship has been forged on no greater a basis than an "I'm so tired—I only got three hours of sleep last night," or a shared nod between two teens sitting across from each other on the subway, textbooks cracked open in their laps. We value both our unforgettable moments and awkward teenage mistakes too much to regret any of our time in Stuyvesant. But even if we did, regrets can't change the past. If we feel that something needs fixing at our school, we owe it to the next generation of Stuyvesant students to do something about it.

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



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of the
Student
Body"*

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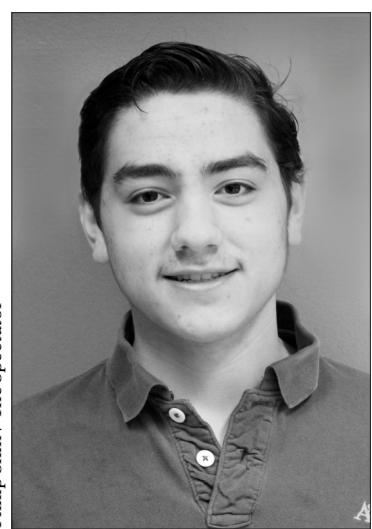
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Opinions

We Break The Law Every Day



Philip Shin / The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

You and I have something in common: every day, as we walk through the halls of Stuyvesant, we are accomplices in the same crime. Shhhh, don't tell anyone! But of course you won't, who am I kidding? No one talks about it. We criminals share a common vice, and are thus sworn to secrecy. Deep in our hearts, we accomplices are bonded, forever intimate in our deeply hidden secrets.

However, I don't carry my crime in my heart—I carry it in my pocket. I use it to text occasionally before and after school, sometimes to check the time, and rarely to make calls, but usually I just let it sit in my pocket and weigh me down.

Our crime hasn't always been illegal. In fact, it was only crimi-

nalized six years ago in an effort to protect us. Mobile phones are classified as a dangerous item, listed alongside knives, guns, and box cutters. Don't you feel safer knowing that students can't text dangerously during school? Knowing that students can be stopped for "illegal possession" warms me up inside.

I admit it: there are better reasons to ban cell phones. They're distracting and shouldn't be used in class. I buy that. Students who text during class should have their phones confiscated. That, however, doesn't explain why they are banned altogether. What if I want to check an important email during my free, or call my parents between classes, or call my internship boss during his working hours? Should that too be a crime?

Laws are made to enforce order and strengthen our education. We should not be punished for texting a parent or a friend after school or during a free, for the simple reason that these behaviors do not harm the public welfare or sacrifice our education.

I'll let you in on a secret: I was caught a couple of weeks ago. I was on the ninth floor and 10th period had just ended. I decided to text my Mom to tell her I'd be home late. Up walked a teacher who I didn't know and I shoved my you-know-what into my pocket. But it was too late! He had seen it. He put his hand out, curtly gesturing me to hand it

over. I was dismayed. I had three options. Hand it over, beg to keep it, or run for it. I chose to hand it over. I know you're ashamed of me; I'm still embarrassed about it. I should have hidden it better. Which technique do you recommend? I'm still learning.

My friends laughed at me when I told them I had been caught. One declared, "He saw me with my phone yesterday and didn't do anything. Too bad

You and I have something in common: every day, as we walk through the halls of Stuyvesant, we are accomplices in the same crime.

you don't know him." And so I learn the first trick of the trade: make sure that you text in front

of teachers who know you, because enforcement is very selective. Trick two: hide your phone in your backpack or under a binder while you're walking. Trick three: text with your phone in your pocket, hoodie, backpack, or textbook. If you want to be extra safe, go to the bathroom to make a call.

The ordeal wasn't over yet. My dad had to come pick up my phone. He was furious. He works until 6:00 p.m. every day and he had to leave work early just to come get my phone. It's funny how they punish parents for our crimes.

The Department of Education regulation on cell phone usage continues to baffle me. They've created a law that every student violates—knowingly and willingly. Students aren't the only accomplices in this grand conspiracy—teachers, parents, and administrators are all aware that nearly every student carries one. The rule is so absurd that it is hardly ever enforced and, when it is, it's enforced very selectively. Moreover, the punishment is worse for the parent than it is for the student.

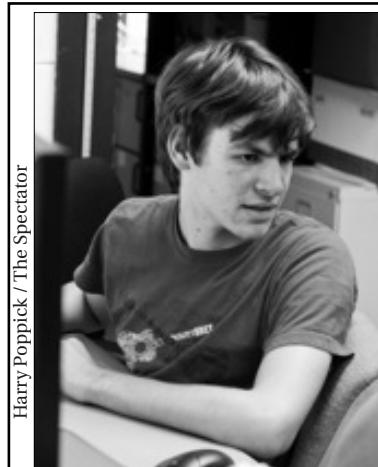
If this were a crime that threatened the safety of others, I'd understand. If this were a crime that distracted students from learning, I'd understand. How using a phone in the school building when class is not in session has any negative consequences I am far from understanding.

And to the administration: I'm sorry I got caught. I know it's annoying for you to have to confiscate my phone. I promise though—I'll hide it better in the future.

Laws are made to enforce order and strengthen our education. So why are we punished for texting a parent or a friend after school or during a free?

One last thing. Please, if you ever see someone use his or her phone to harm another person, or if you see a student using a phone before or after school hours and it's distracting that student from class, give me a call—I'd like to see it for myself.

Diary of a Mad Senior: Rose Colored Glasses

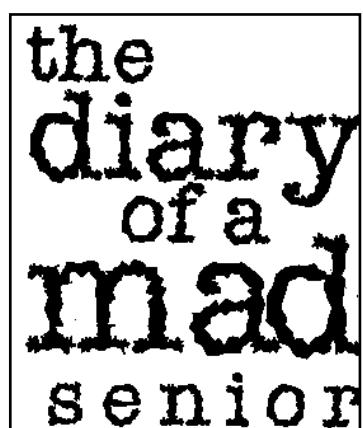


Harry Poppick / The Spectator

By JOSEPH FRANKEL

At long last, I had made it. After three and a half year's worth of essays, interviews, scantrons, PSATs, SATs, APs, and countless other terrifying acronyms, I, along with my classmates, had finally become a second term senior. Suddenly, the pressure had all but abated, and I, like many others, expected the void left by hours studying and demanding assignments to be replaced with sleep, electives, some semblance of a social life, and other previously unimaginable activities. But rather than seeing my high school career through the rose-colored glasses of most graduating seniors, my vision of Stuyvesant has been colored by one very black spot.

I had hoped that this term would be an idyllic time in which I could reconnect with my friends, reflect on my high school career and all of the memories I've made at Stuyvesant, as well as look forward to my future. But while the tunnel vision that marked my time at Stuyvesant has receded, I have found myself



able to focus on little else but the steep, continuous decline of the state of student affairs at Stuyvesant.

As both an Opinions writer and Executive Editor of The Spectator, the school's only forum of institutional memory, I've seen first-hand how students have grown progressively more dissatisfied with the changes in student life over the past few years. Whether it be the implementation of the ID-card scanners in 2007, or last year's unilaterally imposed dress code, outgoing students always bemoan the degradation of student privileges and student voice at Stuyvesant.

But in response to these troubling developments, Stuyvesant students have adopted the mindset that the impetus to get good grades, achieve in their chosen extracurriculars, and get into a "good" college, completely trumps any inclination towards student activism. The Student Union, which, years ago, organized student sit-ins in protest of administrative policies, and never allowed for censorship of

SING! scripts, has now become more or less defunct in terms of its original purpose. It is difficult to blame current members of the SU, who are burdened with maintaining whatever potency the organization has left, for doing little to return to its former state. At the same time, this has left student body without any means of student advocacy or clear communication with an administration that could not care less if policies are created without any transparency, and enforced with absolutely no recourse or discussion.

In the past four years, I've seen first-hand how virulent the effects of this absence have been. Since I started at Stuyvesant, the infamous "1st, 2nd, and 5th" rule has restricted students to limited sections of those three floors; SING! scripts have been arbitrarily and heavily censored; SU open forums have been abolished; the new programming system has made it more or less impossible to change one's schedule; and the list goes on. Throughout all these changes, some students expressed their dissatisfaction, but never beyond the minor complaint that was pushed to the sidelines by the next day's test or presentation.

In our final semester at Stuyvesant, we seniors find ourselves facing a very perplexing dilemma: should we, with our newfound impunity and relative flexibility, try to take action against, or at least open up some productive means of communication with, the administration, or simply give in? As we have so little time left, why bother veering from our attitude of keeping

our heads down and doing only what is needed to get through the days?

Perhaps those who run the school have no problem with creating a culture in which students feel more hindered and constantly maltreated by those who are supposed to be acting in our interest."

repercussions for speaking out in some way are minimal, why is it that we are split into groups of either the apathetic, who are resigned to tolerating what we know is wrong until we leave the school forever, or the whiners, who do little else but complain about how things were better before?

This column may be proof that I've also fallen into this dichotomy, but I cannot add myself to the cliché of the senior who bemoans the loss of the "good old days," for the simple reason that those days, if they ever existed, ended long before the class of 2012 entered the school. Maybe I'm simply stating the obvious. After all, the lack of institutional memory and quick turnover inherent in a four-year high school is exactly what has given the administration the opportunity to lower the standard for student life so drastically over the past decade.

Perhaps those who run the school have no problem with creating a culture in which students feel more hindered and constantly maltreated by those who are supposed to be acting in our interest. But this much is certain: years from now, when I look back on my time at Stuyvesant High School, I will fondly remember the amazing friends and passionate teachers who have taught me and given me so much over the past four years, but I will never forget the administration that, rather than responding or even listening to the concerns of students and teachers, helped turn the school into a machine run at their caprice and convenience.

Many students express the view that Stuyvesant is a system to be played, and a large part of gaming that system is contingent on making as little trouble for oneself as possible, and finding ways around rather than fighting arbitrary, unfair policies. But in this one semester when the

Opinions

Where Fernanda Santos Was Wrong



By DANIEL TEEHAN

The three-page New York Times article published Sunday, March 4, about the experience of black students at Stuyvesant, featuring senior Rudi-Ann Miller, has garnered much attention, and rightfully so. It's not too often that the top newspaper in the world devotes that much of their paper to writing about your school. But reading the article, I couldn't help but feel that the writer, Fernanda Santos, was trying more to write a shocking exposé revealing the well-known minority gap at Stuyvesant than to make a meaningful point about how to lessen it. Much of the article was filled with raw statistics about minorities at Stuyvesant and throughout the public school system, as well

as with incriminating quotes from unnamed Stuy students. What was disappointingly lacking was a well-thought-out plan to deal with the issue at hand. The author addressed the topic mainly through vague and disconnected ideas from different people. The lack of emphasis on finding a solution made the tone of the article almost accusatory, as opposed to encouraging or constructive as I feel it should have been.

The facts of the issue are more or less known to the Stuyvesant community: the percentage of Asian-Americans at Stuyvesant is incredibly high (72.5%) while the percentage of African-American and Latino students is incredibly low (3.6%). (The article did not differentiate between students of East Asian and South Asian descent.) The article was quick to point out that there are a total of 40 African-American students out of a total 3,295 student body. The suggestions for addressing this gap ranged from automatically accepting the valedictorian and salutatorian of every public middle school in the city to extending test prep and tutoring opportunities to heavily minority neighborhoods. Although Santos did not discuss these options at length, considering the proper course of action is necessary if we ever wish to stop complaining about unfairness and start eliminating it.

The approaches can be quickly separated into two cat-

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egories: those that address the issue through admissions, directly changing the demographics, and those that attempt to change conditions in schools and neighborhoods that cause these startling discrepancies. The former approach is fundamentally flawed; adjusting admissions to artificially change the minority breakdown not only lowers the standards of the school, but it also takes slots away from other hard-working

kids who have earned their spot. The latter approach is the only one that seems feasible to me, as it strives toward leveling the playing field and keeping the situation as fair as possible for all involved.

There is no way that only 40 black students citywide are intelligent enough to qualify for a Stuyvesant education, so what is preventing the rest of those eligible from getting in? The questions on the SHSAT are objective and unbiased. Recently, however, doing well on the test has corresponded more and more with taking a prep course. Professional institutions like Kaplan and Princeton Review offer intensive preparations for the test. Enrolling in a class requires pre-meditation and awareness of how important a specialized high school education is, things not so present in heavily black and Hispanic neighborhoods.

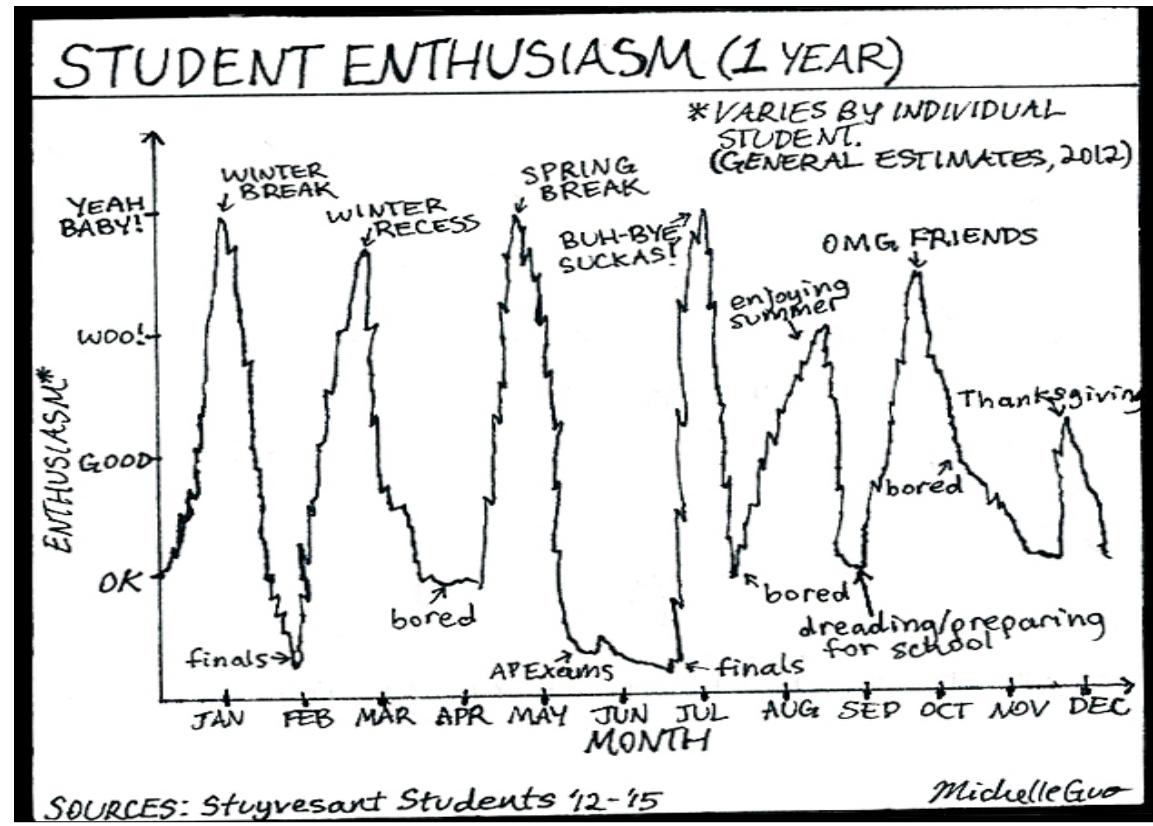
The Times article mentioned that the Black Students League does outreach by talking to schools in the Bronx, but talking spots at one or two schools just isn't enough. This problem requires large changes in the high school search process in middle schools. It is the responsibility of the school and the guidance counselors there to keep the student informed of all options available to them. Students should be entitled to the greatest possible utilization of their intellectual capabilities. To this end, every

public middle school should be required to offer comprehensive high school counseling and free test prep for the SHSAT. This is the only way to level the playing field in the age of test prep.

Another important issue brought up in the article was that in the past the Stuyvesant administration discontinued The Discovery Program, which had allowed students who scored close to the cutoff to take a summer prep course at Stuyvesant and retake the test before the school year started. The administration rejected the plan on the basis that a gap of 80 or 90 points was too high to overcome with a few months of training. But what if the student is intelligent, but just hasn't been taught to unscramble paragraphs? Or maybe they have an incredible capacity for learning, but have been stifled by a lack of content at their under-funded middle school. These students would probably benefit from a month or two of the kind of test prep some white and Asian students were exposed to for years.

Stuyvesant has always prided itself on looking only at test scores, but now it's time to take a harder look at all of the factors that go into those scores. It's a big issue to tackle, but there are things that can be done to make the situation better and make the elite education which we enjoy accessible to all those who are deserving of it.

OP-ART



Cartoons



Photo

Can You Guess It?



By Andrew Fischer, Justin Strauss, and Mark Zhang

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Arts and Entertainment

Venue

Steps Away From Stuy, A Haven for Creativity



Supercute! performed at 72 on Friday, March 9.

By EMRE TETIK

Indie music fills the room, whose walls are spotted with quirky pop-art pictures of cats' heads tacked on to rock stars' bodies, and have old cartoons projected on them. An unusual space, 72 is a far from conventional place to be on a Friday night.

Located just a few blocks away from Stuyvesant at the Church Street School for Music and Art, 74 Warren Street, 72 is a recreation center of sorts for teenagers who want to explore their varied artistic capabilities. The activities it offers run the gamut from workshops (for which prior knowledge in the specific field is not necessary) to magazine openings to live indie music concerts.

The club is partly run by Stuyvesant alumna Z Behl ('03) and has its origins in her experience as a Stuyvesant student. Behl, who would spend hours hanging out with friends after school, noted the distinct lack of hangout spaces in the neighborhood. She wants 72 to serve as such a place. Behl also believes that programs such as 72 are important to teens because "there's no support for this type of thing in school. [School] is still academic; the idea is you're trying to go to college," she said.

Flipping through the catalogue of available workshops, you'll notice that the fields covered in the workshops are highly specific and esoteric, including music video production, gif (animated digital images), and zoetrope-making (stringing together old-fashioned images to give the illusion of movement). The workshops are run by Behl and Mohammed, so the skills covered were chosen based on those they have and are able to pass on to teen artists. Mohammed, a photographer, teaches a digital photography workshop. Behl, a visual artist who works with a variety of materials, teaches the Fibers workshop, in which teens work with familiar materials such as wood in unusual ways.

The activities at 72 aren't limited to workshops and classes. A vital part of 72 is the events it hosts, and despite having been launched just over a month ago, the club has already held three major events, including a release party for an issue of Tom Tom Magazine, a publication about female percussionists.

The release party featured performances by several teen indie bands. Dawn Foster, a student at Montclair State University and the guitarist of Puta de Cava, one of the bands playing at the show,

appreciated the space. "It's like a community place," she said.

Indeed, the most important element to 72 is its sense of artistic community. It creates an environment where teen artists share their talent and work with other teen artists. "It's a collaborative, supportive environment that is really tailored to the kids that we are already in dialogue with," said Gaia Filicori ('03), a staff member who is also a Stuy alumna.

Another part of this environment is the interaction between teen artists and young professionals who can act as mentors. This is epitomized by their film screening series, in which they invite contemporary and nationally acclaimed directors (friends of the 72 staff) for viewings and Q&A sessions.

Behl prefers to look at what goes on in workshops as coaching, not teaching. She believes 72 is "a cultural haven" where you can meet other creative teens outside of the school you go to. Teens are encouraged not just to come to 72 events, but also to rent out the space to hold their own events, such as concerts or parties, or work on art projects. "If video production students at Stuy want to use a green screen, they can come over," she said.

Behl believes that 72 has a lot to offer Stuyvesant students. Aside from providing a creative outlet for the stress of being a student, she believes it can teach them more about their art. "When I went to Stuy, I was the art director in many theater productions and we were given huge budgets," she said. "But I never got to meet any mentors or anybody who didn't go to Stuy."

She also hopes that 72 can give Stuyvesant students control over their space. "SING! is the only time that the students are really in control of the space they're working in," she said. "Stuy students are so dedicated, if only they had more opportunities to be in control. At 72, we're saying 'This is your space, we're giving it to you.'"

Nickel-and-Dine: Calcutta Eats Roll Into New York



Thelewala-Nizami Roll House: 112 MacDougal Street, Manhattan, NY

By CARMEN YUENG

Nestled in a lively strip of cafes and grills on MacDougal Street sits a quaint, hole-in-the-wall restaurant called Thelewala. From the Bengali word that means "street food vendor," Thelewala serves authentic Indian cart food; its specialty is a popular delicacy from Calcutta known as a nizami roll. Rivaling The Kati Roll Company across the street, Thelewala has clearly earned its place as a neighborhood favorite of West Village.

The restaurant is a small and cozy joint in a perfect spot at 112 MacDougal Street, between Bleeker Street and West 3rd Street. With its interior of soft chestnut wood and gentle Indian music playing from the speakers overhead, Thelewala has an atmosphere that is undeniably calming, a pleasant contrast to the liveliness of the Village. Complete with mellow, candle-like lights that dangle from the ceiling and large jars of grains and spices that line the wall, the restaurant feels genuinely Indian even before you get a taste of the food.

Thelewala serves a variety of their nizami rolls, which can range in spiciness anywhere from mild to flaming hot. Orders can be

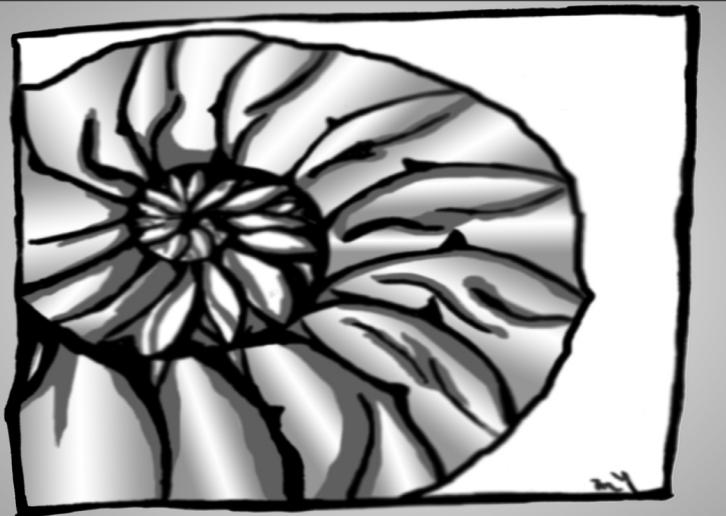
made with zesty chopped peppers upon request. A popular crowd-pleaser is the "Chapli Roll," a perfectly seasoned blend of minced lamb, red onions, eggs, and an unexpected hint of lime rolled up in a soft paratha, an Indian flatbread, for only \$5.50. Thelewala's convenient vegetarian option is their "Lime Paneer Roll" (\$5), which is filled with melted cheese, red onions, and coriander, a terrific combination of simple, bold South Asian flavors. However, these delightfully seasoned rolls are not all Thelewala has to offer.

Marked underneath a category of Indian street food known as "Calcutta Basti Khana" is a dish called "Chili Anda" (\$6), which combines smoky scrambled eggs with green chilies, onions, and cilantro, as well as grilled paratha bread on the side.

Thelewala's employees are extremely customer-friendly and will even offer a 10 percent discount when you show them your student identification card. If you are lucky enough to live within 10 blocks of Thelewala, you can even place a delivery order online. With inexpensive prices, a welcoming and neighborly vibe, and the brightest, richest flavor around, Thelewala may become your new go-to Indian option.

Music

Unearthed From The Slushpile: Soundscapes Reinvented From Across the Ocean



By JAMES KOGAN

Post-rock has become a kind of dirty word among "connoisseurs" of indie music. While bands like Sigur Ros and Explosions in the Sky come to mind, it also carries the unfortunate weight of a genre doomed to be written off as background music. Given the lush reverb-laden sound of the musical style—with instruments used to build textures and timbres and songs developing slowly, forgoing the high-energy rush of other kinds of rock—it is easy to see how

the genre can be alienating. Yet The Samuel Jackson Five's effort, "Easily Misunderstood," displays a sophistication not often found in the genre, capturing an astounding variety of moods and resonating with an unlikely vivacity.

With three albums under its belt and a fourth slated for release this April, this Norwegian band has managed to combine an eclectic mix of influences, including folk, progressive rock, and jazz. A five-man band upon the completion of "Easily Misunderstood," the group utilized a string section, a mando-

lin, and a Theremin, in addition to typical rock instruments like guitars, bass, keys, and drums.

The second song on the album, "If You Show Off The Milk, Who's Gonna Buy The Cow," is a good example of the band's take on the often-homogenous genre. The track opens with a steady bassline, punctuated with chorus-like guitar strums that slowly intensify before giving way to the band's full barrage. Drums, bass, and guitars carry the rhythm, while another guitar plays a staccato melody. Just as the riff is getting stale, the melodic line changes again, piquing your interest and then suddenly changing again. Here, the post-rock influence is obvious; the music teases the listener, who becomes subdued just as the energy develops and then builds up again to an overwhelming climax. A motif from earlier in the song is reintroduced and energetically drives the track until the end.

Luckily, the band has managed to evade the largest shortcoming of post-rock: the lack of originality. Album-opener "Skinflick Dress Rehearsal" is a slow moving number, peppered with jazzy drums and a tremolo-affected guitar melody. The intricate bass

work moves the listener directly into a lonesome-sounding chorus that features howling, demonstrating the band's creative use of their sparse vocal work. Military-style drum rolls lead into the last portion of the song, in which the intensity is upped and a wailing lapsteel guitar is given a melodic counterpart.

"Charlie Foxtrot Queen" is a misleading number, beginning with a quiet guitar-bass harmony over which a glockenspiel daintily adds notes. Just as the tension of this introduction grows unbearable, anxiety slowly builds up with a cymbal crescendo as the song rushes forward with a breakneck pace. The result is ethereal—the sound of the band, aided by multiple overlaying guitar parts, is vast and draws the listener in. Such a diversion is almost exhausting, yet a subtle but bright guitar melody guides the song to its surprisingly calm resolution.

Still, the album throws a few curveballs, employing a variety of musical techniques to keep the music fresh. Aptly-named "Person Most Likely To Enjoy Human Flesh," the song reverts to an exploration of dissonance, with a pounding drum solo serving as

a background to screechy saxophone multiphonics and upright bass abuse. You can hear a Latin-esque percussion accompaniment and reverse-delayed guitar lines in "No Name" before the track gives way to crushing power chords and the towering sound of a lapsteel guitar, Theremin, and synthesizer.

A solemn, almost ballad-like feel is entertained in "Song For Sarah" before the folksy-sounding acoustic guitar takes over from an organ. On the other hand, "Psycho Derelict" is a noisy number, beginning with misleadingly sparse guitar harmonics but developing to include the whole band. It finishes with futuristic beeps right before the two-minute mark.

All in all, the album is a trip. It is incredibly difficult to describe the sound of each song because there is, simply put, way too much to pick up on at once. With each new listen, another musical nuance is revealed, as is the band's impeccable artistry. Especially for a group's sophomore release, far too many of which have been fated to mediocrity, the album is astounding, moving beyond a mere collection of soundscapes and channeling the poignancy and beauty that post-rock truly encapsulates.

Arts and Entertainment

Exhibits

The Steins Push for Modern Art

BY BENJAMIN VANDEN HEUVEL, TAHIA ISLAM, AND OTHILLA WLODARCZYK

The Metropolitan Museum of Art has long been home to priceless masterpieces and artifacts from around the world. However, the current exhibit at the Met, "The Steins Collect," has brought together some of the most coveted and historically prized works of the Impressionist era into a single exhibit. The exhibit boasts a major portion of what was once among one of the world's most landmark private art collections: that of the Stein family.

The collection is set in the brightly lit, modern display enclaves of the museum's second floor. At the entrance are two imposing photographs: one, a panorama of Paris in 1900, and the second a portrait photo of the Stein family. Each room takes the visitor through works from the early 1900s, featuring multiple works by Cezanne, Matisse and Picasso. The exhibit is laid out chronologically, opening with high Impressionism and concluding with the more modern, abstract paintings that developed after the turn of the century. The layout illustrates how the Stein family, especially the most prominent member Gertrude and her older brother Leo, helped support budding modern artists and thus facilitated the Parisian avant-garde movement into Modernism.

One of the exhibit's most prized pieces is Matisse's "Wom-

an with a Hat." This painting is a landmark work of the Fauvist movement, which is known for using unrealistically bright and dazzling color combinations—the word "fauvre" means "wild beast" in French.

Their keen eye, faith in modernism, willing financial support, and above all, their involvement in artists' social worlds, eased along the transition into modernism.

Accompanying the art itself are blurbs and facts about the Stein family's lives. Many quotations give the exhibit personality, especially one by a friend of the

Steins to Gertrude: "Are you a nun, a learned doctor, or are we ignorant as to the meaning of your unique costume?" The question is unsurprising, because the Steins went beyond simply good artistic taste and were willing to invest in radical and generally opposed artistic movements. Their risky investments would more often than not pay off tenfold.

One such movement, Cubism, is well-represented toward the end of the exhibit by some of Picasso's most abstract paintings, such as his 1918 "Guitar" and his 1922 "Still Life." Works by Max Weber and Picabia also serve as a stark contrast to the placid Impressionist works that began the Steins' collection.

One of the first abstract paintings in the gallery is Picasso's "Vase, Gourd, and Fruit on Table." The exhibit interestingly depicts Picasso's growth as an artist, starting with very realistic paintings like his "Apple" and going all the way to "Guitar," which hardly resembles a guitar. Next to "Apple" are Cezanne's "Five Apples" and Morgan Russell's "Three Apples." Compared to Russel's intriguingly vivid piece and Cezanne's impressionistic work, Picasso is actually one of the more realistic painters of the exhibit. It is also interesting to see how the three artists depicted the same piece of fruit in such different renderings.

Though the Steins dabbled in art themselves (Leo's abstract self-portrait is featured in the exhibit), their crucial role in nurturing and bringing together the avant-garde



"The Steins Collect" will be at the Metropolitan Museum of Art until Sunday, June 3.

Andrew Fischer / The Spectator

artistic styles of early 20th-century France is an accomplishment that the exhibit successfully illustrates. According to the exhibit, the Steins went on trips with Matisse, dined with Picasso, and even introduced the two for the first time. The family was instrumental in the progress of new and often controversial artistic movements. Their influence and support helped fringe artists of the time, like Cezanne, become widely accepted. Cezanne's early paintings consisting of rough brush strokes and bright and vibrant colors were dismissed by art critics, but the Steins' stamp of approval helped validate the new style.

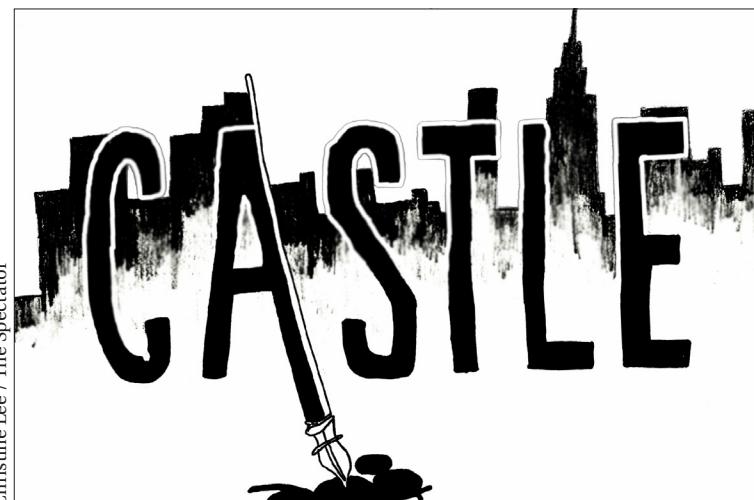
The Met will maintain the exhibit until Sunday, June 3, and it is worth a trip to the museum just

to see it. The exhibit demonstrates how the Stein's keen eye, faith in Modernism, willing financial support, and above all, involvement in the artists' social worlds, eased along the transition into Modernism. "The Steins Collect" is not only a showcase of artwork that most people have only ever seen reproduced in posters, but a microcosm of art history as impressionism fell to modernity.

Gertrude Stein once said that "a masterpiece [...] may be unwelcome, but it is never dull." Thanks to her family's avid collecting of such "unwelcome" masterpieces a century ago, museum-goers in New York this summer will feel anything but dull.

TV

A Novel Twist on a Classic Genre



By AMY ZHEN

When every channel has a crime show (or three), "Castle" could easily be overlooked as just another murder drama. However, its characters, which are as complex as the cases they crack, and its startling mysteries, which often blend the fanciful—fairytales or CIA conspiracies—with murder, make it anything but mundane.

In the pilot "Flowers For Your Grave," which aired on March 9, 2009, Richard Castle (Nathan Fillion), a charismatic mystery novelist, struggles with writer's block while Detective Kate Beckett (Stana Katic) searches for a serial killer whose murders are mysteriously similar to the crimes in Castle's works. After bringing Castle in for questioning, Beckett becomes his unwilling muse, as he begins shadowing her for inspiration for his writing. In a far-fetched twist of fate, his talent for profiling and spotting clues, a result of his work as a novelist, soon makes Castle an essential member of the homicide squad. His detective skills surpass

even Beckett's. Her main police priorities, which consist of intimidating suspects and engaging in gunfights, seem to initially belittle her potential as a character.

Beckett acts as the "brawn" of the duo, hiding behind a harsh, "street-smart" shell. As a domineering female boss, she orders around her fellow detectives Owen (Seamus Dever) and Esposito (Jon Huertas), two static characters who serve mostly to give punch lines than to shape plot. Beckett's stereotypical character traits are too overdone to be interesting. Her antics are even duller when compared to the theatrics of Castle, making it clear why he is the eponymous hero. However, Beckett does have her moments. In the episode "Rise," Katic gives her best performance in the series, depicting Beckett's mental unraveling and tense interactions due to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with gut-wrenching intensity and emotion. By slowly shedding her clichéd façade, Beckett becomes three-dimensional and distinguishes herself among the

other tough love detectives scattered throughout TV land.

Nevertheless, Castle remains the wildly entertaining star, largely due to Fillion's superb acting. In a potentially gritty drama, his juvenility and charm effortlessly brighten the otherwise dark atmosphere. Unlike the detectives who display about as much emotion as the murder victims they investigate, Castle is babyish and even treated as such by his mature, academic daughter Alexis (Molly Quinn). However, his new gig with the police does force him to grow up a little, an essential stepping stone for a man seemingly stuck in Neverland. As he steps up in "Rise" to protect Beckett from her downward spiral, his personality develops.

As would be expected in any television show with opposite

The wild plots add to the allure of "Castle," but they also detract from its believability.

gender leads, Castle and Beckett have noticeable sexual tension from the start. At first, the

duo's romantic friction lent little to the show besides laughs, fueled by superficial flirting and jealousy. As shown by his string of girlfriends and bawdy nature, Castle is a cheeky playboy. In the episode "Deep in Death," he even goes as far as to invite strippers to Beckett's precinct. Because of this consistently raunchy behavior, it's hard to tell whether his attention to her is a game or sincere affection, creating a major annoyance early on in the show. But by giving her some much-needed space to deal with her PTSD, Castle manages to forge a deeper connection with Beckett, who is slowly realizing that she needs him a lot more than she had originally thought.

The romance is exciting; however, the plot tends to stagnate as it grows, falling into a pattern like many of its crime drama kin have done: an intriguing case turns up that sparks Castle's curiosity. The pair works through several suspects before finding the "guilty" party, always revealed to be innocent. After a previously obscured clue prompts the cunning detective Castle to realize their mistake, another chase for the real culprit ensues and Beckett triumphantly captures the criminal. But the inventiveness of the crimes themselves, which have involved ghosts, tiger-smuggling rings, and alien encounters, makes the show worth watching every week, despite its formulaic approach.

If you're looking for an accurate portrayal of life as a murder detective, "Castle" may not be for you. The wild plots add to the allure of "Castle," but they also detract from its believability. In only four seasons, there have been dozens of kidnappings and

In a potentially gritty drama, his [Fillion's] juvenility and charm effortlessly brighten the otherwise dark atmosphere.

near-death encounters, but few realistic consequences. Castle and Beckett frequently escape the clutches of death only to plunge back into their work without recovery, giving the impression that these dramatic events don't faze them in the slightest. This lack of response to life-altering moments makes the plot twists seem pointlessly far-fetched. However, if you accept it for what it is, the characterization is solid and intriguing.

This lesser known show blends crime with romance, drama, comedy, and the realistic world of homicide deductions created by the wit of a best-selling author. Although its nature is predictable and the characters are occasionally flawed, its uniqueness mandates trying an episode or two. Airing on ABC at 10 p.m., "Castle" is a world of ingenuity rooted in the classic murder mystery mold.

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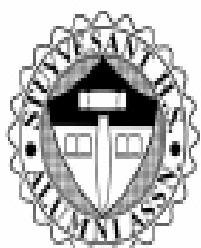
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Sports

Boys' Handball

Training in the Dragons' Lair



Stuyvesant Boy's Handball team practice in the 6th floor gym.

By DARYL CHIN

As indicated by their impressive 46-0 record from 2008 to 2011, the Stuyvesant boys' handball team, the Dragons, have consistently dominated the Manhattan division over the past four years.

Last year, the team finished the season with a 12-0 record and entered the playoffs as the fifth seed. The Dragons defeated Forest Hills, Bronx Science, and Fort Hamilton before being eliminated 4-1 by the number one seed Bayside Commodores in the semi-finals.

Coach Robert Sandler has high expectations for the team this year, based on its recent success in the playoffs and regular season. The graduation of two of the three co-captains, Jacques Cai ('11) and Ricky Guan ('11), has not worried Sandler the team has a returning captain in senior Eric Han. Han has been 7-1 over the past two years in singles matches during the regular season. Han also won Stuyvesant's only victorious match in the semi-finals against Bayside last year. "We have a really strong team, so I'm not worried about replacing them," Sandler said.

Sandler's coaching has been vital to his team's success. "[Sandler] is a really good leader. He actually plays handball, so he knows what he's doing. He organizes

everything very efficiently so I look up to him," senior and co-captain Richard Hsu said.

Though the Dragons are the favorite to win their division again due to their success in past years, they still face many obstacles. Despite the fact that only two of last year's seniors graduated, Guan was their first singles player, while Cai was part of their second doubles team. With the graduation of these two crucial players, much of the starting lineup is up in the air. In terms of the singles opening, the team is "going to play for it, battle it out," senior and first singles player Calvin Chong said.

Sandler is especially looking to Chong to step up. "[Chong] is our lynchpin," he said. "He is the main player for singles. He has to win games; he has to inspire fear in other teams. If you don't have a very good first singles player who can beat the other top teams, you're not going to win. It's important for the playoffs."

The team is comprised mostly of seniors so more time will need to be spent this season on developing its younger players. "Most of our starters are upperclassmen so we're looking forward to finding a strong new generation," Hsu said.

The Dragons are already working on preparing their rookies for the playoffs and next year's season. "We're probably going to have a lot of subs playing. We use the regular season to help out our rookies and get them to understand the official rules when they play handball," Han said.

With Sandler's coaching, a veteran captain, a strong senior class and deep base, the Dragons hope to move beyond the semifinals of the playoffs this year, starting with their first game on Wednesday, March 21. "I think we'll get as far as we did last year, and even farther," Sandler said. "I think we have a good chance of winning the whole championship this year."

Boys' Golf

On Par for Success

By YASIRU JAYAKODY

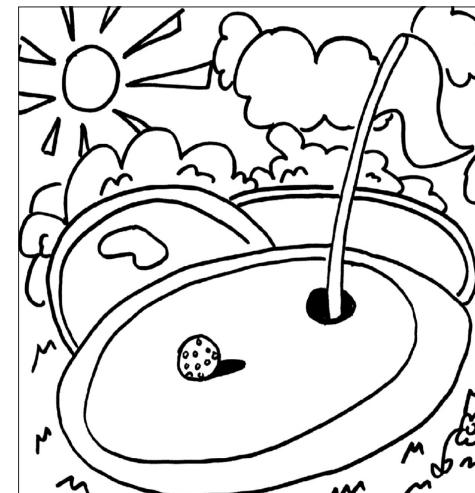
The Eagles, Stuyvesant's boys' golf team, are looking to continue their streak of division championships and playoff wins this spring. These golfers have dominated division play in the past, winning their division for four straight years and going undefeated in three of them. Led by coach Emilio Nieves, the Eagles had a perfect 9-0 regular season record last season but suffered a devastating 5-0 loss in the quarterfinals to the Tottenville High School Pirates.

This year, the Eagles are entering the season with a roster with a large underclassmen presence. The team consists of six freshmen and three sophomores, with captain William Knight IV as the only senior. Despite the difference in team chemistry from last year's upperclassmen-dominated team, the Eagles see the youth on their roster as an advantage. "I firmly believe this is our most talented team, the team with the most potential that we've ever had," Knight said. "I know that I can count on them."

Last year's freshmen played a huge role in the team's success. Sophomore Kyung Jae Han won all six of his matches in the five spot, and sophomore Takeshi Fukui won all nine of the matches he played in the four spot last year, in addition to his playoff victory. Nevertheless, with the previous one and two golfers graduated, Han and Fukui, as well as the other young golfers, have big shoes to fill.

Despite posting a combined regular season 46-1 record since Nieves took over as coach, the Eagles have not yet managed to win a PSAL championship. The Eagles' main challengers will appear in the playoffs when they face teams from outside of their Bronx/Manhattan division, such as Tottenville. "We've had pretty good success over the years. We've never been able to win a championship. It's just one of those things about sports," Nieves said.

It seems as if each year, the Eagles do not reach their full potential, as they are



Niki Chen / The Spectator
always eliminated from the playoffs earlier than expected. This is something they believe they can change this year. Hopefully, this will be the year that the boys end the trend. "I'm not going to be Rex Ryan and say we're going to win it all, but I know that we are capable of going deeper into the playoffs," Knight said.

Nieves believes that his players will get as far as their hard work and dedication takes them. He considers golf a year-round sport and practices with his players individually during the summer, meeting with them at various locations throughout the city to practice. "I hope that the players are as dedicated to winning as I am, and from what I've seen, they are." Nieves said.

Nieves ultimately believes that uncompromising hard work is what will allow them to get over the playoff hump. "We've always worked hard, so we just have to continue to work hard and maybe one day it will happen," Nieves said.

Knight believes that winning is all in the mindset. "We play to win. We want to be positive and believe we can and will win every game we play," Knight said. "Under Coach Nieves, we have only lost one regular season game in six years, and we plan to keep it that way."

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Sports

Boys' Volleyball

Men of Steel to Build on Last Year's Success



Stuyvesant's Boys' Volleyball Team practicing.

By ALEN MAKHMUDOV

The Men of Steel, Stuyvesant's boys' varsity volleyball team, hope to keep their 36-game regular season winning streak alive this year with the addition of 12 regular season wins. The last time the boys' volleyball team lost a regular season game was on Monday, April 28, 2008, when they fell to the Bayard Rustin Titans 2-0.

Despite their regular season success, the Men of Steel were unable to get past the first round of the playoffs from 2008 through 2010. Last year, they broke the barrier, and advanced to the second round. There they were defeated by the William C. Bryant Owls, who went on to win the City Championship.

The team will have to work hard this year to fill the shoes of the three players who were lost to graduation: Daniel Afonin ('11), Luca Senise ('11), and Brian Wan ('11). Afonin was a 6'7" middle hitter for the team, and his height and ability to make kills will be

greatly missed.

Wan was the captain and the setter of last year's team. With 138 assists, he was second in the Manhattan VII league for total assists, and his absence will pose a challenge to this year's squad. "[Wan] was one of the best athletes that I ever had," coach Vasken Choubaralian said.

The Men of Steel hope to find someone who can step up and play on the same level as the seniors from last year. "I have someone who is over six feet, but he's only a sophomore now. I do have some athletic boys, and it's really up to them. If they want it and they work hard they can be as good [as], if not better than, last year's team," Choubaralian said.

Working hard and achieving this goal is exactly what the team has set out to do. Looking for extra practice, senior and co-captain Leon Li, junior Calvin He, and sophomore Connor Pfister helped manage Coach Phillip Fisher and his girls' varsity volleyball team during the

fall season. While they worked as managers, they also participated in the team's practices. Li also played volleyball for a club outside of school.

Coming into the new season, Choubaralian wants to maintain his positive attitude and calm manner from last year. His optimism as a coach has had an enormous effect on the team. "I like how he always seems to be excited for practice, games, scrimmages, and tournaments," Li said. "It motivates us to be excited." Choubaralian boosts morale during his practices with fun, inter-team competitions.

In addition to making practices more enjoyable, Choubaralian wants to change his drills, something he believes will greatly benefit the team. "I want to improve the drills that I use so that they are more dynamic, and more game-simulating. I have some of those drills in mind," Choubaralian said.

Though the Men of Steel have been undefeated for the past three years, they are, admittedly, in the weakest division in Manhattan. In order to be better prepared for the playoffs, in which Stuyvesant would play teams from better divisions, Choubaralian has organized more scrimmages against better teams. This year the team will scrimmage the Academy of American Studies, Brooklyn Technical High School, and Hunter College High School, all of which hail from other divisions.

"As of now, I think we have what it takes to be as good as last year's team," Li said. "Since there are going to be a couple of new starters, we will have to get to know one another really well and work together as a team."

Respect For All (Except Athletes!)

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cult to ace a test when you have a packed after school schedule. One thing the administration should consider is allowing student-athletes to opt out of having a physical education class during their season. This would allow for an extra free period during the day that could be

team more than makes up for two to three 41-minute periods of gym a week. Policies like this are in place at many New York City schools with strong athletic programs, and they can be a huge aid in time management.

As we currently do not have a system like this in place, athletes also deserve the extra attention of college admissions officers. As athletes are forced to work under harsher time constraints than most students, it is only logical that their GPA's will be lower than if they had the extra time to put in studying. I don't see a need for a systemic overhaul here, but it's logical that students who have shown commitment to teams should be cut a little more slack by admissions officers in terms of leniency regarding grades.

If calling for administrative assistance seems a little radical, it would sure be nice to see athletes respected a little more by the student body. Despite everything Stuyvesant has going against it in the realm of sports, its athletic program actually does quite well and produces some of New York City's most talented student-athletes. Yet, all we have to show for it are those nice little trophy cases outside the third floor gym that nobody stops to look at. Our athletes, for doing all that I have mentioned and more, deserve so much more respect than is given to them.

Even the smallest amount of recognition would be nice every once in a while. So take this all into consideration, and maybe the next time you hear that championship announcement over the PA system during third period, you'll be a little more impressed.

In the morning announcements at the start of third period, you are told that the swimming team won the PSAL City Championships for what feels like the hundredth time. You roll your eyes, much more concerned with the upcoming lesson.

used to catch up on studying, at little loss for the athletes. After all, the physical activity provided by participation on a sports

Girls' Fencing

Playoffs a Stretch for Former Champion Girls' Fencing Team

By ODREKA AHMED

The girls' fencing team, at one point the city's best, has been stuck in a comparative rut for the past two years. The team, currently unnamed, hasn't been able to finish the season with a perfect record since its three undefeated seasons from 2007 through 2009. Instead the team saw two losses and eight wins in their regular season last year, both of which were to league rival Hunter College High School, who then went on to win the city championship.

Last year, the PSAL introduced a new weapon: epee. Each of the three fencing weapons—two of which, foil and epee, are used in the PSAL—has a different set of rules and skills that accompany it. Former captain of the fencing team Sarah Alkilany ('11), who currently fences for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, helped some of the girls on last year's team better transition to epee from the PSAL's previously available foil. Because the entire body is a target in epee—in foil only the torso is valid target area—and the weapon is heavier, the girls had to work on extending their reach while maintaining control of the weapon. At the same time, they must not only defend their torsos but their entire bodies. Epee and foil also differ in that in foil, fencers have to be aware of the right of way—only one person scores a point, even

if both make a touch. In epee, if both fencers legally make contact, both get score.

Despite Alkilany's assistance, epee's addition to the PSAL arsenal did hurt Stuyvesant's chances at city championships, especially against schools like Hunter, for which all three epee starters had previous experience fencing epee. "Most of Hunter also has a lot of outside fencing experience. I think we tried our best last year, but there were certain skills that we need to develop more before we face them again this year," sophomore Julia Mendelsohn said in an email interview.

"Hunter is our biggest challenge. Our bouts with them [take] significantly longer, and we need to be more strategic. I think we could have watched our videos of the bouts we have with them more, because the more you analyze the opposite player the more familiar you are with how they move on the strip and tactics you can try with them," senior Bernice Chan said.

However, Stuyvesant's fencing season began on Monday, February 27, which is considerably late compared to other schools. "Our biggest competitor, Hunter, practices all year round," coach Joel Winston said.

The girls' fencing team at Hunter, despite being walk-on, mandates all their fencers to attend weekly clinics and take private lessons in order to remain

on the team, something very few fencers on the Stuyvesant team do.

"I think we already started off with two strikes. We lost half the team to SING! practice. It's hard when you don't have committed players," Winston said. "It's a big detriment."

The loss of Alkilany, one of the team's few year-round fencers, will leave a large hole in Stuyvesant's epee line-up this year. "Not having [her] especially affects the team this year when Hunter and Bronx Science have nationally ranked epeeists on their team," Chan said.

In addition to Alkilany, senior Anna Mastryukova, who started for epee last year, will not be returning to fence due to personal reasons. This leaves only one veteran epee fencer for Stuyvesant this season—senior and co-captain Yinyin Wu.

Stuyvesant also experienced a loss on the foil front with the graduation of Katherine Chen ('11), but the team believes they have enough depth to make up for it. Both Chan and senior and co-captain Sophia Chen have some experience fencing foil. Last year Chan placed second in a city-wide novice tournament, and Sophia Chen and Chan placed third and fifth respectively in the season opener. The team also looks to Mendelsohn to step up for foil this year.

Mendelsohn joined the team



Senior and co-captain Sophia Chen fencing a foil bout with senior Cheng Ma.

as a freshman and went 13-3 in her first year. "I have a lot of outside experience with fencing," she said. "I have been [fencing] since I was about nine years old."

To ensure that the best fencers, regardless of their age, will get to fence this year, none of the returning fencers are guaranteed a starting spot. The team plans to have a pool for starting positions. Each member of the team will fence every other member on the team and the scores will be tallied. The fencers that win the most bouts and have the best records will go on to become starters.

"We understand better than anyone that we have sort of sput-

tered the past two seasons, and every team member is determined [to win]," Chen said.

Not everyone is as optimistic, as this season is expected to be harder than the last due to the fact that Hunter only lost one starter to graduation and still has a very experienced and disciplined team. "Hunter's been at full gear and we started this week. It's hard to beat a team that wants to be first with our mentality. We'd be lucky to come in second," Winston said.

However the rest of the team's goal for this season is undisputed. "[We plan] to win back the championship, of course," Wu said.

Philip Shin / The Spectator

Sports

From Long Poles to Long Proofs

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club in college, but because of time commitments I couldn't do more than that," said Park, who

"I think he's a really good coach. He actually makes us do physical activities because he wants us to get into shape. He knows what he's doing. He teaches our [defensive players] actual defense."
—Avinash Ramsumair, senior

played for Loch Raven High in Baltimore County, and for Emory University in Atlanta.

In Park's senior year of high school, a friend of his on the South Korean men's national team told him about tryouts for the South Korea U-19 team. Near Thanksgiving, he and his friend drove up to New Jersey Park to tryout. "I didn't think I was going to make it, because everyone was pretty decent, but I got a call back a few weeks later," Park said. He then impressed co-coaches Ted and Bill Wolford and gained a spot on the team. The Korean team consisted mostly of current or former high school players born and raised in the United States whose parents were born in South Korea.

Park played with the team at the 2003 International Lacrosse Federation World Championships at Towson University in Maryland. South Korea won three of four games in the tournament, and its only loss was to Japan. "I won the defensive MVP for Team Korea. That was probably the highlight of my career," Park said.

Over the years, there have been several other high points in Park's career. "It's always memorable when you score a goal, especially as a long pole," Park said. A goal by a long-pole defender is very rare because defenders don't often cross the midfield line into the offensive end. It is also harder to dodge and easier to get the ball taken away when using a long pole.

Even though he does not play on the national stage anymore, being a teacher has not stopped Park from being involved with the lacrosse. He has a genuine passion for the sport, and currently plays in a New York City recreational league for college graduates. Additionally, he is the assistant coach for the Stuyvesant boys' lacrosse team. Park is no stranger to the

world of coaching lacrosse. Prior to coaching the Peglegs, he coached 12- and 13-year-old lacrosse players in a recreational league. His playing and coaching experience make him a valuable asset to the team. "I think he's a really good coach. He actually makes us do physical activities because he wants us to get into shape. He knows what he's doing. He teaches our [defensive players] actual defense," senior and goalie Avinash Ramsumair said.

Players either love or hate practices run by Park because of their intensity. Park stresses fundamental stick skills and hustle. He has been known to "rage," Ramsumair said, or get very angry at players who are late to practice, fail to have basic stick proficiency, or simply don't work hard. Park brings a sense of discipline and work ethic to a team that has been troubled by suspensions due to excessive latenesses or cutting in recent years.

"I think of Mr. Park as a very reasonable coach. That being said he is also rather strict," sophomore William Chang said.

Park also supervises line drills that involve passing, catching, and picking up the ball with the stick, and he sometimes organizes intra-team scrimmages. But he is most famous for occasionally playing one-on-one defense against the players. Even among the best players, getting by him is a feat that few have accomplished.

"I couldn't get by him and when I did he took a crazy check and my stick fell out of my hands," sophomore Noah Kramer said. For less experienced players, he goes easier on them to let them learn, but his hits still leave a little sting.

"I won the defensive MVP for Team Korea. That was probably the highlight of my career."
—David Park, math teacher

"He just has to stop teaching and go full-time coach. I think he's getting his coaching license pretty soon, so then he can come and supervise us without our head coach [Anthony Bascone]," Kramer said. "Hopefully he starts coming more and coaching the team more."

Though a career in Major League Lacrosse, the highest professional lacrosse league in the United States, is most certainly out of the question for Park, anything is possible for him as a coach. Park believes that the Peglegs could continue to improve if its members keep practicing and taking his advice. "He knows what he's doing and he knows what he's saying," Ramsumair said. "The players respect him and listen to him. I think he's doing a pretty good job."

Boys' Lacrosse

Peglegs Not Laxed Before Season

By KEVIN MOY

Every year as March 1 rolls around, spring sports teams usually begin their workouts for the upcoming season. Players start re-learning how to work and gel as a team. But for the Peglegs, Stuyvesant High School's boys' lacrosse team, the 2012 season started immediately after the 2011 season had ended.

"Everyone understands that you have to be on point with your attendance as well as being punctual to practice. We have to be on top of that this year."
—Sanjit Gill, senior

The team had reached the first round of the playoffs, before losing to Long Island City High School by a score of 17-5. "We came into the [playoffs] with probably the best offense hands down, but [sophomore and attacker Noah] Kramer got triple-teamed and we were held scoreless for two quarters," senior and attacker Shuqi Gao said.

Last season, the team was plagued by suspensions, especially at the start of the season, because of the athletes' excessive latenesses to school. Additionally, an incident involving an improper use of a storage shed at Pier 40, a practice facility used by many Stuyvesant sports teams, resulted in the temporary cancellation of the lacrosse season by Athletic Director Larry Barth. Two days later, Barth restored the season, but the majority of the seniors quit the team due to suspensions stemming from the event.

"Of course [the lack of seniors] dealt a heavy blow to our

morale," senior and midfielder Ian Chan said. "In hindsight, it helped prepare a lot of juniors and sophomores for the seasons yet to come."

This season, the team will have many seniors, and most will occupy starting positions. The attack will be filled by Gao and senior Alan Lau. Moreover, the team will once again rely on Kramer, who scored 57 goals last season, becoming second in the PSAL.

The team's most improved unit this year is their defense. The three leaders of the defense, seniors Kevin Choi, Bill Ling, and Evan Mostafa, picked up 49 combined ground balls—gains of possession from intercepted passes or balls pick up from the ground. The defense will also be aided by freshman Nick Romanoff.

"Our defense is now super experienced and athletic," Gao said. "Our X-factor will be [junior and] midfielder Roy Choi. He's a game-changer and really quick with a nice shot, so I hope he can step up this year."

Over the summer, the Peglegs worked hard on improving their skills. Players worked out by playing beach lacrosse at Morey's Pier in New Jersey. Others joined City-Lax, a non-for-profit organization that helps develop lacrosse players in New York City public schools. The athletes focused on fundamentals - catching, passing, and shooting - throughout the offseason. Conditioning was also a big part of the Peglegs' offseason and will remain an important aspect of their season.

Despite the team's committed attitude to the game, the players' attendance records have once again hurt the team even before the start of the season. Many players have been late to school excessively and are waiting on Athletic Director Larry Barth's decision regarding the length of their respective suspensions. Gao is already suspended for the first two league games for lateness.

"The thing with latenesses is that they always pop up either right before the season starts or during the season," Kramer said. "Myself and some of the other seniors are always urging the players to go to class and to get there on time, because we know that kills us every year."

"Everyone understands that you have to be on point with

your attendance, as well as being punctual to practice. We have to be on top of that this year," senior and midfielder Sanjit Gill said.

The team will face new competition this year in the Bowl Division, as Frederick Douglass Academy moved down from the Championship Division after going 1-11. Despite this poor record, the Peglegs are not going to take them lightly.

"Of course [the lack of seniors on the 2011 team] dealt a heavy blow to our morale. In hindsight, it helped prepare a lot of juniors and sophomores for the seasons yet to come."
—Ian Chan, senior

"[Frederick Douglass Academy] is going to be our main challenge," Kramer said. "I played with them during the winter, and they seem pretty athletic. But I still think we can beat them."

The Peglegs will scrimmage against the Hunter College High School Hawks on Saturday, March 17, before playing their first league game against the James Madison Knights on Tuesday, March 20. "[The Hawks game] is always a dogfight, so we'll have to be prepared for them," Gao said.

After the disappointment of a first round exit in the 2011 post-season, the Peglegs are looking to improve tremendously this season. "We want to bring a championship back to Stuy and help move the team to the upper division," Gao said. "We have a great team, and the expectations are high."



Michele Lin / The Spectator

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Indoor Track

Distance Medley Relay Breaks PSAL Record, Places Fourth Nationally

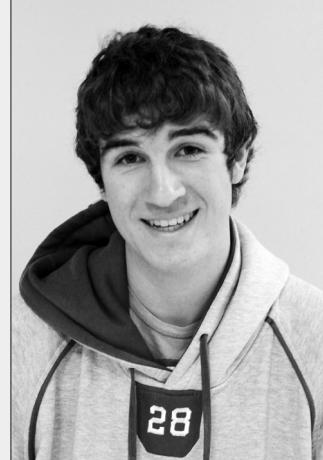
By KATIE MULLANEY
with additional reporting by
YORKBELL JARAMILLO

The Stuyvesant Greyclubs' distance medley relay team, consisting of junior Jack Stevenson, senior Genghis Chau, senior and co-captain Mark Schramm, and senior and co-captain Konrad Surkont, competed against the top relay teams in the nation in the New Balance Indoor National Championship on Saturday, March 10, at the 168th Street Armory. The team achieved an all-time record time for PSAL and finished fourth place. The boys earned the prestigious All-American title for finishing in the top six.

The distance medley relay is a four-leg event in which each leg runs a different distance. Stevenson started off the race with 1200m, followed by Chau with 400m, and Schramm with 800m. Surkont secured the fourth place finish with the 1600m, totaling the time to 10:12.24.

Of the thirteen teams competing, the top seven teams finished within less than three seconds of each other, including Stuyvesant's. St. Benedict's Preparatory School finished first with a time of 10:10.08, and the seventh place team, Monsignor Farrell High School, finished close behind with a time of 10:12.50. The third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh teams crossed the finish line within less than a second of each other.

Respect For All (Except Athletes!)



By MICHAEL SHELDON

We've all been there. In the morning announcements at the start of third period, you are told that the swimming team won the PSAL City Championships for what feels like the hundredth time. You roll your eyes, much more concerned with the upcoming lesson. Awesome.

Most of us simply just don't think about how difficult it is to be a successful student-athlete.

However, all students are familiar with the Stuyvesant workload. In the quest for straight A's, students study and do homework for hours every night, often remaining awake into the wee hours of the morning.

Imagine having to deal with this while regularly coming home at 8:00 p.m. or later, and being physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted. This is what the average student-athlete's

In facing this tight competition, Surkont had to keep up with his opponents in the last lap to ensure a top place. "I felt good through my leg, and at the last lap I knew where I needed to be," Surkont said. "I surged forward, and it worked out."

By breaking the PSAL record, the members of the team achieved a goal they had set for itself in the beginning of the season. With each runner working to increase his time throughout the season, the finishing time of the relay dropped drastically from previous meets. "We just had to put in the practice. After we ran 10:19 earlier in the season, we knew we had to improve our time to really break the record," Chau said.

Surkont's time of 4:11 in his 1600m leg technically breaks the PSAL all-time 1600m record, as well as his own personal record. However, since it was obtained as part of a relay and not an individual 1600m event, it does not qualify as an official record.

This dominant relay team will run together again next month at the Penn Relays on Saturday, April 28 at The University of Pennsylvania. At this outdoor track meet, they will face many of the same teams they faced in this competition. "I just hope to keep improving and not get caught up in what we've already done," Schramm said. "Hopefully we can do more and greater things in the future."

week is like. It's all the pressures of a Stuyvesant workload along with 15-30 hours of physical activity to top it off.

But in order for Stuyvesant sports teams to achieve success, this is the amount of time athletes need to put in. Our athletic programs do not have the luxury of recruiting natural talent, and if our teams want to be competitive amongst other New York City high schools, the members have to work hard for it. There is no handicap in the PSAL because we go to Stuyvesant. Here, strong performance is built on hard work and preparation, and these things take time.

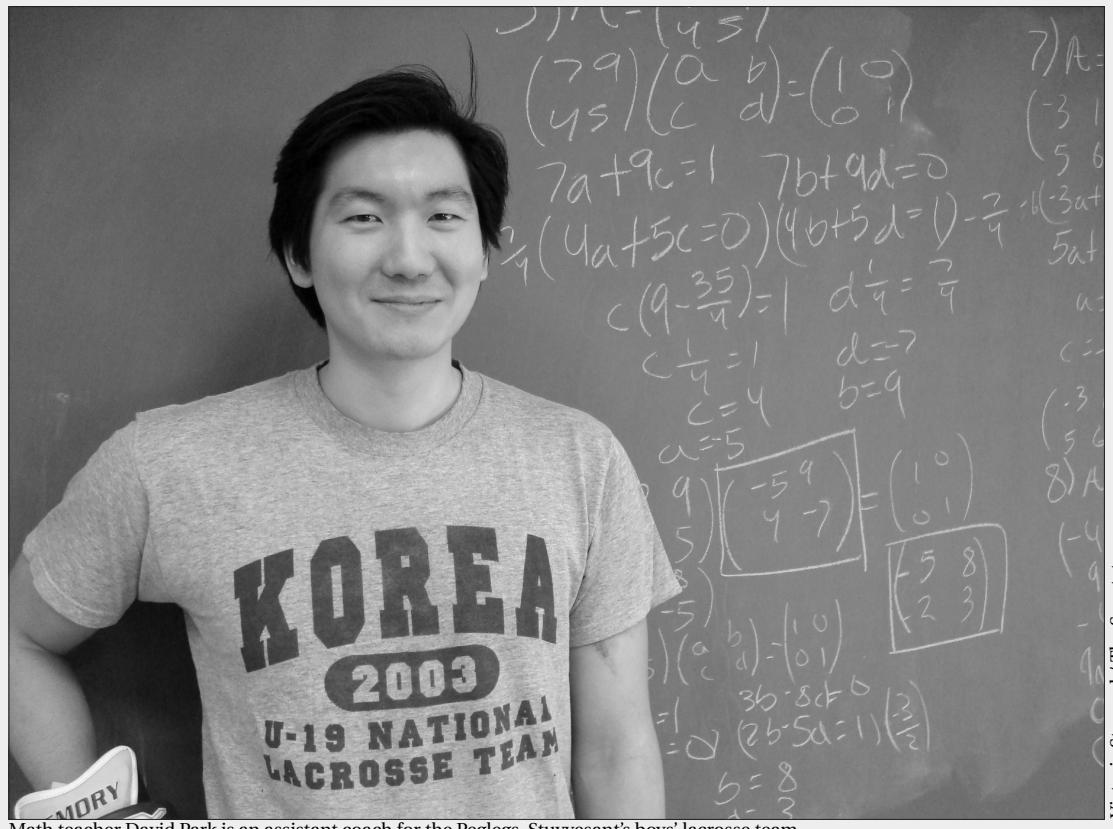
On top of a Stuy workload, competing may seem a near-impossible task. Hours that could otherwise be used for studying are instead spent practicing or playing games, and either an intense form of super-genius or extra waking hours are required to account for both activities.

Staying up late may help athletes make up schoolwork, but when nobody can be so exhausted that they can't perform for their team, it seems like there just aren't enough hours in the day. Nevertheless, many members of the Stuy community find the balance, and they rarely earn any form of recognition.

That's not to say that student-athletes do not struggle with managing what little time they have. No matter how hard you work, it's going to be awfully diffi-

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From Long Poles to Long Proofs



Math teacher David Park is an assistant coach for the Peglegs, Stuyvesant's boys' lacrosse team.

By MATTHEW MOY

At Pier 40, members of the Stuyvesant boys' lacrosse team, the Peglegs, line up to test their skills during practice. A solidly built lacrosse player is playing defense as part of an individual drill. He wields a long pole—a 72-inch lacrosse stick reserved for defenders and defensive mid-fielders, as opposed to the normal 42-inch stick for offensive

midfielders and attackmen—and repeatedly strips players of the ball. He easily pushes away everyone trying to dodge past him, and viciously checks the players' hands and arms with his stick, attempting to dislodge the ball. He fits in with the team, but one thing gives away his identity: his helmet.

The player is actually math teacher David Park. His helmet has Korean decals on it, sinceas

Park was a member of the South Korea Under-19 team at the pinnacle of his lacrosse career.

Park began playing lacrosse as a youngster in Baltimore, Maryland. "I started with a [recreational] league when I was seven, up until I was in ninth grade. Then I played JV my first year of high school and then varsity for three years. I played two years of

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Girls' Tennis

Lobsters in the Hunt for City Championship

By VINIT SHAH

For the Lobsters, Stuyvesant's girls' tennis team, anything less than a championship appearance this season would be considered a disappointment. For more than four consecutive years, the team has consistently won the Manhattan/Bronx division. Moreover, the Lobsters have consistently made it to either the finals or the semi-finals for the past decade.

Despite their usual regular season success, the Lobsters still struggle to carry the momentum into the postseason—they habitually lose to the eventual city champions in the late rounds of the playoffs. From 2008-2010, the Lobsters were ousted by the Benjamin N. Cardozo High School Lady Judges, who went on to win the PSAL City Championships in all three years. And in the 2011 season, the Lobsters lost to the current champions, Leon M. Goldstein High School for Science, in the semi-finals.

"For the last ten years, Stuy has reached the finals or the semis. No champion in the last decade has won without facing Stuy in the final or the semis," coach Jeffrey Menaker said. Getting over the postseason hump will require "proper nourishment" and "putting in the hours at practice."

Though the team usually has good attendance at practices, it needs to be more productive and efficient in the limited time that it has. Senior and co-captain Sofia Pidzryalio tries to "motivate [her team] to come to every practice, and since we're all a pretty tight

bunch, we do as much as we can to improve our game," she said.

Last season, the Lobsters lost their co-captains, Emily Quint-Hoover ('11) and Samantha Unger ('11), for an extended period of time due to lateness policy violations. However, this season looks to be different. Menaker thinks the Lobsters have "more than replaced last year's seniors in terms of talent," he said, as Quint-Hoover was the only starter that the Lobsters lost to graduation.

Junior, co-captain, and the team's 2011 Most Valuable Player Dina Levy-Lambert thinks the Lobsters have found a gem in freshman Julia Gokhberg. "She'll make our lineup stronger and hopefully will help us recapture the Manhattan/Bronx Division title," Lambert said.

This year, though the Lobsters have a lot of depth, they are not able to fully take advantage of it. PSAL teams only play three single matches and two double matches in one school game. This system only lets a limited number of players—seven at most—showcase their talent. Menaker said, "I sometimes wish we played seven court matches, as they do in Long Island and around the state."

Still, the team's depth of talent is crucial because almost any player on the roster can compete with reasonable success. "We may not sweep the singles, but as you move down the lineup, it's hard to find places to beat us," Menaker said. The Lobsters' depth can rest starters before big games and not despair over injuries because they have a more-than-capable second line to back

them up.

The Lobsters would benefit from having a greater number of skilled players in the incoming classes. Since students need to take an exam to gain admission into Stuyvesant, the Lobsters are forced to search for talent in a limited pool of student-athletes, whereas schools like Benjamin N. Cardozo and Leon M. Goldstein are able to recruit players.

Lastly, the Lobsters' tight-knit team dynamic serves as yet another quality that could propel the team forward. "Whenever we have matches, whether we're winning or losing, we have each other's backs and try to cheer each other on when we see a member having a hard time," Pidzryalio said.

Due to the loss of many talented players for Cardozo and Goldstein, the Lobsters have a good shot at beating them in the playoffs this year. If the team can perform to its fullest potential in games and get over its occasional anxiety, the team can improve its postseason performance. As Menaker said, "There's no team in the New York State we're not capable of beating if we play our best."

Menaker's outstanding coaching experience, the Lobsters' unity, and the leadership of three talented co-captains are likely to push the team forward this season. With improvements across the board, the loss of only one starter, and the motivation to advance farther after last season's loss to Goldstein, this may very well be the year of the Lobsters.

Victoria Stempel / The Spectator