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SU Election Winners Plan for Upcoming Year

By ELENA MILIN

The results are in: freshmen Ryan Kim and Andrew Lee are now President and Vice President, respectively, of the Class of 2015. Sophomores Thoasin Bari and Eddie Zilberbrand are now President and Vice President of the Class of 2014.

Kim and Lee won 60 votes at the Student Union general election on Wednesday, December 2, beating out their opponents, Briana Lui and Maggie Gutmann, by 20 votes.

"From what I've seen, heard, and researched about Ryan Kim and Andrew Lee, I believe that they are well-qualified for the job," freshman Elvin Shoyfer said.

Kim and Lee plan to focus on creating events to be attended exclusively by freshmen, such as a freshman Open Mic and freshman sports tournaments. They also want to have a freshman spirit week, which would include different dress days, such as Pajama Day or Middle School Shirt Day. In addition, they hope to organize a freshman dance.

"We want freshmen to be more involved," Kim said.

Though the two are new to Stuyvesant, they have some ex-

perience with student government, as they were the 8th grade President and Vice President at their middle school. In addition, Kim was the secretary in 7th grade. While in middle school, they organized dances, a spirit week, and other events.

The two aim to make the transition into Stuy more enjoyable. "We can't promise people everything, but we want to do the best we can in order for people to enjoy their year," Kim said.

Bari and Zilberbrand received 75 votes, two less than candidates David Cahn and Jason Duong, but Cahn and Duong were disqualified for having three posters up on election day, and for placing these posters on walls, not bulletin boards.

"Despite the scandal, I think that this year's President and Vice President will give us a great sophomore year," sophomore Michael Sugarman said.

Now that Bari and Zilberbrand are in office, they plan to start the application process for SING! producers and coordinators by the end of this week. They are also hoping to have several winter fundraisers to help cover the costs of SING! and a possible sophomore dance. To raise even more money, they plan on selling

Class of 2014 apparel.

Soph-frosh SING! is of considerable importance to Bari and Zilberbrand, and they plan to be involved in more than just the financial aspects of the show. "We're going to keep a tighter run [on SING!]," Zilberbrand said. "Me and Thoasin can be part of every single step."

The newly elected sophomores are planning sophomore outings, such as a sophomore field day, at which 10 teams of 10 would compete in various sports tournaments. Students not participating directly would watch the games, which would be held in Battery Park.

"Overall, I think the school just wants more school spirit, so that's what we're aiming for this year," Bari said.

Bari and Zilberbrand have also devised an innovative "buddy program" that would pair up sophomores and freshmen. The program would prepare sophomores interested in being Big Sibs for the responsibilities involved, while the more shy freshmen would have access to a "less intimidating" older student, Zilberbrand said. A group of five

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Cahn and Duong Disqualified from Sophomore Caucus Election

By SOULIN HAQUE

Due to a violation of the Board of Election's rules, sophomore caucus candidates David Cahn and Jason Duong were disqualified after receiving 77 votes, in comparison with Thoasin Bari and Edward Zilberband's 75, in the SU election on Wednesday, November 30. The BOE declared the runner-ups winners by default, because Student Union (SU) President Edward Cho and two BOE members found three of Cahn and Duong's campaign posters on the fourth floor, fifth floor, and staircases.

The BOE enforced a strict no campaigning rule for 24 hours before the vote in order to prevent coercion. Thus, the first poster they found on election day, "Results, The Only Thing That Count: VOTE David Cahn and Jason Duong for Sophomore Caucus," were grounds for disqualification. One of the BOE members first saw the

campaign poster on room 437 on the Monday before the general elections. However, Board of Elections Co-Chair Bumsoo Kim said that the poster may also have been up during the primary elections, because he had seen a poster in the same place a little more than a day before the primary election. "I left it there because it wasn't time to disqualify him yet," Kim said.

According to BOE rules, two violations immediately disqualify a candidate. Kim stated that because the poster was up during the day of the general elections and because it had not been placed on a bulletin board, Cahn had violated BOE rules twice. If the poster was indeed up on the day of the primary elections, as the BOE suspected, that would count as a third violation.

Cahn said the disqualifi-

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Geller's Students Adjust to New Teachers

By LINDSAY BU
and EUGENIA SANCHEZ

In response to math teacher Richard Geller's recent death on Tuesday, November 1, the Stuyvesant administration has asked some of the department teachers to take over his classes for the duration of the fall term.

Starting Monday, November 14, all of Geller's students were put under the instruction of new teachers, after being supervised by substitutes. "Our major concern is a smooth transition for [Geller's] students," Mathematics Assistant Principal Maryann Ferrara said, in a letter addressed to the parents of Geller's students, posted on the Stuyvesant Web site on Thursday, November 10. "Experienced mathematics teachers [will] take over [his] classes [...] and will therefore be knowledgeable about the syllabus and examinations required."

Geller, who passed away from advanced melanoma cancer after teaching at the school for 30 years, was teaching Algebra II and Trigonometry this semester, in addition to coaching one Math Team class. Math teachers Gary Jaye, Robert Mak-sudian, David Park, and Sophia Liang each took over one of his four Algebra II and Trigonometry classes. His Math Team class was taken over by Stuyvesant alumnus John Taylor ('07) and

Ferrara.

"Believe me, this is the last thing I wanted," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "But we don't really have a choice. This is the best solution we have at the time being."

The administration initially hoped to bring back a retired teacher who had taught the course. "We couldn't find anyone who was able to come back for the term," Ferrara said. "So I asked my teachers who were already teaching the course if they were willing to teach another class. Many agreed and [...] Mr. Geller's past classes were assigned to experienced teachers in our department," she said. The four teachers received financial compensation for their additional work.

"A new teacher would be too complicated," Teitel said. "They wouldn't meet our standards and they wouldn't be as familiar with the curriculum as I would expect them to be. I want things to go as back to normal as possible, as soon as possible."

"The teachers taking over the classes were chosen based on already teaching the MR21 course, and availability during the particular class periods," Park said.

"Of course taking on another class is more work, but it seemed like the right thing to do," Mak-

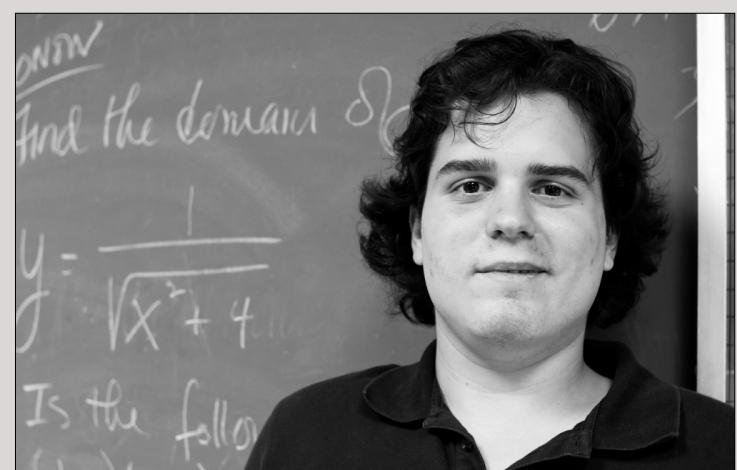
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John Taylor: Master of Music, Math, and Languages

By KAREN ZHENG

When Stuyvesant alumnus John Taylor ('07) was five years old, he sat outside the admissions office at Saint Ann's School, awaiting his interview, and helped the much older girl next to him with her math homework. Throughout elementary school at Saint Ann's, Taylor excelled in math classes alongside students a year older than he was. Upon entering Stuyvesant, he joined the math team, in which he rose to the rank of captain. In his senior year, Taylor competed in the tiebreaking round of the American Regions Mathematics League (ARML), an annual national high school math team competition, and was admitted to Princeton University, graduating with a degree in Music. Now he's back at Stuyvesant, having taken over math teacher Richard Geller's Algebra 2/Trigonometry (MR21) and Math Team classes.

Taylor visited Geller during an after-school tutoring session in May 2009, in his sophomore year of college. "Not math?" was Geller's reply, accompanied by a smile, when Taylor said that he was majoring in Music. Though he started off as a math major, Taylor switched to music after his freshman year, during which he took two math classes: Analysis In a Single Variable, and Numbers, Equations, and Proofs, the latter of which he described as "next to impossible.



John Taylor, former Stuyvesant High School math team captain and current math team coach.

[...] As a freshman, I was totally unprepared.

"I have always loved math," Taylor said. "Math was always my favorite subject." Even when it was challenging, as Geometry was for him, he "just worked very hard at it," he said. He was the only Stuyvesant freshman who was selected for the 2004 ARML, and was able to answer two out of eight questions on the notoriously difficult exam. As a senior, he correctly answered all eight and competed in its tiebreaker round.

However, Taylor has always been equally passionate about music. He started taking piano lessons at the age of three, and he played the clarinet for both Saint Ann's and Stuyvesant's bands. He taught himself how to play the guitar, and composes string quartets and piano pieces, including one that he played for Geller's memorial service on Wednesday, November 9.

When he was in sixth grade, Taylor applied for Juilliard's Pre-college Division, a course for young musicians held on Saturdays, as a composition major. After initially being rejected, Taylor tried out again in seventh grade, and was admitted to the program. During his time at Juilliard, Taylor wrote classical and tonal music, music in a specific key with a home base.

"Music was always something that came naturally to me. Everything flowed like water,"

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Systems Level Programming: A Closer Look at the Machine

Do you understand how your computer works?



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Arts & Entertainment

Aristocratic Infatuations

The riveting British drama "Downton Abbey" follows the wealthy Crawley family and its servants through World War I.

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Cahn and Duong Disqualified from Sophomore Caucus Election

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cation was "simply unfair." "I don't think that an 8.5-by-11-sized piece of paper that is covered by another piece of paper caused people to vote for me at all. There isn't any reason for us

"We had 10 campaign managers, and we told all of them to go all around the school checking for posters seeing if they were up. We did no campaigning except for oral campaigning before the second round of voting."
—Jason Duong, sophomore caucus candidate

election. "We had 10 campaign managers, and we told all of them to go all around the school checking for posters seeing if they were up," Duong said. "We did no campaigning except for oral campaigning before the second round of voting."

One of Cahn and Duong's campaign managers, Sweyn Venderbush, verified this. "We did runs on November 22. No one saw a poster after that. We also did another search on November 30, and no one saw posters between those two dates. We were looking throughout the day. We didn't post any posters after the primary."

After the BOE declared that Cahn and Duong were disqualified, the two sophomores protested via Facebook. Duong said, "David and I didn't send [Coordinator of Student Affairs Lisa] Weinwurm any e-mails. We told people that if they thought the election was unfair, they should e-mail Weinwurm about what they thought. They should write the specific line that the disqualification was unfair. We also got some of the other primary candidates to email her for us. They actually thought it was unfair, too."

According to Kim, Weinwurm received at least 50 emails. Because of this commotion and because she was absent during the general election, Weinwurm decided to call an emergency meeting on Friday, December 2. At this meeting, Weinwurm and five BOE members were present while Cahn and Duong waited outside the SU office. Weinwurm decided to take the issue to Principal Stanley Teitel.

Weinwurm and four BOE members, as well Cho and SU Vice President Kevin Park, were present at the meeting with Teitel the following Monday. First, the BOE, Cho, and Weinwurm gave their statements. According to a BOE member who requested anonymity, because Weinwurm and SU members had asked the BOE not to comment, Cho dominated the ar-

gument, though he "was there simply as a witness," the member said. "He was the most vocal during the meeting. The SU is supposed to be independent

she is the BOE's faculty adviser, Weinwurm should not have been involved. "She is supposed to be voiceless."

The anonymous BOE member believed that Cho and Weinwurm were biased during the meeting. "It was clear in the meeting that Ed Cho and Ms. Weinwurm had an objective that they wanted to obtain," they said. "They were clearly in favor of disqualifying David. It definitely seemed like Ed Cho had undue influence over the arguments going on."

"Prior to the appeals to Teitel, both Ms. Weinwurm and myself and several of the other BOE members did believe he deserved an appeals process. We were all sympathetic towards him," Cho said. However, he also said, "Before we went in, [...] we did agree that he did deserve to be disqualified."

Weinwurm declined to comment.

After hearing both sides of the argument, Teitel decided that the BOE's decision to disqualify Cahn would stand. "What he did was against the rules," Teitel said.

Kim said that had Cahn and Duong won by a greater margin, Teitel would probably have overturned the BOE's original ruling and declared them the new sophomore caucus, because the few posters probably had a minimal influence on the election results, if any at all.

In addition, the candidates who won by default said they would have compromised with Cahn and Duong had they been involved in the discussion. "He didn't even tell us he was going to Teitel. He didn't keep us in touch at all," Zilberband said.

"If he came to us and was humble about it, we would have considered re-election. I would possibly have given it up," Bari said. "I didn't because of David Cahn's hostility."

Though he was in favor of following the rules in regards to Cahn and Duong's disqualification, Kim wants to "change the rules so this never happens

again. We are going to allow posters on the final election and on the primary day," Kim said.

"When you have a rule that you already know isn't going to exist in a year, and when you

"We did runs on November 22. No one saw a poster after that. We also did another search on November 30, and no one saw posters between those two dates. We were looking throughout the day. We didn't post any posters after the primary."
—Sweyn Venderbush, sophomore caucus campaign manager

of the BOE."

Kim agreed. "He shouldn't really interfere with BOE affairs. The BOE should have final say," he said, and added that though

"I don't think the 8.5-by-11 piece of paper that is covered by another piece of paper has caused people to vote for me or for another person at all. There isn't any reason for us to believe that paper had any influence on the election."
—David Cahn, sophomore caucus candidate

enforce it and disqualify a candidate because of it, you are clearly going beyond the rules," Cahn said.

The BOE will have an open forum for students to speak their minds about the BOE rules on Thursday, December 15, in room 233.

SPARK Raises HIV / AIDS Awareness

By SHARON CHO and NANCY CHEN

SPARK groups, including BuildOn, the Gay Lesbian and Straight Spectrum (GLASS), Black Student League (BSL), and ASPIRA, promoted AIDS awareness through a series of workshops held between Monday, November 28, and Friday, December 2. SPARK called the week World AIDS Week, because it was an extension of the official World AIDS Day on Thursday, December 1.

Stuyvesant seniors Xin Huang and Tylor Lei led three "HIV/AIDS 101" workshops in Room 736 from Tuesday, November 29, to Wednesday, December 30, after 10th period during World AIDS Week. At the start of the hour-long workshops, Huang and Lei introduced students to APICHA, a non-profit organization, of which they are both members, that provides health-related services in New York City. Previ-

"It was really helpful. I already had health class in school, but they really went in depth."
—Eunice Kim, sophomore and BuildOn member

ously known as the Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, APICHA dropped its official name in order to accommodate people not of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. The organization reaches out to minorities, such as Asian and Pacific Islanders, the LGBT community, Hispanics, and blacks, and focuses on helping those who have HIV/AIDS.

After providing this introductory information, Huang and Lei played a "myth or fact" game involving different statements about HIV and AIDS, such as: the most common way people get HIV globally is through heterosexual sex (fact), there's a window period where a HIV test can show up as a false negative (fact), and people who have HIV get sick quickly (myth). After each statement, they called on members of the audience to state their opinions and explain their reasoning, before they explained the scientific reason behind the cor-

rect answer.

For example, in regard to the last statement, Lei said, "When your immune system is damaged, you don't get sick quickly. It's just when you are sick, you recover slowly, and sometimes you can't recover because your immune system is damaged."

Huang and Lei also talked about the four stages of HIV/AIDS, beginning with the infection of HIV, called Acute HIV Infection (AHI), which, as the virus goes unrecognized by the body's immune system, gradually takes over and destroys T-cells necessary for initiating an immune response, and develops into AIDS, a condition in which the body's T-cell count is under 200, compared to the average of 600 to 1200. Other topics covered were modes of HIV transmission and ways to test for HIV.

"It was really helpful. I already had health class in school, but they really went in depth," sophomore and BuildOn mem-

ber Eunice Kim said.

"It's great because not many people know this information," senior and APICHA volunteer Bill Ling said.

Huang and Lei mentioned their work as APICHA volunteers, and spoke about what they have learned from being volunteers from the organization.

"We have about 30 volunteers from various schools and we do outreaches, presentations, workshops, and other community-based work. We educate [youth] about STDs, HIV, risky behavior, and teach them to talk to their friends about it," Huang said.

Huang and Lei are trying to recruit new peer educators for APICHA. "The seniors have matured out of the APICHA system, because we've taught them a lot and they have been with APICHA for at least two years," Huang said. "We're looking for members to be the next generation [of] APICHA advocates."

Tillman Steps Down As Dean

By ANNE CHEN
and EDRIC HUANG

First, second, or fifth. Every Stuyvesant student is familiar with these words and the imposing man who shouts them in the hallways at loitering students. But after four years on the job, social studies teacher Daniel Tillman will be stepping down as a dean at the end of the fall semester.

"Although initially I was scared of Mr. Tillman's intimidating presence, he always turned out to be a well-respected and humorous person in the hallways. Just from watching him do his job gave off the impression that he was a very special and dedicated dean," sophomore Jennifer Wu said.

Currently, Stuyvesant has four deans: math teacher Gary Rubenstein, physical education teacher Vincent Miller, English teacher Mark Halperin, and Tillman.

"These jobs are referred to as compensatory time positions. They have to be rotated on a fair and equitable basis," Teitel said. "I have to make an agreement with the UFT [United Federation of Teachers], and the current agreement in effect is that these jobs must be rotated every four years."

Teachers who fill compensatory time positions, such as

"He was out on the necessary floors whenever he had the opportunity, and he was always on top of things."
—Stanley Teitel,
Principal

deans, programmers, and grade advisers, teach fewer classes.

"It's an opportunity for a teacher to really grow and nobody should have it permanently," Tillman said. "I have learned so much about myself, about students, about parents, and

about the administration that I wouldn't have learned any other way."

Deans are responsible for keeping track of students. They make sure students are not cutting or disrupting classes.

"One of the reasons I chose [to be a dean] was being able to work with Mr. Teitel and Ms. Damesek so closely, and learn so much about running a school," Tillman said. "I love it when I sit there with students who have been having problems for a while and a light bulb finally goes off in their head and they realize, 'Oh my god, if I keep cutting class and getting in trouble, I'll still be here and my friends will be in college having a great time.' That's why I chose it."

Typically, teachers must apply for open dean positions, and Teitel interviews the applicants. "Once the compensatory time jobs are posted, any teacher is allowed to apply. Some things that I must take into consideration are, for example, whether or not they held a compensatory time position before and building seniority. There are other criteria that I can take into consideration as well, such as attendance and punctuality," Teitel said.

However, there will not be anyone to replace Tillman as the fourth dean. "We have gone with only three deans for quite a long time, so I'm not worried at all about that," Teitel said. "In addition, it's difficult for me to pull teachers out of departments and reduce the number of classes in the middle of the school year. Therefore, I decided to simply add Mr. Halperin in over the summer, and keep Mr. Tillman for his final term."

Tillman is confident in the ability of the current deans. "The dean's office is really strong right now. I like the attitude of the deans because we are not here to harm, we are here to help you. We want you to get the most out of your time so you can go onto a great college and so forth," Tillman said.

Some students noted that they appreciated Tillman's style of managing students. "Even though he tells you to get off the floor, he does so in a friendly kind of way so that you can feel as though you can relate to him," junior Irene Lin said. "He's able to enforce the rules without being too mean, and because of

this students seem to like him even though he's a dean."

Next semester, Tillman will be taking on two additional classes.

"I have learned so much about myself, about students, about parents, about the administration that I wouldn't have learned any other way."
—Daniel Tillman,
social studies
teacher and dean

Though deans are assigned three periods during which they must act in their official capacity, Tillman believes that the job of a dean extends far beyond that. "When you're a dean and you do it the right way, you're a dean every period you're not teaching. If something is needed, you'll do it," Tillman said.

Many faculty members look favorably on Tillman's term as dean.

"He's been very effective and he's excellent at doing the job. Being that I am a newer dean, he's definitely been very generous with his time and advice," Halperin said.

"He was out on the necessary floors whenever he had the opportunity, and he was always on top of things," Teitel said.

Rubenstein and the other current deans expect to successfully maintain the school environment Tillman worked to create. "We [The current deans] plan to continue to keep this school in order but it can't be denied that he definitely did a great job," Rubenstein said. "He's part of the reason why all the kids in the school know that they can only be on floors one, two, and five."

Schenkel has spoken three times at Stuyvesant in the past couple of years. "We worked together in the same lab at [University of California, Berkeley]," O'Malley said. "We're friends, and she's a working chemist in real life, so I asked her [to come in and speak]."

Schenkel started off her lecture by talking about Amgen,

Organic Chemist Lectures Students on Drug Development

By NABANITA HOSSAIN

Dr. Laurie Schenkel, an employee of Amgen, a biotechnology company, visited chemistry teacher Dr. Steven O'Malley and his second period Organic Chemistry class on Wednesday, November 23, to talk about her career as a chemist.

Every year, O'Malley brings in a guest speaker to talk to his Organic Chemistry class. Schenkel has spoken three times at Stuyvesant in the past couple of years. "We worked together in the same lab at [University of California, Berkeley]," O'Malley said. "We're friends, and she's a working chemist in real life, so I asked her [to come in and speak]."

Schenkel started off her lecture by talking about Amgen, which develops and produces new drugs. "We try to synthesize compounds to combat diseases using organic chemistry," Schenkel said.

At Amgen, medicinal chemists are in charge of developing human therapeutic chemicals. "During a typical day, I propose a drug and then go into the lab and make the compound and purify it. I then hand it off to a biologist, who tests it. Most things fail and aren't efficient," Schenkel said.

She discussed a case study of the compound AMG706, which was created by Amgen to help reduce tumors in cancer patients. After medicinal chemists created the compound in the laboratory, they sent it to biologists, who tested the drug on animals. Since the compound was effective, it moved past the pre-clinical phase into the trial phase. It is currently in the second and third phases of human trials. If it makes it through phase three of trials, it will be registered with the Food and Drug Administration, and Amgen will mass-produce it. Most drugs take ten years to complete this process.

Schenkel concluded the lecture by talking about the lab environment. "Working in the lab is hands-on and collaborative," she said. "I figured that once you get to a company, everyone is neat and professional, but there's a casual atmosphere. I wear jeans,

T-shirts, and sneakers."

Several students noted that some parts of the presentation were difficult to understand. "Some of the stuff she talked about was really advanced, so it wasn't directly relatable to what we were doing in class," junior Fiona Woods said.

However, the lecture cemented other students' desire to pursue a career in chemistry. "I have loved chemistry as a science for a long time, and I know that I want to study it in college, but I had never before thought too much about the details of it as a career. I never really knew what being a chemist meant as far as what you do on a day-to-day basis. This presentation gave me a glimpse into the world of a real-life chemist," senior Ivaylo Madzharov said.

"I want to major in chemistry or chemical engineering in college, so I was pretty interested in the mechanics of the job," senior Rebecca Balaj said. "[Schenkel's] visit really put the amount of work done by chemists in per-

"This presentation gave me a glimpse into the world of a real-life chemist."
—Ivaylo
Madzharov,
senior

spective, because she creates thousands of compounds in a month, and tons more in a year, and I guess it got me thinking of where I would be in ten years. She had a lot of respect and love for her job, and she inspired me to work in the chemistry field."

NYC Math Team Places in Top 10 at PUMaC

By JOHN YUEN

The New York City Math Team attended the Princeton University Math Competition (PUMaC) on Saturday, November 19. This year, two teams under the umbrella of the NYC Math team, Murph and the Magictones, and Party Posse, chose to enter in the A division, the more difficult of two divisions.

"It gives them an opportunity to converse with the other top math kids around the country, and do some exciting problems, and maybe do some problems they are not accustomed to," Stuyvesant math teacher and the Head Coach of the NYC Math Team Jim Cocoros, said.

The competition was divided into two parts: the team round and the individual round. Murph and the Magictones, which was made up of five

"The individual round seemed more difficult compared to last year. Most of the team thought so too, and it was more challenging than the practice problems we did."
—Stern Huang,
senior

Stuyvesant students, and three Hunter College High School students, placed first in the team round, and third overall. Party Posse, which was made up of eight Stuyvesant students, was not ranked in the team round, but still placed 10th overall.

In the individual round, the competitors had to complete two of four test sections: number theory, geometry, algebra, and combinatorics. They were allotted one hour to complete each section, which consisted of 10 multiple-choice questions. Four students from the NYC Math Team, including junior David Lu, moved on to the final round of competition. Lu eventually placed sixth.

"The individual round seemed more difficult compared to last year. Most of the team thought so too, and it was more challenging than the practice problems we did," senior

Stern Huang said.

The team round, also called the Power Competition, featured a large guided proof that students downloaded off the PUMaC Web site, and completed over the course of a week. This year's proof consisted mostly of projective geometry.

Murph and the Magictones placed first in the team round, in large part due to senior Michael Scheer, who wrote the entire proof because he "happened to write a paper on [projective geometry] last year and it helped a lot with the proof," Scheer said.

"It was great to see, as the teams were being listed, the big guns be listed, until at the top was Murph," Cocoros said.

Dozens of teams from all parts of the world attended the competition. Cocoros stated that it has attracted more international participants over the past few years, and now involves

teams from China, Korea, Bulgaria, and other countries.

Despite the high level of competition, both of the NYC math teams performed well. "Not only did our team [Murph and the Magictones] finish third, which was the best we have done at this event, but our second team [Party Posse] finished 10th, so we have two teams in the top 10," Cocoros said. "I don't think that that has ever happened before. It's a testament of how well the kids work together."

Cocoros also noted the fun the students had while attending this competition. "It seemed like our kids had a great time," Cocoros said. "A lot of the discussion about the problems about the mathematics did not stop the minute the competition ended. You saw kids playing Frisbee with kids from other teams, and kids getting excited about what they are doing."

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sudian said.

Grade records have been transferred to the new teachers, who will weigh students' scores on Geller's exams as regular tests.

"All of my classes merged very well, and they're all at more or less the same point," Maksudian said. "There was a nice correlation, and it has worked very well so far."

Park views the administrative change positively and thinks his new students will manage well. "Since my new class was a little farther ahead in the curriculum with respect to my other classes, I was able to go back and see what they knew and what I expected a student in my class to know. There was very little that I had to go over that they hadn't learned. They're very bright kids," he said.

The arrangement is only expected to last for the remainder of the fall academic term. "We haven't yet made a decision about what to do for the spring term," Teitel said. "We won't continue using these teachers, and we'll determine what to do with the help of Mr. Wong after students register online for their classes, and we see how many classes we will have."

In the beginning of the year, despite his disease, Geller mentored Taylor as a student teacher. He eventually took over his classes while Geller was in the hospital.

"He was being mentored by Mr. Geller," Ferrara said. "At the time, it was the easiest arrangement for everyone, but I prefer that [Geller's] past students be taught by department teachers

Geller's Students Adjust to New Teachers

with more experience."

"I would sit in his classes in order to observe his teaching methods. This was so that, on the days when he was absent, I could effectively teach the class," Taylor said.

"[Taylor] can't be a regular teacher. He doesn't have the license to teach permanently. While he was teaching the classes, Ms. Ruben was always in the back of the room because of legal issues," Teitel said. He doubts Taylor will serve at Stuyvesant as

"I hope they adjust quickly so we can all move forward together."
—David Park, math teacher

a permanent teacher in the near future.

However, other faculty members noted that the student teacher's lack of credentials did not detract from his teaching. "I sat on the back of Taylor's class one day," Maksudian said. "He covered the material really well, and the students seemed to really understand [him]."

Many students admired Taylor's teaching style, and felt his

sudden departure worsened the situation.

"Taylor is a brilliant mathematician and a kind person who truly cares. I initially thought he should have a degree before permanently teaching us, but his completely in-depth answers to student questions, and great back-and-forth exchange with the students changed my mind," sophomore Jonah Shifrin said.

"This was a decision that sacrificed education for rules and regulations," said sophomore David Cahn, who, along with his twin brother Jack, posted signs over the school reading "Keep the Brain: End the Bureaucracy," in hopes of maintaining Taylor's position at the school.

Though Taylor is still an active presence at Stuyvesant, his teaching duties have been diminished. "Mr. Taylor is continuing to work with Stuyvesant's math team," Ferrara said. "He just will not be brought back to teach."

"I appreciate the fact that my students loved me as a teacher and were sad to see me go. I would have wanted to teach them for the whole term, but I understand that DOE policies must be adhered to," Taylor said.

Still, many students believe that the way in which Geller's replacement was handled was problematic.

"The administration was as unprepared for the situation as the rest of the Stuyvesant community was. Mr. Geller's dedication to his students, and the fact that he came in almost every day despite being sick, made us feel as though he was fine, or maybe we just needed him to be fine," sophomore Paula Carcamo said.

"I'm not naturally good at math," sophomore Juliette Hainline said, "Having had to change teachers so many times this year certainly hasn't made that better, and it hasn't been the most effective way for me to learn."

"All three teachers we've had this year had different teaching styles, and whenever we felt comfortable with any of them, we had to switch literally a week

"slippery" situation and what I wanted was not necessarily the right course of action for the school," Taylor said.

The teachers, however, are more hopeful about their students' adjustments and believe learning will ultimately be unaffected.

"I enjoy my students profoundly and they seem to be handling the transition very well. I'm very optimistic that everything will go as well for the students as possible. Their learning won't be compromised and we all know that we're doing what we should be doing," Maksudian said.

"Regardless of who is up in front of them, [the students will] find methods of learning, whether it be from the textbook or other sources. I just think it helps a student to have consistency with regard to rules, procedures, exams, and teaching styles, so I'm glad to be teaching them. I hope they adjust quickly so we can all move forward together," Park said.

"Because teachers who replaced Mr. Geller have been very concerned with the continuation of our learning despite the tragedy, I feel that there are no gaps in the material," Carcamo said.

Through all the changes in instructors, the math department and former students continue to mourn the loss of Geller.

"Students' adjustments have been more about dealing with the death of Mr. Geller than with getting new teachers," Ferrara said. "But everyone in the school is still very, very sad. He is missed and will continue to be missed, for no one will ever be able to replace him."

"The administration was as unprepared for the situation as the rest of the Stuyvesant community was."
—Paula Carcamo, sophomore

later," Shifrin said.

"I was very upset to lose my classes, since I had really formed a bond with the students," said Taylor. "I absolutely plan on staying involved with Stuyvesant. I really love working with the math team and treasure it as a unique opportunity to impart my mathematical knowledge onto my students [...] it was a

Big Sibs and SU Organize First Fall Festival

By EMMA LICHTENSTEIN

In an attempt to increase school spirit and give underclassmen and upperclassmen the opportunity to spend time together, the first annual Fall Festival was held on Thursday, November 17 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the cafeteria. The Student

junior and SU member Derek Li said. "It was a brand new idea, like a pre-winter carnival where people can have a fun time and support these two organizations at the same time."

According to Li, the SU raised approximately \$500. However, \$300 will be used to cover the costs of the event, while the remaining \$200 will be split between the SU and Big Sibs.

The Big Sib Chairs came up with the idea for the Fall Festival earlier in the school year, when they had a meeting with other Big Sibs and freshmen to figure out how to generate school spirit. "We realized that Stuy needs a lot more school pride, so Ms. Weinwurm had asked us to come up with ideas in late September," Big Sib Chair Swara Saraiya said. "After coming up with the idea for the Fall Festival, we proposed it to the SU and started working together."

The planning took a while. "We had to brainstorm ideas and formulate them," Li said. "As it got closer to the event, we had to spend hours after school making decorations, buying props, and buying all of the food, but I think our hard work paid off."

The festival featured games such as Pop A Balloon, Ball Toss, Donuts on a String, and Wheel of Fortune, through which students could win a gift card, a t-shirt, or food and beverages.

"My personal favorite game was popping balloons, because it was fun, unique, and you could win things like a gift card from Terry's," Saraiya said.



Students crowd around the spinwheel at the Fall Festival.

"I didn't think it was going to be as fun as it was," freshman Geraldine Camille Perra said, "but I actually really enjoyed playing Donuts on a String with my friends."

There were also stations where students could purchase and decorate food, and take photos. The most popular booth, however, was one at which students could throw a pie at SU President Edward Cho's face.

"I suggested being pied in the face as a joke, but people really liked the idea of it," Cho said. "I

agreed mainly because people said it would be a real money maker."

"It was hilarious to watch Ed Cho get pied," senior Daniel Lee said. "Overall, it seemed like everyone was having fun, getting away from the stressful parts of Stuy and being able to hang out together."

Turnout was not as high as expected, as over 100 people responded to the event page on Facebook but only about 60 students attended.

"It was a fun event, but if

there were more freshmen, Big Sibs, and just students in general, it could have been even more fun," freshman Charles Zhen said.

For next year, the SU plans to schedule the Fall Festival on a more convenient date, include the Big Sibs more, and reach out to more underclassmen.

"It was a really great idea and a fun event," Cho said. "If it is done right, it has the potential to be one of those iconic events next year."

Union (SU) and Big Sib Chairs helped to plan the event.

"It was a way to garner school spirit as well as fundraise for the SU and the Big Sibs, and it truly was a collaborative effort between the two groups,"

Eugene Lee / The Spectator

Stuyvesant Holds Second Annual Health Fair



Stuyvesant's Health Fair was held in the cafeteria on Friday, November 18.

By SARAH MIN

Stuyvesant held its second annual Health Fair on Friday, November 18. SPARK and the Stuyvesant Red Cross Club coordinated the event, which was intended to raise awareness about a variety of health issues, and to promote health education. With the purchase of their \$5 admission tickets, students received six vouchers, which they used to purchase snacks and beverages, as well as to participate in games and activities.

"The purpose of the health fair is to provide health information throughout the school, for teens and even for adults," SPARK coordinator Angel Colon said. "We wanted to focus on important health issues and mix it up with fun activities."

Most of the clubs present at the fair worked under the supervision of SPARK or worked closely with the organization. In preparation for the event, Red Cross contacted clubs and held a general meeting for those interested in participating. For two weeks, Red Cross sold tickets and worked with the clubs to come up with fun fair activities.

"I'm really proud of the interactions between the clubs. We worked really well together. I couldn't ask for any more than that," senior and Red Cross President Wei Lin said.

Several clubs set up booths around the cafeteria. STRIVE, Stuyvesant's environmental club, handed out informative

pamphlets about environmental health. It also hosted a recycling game that tested students' knowledge by asking them to place certain recyclable and non-recyclable items in the ap-

don't really think about Asians getting AIDS."

Other highlights of the fair included a fitness competition, arm wrestling tournament and a raffle. At the end of the fair, gift cards from Gee Whiz, Terry's and Amish Market were awarded to the arm wrestling tournament and raffle winners.

"The fitness competition was really fun. There was a bunch of things to do, like push-ups and pull-ups," junior Annie Lai said. "When you're competing against your friends, it makes doing normally difficult exercises a lot more bearable."

According to the fair's coordinators and volunteers, the fair was much more successful than in the past, as they raised over \$1,200. "This was the real health fair. The one in April was a test pilot to see to get a good measure of what a health fair would be like at Stuy," Colon said. "We learned from last time. This year we went overtime, and actually had to push kids out to leave."

One major change made from last year was the shift from the third floor gymnasium to the student cafeteria. "The gym was such a large open space. No matter how many clubs there were, we couldn't fill it," Colon said. "[In the cafeteria] you got angles of spaces, making it easy to divide. Each club had their own section."

In addition, the Stuyvesant community was given more advance notice. The fair coordinators posted a banner and flyers on the fifth floor, and asked teachers to promote the fair to their classes. Some teachers offered extra credit to students who attended.

"It's really nice to see how many students came to the fair," senior and Stuyvesant Christian Seekers Club President Jeffrey Tseng said. "Red Cross was also very supportive of the clubs who took part in the fair. They were enthusiastic in contributing game ideas, and made sure that we would be able to make a profit from our booth."

Colon also recognized that cooperation between clubs was important in the success of the fair. "For any event, you need a strong club working with other clubs. For that to work, you need an alliance," Colon said. "We're advocating Stuy unity."

"The purpose of the health fair is to provide health information throughout the school, for teens and even for adults."

—Angel Colon, SPARK Coordinator

"I'm really proud of the interactions between the clubs. We worked really well together. I couldn't ask for any more than that."
—Wei Lin, senior and Red Cross President

properite bins.

"We want students to become more environmentally aware," senior and STRIVE President Aarthi Kuppannan said. "It's important that people know to recycle more and not do anything in waste."

Stuyvesant Free Hugs Club and Project Love both focused on depression, and its prevalence amongst teenagers. They informed students about the various symptoms associated with depression, including sadness and loss of self-worth.

"About 70 percent of teenagers who have depression don't receive any kind of treatment," senior and Stuyvesant Free Hugs Club President Shirley Chen said.

Other clubs present at the health fair included the A Cappella club, which performed the show tune "Seasons of Love," Stuy Cancer Society, and the Global Citizen Corp, which distributed pamphlets about HIV/AIDS.

Junior Patricia Nguyen said that the pamphlets "were pretty interesting. They were specifically targeted towards Asians and were talking about how you

SU Election Winners Plan for Upcoming Year

continued from page 1

freshmen would be assigned to a sophomore, whom they could contact and set up meetings with if they needed advice.

"I voted for Thoasin and Eddie because they are outstanding students, two of the nicest people I know, and always help out others. They were clearly the best choice for sophomore caucus," sophomore Robert Melamed said.

Though some students are enthusiastic about the new SU members, others were concerned by the low turnout on election day. Freshman Caroline Kim said, "More people would have voted if they knew the election was being held. Most people didn't even know there was an election, and, as many know, one vote can change the results."

Overall, I think the school just wants more school spirit, so that's what we're aiming for this year."

—Thoasin Bari, Sophomore Class President

SPARK Starts Series of LGBT Workshops

By SHARON CHO and NANCY CHEN

Afterwards, the students discussed the meaning of community.

"You need something in common with each other. Even just being in the same location gives you something in common," junior and GLASS President Emma Lesser said.

"They probably hang out because they have something in common. That brings up a question of identity. There's something about your identity that connects with someone else's identity," Currie said. "So, what does 'identity' mean?"

"It's a story you tell yourself. There are always people who live under false identities, who try to convince themselves that they're something they're really not," junior and GLASS member Kayla Halvey said. "These people are uncomfortable with who they are."

"It's who you are," Lesser said. "Everything about who you are, every decision you make, every opinion you have, every thought that goes through your head. Even fake identities are a part of your identity, because of the fact that you want to put forward that identity."

One way that Live Out Loud works to help LGBT youth is by connecting them with successful LGBT professionals in their community. David Lauterstein came in to talk about his experience with his rising business, a sportswear company called Nasty Pig.

"I've been designing clothes for 17 years. Gay magazines, they won't touch us [...] My own community won't come near me. Even a lot of the straight community won't touch us," Lauterstein said. "It's okay, because I'll just keep building and doing my own thing. I've realized that I want to be my own role model."

"I'll just keep building and doing my own thing. I've realized that I want to be my own role model."
—David Lauterstein, founder of Nasty Pig

ested in attending contacted SPARK counselor Angel Colon. Ultimately, 12 students came to hear Currie speak.

At the workshop, students participated in activities and discussions meant to build a sense of community among LGBT youth and allies. First, they were required to fill in a sheet with three categories: "I like," "I have," and "I am." Currie divided the workshop participants into two groups, and played a game intended to show how many of the statements applied to members of both groups.

David's story was definitely inspirational. It showed that there are environments in which the LGBT community would not be judged and can be who they want to be," sophomore and GLASS member Carolyn Fisher said. "He went out there and did what he loved to do, and is thoroughly enjoying himself, working in that environment and just being open about everything."

The next workshop will be held on Wednesday, December 14.

News

Freelance Writer Ada Calhoun Speaks in English Classes



Ada Calhoun (left) came to speak to Annie Thoms's Writers' Workshop classes

By MIRANDA LI

Stuyvesant alumnus and professional writer Ada Calhoun ('94) came to Stuyvesant on Thursday, November 17, to speak in two Writer's Workshop classes and one Women's Voices class, both taught by English teacher Annie Thoms.

Calhoun and Thoms met through the memorial for Debra Schmitt, who taught at Stuyvesant in the 1990s. "[Calhoun] had written something about Schmitt called, '90s Women," and she and I were in touch for that. I saw the writings she was doing, and I asked her to come [and speak to my classes]," Thoms said. "We had talked about it last spring, and she emailed me about a month ago."

Calhoun is a freelance writer who has written blog posts, magazine and newspaper articles, and bestselling novels. In high school, she interned at Esquire Magazine and Spin Magazine, and since she graduated from the University of Texas at

Austin in 2000, she has worked at Vogue, New York magazine, and Nerve.com, a culture Web site, and launched her own magazine about parenting.

Since then, she has ghost-written for Tim Gunn from Project Runway, meaning she was paid to help write material officially credited to Gunn, namely The New York Times bestseller "Gunn's Golden Rules: Life's Little Lessons for Making it Work," which first came out in 2010. She is currently working on "Tim Gunn's Fashion Bible: The Fascinating History of Everything in Your Closet."

"When ghostwriting for celebrities, I just facilitate the process. It's their book ultimately, but I have such a great time," Calhoun said.

She has also worked for The New York Times, the New York Post, and Salon.com, and is currently working for Glamour Magazine and Time Magazine.

"I will say that two of my all-time favorite jobs were about as opposite as [it gets]: reporting on crime for the Post, and co-

writing books with Tim Gunn, the nicest man on the planet. I learned so much from both gigs, and there was never a dull day with either one," Calhoun said.

In the two Writer's Workshop classes, Calhoun spoke about the daily life of a writer, and why she loves to be one. "[Writing] lets me travel, and meet new people, and be part of the world, and also my schedule is flexible," she said, also referring to it as "one of the better ways to communicate."

Students were impressed by her dedication to her job. "She said she loved being able to do what she loved every day, even though it could be a bit frustrating and stressful at times," said junior Alisa Emag, who is in the Writer's Workshop class.

One of Thoms's goals in inviting Calhoun was to show

"It's impossible to know what work will or won't come through from one month to the next, but I like it that way."
—Ada Calhoun, alumnus ('94)

students the possibility of being a professional writer. "The students in my class love writing, and I thought it would be really interesting to get a professional writer to talk about her life freelancing and what it was like to be a writer," she said.

"She elaborated on the struggles of not knowing where her job would take [her] next, but also how much she enjoyed that," Emag said. "I could imagine myself doing what she's doing. I never thought of myself being a writer, because I imagined them to be people who locked themselves up in a tiny room and sat at a computer all day just typing away, but her speech was refreshing and rather eye-opening."

In regards to the Women's Voices class, Calhoun said, "I was asked if I faced difficulties as a female journalist and I told some stories about that. I was asked by a rather bold young man if [feminists] weren't whiny and hypocritical. I asked him if he joined the class to pick up girls."

The Women's Voices class also talked about media representation of women and women's efforts to be regarded as equal to men. "[There are a lot of valuable] conversations to be had around feminism: about race, class, privilege, opportunity. But judging other people's level of feminist purity seems to me like a bad way to get anywhere," Calhoun said.

For students, Calhoun connected what she discussed with what the class previously spoke about. "I remember she told us that many of us are feminists and we don't even realize it," senior Frankie Choi said. "She asked us if we thought women should be able to vote. Many students raised their hands, including me. She then told us

"I never thought of myself being a writer, because I imagined them to be people who locked themselves up in a tiny room and sat at a computer all day just typing away, but her speech was refreshing and rather eye-opening."

—Alisa Emag, junior

that we were feminists without even knowing."

In all of the classes she spoke to, Calhoun spoke of her plan to continue working as a freelance writer. "I have four assignments due in the next three weeks, so if that doesn't kill me, I plan to keep writing for magazines, and I hope to do some more books," she said. "It's impossible to know what work will or won't come through from one month to the next, but I like it that way."

War Veterans Give Students Contrasting Accounts of War

By GEORGIANA YANG

Guest speakers and representatives Chiroux and Elaine Brower from We Are Not Your Soldiers spoke to social studies teachers Lisa Shuman's and Eric Wisotsky's classes in Lecture Hall A on Monday, November 14. Former soldier Mark Deming also spoke in Lecture Hall B on Wednesday, November 16.

We Are Not Your Soldiers is a project of World Can't Wait, an organization that promotes resistance to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to organization's Web site, more broadly, it seeks "to halt and reverse the terrible program of war, repression and theocracy that was initiated by the Bush / Cheney regime." Some of the organization's representatives, including veterans and their families, tour high schools around the nation and speak about the negative aspects of war.

"The [recruiters] told us that [being a soldier] would make us strong, that it would make us tough, that they would pay for college, and that ladies loved a man in uniform," former Army sergeant and anti-war veteran Matthias Chiroux said.

The tour group contacted Assistant Principal Social Stud-

ies Jennifer Suri to arrange a presentation, which was then organized by Wisotsky, who later invited Deming, a long-time friend, to speak to the students.

"It's important for students to hear because they [the soldiers] are the ultimate primary source document," Suri said. "We are lucky to be able to hear individuals who are able to speak about what we are learning. As future voters, students will benefit from the information."

Brower, the mother of a veteran, began the first lecture by explaining her role in World Can't Wait. "One of the things that I've been doing for the last two years is [passing out flyers] outside of BMCC with my friends talking about what we can do to stop the military recruiters from coming onto your campus and trying to get a hold of the high school students," she said.

Chiroux expanded the discussion by mentioning what recruiters do not tell enlistees. "I'm not telling you [that you] can't join," he said. "I'm saying that if you join, you need to hear the whole picture, but people [...] are getting the modern warfare picture, the recruiter's picture."

He used statistics to enforce

his opinion of the military. "One in three women that join the military is sexually assaulted by fellow soldiers. Men are one in five," he said. "One out of every five people [in America] that killed themselves was a veteran or a soldier."

"My view [of the military] worsened after hearing about the treatment of soldiers, racism, and sexism," junior Erica Kwong said.

Brower and Chiroux also distributed surveys to the students to document how their views on the military changed from before the presentation to after. "I'm so happy to see that no student was still considering joining military," said Chiroux, after looking at the final survey results.

On the other hand, Deming offered a more positive view of the military. "When I was there [Iraq], there were no IEDs [improvised explosive devices] or insurgents, and I got to really experience the culture," he said. "I was lucky because the war is different now."

Deming continued his presentation by sharing one wartime experience in which he "was yelling at sergeants, platoon leaders, telling them what to do," he said. "Everyone was

frantic, [but] I was able to keep my head on my shoulders and I got a bronze star for that."

Unlike Chiroux, Deming was positive regarding the military's treatment of soldiers and veterans. "The military and its generals are ever evolving," Deming said. "I could not have done this speech without the VA [Department of Veterans Affairs]. I got the help I needed [for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder], and I'm better now."

"It's important to present contrasting perspectives of different events and experiences," Shuman said. "This provided a very realistic demonstration and the goal is to foster curiosity among the students."

After both lectures, there was a question and answer session.

"[The students] were a little reluctant [to comment]," Deming said. "However, I appreciated all the questions. They could've asked me any question, and I would have answered it. I didn't want to sugarcoat anything."

Students came out of the lectures with very different perspectives on the two main speakers.

"I liked that [Deming] wasn't a prepared speaker," senior Andreas Petrossians said. "He had

much more real experiences, and I felt that [Chiroux] skewed the facts a lot."

Senior Julian Michaels agreed. "[Chiroux] was pretty relentless. He gave a lot of harsh statistics that, if I hadn't heard [Deming], I would have believed [...] a lot more," he said. "[Deming] was really truth-telling, and would answer any questions. That really got his point across more, that war is what you make of it."

In contrast, junior Julia Magilozzo preferred Chiroux's presentation. "[Deming] seemed like he had detached himself from the experience. However, [Chiroux] seemed like he remembered more and had a more personal account," she said.

These two presentations are only the beginning. "This is the first in a series of guest speakers with different perspectives of the navy, army, and military," Wisotsky said. "The goal is to expose kids to the most amount of information about the military as possible. At the same time, they will learn how to evaluate and analyze primary sources from people with different experiences."

Speech and Debate Team Place Second at Villiger

By SAM MORRIS

The Stuyvesant High School Speech and Debate Team placed second to Regis High School at the Villiger Invitational Tournament. Stuyvesant received a total of 91 points, while Regis received 111.

The tournament, which is one of larger-scale tournaments that the team attends annually, was hosted by St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia, and took place on Saturday, November 19, and Sunday, November 20.

According to senior and Speech and Debate team president Loulyana Saney, as in previous years, just under 100 Stuyvesant team members attended the tournament.

"Students were chosen to compete in the tournament based on how much work they had done thus far as determined by [Director of Forensics Julie] Sheinman and upperclassmen on the team that had worked with those students," Saney said.

Stuyvesant students competed in three different debate categories: Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate, and six

different Speech categories: Declamation, Student Congress, Original Oratory, Original Interpretation, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Dramatic Performance.

The result was a step down from last year, when Stuyvesant beat Regis. Despite this, members of the Speech and Debate team were generally happy with the results, considering that a total of 71 schools from all across the country participated in the event. "We did an amazing job and second place is an incredible accomplishment at a tournament like Villiger," senior and Speech captain Kristina Mani said.

In total, 13 members of Stuyvesant Speech advanced after the initial rounds and 14 Stuyvesant debaters advanced. "Stuyvesant did well across all categories," Saney said.

According to Mani, the team's intense preparation made the difference. "In the weeks leading up to Villiger, everyone on the team worked very hard to prepare their individual categories and improve their performances," Mani said. "We prepared really well and that showed in our success."

Sophomore Juliette Hainline, who joined the team at the beginning of this school and was a semi-finalist in Oral Interpretation, said the upperclassmen's guidance was invaluable. "The week before the tournament I prepared with my lab leader [senior Suprita Datta], which was very effective and really helped me," she said.

In general, novices do not attend as many out-of-state tournaments as varsity members of the team, so Villiger is a rare chance for younger students.

Freshman Max Bondarenko, a quarter-finalist in Declamation, said, "The tournament was a great bonding and learning experience and I am proud to have gotten into the next round of competition."

Speech and Debate members said that, though the weekend was packed with various speech and debate rounds, they still had time for fun. "With no rounds on Friday night, team members took the time to relax or eat at one of the restaurants in the vicinity of the tournament hotel," Saney said. "Villiger provided a great bonding experience for the whole team."

Results of the Villiger Invitational Tournament

DEBATE

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS

Loully Saney (E) - Octos
Eric Han (E) - Octos
Samantha Hom (J) - Octos
Gerald Nelson (E) - Double Octos
Sweyn Venderbush (O) - Double Octos
Harry O'Neil (J) - Double Octos

PUBLIC FORUM

Brenden Collins (E) and Claudia Yau (E) - Octos
Chang Tang (E) and Jong Lee (E) - Octos
Aminah Sallam (J) and Irina Titova (J) - Octos

POLICY

Angela Fan (E) and Ezra Louvis (J) - Champions

(E) = Senior
(J) = Junior
(O) = Sophomore
(F) = Freshman

SPEECH

DECLAMATION

Max Bondarenko (F) - Quarters
Josephine Chun (O) - Semis

CONGRESS

Max Liebeskind (J) - Supersession
Annarose Jacobs (J) - Supersession
Jeremy Majerovitz (E) - 1st Honorable Mention
William Francis Knight IV (E) - Supersession

EXTEMP

Michael Madans (E) - Quarters
Mick Zloof (E) - 4th

ORAL INTERPRETATION

Kristina Mani (E) - Quarters
Sara Schaeffer (E) - Quarters
Suprita Datta (E) - Quarters
Juliette Hainline (O) - Semis

ORIGINAL ORATORY

Kristina Mani (E) - 3rd

Tong Niu (E) - Quarters

Educating the 99%



Linda Cai / The Spectator

By TEN-YOUNG GUH

When senior Brandan Carroll first entered Zucotti Park on Saturday, September 17, he said wanted "to demonstrate my First Amendment rights." Carroll and senior Ben Koatz ended up joining Occupy Wall Street (OWS), a movement that protests corporate influence in politics and economic inequality. "This would be a brilliant way to be an agent of change in the world," Carroll said.

After attending a meeting of the New York City General Assembly, the movement's decision-making body, they started to become more active in the protests.

"I fell in love with the direct democratic process," said Koatz, who was arrested near Union Square in September for protesting. "Everyone can get to speak and make their views heard, and you feel like you really matter as a part of the movement."

As the protests grew, Carroll and Koatz proposed a Stuyvesant chapter of OWS. However, Principal Stanley Teitel rejected the club's charter, not wanting to associate Stuyvesant with the

movement. So Carroll and Koatz rehashed the club as the Stuyvesant 99%, a club that educates students on the issues surrounding OWS, and houses discussion and debate on the movement.

The club meets every Wednesday and Friday in room 315. The club's meeting format emulates that of the Occupy Wall Street General Assembly. At the start of the meeting, attendees discuss recent developments in the Occupy Wall Street movement, and suggest topics of discussion, before voting on which topics to focus on. In the past, they have discussed economic equality, corporate influence in politics, and the media in relation to OWS.

One discussion topic, brought up by club member and senior Saad Bokhari, was the lack of organization in Occupy Wall Street. "We do need organizational structure, not necessarily a leader," he said.

"A leader can force their views upon the people," club member and senior Lilja Walter said. "That is not what we want."

A parliamentarian decides on the order in which people

will speak on each issue, keeps the order, and watches the time so that all attendees get a chance to speak. Carroll, the club president, and Koatz, the club vice president, choose a new parliamentarian at each meeting.

Attendees use several hand gestures during discussion. They wiggle their fingers upward when they agree with the current speaker, and wiggling their fingers downward when they disagree. They form a triangle called a point of process with their hands when they think that the current speaker is going off-topic. They raise one finger in the air to mark a point of information, or to request additional information.

"[The gestures are] a really good way to express agreement or disagreement or what have you, without interfering with the flow of discussion," Carroll said.

A facilitator decides whether to accept points of process or points of information. Carroll and Koatz are the default facilitators, "just because we know a lot about the movement, and we're the heads of the club," Koatz said. However, any member may be a facilitator.

A minute-taker takes down notes about the meeting and puts them up on the club's Facebook group. Like the parliamentarian, the minute-taker varies each meeting.

The club has begun inviting teachers to give lessons about issues related to Occupy Wall Street every other Friday. The first speaker, social studies teacher Bill Boericke, gave a talk on Friday, December 2, about the media's role in the OWS.

However, before they even started teach-ins, they encouraged teacher involvement. For example, English teacher Philip Mott, who was told about the Stuyvesant 99%, attended a couple of the club's meetings. He decided to attend because he supports OWS as an example of "when people decided that

they wanted to take a stance and speak truth to power," he said, and wanted to observe how students took part in the movement.

"I was initially intrigued by the individuals who are part of the club, their maturity, and their understanding of the issues," he said. "I'm just so thirsty in this school for a level of a conversation that is on the level that these young people have presented themselves."

"When the meeting was over, I was like, 'How can I use the order and the procedures of this meeting in my classroom?'" Mott said. "There was no adult in here to keep them on task. But young people tend to be stricter among themselves than if there was an adult actually in the place."

The Stuyvesant 99% members not only encourage teachers to attend their meetings, but also all students, no matter the degree of their OWS involvement. Senior Michael Hubbs said he originally considered himself a supporter of OWS, but did not well-informed about the issues brought up by the protesters to take an active role in the movement. However, he became more involved after attending a Stuyvesant 99% meeting at which he said he heard that "this was the time for action and for protesters not to be [...] passive."

The club uses a variety of sources to educate attendees. They post articles, speeches, and videos concerning the protests on the club's Facebook group, "Stuyvesant 99%," in addition to printing out select materials to bring to materials. "You can't get all your education from one textbook and say you know everything, or say clearly and unequivocally that what I know is true, because there's always a second opinion on everything," Koatz said. "We don't do hearsay. We're [...] making sure we believe what we believe, and that we back that up with fact

instead of opinion and bias."

According to Carroll, almost all of the club members support OWS. However, even the supporters are never in complete agreement. Nevertheless, Hubbs said the club created and "open atmosphere" where, "No one was like, 'No, you're wrong.' You can hear from all sides."

"Everyone's allowed to come on stage," Bokhari said. "It's kind of humbling. It kind of forced me to listen to different perspectives. It forced me to talk to people I normally wouldn't talk to."

Carroll and Koatz have reached out to students other than OWS supporters. "It's hard to get people to bridge that gap between being called the Stuyvesant 99% and us saying, 'Yeah, it might be called that, but what we're really committed to is a conversation,' and not just us preaching to the choir," Koatz said. He promises dissenters "an equal playing field" with other members and hopes that they alter the club's makeup.

Senior Dennis, a fiscally conservative libertarian who plans on attending future OWS meetings, agrees that there is excessive corporate influence in government, but is strongly opposed to OWS. "It's a lot of talk and no actual action," Rim said. He suggests that OWS finds a leader if it is to "actually become a movement," he said.

Koatz has also managed to get supporters of Mitt Romney, a Republican presidential candidate and former Governor of Massachusetts, and of Sarah Palin, Republican vice-presidential nominee of 2008 and former Governor of Alaska, both of whom have criticized OWS, to attend his club's meetings.

"No matter what your viewpoint is, you'll be welcome at the Stuyvesant 99%," Koatz said. "If you don't have a viewpoint, you'll be welcome at Stuyvesant 99%, too, because we're for education."

Features

John Taylor: Master of Music, Math, and Languages

continued from page 1

Taylor said. Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin are his favorite composers, and Taylor's best original composition is a string quartet with four movements. "It shows my different facets as a composer. It shows a wide range of emotions," he said.

At the same time, Taylor was doing mediocre work in his math classes at his middle school because he didn't agree with his teachers' teaching styles. His parents attempted to dissuade him from joining the math team after he gained admission to Stuyvesant, but Taylor was adamant about joining. He remembers thinking, "I want to be on the math team. I want to show you and the rest of the world that I'm for real."

Taylor retains an active presence on the math team even after graduating, attending three of the past four ARMLs as a coach.

He decided that teaching math was "something to do for a time" after he graduated Princeton, but did not get accepted into any graduate professional schools for music. On Taylor's first day on the job, Assistant Principal Maryann Ferrara asked him to help teach Geller's classes. Taylor ended up teaching a full schedule for three weeks, with five classes a day. He will continue teaching MR21 after obtaining his teaching license.

"I got more than I bargained for," Taylor said. "I know I won't ever be a great mathematician [...] like Euler, who proved things nobody knew had a proof. I know I can be a great math teacher if I work hard at it."

Though he only plans on teaching until either the end of this term or this school year, and is currently studying for the December Graduate Record Examinations to try out again for graduate professional schools for music, he said, "I would never

**"While it may
be hard to be
a student at
Stuyvesant High
School, imagine
what it's like to
be a teacher.
You've got to
have empathy
for the teachers."**
—John Taylor,
Math Team
teacher

dream of teaching anywhere else."

Taylor's least favorite part of his high school experience was "the escalators when they weren't working," he said. He also abhors the cheating that goes on at Stuyvesant. "I use the example that Mr. Geller used. I don't want people operating on me who cheated their way through medical school," Taylor said. "Stuyvesant is a total meritocracy, and that's what I love about it. [...] I just wish there could be the competition without the cheating."

Now that Taylor is a teacher, music has taken the back seat, as he has to spend time on grading and lesson plans. "While it may be hard to be a student at Stuyvesant High School, imagine what it's like to be a teacher," he said. As a teacher, his most difficult job is the preparedness that being in the front of the classroom necessitates. As a student, you can be lazy. Some days, you can make mistakes. No one's re-

ally watching you. As a teacher, everyone's watching you," Taylor said. "All eyes are up there."

In addition to his accomplishments in math and music, Taylor can converse in Mandarin Chinese, Latin, Italian, and Spanish. He began his Chinese studies when he was seven, and took it for four years at Stuyvesant. "Chinese, I believe, is the language of the future," Taylor said. He took Italian at Stuyvesant as well for two years, and in college, he took Spanish and French for one and two years, respectively, citing an interest in the languages of Western Europe. "Languages and linguistic patterns was something I was always strong in," Taylor said. "I like the idea of communicating with different people." He plans on learning Portuguese next.

Taylor has mastered the languages of composition and math, notes and numbers. Now he is trying his hand at a new art—teaching.

A Spotlight on the Booth



The sound and lighting room is located in the back of the Murray Khan Theater.

Jessica Toib / The Spectator

By LIBBY DVIR

The room darkens, and a single spotlight illuminates a lone stage figure, who speaks the opening lines of one of the Stuyvesant Theater Community's many productions. While focused on the actor, the audience often forgets the people behind the scenes, including those in "the booth," the small room on the third floor that overlooks the Murray Kahn Theater and controls its sound and lighting systems. Because of the lighting room's expensive equipment and safety hazards, machinist Kenneth Levigion has installed infrared cameras inside the booth and only allows a select few familiar with the light and sound systems to enter.

To an unaccustomed guest, it may appear to be filled with junk, old scripts, and random posters, but in a guided tour, STC and SING! lighting and sound directors, seniors Eli Rosenberg and Joe Steele, showed otherwise.

Disco Ball

On the booth's ceiling hangs a small, inconspicuous disco ball, seemingly unimpressive next to all the booth's other treasures. With the flick of a couple switches, however, Rosenberg has the ball spinning on its axis and reflecting patterns of light, covering the ceiling with blue, purple, red, and pink. "We're the lighting crew, and this is the kind of stuff we're good at," Rosenberg said of the set up. The actors can see the light from the disco ball on the theater's stage. During the final seconds of each SING! performance, the lighting crew turns

on the disco ball and dances, and those on stage dance under the houselights while singing the spirit song.

This Is NOT a Step

The students who have access to the lighting booth are also allowed on the catwalks, the crisscrossing metal walkways and ventilation shafts above the theater. "The tech crew stores wood in the catwalks, and we use them to reach lights," Rosenberg said. As Technical Coordinator, Rosenberg allows access to the catwalk only to lighting and sound crew members who have been active in the club for at least two weeks.

**I've always felt
as if the lighting
booth is the
dynasty. The
crew changes
all the time, and
Kern is the only
thing tying it all
together, really."
—Joe Steele,
STC lighting
director**

New crew members who try to go

on the catwalks without permission often have trouble getting up to the catwalks, because they need to avoid the "not a step." The ladder that leads to the catwalks has rungs that are evenly spaced, except for one rung that is a part of the ceiling, so it needs to be stepped over. Informed students know they must aim high for the next rung instead of resting their weight on the "not-a-step." "It is labeled clearly, but people never pay attention," Rosenberg said. He makes sure to teach his members how to safely go up to the catwalk before allowing them to go by themselves.

The Limerick

If the costumes are poorly designed

And the singing all sounds like a whine

And the dancers can't dance
We'll just take off our pants
It's the lighting crew's moment to shine

On the bulletin board covering the wall of the booth, years of playbills, photos, and quotes are pinned, but the limerick (above), signed by former STC and SING! lighting director Jackson Maslow ('11) and written by his friend Milo Beckman ('11), sheds light on a very special tradition the lighting and sound crews have. "After the last performance of a successful show, we [the lighting and sound directors] take our pants off, power up the disco ball, and dance the night away," Rosenberg said. "The pants-off dance-off tradition has been around since before time. At the end of the show, when the actors finally acknowledge us, the most important people in the theater, we thank them by letting them see our pants-less bodies as we rage to Cascada," former lighting director Michael Silverblatt ('11) said.

Benjamin Softness:
Tech Crew 2002

"Sometimes when I'm around here, I'll find random things from a long time ago," Rosenberg said, and Benjamin Softness's "Tech ID" from 2002 was one of them. The tech IDs were special access cards Levigion used to issue students under his tutelage in the technical departments of the STC. Rosenberg came across the former Stuyvesant student's ID when he was changing the

house light bulbs. "It reminds me that I am part of something bigger than myself," Rosenberg said. "The lighting crew has existed for a long time, and this card is a reminder of that."

Kern is Coming

"Kern IS COMING, LOOK BUSY" reads a sticker on another of the booth's walls. "It originally said 'Jesus' instead of 'Kern' but someone changed it," Rosenberg said. The sound and lighting crews value Kern's help, and this sticker is just one of many tributes to the machinist. Lying on a desk is a Thank You card from a former student addressed to Levigion for Administrative

**"It's awesome
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to just get away
from the school."**

—Michael
Silverblatt ('11),
former STC
lighting director

Professionals' Day. "I've always felt as if the lighting booth is the dynasty. The crew changes all the time, and Kern is the only thing tying it all together, really. To emphasize that, the Kern scare earlier this year would've been pretty terrible for us," said Steele, referring to the former possibility that Levigion would lose his job. "Eli and I would've been the only ones who knew the inner workings and nuances of the art of lighting. Without Kern, there is no crew."

The Tools

Naturally, the booth is filled

with tools the technical crews use to do their jobs. The lighting and sound crews go over the script with the directors and producers and plan the lights, sounds, and special effects needed. The sound crew sets up the microphones, the sound system, and music while the lighting crew prepares the light bulbs and filters, focuses the lights, and programs the lighting board. During the show, both crews work with the stage managers to synchronize the lighting and sound system with the actors on stage. One tool the lighting crew uses is the "Jesus wrench," named for its cross shape, to focus the lights. The booth also houses several rows of gobos, which are filters used to make patterns of light on the backdrop, giving the illusion of a certain setting. "One [gobo] we use frequently is the forest gobo," said Rosenberg, noting that its unique pattern mimics the light falling through the gaps in trees' leaves.

The Booth Then and Now

The booth has remained a place for students interested in technical theater to learn the tricks of the trade, but it has also become a private space for the few students to whom access is granted. "It's awesome to have our own personal space within the school, not necessarily to do things frowned upon in public space, but more to just get away from the school," Silverblatt said.

The directors are also glad to have the privilege of going into a room so few students have access to. "I feel like we earn our access to it by doing work for Kern. It's not like he lets us in there without condition—and we do have a reason to be there," Rosenberg said.

The directors have different opinions about the newly installed infrared cameras that were intended to keep out intruders. "The camera is a good thing, because people who don't belong in the booth sometimes try to get in and it protects our equipment," Rosenberg said.

However, "It seems pretty silly seeing as one quarter of the booth is glass, so it can't be too difficult to see what we're doing inside," Silverblatt said.

Perhaps next time you go see SING! or another STC performance, you too will look behind you and see what the lighting directors are up to.

Features

Systems Level Programming: a Closer Look at the Machine



Sofia Pidzirailo / The Spectator

A senior works on his shell, a program used to launch and interface other programs.

By KAVERI SENGUPTA

A little over thirty students sit click clacking away at their computers in computer science teacher JonAlf Dyrland-Weaver's Systems Level Programming class, often referred to as "Systems." Going above and beyond typical high-school computer science coursework (AP Computer Science is a prerequisite), the class covers college level concepts and programming techniques.

"One of my [former students] who's working at Google,

"You're not programming for a test. You're going to try and build something and develop a product."
—JonAlf Dyrland-Weaver, Computer Science Teacher

he was telling me, 'Yeah, they hated me at Cornell. I didn't have to work at all until my junior year, because of all this foundation stuff that I learned in the Systems class and the other classes.' I've heard that from so many people," Computer Science Coordinator Mike Zamansky, who designed the Systems course in 1996, said.

Zamansky taught the course until this semester, during which he is "taking a break" to help design new courses, including the new required ML2 Introduction to Computer Science course. Dyrland-Weaver, who has taught one section of Systems for the past several years, and who took the course himself ten years ago, is now teaching all three sections. "I thought [taking Systems] was very useful to me, so I wanted to be able to give that back," Dyrland-Weaver said.

Dyrland-Weaver emphasizes that the Systems course is truly meant for students who plan to go into computer science in college. "If you want to do computer programming, it's a very good class for you to take," he said. "It's less on the theory side of computer science and much more on the programming side, to a large extent."

However, while Systems is a highly specialized course, it is taken and enjoyed by students of diverse academic interests. Senior Liam Downs-Tepper does not intend to major in computer science in college, but takes Systems because "it seemed like the natural thing to do," he said. "I was taking a lot of social science courses this year, so I figured I would

balance it out with something equally interesting in a different spectrum."

In terms of evaluation, the course is largely project based. "I tell the kids that I only give tests when I have to, if they're

"[Systems is] my favorite 45 minutes of the day. The Comp Sci department is my favorite department in the school."
—Doris Tang, senior

not keeping up with things," Zamansky said. "But it's been project based for a long time. [In most cases], you got your research, you got your time, you can help each other out. Some of them will be solo projects, some will be group projects, some will be one night, some will be a couple of days in the lab, some will be big projects

over the course of weeks."

Zamansky highlights the final projects as an interesting and innovative part of the course. "Last year, somebody wrote a simple version of the video game, Pong. But the ball goes off of my screen and then goes on to your screen. So that's pretty cool," he said. Projects are Dyrland-Weaver's favorite part about teaching the class. They "[give] the students a lot of freedom to do whatever they'd like to a certain degree," Dyrland-Weaver said. "In the real world, you're not programming for a test. You're going to try and build something and develop a product."

As Systems is a post-AP level course, enrollment is dependent upon how many students are taking AP Computer Science. "We've generally held two [Systems classes], now we hold three, but it's an artificial number," Zamansky said, as the number of students taking Systems varies each year. This year, over 200 juniors are taking AP Computer Science, which is likely to lead to a higher percentage of students willing to take Systems.

One example of the high-level projects the Systems students have taken on this year is making a shell. "[It's] basically an interface where the user communicates to the computer what it wants the computer to do... It's like a bridge between the user and the computer," senior and Systems student Doris Tang said.

Zamansky's goal for the Systems course was to give Stuyvesant students a leg up in college computer science courses. "I wanted to design something that would give the students a much stronger basis for their programming and computer science no matter what they did, and also to support, not to duplicate what they do on the college level," he said. "The course content [contains] things like network communications and interprocess communications. They learn the C programming language, they learn how to do network programs, they learn how to have programs that do multiple things at once."

While much of the curriculum has remained constant since it was first designed, the course has undergone major changes to keep up with new technology. "We're probably going to re-envision [the course] again in the relatively near future," Zamansky said.

"The material is not that different. We teach it in the C programming language, which hasn't changed in thirty years or so and it's still what underlies just about anything you've used," Dyrland-Weaver, who took the Systems course at Stuyvesant ten years ago, said. "The network stuff has changed over the years because in the

ten years between [my] taking it and teaching it, the Internet has become much more popular and the networking interfaces are different now."

Though he has taken on two extra sections of the class due to increased demand, Dyrland-Weaver is still admired by his students for being an effective, inspiring teacher. "He's pretty good at making a relaxed atmosphere, but still motivating the students to do well in his class and actually do the work," Demos said.

Tang appreciates the fact that computer science is required for Stuyvesant students, as she feels she would have been unable to find what she wants for her major any other way "Honestly, if [computer science] were not required in Stuy, I would have never taken it, and that would have been very sad because it's what I want to

"If you're actually interested in how computers function on a basic level and how they do the things they do, it's a really interesting class."

—Brenden Collins, senior

major in, and it's what I want to do after I graduate. I'm so glad it was required because it just set me on this whole journey to completing all the [computer science] courses that Stuy has," Tang said.

While the class is not for everyone, it is a rewarding experience for anyone interested in computer science. "It's a very, very nerdy class, and you have to be really good with computers to enjoy it, but it's a lot of fun," Collins said. "If you're actually interested in how computers function on a basic level and how they do the things they do, it's a really interesting class."

1:274

1:68

1:68

1:31

1:5

College Counselor to Freshman Ratio

Guidance Counselor to Freshman Ratio

Freshman English Teacher to Freshman Ratio

Big Sib Homeroom Leader to Freshman Ratio

Big Sib to Freshman Ratio

Features

By TONG NIU

They are in your classes and on your sports teams. They are from every grade and every borough. During the day, they blend in among the student body, posing has Big Sibs, as runners, as musicians. But once school is out, they communicate in a strange new language, getting red and stealing blue, slaying barons and minions to net experience and gold. They are the gamers.

Senior Kong Huang started gaming in 2004 with the then popular game, Runescape. "I started playing games because there was nothing else to do. There was so much free time, and television or toys were not as appealing to me as a kid," Kong wrote in an e-mail interview. From there he expanded to Counterstrike (a first-person shooter game that pits a team of terrorists against a team of counter-terrorists), Minecraft (a 3D game in which players create constructions out of materials from the environment while attempting to survive attacks from local creatures), DotA (also known as Warcraft III: Defense of the Ancients, a real-time action game that requires one team to destroy opponents' heavily guarded fortresses, otherwise known as "Ancients"), and League of Legends (LoL), a DotA type game with a focus on team play.

It was this game that inspired the name for his club,

StuyLeague, which was created in June of this year. "There was no official club that allowed Stuy kids to play games in a competitive environment," Huang said.

"Everyone, or almost everyone, in Stuy games. They keep it to themselves or in their own clique."
—Kong Huang, senior

The club operates virtually, with meetings held online through Internet relay chats, giant chat rooms where people can communicate. Most members play each other for one or two hours a day in "in-house" games, in either pickup games with nonofficial teams, or official games with a team leader, four players, and a substitute.

What began as a group of 30 or so of Huang's friends has grown to a 130-member club

dedicated to creating community and improving gameplay. "That is one of the main reasons why I like games so much," Huang said in an e-mail interview. "I see so many people playing by themselves, but it is the social aspect of it that is attractive."

The club, which consists mostly of seniors and few freshmen, is more than just a group of expert gamers. The more experienced members teach the newcomers. To ease in newbies, Kong runs video streams of his plays and his interactions with his teammates. He is in the process of writing guides and hopes to hold a Winter Cup Tournament in which teams of five face off in a double-elimination-style competition over winter break.

"Everyone, or almost everyone, in Stuy games. They keep it to themselves or in their own clique," Huang said. "There are some people in my club who are football players, there are some people who have 95 plus averages. There's everyone."

But the gamer stereotype is not completely unfounded. Senior and StuyLeague Vice President Stanley Yang considers himself to fit the stereotype. "You don't sleep, you don't care about your schoolwork, and you do nothing but play games," he said.

Furthermore, most of the gamers are, stereotypically, male. Lucy Qian ('11) was one of the first girls to join



Linda Cai / The Spectator

StuyLeague, which currently has only two female members. "I don't really know why it's a male-dominated game," she wrote in an e-mail interview. "People keep thinking that only guys like to game, and it's become such a popular way of thinking that girls just shy away from gaming. Girls might get intimidated."

Qian does not consider herself to be a very good player. However, what started as a way to procrastinate turned into a rewarding and exciting experience. "It feels nice to see the enemy's health bar drop whenever you use the skills on them," she wrote. "And winning makes it all the better."

For Huang, gaming is all about community. "I had a friend's friend, YaN [who] helped me throughout [DotA]. I remember when he yelled at me for making the slightest mistake, but it was all in good fun and helped me improve," Huang said. "With another person, not necessarily a mentor, they can point out mistakes and improve your gameplay drastically."

With StuyLeague, he hopes to create such a forum where one can ask questions, give tips, and help one another.

"People who you would not expect to play games game," Huang said. "We want to reach out to them."

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Humor

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Administration Announces Success of Climate Control Energy Boost Program

By JAMES FRIER
and ELI ROSENBERG

On Tuesday, December 6, The Stuyvesant High School administration announced the success of a "Climate Control Energy Boost" program, instituted by the school at the beginning of the term. The announcement came in the form of a press release and showed that the initiative, which utilizes the schools climate control system to keep students awake and alert during class, was an astounding success.

The program was the brain-child of Principal Stanley Teitel, who has been making jokes about keeping kids awake by keeping the building cold since 1973. "I first thought of the program during the great blizzard of '73, when despite outside temperatures below zero degrees Fahrenheit, the schools air conditioners remained on due to a faulty conduit," Teitel said. "Never before had I seen students with such academic zeal and physical discomfort."

After years of simply joking about his master plan, Teitel, unsatisfied with the student energy level, finally convinced the Stuyvesant administration to let him institute the program.

Under the program, when outside temperatures drop below 50 degrees, the air conditioners automatically cool the school building to a refreshing 15 degrees Fahrenheit. Ma-

chinist Kernen Levigion was put in charge of the ambitious climate system. "I was told to upgrade the schools previous air condoning system to a more accommodating 900,000 BTU Soviet era industrial era cool-

"Never before had I seen students with such academic zeal and physical discomfort."
—Stanley Teitel,
Principal

ing system, previously used to preserve the Kremlin's personal emergency store of vodka, caviar and bear meat," Levigion said.

Since the program was initiated, student sleeping has gone down an astonishing 45 percent. Participation and note-

taking have also increased, according to teachers. "Instead of sleeping, students spend the class shivering. It's just too cold to sleep in that room."

However successful, the program has faced some criticism, mainly from the student body. The Student Union petitioned the administration to end the program, citing three cases of hypothermia among freshman students in the past semester, as well as countless hindrances to student livelihood. "The school's pool has frozen over, and scattered groups of Inuit have been spotted ice-fishing and hunting for seals," biology teacher and climate expert Stephen McClellan said. Students have experienced difficulty reaching the upper levels of the school due to arctic-like conditions. Some needed to hire Sherpa guides to traverse the perilous, snowy trail up to the tenth floor.

Despite the criticism, the administration has regarded the program's academic benefits as successful and are considering perhaps expanding the program into the summer months. "Once it becomes hot out, it will be unfeasible to cool the school to such extremes, so instead we will be using the heating system to raise the school's temperature to an invigorating, sauna-like 115 degrees Fahrenheit," Teitel said. "Maybe then our students might actually shower."

11th-Floor Pool Re-opens

By ELI ROSENBERG

After years of disuse, Stuyvesant High School's 11th floor pool has finally been made accessible to students. The pool was originally built during the construction of the new Stuyvesant building in 1993, but never opened due to filtration issues.

Due to the extended closure of the pool, students for years have believed the pool's existence to be an urban legend. "I heard that there was a pool on the 11th floor my freshman year when my Big Sib tried to sell me a pass to swim after school," junior Joaquin Pinto said. "But he also told me that the department A.P.'s were helpful and that the Cafeteria was the cool place to get lunch, so I was inclined not to believe him."

Even students who attended the school when the new building first opened were shocked about the pool's actual existence. "When we first moved into the new building, there were rumors flying around about different aspects of the building," Christine Hung ('94) said. "I just assumed that the 11th floor pool was just another one of those."

The administration kept the pool a secret until now, citing repairs, as well as a need to maintain a serious academic environment. "We decided that a second pool would just be too much fun for one building, and students couldn't handle that," Principal Stanley Teitel said. "We did host a number of staff parties up there though, it got

pretty wild."

The administration finally decided to tell students about the pool in an effort to generate revenue for the school. Beginning in January, Stuyvesant will charge students twenty dollars a month for access to an entertainment complex on the 11th floor, which includes the pool, in addition to a game room, several hot tubs, and a rock climbing wall. "My conference room's mahogany table was showing a little bit of wear, so I decided to try and generate more revenue to pay for a replacement. Due to rising wood and polish prices, the 11th floor seemed to be my only viable option," Teitel said.

Students have expressed excitement for the pool's opening, and the administration has received over one hundred pre-orders for passes to the pool. However, while the general population has a positive take on the pool's delayed opening, others question its usefulness. "We have one pool already, why in the world would we need a second one? Also, it makes no sense that it be all the way up on the 11th floor," senior Ariel Matalon said. "It's a ridiculous design, and on top of that, how did it possibly take eighteen years to repair it?"

Despite Matalon's concerns, the administration maintains a staunchly joyous stance on the pool's opening. "Now we have twice the amount of space to force humiliation and discomfort upon unathletic freshmen," Principal Stanley Teitel said.

Opium Den Uncovered in Fifth Floor Boys' Bathroom

By JAMES FRIER

After years of undercover investigation, the United States Drug Enforcement Agency announced on Monday, November 21, that one of their agents had finally succeeded in uncovering an extensive opium den and trading ring in the handicapped stall of the fifth floor boys' bathroom at Stuyvesant. The DEA made has made several arrests thus far in relation to the opium den, and has confiscated an estimated five hundred thousand dollars worth of opium and opium paraphernalia, including a ceramic pipe dating back to the Ming Dynasty.

The DEA began investigating the school after Dean Daniel Tillman made them aware of circumstances that suggested possible drug activity. "I was tired of walking past that bathroom every day and having my nostrils assaulted by the potent aroma created by the mixture of human feces, marijuana, tobacco and poppy. Whenever I went in to try and see what was going on, the students in there always promised me that it smelled like that when they came in," Tillman said.

After conducting a preliminary survey of the school building, DEA officials began

"I can't believe that this sort of debauchery could go on right next to the health classrooms, which serve as fortresses of anti-drug ideology and positive moral values."
—Barbara Garber,
health teacher

to suspect opium use after seeing that students had placed a suspiciously large order with an alleged calculator manufacturer in India's Uttar Pradesh region, a major grower of poppies. Agents then began to infiltrate Stuyvesant's student body.

"After talking to a few kids, I was told that interest in opium use skyrocketed after students learned about the Opium Wars in social studies teacher Muriel Olivi's World History class," DEA Agent Kevin Moore said. After spending a few months earning the trust of Stuyvesant's underground drug community, Moore was invited to the fifth floor bathroom "to mellow out for a little while."

"What I saw could have come straight out of nineteenth century Shanghai," Moore said. "When I opened the door to the handicapped stall, I saw several people in silk robes reclining on couches, and although it was difficult to see, the only light came from several candles placed around the stall, I was able to make out five ceramic opium pipes. There was also a freshman girl serving tea and refilling the pipes."

The news shocked many members of the Stuyvesant administration, who had believed that drug use at the school

"After talking to a few kids, I was told that interest in opium use skyrocketed after students learned about the Opium Wars in social studies teacher Muriel Olivi's World History class."
—Kevin Moore,
DEA Agent

had been declining. "After the alcove was covered by scaffolding, we thought that delinquents would have nowhere to go to do their drugs," Tillman said.

"I can't believe that this sort of debauchery could go on right next to the health classrooms, which serve as fortresses of anti-drug ideology and positive moral values," health teacher Barbara Garber said. "Although this does explain why students always come back from the bathroom looking so happy."

After shutting down the opium den, the DEA will continue to monitor the bathroom, as well as others in the school, for drug activity. In addition, criminal drug possession and distribution charges are currently being brought against the students implicated by the DEA. "I'm certainly happy that the degenerates who set up the opium den are being punished, but at the same time, I'm reminded of my own experiences while traveling through Burma as a young man," Teitel said. "The students will be suspended, and the drug activity stopped, but I can't help but feel a tinge of sympathy."

Editorials

STAFF EDITORIAL

What We Have to Say

When we published an evaluation of Stuyvesant's departments in the last issue of The Spectator, our intention was to point out what any student could tell you: though the New York City Department of Education gave Stuyvesant an "A" in its 2011 Progress Report, and Stuyvesant has been labeled one of the top schools in the city, there are problems in our school that are not being addressed.

Students grumble about uninspiring teachers, too many tests, and burdensome amounts of work, but their complaints about specific classes never get past their friends, unless they happen to post an evaluation on RateMyTeachers.com. This results in an inadequate expression of student opinion, because the comments are about specific teachers, not classes or departments; our editorial tried to fill the void by providing a more comprehensive evaluation of the specific factors that affect student learning and experience.

Please understand we did not intend the content of our last editorial to be in any way hurtful or disrespectful. We apologize to any teachers who felt as if they were being personally attacked, and acknowledge that some of our complaints may have come across as unfairly harsh, but believe us when we say that this candid account of our opinions was meant to be constructive.

We value our teachers. We appreciate that they come in every day to educate and inspire us, and spend hours grading tests, papers, and homework outside of the classroom, but we do not feel that this respect should bar us from voicing our concerns.

To clarify, when we say "we," we are referring to the members of the Editorial Board, not the entire student body. The 34 members of The Spectator's Journalism class spent several days discussing the categories we would use, and our general evaluations of each department. The editorial was an

opinions piece, not a formal study. We divided some departments, such as Chemistry and Physics, and Math and Computer Science, because we felt that these subjects deserved to be evaluated separately, considering the huge difference in material covered by each. After we exchanged ideas about our current and former classes, we voted whether to give each department an A, B, C, D, or F, and then re-voted once we determined where the votes were concentrated. For example, if most students opted for a B, the members of the Editorial Board were then all given the option to vote for a B-, B, or B+. We do not pretend that this is how an official polling body would conduct a formal survey, but this method of evaluation was supposed to give a general sense of our sentiments.

Yes, we are a small group of students who all have an interest in a singular extracurricular activity, but that does not mean that our comments are one-sided. We have formed our own opinions based on personal experiences, and in most cases, both the praise and the criticisms were corroborated by one another. In other cases, the diversity of experience made it difficult for every person's opinion to be included. Numerous teachers have said that some of our evaluations give false impressions of departments, but how can they know if they have not asked the student body as a whole?

This question is something we have written about for years, with articles like, "The Case for Teacher Evaluations," published in 2004, "Mutual Assessment," in 2009, and "Teacher Evaluations: What About the Students' Voices?" in January of this year. Time and time again, we get little response, if any, and only now that we have stopped talking in theoretical terms and given our honest opinions have we heard back from some members of the faculty. (We assume the large letter grades helped draw their attention, though we hoped they

would focus more on the comments, which were meant to be constructive.) Unfortunately, we have not received any letters for publication—you can still submit one now!—but in conversation our judgment has been questioned.

We don't claim to have written a perfect piece, but we want to resurrect the idea that the school should mandate that students evaluate the courses they take, which includes evaluating the teacher, the curriculum, and the course materials, among other factors. The idea was shot down when brought up in a Student Leadership Meeting in 2009, with concerns raised about receiving excessively negative, unconstructive reviews of teachers. However, some teachers in our school already ask for student evaluations, and educators' huge impact in the classroom cannot be ignored; we must assume that most students will be mature in their evaluations and will consider the readers of their responses.

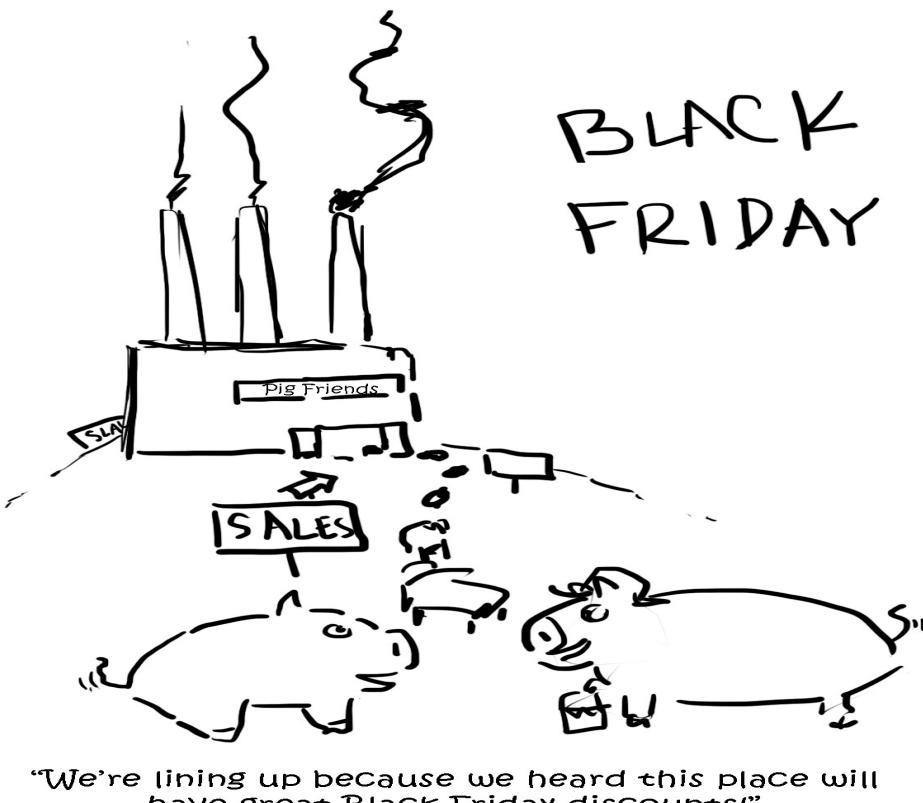
Such evaluations are done consistently at the college level, and especially in a school as large as Stuyvesant, where assistant principals sit in on teachers' classes once a semester, if that, they are necessary to help teachers, and the school as a whole, to always improve.

Ideally, assistant principals would be privy to the students' evaluations so that they could give teachers suggestions and ensure that the changes they make adequately address any problems. However, even having teachers receive feedback without supervisor interference would be better than nothing.

You have heard the opinions of 34 students. Instead of writing us off, we ask you to take what we have started a step further and to open a dialogue.

Mr. Teitel, please consider this. Student Union representatives, please fight for this. Teachers, please ask your students for their opinions. Students, don't be afraid to tell them what you think.

OP-ART



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse
of the
Student
Body"

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The Spectator

We are compiling an archive of
past issues.

We are looking for issues
published before 1995.

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A Note to Our Readers:

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

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

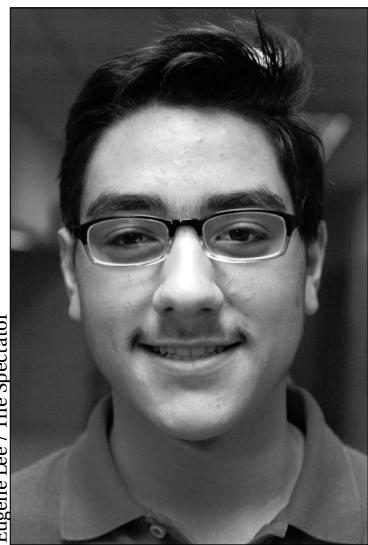
Write a letter to the editor and e-mail it to letters@stuspectator.com or drop it in The Spectator box in the second-floor mail room.

FOR THE RECORD

- Anne Chen wrote the article "Stuy Quiz Bowl Team Undefeated at First Tournament."
- Azra Tanovic's name was misspelled in the byline of "Escape the Golden Arches."
- Sofia Pidzryailo's name was misspelled in the byline for the photo accompanying "On Your Marks, Get Set, Go."
- Senior and co-captain Maggie Yeung's name was misspelled in "Penguins Dominate in PSAL Open Championships, Send Relay Team to States."
- English teacher Holly Schechter and senior Nancy Sun both spoke of the love between Rezia and Septimus, not Clarissa and Septimus, in "Playwright of 'Septimus and Clarissa' Speaks at Stuyvesant."

Opinions

Moratorium on Brains



Eugene Lee / The Spectator

By DAVID CAHN

Lately I've become downright outraged as I watch bureaucracy and rules trump brains and innovationn a world in which bureaucracy and rules trump brains and innovation, where all too often progress is impeded by the close-mindedness of the collective. Stuyvesant is a school that pledges to uphold the values of individualism and merit. Students are accepted based on test scores, and are pressured to learn and grow in the short four years they have. Mr. Richard Geller, who passed away just a month ago, embodied those values. With a passion for education, and a love of math, he helped his students succeed, providing them with a quality education. By surpassing expectations, and contributing to the development of each and every one of his students, he was the

archetype of the 'passionate teacher.' The recent demotion of his successor, John Taylor, represents an assault to these values.

Taylor, a former captain of the Stuyvesant Math Team and Princeton University graduate, shared the passion and the devotion to math that allowed Mr. Geller to become a legend at Stuyvesant. A superb teacher, he invigorated his students with his excited passion for math. He was kind, understanding, and helpful. Most importantly, he loved math, and through his lessons, we were inspired to learn and grow.

Sophomore Richard Yip said of Taylor, "He was an excellent math team coach... his eyes sparkled with energy whenever he presented an especially elegant proof to us." One student posted on Facebook, "He was really devoted, and obviously loves teaching. On my test, he went over the scrap paper and circled and explained why I got points off. I was able to learn a lot of math from him."

Unfortunately, this sort of passionate teaching would not go on much longer after the passing of Mr. Geller. Taylor's classes were transferred to more 'qualified' teachers on November 14, 2011. It seems like The Moratorium on Brains that Ayn Rand originally analyzed in her now famous novel *Atlas Shrugged*, in which society prevents its most brilliant members from succeeding, has spread to Stuyvesant as well. The removal of a fantastic teacher, a genius, who preached Math Is Number

1 just as fervently as his predecessor, seems to mark a disastrous trend in America—the decline of merit in favor of "rules

The removal of a fantastic teacher, a genius, who preached Math Is Number 1 just as fervently as his predecessor, seems to mark a disastrous trend in America—the decline of merit in favor of "rules and regulations."

and regulations."

Mr. Taylor, who out of the goodness of his heart agreed to help Mr. Geller with his classes in early September, doesn't have a teaching license. Pro-

fessor Barack Obama didn't have a teaching license when he taught at the University of Chicago, Professor Condoleezza Rice at Stanford University doesn't have a teaching license—nor did most of their teachers. The fact that Mr. Taylor's been teaching Stuyvesant students since September, that he is a math genius, and that he could have taught in the presence of a licensed teacher have all been ignored. He's been demoted because of "rules and regulations." These Department of Education (DOE) rules were put in place to uphold standards and maintain order, but when rules are enforced to the point where they betray their original purpose, they must be reconsidered.

The DOE allows for a bright teacher without a Masters degree to be removed from his position while mediocre teachers remain. The system assumes that any ineffective teacher will eventually retire. But our students aren't waiting. Education needs to be improved now, and that means saving teachers like Mr. Taylor. Hold on to good teachers you've got while you have them. Each individual teacher shapes the minds of hundreds of students, and the great ones have lasting impact. Yet the 'passionate teacher' is becoming increasingly difficult to find. Are they on strike, or are we letting them go? Are they voluntarily leaving a system filled with bureaucratic abuse, or are we kicking them out?

The firing of an exceptionally intelligent and passionate

teacher represents the destruction of innovators in favor of bureaucracy. The story of Mr. Taylor is indeed a tragic one. Every one of his students will suffer from losing his services this semester. It should serve as

It should serve as a warning to all of us; Stuyvesant is not immune to the Moratorium on Brains. If we don't combat it, the students might be next.

a warning to all of us; Stuyvesant is not immune to the Moratorium on Brains. If we don't combat it, the students might be next.

A Less Than Perfect Apple Pie

By SARU NANDA

Family is pouring in from all rooms of the house. The room is decorated with warm, autumn colors; new silverware lies beside the fine china on the table, which is covered with plates of cornbread, mashed potatoes, pumpkin pie, and the mouth-watering stuffed turkey at the head of the table. Dinner never looked so good.

I have never eaten tur-

key. I've never slaved away in the kitchen during the fourth Thursday of November, preparing an elaborate Thanksgiving meal. Instead, I sleep in, watch a half hour of the remains of the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and eat leftover dinner for brunch. All in all, Thanksgiving is not a typical Thanksgiving in the Nanda house.

If you ask my parents how our family celebrates Thanksgiving, they'll say we don't

celebrate it at all. This is simply because if we're thankful for something, we don't wait around until the end of the year to say so. And we especially don't say it through food. It also doesn't help that we're vegetarians.

But that doesn't stop us from wanting to make an elaborate dinner for one night. No, my mom doesn't prepare the turkey. No, my dad doesn't make cranberry sauce. No, my brother doesn't help me make the batter for corn bread. Instead, we have our own Thanksgiving: we make pastas and salads and other dishes we wouldn't eat on a normal day-to-day basis. We don't set out our best fine china, but we don't eat off of paper plates either. Dinner is dinner and that's it.

I'm not criticizing Thanksgiving. I look forward to it like so many others do. I just think that as people, we seem to forget the original idea of the day: to give thanks. I spend my Thanksgiving eating foods that don't seem traditional, but why is that such an issue? The point of Thanksgiving to give thanks and yet, it is too easy to forget that minor detail. The smell of the warm, home-cooked meal outranks the idea of gratitude. It comes in second to dinner. Most people will simply say, "Thank you for such a beautiful dinner, can you pass the mashed potatoes now?" They will ignore the truly traditional part of Thanksgiving—the tradition of saying, "thank you."

After dinner, my parents,

my brother and I will bake apple pie. No, we won't make it before we eat dinner. We'll peel the apples, mix in the cinnamon and flour and nutmeg, the whole she-bang, after dinner. Of all the traditional Thanksgiving foods, apple pie is the only one that has ever stuck with us. No matter the time, we'll sit and wait the forty minutes it takes for the dessert to bake, and we'll stay up late devouring it once it's done. It's never perfect; we're okay with that. It almost symbolizes us: we're not

It almost seems awkward to say the two words over something as trivial as food. But when making dessert with my family, it's like we're saying thank you to each other. Thank you for being there, thank you for being with me.

Thanksgiving is a day that I spend with my family. We don't spend half the day the day away from each other, preparing a dinner that will last a couple of hours. We spend the day together, doing whatever we wish to do. Who says we have to be traditional?

It's easy to forget that Thanksgiving is a day of thanks, even if the word is in the name. It's not until right before we eat that we think of what we're thankful for. While not celebrating Thanksgiving in the most traditional way, I do expect a less than perfect apple pie waiting to be devoured by my less than perfect family this year. That's my Thanksgiving: untraditional, but it's what I'm thankful for.



Victoria Stempel / The Spectator



Give Thanks, Spread Love

Wei Dan Yang / The Spectator

Opinions

The Solomon Column: The End of Empire



Mostafa Elmabdoly / The Spectator

By DANIEL SOLOMON

In the 1830s, the United States was on the edge of the world, a beacon of frontier egalitarianism, an example of the pastoral idyll. Americans liked it that way, and some were concerned about how our nation would develop, whether it would remain the agrarian republic that Jefferson envisioned or morph into a European-style imperial power. Thomas Cole, the founder of the Hudson River School, was working on his magnum opus at the time, a five-part series of paintings titled, "The Course of Empire," which expressed beautifully these worries.

The first work is called "The Savage State," depicting at the break of dawn a rugged wilderness populated by people who look like Native Americans. The second, known as "The Arcadian or Pastoral State," shows plowed fields tended to by the salt of the earth, a picture straight out of Greece's Dorian Age. The third, "The Consummation of Empire," is set at high noon and recalls the pomp and splendor of Rome at its apogee. The fourth is "Destruction," where the city of the previous scene is sacked during afternoon by invaders, conjuring up the Visigoths and Huns. The fifth and last is "Desolation"; the once-bustling metropolis lies deserted and crum-

bling as dusk descends.

Many scholars have used Cole's masterpiece as a visual aid for their theories about the decline of America, challenging the fatuous notion of exceptionalism with the stark reality of civilization: that invariably our day in the Sun will end, just as it has for every power that has come before us. They posit we are in the phase between "The Consummation of Empire" and "Desolation," and that there's no going back. I'm more optimistic; we are at that point, but we can change course, if we're willing to recognize the faults of our foreign policy and are open to sweeping changes in our defense posture.

Right now, we have troops stationed in 148 countries across the globe and at 662 bases in 38 different nations. Our global presence is very similar to the footprint that the British used to have before post-war decolonization, with several important caveats. Our Anglo-Saxon friends practiced a more transparent form of imperialism, actually taking over places, subjecting the inhabitants to direct rule, and exploiting natural resources for hungry manufacturers and consumers in the United Kingdom. The United States's means of control are more insidious. The CIA has toppled unfriendly regimes in Iran and Indonesia, Nicaragua

and Guatemala, Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and the list goes on and on. This political clout lays the groundwork for economic domination. And that's not to say that empire is always bad. India benefited greatly from British rule, prospering from the elimination of backward cultural practices such as the caste system, sati, and thuggee; the emergence of an educated bureaucracy; the introduction of English; and the construction of a modern infrastructure system. This sort of thing is costly to keep up; people get sick of paying through the nose to fund overseas adventures while domestic troubles are mounting.

In the aftermath of World War II, Britain couldn't afford the human and material cost of maintaining its empire. The few times it did try to resist what Prime Minister Harold MacMillan called "the wind of change," it was shut out, losing jungle battles in Malaysia and failing dismally to retake the Suez Canal from the Egyptians.

Our situation is similar, though I don't believe that we will suffer the same loss of status that Britain did. We are, however, spread too thin, slowly ending conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and grappling with a \$700 billion defense budget that has sapped domestic programs of needed funding. The obvious result of this is a protest movement like Occupy Wall Street, our own Winter of Discontent.

It is clear that the American Empire has to end. Fortunately, that does not necessarily spell our decline. We have to continue to defend our interests around the globe, but we must do so in a cost-effective way that doesn't draw the ire of the world's citizens. Moving to a foreign policy model based on soft power is the best solution. A phrase coined in 1990 by Harvard professor Joseph Nye, soft power means our "ability to attract others by the legitimacy of U.S. policies and the values that underlie them."

It is peace through respect rather than peace through strength, leadership by collaboration, not coercion.

Soft power has long been a key part of the State Department's toolkit, from the Marshall Plan to JFK's Alliance for Progress. But just like how State is overshadowed by Defense, soft power takes a back seat to hard power, i.e. direct military action. When Barack Obama swept into office, he promised a new emphasis on soft power, but he has not gone far enough toward that end. Indeed, in an effort to counter the growing influence of China in Southeast Asia, Obama announced plans to open a new military base in Darwin, Australia, staffed with 2,500 troops.

Meanwhile, as we put more feet on the ground, China seeks to win the hearts and minds of people the world over. It has sprinkled billions of dollars around Africa, signing economic cooperation pacts and energy deals with a clutch of leaders. It has bought the goodwill of many in the Pacific Rim with infrastructure projects financed by state-owned corporations. It has even made inroads in the West, setting up propaganda-spreading Confucius Institutes and launching a charm offensive that has touched the billboards atop Times Square and

many of our country's movie theaters and sports arenas.

You might think this would prompt Congress to pump up the budget for international assistance, but, in fact, 165 House Republicans recently penned a letter urging the total defunding of the agency, USAID, responsible for aid. That might be politically wise; it is, however, a geopolitical blunder.

As many celebrated analysts have observed, it would cost chump change for the United States to drastically reduce the prevalence of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria in Africa and to fund family-planning services there. In the Middle East, we would do well to modernize our media outreach to regular folks through our external news agency, The Voice of America, which suffers from a lack of money and years of mismanagement. In Southeast Asia, we could plow funds into efforts for regional cooperation, like the Mekong River Committee.

Of course, these are just a few examples of policies we should look into. They are certainly cheaper than the oversized military we have today and, if anything, entail a lower risk of the "Desolation" and "Destruction" that Cole so ominously foretold.



Linda Cai / The Spectator

By the Opinion Editors

Drill, Baby, Drill?

Governor Andrew Cuomo seems determined to allow horizontal hydraulic fracturing, a dangerous oil extraction method, to be used to unlock the natural gas contained in upstate's Marcellus Shale rock formation. The process, more commonly known as fracking, involves the blasting of rock with explosive materials mixed with water, producing a by-product of toxic sludge. If it sounds scary, that's because it is.

Josh Fox's 2010 documentary, "Gasland," details how fracking led to the contamination of much of Pennsylvania's drinking water, after waste from the drilling leached into aquifers. In a particularly shocking scene, one of the film's subjects lights water from his tap on fire. But that's not all. Much of the science supporting fracking comes out of Penn State, an institution notoriously cozy with Big Oil; this disturbing relationship was sketched out on a recent episode of "This American Life," one that includes accepting

millions in donations from fossil fuel interests and suppressing contrary views from within the University.

Meanwhile, in New York, banks won't give out mortgages to people who sign oil and gas leases for fear that properties will be irreparably tainted. But Big Oil has done a good job of buying Cuomo with lavish campaign contributions and he has returned the favor, steamrolling over those with concerns about the safety of our drinking water, our health -- drilling can lead to cancer clusters -- and, dare we say it, environmental quality.

Where's Captain Planet when we need him most?

Guidelines for Holiday Shopping

The season is upon us. From Black Friday until 11:59 p.m. on December 24, department stores, online catalogues, and retail vendors are overrun with a swarming stampede of vicious shoppers. Commercialism, not God, is the December deity. Tis the season to shop.

Unfortunately, the real test

this season, as with every year before this, is not where to shop, but what to buy. How can you possibly reduce the veritable cornucopia of potential gifts to the one your friend, parent, sibling, spouse, or distant-cousin-you-just-found-out-is-coming-over-on-Christmas-Eve actually wants? The whole ordeal is mind-boggling.

To help out those you who are in the giving spirit, we have assembled a clear-cut, stress-free list of rules to maximize your holiday shopping experience.

1) Don't spend more than \$20. Seriously. The odds that you bought a gift that your recipient will actually use for more than a week or two are frighteningly negligible.

2) If your friend/parent/sibling/spouse/cousin neglected to buy you something when you threw your \$20 maximum gift on them, you have the right to take back your gift. It's their fault if they don't appreciate you. So buy something good because you may end up keeping it.

3) Don't buy organic. Free-trade, wholesome, organic products are so 2011. Don't suc-

cumb to them. Start next year's trend off right by buying processed, cheaply manufactured goods. Anything with a "Made in China" label is a good place to start.

4) Don't spend more than 20 minutes thinking of a gift. See rule number one.

5) Bumper stickers are the best standby. If you can't think of anything, which if you're only taking 20 minutes, you probably can't, bumper stickers are your best bet. Bumper stickers are the kind of gift that disappoint at first but which, at some point in the distant future, you may glance at and chuckle from time to time. That's really the best you can ask for.

Where Does It Stop?

Students have complained in vain during the first months of school, as administrators have strictly enforced the new dress code. As promised, we have been pulled over and reprimanded when violating the guidelines of the code. Not surprisingly, Facebook petitions in protest against the dress code

failed miserably. Evidently, hundreds of signatures meant nothing to the creators of the code. Yet, despite the hopelessness of the situation, recent developments on the enforcement of the code cannot be taken sitting down.

Individuals who have been pulled over for their outfits state that enforcement of the code is purely subjective. The original dress code stated that "the length of shorts, dresses and skirts should extend below the fingertips with the arms straight at your side." This is far from what has been enforced. Individuals who pass this fingertip test have had their IDs taken away nonetheless. Evidently, enforcement of the code is purely at the discretion of the enforcer.

Case-by-case enforcement of the dress code cannot continue. If you comply with the technically stated rules of the school you should not be targeted. The rules are here for a reason. Let's keep the peace, and follow them as they were written.

Opinions

What Makes A Good Teacher?

Jill Chow (Class of 2013)

A good teacher is someone who loves the subject she teaches and goes to great lengths to convey this love to the students. The ability to make a student embrace a subject makes a quality instructor. Successful teachers are not those who pass their students with high scores, but rather make the students enjoy the subject. The teacher can be a hard grader, can give a lot of homework and can be very strict. The teacher can also be very laid back and easy to talk to. Regardless of her personality, the most important thing is that she is able to engage the students and to pass on knowledge.

Some students judge teachers purely based on how nice they act and how easy a workload they assign. I, however, see teachers as divided into those that can teach and stick knowledge in their students' heads and those who leave very little impact. A good teacher should make the class interesting and make the students want to go back. Teachers should be enthusiastic about their own subjects and bring in current events, or link the learning material to the real world in order to emphasize its importance. Merely spewing out information and lecturing is not enough to qualify as a "good teacher." The teacher needs to feel a certain passion, and to convey that passion to the kids.

Andrew Reilly (Class of 2013)

A good teacher isn't someone who can hurtle information at you at lightning speed. A good teacher doesn't have to be someone who has been published, or has done extensive research. A good teacher, rather, is somebody who is willing to go the extra distance to make his subject special to their students, someone who not only teaches the material, but also teaches morals and imparts their love of their subject onto their students. The role of the teacher extends beyond the classroom, as teachers should inspire us to learn more about the subject than what is required. In addition, teachers need to understand that for every ounce of work they put in, they will get an equal output, which is, in essence, the real reward of teaching. This is really the key component to teaching – love. Without a love of the subject and of the students, a teacher will never truly be successful.

Andrew Fan (Class of 2014)

Teachers are the people who help shape our minds. Their opinions influence us, they enlighten us, and the better ones do even more. The ideal teacher does not spoil her students, nor is she extremely strict. A good teacher is able to balance lenience and strictness and is able to effectively communicate knowledge to her students.

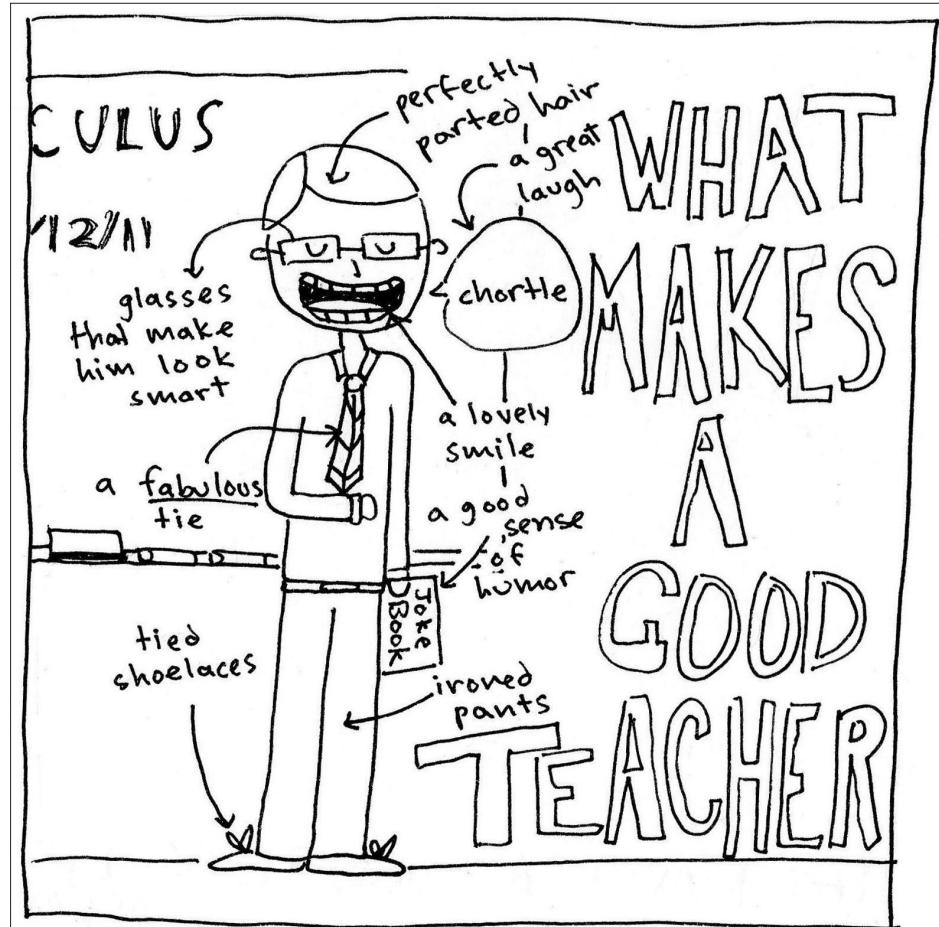
Tests should be thorough and emphasize important concepts. The subject matter must be posed in a way that makes the students interested in it – that gives them motivation to learn. A good teacher does not bombard students with tests, but instead makes sure that they learn the material effectively. Worksheets that pose problems should require thought on the topic and should not be long pages of simple math problems that need "all work shown" when nearly the same thing is being done for each question.

If a teacher is able to motivate her students to learn and discover more, that teacher will be effective. Weaker teachers teach to a test or textbook and provide no other information. Teachers who teach current events (not long written article summaries) regarding the subject are usually more able to interest students in a subject, and those who do this successfully are often good teachers. Teachers who make students think deeply are also above par. Debating, exploring extra topics, and reinforcing knowledge with visual links to other subjects allow for thought and a more enriching class atmosphere.

Most importantly, a good teacher must want to teach.. If a teacher does not pose creative assignments and does not show any effort, students will not take the class seriously. This apathy carries over to other classes and affects other teachers and the school itself.

Louly Saney (Class of 2012)

Engaging, enthusiastic, and energetic. These three qualities make a teacher magnificent, and a teacher like this makes a class worth taking. Only a handful of teachers are capable of making a simple or dull lesson exciting. Those who care are passionate about what they teach and bring that passion into their lessons. Teachers who are happy to be in school with students, who plan ahead, and who look forward to classes are the strongest. Teachers who are willing to spend their free periods with students to go over something or talk about an issue are the teachers that one will always remember. Teachers who care about students enough to get to know them and want to learn about their backgrounds are clearly the most invested, and the most effective. An amazing teacher is one whom gets to know you better and whom you get to know better outside of the classroom. A teacher you come to love is one that not only is an effective educator, but also a powerful, compassionate person.



Libby Dvir (Class of 2012)

Teachers teach because they want their students to learn, and use what they learned to become successful in whatever path they take. A good teacher is able to explain material effectively until every student can leave feeling confident that he or she understood the lesson, but a great teacher does so in a way that holds students' attentions and leaves them wanting more. A teacher's passion should be strong enough to spread to everyone in the class, as this makes the experience much more engaging, and the more engaging a class is, the easier it is for students to learn. Accordingly, teachers should aim to avoid monotony and instead aim to use creativity to craft thoughtful and engaging lesson plans. Teachers acknowledge that they learn from their students—so to take advantage of the young and innovative minds in every classroom, they should make an effort to create a setting in which all their students will want to participate. There should always be time for questions and examples of how the material applies to real life. Good teachers should stimulate their students' minds, broaden their horizons, and expand their perspectives. No matter what the subject is, at the end of the day, chapter, unit, or semester, students should have learned something they can take with them into the future, no matter what path they pursue. All this can only happen if teachers care—if they truly want to teach, they will go beyond the requirements and see to it that each and every one of his or her students will leave the class having gained something from it. This kind of investment is the hallmark of a great teacher.

Tiffany Phan (Class of 2013)

To me, good teachers are those who genuinely care about their students, not only in matters regarding education, but in other aspects outside of the classroom as well. In many of my classes, I'm used to hearing my teachers dawdle a few seconds over a name or two of certain students who haven't shown up in more than just a few days. Many of them merely say, "Is he absent again?" Very few question why, and even fewer actually reach out and try to understand the roots of the situation. Of course, one may argue that those are personal issues that are out of the domain of teachers, but I disagree. It is a teacher's responsibility to make sure his or her student's potential to learn is at its greatest and if he can't even spare a few minutes to understand why a student is doing poorly, how can he expect to teach effectively?

Teachers should not be individuals who would rather be cornered by a 4-by-4 cubicle than interact with their students in the classroom. Good teachers do not call it a day after they successfully finish regurgitating four pages of lesson notes to their jaded students. Even if it takes 20 minutes to explain how to solve a polynomial inequality, they will make sure their students actually understand what's going on before moving ahead. More importantly, they constantly try to perfect their way of teaching in order to maximize the amount of interaction and excitement in the classroom. In my opinion, a good teacher considers teaching her students about a certain subject secondary to teaching them how to love learning.

Regular teachers are those who get paid to lecture and write notes on a board. Good teachers are more than that; they are people who choose to teach because they are truly passionate about it. They care about a student's performance in school and are willing to spend a few minutes of their time to understand a struggling student's circumstances. Good teachers are not only teachers; they are mentors, friends and sources of inspiration.

Cartoons

The Good Old Days



- Katherine Chi

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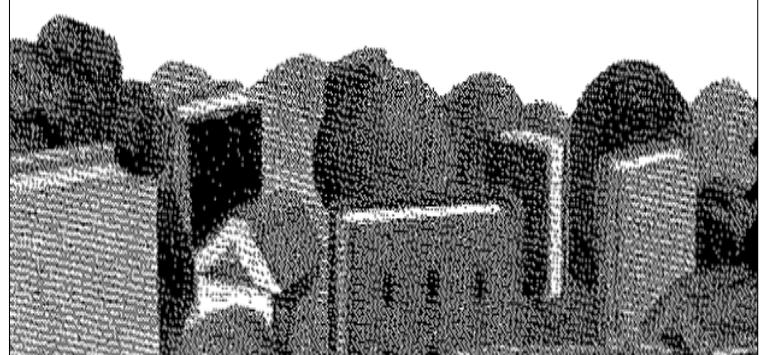
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Arts and Entertainment

Homes for the Holidays



Sora Kim/The Spectator

Holiday House, 3 East 63rd Street.

By MEG PALMER

At age 33, Susan G. Komen was diagnosed with breast cancer. Three years, nine operations, and three courses of chemotherapy and radiation later, "Suzy," as her younger sister Nancy Brinker affectionately called her, lost her battle with the illness, and passed away. In the last conversation Komen and Brinker had, Komen told her sister that she wanted other women with breast cancer to be more educated and better treated by their doctors from the start.

In 1982, Brinker set up the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation (Susan G. Komen for the Cure) to educate women, and accelerate research, in the hopes of one day eradicating breast cancer. In 2008, breast cancer survivor Iris Danner founded "Holiday House NYC" to raise money for "Susan G. Komen for the Cure." This annual showcase displays interior designs representing various holidays, ranging from national holidays, like Independence Day, to less traditional holidays, like Oscar Night. At this year's Holiday House, there are 20 different holiday themes, and pop-up shops are scattered throughout the house.

Holiday House is located at East 63rd street, just off Fifth Avenue. Since Wednesday, November 16, it has been open from eleven in the morning to five in the evening, except on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when it closes at eight at night. The Holiday House will be open until Sunday, December 11.

Walking through the main doors of the 19th century New York mansion that is home to Holiday House, the viewer enters a large foyer, decorated by designers Benjamin Bradley and David Thiergatner to represent Christmas. The mansion, which was originally a private residence but is now rented out by its owners, has two floors that surround a courtyard, and an additional two floors above the first two. People wander through the house at their own pace and can ask questions of designers or volunteers, or consult their Holiday House guides.

The designs are breathtaking. The designers went above and beyond, not just in their creation of interesting concepts, but also in their attention to detail. Bryant Keller (Columbus Day) has menus for "Chris" and "Bella"; Suzanne Eason (Hal-

loween) has ravens painted on the ceiling; Felicia Zwebner (Thanksgiving) has conversations playing in the background, as though one were listening to an actual family. The creativity never ends.

The most impressive room by far is Valentine's Day. James Rixner was not inspired by red hearts, but by the reason he believes most people love Valentine's Day: chocolate. The walls

The designers went above and beyond, not just in their creation of interesting concepts, but also in their attention to detail.

are a deep, coffee brown, with pristine, white picture-frame borders. Red chairs flank and face a large couch on one side of the room, and on the other, a small table is set for four—each plate is laden with several pieces of chocolate. The floor is dominated by a rich, mocha rug, patterned with sweeping gold and beige swoops and swirls that form hearts, one of Rixner's few nods to the common symbol of the holiday.

The designers often spend a few hours in their rooms, talking to people and inviting them to look around. The approachability of the designers is surprising—I spoke to one of the designers for Oscar Night and one of the ladies from Bring It To The Table, an all-women's design group. These designers have mostly been with the show since its debut in 2008, while others have been invited over the years.

While the showcase is beautiful, it is unfortunately a little too pricey. Tickets cost \$30, a fee that is too steep for many students. Nevertheless, the good cause and the amazing designs should be incentive enough to check out this year's Holiday House.

By MOLLIE FORMAN

For a period drama that spans six years and follows over twenty characters, "Downton Abbey" begins fairly simply—with the tapping of a telegraph, informing Robert Crawley (Hugh Bonneville), the Earl of Grantham, of the death of his heir aboard the Titanic.

Written by award-winning author Julian Fellowes and shot in the authentic Highclere Castle, "Downton Abbey" follows the Crawley family from 1912 to the end of World War I in its first two seasons. The drama charts how these aristocratic products of the Victorian age and their servants adapt to changing times. Despite suffering from an overabundance of subplots in the second season, "Downton Abbey" provides a lush, masterfully acted view of the dying British aristocracy and the humane figures wrapped up in its downfall. The second season finale aired on ITV in Britain on Sunday, November 6. The first season is currently available on DVD in the United States, and the second season will premiere on PBS on Sunday, January 8. The filming of a third season, which covers the 1920s, will begin in 2012.

The first season revolves around the complications arising from the death of Lord Grantham's heir, a cousin who would have inherited the estate and title in an entail that could only be passed down to a male relative. Mary (Michelle Dockery), the eldest Crawley daughter, had been set to marry this cousin, ensuring an inheritance for herself and her two sisters, Edith (Laura Carmichael) and Sybil (Jessica Brown-Findlay). With his death however, the entail, which includes their mother's (Elizabeth McGovern) American fortune, is set to pass to distant cousin and near stranger, Matthew (Dan Stevens), a solicitor who lives simply and is far removed from the Crawley's posh life. A complicated and oft-thwarted attraction grows between Matthew and Mary and comes to dominate the course of the narrative.

There are few flawed actors in the cast, but Dockery stands head and shoulders above this impressive crowd, vividly expressing Mary's transformation from unlikable snob to suffering martyr and hero of the show. With a straight-backed bearing reminiscent of Keira Knightley, Dockery's Lady Mary is a fascinating enigma, both a scheming socialite and a young woman repeatedly and tragically wandering into heartbreak. Her porcelain face and arched brows are formed to exhibit the epitome of poise, but when this veneer cracks, she crumples inward. Dockery's nuanced performance makes Mary the most compelling character of the show.

As the younger sisters, Edith and Sybil, Carmichael and Brown-Findlay do not share Dockery's virtuosity, but their characters are interesting in their own rights. The ugly-duckling middle sister, Edith, is spiteful and flighty, falling for every handsome man only to have them ignore her for the more alluring Mary. Sybil, on the other hand, is Mary's match in beauty, but has very different ideas about the role of the aristocracy. While she spends a good part of the first season mourning the loss of her inheritance, she eventually becomes a nurse, attends

Aristocratic Infatuations

TV Series Review: *Downton Abbey*

political rallies, and draws close to Tom Branson (Allen Leech), the Crawley's handsome Irish-socialist chauffeur.

In an Emmy Award-winning role, Maggie Smith plays Robert's sublime mother, Violet. Referred to by the staff as "the old lady," Violet quite literally sweeps through their lives, taking command of any room she enters and expecting everyone else to follow her lead, simply because it is hers. Her witty one-liners and stubborn attachment to the old ways provide the comic relief. When Matthew assures Robert that he can hold a job while learning about the estate on the weekend, Violet, with perfect delivery, turns to her son and asks in utter confusion, "What is a weekend?"

Despite her priggish exterior, Violet is soft at heart, working hardest push Mary and Matthew together in the name of love and her granddaughter's happiness. "Why, Granny, you're a romantic!" exclaims Sybil in one scene. "I've been called many things in my life," responds Violet definitively. "But never that!"

Below the stairs, a very different world exists with the hustle and bustle of the household staff. Lored over by the proper and exacting butler Carson (Jim Carter) and strict housekeeper Mrs. Hughes (Phyllis Logan), the servants live sparse and structured lives amidst the opulence of Downton; Carson admonishes the housemaids more than once for being in the dining room during dinner and the maids' cramped dorms starkly contrast the Crawley's luxuriant bedrooms. The arrival of a new valet Mr. Bates (Brendan Coyle), an old friend of Robert's who suffers from a lame leg, adds a bit of early drama. The majority of the staff, excluding the magnanimous housemaid Anna (Joanne Froggatt), distrusts and looks down on him for his disability, adding friction to Carson's well-oiled machine.

Footman Thomas Barrow (Rob James-Collier), a homosexual at a time when male relations were illegal with ambitions far above his prospects, is the most intriguing character. Descending and wickedly offensive, Thomas is the first season's version of a Disney villain, conspiring with dour and disdainful lady's maid Sarah O'Brien (Siobhan Finneran) to dispose of Mr. Bates and commit other acts of trickery. He is an easy character to hate: in the second season, when he hears rumors that war with Germany is not far off, he secures himself what he expects to be a cushy corpsman position

to avoid the danger of the front. As the war worsens however, he finds himself embroiled in the very trenches he thought himself too good for and escapes duty by raising a lighter into enemy sight, suffering a bullet to the hand.

He is, if not redeemed, illuminated by a brief but intense relationship with wounded serviceman Edward Courtenay, played with painful delicacy by Lachlan Nieboer. Their connection is deep and palpable. Edward is blind and traumatized by the war, and something about him penetrates Thomas's marble façade in a way that no one else has. "All my life they've pushed me around, just 'cause I'm different," Thomas tells him. While he is not a changed man, he is closer to being an explained one.

After the near-perfection of the first season, the second is a letdown, ultimately drowning itself in too many complications and subplots. Despite the inevitability of Mary and Matthew's relationship, Fellowes draws out their tale with frustrating and senseless obstacles. At the end of the season, they are no closer to each other than they were at the beginning. The most frustrating aspect however, is the paucity of attention paid to the most interesting romance between Sybil and Branson. The overabundance of screen-time allotted to Robert's tryst with a maid—a senseless development in itself—relegates this far more logical and intriguing relationship to brief and repetitive cutscenes.

Two aspects of the show that remain flawless are the art direction and score. The façade and grounds of Highclere are utterly breathtaking, and in an England bathed in suspiciously eternal sunshine, long shots and close-ups alike elicit the sense of being subsumed into fairyland, accentuating the isolation of the British elite. The score by John Lunn is a sweeping exhibition of strings and piano—a work of art on its own.

From electricity to telephones to romances between the rich and the poor, the Crawleys hurtle towards a new age in which their beloved Downton is outmoded and perhaps even antique. The world we meet, with its lazy days and velvet drawing rooms, seems to come from an age that existed more than just a century ago. This fact makes the creeping tentacles of modernity, the cause of the old social order's fall, all the more alarming and intriguing. It is up to Fellowes to decide whether the Crawleys will be left standing at the end of it.



Margot Yale/The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

This Investigation Barely Scratches the Surface



Michelle Guo / The Spectator

By PATRICK HAO

J. Edgar Hoover was the director of the FBI throughout the terms of eight different presidents, six different decades, and domestic conflicts, such as

the founding of the FBI, the case of the kidnapped Charles Lindbergh baby, and other aspects of his high-profile life. This reminiscent Hoover is a relic of the past, a man out of place in an organization of younger people. The movie draws attention to his age by depicting his entire, massive life story, unintentionally diminishing the importance of each event and falling into the trap of superficiality.

The one aspect of Hoover's life that is fully explored is the Clyde Tolson relationship, which lies at the heart of the story. Tolson is cool and level-headed, starkly contrasting the introverted and paranoid Hoover. Their connection is sweet and natural, despite the lack of summation. With a connecting chemistry similar to that of Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger in "Brokeback Mountain," Hammer and DiCaprio act expertly, filling scenes with almost palpable longing carefully covered up by aloof body language.

But the terrific acting can not lift the movie above its shoddy screenplay. Melodramatic dialogue turns climactic scenes into soap operas. Tolson's use of modern vernacular makes the supposedly defining moment of Hoover's and Tolson's unspoken romance into a farce. At one point, Tolson says, "fashion forward," a phrase that does not belong to the 1930s. The misplacement makes it feel as if Black is concerned only with wit.

Black tries hard to elucidate the life of Hoover the legend, but in doing so, he forgets about Hoover the man. The script turns the FBI icon into little more than a manipulator with total disregard for those around him. However, Eastwood's direction indicates veneration and appreciation for Hoover's work—soft lights, low angles, and inspirational score portray him as a misguided hero. This dichotomy makes Hoover hard to root for, but also hard to hate.

Ultimately, "J. Edgar" is an interesting mess of a film. The filmmakers' zeal in creating a dynamic biopic was obvious, but the execution did not match that passion. Though Hoover was one of the 20th century's most mysterious public figures, the film of his life was disappointing rather than definitive.

Eastwood's direction indicates veneration and appreciation of Hoover's work—soft lights, low angles, and inspirational score portray him as a misguided hero.

the Red Scare of the 1920's and the gangster wars of the 1930's. Though he was arguably one of the most powerful men in government, his strictly business image belied an eccentric personal life. Rumors hinted at a long-time affair with second-in-command Clyde Tolson, and cross-dressing habits. This dichotomy should have provided an all-star production team—one that included director Clint Eastwood, Oscar-winning writer Dustin Lance Black, and star actor Leonardo DiCaprio—all it needed to make "J. Edgar" one of the best American biopics in the last 10 years. However, dissonance between the writers' and director's visions prevents the film from offering insights into one of America's most intriguing figures.

In the movie's basic structure, Hoover, played by DiCaprio, dictates his life story to a clerk responsible for writing his memoirs. Through his recollections, we learn about Hoover's relationship with his overbearing mother, his role in

The Next Level Arcade



Jeany Zhao / The Spectator

On Saturday, November 26, the Next Level Arcade held an event called "Team St1ckbug."

By MARIAM SARDER

The era of arcades has come to an end, and consoles have long since replaced old-fashioned arcade machines. However, all hope is not lost for those who mourn the death of the classic arcade game. If you are one of those who finds yourself nostalgic about the "K.O." of Mortal Kombat, or the trademark squeals of Galaga, there is a place for you. Hidden in an obscure pocket of Brooklyn is Next Level, the steadfast last bastion for arcades in a world of home-console RPGs and first-person-shooter video games.

Hidden in an obscure pocket of Brooklyn is Next Level, the steadfast last bastion for arcades in a world of home-console RPGs and first-person-shooter video games.

Next Level has deep roots in the arcade and gaming world; its legacy began with Chinatown Fair, the now-iconic arcade that brought thousands of gamers into Chinatown to compete against each other in a wide array of arcade games. However, in March of this year, Chinatown Fair's owner Henry Cen announced that the famed arcade would be closing its doors. Dedicated supporters of

the arcade were devastated to learn that the last true arcade in the city would soon be gone. However, Cen's latest project, Next Level, arrived in Brooklyn soon thereafter, serving as a reincarnation of the beloved Chinatown Fair and proving that arcades are here to stay.

Next Level has become a beacon of light for those wishing to merge the worlds of modern and old school gaming. Though its somewhat unappealing black and red front may not look like anything special, the arcade is every gamer's paradise. It is equipped with the essentials of fantastic arcade playing, from games like DJ Technika 2 to King Fighters 13, but it also contains isolated areas for Xbox 360's, PS2's, and PS3's.

While Next Level brings out avid, skilled gamers from around the city, most are not the stereotypical, mean-spirited fanatics seeking to beat you at every game. Although Next Level's demographic seems to be mostly male, they are an extremely diverse group of interesting, approachable people.

The camaraderie among the players is astounding. It is clear that they are at Next Level for the games and the players. Players often drop what they were doing to help their opponents and give them pointers. In this way, the players add an essential element to the ambiance of Next Level, making it more than a place to play games that one could simply play at home, but also a place to meet new people and truly enjoy oneself.

Though Next Level is a great place to hang out, you can't ignore the steep prices to play. The first hour of gaming costs \$3.00, and every hour after that will each cost \$2.50, but if you plan on spending more than a few hours at the arcade, it makes sense to pay the fee of \$10.00 for the whole day. Next Level also maintains a somewhat inconvenient "bring your own controller" policy, while rentals cost \$3.00 for a controller and \$2.00 for a joystick, and a photo ID is also required. In addition to the hourly fee for console games, the arcade

games inside Next Level cost an additional 25 cents to play.

The price to play may deter you from going to Next Level at first, but the staff of Next Level is so dedicated to optimizing your gaming experience that it's well worth the money. The staff stages tournaments, video game release parties, team battles, and weekly videogame "showdowns." Next Level is more than a place to play video

Though its somewhat unappealing black and red front may not look like anything special, the arcade is every gamer's paradise.

games; it has fostered a community of diverse players who share an appreciation for old-time arcade classics, modern console games, and each other.

Arts and Entertainment

By JAMES BESSOIR

Stepping under the ornate ceiling made of dark wood arranged in a mesmerizing traditional geometric star pattern feels like traveling halfway around the world, and centuries back in time. The room is vast but dimly lit, and the dark

The gallery has been beautifully restored, with original stone screens and wall panels between rooms that are marvelous works of art themselves.

burgundy walls are hung with various carpets, each covered with elaborate floral motifs and colorful patterns. The most eye-drawing attraction in the room is a massive carpet, 30 feet long and eight feet wide, displayed in the center. It consists of only five colors, but the many threads form images of elaborate scrolls, plants, and elaborate shapes. The carpet,

known as the Simonetti carpet, is a masterpiece of the Mamluk period (1250-1517) of Egypt. This, along with hundreds of other pieces of art from the Islamic world, is displayed in a newly renovated gallery in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibit, showing pieces of the Met's collection from the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia, is now a permanent installation.

The gallery has been beautifully restored, with original stone screens and wall panels between rooms that are marvelous works of art themselves. Display cases with everything from ceramic bowls to gilded swords are placed around the rooms. The rooms themselves are impressive; one contains a gorgeous prayer niche made of turquoise and navy tiles, and outlined in white Arabic script, while another room is a courtyard recreation, with a bubbling fountain in the center. A downside, however, is the non-linear floor plan. Each room leads to multiple others and can cause one to get turned around easily.

One of the most interesting parts of the exhibit is the "Damascus Room," a small side room built to replicate a winter reception room in a wealthy house in Damascus, Syria (c. 1707). The lower walls and ceiling are made of cypress, poplar, and mulberry wood, and are elaborately carved and gilded in places. The upper walls are made of simple white stucco with beautiful panels of colorful stained glass. A poem, written in intricate Arabic cal-



Tamara Kahan / The Spectator

ligraphy, is written on wall panels around the room. Small niches and shelves in the wall house small vases, porcelain plates, books, and wooden boxes. A small, elegant red cushion runs along the perimeter of the room, and an elaborate tiled fountain stands in the middle of the floor. This room is only visible from one doorway, as it can be damaged, but a touch screen computer mounted on the railing shows information about it and a complete interactive display of items in it.

Another masterpiece displayed in these galleries is an intricate set of pulpit doors

from Egypt (c. 1325). Mounted on a wall in the first room of the exhibit, the doors stand six-and-a-half feet tall and are about three feet wide. The most remarkable feature of these doors is their beautiful and amazingly detailed carving and inlay, in a geometric pattern of stars. The doors themselves are made of rosewood and mulberry, and the inlay is ebony and engraved ivory.

However, what makes the new exhibit especially strong is its collection of many beautiful small works between all the large impressive pieces. The decorated enameled bot-

ties of about 10 to 20 inches in height on display have a delicate charm. Made in Egypt in the late 13th century and early 14th century, the multi-colored bottles, decorated with gold leaf, often depict animals and battle scenes.

This newly renovated section of the Met is absolutely worth seeing. It showcases a wide variety of pieces from many different countries with ease, and makes the rooms themselves match the art they present, thereby immersing the viewer.

Nickle-and-Dine: Three Corners of Venezuela



Caracas Arepa Bar, 93 1/2 E 7th St.

By NICOLE SANCHEZ

You promised to take your date out to a nice diner, but you realize that your wallet disagrees this week. Luckily, Caracas Arepa Bar, a cozy restaurant with great food and service, can help. The restaurant first opened in 2003 in the East Village when its Venezuelan founders, husband-and-wife

duo Aristides "Gato" Barrios and Maribel Aruajo, decided to end a series of odd jobs to open their own restaurant and devote their time to "the art and science of arepas," as Aruajo calls it.

Caracas Arepa Bar has been rated one of the best Venezuelan eateries in the city, and it lives up to the title. The restaurant serves traditional dishes like empanadas (stuffed dough pas-

tries), tostones (the Latin American version of French fries, but made from unripe plantains), and quesillos (desserts made with eggs, condensed milk, and caramel). Beverages include natural fruit drinks (\$3.50), and specials like papélon de limón, icy sugar cane juice flavored with lime (\$3.50), and Camaburada, a banana milkshake with tinges of cinnamon (\$5). The papélon is definitely a

great choice; the tangy and affordable drink complements all available dishes. A close second is the Camaburada—even if it may sit a bit too heavily in your stomach after a big meal.

There is no doubt, however, that the main attraction is the arepas, thick corn-flour pancakes stuffed with fillings like meat, beans, and cheese. Caracas Arepa Bar offers 17 different fillings, the best selections of which include "De Guasacaca" (\$6.50), a type of Venezuelan guacamole made of soft avocado, olive oil, lemon juice, and fresh white cheese; "La Playera" (\$7), a shredded white fish garnished with black peppers, onions, and other herbs; and "La Pelúa" (\$7), a tasty combination of shredded beef and cheddar cheese. "La Surena" (\$7.50), an arepa stuffed with chicken, chorizo, avocado, and spicy chimi-churri sauce, is another tasty option. Caracas even accommodates vegans by offering the option of replacing meats with baked tofu. While some items on the menu are pricey, all arepas only cost between \$5.50 and \$10.

Caracas Arepa Bar has expanded to three locations in the city since its modest beginnings in the East Village. The original location has maintained its Latin-style décor and intimate feel, offering on-the-go food and beverages every day of the

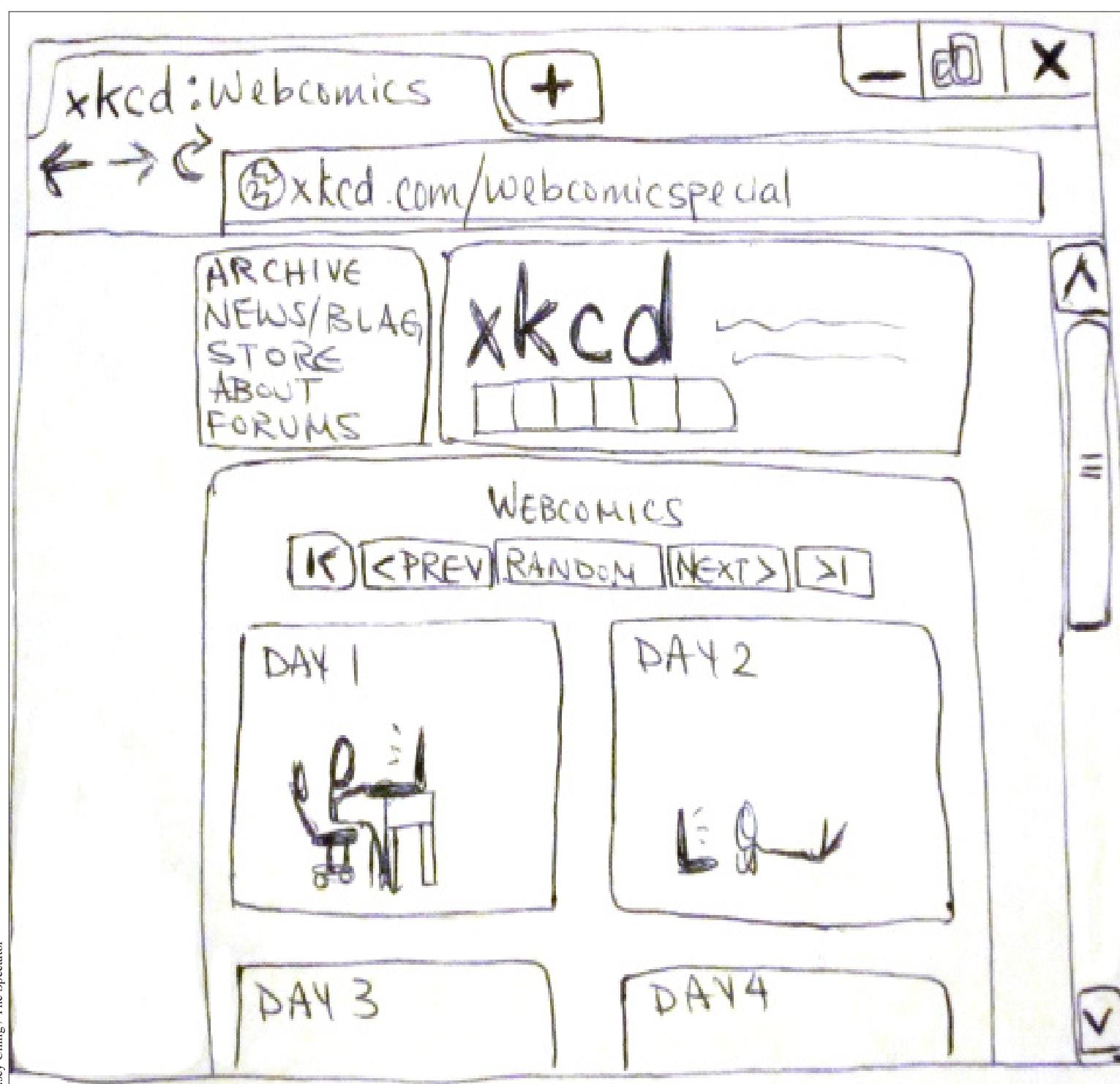
week. The new Caracas Bar in Rockaway offers old city favorites along with exclusives found only at Rockaway for a true taste of Venezuela on the beach. The Williamsburg location, however, is the largest of the three, including a dining room and a patio. It's the perfect solu-

Caracas Arepa Bar has expanded to a total of three locations in the city since its modest beginnings in the East Village.

tion to any meal dilemma; the easy-going atmosphere, lack of city rush, and shorter waits are bound to please everyone.

Arts and Entertainment

Wistful Webcomics



Casey Ching / The Spectator

By DAVID KURKOVSKIY

Web-comics, online cartoon strips, provide instantaneous comedic relief for time-limited readers. Though each of their pages is full of riveting jokes, the strips tie into a larger, more solid theme, allowing for a comforting consistency of new original content. Two such refreshing and rewarding web-comics are "XKCD" and "Questionable Content." The appeal of "XKCD" comes from its intellectual humor and elaborate, dynamic sketches. In contrast, "Questionable Content" stays true to the storytelling vein, telling a realistic tale of young adult life that is both hilarious and dramatic.

"XKCD," by Randall Munroe

Begun by Randall Munroe in 2005, "XKCD" is an admirably intelligent web-comic with a humorous, scientific, mathematical twist. "XKCD," which misleadingly stands for nothing, is simply drawn, its characters depicted with simplified stick figures. Advertised as a web-comic of "romance, sarcasm, math, and language," its caustic humor and abundance of math, physics, and computer science jokes are tailored to Stuyvesant students' tastes.

Though the series' plot is almost always non-continuous, each new comic (published three times a week) is original and profound, making use of

multifaceted jokes that can—
with some occasional difficulty—be understood by the average Stuyvesant student and

Despite the web-comic's stylistic simplicity—only two characters are featured in interesting back-and-forths—the unexpected intelligence behind the humor is thought-provoking.

thoroughly admired by fans of astronomy, physics, mathematics, and other disciplines. One

of Munroe's signature comics consists of a single panel in which a woman is shown spinning to slow the angular momentum of the earth, hoping to spend more time with her lover.

"XKCD" offers thoughtful, funny commentary on many of the topics both in its dialogue and rollover text, read by holding the mouse over the panel. In addition, its clever graphics and depictions, ranging from three-dimensional maps of space to charts about the characteristics of fruit, add on to its refreshing wit. Despite the web-comic's stylistic simplicity—only two characters are featured in interesting back-and-forths—the unexpected intelligence behind the humor is thought-provoking.

Occasionally, Munroe's comics veer from the norm and follow a continuous plot. Though they are not as cohesive and fully mapped out as those of other series, they include some of XKCD's most thrilling installments. The series begins with a comic called "Journal," featuring a heated and brilliant face-off between a manipulative man and a cold woman as they vie for each other's emotions and the possession of a stylish hat.

Using unprecedented and tactful jokes, "XKCD" is a hilarious web-comic that greatly appeals to its audience. Its astounding topicality and piercing depth into both academic and emotional subjects are ex-

ceptional and rarely achieved by comic writers. Each strip can stand alone to provide insightful humor, or the entire web-comic can be read in one

By developing the dynamic storyline of "Questionable Content" over many strips, which have progressively become more detailed and colorful in their art, Jacques creates a solid drama in his web-comic.

sitting. "XKCD" is the perfect web-comic for the Stuyvesant community.

"Questionable Content," by Jeph Jacques

Published five times a week, "Questionable Content" features the engrossing story of young adults Marten, Faye, and Dora. Started as a side project of art hobbyist Jeph Jacques in 2003, the comic eventually became Jacques's full-time career. Though the web-comic generally fits the constructs of romance and drama, it still offers an enjoyable situational humor. Its rich plot and character developments make it a great web-comic choice for avid readers, yet perfect for busy students who prefer to see expansive plots develop over a long period of time.

"Questionable Content" centers on Marten's life after he graduates from college, finds depressing white-collar work as an office slave and, later, a librarian. It delves deeply into his growing friendship and romantic entanglements with female acquaintances Faye and Dora. Though changes in these relationships occur slowly, the characters of the three protagonists are so well defined that the reader is able to relate to them, despite the short length of each comic. Marten's desire for romantic growth and frustrating ennui, Faye's introversion and defensive sarcasm, and Dora's biting bluntness are all uniquely relatable and make the characters shine, starkly contrasting the lack of concrete characters in "XKCD."

By developing the dynamic storyline of "Questionable Content" over many strips, which have progressively become more detailed and colorful in their art, Jacques creates a solid drama in his web-comic. However, he still manages to maintain a sharp comedic style that keeps dialogue and situations unique; his different characters respond differently to humorous events. One lovable gimmick is Faye's unwavering tendency to painfully insult customers at "Coffee of Doom," Dora's cafe, where Faye works as a barista. In addition, the clever rapport between the main characters and their friends is always refreshing and makes each strip stand out in its bold humor. Their clever dialogue references current events and indie culture, often making fun of the disappointing advancement of the popular music genre.

With its hilarious strips with brilliant dialogue and a powerful connecting storyline, "Questionable Content" is both a great artistic and literary piece. Its consistent character development and great execution in a web-comic medium create an exciting story with believable and engaging characters. "Questionable Content" is a must-read web-comic for lovers of literature and students who wish to emotionally invest in their favorite characters.

"XKCD" can be found at xkcd.com

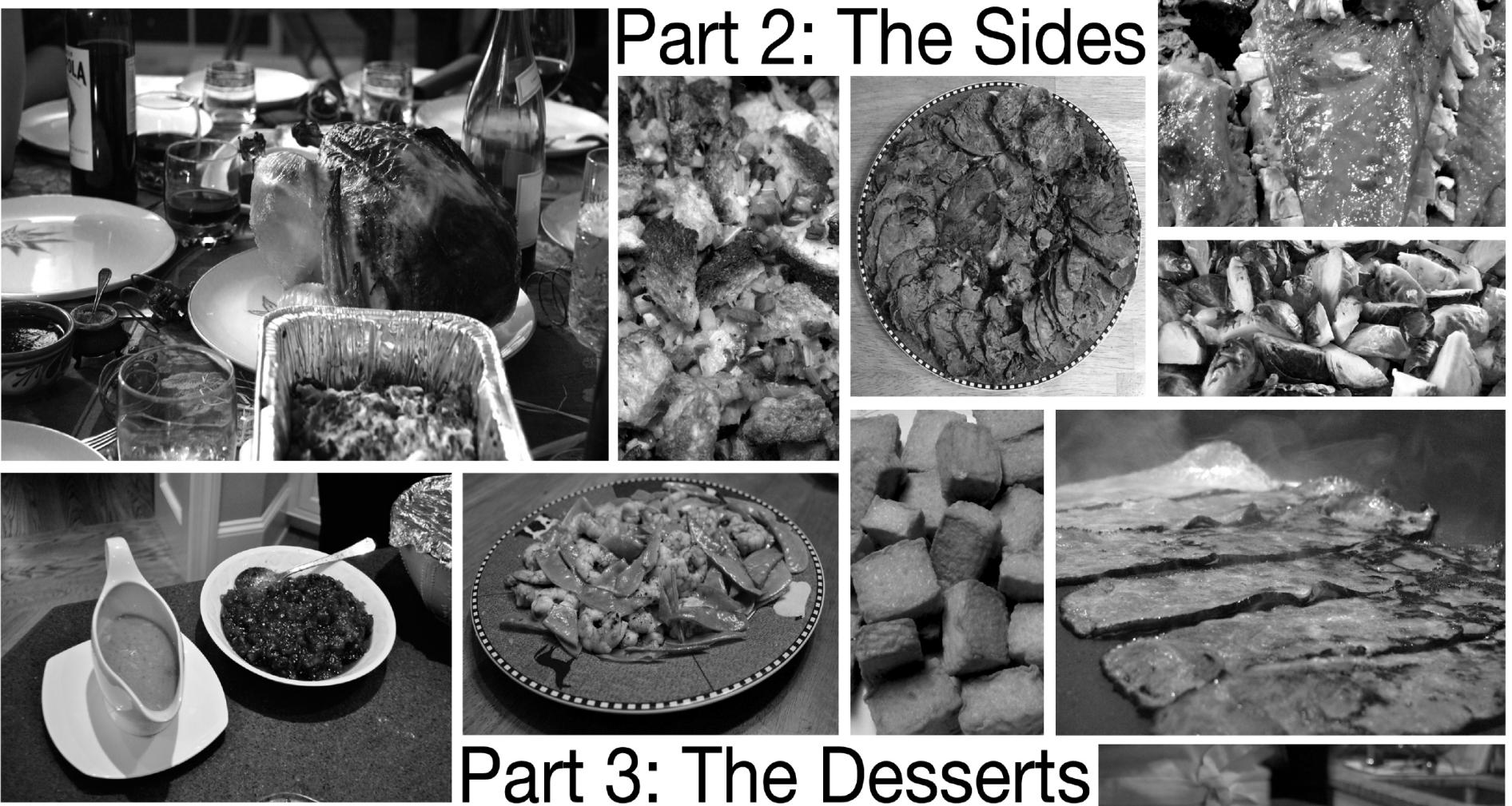
"Questionable Content" can be found at questionablecontent.net

Thanksgiving

Part 1: The Turkey



Part 2: The Sides



Part 3: The Desserts



Twin Day



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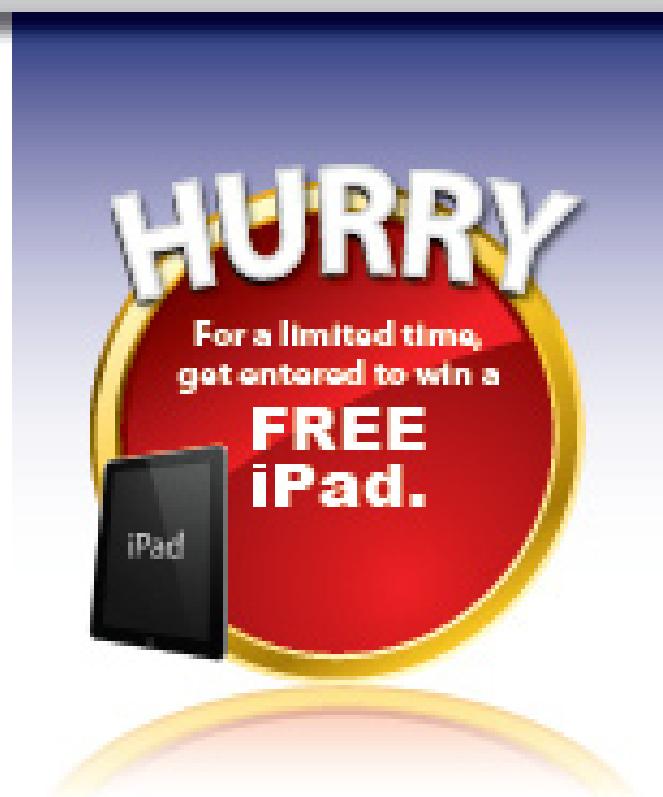


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Sports-in-Brief

Boys' Cross Country: Greyducks Place 11th at NY Federation Cross Country Championships

By MAGGIE YEUNG

Despite its tough loss to the Bronx Science Wolverines in the PSAL Cross Country City Championships, Stuyvesant's boys' cross-country team, the Greyducks, finished 11th at the New York State Federa-

**"Our 11th at the
NY State
Federation
Championships
was the highest
finish by a PSAL
team in at least
the last 15 years."**
—Mark Mendes,
coach

tion Cross Country Championships on Saturday, November 19 at Bowdoin Park in Wappingers Falls, NY. Stuyvesant was one of the four teams to represent the Public Schools Athletic League.

"Our 11th at the NY State Federation Championships was the highest finish by a PSAL team in at least the last 15 years," coach Mark Mendes said in an e-mail interview. "It certainly ranks among the top five all time."

Most kids in suburban and rural schools start running in the early grades, and have hills and trails near school, but the Greyducks do not have this luxury, so placing 11th was a significant victory.

Senior and co-captain Konrad Surkont finished sixth individually with a time of 16:07, the best time of any competing PSAL athlete ever on the Bowdoin Park cross-country course.

"At states is where you really show up, where you go 100 percent," Surkont said. "I did just that, and placed sixth, which was really great."

Co-captain Jack Stevenson finished the 5,000-km race with a time of 16:22, the best time out of those of all the PSAL juniors in attendance. "[Placing 16th overall] was slightly better than I expected, but nothing inconceivable. I was hoping to make the top 25," Stevenson said in an e-mail interview.

Though Bronx Science

won the PSAL city championship, its team placed 20th at the state championship. "[Bronx] Science's 4th and 5th didn't do quite as incredibly well at State's as they did at City's," Stevenson said.

Both Surkont and Stevenson beat the Wolverine's first finisher, sophomore Pier Berkman, who came in 22nd place. Senior and co-captain Mark Schramm and sophomore Jeremy Karson finished directly behind the Wolverine's second man and third man, respectively. Both junior Cameron Abma and senior Ivalyo Madzarhov beat the Wolverine's fifth runner.

"There is always room for improvement, so I can never be totally satisfied, but I was very pleased with our performance," Mendes said.

Girls' Volleyball: Stuyvesant vs. Midwood, 25-16 and 25-22

By KEVIN MOY

The Vixens, Stuyvesant girls' volleyball team, advanced to the semifinals on Thursday, November 17, defeating the Midwood

**"We haven't
really played a
lot since the
season ended,
and it's hard
to stay fresh
for so long."
—Philip Fisher,
coach**

Hornets in straight sets. Despite falling behind early in each set, the Vixens won 25-16 and 25-22.

In the first set, the Vixens took an early lead following an offensive kill from senior and co-captain Melissa Chin. After several poor serves, the Vixens found themselves down 13-14. However, junior Anna Wang served two aces and the team scored seven unanswered points.

The second set was closer than the first, partly because the Vixens struggled to serve consistently. The team relied on junior Natalie Kozlova and senior Ana Slade to keep them ahead of the Hornets. Slade saved the offense with several overpasses, and Kozlova finished the game with

eight kills. Senior and co-captain Lisa Qiu also played a vital role, expertly setting up the kills, and finishing the game with 16 assists.

With the game 19-22 in the Hornets favor, coach Philip Fisher called a time out to refocus the team.

"They got a little nervous," Fisher said. "I told them they were making [Midwood] look better than they are."

"We knew we could get out of it," Kozlova said. "This could have been the last game of the season for us, and especially the seniors. We didn't want that."

After a long serve by the Hornets, the Vixens went back to work with Chin serving. Her first four serves gave the Vixens the match point. She aced the final serve, and secured the Vixens' victory.

Though the team was excited to move on, they acknowledged that their performance was not close to their usual standards.

"I thought we were pretty shaky today," Fisher said. "We haven't really played a lot since the season ended, and it's hard to stay fresh for so long."

"We were having problems on service reception, passing, and serving," Chin said. "Hopefully we can work on that in practice and in the next coming games."

Girls' Basketball: Stuyvesant Phoenix 50, Seward Park Campus 19

By NOAH HELLERMAN

To start the Monday, December 5 game against Seward Park Campus, Stuyvesant's girls' basketball team, the Phoenix, listened intently to its coach, Michelle Flemming. "Find that intrinsic motivator to play your best game possible. Let's go," Flemming said. With that, the starters took their positions.

Even though Seward

**"We were slow
to begin, but I'm
proud of the
second half."
—Lisa Qiu,
senior and
co-captain**

Park won the jump ball, senior and co-captain Lisa Qiu scored the first points for Stuyvesant, on the fourth possession of the game. After the first quarter, the score was 11-5 in favor of the Phoenix, with junior Elektra Oates having scored nine of those points.

Seward Park Campus was a team to be reckoned with last year, finishing second in Manhattan A South division of the Public School Athletic League at 11-6. Then-senior Jaevionne Wright averaged more than 25 points per game, and this season, without her, the team is significantly weaker.

Still, co-captain Yiru Luo went into the game remembering last year's losses to Seward Park. "I was a little nervous," she said.

In the second quarter, Stuyvesant's offense was too quiet for Qiu's liking. "We were slow to begin, but I'm proud of the second half," she said, reflecting on the game.

The second half took off for the Phoenix late in the third quarter, when Oates drained a shot from just inside the arc and forced a turnover on defense, and junior Zambeta Tsapos followed with a three-pointer.

A minute and a half later, Oates scored twice and Qiu hit a three to end the quarter. Freshman and starter Lauren Sobota sealed the drive with a breakaway layup, leaving the score 39-10 to start the fourth quarter.

Stuyvesant finished strong, with a final score of 50-19. "We played well, and I'm glad we're 3-0," Flemming said to cap off the victory.

Girls' Indoor Track: Greyducks finishes 5th in Jim McKay games

By YORKBELL
JARAMILLO

At the Jim McKay Games on Sunday, December 4, the Stuyvesant Greyducks, the girls' indoor track team, continued its early success streak by qualifying even more runners for the City Championships. The games were held at the Armory Track on two consecutive days, but the Greyducks competed on the second day with the rest of the power-rated teams.

As a team, the Greyducks scored 29 points, without senior and co-captain Karen Zheng, and still placed 5th out of 21 teams. Their strongest performances came in the 1500-meter race-walk and long jump

events, where they scored 13 and eight points, respectively.

Though sophomore Sophia Mahin from Townsend Harris blew away the race-walk competition with a time of 7:32.59, junior Janie Ou Yang finished in a satisfying second place with a time of 8:45.80, qualifying her for cities.

Moreover, junior Alicia Vargas, who had already qualified for cities in the triple jump, led the Greyducks' jumpers with a long jump of 14 feet 10.75 inches. "I still haven't hit my personal [triple jump] record from last year, so I want to do that," Vargas said. "But I think I'll also work on long jump some more because

**"We have already
qualified more
girls for cities
this season than
last year, but we
still need to
practice harder,
be more
dedicated, and
show more
intensity."**

**—Anna Markova,
coach**

I'd like to make it to cities for that too."

In the 1500-meter race, the Greyducks were overshadowed by fierce competition from Midwood and Brooklyn Tech. However, junior Helen Nie and sophomore Vera Pertsovskaya also qualified for cities by running 5:24.53 and 5:24.70, respectively. More impressive were the last 200-meter splits for Nie and Pertsovskaya, who closed with a 40-second finishing lap.

With six girls already qualified for cities, the Greyducks have high hopes for their future competitions. "We have already qualified more girls for cities this season than last year, but we still need to practice harder, be more dedicated, and show more intensity," coach Anna Markova said.

Sports

Boys' Wrestling

New Core of Wrestlers Makes Success Tough for Spartans

By JOEL BEACHER

The Stuyvesant Spartans, the wrestling team, ended its previous season with a 7-3 record, one of the best they have had in years. However, 13 of the team's 15 starters last season graduated, and the returning members will have to carry the team along with a large group of new members.

"The seniors we had were, for the most part, fourth-year wrestlers who had started as freshmen, so they were very good wrestlers," coach Richard Murray said.

"Wrestling is not a sport that you can just pick up quickly."

—Joseph Cheung, senior and co-captain

Despite the loss of the seniors, the team has gained a number of new underclassmen. Many of the recruits come from other sports teams, such as the football team, and have the physical capabilities necessary to perform well as wrestlers once they learn the necessary techniques. However, it is unlikely that they will be ready at the very beginning of the season.

"Wrestling is not a sport that you can just pick up quickly. It takes a lot of time for a new member with little experience to get the hang of it," senior and co-captain Joseph Cheung said.

"It's very rare to have someone come in and be amazing all on his own," senior and co-captain Natalie Kuang said. "It's just something that's going to take a lot of repetition and drilling before the mental-physical connection is established."

One big key to the Spartans' success has been their ability to spread their wrestlers

throughout the weight classes. If the team has no wrestler in a certain weight class, they forfeit that particular class, losing six, often crucial, points.

The Spartans lost last year's first playoff match 42-36 to the Midwood High School Hornets. The team lost the six points that would have made the match a tie after forfeiting the 275-pound weight class, the heaviest class.

The training and pressure to make weight is grueling for the wrestlers. "It takes a lot of the fun out of it when you can't eat for a couple of days," Murray said. The team works especially hard during daily practice, doing long conditioning work and calisthenics until the coach arrives, at which point they start mock matches.

"From my experience, the practices are productive. Wrestling takes a lot of endurance, and the fast-paced conditioning prepares you for this. After conditioning, we learn wrestling skills, which teach us what to do on the mat," sophomore Dylon Jagu said in an e-mail interview. "This combination of conditioning and wrestling skills make practice effective."

The training also takes a large physical toll, and the team is excited to get seniors Showaib Kamal and Robert Bennett back after they missed last season due to injuries. Kamal, wrestling in the 112-pound weight class, has a lot of experience, and was a starter in his freshman year, during which he won six of nine matches, a rare accomplishment. "I expect big things from him," Murray said.

Though the two seniors will guide the newer members of the team, this cannot make up for the team's overall lack of experience. "Even if they work hard, it's tough, because they're first-year wrestlers. They're going against guys who've competed for three or four years," Murray said.

A new division alignment shakes up the schedule, and allows for less travel, but all in all, the team will be hard pressed to do well. "There's a lot of potential," Murray said. "[But] you can't expect a first-year wrestler to do as well as a fourth-year."

Girls' Bowling

Pinheads' Season Ends in Quarterfinals

By KATIE MULLANEY

The seventh-seeded Stuyvesant girls' bowling

"Through looking at the PSAL Web site and seeing what they average each game, we knew we were going into an uphill battle."

—Peter Bologna, coach

team, the Pinheads, ended its season in the quarterfinals of the playoffs, losing 2-0 to the second-seeded New Dorp Cougars on Tuesday, November 22.

The Pinheads, led by Physical coach Peter Bologna, and co-captains junior Audrey McCarthy and senior Jennifer Huynh, had a 9-1 regular season record, and swept both sets in their previous two playoff games.

This is the first time the team has reached the quarterfinal in the past three seasons. "We usually don't get past the second cut for playoffs, and making quarterfinals was a big step for us," Huynh said.

Though dominant throughout the season in their Manhattan division, they realized that playing New Dorp, a team in the strong Staten Island Division, would be a challenge. "Through looking at the PSAL Web site and seeing what they average each game, we knew we were going into an uphill battle. We knew it would be very difficult and the odds are against us. But on any day, anything could

happen," Bologna said.

Defying the odds, the Pinheads began in the lead in both their A and B games, with several strikes and spares in the beginning of each. The highlight of the A game was one of Huynh's spares. Four pins, three on the left and one on the right, remained after her first bowl. On her second bowl, she was able to achieve a difficult split, knocking down all four pins to get a spare.

However, as the Pinheads weakened throughout the A game, the Cougars remained strong, causing the Pinheads to lose 784-511. McCarthy, the anchor of the A team, bowled the highest score on the Pinheads with a 174, more than 50 points above her average, but even this was not enough for the team to come out on top.

Huynh also bowled above her average, with a final score of 127. The other two members of the A team, senior Seulbi Lee and junior Dan Bee Kim bowled slightly below their averages, with 122 and 88, respectively. "Our A team definitely played as well as we could have," McCarthy said.

While the 511 first match score was the highest the Pinheads have achieved since the middle of the regular season,

"Our A team definitely played as well as we could have."

—Audrey McCarthy, junior

three of the four Cougars had scores better than McCarthy's; senior Carla Ann Spoto, who averages over 200 pins per game, bowled a 242.

In the B game, New Dorp defeated the Pinheads 561-414. Both sophomore Priya Aggarwal and senior Justyna Bujno scored above their averages, finishing with 118 apiece. Senior Victoria Gong and junior Carrie Hu also bowled in the B game, though they bowled below their averages. "[As a team,] I think we did really well. We got really high scores. It was a decent game compared to past games," Hu said.

Though the Pinheads lost, they view the season as a huge success. They will lose five seniors to graduation, but hope to go even further in the playoffs with their many strong returning players. "If the girls practice in the off-season, we can have a better season where the games are not down to two or three pins," McCarthy said.

"We usually don't get past the second cut for playoffs, and making quarterfinals was a big step for us."

—Jennifer Huynh, senior

13

136

0

23

Number of Girls' Volleyball Seasons Coached by Phil Fisher

Number of Consecutive Regular Season Wins With Fisher as Coach

Number of Regular Season Losses With Fisher as Coach

Number of Playoff Wins With Fisher as Coach (2001-2011)

Sports

Boys' Basketball

The Rebels Open the Season 2-1

continued from page 28

vent the Bulldogs from scoring. Calling for a final key offensive strategy at the end of the fourth quarter, Fisher called for a "dummy offense" tactic, in which the team slowed down the previous fast-paced play.

With just nine seconds left on the clock, sophomore Imtiaz Hassan's breakaway basket with an assist from Vlcek sealed the win for the Rebels, bringing the final score to 58-40.

Expressing his reactions to the first league game, Fisher said, "We could've played better. We really needed to stop handing over the ball too much as Christmas presents and getting too many turnovers, but it was a win."

The success of the athletes after they got in-stride and made smart decisions is a promising sign for the Rebels. "It was a slow, tight start, with quite a few number of turnovers, but when we got settled on our offense, our lead went up," Vlcek said. "We all should play with more confidence and trust in each other and keep the ball moving, and as long as we have that then, we have the arsenal we need to take on any team."

Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels 46, Bayard Rustin Titans 58

The Runnin' Rebels lost to the Bayard Rustin Titans on Wednesday, November 30, by a final score of 58-46.

The Titans had a strong start, and led 21-15 at the end of the first quarter. They held the lead throughout the rest of the game. The Rebels' only chance to pull ahead came in the fourth quarter, when they closed to within four points with two minutes to go, but back-to-back turnovers ended any comeback hopes.

Throughout the game however, the Rebels handled the Titans' zone defense well. In the first quarter, the Rebels took several three-pointers, and when the Titans started to protect against them in the second half, the Rebels pounded the ball inside. Hood had a seven-point stretch in the third quarter, during which he scored all of the team's field goals from underneath the basket.

"In the beginning of the game, they were packing the paint," Wong said. "They were leaving the three-point shots open. But when they started closing to the corner, we started finding people."

Choudhury, for the second straight game, led the team in scoring with 14 points, including four three-pointers. Hood also contributed 14 points. However, he made just four of his 10 free throws. The team as whole struggled with making its free throws, knocking down six out of 16.

The Rebels also struggled to stop the Titans from scoring on fast breaks. "We gave up too many offensive rebounds. We turned the ball over too much, and we missed too many free throws, and we missed layups," Fisher said.

The Rebels have yet to find their rhythm on offense. "Our biggest problem: just moving the ball. We've got to learn how to just make a pass," Hood said. "If we get them to come and double us, then that's to our advantage. But

we got to move the ball quick. We can't let them trap us."

The players also need to be more aware of the court as a whole when making decisions. "We weren't looking for the smart pass, we were looking for the pretty pass, and when we tried to do that, everything didn't work out," Choudhury said.

Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels 75, Seward Park Campus Bears 43

Stuyvesant improved its regular season record to 2-1 after defeating the Seward Park Campus Bears on Monday, December 6, by a score of 75-43.

After a tough defeat against Bayard Rustin, the Rebels came into their third game ready to get their season back on track. At practice, Fisher devised an aggressive game plan to try to limit the Bears' offense, which averaged 79 points in their first two games. He specifically focused on stopping Seward Park junior Juan Cruz, who averaged 22 points per game in his team's first two games and scored 16 points against Stuyvesant in two games in the 2010-2011 regular season.

The Rebels played strong and aggressive defense for almost the entire game, save for a stretch in the third quarter when their offense turned the ball over on consecutive possessions. "Defensively, we just got after it today," Fisher said.

Offensively, Stuyvesant thrived throughout the game, dominating the Bears in size, as well as exploiting Seward Park's small court by not letting the Rebels' lack of speed play a factor in the game. Seward Park began the game playing a full-court press, but abandoned that plan five minutes into the first quarter after Stuyvesant's transition offense consistently got the ball up the court to Hood and Vlcek, who made easy baskets.

Despite the change in tactic, Stuyvesant was able to score off of the Bears' half-court set plays. Hood's reverse lay-up with 20 seconds remaining and Wong's three-pointer at the buzzer gave the Rebels a 44-21 lead, and momentum going into the second half.

In the second half, Seward Park's press returned as the Bears made a push to get back into the game, but Stuyvesant stayed strong. Vlcek, who finished with 27 points, eight rebounds, and four assists, almost scored at will, as he drove through the paint and finished with finger-rolls multiple times. When it wasn't Vlcek, the Rebels found Hood, who finished with 16 points, 8 rebounds, and 1 assist, open under the basket.

"We did a good job adjusting to what their defense was giving us, and continued to score off that," Vlcek said.

Fisher hopes the team could build off this momentum with three divisional games coming up on the schedule.

"This is the first time we played basketball the way I like the game to be played. I have a certain idea of what the game should look like and what they should look like doing it, and in the first four [league and non-league] games of the season, we certainly weren't that. Today was more like what I want to see from my team," Fisher said.

Girls' Swimming

Penguins Win City Championship

By GABRIEL SUNSHINE

It's been four years since Stuyvesant's girls' swimming team, the Penguins, has lost a city championship. That's before current seniors were even at Stuyvesant. It's before current freshmen were even in middle school. On Tuesday, November 22, the Penguins continued their streak of dominance with a win over Brooklyn Technical's Engineers to become city champions for the fourth year in a row.

This was the second straight year the Penguins and Engineers met in the city championships. Going into the meet, the Penguins knew that they had a challenge in keeping up with senior Annie Zhu of Brooklyn Technical, who has been scouted by the US Olympic Team and is the number one swimmer in the city.

"We were kind of nervous obviously, because this was the big day," senior and co-captain Sharon Romero said. "Knowing we were going up against a swimmer like that kind of made us more nervous."

"It was going to be very close. Second and third place were



The Stuyvesant Penguins won the PSAL Girl's Swimming Championship against Brooklyn Tech at Lehman College on Tuesday, November 22.

Elana Movshovich / The Spectator

In the meet, Sabala decided to shake things up and put her swimmers in different events. "My usual event is the 100 free," senior and co-captain Maggie Yung said. "But today, Hana swam it, and she came in first."

The most exciting moment of the meet came in the final race, the 400-yard freestyle relay. With a one-lap lead over Brooklyn Technical, Stuyvesant looked poised to win. However, when Zhu was relayed in, she quickly erased that lead, and won the race for the Engineers by a small margin. The Penguins managed to take second and third place.

The win concluded a successful season for the Penguins, a win that saw them undefeated in the regular season and through the postseason. Their most memorable wins this season were against Hunter College High School, the wins "which really prepared us to race," Sabala said. The Penguins swam against Hunter twice, winning by seven points in the first meet and a mere four points in the second meet.

Having six seniors graduate last year meant that there were holes on the team that would need to be filled by incoming freshmen.

"I didn't know what kind of freshmen we would get to replace the seniors. It's a good freshmen class, so that's positive," Sabala said. Freshman Sappha O'Meara has become an integral part to the team's unbeaten 200-yard medley relay squad as well as the team's top swimmer in the grueling 500-yard freestyle race.

coach Kristen Sabala said.

In the practices leading up to the championships, Sabala had her swimmers work on the intricacies of swimming, such as starts and flip turns. She also asked them to worry only about the competition, not their times.

"Our coach told us to race the girl next to us, and that's what we did," senior and co-captain Hana Yampolsky said.

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens Semifinals Loss Marks Early End to Fisher's Coaching

continued from page 28

linger on this final game and is looking forward to the 2012 season. "I think we will do really well next year. A lot of the members of the team will be returning, and we're all improving a lot," sophomore Janice Yoon said.

Along with the high hopes, next season will also bring the Vixens a new head coach. The elimination of the team marked not only the end of their season, but the end of Fisher's time as head coach as well. However, he will remain the head coach of the boys' varsity basketball team, the Runnin' Rebels.

Though Fisher has never

won a championship with the Vixens, he has brought the team into the playoffs every year since 1999, and has also compiled a 136-game regular season win streak during this period. "We lost two finals. We've been in seven semis in my 13 years," Fisher said. "Stuyvesant has had an excellent run under my coaching."

His stepping down represents the loss of "a great coach and mentor," Qiu said, a sentiment that is echoed by other players on the team.

"Coach Fisher has always been there for us. He is so committed and dedicated to the Vixens, and we will definitely miss him next year. Without his

leadership, it just means the seniors of next year need to step up and push the team to work hard and to do our best," Wang said.

The Vixens also believe that he is responsible for the success the team has had for nearly a decade and a half. "He really made us work and he really pushed us, which is why we have done so well," Yoon said.

The reality that Fisher's send-off season has just been completed has not quite hit him yet. "Right now, I'm a little numb. Right now, I want to practice with them on Monday and get ready to play Monday night [for the championship]," Fisher said. "But I'm just smiling."

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Boys' Swimming

Pirates Look Strong Going into Season

By ALISON FU

After an undefeated season and a second consecutive Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) championship last year, the Pirates, the members of Stuyvesant's boys' swimming team, are eager to put on their goggles and freestyle their way to a repeat of both feats.

This confidence is justified by their consistently excellent performance. The Pirates' regular season win streak is currently at 30, and the team has won the city championship seven times in the past decade.

However, despite all their previous successes, the swimmers prepared intensely for their first meet, which was held on Thursday, December 1, against the Evander Childs Tigers, and ended in a 62-32 win. The performance mirrored their 62-39 win against the Brooklyn Technical High School Engineers in the PSAL City Championships last February.

To continue their streak of successes, the Pirates have been holding morning practices at 6:30 a.m. five days a week, and "have started working out harder than in the past," coach and physical education teacher Peter Bologna said. "We've hit the ground running."

The team was able to take in

some promising new swimmers, adding depth to its roster. "The new members are really talented and really fast, so they will definitely play a big part on the team this season," junior David Jiang said.

Another one of the Pirates' strengths is their large body of experienced swimmers. "We have 12 seniors swimming on the team this year and they all performed exceptionally well last year and will definitely improve even more this year," Lin said. Senior En Wei Hu Van Wright qualified for Olympic trials, and broke the record for the 100-yard Butterfly, while senior Noam Altman-Kuroasaki holds the school record for the six- and eleven-dive events.

The rookies have quickly become part of the closely-knit team. "We all really take pride in being on the Stuyvesant swim team, and we all work towards one goal, swimming fast and winning. Everyone helps each other out, and we become very close," senior and co-captain Kevin Lin said. "The swim team is like a second family to me."

Returning members have assured Bologna that they worked hard throughout the off-season to fill the voids left by the four seniors that graduated. "The returners have all stepped up and became leaders on the team, and

have helped the rookies acclimate themselves," Bologna said.

Concerning leadership, the loss of last year's seniors has had a minimal impact. The new co-captains, Lin and senior Andrew Qiao, have stepped into their new position with ease. They began to prep all members of the team well before preseason workouts began on Monday, November 7. They have conducted dry lands—exercises swimmers do out of the water—during 10th period, and have organized challenging water drills to get the team into shape.

"We have a lot of motivation and determination for this sport. Not trying your hardest would be failing your teammates," junior Brian Chen said.

However, the boys acknowledge that Bologna, who has been the Pirates' head coach for seven years, is their true driving force. "Coach Bologna has been really helpful in getting us back into the swing of things. He sets targets and has given us a lot of positive reinforcement," Lin said.

Despite all the encouraging signs, the Pirates are going into the new season with an air of caution. "Other teams have gotten some very talented swimmers, so you never know what happens," Bologna said. "Our practices and our work ethic is what's going to carry us."

Boys' Fencing

Fencers Finish Second, Lose Chance at Fifth Consecutive PSAL Championship



Stuyvesant faces off against Beacon in the finals.

By LEV AKABAS

After winning the city championship for the past four years, Stuyvesant's boys fencing team had high expectations going into this season, and performed well, finishing with a 10-0 record. However, at the city championship single elimination tournament, the fencers finished second in total team points after coming in second place in foil and third place in épée. The tournament was held at the Nat Holman Gymnasium on City College of New York's campus, on Sunday, November 20.

In foil matches, fencers can only score a point by touching the opponent's torso, whereas in épée, a touch can be scored anywhere on the body except the facemask. Stuyvesant dominated the competition in the early rounds to reach the semifinals in both events. With four teams remaining in each event, the team faced Staten Island Technical High School (MSIT) in épée.

Stuyvesant dug itself a deep hole right from the start, losing its first four bouts and getting into a

10-3 deficit in touches. However, the team slowly climbed back and tied the score at 29-29. The strong MSIT team, which began its practices two weeks earlier than others, was led by junior Mitchell Revich, who won all three of his bouts. It overpowered Stuyvesant by a score of 45-39.

"We knew going in that MSIT and Hunter were going to be very tough in épée," coach Joel Winston said.

The épée team however, performed admirably considering that it lost two key starters from last year's championship team, Andrei Tapai ('11) and Rienzi Goeka ('11). Inexperience could have also played a factor, as this was only the second season that épée was part of the PSAL championship tournament.

As the épée fencers were playing their matches, the foil team was locked in a tight battle with Hunter College High School. Down 18-23, sophomore Philip Shin led a roaring comeback by Stuyvesant to take the lead 30-29. Juniors Sasson Rafailov and Adam Schorin also chipped in to help fend off Hunter 45-39, as over 100 spectators looked on.

Stuyvesant's foil team faced Beacon High School in the finals, and started out with a lot of energy. Schorin and Shin won their first two bouts to jumpstart the team to a 10-6 lead. However, the team proceeded to lose 24 of the following 32 touches and fell behind with a score of 18-30. Though the Stuyvesant fencers continued to fight hard, they wound up on the losing end of a 45-31 final score.

Hunter High School won the épée finals, and the overall tournament, edging out Stuyvesant, which finished second.

The teammates were disappointed that they could not keep their championship streak going. "If you're not first, you're last. I really would've liked to get that five-

in-a-row," Schorin said in an e-mail interview.

Several team members attributed their loss to lack of focus and effort. "Beacon's advantage was effort," Schorin said. "Their fencers work hard all year round while I think we tended to slack off a bit this season."

"Throughout the season I noticed, and was very upset with, a general lack of hype and team spirit," Ravailov said in an e-mail interview. "This loss serves as a reminder that we are not, and never will be, bulletproof."

On the other hand, some fencers were still optimistic about their performance. "We all tried our best, and we came through," Shin said. "Even though the last bout we didn't win, we tried our best, and that's all that counts."

"[We knew] Beacon would be strong in foil," Winston said. "We came in silver. Second place isn't bad."

Winston, like many of the fencers, is hoping for better luck in the following season. "Maybe next year, [Hunter] will lose their senior épée player [...] so the playing field will be a little easier," Winston said. "Our foil team will look good next year, and we'll see what happens with the épée team."

Next reason, the team will have three returning starters, all of whom showed promise in the tournament by winning bouts under pressure, as well as several talented substitutes who will likely move into starting roles. "We had a couple strong showings from our substitutes, Noam Dorogoyer and Sasson Ravailov," senior and co-captain Simon Gurvets said. "They did very well when called upon in substitute rolls, so this gives me great hope for next year."

"We'll be up there again, whether it's gold or silver," Winston said.

Girls' Volleyball

Vixens Semifinals Loss Marks Early End to Fisher's Coaching

By ALISON FU

effectively ended the Vixens' season.

This came as a shock and upset, as the Vixens were the number one seed going into the game, while the Patriots were the number four seed. Stuyvesant's star player and co-captain Melissa Chin made 17 of the team's 31 kills and 15 digs, but those impressive statistics were not enough to take the steal the game from the Patriots.

The teammates recognize the errors that led to their close loss. "In the first set, we played with more intensity and played more as one unit. In the later sets, I feel that we were playing too detached from each other. We also passed and serve received a lot better in the first set, which is key to winning," junior Anna Wang said.

"We kept making the same mistakes over and over," said senior and co-captain Lisa Qiu, who finished the game with 28 assists. "We beat ourselves." However, the team is proud of its impressive performance leading up to the loss. "We were hoping to be number one, but we still had a good season. And this is the first time in my four years that we actually made it to semis," senior and co-captain Melissa Chin said.

All 12 of their regular season wins also came as 2-0 shutouts. However, the team will not

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Boys' Basketball

The Rebels Open the Season 2-1

By NIYAZ ARIF,
DARYL CHIN,
and JORDAN WALLACH

Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels 58,
High School of Art and Design Bulldogs 40

The Stuyvesant Runnin' Rebels kicked off their 2011-2012 regular season campaign on Monday, November 28, with a win against the High School of Art and Design Bulldogs.

The first few minutes of the game saw the Rebels and the Bulldogs switch the lead back and forth. After the first three minutes, the score was even. Halfway into the quarter, senior Abid Choudhury began to dominate the floor, scoring five points and blocking four shots. However, the Bulldogs gained the lead in the last three minutes by a score of 11-7.

Coming out of the first quarter, coach Philip Fisher and the Rebels adjusted their defense by placing junior Thomas Cui and senior Erick Wong at half-court to put pressure on the Bulldogs' point guard. Fisher also urged Cui to get into the corner and run the baseline on offense.

From there, the Rebels employed a more vibrant, controlled movement on the court,

which sparked some nice offensive possessions. A bright moment came for Stuyvesant when a swing pass to Cui allowed him to shoot in a three-pointer with 57 seconds remaining in the half. Just 50 seconds later, it was followed by another three-pointer off a swing-pass, which brought the score to 30-20, with Stuyvesant in the lead.

The Rebels started off the second half with a fast-paced, aggressive attack that continued into the third quarter. They were further energized when senior and co-captain Quinn Hood delivered a long pass across the court to Choudhury, who scored a lay-up to further extend the Rebels' lead to 46-31.

At the start of the fourth quarter, the Bulldogs unexpectedly showed a successful, but short-lived counterattack. However, in the middle of the quarter, their forcefulness in the paint resulted in a foul called and two free throws for senior and co-captain Roy Vlcek, who successfully converted both.

The defensive strategy applied by the Rebels in the paint was superb, as they concentrated Hood, Vlcek, and Wong to pre-

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