



DISRESPECTATOR

To All the Objects We Left In Our Lockers

From gym clothes to a photo of a bald teacher, we reminisced about the beloved objects that we left in our lockers. Here are our love letters to them.

SEE PAGE 30

DISRESPECTATOR

Sample Letter of Continued Interest to Get You off the Harvard Waitlist

While on the waitlist for all eight Ivy League colleges, here is yet another Stuy Kid's e-mail to show that they are still interested in the college.

SEE PAGE 31



DISRESPECTATOR CONTENT ON PAGES 1-4 AND 29-32

HUMORBEAT

- The Stuyvesant building collapsed inward due to the lack of in-person attendance.
- The coral reefs are now healing after a new species of algae was discovered in Stuyvesant's uncleaned pools.
- The Physical Education (PE) Department introduced the Racing With Principal Yu and Frisbeeing With Mr. Moran electives.
- The Stuyvesant Football Team is currently undefeated this season.
- Escalators still break down despite lack of students.
- The Student Union revises its Speed-Friending Platform to Speed-Dating. Love is real.
- Students are now required to wear PE uniforms for their online classes to build community.

By AARON WANG, KELLY YIP, and KAREN ZHANG

Seung Yu <principal-seungyu@stuyspec.com> to Stuyvesant Student Body 4:10 a.m. April 1, 2021 (6 hours ago)

"This is the only real concern of the artist, to recreate out of the disorder of life that order which is art."
—James Baldwin

Happy Thursday Stuy,

Though today is traditionally known for pranking your loved ones, we must remember to show kindness during these tough times. One of my beliefs as an educator is that we all need cheerleaders to help us along our path. Therefore, I am declaring that SING! this year will be renamed to SEUNG! the Extravaganza and I will be appointing you as my personal cheerleaders to accompany me along my path toward Stuyvesant Principal Greatness.

I am grateful to be a part of the SEUNG! fervor, albeit virtually. After reading the SING! scripts from past years, I thought deeply about this year's SING! season and

SING!? More Like SEUNG!

how important it is for us to continue to work together to improve our theatrical skills. Improvement is challenging because it requires both discipline and diligence—things you all lack. Therefore, I will take my place as the fourth

your lamentable romantic life, mediocre essays, and everything in between. I wish there were simple answers, but I have not found them. However, I've found that my reflections at 4:00 a.m. have been enlightening, so I



Courtesy of Photostop

competitor at SEUNG! so you can all see what a real show looks like.

First and foremost, I am working on prioritizing my most important tasks so that I don't always feel overwhelmed, unsuccessful, or guilty. I imagine many of you feel the same way about

will share one of many revelations. Yu is the beginning of the name of the popular trading card game, Yu-Gi-Oh. I'm sure that you also know of the classic game "Uno." "Uno" is spelled with three letters, just like the word "dog," and there is no coincidence that "dog" spelled backward is

"god." I have been blessed by something divine. Perhaps it is destiny. This is why I have full faith that I will be successful in leading SEUNG!

While SING! is typically riddled with lackluster performances, I believe that I can "revolutionize" theatrical performances here at Stuy. I certainly won't be painting any backdrops upside-down as I have a keen enough eye to prevent making such amateur mistakes. With my expertise, you can expect nothing less than a Hollywood-quality production.

Stuyvesant is a complex and dynamic place with equally complex and dynamic people. This is why we must adapt to the large SEUNG! change. It is especially important to improve the current quality of Stuyvesant entertainment.

As I eagerly wait for the first rays of the rising sun to shine through my window so that God's blazing hand can guide mine across the sea of good scriptwriting, I have started my own adventure. Behold!

continued on page 2

A Survivor's Account of the Stuyvesant Civil War

By LIESEL WONG and CYRUS CURSETJEE

BBC Interviewer: Could you please introduce yourself to the camera?

The camera pans to a ragged 17-year-old blankly staring into the distance outside a vandalized TriBeCa Bridge.

Juliuseses Grant: Hi, my name Juliuseses Grant, and I am a survivor of the Stuyvesant Civil War.

Insert a montage of ruins and piles of school equipment all over the Stuyvesant building: shattered windows, smeared ketchup packets, textbooks without covers, broken desks, and ripped-up papers.

Juliuseses Grant: It all started with the morning announcement on March 29th. It was a Friday...

Cue flashback

Juliuseses Grant: The day, as always, started with the morning announcement: "Gooood morning Stuyvesant! We are your student announcers, Liesel Wong and Cyrus Cursetjee, and here are

your morning announcements! Do your keys keep disappearing after you leave the house each morning? Well, it turns out that the Stuyvesant Key Club has had them all along and is asking you to come pick them up next Monday at 4:00 p.m. in Room 231, where it will coincidentally be holding its interest meeting. Additionally, the Physical Education Department will be accepting submissions for next year's design of Stuyvesant's Gym Uniform! Submissions are due at 11:59 p.m. on April 29th. Designs can be submitted to udaboss@stuy.edu. The winner will be decided based on a democratic vote by the student body.

Liesel Wong: "And now, for the morning joke: Cyrus, does February like March?"

Cyrus Cursetjee: "I don't know, but April May."

Liesel Wong: "Hahaha."

Cyrus Cursetjee: "Ha."

The speaker is abruptly cut off.

Juliuseses Grant: I couldn't stop thinking about the gym uniform submissions. No more bright orange cur-

sive? No more shorts that add 10 pounds? I looked around. Everybody in the classroom was whispering. I think everyone knew what I knew—that this was our chance to have my club dominate the school. I was part of the Stuyvesant Anti-Club Club. Immediately after class, we assembled to discuss our design for the uniform competition. We needed a shirt that would best push our anti-club agenda. We decided on a truly revolutionary design: the word clubs with a large, red "X" over it. I sent the submission to udaboss@stuy.edu immediately after.

Club Member 1: It's perfect. A guaranteed win.

BBC Interviewer: You really forgot the name of your club members?

Juliuseses Grant: Yes. Names are a construct.

Juliuseses turns away and drips a splotch of red ink on his bald head.

"Also, I got shot during the war and lost my memory."

continued on page 2

The Spectator Scavenger Hunt

Dear Reader,

Welcome to The Spectator's Scavenger Hunt! Littered around the pages of Disrespectator content are clues that will lead you to spell out a link to The Spectator website for exclusive content.

The structure of the link is as follows: _____ com/____/____/____-____-____-____-____.

To help you find the words that correspond to each of the blanks, you will be given a clue in the form of a rebus or puzzle. The clue will spell out a topic or title related to a specific article in one of the eight pages of The Disrespectator. When you find the article, look for the bolded letters in the first few paragraphs of the article that will spell out a word. At the end of the article, look for the clue that will take you to the next article.

Your first clue awaits: 🧐 + en 🧐🧐 + en ?

Have fun and happy reading,
The Spectator Editorial Board

*Answers on page 32

Disrespectator

SING!? More Like SEUNG!

continued from page 1

SCENE 1

[On the dim stage, the lone Yu rests, dressed in his high school football uniform, assuming the hunched position of a Swan Lake performer.]

LQ 1: SPOTLIGHT ON YU

[Suddenly, he lifts his head, and his forehead glistens in the spotlight.]

YU

My number one advice? The most important relationship in life is the one you have with yourself. And that's why I'm going to tell you the story of my life!

SONG 1.1: "Story of My Life" by One Direction

DANCE CUE 1: YU FLOSSES FOR FOUR MINUTES AND SIX SECONDS.

YU

Good morning, my friends. I have awoken before the sun has risen. The birds are still sleeping. I am cur-

rently waiting for the sun to rise. My journal is within my grasp. The sun edges over the horizon. The birds must be awoken. I have my journal in hand, ready to conquer the day. And everyone else.



Courtesy of Photoshop

[He opens his journal, sits down on stage, and looks into the audience.]

There are many challenges and joys we experience on a daily basis, and times for reflection can help you parse out what is important. However, I have been thinking. Oh to be, "an echo in the forest," an "arrow in the blue sky." To be a pillow or table.

Yeah, life goes on like this again.

[He stands up and opens his arms toward the ceiling, before sharply flinging his journal into the audience. An audience member lets out a yelp.]

YU

I'm too cool for school.

SONG 1.2: Cue 2 Cool 4 Skool (feat. DJ Friz)

DANCE CUE 2: COMMENCE VERY HIP MOVES

[The music stops suddenly. He strikes a dramatic pose. He takes a pair of glasses out of his pocket. He puts them on slowly. He pushes his glasses up his nose with his middle finger. The lenses shine a bright light.]

LQ 2: LIGHT BLUE LIGHTS

YU

[Dramatic Reading] I sometimes wonder about the purpose of everything. Why am I your principal? Will Jungkook ever no-

tice me? Perhaps you wonder as well. Why are you taking AP Chem? Why are you not pursuing your dream of being an artist? Why have you not reconciled with your lost friendships? Why have you not taken a moment to realize that there is more to your life than numbers on a report card? That you are you, and nothing will change that? What's for dinner tonight? What do men want? Here are some guiding words of wisdom:

Cause I-I-I'm in the school tonight

So watch me bring the heat and set the SEUNG! alight (hey)

Photosynthesizing with a little punk and spaz

So I will light it up like dynamite, whoa oh oh

[He runs toward the front of the stage and long jumps over the orchestra pit onto the floor below. He runs toward the back of the theater and high-fives himself. He stands in the back and holds up his BTS lightstick.]

YU

Excellence is a discipline, not a performance. Therefore, I resign from SEUNG!

LQ 3: BLACKOUT END OF SCENE 1

But these are just some of my thoughts. This is a work in progress, and it requires everyone to be on board, so I would appreciate it if you could provide some feedback.

Remember that if you have any questions or concerns about my well-being, I have Office Hours today.

Topic: Office Hours (4:30-4:50 a.m.)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81221234567>

Meeting ID: 123 456 7890

Passcode: seungsupremacy

Have a productive and amaSEUNG! day!

Principal (and ex-Coordinator) Yu

The Case Against a Nap Period

By ASA MUHAMMAD

Students of Stuyvesant High School are known to be chronically tired. They take their sleep in installments, and the payments always seem to come late. The oft proposed solution is that we institute a naptime. While this idea sounds wonderful in concept—a blissful period to doze off and delight yourself in the hypnosis of the diurnal siesta—Stuyvesant would, in true "Pro dolor, aegritudo, nobis" fashion, find a way to ruin it.

Firstly, if a formal naptime were to be instituted, even though napping is considered one of the most elusive arts to master, it would be a gym class (due to sleep having to do with our health or something). This isn't inherently bad, but with the varying quality of gym teachers, you may have one of our more "authoritarian" instructors proctoring your 55 minutes of what should be bliss. Whether they're demanding you remove your hoodie because this is "still a real class," or insisting you keep your camera on "to make sure you're practicing proper side sleeping form," the tiny terror and Doctor Sleep would do everything in their power to make this exercise in tranquility as stressful as possible.

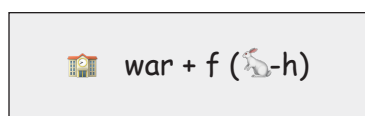
Beyond the risk of nightmarish teachers, our student body just does not have a sleep positive culture. Naptime sounds like a dream, but students would undoubtedly cut nap class to finish their assignments due next period.

"Well if I have two pages of physics due next period, there's no way I'm going to sleep class. What are they going to do? Fail me? 'Sorry mom, I'm missing three as-

signments in math because I had to go to naptime and I couldn't do it earlier because I was procrastinating.' Inconceivable. I value my procrastination time, and plus, even if I miss a few nap classes, I should get extra credit for being so slept on--this is going in Spec, right? Yo, check out my Soundclou—" junior Preston Zheng said.

His sentiment is a popular one, but the issue extends far beyond in-class attendance. If naptime were to assign homework (which it most definitely would, considering that our lack of commute time frees up valuable working hours), it would almost immediately become a crutch for overwhelmed students. Excuses like "I'm sorry my paper is late, but my sleep assignment took a little longer than I thought" would become all too common, or conversely, students would just lie on their sleeping logs like they lie on their gym logs. 4:00 a.m. submissions would become signs of a good night's rest rather than a good day's work. (The Spectator does not condone lying on your gym logs. In fact, if you do, you're a disgrace. I'm so dedicated that I can do two days of exercise in the 10 minutes after the form is posted.)

In conclusion, the entire premise of naptime would be undermined by the overworked students who begged for it in the first place. Naptime would be a sanctuary from the omnipresent stresses of our school, but unfortunately, Stuyvesant scoffs at Hypnos in favor of the Algea, patrons of our sorrow.



A Survivor's Account of the Stuyvesant Civil War

continued from page 1

The interviewer eyes the ink jar in Juliuseses's hand.
BBC Interviewer: Sure!

Juliuseses Grant: Anyway, the situation quickly escalated. The Physical Education Department received over 200 submissions for the uniform design. Because there was one month left before the election date, a lot of clubs took this as an opportunity to promote their designs. Students came up with all sorts of methods to get as many votes as possible: they handed out stickers, cookies, flyers, cash, sushi, puppies—nothing was off-limits.

Teachers started picking sides in an effort to boost their favorite uniform. The Spanish Teachers formed a coalition and offered large amounts of extra credit to students who voted for the "Día de Los Muertos" uniform, which included a skeleton mariachi band, a sombrero, and shorts made of papel picado. Economics teachers lowered test scores and equaled the Spanish Department's extra credit, thereby forcing students to support their inflatable "inflation shirts" for the sake of their grades. History teachers, claiming the bribery of other departments resembled the strategies of political machines, promptly shored up support for a t-shirt with Cornell Notes on "How to Do History Homework during PE."

The tension over the chosen uniform divided everyone and split the school into factions. Teachers, students, custodians, and even the Principal would do anything just for a vote for the design of their choice. Friendships were broken, pencils were lost. The atmosphere was uneasy. Stuyvesant was getting ready for war.

*Documentary cuts to a scene of students yelling in

the hallways. Crushed food litters the ground. Almost every square footage of space is covered in ripped posters. It smells distinctly of expired milk.*

BBC Interviewer: But what was the last straw? Who was the Archduke Ferdinand?

Juliuseses Grant: Well, the Student Union wanted to take out its biggest competitor. They decided to cut off funding for the STC, accusing them of "not meeting the requirements of monthly meetings scheduled on StuyActivities." STC was outraged, and they united with SING! members to write a play protesting the Student Union. During the final performance of the play, a member of the SU shouted "What is that mysterious ticking noise?" in a voice like that of Severus Snape and promptly threw a glitter bomb onto the stage. The Stuyvesant Civil War had started.

After the glitter explosion and the ensuing havoc, STC and SING! (now the Drama Club), slept in shifts to maintain their control of the now sparkly auditorium, their new base of operations. The Music Department occupied the band room. The robotics team drove around the second floor in scrappy, malfunctioning cars. Other clubs soon populated the remaining real estate.

Once every region in the building was occupied, a frenzy of unique battles commenced. The first notable battle was between the Chess Club and the Board Games Club. The Chess Club developed a war tactic that involved sacrificing "pawns" to capture its opposition's members and hold them hostage. Their battle received a short feature on NBC before the Chess Club offered a draw. The Swim Team attempted to expand into the weight room, which was a

part of Track Team territory. They launched the attack by using one of the hallway benches as a battering ram, breaking through the door to expose the thoroughly shocked Track Team. Both battalions fought inside the weight room using hula hoops and flip flops. The battle ended in a substantial amount of property damage and a victory for the Track Team, who enjoyed what was left of their weight room. This haphazard battle caught the attention of the NYPD, which sent police officers to monitor the escalating situation. However, they quickly lost control when the Communist Club imported guns and artillery from "The Motherland" and decided to distribute them evenly amongst all the competing clubs. As for the Anti-Club Club, we fell into a verbal altercation with the Debate Club when we accused them of pushing their radical clubist agenda to gain votes. However, we fell into internal conflict after the Debate Club pointed out that we ourselves are also a club. Despite all the violence, the war was at a stalemate. Hardly any faction of the school managed to dominate a large area for an extended period of time.

The war came to an end when Kung Fu Tea, after hearing of this long-drawn conflict, reopened their old location and proposed a bubble tea gym uniform design of their own. Juniors and Seniors, who had been suffering from withdrawal symptoms ever since the Kung Fu Tea's closing two years ago, all flocked to the store. The rest of the school stopped fighting, and the Kung Fu T-Shirt won by a massive margin. They even said one lucky student would receive a free bubble tea coupon with their

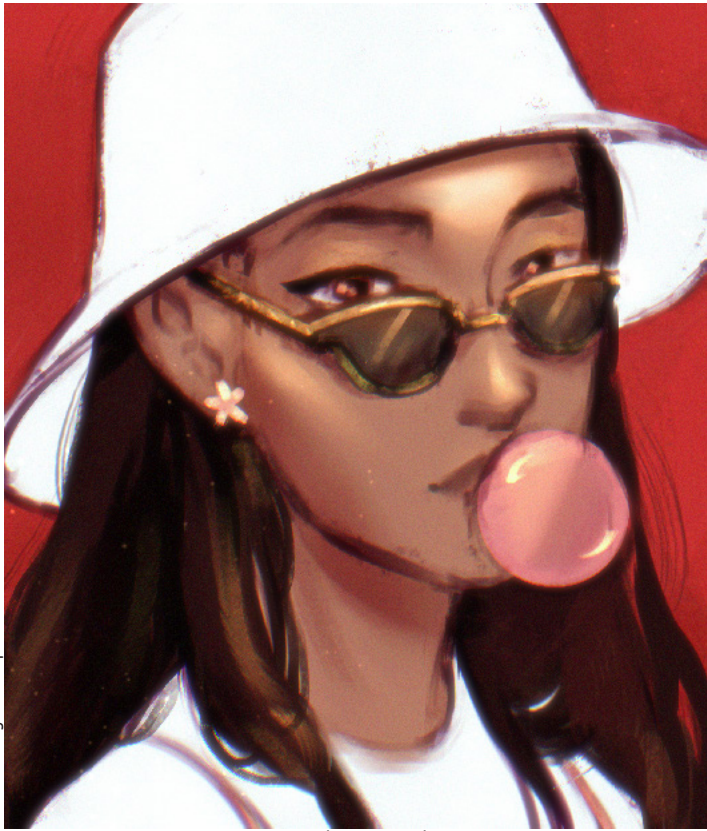
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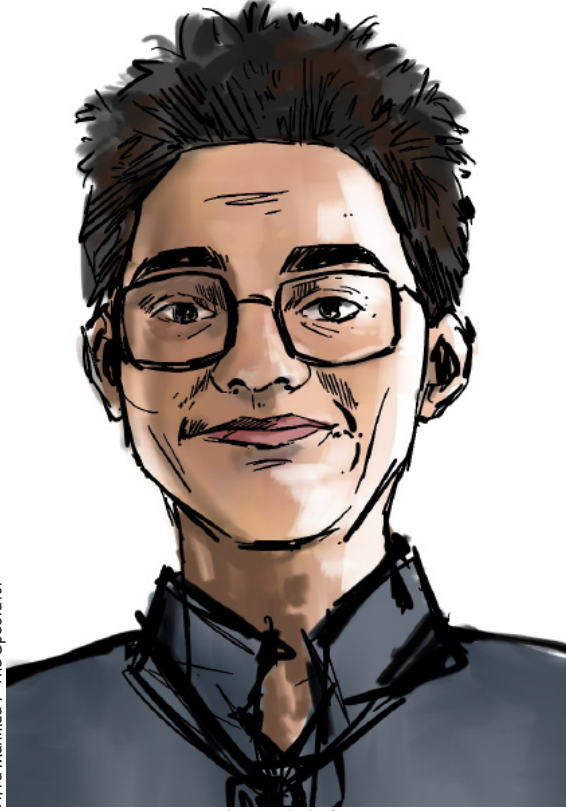
The Editorial Board Predicts Each Other's Future

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The future is looking bright for the 2020 - 2021 Spectator Editorial Board! Here are the editors 20 years into the future:



Shreyasi Saha



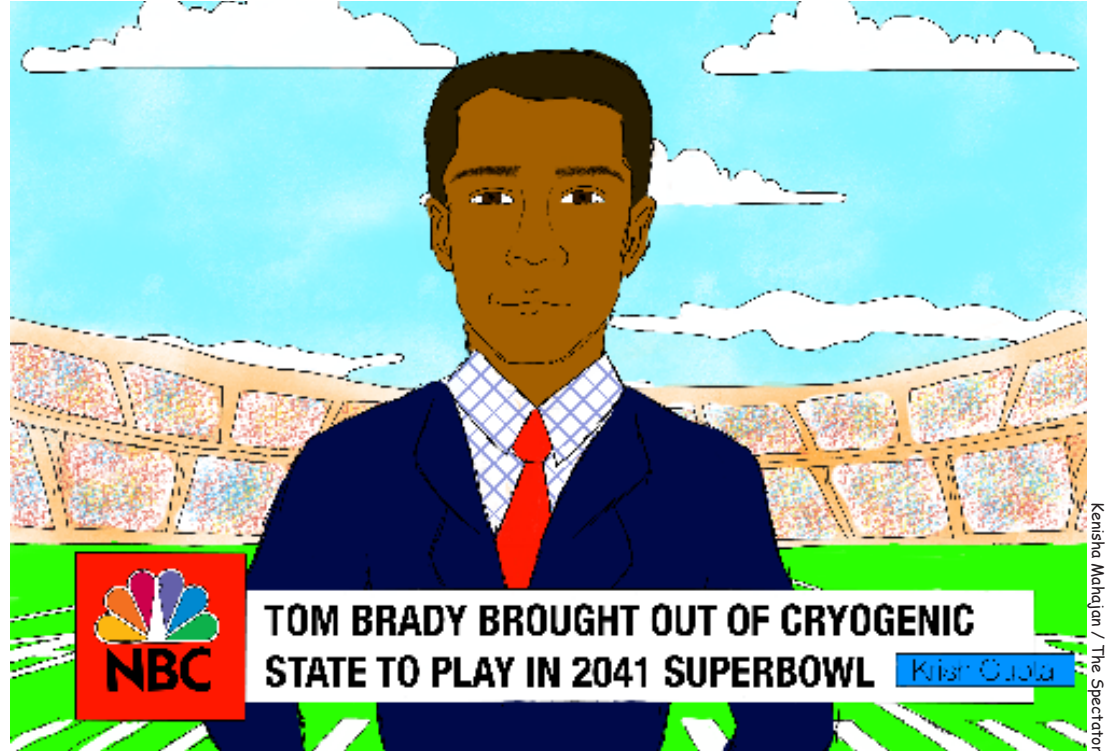
Gavin McGinley



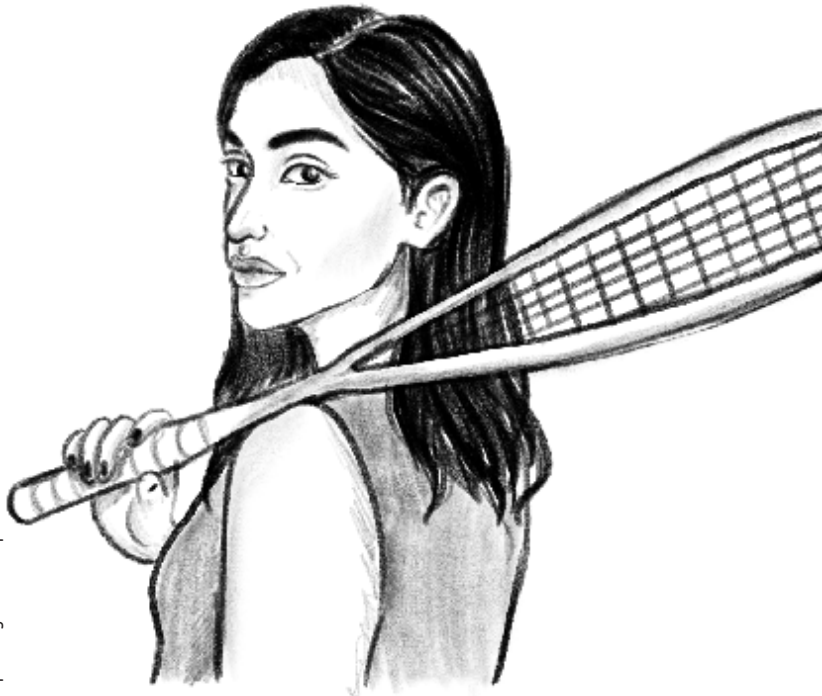
Suah Chung



Clara Shapiro



Krish Gupta



Sonya Sasson



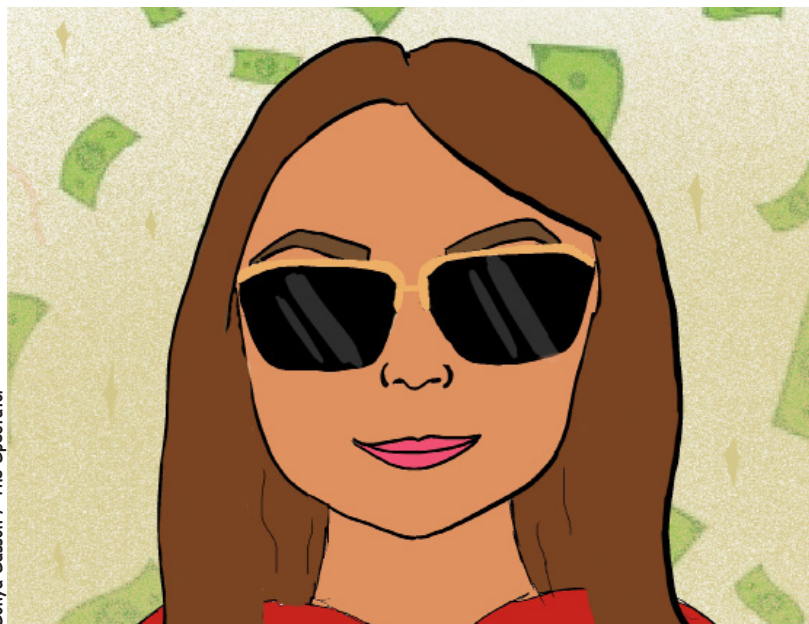
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Momoca Mairaj



Tina Nguyen

See the full spread here:



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Disrespectator

Breaking News! Freshmen From Homeroom 1KK Flee Stuyvesant

By EZRA LEE

A freshman couple from Homeroom 1KK fled the Stuyvesant High School building on Thursday, April 1, 2021, during third period of blended learning. The duo was discovered in Montgomery, Alabama, on April 3 at approximately 2:00 a.m. According to official FBI records, the couple was staying at an inn and was discovered when one of their parents received an email about an excessive amount of money being spent on a credit card to pay for the couple's room, as well as some lotion, classified pills, a belt, a flashlight, and a packet of balloons. It is unclear what their intentions were with those items. They will remain anonymous in this article in order to protect their identities.

Through a thorough investigation, it's been discovered that the couple used a well-known escape route in one of the staircases. "Yeah, on the second floor around second or third period, Principal Yu opens the window while singing along to some K-pop. When I was around there a week ago, he was singing to Red Velvet's 'Psycho' and BTS's 'Dynamite,'" said an anonymous junior. "The freshies probably jumped off the floor and safely hit the grass when Principal Yu left to go to the bathroom."

While it is commonly known

throughout the school that the principal loves K-pop, the principal refutes these so-called "absurd" claims. "Lies! I love those groups, but I would never sing their songs in the Stuyvesant building, at least not publicly! I was simply practicing for my audition for Big Hit next week," Yu said. "I will, however, admit that I was the one who opened the window. To all the parents and students, I sincerely apologize."

Though The Spectator was unable to interview and find the true intentions of the couple due to them being banned from talking to anyone, there are many speculations spreading around the building. "I heard that their parents never approved of their relationship because they're first cousins. That's why they fled to Alabama because it's more socially acceptable to date your own relative there. Isn't that so romantic? It's like the classic Romeo and Juliet story," said an anonymous sophomore, a supporter of this couple.

Days before the incident, the freshman couple reportedly talked to their assigned homeroom Big Sib. When asked what the best possible action they should take should be, the anonymous junior Big

Sib said. "And I guess they chose Alabama."

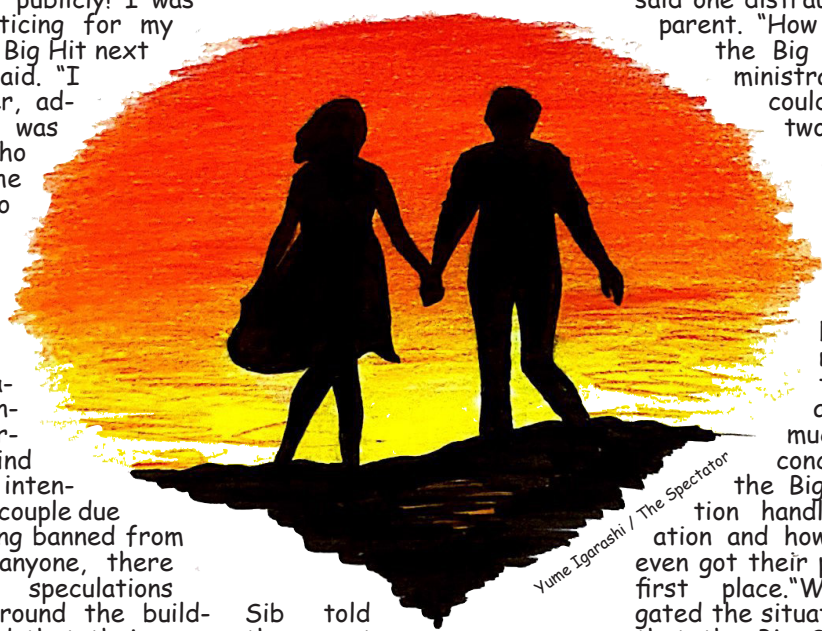
Several parents have voiced their concerns about the news. "We expect the Big Sib program to be role models for our precious children," said one distraught freshman parent. "How can we trust the Big Sibs and administrators if they couldn't even stop two cousins from running away to Alabama to hook up with each other?"

The Big Sib Chairs have also commented on this situation, as there was much criticism concerning how the Big Sib in question handled the situation and how the Big Sib even got their position in the first place. "We've investigated the situation and found that the Big Sib involved in the recent scandal actually got their position through bribery. A past Big Sib Chair received a \$10 Starbucks gift card in exchange for a seat in the program. The involved Big Sib will be removed from their position immediately," the Big Sib Chairs wrote on a recent Facebook post in the Dear Incoming 2024 group. "We want

all parents and students to understand that the Big Sib Program never has and never will tolerate this type of behavior from any of its members."

The program has also updated various parts of their application for their new recruitment season this year. "We now require all potential and current Big Sibs to sign a contract that states that they will alert us and administrators whenever a Little Sib shows signs of desertion, unusal sexual behavior, and murderous intent, just in case," one of the new Big Sib Chairs said in a Zoom interview.

The freshman couple is currently safe after being escorted back to New York by the FBI. They will be spending all free periods with Mr. Brian Moran, a dean at Stuyvesant High School. "I don't particularly enjoy babysitting cousins and making sure they don't kiss each other in my room, but it has to be done," Moran said. "I also want to emphasize that I discourage all Stuyvesant students from running away from school. You'll end up sitting with me and a photo of my family during lunch as I gossip about you to my fellow staff, and trust me, you don't want to hear that."



Yume Tzgarashi / The Spectator

Sib told them to run away. "I thought they were joking when they said that they wanted to run away from all the pressures and expectations of society. I assumed they were talking about their hatred for Freshman Biology, so I told them to run away to the closest state with the worst education so life could be easier, as a joke," the

Mobile Game Ads: An American Tragedy

By ELIZABETH BLACK

It is no secret that mobile game creators have used some questionable practices to earn as much money as possible in the rapidly growing market. Loot boxes, pay-to-win tactics, and other techniques have helped mobile games evolve from a market that focused on creating enjoyable games into one focused solely on profit and quick consumer acquisition. In an attempt to make elementary schoolers spend their parents' money on mobile games, developers have created some advertisements that are downright dreadful.

An interesting development is that these ads have progressed into none other than false advertising to cover up their poor design. After constantly seeing Homescapes ads filled with character drama and mini-games, I decided to download the game for the purpose of this article. Of course, it was the millionth "Match 3" game on the market and exceptionally boring with none of the "drama" from the ads. I'll never get back the full three minutes I spent before deleting it.

Meanwhile, even more desperate game developers have started to rely on pure scams in their ads. I have seen countless ads that show someone playing the game and then randomly receiving money through PayPal simply for playing. Since it sounded too good to be true, I sacrificed my dignity for my curiosity and downloaded not one, but two of these games. Both

turned out to be children's games that didn't give me any money but instead asked for my own. Naturally, the creators' hope is that some eight-year-old will make all in-app purchases necessary to succeed in the game and receive the promised PayPal reward. Thankfully, I'm slightly smarter than an

their evil creations.

Aside from being misleading, mobile game ads are easily the most annoying and cringe-worthy type of advertisement with the ability to ruin anyone's day instantly; it's imperative that the government take action against the havoc these ads are wreaking on society. Their

been lied to. Other ads seem to aim to annoy the potential customer through various tactics: some pretend to be an interactive sample of the game but bring the player to the download page instead. Others leave the audience staring at one photo for 30 seconds with little content about the game. They're made with no effort. Some occasionally do not have audio, and the same characters and content are used to depict several completely different games.

After much thought and research, however, I've come up with a theory as to why the ads are so poor. Most of these ads show up in other mobile games, which usually have a purchase option available to disable further ads. Perhaps these companies have given up on selling consumers their games and instead want the player to despise having to keep watching the ads and make the purchase necessary to avoid it. These ad companies aren't trying to market any other game but rather increase purchases for the one a player has already downloaded.

Overall, mobile game advertisements are a menace to society. If we track down the people making them, we can relieve ourselves of this pressing issue. They can't stop all of us. We need to rise up, call our representatives, and protest mobile game ads. We are the revolution.



Julia Shen / The Spectator

eight-year-old and deleted both games immediately.

Not only are these false advertising and scamming practices frustrating and evil, but they're also illegal. According to the Federal Trade Commission, ads that leave out crucial information or simply lie are considered false advertising and are strictly prohibited by the U.S. government. We can only hope that the people behind mobile game ads will be behind bars sometime soon, in which case we can all celebrate our freedom from

ridiculous taglines, such as "only one percent can reach the top," "noob vs. pro," and even "mom vs. dad," make me irrationally angry. How anyone, even an eight-year-old, can look at these ads and want to download the app is beyond me.

While I'm no marketing expert, these ads do not use the right methods to target customers. The ones that are well-designed but misleading may bring in downloads, but too many people will quickly abandon the game once they realize they've

A Survivor's Account of the Stuyvesant Civil War

continued from page 2

gym uniform. How could anyone pass up something like that?

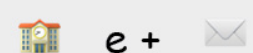
BBC Interviewer: What happened after?

Juliuseses Grant: Under the judgment of the DOE, Stuy siphoned much of the club funding into repairing the damages done to the building. All the students were forced to disband their factions and return to normalcy. Sadly, the administration decided that the bubble tea uniform wasn't representative of our school, so we were subjected to the ultimate punishment: the original gym uniform. On the bright side, Kung Fu Tea returned and we are actually grateful for the delicious nectar of the gods. We're ensuring that the store never closes down again.

BBC Interviewer: It sounds like a dream.

Juliuseses Grant: It's not...

Juliuseses Grant presents some bubble tea to the camera.





The Spectator

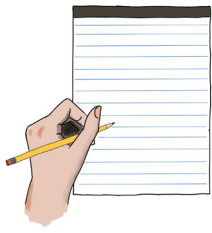
The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

"The Pulse of the Student Body"

Volume 111 No. 13

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stuyspec.com



SCIENCE "Why You Should Continue Taking Notes By Hand"

Science writer Riona Anvekar explains the scientific explanation behind why taking notes by hand helps us retain and understand information better.

SEE PAGE 19

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT "A (Wanda)Vision of Success"

A&E writers Asa Muhammed and Samira Esha discuss the global television phenomenon "WandaVision," a meticulously planned and executed TV event that proves once again why Marvel remains so pervasive in our culture.

SEE PAGE 23



Pandemic Prompts Regents Examinations Cancellation

By **SAKURA YAMANAKA, MAGGIE SANSONE, MICHELLE LU, and MAHIR HOSSAIN**

The Board of Regents announced the cancellation of all Regents exams this school year with the exception of four subjects—English, Algebra I, Earth Science, and Living Environment—on March 15. The four tests will be administered in person this June.

In compliance with New York State graduation requirements, public school students must pass five Regents exams: one English Language Arts (ELA), math, science, and social studies, as well as an additional exam in another subject. Under normal circumstances, New York State would offer Regents exams in 10 subject areas. Freshmen would take the Geometry Regents, sophomores would take the Chemistry, Global History and Geography, and Algebra II Regents,

and juniors would take the Physics and English Regents if not taken in previous years. This year, the only exams that will be administered are those necessary to fulfill the federal requirement to test students at least once in ELA, math, and science.

Many teachers were unsurprised by the cancellation. "We were all expecting it to happen. We were just anxious for them to make a decision and communicate it as quickly as possible," Assistant Principal of Mathematics Eric Smith said in an e-mail interview.

While non-AP core classes at Stuyvesant are structured to prepare students for the Regents, many teachers believe the cancellation will have little impact on how these classes are conducted. "Students at Stuy[vesant] are motivated by more than a Regents exam,

continued on page 8

Dr. Lisa Greenwald Leads the Ellington Project

By **JANNA WANG, JUNI PARK, SAKURA YAMANAKA, MAGGIE SANSONE, and RIFATH HOSSAIN**

Since the beginning of spring 2020, history teacher Dr. Lisa Greenwald has led the Ellington Project, which delivers food, clothing, toys, and toiletries to the homeless shelter Hotel Ellington. The building, now managed by New York City's Department of Homeless Services, has been serving the homeless community for over 19 years. Dr. Greenwald has recruited 120 volunteers to help collect various donations for the shelter. Some have donated money, cooked, or baked food to contribute.

Dr. Greenwald started the initiative in March 2020 after New York City public schools closed. "I remember reading about how things were getting worse for a variety of people and I was inspired to read about other people and how

they were trying to help," she said.

She garnered inspiration to start the Ellington Project



Courtesy of Dr. Lisa Greenwald

from her cousin, who worked as an X-ray technician at a local hospital at the time. "I started thinking that well if my cousin can be doing that and risking his life every day, I should get off my butt and do something for other people," Dr. Greenwald said.

Dr. Greenwald started contributing by cooking a meal for Hotel Ellington each week. From here, the project grew quickly as she spread the word in her neighborhood by hanging flyers to inform the community that she was collecting donations for the shelter. "There's a lot of disparity in the city. There are people who have too little and people who have more than enough, and the people who have more than enough are frequently more willing to give to the people who have less, they just don't know how. So this is a way to do it. And that gives me a lot of satisfaction, to be that conduit," she said. "If I just cooked the meal, [that] would be okay, but what we're doing now is much bigger than that."

Through her work and that of others, Dr. Greenwald expressed the more welcoming atmosphere that the com-

continued on page 8

NEWSBEAT

PSAL Sports resumed on April 5.

The annual **Stuyvesant Spring Fest** will be held virtually on April 17.

Sophomore Raven Tang delivered a speech at a New York Road Runners (NYRR) town hall as a **Rising NYRR Youth Ambassador**.

Junior Angela Cai won **first place** in the Association for Women in Mathematics' Essay Contest.

Junior Cynthia Tan and **sophomores Eugene Yoo** and **Sophia Wan-Brodsky** performed in the final round for the **Lincoln Center Young Musicians Innovation Challenge**.

Senior Keyvon Maybody and **junior Bryan Zhang** are both qualifiers for the **Physics Olympiad**.

Dr. Winkel Hosts First Virtual Cultural Exchange Event

By **ISABELLA JIA and KAI CAOTHEN**

For music teacher Dr. Gregor Winkel, hosting a cultural exchange event for his band students has always been a dream. Remote learning presented an opportunity for him to do so. "I almost always wanted to do something like this, but it was always obstructed by physical practicalities. Usually, when you have an exchange, the guest students stay with the host family, but that is something difficult to do in New York City," Dr. Winkel said. "Since I'm teaching virtually, soon this came to the extent of my vision and I thought maybe it would be an option."

Dr. Winkel's fourth period concert band students participated in a cultural exchange event with students from Abtei-Gymnasium Brauweiler (AGB), a high school located in Pulheim, Germany, on March 16. The event started off with guest speakers Principal Seung Yu, German Consul of German Embassy in NYC Herr David Gill, and Direktor (principal) of AGB Martin

Sina, who gave introductory speeches to students. Stuyvesant students then performed a musical piece to welcome AGB students, followed by videos created by students from the respective schools. These videos featured different school environments, foods, and activities from German and American cultures. Students had the opportunity to converse after each video. The end was reserved for sharing contact information.

Winkel chose to collaborate with AGB because of his personal connections to the school. "I was thinking of several connections I have to Germany. The daughter of my oldest brother went to [AGB] and graduated from there," Winkel said.

The event came about when Dr. Winkel's students showed an interest in his German ethnicity. "They started off asking me in class where I'm from and I started showing them in Google Earth where I'm from. After I did that, I asked students if they wanted to do the same, so we started to give each other tours of places we were from, such as Egypt, Italy, and several

other countries," Dr. Winkel said. "It was very interesting. They always talked about where they are from, their hometowns, what their favorite foods are, favorite music, etc."

This activity engaged students and ultimately developed into a plan for a cultural exchange event. "I thought maybe we could take it up a step further and ask [students] if we could do [a] cultural exchange through Zoom. There was a school up in Germany and they were all in for it. We had four students: [senior] Jenny Chen, [sophomore] Emily Lu, [sophomore] Eduardo Lozano, and [senior] Filip Markovic make wonderful videos, [while] other students collected questions they wanted to ask," Winkel said. These videos were presented by AGB students and Stuyvesant students to showcase cultural and lifestyle differences between New York City and Germany.

Students wanted to highlight New York through a non-stereotypical lens. "Through my video, I wanted to convey that there were many different aspects of New York besides the

bustling city and towering skyscrapers," Lu said in an e-mail interview.

Chen created a video of her neighborhood, Woodside, Queens, and showcased her German speaking skills. "Unlike the other videos, mine was in German. I initially took on this project because I thought it was a great opportunity for me to practice my German speaking skills, having taken German for the past four years," Chen said in an e-mail interview.

A challenge students encountered in the video-making process, however, was conveying humor properly. "Honestly, humor doesn't translate well over languages or culture, so I was a little worried over making certain jokes and references in my narration," Lu said.

However, many AGB students responded positively. "I also appreciate the humor that was clearly noticeable and that all videos showed," senior and AGB student Carolin Elena Kaminski said in an e-mail interview.

Other students also found

continued on page 6

News

Robert Sandler Hosts Three American History Guest Speakers

By EUGENE YOO, NADA HAMEED, and RUIWEN (RAVEN) TANG

History teacher Robert Sandler hosted guest speakers Amity Shlaes on February 10, Matthew Dallek on March 4, and Brian Rosenwald on March 9, over Zoom. With a turnout of roughly 70 students, the events offered opportunities for students to learn about the government and media during the 1900s from experts in addition to the American history curriculum taught in class.

Sandler first invited Amity Shlaes, who is a mover and shaker of the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Foundation. Sandler noted that Calvin Coolidge, the 30th president of the United States, is usually known as a president who did nothing. “Think about great presidents: Lincoln emancipated the slaves, FDR had the New Deal, LBJ worked on civil rights and had the Voting Rights Act [...] and Coolidge. He’s basically famous for not doing much. That’s the way the textbooks describe him,” Sandler said.

However, Sandler knew that Shlaes, who had written a book about Coolidge, had a different perspective—that Coolidge was an underrated and a great president—and he believed that her viewpoint would be interesting to share with his students. “The kids liked it. They thought it was interesting to be [...] confronted by a conservative intellectual who had radically different views than those they were used to, the way the textbook portrayed, the way I taught it,” Sandler said. “It was really valuable for them.”

Sandler also invited Matthew Dallek, a professor from George Washington University, after reading an article that Dallek wrote for The Washington Post about the John Birch Society (JBS). Dallek is currently writing a book about the JBS, which was a group of right-wing extremists who believed that America was succumbing to communism. Though the JBS is not covered in textbooks,

Sandler noticed the topic was similar to those that were taught in class and decided to invite Dallek to talk about it. “I thought it would be interesting because I saw a lot of material in the article that drew parallels to Q-Anon,” Sandler said. “The John Birch Society was afraid that America was going to fall to communism. It seems like in various times of American history, there’s this paranoid fringe of people with these extreme, right-wing beliefs.”

Sandler also felt that Dallek’s presentation had a positive impact on students as they learned about Dallek’s research process. “What made it so cool was that he showed the kids the process,” Sandler said. “The kids thought it was cool to see all the documents, to see all the research, and they also really liked the back-and-forth Q&A. They asked questions like how it was similar to Q-Anon, how it was different, so I thought that was really great.”

Finally, Sandler invited Brian Rosenwald, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, to discuss his book “Talk Radio’s America: How an Industry Took Over a Political Party That Took Over the United States,” which was about conservative talk radio and American radio personality Rush Limbaugh’s legacy on the conservative party and the media. “[Limbaugh] basically expressed the grievances that a lot of white men of the conservative working-class felt: that they were ignored, that their voices were being silenced by the cultural leads, the left, and how it would dominate our culture,” Sandler said. “And I don’t even think he’s in our textbooks, yet he’s had such a great influence on the Republican party, according to this historian.”

Through the three guest speaker events, many students enjoyed the presentations and felt that they gained greater insight into history. “The lectures were really interesting and some of them had presentations go along with them,” junior Candence Li said. “Stuyvesant is

really helping me realize how much I enjoy history, so having more professors and researchers come in and talk about their work is really fascinating. I would totally love to listen to more if Sandler can get any teacher.”

Others hope to continue learning more about topics that are not normally taught or known after attending the events. “I liked it a lot. I think it was a hit,” Brovender said. “I would definitely attend more of these in the future, even if extra credit wasn’t attached. I would love to see specialists on subjects that I don’t know about because it gets me interested.”

Rosenwald felt that the virtual nature of the event provided him the opportunity to guest speak for students. “If such talks were in person, they’d end up being both cost-prohibitive (for the school) and time prohibitive for me because of the travel involved,” he said.

Dallek expressed a similar sentiment. “Though I always prefer to teach and talk with students in person over virtual, the use of Zoom actually made the event far more feasible,” he said. “I live in Washington, D.C. and it’s possible that the widespread reliance on Zoom made it easier for Mr. Sandler to reach out and ask me to participate.”

Due to the large turnout, the events faced time constraints and unanswered questions. “The kids sometimes had a lot of questions to ask but there was not enough time,” Sandler said. “You got to think of it like this: it was 70 people versus three.”

Despite this, Sandler felt satisfied with the events as students were able to learn new material from the professors. “I got overwhelmingly really positive feedback,” Sandler said. “It was so exciting to hear about the whole process of interviews and [Rosenwald] actually played clips from Rush Limbaugh’s shows. It was exciting for me because I do new things every year. The last two were new and I think they were very very successful.”



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and NASA

WORLD BEAT

Eight people, six of whom were **Asian American females**, were **killed** in a **shooting** at three spas in **Atlanta, Georgia**, on March 16.

10 people were **killed** in a **shooting** at a grocery store in **Boulder, Colorado**, on March 22.

New York State officials reached a deal to **legalize recreational marijuana** that is likely to come into effect in more than a **year**.

North Korea launched **two ballistic missiles** as a **warning** against President Joe Biden.

Dr. Rachel Levine is the first openly **transgender** person to be confirmed by the **U.S. Senate** for a **federal position** as the Assistant Secretary for Health.

Similarly, Dallek felt that the event was overall successful. “I greatly enjoyed talking with the students. They asked terrific questions, offered lively comments, and seemed really engaged with questions about the John Birch Society and the legacy of the far-right and extremism in modern American history,” he said. “A number of students stayed late to ask me questions as well, and there seemed to be substantial interest in the issue of how the Republican Party became so extreme, how Trumpism came to be, and how the John Birch Society and other ‘extremist’ organizations cast a shadow over our own times.”

As a guest speaker, Dallek hoped that students learned

more about not just history itself but also how it is formed and why it matters. “I hope that students took away a sense of how historians attempt to puzzle together thousands of primary documents, engage with the secondary literature, and attempt to weave a thematic narrative that provides new knowledge and contributes to our collective understanding of history and why history matters,” he said.

Rosenwald added, “[I] wanted to expose [the] part of politics that is usually submerged for most people so that maybe they’d understand better how our politics got to be so fractious. And I hope I achieved my objective, but only the audience knows for sure.”

Dr. Winkel Hosts First Virtual Cultural Exchange Event

continued from page 5

the event exciting and informational. “I was surprised because it looked different from what I initially expected and I found the names [of locations] pretty interesting. Specifically, I did not know that they called the cafeteria a ‘canteen,’” freshman Sun Min Choo said in an e-mail interview.

Not only did students present videos showcasing everyday life, but they also shared different music pieces. AGB students played a pop song, while Stuyvesant students presented classical pieces. “It was really disparate from the music we created. Honestly, I was expecting a recording of them just

playing a really classical piece, but they actually sort of recreated a really popular song and I was amazed,” Choo said.

Winkel decided for his band students to play the song “Mer losse d’r Dom in Kölle” as a way to welcome the AGB students. “We created a little piece that I knew and usually played in a carnival in Germany,” Winkel said. “It was a way to welcome and comfort them.”

Students felt the cultural exchange event was a positive change of pace from regular scheduled online classes. “I love how Dr. Winkel arranged this and took his time to do something fun for us [...] I want to appreciate that, especially since online school can be very boring,” sophomore Cassandra

Fenwick said.

Students used the end of the event to exchange contact information with each other. “Afterwards, I even chatted to students via Instagram, so I feel like our first meeting was a success already,” Kaminski said.

This reflects Winkel’s goals to engage students in different cultures. “The main goal was to make the students interested in each other. I remember that very well when I came to the United States 20 years ago. I found almost everything interesting, when I went to the doctor’s office, the supermarket—everything was different,” Winkel said. “And that is what I wanted [students] to become interested in and connect with each other.”

Despite the amount of engagement, many students wished for the exchange to be longer and more personal. “I wish there was a bit more time to talk to the students in something like breakout rooms because 55 minutes wasn’t really enough to get to know them,” Lu said.

Winkel was aware of this when planning the event and made accommodations accordingly to allocate the timing better. “I wanted to make sure that I do not suffocate any student conversations [...] I was worried the videos could do that,” he said. “But, I think everything actually worked out. I gave some time in the end when they could communicate with each other.”

With this in mind, Winkel has possible improvements for potential future events. “One change would be to extend the time or set it up for at least two meetings to give it more time [and] work on the group sizes maybe,” he said.

Overall, Winkel felt satisfied with the event’s success and hinted at a possibility for a similar event in the future. “I really enjoyed it. I really loved it and I’m glad that students became acquainted and were interested in contacting each other and exchanging e-mails and contacts. If I were to do it again, of course, I would,” he said.

Chen added, “The cultural exchange honestly came out of nowhere but I really liked it,” she said.

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News

Pandemic Prompts Regents Examinations Cancellation

continued from page 5

and I believe that teachers at Stuy strive to make their classes more meaningful than just Regents exam preparation,” Smith said.

Math teacher Patrick Honner considered the possibility of the exams being canceled this spring but believes that students are prepared to excel regardless. “It’s always our goal to teach beyond Regents-level mastery, and that’s still true this year even under unusual circumstances. We want students to be successful in math this year, but we also want to make sure they are prepared to succeed next year and beyond,” Honner said in an e-mail interview.

With the majority of Regents canceled, many middle school teachers who teach Regents-level classes feel less pressure from having to fit the curriculum and test prep into the school year. “It felt like we were just rushing through the curriculum a lot with the Regents

hanging over our heads. Whereas I feel like now that it’s been canceled, we can maybe focus a little bit more on quality instruction rather than just rushing to get everything done,” Talented and Gifted for Young Scholars social studies teacher Emily Lake, who teaches U.S. History, said.

Chemistry teacher Kristyn Pluchino expressed a similar sentiment. “I’m really relieved because usually, you have to set aside time to help students review for the Regents,” she said. “I feel like this semester, the pace has already been really quick, so I’m glad that I don’t have to carve out a couple of weeks for review. We get to slow down on the topics, delve into more challenging topics, and give students a chance to practice and feel like they really understand the material.”

In addition to teachers, many students felt relieved upon hearing about Regents cancellations. “I’m a little glad that we don’t have to take as many just because of how difficult learning has been during

the pandemic,” freshman Chloe Tom said in an e-mail interview.

With the cancellation, some teachers have reflected on possible improvements for the exams. “I don’t think the Regents should be gone forever, but I think it would be a good time to re-evaluate how we structure the exam and how much information we put on the exam,” Lake said.

Others, however, are against the standardized nature of these exams and their presence in students’ education. “The insufficiency of the exam and the inequity of the system were incredibly obvious from the huge range of performance on the exam across the city. Not all schools have the same resources that Stuy does, and there are schools that have even more than Stuy,” English teacher Lauren Stuzin said. “If schools could decenter standardized forces like Regents or Advanced Placement [exams], they could focus more on teaching directly to the students in those schools and [be] more in accordance with what those particu-

lar students need, not what the state arbitrarily decides is good or right or needs to be learned.”

In addition to fulfilling graduation requirements, Regents exams would traditionally be factored into students’ final second semester average in certain classes at Stuyvesant, such as Geometry. Usually, the Regents score accounts for a large portion of a student’s final grade during the second semester, though the weight of said scores is up to the department and/or teacher.

However, there is still some uncertainty as to whether there will be modifications to make up for the lack of Regents at the end of second semester. “I can’t speak for other departments, but this is definitely something that the math department has been discussing and will continue to discuss,” Smith said.

For ARISTA’s District 1 Pilot Program in collaboration with PS/MS 34 and BELL Academy, ARISTA tutors will continue to prepare eighth grade students for the Living

Environment and Algebra I Regents. “Our weekly after school classes have remained the same, with tutors going over practice problems from previous Regents exams to reinforce the concepts and using other online resources in collaboration with the students’ teachers to make each session meaningful and rewarding for our students,” ARISTA President and senior Emma Donnelly said. “Our program is designed to encourage learning for the pursuit of understanding rather than solely for a number grade on an exam.”

Despite the uncertainty and mixed emotions, many are optimistic that the cancellation is to the students’ benefit. “This year, everyone needs to be cut a little bit of slack [...] Hopefully, this makes June a little easier for everyone. It has been a long haul since March,” Pluchino said. “Thank you [students] for hanging in and doing all the little things and being responsible and on top of your work. I’m looking forward to being back in the building.”

Dr. Lisa Greenwald Leads the Ellington Project

continued from page 5

munity has fostered. “I love feeling like I’m creating [...] a culture on our block that says everyone belongs. It doesn’t matter if you live in a fancy apartment, it doesn’t matter if you live in a transitional housing shelter. If you’re on our block, you belong. And that’s what the West 111th Street Block Association is also doing,” she said. The West 111th Street Block Association was created in April 2020 as an organization for both residents and local businesses of West 111th Street on the Upper West Side.

She also highlighted the

impact of projects and organizations and their contribution to fostering a more cohesive sense of community. “They’re doing their own thing, I’m doing my own thing, there are also other organizations, we’re all doing our own thing, but we’re able to come together and work on things together. And when you do that, when you have a whole neighborhood doing different things, it’s great,” she said.

She further explained that while living during this pandemic has been difficult for everyone, there are some who have been affected more severely and may require more assistance. “There are some students for whom it is very

hard, they’ve lost parents, they’ve lost grandparents, their parents are out of work,” she said. “When we’re putting all our energy into playing video games and complaining about how isolated we feel, it’s important for us to add some water to our wine, to think about what we are grateful for, and then to help other people with even greater challenges than our own.”

Dr. Greenwald emphasized the importance of assisting local communities and creating an initiative to help others. “We don’t have to sit around and say [...] somebody else will tell me what to do, somebody else will do something good. I can sit back and watch televi-

sion news coverage of other people doing good things. No, we should just get off our butts and do stuff,” she said.

She advises people to look deeper into their own communities and find ways to help. “People around the city ask how to help the Ellington, and I said, ‘Don’t. Help your own community. Do your own thing,’” she said. “Find out if there are any neighborhood associations [...] if there are any community-building organizations. You can speak to your local assembly person [...] or your local city government representative who often knows what is going on. The other way to get involved is if you see a problem that needs

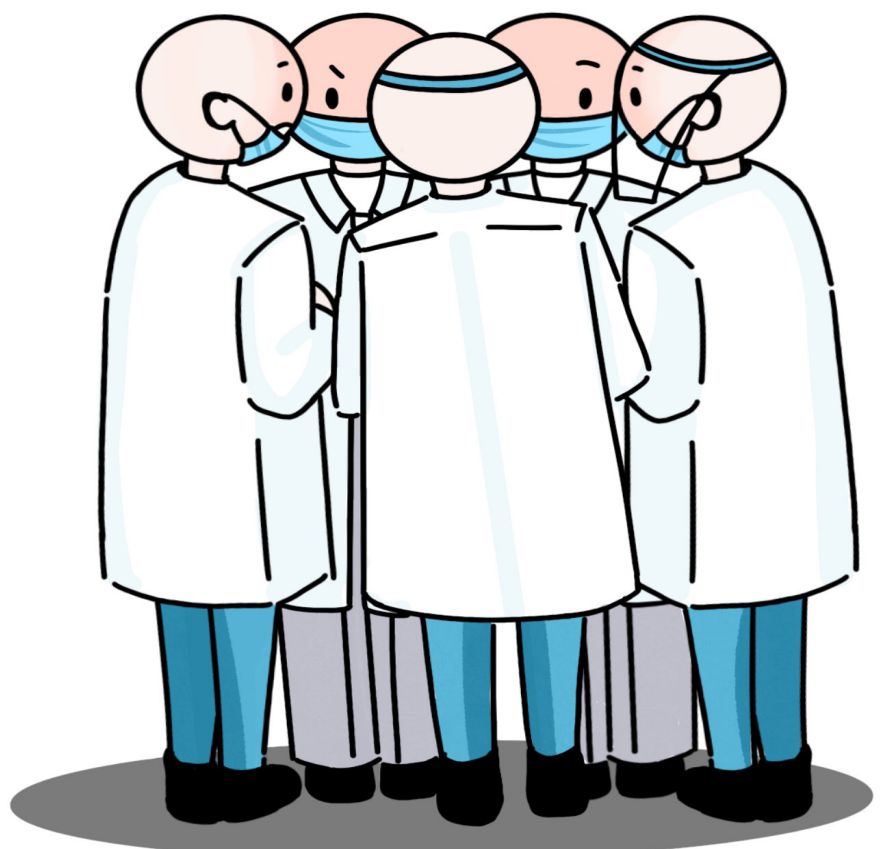
fixing, or that you see a situation that needs help, how about making a plan yourself. Maybe knocking on your neighbors’ doors or putting up flyers.”

Through the Ellington Project, Dr. Greenwald has found value in helping and understanding others. “My message is really one about perspective and understanding and being willing. That doesn’t mean denying your feelings, that doesn’t mean, I’m fine, I’m fine, I’m fine,” she said. “That might mean saying, I feel incredibly lonely and disconnected from everybody. I need to step out of myself and see other people suffering, and help them. And then I’ll feel better too.”

Dead Art



Ying Chen / The Spectator



Christina Jiang / The Spectator

What's In a Rec?

Teachers Explain the Process of Writing Recommendation Letters

By ISABELLE LAM
and KAELIANA YU

“Passed the class. Very engaged. Not violent towards classmates. 10/10 would recommend this student for your college.”

Or something to that effect. Most Stuyvesant students understand the general gist of a recommendation letter, which is that it should recommend. What is more of a mystery is how teachers write them, especially in the remote world—how do teachers get to know their students? How many recs do they write? What qualities in their students might they look for?

Nearly all teachers agree that a student must do well academically in the class in order to merit a recommendation letter. Social studies teacher David Hanna, for instance, requires a minimum average of A- in his class, as well as high scores on Advanced Placement (AP) and Regents exams to back up what he writes about students.

But as Hanna explains, sometimes these numbers are not enough to string together a whole letter, and it is for this reason that he gives students a brief questionnaire to add some more substance to their recommendations. “Sometimes the letter practically writes itself,” Hanna said. “Other times, it’s a real chore. Either way, it takes at

least two drafts.”

Letter-writing is most likely to “write itself” when the teacher really knows the student.

“It is definitely helpful if a student has a strong presence in class through their participation, or has frequently sought me out for help after class or by e-mail,” math teacher Brian Sterr wrote in an e-mail interview. Gary Rubinstein, also from the math department, makes special effort to document his students’ participation. “I’ve been keeping track of participation on this app, ClassDojo, which elementary school teachers use a lot,” he said. “If I [didn’t] keep track of [participation] and mark it, it would all just be gone in my mind at the end.” Beyond documenting the major participants in class, Rubinstein has also made efforts to get to know his students through extra credit videos: “I made some extra credit projects where people made Flipgrid videos, for extra credit or just optional stuff. Some people have done that and I know those people better because I watch these little videos that they made. That was an opportunity I had for people to [...] introduce [themselves]. Those things stand out to me.”

But no matter how many active, bright-eyed, Flipgrid-making students a teacher has in class, there are only so many recommendations a human being can write. “My second year

at Stuy, I said ‘yes’ to so many students (without properly keeping track), and wound up having to write nearly 60 letters,” Hanna said. “I will never do that again.” Drowning in a recommendation flood is a problem particularly for teachers of humanities subjects. As-



Candy Yang / The Spectator

stant Principal of English Eric Grossman was able to cite some statistics: “Naviance shows that some departments write, on average, far more than others, [and] some teachers write far more than others,” he said. Not only do English teachers bear the brunt of letter-writing, but they also help seniors write their college essays, and some-

times read several drafts from a student, which adds a lot of work to teachers’ plates. Grossman added, “The time it takes to write 40 recommendations is time that could be spent planning lessons and responding to student work and helping students.”

The English department has already attempted to dam the recommendations flood. English teacher Megan Weller wrote in an e-mail interview, “The English department, a couple years ago, [...] decided we would have a department cap of 25 [letters].” Over the past five years, Weller’s average has been exactly 25.

One way to re-distribute the weight of letter-writing among teachers could be to ask not just junior teachers, but sophomore teachers, too. “One big misapprehension that I think a lot of students have is that [letters] must be from a junior teacher. Really, [you should ask] a teacher who knows you well,” Grossman explained. Getting a recommendation from a sophomore year teacher instead of a junior year teacher is a particularly promising idea in the world of remote learning, where teachers do not know much more about students than the wall behind them on Zoom. “Normally, when students work in groups in my class, I go around and listen to the conversations and can get a sense of which students take on leadership roles, who likes to help others, etc,” Sterr said. “With breakout rooms, that isn’t really possible, especially when 85 percent of the time when I pop into a breakout room, everyone’s muted.”

Challenging as it is for students and teachers to get to know each other, there are still some ways to feel more connected. There are office hours. There is an unmute button, which you can click at any moment (perhaps the middle of a lecture?) and let out a primal scream. Then teachers will really know you.

VOICES

By KRISTA PROTEASA

A little over a year ago, the Stuyvesant routine we all know and love was put on pause. Now, the time for us to slowly press play has arrived. Just a few months ago, I was frankly too scared and too stressed out to even imagine going back to school. I’d forgotten all the joy of in-person learning, which I now realize I took for granted. But my internal suffering had gone on long enough.

Waking up at a relatively early hour again was as horrible as it was for as many minutes as it took for my brain to process being awake, but once that was settled, I brushed my teeth and put on a complete outfit for school for the first time since March. Yes, this did include proper pants and shoes, something many of us haven’t experienced in a while. I practically bounded down the stairs of the subway, feeling the adrenaline rush of barely catching the train before its doors closed, then it proceeded to accelerate down the tracks.

A comforting sight: adults wearing suits looking barely sentient as they pulled up their masks in between coffee sips, cold metal poles breaking up the blue benches, and the random yet calculated spotted pattern donning the floor. It’s been so long since I last race-walked down Chambers Street with fire fueling the soles of my feet while trying to avoid being late.

I greeted every security guard with some variation of “good morning!” because boy, have I missed people. After completing the most physically intense act so far of getting the second floor double doors open, I was met with the ID scanner, the newly-implemented touch-free

thermometer, and the staff waiting to check my health screening. The lack of people crowding the hallways reminded me of times I was incredibly late to class, taking the walk of shame up each step and waiting to be questioned by a teacher. But surprise! There was no teacher because I was... early? Nice.

I walked into the third floor gym and once again greeted the staff with the ever-so humble yet criminally underrated “Good morning!” It was indeed a good morning. I made my way to the seat labeled A9, right in front of the gym entrance. I felt so blessed. During the next ten minutes or so, I sat anxiously waiting to see who would come through those very doors. Some friends arrived! Nice! Seeing my friends at school has never been more exhilarating. We exchanged a couple words of acknowledgement and pretty much went about our days, characteristic of a normal return to school.

As people slowly trickled into the gym, my social battery immediately recharged. The rustling of papers and the clacking of keys livened the previously desolate gym. Since Windows didn’t want to connect to the WiFi, I simply connected to my hotspot. No biggie. First period physics had a whole new wardrobe today. Instead of the ripped shirt and socks in desperate need of a wash, class felt more like Meryl Streep in “The Devil Wears Prada”: so put together, so confident, so intriguing. Answering questions was a bit awkward at first, but I soon realized that no one in the gym (at least to my knowledge) minded me and my enthusiasm for the entire day, even in my breakout rooms where I practically burst out laughing at times. I completely

Back to School: 7 Months Later

forgot these people were all at home, and I was basically on FaceTime with all of them while being moderated by a teacher’s presence.

None of the staff in the gym were bothered by any of our activities. No one stared at me while I asked my teacher whatever random questions popped into my head. Since we’re all students, we’re legally obligated to have adults in the room, but they had their own business to attend to. Don’t fret, no one can hear you when the question asked requires a qualitative answer, and you said “16.” My face gets red and sweaty at times like this too.

To be completely honest, this was the first day I took legitimate notes all year, not just scratching some formulas and dates on a page and calling it a day. My note-taking skills definitely need some fine tuning but it was nice to finally be an active member of a classroom again. In my efforts to copy down every diagram, I actually felt myself learning actual material again, which was a wonderful feeling. The same real-life class sentiment remained when my teachers sent the class into breakout rooms and the first sentence anyone said was, “So what are we doing?” Class got ten times more exciting when I was put into a breakout room with all my friends who were at home.

“Where are you, Krista?” one of my classmates asked in one of the breakout rooms.

“The gym!”

“How many people are there?”

“Um... I can’t estimate but maybe around 15? 20?”

“Oh, cool. What’s it like?”

“It’s a fun time; I got my little desk all set up with my notebooks, my computer, and I can

even have my phone out. 11/10 would recommend.”

My second period class, Spanish, began with the same conversation, only this time I recited my lines in Spanish. Who would’ve thought? That day, Assistant Principal of Languages Francesca McAuliffe popped into our Zoom. For some reason, having an AP visit your class via Zoom is a lot more intimidating than having them sit quietly in the back of your real-life classroom.

At the very satisfying hour of 12:30 p.m., my biological clock decided it was lunch time. The next twenty minutes were filled with chicken, broccoli, and APUSH. Quite a lovely combo, if I do say so myself. Participating today felt extra necessary, as if I had to make up for all the lost time. I felt so scholarly just perusing around in an educational setting.

Every trip to the bathroom was a walk down memory lane. The rows of lockers lining the third floor brought me back to sophomore year, when I’d see all my junior friends sipping their iced coffees and slowly closing their doors to proceed to class. Ah, the good ol’ days.

Freshly stocked soap and paper towel dispensers greeted my entrance to the restroom, and I can’t say I didn’t miss this part of the school, too.

In short, all my classes proceeded as they always had when I was at home. I still participated just as much (if not more) and my teachers still taught the lesson of the day. The only difference was that I now felt too embarrassed not to pay attention as I was in an actual school. I couldn’t bear the thought of my computer freezing on me because I tried to play cool-mathgames.com while having 13

other tabs running. My priorities quickly changed. Instead of just trying to pass the time, I became one with the class. Instead of letting information pass through my ears, I felt like I was absorbing information better. My brain now returned to being the desperate empty sponge waiting to soak up knowledge I once knew it to be. Good to have you back, buddy.

As my last two classes came to a close, my glee was just ramping up. I bid all the staff in the gym and about the second floor a good night. I made my way down to Battery Park (which I know isn’t really Battery Park but everyone still calls it Battery Park). The tiny sculptures adorning the chess tables were still there and the flowing river, along with the boats sailing through it, remained unchanged. The small children still mosed across the lawn as well. After a few minutes of zen, I made my way to the subway for my journey home.

Nothing’s seemed to have changed, yet I know everything has changed. Going to school in-person is one of the best decisions I’ve made this school year. As much as we used to blame school for everything, from taking our beloved sleep away to forcing us to walk up what seemed like tens upon hundreds of flights of stairs, it’s the one constant in our current lives. The building that housed so many of our highs and lows is still there, unchanged, only now it’s an opportunity for you to take your thumb off the pause button that was the previous season of your life. Start a new episode, and see what plot you’ll get to experience. You’re the main character here, and it’s your choice whether or not you want to let another season pass you by.

Features

Students' Response to Anti-Asian Hate Crimes

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD and THE FEATURES DEPARTMENT

In light of the shooting in Atlanta, Georgia and the increase in Anti-Asian hate crimes since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we interviewed students and sent out a form to the student body on their thoughts and responses. Here is what they said:

**Certain responses have been edited for length and clarity.*

“As an Asian American woman, I feel that the Atlanta shooting definitely hits us differently. Those women look like me. They look like my mother, my aunts, [and] my grandmother. It just hurts knowing that one day, that could be me or someone I love. What angers me even further was that the police just dismissed it as him having a ‘bad day.’ No, it was a hate crime by a white terrorist. He wanted to eliminate his ‘sexual temptations,’ when in reality he just had yellow fever. He had racist fantasies of dominating Asian women and chose to act on them. The fetishization of Asian women and most POC women in general, has long been an issue that has yet to be properly addressed. When will people understand that my race is not just another porn category to fulfill your derogatory sexual desires?”
—Ashley Tian, Junior

“It’s hard to hear about this negative media because it’s a very sensitive topic. What’s frustrating is that if it was a minority who committed these crimes they would be labeled as terrorists. Meanwhile, the person who committed this crime is not.”
—Rafatune Myma, Sophomore

“Seeing the rise in anti-Asian hate is frightening, but unfortunately it’s not surprising. Violence has become a norm in the United States. Along with the Atlanta shootings, many elderly Asians are being assaulted. I have grandparents at home and it scares me if anything were to happen to them.”
—Iris Lin, Freshman

“It’s really upsetting to see everything that’s been happening. I’ve had countless peers talk to me about how afraid they are to go outside, and it’s scary to think that it could easily be one of us, or our family members, that get assaulted next. It’s been really frustrating to see our current socio-political situation pit minorities against each other rather than empower us to stand up for one another and against the bigger issue: white supremacy.”
—Anonymous, Junior

“About the Atlanta shooting: the fact that the spokesperson had the audacity to say it was just a ‘bad day’ for the culprit and the fact that the shooter blamed it on his sex addiction—it’s so hilarious. These people you murdered shouldn’t have and will never deserve to be victims of something you control. Your ‘sex addiction’ doesn’t justify your actions or the reasons for your actions. Most of the people who are attacking Asian Americans, Asians, Pacific Islanders, are racist and uneducated. They think that they are right to attack innocent people and their justification is simply because ‘they’re Asian.’ It doesn’t matter what race, gender, sexuality, etc. you are, no one should have to experience a hate crime or an unjustified and illogical attack because of something they can’t control.

COVID-19 began in Wuhan, China. At the time, the Asians and Asian Americans in the United States weren’t even in China. We couldn’t have caused it. Additionally, China as a whole should not be accused of the sole cause of the pandemic. For it to spread, it had to be because one person ate the food and got sick but gave it to others unknowingly. This being said, one person’s accidental action shouldn’t define all Asians all over the world. People didn’t catch COVID because it was spread by Asians. They caught COVID because people didn’t listen to the scientists, doctors, and medical experts. They didn’t take precautions as they should’ve. And they have the audacity to blame us, as if they were never wrong. It is absolutely hilarious that the people who attack us Asians for these stupid reasons are the same people who think they don’t need to wear masks and attacks Asians who are trying to protect themselves from getting COVID. And then you get COVID and now it’s their fault? The people you killed, the innocent women and men who were just doing their job, trying to provide for their family—some of these people are mothers, fathers, and grandmothers. These innocent people did not and never will deserve to have everything taken away from them for an unjustified and illogical reason. As for the murderers, the racially stupid and heartless people, there is blood tainted on your skin, blood tainted in your soul, all as a result of the evil deeds you committed. This is what white supremacy has become. This is what the world has become. To combat this, people must be unified and fight back together. No innocent person deserves or will never deserve the fate that the victims of the Asian hate crimes received.”
—Anonymous, Freshman

“I feel very frustrated because many people are still ignoring the rise in hate crimes and/or telling me that there is no racism in America. I had someone tell me that I was making a big deal out of nothing when I told him about the Atlanta shooting and that the attack wasn’t racially motivated. I’m so tired of people making excuses for white terrorists, and I feel like, in the eyes of the government system and the general public, hate crimes don’t matter as long as a white person commits them. If a POC shot a white person and killed them, they’d get life in prison, so why is it that when a white person shoots and kills eight people (six of them Asian), he is portrayed as someone who ‘just had a bad day?’ I really hope that Stuyvesant shows a strong front against racism and that the city actually cracks down on hate crimes (starting by identifying hate crimes as actual hate crimes and not just random shootings) so I can feel safe and accepted. As of now, I can’t even take a walk without being called a chink. It really is ridiculous.”
—Rachel Lin, Junior

“There have been various differing opinions from the media, from my family, friends, and peers about the motivations behind the Atlanta shootings and responsible parties for increased anti-Asian hate crimes. Differing political narratives or attempts to rationalize recent events from any political party don’t matter so much as the effect. From my experience, family members and friends have expressed that they simply feel unsafe and feel that no political party truly represents them and their needs without conflicts of interest. Many parents are worried about how they will send their kids back to school when reopenings occur. Many do not feel safe enough to gather with friends, go outside, use public transport, and be themselves.”
—Michelle Zhang, Junior

“I’m pretty surprised about the shootings and rise in Asian hate crime. And it has affected my community because now I get to talk about it with my friends. Before, we never really talked about world issues, but now we always share news with each other and keep each other up to date. And my family and I also watch the news just to see what’s going on in the world.”
—Shafiqul Haque, Sophomore

“I’m definitely more scared and cautious to go outside, though it won’t stop me from going out. I have a bit of anger, and just this idea of why: we literally did nothing wrong. The entire thing is stupid, but I do like how there is a lot of activism about it and lots of people are speaking out. People are being less quiet and it’s very nice to see support.”
—Pak Lau, Senior

“This has made me realize how much Stuy and really the whole culture around discussing race has failed people of color (POC) like myself. It takes a mass shooting to even start talking about racial tensions. And when my (primarily white) teachers do talk about it, they murmur sympathetically, show dainty PowerPoint presentations, reblog articles and say ‘This is so horrible.’ Do they ever feel like a parasite or a virus when they walk down streets? Do they feel the need to, like so many POC individuals, cover up with beanies and masks and cover up as much skin as possible to pass as white under fabric? I don’t think so. They don’t really know how it feels like, past articles and delicate conversations through Zoom and sympathetic Google Classroom posts. They—and other non-POC individuals—are supposed to care about brutal inequalities. But they aren’t ever, ever supposed to fall victim to it.”
—Anonymous, Sophomore

“It’s incredibly disgusting to me to see the increasing rise of hate crimes against Asian-Americans in this nation. It’s indicative of the harmful effects rhetoric can have on minority groups. Names such as ‘Kung Flu’ or ‘the Chinese virus’ have been used by notable political figures, including our former president, to describe COVID-19. This irresponsible and downright racist way of phrasing the virus has made people point to Chinese people as a scapegoat to take out their anger on. Trying to frame COVID-19 in a way that points to Chinese people as the cause of it emboldens bigots to carry out violence against them. It is one of the reasons the World Health Organization itself said that no ethnic or racial groups should be mentioned when naming an infectious virus, as it leads to indiscriminate violence against these groups as we are seeing now.

What also isn’t helping is the handling of this spike in hate crimes by the authorities. Many cases of racially motivated attacks have yet to lead to arrests, and when they do lead to arrests, in some cases including in the recent case of the stabbing of a Chinese man in Chinatown, the perpetrator arrested was not convicted of a crime. However, the most egregious of all is what happened with the Atlanta shooting. A white man, fueled by bigotry against Asian people, and specifically Asian women, killed eight people because he viewed Asian women as sex objects that were fueling his ‘sex addiction,’ instead of human beings with emotions and livelihoods. The obvious police response would be to call out the actions of this bigot. However, what we got instead was a police officer saying the shooter was ‘fed up,’ ‘at the end of his rope,’ and ‘was having a bad day.’ It is sickening to see the justification this shooter is getting for their actions. When there are cases of extremism carried out by people of color, they are vilified by the media and are used to justify hatred against their groups. However, when it’s a white person doing it, suddenly it is this nuanced discussion on mental health. There is no discussion to have here. This man is a bigot, and if not a bigot, a horrible piece of garbage who killed eight people. Seeing cops try to justify the acts of a racist simply emboldens other shooters to carry out the same actions. It’s simply disgusting, and I feel like if we want to see anything change regarding the current situation right now, we need our politicians and police officers to listen to the voices of Asian Americans and realize how some of what they’re saying is downright problematic and harmful.”
—Luca Adeishvili, Sophomore

“I feel disgusted by these hate crimes. I feel disappointed that many people find it so hard to treat people like people. I hope that instead of focusing so much on the perpetrator’s motive or life, we focus on those who have lost their lives. Let’s focus on the victims, learn about who they are, learn about their lives and their families, and support them in any way. Don’t give that murderer more attention, and please respect everyone because there is no way you know everything they are going through and feeling, and you cannot assume that based on race or other traits.”
—Anonymous, Freshman

Students' Response to Anti-Asian Hate Crimes

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD and THE FEATURES DEPARTMENT

"I will say that Asian hate does have a significant impact on us. I've talked to my friends about this and they're very bothered about it and I am too, because while I haven't personally experienced a lot of it, the fear that it could happen is so much more in my face. This is actually something that is really a problem; it's so much more prevalent now [...] The way that the coronavirus was talked about by the people in power definitely had an influence on other people and the way that many communities perceived Asians. As a whole, it's just how it's been for a while; it just hasn't been as recognized. And [given] how a lot of people say Asians are the model minority, people don't really care in the end because it's just not seen as a real problem. While the recent incidents and the rise [in anti-Asian hate] has been very problematic, I do think that it's important because it's brought so much more awareness to the whole situation, and people have started to care so much more about it."

—Julia Lee, sophomore

"I remember when I was younger, people would say all these stereotypical jokes: 'you eat dogs, since you're Chinese.' And I would say, 'No, I'm not Chinese.' That would be my go to response, and I feel like that is for a lot of Asians. But we fail to realize that they don't care. If we're all Asian, then they're just going to keep saying the same jokes, the overused stereotypes, and even violence as we see now. So what we need to do as a collective community is to stand up as one solid movement of Asians, together, to fight against racial injustice, instead of bickering amongst each other [and] amongst ourselves. That's the main goal of what we should do, [as well as making] our voices heard. It's what we've been avoiding for the past years. Going back to before, when I was a kid, you would try to fit in with all these dumb jokes, think they're funny, and go along with them. But I realize that's not a good thing to do. That just feeds into these racist jokes, [which] help feed into even more violence."

—Jinseo Hong, sophomore

"The Atlanta Spa shooting is horrifying and what is perhaps scarier is that the act of sheer terrorism is not even confirmed as a hate crime.

The rise in Asian American hate crimes is truly horrifying and unjust. Even in the most diverse city in the world, New York, there are still Asian American hate crimes. Many of my East Asian friends are afraid of going out now and overall my community has become more tense and afraid as I live in an almost entirely Asian community.

I truly hope Asian American hate crimes end in the near future, as it is not right for Asian Americans to be treated inhumanely."

—Rayyan Bhuiyan, junior

Stuy's TikTok Stars

By ISABELLA JIA,
LAUREN LEE
and AVA FUNG

Boredom. It's horrible to live through, but it's great for creativity. Stuyvesant students have experienced boredom beyond bounds during this pandemic, but TikTok has risen as an outlet to express pent up creativity. The expansive social media app has a specific algorithm that tailors to viewers' preferences, but some students have gone above and beyond the viewer status to become content creators, amassing thousands—and sometimes millions—of likes. These students have built their following through well-thought-out content and fresh editing and have gone on record to spill their secrets and stories.

Junior Emma Wong has many TikTok accounts, but her most popular account has amassed 20.4K followers and 540.3K likes. Wong typically posts relatable and funny content as well as TikToks that use popular sounds and follow trends. Wong's first viral TikTok was unexpected. "It was funny when my account first blew up because I posted it without the intention of it going viral, since I only had about 100 followers," Wong wrote in an e-mail interview. "My TikTok notifications and [follower] count just started going up really quickly and it caught me by surprise."

Wong enjoys the benefits of her newfound TikTok renown, including new internet friends and more followers on her other social media accounts. "It's pretty cool to have a following on TikTok, and people are usually impressed by it. Because of TikTok I've made good friends that live in all parts of the country, and my Instagram account gained over 2,000 more followers too," she explained. However, Wong notices a difference between the TikTok algorithm and other platforms. "Although I have over 20K followers, my TikToks don't get nearly that many views or likes because of how the algorithm works," she said. "I've noticed that this is the case for most people on TikTok, where they could accumulate a decent following but their content doesn't consistently get shown to their fol-

lowers."

For others who are looking to grow their TikTok following, Wong has some advice. "Post often. The TikTok algorithm seems to favor accounts that post often and will put their videos on the For You page more," she said. "I would also suggest that you post content that is relatable, so that people will share it with their friends

TikTok was rewarding, as they received support for coming out, which encouraged them to continue posting. "I was met with a lot of support, which was really nice, because I was fresh out in the closet. And I really liked appealing to the gay community. So I make a lot of LGBTQ+ based TikToks. A lot of humor-based content as well. No thirst traps ever,"



and leave comments. Creativity is definitely useful, especially if you're putting a twist on popular trends or sounds."

Sophomore Ruby Friedman also creates comedic and relatable content. Most of their videos are geared towards the LGBTQ+ community and document their journey coming out. Since last August, Friedman has racked up 19K followers and over 500K likes on their account @rubyfriii.

At first, Friedman felt animosity toward the app and only watched TikToks through Instagram Reels. "I had originally encountered TikToks through Instagram, because I was kind of an anti-TikToker, like I despised TikTok," they said. However, they started to embrace it as they watched more LGBTQ+ TikToks. "At the time, around March quarantine, I was heavily closeted, and I was watching all these gay TikToks. And I was like, 'Hey, that's really cool. I could try that.' I came out in April, and then I was like, 'I think I'm going to start,'" Friedman said.

Friedman's exploration into

they said. Over time, Friedman switched up their content style when they came out as non-binary.

This wasn't the only switch for Friedman's TikTok content, as they began to be known for fake piercing tutorials. Friedman made a fake nose ring tutorial in mid-September and got half a million views and almost 200,000 likes. From that TikTok alone, Friedman amassed 6,000 followers. After receiving their first taste of TikTok notability, they continued along this path and filmed more piercing tutorials, including a septum ring one and ear-ring one. However, they eventually lost interest and switched back to LGBTQ+ content.

TikTok following doesn't come without consequences, however. Friedman has also faced haters and death threats. "The worst thing is when you encounter the weirdos; the weirdos are the people who recently put me on a shaved head fetish page [...] It was very bad," Friedman said. "I've also not enjoyed the death threats. Those aren't fun. I get those.

Sometimes they're like random hate comments that are like 'haha, Baldy,' and then there's sometimes 'kill all the fill-in-a-homophobic-slur-here.'"

There's a different side to TikTok creators, though. Junior Paige Wolfing mainly uses her account, not to grow to a wider connection, but rather a deeper connection with friends. After she was convinced to try out a trend, Wolfing slowly started creating more and more videos. "I post a lot of different things, but mostly basic transition videos, outfit videos, and just any of the trends that are going around at the time. For me, usually when I post about Marvel or Minecraft, that makes the algorithm," Wolfing wrote in an e-mail interview. Her followers consist mostly of friends or mutuals, but a few of her TikToks have become viral, with her total likes coming in at 131.6k.

Wolfing has met a lot of great people from all over the world that she has built a connection with through the app. She was even able to reconnect with an old friend of hers. "I remember this one person recognized me after being on her For You page, and I haven't seen her since a summer camp we were in together in like fourth grade. It was cool that TikTok could bring us together again, even after that long period of time," Wolfing said.

While scrolling through the For You page, you might even stumble upon math TikToks sandwiched between dancing and comedy videos, featuring SAT math tips or tricks. Junior Cary Han is one of the pioneers of these math accounts with 2.3 million followers and 20.3 million likes on his account, @my.bummy.math.tutor.

He started in the June of 2020 in the midst of boredom during quarantine. "Basically, I was really bored. So I had nothing to post and I posted videos related to math," Han said. Regarding his massive account growth, he attributes it to his constant posting. "As long as you post consistently, and your quality is somewhat the same, I guess your account just continues to grow," he explained. "I normally post around three times a day. I post at 11 a.m. And then I post around 2:30

p.m. And lastly, at night around 8:30 p.m."

Han also attributes his growth to the lack of math accounts on TikTok. Thinking outside the box and filming math content has helped Han stand out and gain attention. "Math isn't really a loved subject, in terms of what people watch on TikTok, but that's why I did it. At the time I started TikTok, math wasn't really that popular. Because if you think of TikTok you think of like dancing videos or just like comedy. Math kind of stands out in that realm," Han said.

Junior Christopher Dou, another math TikToker, started his TikTok, @themathwizard, in mid-October of last year and has amassed 1.2 million followers and 14.7 million likes. He posts TikToks with the goal of teaching math to a mainstream audience, as well as spreading his love of math. "What inspired me to post was a while back I was doing tutoring and there were a lot of kids who kind of wanted math tutoring but they couldn't," Dou said. "I just feel like there are so many people I could teach at one time and a lot of these people didn't find math interesting."

Dou has some advice up his sleeves to becoming TikTok famous. "Follow the trends and use the features that TikTok puts out, like stitches and duets, as TikTok often heavily promotes them, and make sure that you get their attention in the first two seconds to make them not want to leave," Dou said. Additionally, he advises making videos that catch the audience's attention right away. His last piece of advice was much less technical. "Just try to be yourself. Don't be someone you're not; they can tell if you're being real or fake," he said.

All of these TikTokers have one thing in common. They all jumped right in, and that's exactly what Dou recommends. "For people who want to start TikTok, just go for it; don't be scared what's the worst that's gonna happen," Dou advised. Soon, you might find yourself hooked on making videos about things of your interest, whether it be math, art, or Marvel comics. And who knows... maybe somebody else will be interested too.

Features

VOICES

By ZOE BUFF

**Day 1:
Sunday, Feb 28th**

There's a pounding in my ears, and I can barely register what the dormitory caregiver is saying. Did I sleep enough on the flight? Definitely not. I landed in Germany at 4 a.m. EST, but in Munich, it's already mid-morning. The nice lady tells me to expect lunch at one o'clock. I stand in the doorway of the apartment until she waves goodbye. For five days I am not to step over the threshold. I shut the door. My quarantine begins.

Most Germans don't use wallpaper. The apartment is decorated with white plaster, except for the kitchen and the bathroom. I was expecting a room the size of my dorm, which is about 70 square feet. I got something more than twice as big.

There's a quaint little area for watching TV with a black couch, a dining table with two chairs—funny, 'cause who am I going to share it with?—a bedroom with two beds, a tiny closet attached to it, a small bathroom with a colorful shower curtain, and a kitchen about the same size. All three windows are large and square, framed by beautiful red curtains.

At first, I didn't know what to do. I'd never gone five days without being in the same space as a human before. Luckily, remote learning will keep me busy, but there are still so many hours left this Sunday. For now, though, everyone I know is sleeping in the city that never sleeps.

**Day 2:
Monday, March 1st**

I wake up around seven to my alarm. I've always been really good at adjusting to jet lag with six-hour time differences. It takes me a few moments to remember that I am in Germany. By myself. With no one to turn to if I need help.

I get to speak with my parents over FaceTime for 10 minutes before they go to sleep. Our call is cut short by the caregiver, who asks what I want for breakfast. For every meal I have in quarantine—except lunch, which is just the

same one dish for everyone—the caregiver will have to assemble a tray for me according to what I want to eat. Except usually the only option for dinner is bread, so I don't have much of a choice to make. They leave the tray on a table outside. I take it, and when I'm done I leave it out again for them to take away.

I put on some comfortable clothes and seat myself at the white table with my laptop, keeping it connected to an outlet. Video calls have a tendency to rapidly run down my battery. I take a variety of courses, all of which are required: economics, ethics, geography, and even physics—a class that most of my classmates have been taking for at least three years already.



By the time my last class finishes, my legs feel like jelly, and my mind feels like lead. In the few minutes I have between class meetings, I run around the tiny apartment, hoping it will compensate for my lack of exercise. In the fall, during the three months of complete in-person school in Munich, I went out for walks every single day and sometimes even went jogging in the park. I miss that freedom as I sit by myself, surrounded by white plaster walls.

**Day 3:
Tuesday, March 2nd**

The middle day. I think I'm starting to feel the effects of true isolation. I have been unbelievably lazy these past two days. My head is heavy whenever I close my eyes. I've lost all sense of time. I make elaborate plans of what I want to do and then I completely

forget them.

The caregivers—there's a different one every day of the week—are very nice, and they try their best to look out for me. When they bring me food, I stand behind the threshold with my mask on so we can talk a little bit. They always ask me if it's boring for me, staying in the apartment all by myself. My answer is yes, but I say no.

Whenever I receive my food tray or place it outside my door, I catch a glimpse of the world outside my apartment. The hallways of the Internat—the German word for boarding school—feel eerie and ghostlike. When the school shut down in mid-December last year, the dorms followed suit, sending all the boarding kids home and me

12th grade in order to prepare for university education. It only took me one weekend to decide I wanted to stay in Germany. On Friday we were touring the school, and by Tuesday I was moving in. Even though the decision cost me an extra year of high school, I could not be happier with where I am now, after spending three months in a classroom instead of a computer at home.

**Day 4:
Wednesday, March 3rd**

I wake up this morning and reflect on what an unproductive day Tuesday was. I had so much planned, but I ended up doing less than half of it. I promise myself that today will be different. Once school



is over, I intend to get things done. My head feels clear for the first time since I entered quarantine.

By the end of the day, I'm pretty satisfied. With plenty of tasks behind me, I have time to think. I find myself remembering what life was like a year ago, before the coronavirus hit, and I think about how much I've changed. I don't think pre-lockdown me would've ever willingly quarantined solo in a foreign country in the middle of a pandemic.

Bread for dinner, the fourth night in a row. I don't mean to complain, and, yes, I am fully aware that bread is a staple of German culture—our breadbox in New York is constantly stocked because my dad can't live without it—but this is simply too much bread for me. For breakfast, there are usually other options, such as cereal and yogurt, and lunch is

always a warm dish, but dinner is only bread. Bread. Butter. Cheese. Ham. Every. Single. Night. I used to like bread, but I don't think I do anymore.

**Day 5:
Thursday, March 4th**

Since yesterday was a good day, I'm in a pretty good mood today. I'm scheduled to take a COVID test tomorrow, at a doctor's office that's a 10-minute walk away from campus. It's a rapid test, which means the result will come within half an hour after I take it. If it's negative, I'll be free to move back to my room! I've never looked forward to going outside so much. Luckily, the quarantine was only five days, because I'm not sure if I would've been able to handle two weeks.

My classes end shortly before one o'clock today. Three solid doubles. Social studies, chemistry, French. In terms of subject matter, school was pretty light today, but sitting in front of a computer screen for six hours straight is enough to knock the wind out of anyone's sail.

After class ends, I'm still in a really good mood. I turn on some music and

do a little workout. The sky was white all morning, but in the early afternoon the sun came streaming through the windows, lighting up the entire living room. For the first time since I came into quarantine, I smile like I mean it. I think I'm probably just happy that tonight will be the last night of plain old bread. Tomorrow night I'm planning on buying myself a small dinner somewhere.

These five days in quarantine definitely went by faster than I thought they would. Every time I have a completely new experience, I ask myself if I've learned anything. I guess this time I learned what it was like to completely have my own space. I'm not used to surfing solo. It wasn't too bad, though. I think I had fun riding the current.

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Voices

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Features

I Stuy With My Little Eye

By VINCENT TAN

Scientists say scent and memory are closely linked—in fact, among the five senses, smell is the most closely intertwined with memory. With that in mind, what scent comes to mind when we think of school? What sensations do we associate with Stuyvesant? Perhaps it's the fragrance of the school cafeteria. Maybe it's the odor of chlorine from the first floor pool. Or maybe it's the scent of your deli roll, being made right before you go to school.

For Albert Zhang ('19), these are the steps he retraces when thinking of Stuyvesant. As a member of the class of 2019, it's been two years since he attended Stuyvesant. However, that time doesn't stop him from visiting and showing his friends his alma mater. "Whenever I swing by Tribeca and Stuy, I always point out [Stuyvesant] to my friends," Zhang said. He added that his friends had only seen the building in video games like "Marvel's Spider Man" (2019), in which fans can explore the streets of Manhattan as the titular superhero. "I show [my friends] how the game is missing the bridge that leads from the sidewalk directly into the building and how a river of students would emerge every morning and afternoon from the bridge," he recalled.

For Zhang, the building manifests intense nostalgia. When thinking back to his time as a student, he remembers the diversity of talents within the student body, applauding the range of activities students undertook. "At Stuy, there are so many people who do so many different things, it's hard to explain—let alone come up with—a stereotype of a Stuy student," he stated. Nonetheless, he still sees a unifying characteristic within their work. "The typical Stuy student

is somehow adept at procrastinating assignments until the last minute and still managing to finish and do well," Zhang added.

For senior Carina Lee, this knack for academia is deeply tied to the Stuyvesant culture. "Stuy kids are really hard working but in a way that is really not obvious. You might think someone has a lot of free time and hangs [out] with their friends a lot, but they study for tests instead of sleeping right after hanging out," she remarked.

This proficiency for education was also witnessed by Andy Zhou ('18). While recognizing students' strengths in school, Andy Zhou recalls the competitive nature of his classmates. "Everyone humble bragged and was constantly trying to impress each other," he said. On a more lighthearted note, though, Stuyvesant also reminded Andy Zhou of something more homely: "If you asked anyone what you should get for lunch, it would be a bacon guacamole chipotle from Ferry's."

The Ferry's that Andy Zhou refers to is Battery Park City Gourmet Market, a grocery store across from Stuyvesant. "I like explaining Ferry's to people because it's such an important part of the Stuy experience, but the deli isn't even called Ferry's," alum Alan Zhou ('18) said. As alums, Andy Zhou and Alan Zhou are all too familiar with Ferry's significance, as well as the friendly yet longstanding divisions between Ferry's and another deli next to Stuyvesant, Terry's. With Battery Park City Gourmet Market adopting its nickname as a portmanteau of "Fake Terry's," it, along with Terry's, would engrave itself into Stuyvesant culture.

Ferry's has long stood as a place of comfort for students in a work-heavy environment.

For senior Russell Low, these traits are factors he associates with Stuyvesant students. "Afterschool vibes brought out the most nostalgia for me," Low recalled. He thought back to the smell of food and the smiles of friends, contributing the laughter and funny conversations that often brightened up his days in school.

Additionally, Low shares Zhang's views in applauding students' abilities to function under stress. "If our school had an aesthetic, it [would definitely be] thriving through chaos," Low said. Nonetheless, he also recognizes its more negative traits. "We are all obviously smart and driven, but I think our worst shared quality is our low prioritization of mental health," he added.

Many other students share this sentiment, citing how Stuyvesant bears a reputation for constant fatigue. "The epitome of the Stuy student would be someone barely dragging their feet to first period holding a half-drunk iced coffee," junior Krista Proteasa remarked, describing how students would then participate in long hours of activities, fall asleep on the subway home, fall asleep struggling to do homework, and then continue this cycle. "[We are] a truly remarkable species, all in all. I wouldn't want it any other way," Proteasa joked.

Although Proteasa described Stuyvesant life with nostalgia, many onlookers view this cycle as daunting. "Since [Stuyvesant students] go to school in the city and get a workload that is difficult, they always seem like they have no time to spare and need to do things quickly—just like a true New Yorker," Jeffrey Tung, a senior at Brooklyn Technical High School said. Tung also noted an elevated sense of academic excellence its students seem to strive for. "They'll usually meticulously make their

digital presentations look perfect while adding more and more images or designs with diminishing returns," he added.

Tung's archetype of the excessively diligent Stuyvesant student is prevalent among students in other schools. To Staten Island Technical High School senior Sharon Zohirova, who rarely interacts with Stuyvesant students, Stuyvesant still maintains a reputation for its workload. "The overall stereotype of Stuy kids tends to be the overworked nerdy students," she commented, admiring Stuyvesant students' work ethics but also remarking on a darker underbelly. Just like Tung, Zohirova noted the school culture's detrimental emphasis on grades. Although students busy themselves with academia, such perseverance has taken a toll on the student body.

Though Stuyvesant's unrelenting workload has its downsides, Proteasa finds solace in the camaraderie formed between students while overcoming these challenges together. "I get nostalgic whenever I recount my late night video call study sessions with my friends that usually never resulted in stellar scores on whatever test the next day," Proteasa recalled. "Those, along with team bonding dinners with my beloved fencing team members will always take me back to the simpler times of when I was a freshman."

Through memories of late night study sessions or long hours spent on extracurricular activities, the dual nature of Stuyvesant pushes many students together, unifying them in their academic struggles and creating countless friendships and memories. Whether it's the smell of halal carts or the sight of a Ferry's roll, students and alumni will always be brought back to their time in Stuyvesant.

QUERIDA CLARA



Ardhana Peng / The Spectator

Clara Shapiro's Advice Column

Querida Clara,

"How do you deal with teachers that just DON'T seem to like you?"
—Anonymous, Sophomore

Those who seek to curry favor with teachers have many options. "Go to office hours," some people advise. "Be respectful! Show interest!" These people are wrong.

What teachers really seek is someone hardcore. They seek a student who is willing to go to the next level. I, for instance, demonstrate engagement by getting supersized tattoos of my teachers' faces emblazoned onto my biceps. I then surprise-reveal these tattoos at unexpected moments during class (if you look at the above art, you will see that it is a depiction of me doing exactly this).

Some people are not ready for tattoos. That is okay. Basic human decency tends to go over just as well with teachers, and I have never known anybody to object to an extra 'hello' every now and then. Teachers are humans, albeit with formal prefixes in front of their names, so your usual tactics of seduction ought to go over just as well with them as with any other people. Everybody seeks to be understood, and indeed, as the word implies, you must look UNDER the outer layer of a person to truly understand them and be understood.

Embracing Asian Identity

By ZIFEI ZHAO, LAUREN LEE and DALIA LEVANON

The first word someone hears in the morning as their parent wakes them up. The eager call of a friend after reuniting after summer break. Taking attendance in a classroom at the beginning of the school day. All of these events have something in common—a name. Names are more than just strings of letters and sounds; they can be symbols, have hidden meanings, or be passed down through generations. Some people love their given names. Other people despise them and end up changing what they are called. Others might even have nicknames or more than one name to compensate for different cultural backgrounds or relationships. In the Asian American community, in particular, people often find themselves in two cultural spheres. The uptick in hate crimes against Asian Americans has only highlighted the different identities Asian Americans place in their names.

Freshman John Fang's Chinese name is Fang Jianye. "The first character in Chinese names is the surname," Fang explained. "The second char-

acter in my name, Jian, means to build. The last character is Ye, which means success." His name is a symbol of the success his parents hope he will aspire to. "They want me to have a successful life," Fang said. "My parents chose for me to have a name that means 'build success.'" Fang's name affects him very deeply in his day-to-day life: "I like my [Chinese] name—I like the meaning behind it. It kind of motivates me to live up to that name, since my name literally means to build success. It makes me strive to be a better person."

Senior Yume Igarashi shares a similar sentiment. "My mother loves a certain manga company named 'Hana to Yume' in romaji. Some of her favorite manga series and childhood memories involved that company, and she knew that the 'Yume' part would be a perfect name for her daughter. She also loved the fact that we would both not only have the same initials, Y. I., but the same first syllable," Igarashi explained. "Yume" is also the Japanese word for "dream" and "Igarashi" can be translated to "fifty storms." Yume muses that even though her name does not connect to her on a literal level, it reminds her of her rich cultural

background every time someone says her name. "I am often awed by the elegance that can be found in Japanese, where a complex, abstract concept could be represented with one symbol," Igarashi explained. Through her name, Igarashi is able to connect with and take pride in her Japanese heritage.

Freshman Henry Ji also shares a similar sentiment. Ji's Chinese name, Ji Minyu, means to remember Yu the Great, an emperor who was known for his ability to control the Huang River. "I really resonated with this because I just thought it was really impressive that someone was able to engineer and create structures to stop and regulate an entire river. I feel pretty proud that my name is a tribute to him because I think he was an impressive figure," Ji said.

But beyond their birth names, some students have chosen to anglicize their names in hopes of better fitting into American society. Fang has gone by his anglicized name, "John," ever since his first-grade teacher gave him the name for easier pronunciation. "I think America really likes white-sounding names, and in a workplace, they would probably want someone with a

less-minority sounding name. My culture is really part of my identity, but my parents want a successful life for me," Fang explained. Many people in the Asian American community have felt pushed to either assimilate into American culture or get stigmatized for being too foreign. Fang goes by his anglicized name due to pressure from his teacher who made little effort to try to pronounce his birth name, a pivotal part of his identity.

Ji also has mixed feelings about his name. "Henry" doesn't exactly resonate with Ji because it lacks the uniqueness and cultural significance of his Chinese name. However, he appreciates the convenience it brings. "At the same time, I do really like it because it just feels very simple and like something normal, where I don't have to fuss about people mispronouncing it," Ji explained. However, he can not totally escape mispronunciations, especially when he uses his Chinese name. "[Non-Chinese people are] always confused about how to say it right and always ask me to give me a correct pronunciation, and sometimes still mess it up," Ji expressed.

This mispronunciation of names has had a profound ef-

fect on a lot of Asian Americans who have had their names called out wrongly and changed by others. With the recent spike in hate crimes against Asian Americans, more and more students have begun to proudly wear their name and culture. "I've realized how it is especially during times when confusion, ignorance, and fear have rotted into potent discrimination and malice that we must all both individually and collectively value and be proud of our own identities and what we can offer to the world and ourselves," Igarashi expressed. She believes that through pride in their identity, including their names, Asian Americans can tackle racism and hate. "I think my name holds more meaning for me now than before all of this started," Igarashi said.

For many Asian American students, their names have brought them pride as well as frustration. It is often a constant battle between appreciating the beauty and the cultural value of their identity while also living in a society that has only begun to scratch the surface of anti-Asian bias. But through it all, students continue to wear all their names with pride, embracing them as beacons of their beautiful uniqueness.

Editorials

Addressing Anti-Asian Sentiments

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, anti-Asian sentiment in America has been on the rise. Fueled by former President Donald Trump's racist and xenophobic rhetoric regarding the coronavirus, the historical prejudices against Asian-Americans in the U.S., and a stream of misinformation, violence against Asian-Americans has become increasingly prevalent. In the wake of the shooting of eight people in Atlanta, Georgia—six of whom were Asian-American—coupled with an increase in subway and street attacks, many are now fearful for their safety. In New York City, Asian-Americans comprise an estimated 16 percent of the population; at Stuyvesant, they make up an overwhelming 71 percent of the student body. The anxiety, anger, and fear felt by Asian-Americans reverberate throughout our school community.

Everyone is supposed to safely come and go as they please on the streets and public transportation. That, however, was not the case for the 89-year-old woman who was lit on fire near her home in Brooklyn. It was not the case for the 39-year-old woman who was doused with chemicals as she took out the trash.

Everyday actions, such as commuting on public transit or walking down the street, are now laced with fear. Walking or riding the subway or bus used to represent a sense of freedom, especially for many who have stayed home for months during quarantine. With in-person schooling resuming again, the idea of commuting to school is not far from students' minds. Neither is feeling scared. For many, especially for those who live in the outer boroughs such as Staten Island or

Queens, the commute to school is laborious as is. The possibility that their safety could be jeopardized simply walking down the street adds insult to injury. With the increasing number of anti-Asian hate crimes, it is not surprising for students to feel a sense of trepidation as they are commuting. Parents are telling their kids to be extra careful not out of obligation, but of true necessity, while kids are fearing for the safety of their family members.

The thing about hate crimes is that they are not isolated events. While the exact timing of the violence may be unexpected, their motives certainly are not. They are rooted in systemic racism and discrimination. So when we hear about these incidents through news outlets and social media, we grieve for those families and in a way, grieve for ourselves. But perhaps more importantly, we think about our own families and grieve for them as well. Our parents, our aunts and uncles, our grandparents. They could be next. It is a heartbreaking thing to acknowledge and it is even more painful to be unable to prevent it.

While fears and concerns over anti-Asian-American sentiments do not often manifest in our school environment, it is important to recognize the discrimination that the large Asian student body at Stuyvesant has experienced through acts of microaggressions. Many students can attest and relate to instances where a teacher confused them with another Asian student or continued to pronounce their names wrong despite constant correction. Microaggressions can take the form of backhanded comments that are often based on stereotypical expectations, such as "I'm surprised how good your English is" or

"I thought you were supposed to be good at math," depicting students as a part of a uniform model minority before their own unique identity. This is especially harmful, as many who have felt unheard or unseen in this environment, in turn, have stated that they felt they need to work even harder to distinguish themselves from their peers. In light of the increase in anti-Asian hate crimes, it is more important than ever to combat the normalization of these microaggressions and speak out to dismantle these implicit biases.

A step we all can take is to educate ourselves and raise awareness of the situation. Learning more about the history and pervasiveness of discrimination against Asian-Americans in tandem with challenging the monolith that the Asian-American experience has often been portrayed as helps us to better connect with our peers and understand how to support them. A part of this education is confronting our own biases. Racism against Asian-Americans is not usually explicit but is normalized and often manifests as microaggressions or ignorant comments. These preconceptions lead teachers and administrators to unwittingly impose their biases on Asian-American students. Being better-informed individuals allows us to be more cognizant and cultivate a safer environment for students to embrace their complex identities.

Building these safe spaces lets students speak up about the injustices they face, both inside and outside of school, and promotes understanding within the school community. Teachers should use the classroom to create conversation around America's rising anti-Asian sentiment, whether it is taking five minutes at the start of class to

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The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse of the Student Body"

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Please address all letters to:

345 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10282
(212) 312-4800 ext. 2601
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check in with students, amplifying Asian-American voices in lesson plans, or providing educational resources to students. Office hours or supplementary meetings can be used as ways to offer support in a more intimate environment to

those who are grieving or need a space to talk. Taking the time to inform ourselves as a school community of anti-Asian sentiments is a necessary first step to increase visibility and advance justice for the Asian-American community as a whole.

Haste to Reopen Schools Impedes Recovery

By ALEX CHO

Last week, my mother talked to After a year of Zoom fatigue, pandemic optimism rules the day as vaccinations ramp up. "The worst of the pandemic is over," sings [New York Magazine](#). The New York City Department of Education, whose speed seems driven by this state of euphoria, announced that public high schools would reopen on March 22. There are many reasons for this decision: virtual learning does not work for everyone, many students have seen their performance and mental health suffer, and it is difficult to keep up with extracurriculars. It has been a drain on some parents too, who used to rely on their children going to school during their busy workdays. However, the rapidity of the reopening is irresponsible and places the greater population at risk.

While most NYC teachers are now vaccinated, many remain unvaccinated, and [three in four New Yorkers](#) have yet to get their first shot. Sending 55 thousand students into indoor buildings where COVID-19 has the chance to spread through aerosols, especially when some of the more transmissible strains are circulating, is a serious roll of the dice when it comes to the safety of those who the students live with. We

must not throw caution to the wind despite our desperation to return to a life that at least somewhat resembles the one we lived pre-pandemic. Doing so only brings the risk of reversing the progress we have made so far.

School openings have led to a considerably greater spread in areas with high pre-existing case counts.

The process of reopening school comes with safety protocols in place, including masks, six-feet-apart distancing, and "pod" organization to prevent students in different classrooms from mingling. However, it's not clear that there's been enough time to fine-tune these systems and ensure they work. The [protocols](#) also appear less rigid than before. For instance, a confirmed COVID-19 case will prompt the quarantining of a classroom but not the rest of the school. This response ignores the likelihood of transmission through vents and

shared air circulation as well as the transportation that students take to school.

This commute, incidentally, is another large concern: most students cannot drive themselves to school, and only some have rides, exposing many to the dangers of crowded public transportation. While mask adoption in NYC has been a positive development, face coverings are not foolproof, especially as most of the masks that people wear are not medical grade. Certain types of masks, such as neck gaiters and bandannas, have been shown to be less effective at preventing the spread of airborne virus-filled particles. The protocols make no distinction between mask types or insist on the more effective N-95 mask, which is a worrying indicator.

Moreover, recently published research studies suggest that schools have not played a large role in community virus spread. However, these studies are likely influencing the wave of public opinion and articles in favor of an immediate return to in-person classes. Many reports have analyzed regions of the U.S. where school reopenings have occurred and concluded that the infection rate was not significant, especially when compared to surrounding communities without reopenings. However, other studies point

a different picture: the answer to whether school reopenings have led to increased spread depends on the situation. According to research published by the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Educational Research (CALDER) and based on evidence from Michigan and Washington, while in-person schooling has little effect on the incidence of transmission in places with low pre-existing COVID case counts, school openings have led to a considerably [greater spread in areas](#) with high pre-existing case counts.

New York undeniably falls in the second, high-risk category, with a moving average of around 3,000 new cases per day. Moreover, NYC has qualities, such as its unusual density and crowded public transportation, that have made it an outlier in the pandemic so far, earning the dubious title of the epicenter of the pandemic. Few other locations in the world have hit a moving daily average of 7,000 cases (as New York City did just a few months ago). As the CALDER data indicates, what may have happened during school openings in more rural and suburban environments may not be replicated in New York. Thus, many of the pre-school-opening studies should be looked at skeptically. Just because elementary and middle

schools are open does not necessarily mean that it is safe for high schools to reopen; multiple studies have found that adolescents above 15 are [three times as likely to transmit COVID-19](#) as pre-pubescent children.

Due to NYC's demonstrated propensity for COVID to spread rapidly through its dense population, we should err on the side of caution. While some studies seem encouraging, they are not conclusive enough to completely throw out all preceding care. Doing so places our entire city at risk. Nonetheless, there needs to be some reasonable standard to allow students to return to their in-person classes, which by all accounts are more effective for academic performance and better for mental health. The data introduced by CALDER's research only accounted for populations with lower infection rates than 20 cases per 100 thousand members of the community; it provided no evidence stating that school reopening would not impact areas with higher infection rates. For New York City, this process would require case counts to come down by about half of the current rate in order to reopen. We should demand a standard based on solid data and a recognition of the risks inherent in reopening schools but that still promises an end to Zoom class.

A Physicist Who Never Lost Her Humanity

By AYA ALRYYES

The Nobel Prize Committee has drawn scrutiny and criticism over their recipients' lack of diversity, provoking headlines like "The Nobels Overwhelmingly Go to Men" from NPR and "Breaking News: White Men Awarded Nobel Prize, Again" from HuffPost. There certainly is cause for these headlines: as of 2020, 57 Nobel Prizes have been awarded to women compared to 876 awarded to men. The disparity is much deeper within the sciences, where only four women have received the award for physics, making up a minute 1.9 percent of the total winners for that prize.

While some of these gaps reflect pre-existing disparities within the field, research has shown that it does not account for all of them. Even after balancing those disparities, women remain noticeably underrepresented in the Nobels. While it is important that the Nobel Prize Committee prioritizes representation and diversity in their considerations moving forward, it must also look to its past wrongs. Addressing and honoring women who have been overlooked is the first step in making the Nobel Prize truly meaningful.

No one is more deserving of long-overdue honor than physicist Lise Meitner. Born in Austria to Jewish parents in 1878, she was brought up to value learning and thinking for herself. Her parents, who had seven other children, insisted that their daughters receive the same education as their sons. From a very young age, Meitner showed a proclivity and passion for math and science and received private tutoring in those subjects, since public education for girls was limited. She focused her talents on gaining entrance to the University of Vienna, a pursuit in which she was successful.

After receiving her doctoral degree in physics from the University of Vienna in 1907 and becoming only the second woman to do so, she moved to Berlin, the "mecca of theoretic-

cal physics." There, she worked at the Friedrich Wilhelm Institute and met influential scientists such as Max Planck, who opposed the admittance of women to universities but regarded Meitner as an exception, and Albert Einstein, who would term her "the German Marie Curie." Most importantly, Meitner met Otto Hahn, a German chemist with whom she would work for the rest of her career. Though Meitner stood out as a brilliant mind, due to the gender discrimination in Germany at the time, her work in Berlin initially went unpaid, and she was barred from using the labs, "lest her hair catch fire." Instead, she did all of her initial research in a basement.

Despite these setbacks, Meitner did great work during her time in Berlin. She and Hahn formed the perfect pair, with her as the bold physicist and him as the methodical chemist. Together they discovered radioactive recoil, a new way to detect radioactivity, as well as several new radioactive isotopes, authoring nine papers over a two-year period.

Meitner and Hahn moved to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in 1912, where Hahn received the title of "professor" and Meitner of "guest." Hahn appointed her his assistant later that year, which was the lowest rung on the academic ladder but her first paid position. Though Meitner later ascended to the same rank as Hahn, her salary remained lower than his.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Meitner worked as an X-ray technician on the front lines until 1916. Upon her return to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, Meitner and Hahn discovered the first stable isotope of protactinium, meaning the element's properties could finally be determined. For this discovery, Meitner achieved significant professional recognition, receiving the Leibniz Medal from the Berlin Academy. Meitner became the first female physics professor in

Germany in 1926. Even then, she faced condescension and disregard, such as when newspapers [reported](#) the topic of her lecture as "Cosmetic Physics."

When Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, Meitner began facing opposition for her Jewish ancestry. While she lost her lecture position at the University of Berlin, she critically maintained her research

position at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. Despite the enormous stress of being Jewish at the time, this period was also when

barium (atomic number 56) was consistently a product. But how could an element split into a lighter one? He wrote to Meitner, who had fled Nazi Germany to Sweden, to see if she had an explanation for what seemed like an impossibility. She wondered if it was possible for a nucleus to split up into two smaller nuclei.

During a walk in the winter woods, Meitner came to the realization that if $E=mc^2$, mass could not be lost, but the nucleus could split. After calculations, Meitner realized this split would come to an extraordinary amount of energy.

Yet Hahn published their work without listing Meitner as a co-author. Putting a Jewish woman's name on a scientific paper would have been dangerous in Nazi Germany.

But some make the case that Hahn had been deliberately excluding Meitner from their work years before the war began. Even after the conflict ended and stability was restored, he did not revise the paper or the narrative to include Meitner. Hahn alone received wide recognition for the discovery while Meitner came to be known only as his junior assistant.

Otto Hahn received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1944 for "his" discovery of nuclear fission. Meitner, who had been nominated 19 times for the Prize in Chemistry and 29 times in the Prize in Physics, was not included.

Meitner was not only a bril-

liant scientist but also a moral one. Unlike many other nuclear physicists at the time, she tried her hardest to separate herself from the atomic bomb, rejecting an offer to work on the Manhattan Project. She resented the fact that it was her research that made such weapons of mass destruction possible. It is for these reasons that her tombstone reads, "A Physicist Who Never Lost Her Humanity."

Meitner has received some recognition for her brilliance and hard work. She, along with Hahn, was the 1966 winner of the Fermi Prize, a prestigious Presidential award. Moreover, the extremely radioactive element 109 was named meitnerium in 1997 after her. But these recognitions aren't enough. The fact that she was passed over for the Nobel Prize for a discovery that would not have been possible without her more than invaluable contributions is a huge injustice. She deserves the same recognition as Hahn, if not more, as she was the one, after all, who figured out the actual mechanism of nuclear fission. Even now, more than 50 years after her death, she remains much less known than her male counterpart.

Though the Nobel Committee has a strict policy of only awarding living people, ruling out the possibility of a posthumous Nobel Prize for Meitner and women like her (most grievously Rosalind Franklin, Chien-Shiung Wu, and Jocelyn Bell Burnell), a simple statement of acknowledgment of wrongdoing from the committee would bestow some of the recognition she so undoubtedly deserves.

The Nobel Organization keeps its nominations and deliberations secret, so it is difficult to verify if they have followed through on their assertion that they "will continue to work actively" on diversity. Such a statement acknowledging the injustice done to Meitner would be material evidence that the Nobel Prize Committee is committed to just representation.



Adrianna Peng / The Spectator

Meitner began her most important work.

Meitner became very interested in 1934 in the work of Enrico Fermi, an Italian scientist whose experiments suggested the possibility of creating transuranic elements, or those heavier than uranium, by bombarding uranium atoms with neutrons. She and Hahn teamed up again at her request to investigate Fermi's hypothesis.

Hahn found almost unbelievable results. It seemed that

Sia's "Music":

A Case for Why Representation in Casting is Important

By MAYA NELSON

When Australian pop singer Sia first announced that she was releasing a film titled "Music" about an autistic girl named Music (hence the title), it was immediately met with backlash. Though most of the information about the film had not yet been publicized, one crucial detail led many to demand its cancellation: Music is played by neurotypical actress Maddie Ziegler. Now that the film has been officially released, it's become apparent why having proper representation behind the camera, as well as in front of it, is so important, as Ziegler's portrayal of an autistic character is highly offensive.

The drama surrounding "Music" first began on Twitter, where hundreds responded to the tweet announcing the film, criticizing Sia for her decision to cast Ziegler. [The National Autistic Society tweeted](#), "Sia has got this one wrong. There

are so many talented autistic actors out there."

Sia responded to the backlash by defending her decision and insisting that casting a non-disabled actress was "more compassionate." Many from the autistic community also began to take issue with Sia's usage of the phrase "special abilities" rather than disabled.

This backlash might have been unwarranted had Sia actually made the compassionate film she clearly wanted to. In response to these criticisms, Sia tweeted that people should watch the film before making judgments. However, the content of the film only makes her choices much more problematic. Despite being targeted toward a disabled audience, the movie is a cacophony of loud noises and bright colors, making it the embodiment of the phrase "sensory overload." Additionally, the depiction of autism in the film is extremely offensive. Ziegler uses stereo-

typical characterizations of autistic people in her portrayal of Music, and her movements and facial expressions are heavily exaggerated. Rather than representing the autistic community, she is mocking them. To top it all off, the film encourages using prone restraint, a violent technique used to subdue autistic people that can lead to extreme trauma and in some cases death. The film ignores the harmful implications of using restraint and simply describes it as "crushing with one's love."

The movie's inaccurate representation of autism shows why proper representation is important when it comes to casting. Sia could have casted plenty of talented autistic actresses to play Music, but she chose someone who she thought would be easier to work with. The issue with casting non-disabled actors extends beyond misrepresentation: rather than portraying the actual soul and personality of a

character, abled actors tend to focus too much on the physical characteristics of a disability—which is exactly what Ziegler did. To play a character, one has to have a deep understanding of the character's mindset and personality. The best actors are the ones who get inside their characters' heads, which is what most abled actors cannot do when it comes to representing disabled characters. Rather, disabled characters should be played by disabled actors.

"Music" also brings up the trope of disabled characters being treated as props and aiding the growth of an abled main character. Despite being marketed as a film about Music, she ends up only serving the purpose of teaching Zu, the main character struggling with addiction, how to find joy in a world that may seem bleak. Music has little to no development throughout the film, which sends a message that people are defined by their disabilities and

only serve to help others grow.

"Music" is not the first film, nor will it be the last, to offensively portray a disability. Stereotypes, improper casting, and the secondary treatment of minority groups are issues that we must strive toward resolving. Ableism is often overlooked in society, which is why it is even more important to stop the cycle of inaccurate depictions of disabled people by having better representation in casting. It is important to speak out and criticize media that cast a harmful light on groups that already receive minimal representation. Voice your opinion on whatever platform you can as spreading awareness of misrepresentation is the first step toward eliminating it. The impact of seeing an accurate portrayal of oneself on the big screen, especially when it is not done so often, is tremendous: it allows one to have characters to relate to and can make one feel seen—that one's story is being told.

Opinions

The Feminist Shampoo

By ANISHA SINGHAL

Feminism is the new trend that advertisers are trying to capitalize on. Slogans like “It doesn’t matter who wears the pants, as long as they are clean” (Tide), “Color for lips that speak up” (MAC), and “Advil: mansplaining relief” (Advil) are appearing more frequently. While pro-feminism advertisements seemingly come off as supportive of the feminist movement, these companies are only profiting off of the commoditization of feminism without actively supporting the cause. For instance, while MAC is supposedly encouraging women to speak up, they have also been called out for various instances of racism, including racially motivated firings. Companies can give the impression of being progressive without implementing any progressive policies in the workplace or donating to feminist organizations; all they have to do is put up a couple of pink posters calling for #GirlPower to be considered “woke.”

When companies advertise, they often keep the demographics of their customers in mind. Considering that 85 percent of purchases are made or influenced by women, assimilating feminism into their

marketing strategies is a smart move for companies. For the feminist movement, however, such marketing is counter-productive. As Andi Zeisler, the founder of the feminist organization [EXPLETIVE] Media, pointed out, “Marketplace feminism comes to steal the show from more explicit active feminism.” The average consumer is unaware of the distinction between active feminism and marketplace feminism. By purchasing a product that has been marketed as femi-

nist, pockets of any organization working toward that change, and feminism is often just for show.

Commoditization of feminism encourages symbolic feminism and develops a false sense of progress. Companies often appoint one woman to an executive position and check the diversity box without paving a path for other women to follow. The institutions and

through advertising without solving the root of the problem. While companies appear to be making some effort, either through advertisements or symbolic promotions, they don’t have to work hard or have an incentive to facilitate more meaningful changes, like closing the wage gap, weeding out inappropriate employees, granting longer maternity and paternity leaves, and preventing sexist promotions or demotions.

Furthermore, using a social movement as a marketing strategy patronizes the cause. In a publicity tactic, Burger King tweeted, “Women belong in the kitchen.” After grabbing people’s attention and creating an uproar for making such an atrocious statement, they followed up with another tweet explaining: “If they want to, of course. Yet only 20 percent of chefs are women.” Sexism should not be thrown around for a catchy advertisement. Millions of women around the world are trapped by the “women belong in the kitchen” mentality, where families and cultures often discourage women from pursuing their own careers and passions to take care of their families instead. Though Burger King claims that it is on a mission

to change the gender ratio through culinary scholarships for women, these are simply empty statements without clear goals and results.

Companies, inherently driven by profit, cannot drive change without quantitative goals to hold them accountable. Changes like women’s suffrage, independence, and harassment policies all come from organizations dedicated to attaining social and political justice. The Women’s Rights Project successfully pushed to lift the ban on women in combat, the National Organization for Women has led the charge for pro-choice policies, and The National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education lobbied vigorously for Title IX, which forbids gender discrimination in schools. By commoditizing the social movement, we are drawing attention away from such organizations which are actively involved in feminist change and toward companies hoping to scrape some profit off a “trend.” When we see feminism everywhere, the part of the movement that is genuinely pushing for change is easily overlooked. And while the flashy ads are more visible, their impact is pernicious.



a consumer is left with the impression of supporting a progressive company. Most of the time, however, the consumer’s money never touches the

power structures that perpetuate the gender divide and discrimination in the workplace can be ignored, so long as companies put up a facade of progress

Stop the Silence

By GULAM MONAWARAH

Eight people, including six Asian American women, were ruthlessly [murdered](#) at three salons in Atlanta, Georgia on March 16. The victims were identified as Soon Chung Park, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Yong Ae Yue, Delaina Ashley Yaun, Xiaojie Tan, Daoyou Feng, and Paul Andre Michels. The suspect, Robert Aaron Long, who was seen frequenting the salons, has now been charged with four counts of murder and one count of assault.

The deaths of these innocent people have sparked nationwide outrage, with many believing that the attack was racially motivated. Since the initial outbreak of COVID-19, hate crimes against the Asian community have spiked. Stop AAPI Hate, an organization founded in 2020 in response to increased anti-Asian sentiment since the pandemic began, reports that at least [3,800](#) anti-Asian attacks have occurred during the pandemic. Asian American hate is real, and it is destroying thousands of lives every day while people continue to make excuses.

There are countless instances of violent attacks on Asian Americans that have happened in the past year alone. Elderly Asian Americans in particular are becoming increasingly targeted. In San Francisco, California, Xiao Zhen Xie, a [75-year-old Asian woman](#), was brutally attacked in broad daylight on March 17 by a male named Steven Jenkins, who hit her in the face and caused a swollen, bloody eye. Xie fought back with a wooden stick she found near her and injured Jenkins, who was then handcuffed to a stretcher and taken to an ambulance. Meanwhile, the victim frantically begged passersby to help her, repeatedly exclaim-

ing in Chinese, “You bum, why did you hit me? This bum, he hit me.”

A similar attack took place in Oakland, California, where a 91-year-old man was brutally shoved to the ground by a young black man in a hoodie. In a different incident, a Chinese woman was attacked in the midst of a crowded city sidewalk outside of a bakery. The assaulter came out of a store, carrying a large box, threw it straight at her face, and shoved her to the ground. Despite this attack, few people stopped to help her or attempted to catch

community. He has called COVID-19 racist nicknames, such as “kung-flu” and “the Chinese virus.” When we allow significant figures to spread this rhetoric, it encourages others to feel and act the same exact way.

Many attacks against Asian Americans are verbal and are equally damaging and telling. During an investigation, several people found Captain Jay Baker, a Georgia sheriff who spoke at a news conference about Long, promoting shirts that said “COVID-19: Imported Virus from Chy-na.” He no doubt took inspiration from the countless ac-

during the important meeting. Rhetoric like this instance diminishes the severity of Asian American discrimination; it is not appropriate to talk about lynching people in a joking way. Representative Grace Meng of New York [called him out](#) for it, claiming that his language was dangerous and will likely put “a bullseye on the back of Asian Americans across this country, on our grandparents, on our kids.” It is possible that people will take Roy’s statements far too seriously and cause increased violence either in the name of justice or hatred.

He viewed the spas as “a [temptation for him](#) that he wanted to eliminate.” However, these are just excuses for racism against Asian Americans. We cannot use sex addictions to justify the deaths of Asian Americans because doing so downplays the clear racism coming from citizens and politicians alike.

Additionally, [Baker’s claim](#) that “yesterday was a really bad day for [Long], and this is what he did” downplays not only the severity of Long’s actions but also the deaths of eight innocent people. Baker’s insensitive words dismiss the sadness that the Asian American community is feeling right now. We must understand that similar language coming from government officials is the problem. When we diminish the deaths of an entire community in this manner, we also show that we do not care.

But we have to; we need to care. We must stop making excuses for racist behavior. I am tired of seeing politicians and government officials excuse assaults against Asian Americans. We can no longer ignore these warning signs as we have done since the start of the pandemic. We must continue to raise awareness about racism against Asian Americans through mediums such as social media and condemn those who openly display racist behavior. Another way is to donate to trustworthy organizations, such as Stop AAPI Hate, or victim memorial funds to help directly.

Do not ignore current Asian American racism, and do not make excuses for it. Do not allow normal citizens or high-ranking government officials to dismiss the large problem at hand. Lastly, make sure to help the Asian American community in whichever way you can: financially, publicly, or emotionally.

Even then, it would be incorrect to say that the pandemic “caused” this wave of racism that has plagued our country. Many influential politicians have publicly degraded entire communities in the past few years.

the man who hurt her.

These examples do not even scratch the surface of the injustices toward the Asian American community in our nation and the innocent victims who have been hurt since the pandemic began. Even then, it would be incorrect to say that the pandemic “caused” this wave of racism that has plagued our country.

Many influential politicians have publicly degraded entire communities in the past few years. Former President Donald Trump is a large propagator of several racist ideas who used his position to spread hateful rhetoric toward those communities. He pandered to the racist mindsets of many Republicans instead of spreading the truth, which was made clear with the kind of language Trump used toward the Asian American

community. He has called COVID-19 racist nicknames, such as “kung-flu” and “the Chinese virus.”

Language from powerful government officials toward the Asian American community also tends to be racist and dismissive, which is a significant problem when we try to open up important conversations about race relations. A recent example is when GOP Representative Chip Roy spoke in a House Judiciary Committee meeting on the rise of violence against Asian Americans. While he seemed to side with the Asian community, [he said](#), “There’s an old saying in Texas about ‘find all the rope in Texas and get a tall oak tree.’ You know, we take justice very seriously, and we ought to do that. Round up the bad guys. That’s what we believe.” This remark was insensitive and disrespectful to say

Not only does behavior like this example encourage hatred towards minorities, but it also allows the perpetrators to get away with their crimes by diminishing the severity of hate crimes. When George Floyd was murdered, countless social media users immediately came to the police officers’ defense, saying that he was previously resisting arrest but the camera did not catch it or that the policemen were almost in the right for choking him because Floyd had a criminal record. This practice of rationalizing the wrongdoer’s actions is happening with Long right now. Those who knew Long on a personal level, and even Long himself, claim that he has a sex addiction so serious that it could be the sole motivator for his murder in the salons. He told the Cherokee County Sheriff’s Of-

In Response to “A People Abandoned”

By MAYA DUNAYER
and JOSHUA GINDIS

In Issue 11 of The Spectator, Opinions writer Aya Alryyes’s article, “[A People Abandoned](#),” criticizes Israel’s vaccine distribution to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. It discusses the “occupation” of Gaza and other territories by the Israeli government and asserts that Israel should be responsible for vaccinating all Palestinians. We would like to break down the claims made in the article and show that Israel is not obligated to distribute vaccines to Palestinians but is still doing it anyway.

The territories of the West Bank and Gaza are divided into three zones: Areas A, B, and C. Area A is governed by the Palestinian Authority (PA), Area C is controlled by the Israeli government, and Area B falls under shared jurisdiction of the two entities. The article points out that the Geneva Convention tasks occupying powers with the maintenance of the public health of their occupied territories, identifying Area C of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip as occupied territories. However, the [Hague Regulations](#) define occupation as being “actually placed under the authority of [a] hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised.” This definition does not extend to Gaza, which is designated Area A and has not been under Israeli control since 2007.

Since then, Israel has blocked the Gaza Strip to protect Israeli citizens from “terrorism, rocket attacks and any other hostile activity,” which Alryyes deems “de facto occupation” even though it does not meet the internationally agreed-up-

on criteria. Israel is no more responsible for the administration of public health in Gaza than Egypt, which also shares a border with and blockades Gaza. Only Area C meets the criteria for occupation, and in this regard, we agree with Alryyes that Israel has an obligation to distribute vaccines to all those living in Area C. This distinction has not stopped Israel from already distributing vaccines to Palestinians outside these areas.

Israel has administered vaccines and facilitated their transport to PA-controlled regions. It allowed the first vaccines into Gaza through the blockade since the second week of February and has been continuing its vaccination efforts in the region since. Furthermore, Israel [permitted](#) a 40 thousand vaccine shipment from the United Arab Emirates to enter Gaza on March 18. Israel began its [two-week campaign](#) to vaccinate over 100 thousand Palestinians who carry Israeli work permits as of March 8. This campaign consists of setting up eight vaccination centers along the border between Israel and the Palestinian territories. These centers have the ability to vaccinate 1,000 people per day. It also opened four vaccination clinics at industrial centers within the West Bank. More help is on the way, however, as the PA has announced that it will be receiving 37 thousand Pfizer-BioNTech doses and 168 thousand AstraZeneca doses in the coming months.

Many say Israel has not vaccinated enough Palestinians or has blocked access to vaccines in these territories for any significant amount of time. The healthcare systems in Israel are superior to those in Palestine. Israel’s healthcare system consists of four main providers

that are connected to a national network that is constantly updated with patient records. This system makes it incredibly easy for Israelis to book and receive vaccine appointments, which they can do by phone or by text message. Though Palestine does have a healthcare system with compulsory enrollment, the standard care for a healthy individual is much lower. [The PA](#) spent about \$294 per Palestinian in 2012, as compared to

Jews in the same age group. This distribution is clearly not a matter of Israeli discrimination against any group since it is beneficial to Palestinians and Israelis alike to vaccinate the entire country. As U.S. State Department spokesman [Ned Price](#) put it, “We believe it’s important for Palestinians to achieve increased access to COVID vaccine in the weeks ahead. We believe it’s important for their own—for their

cines. The Independent Commission for Human Rights, a Palestinian human rights group, has accused Palestinian officials of distributing vaccines meant for healthcare workers to other politicians and their friends. Palestinian officials were initially opposed to receiving vaccines from Israel. [One official said](#), “We are working on our own to obtain the vaccine from a number of sources. We are not a department in the Israeli Defense Ministry. We have our own government and Ministry of Health, and they are making huge efforts to get the vaccine.” Communication must precede collaboration between Israel and the PA. If the PA denies the aid offered to them, then Israel cannot be accused of not providing vaccines to Palestinians. Ultimately, it is clear that Israel’s incredible vaccination efforts also extend to their work in Palestine, even though they are not legally obligated to administer these vaccinations.

The Israeli government is not being negligent and immoral in regard to the distribution of vaccines in Palestine and is actually doing more than is legally expected of them. Those who claim that the Israeli government is not doing enough to vaccinate Palestinians are using the COVID-19 vaccine as a political weapon to demonize the state of Israel. This claim is not a fair assessment of the work that Israeli officials are doing in order to get the vaccine to everyone, regardless of where they live within the region. It is essential that in the face of COVID-19, we band together to administer the vaccine as efficiently as possible, rather than being counterproductive by accusing certain groups of not doing enough.

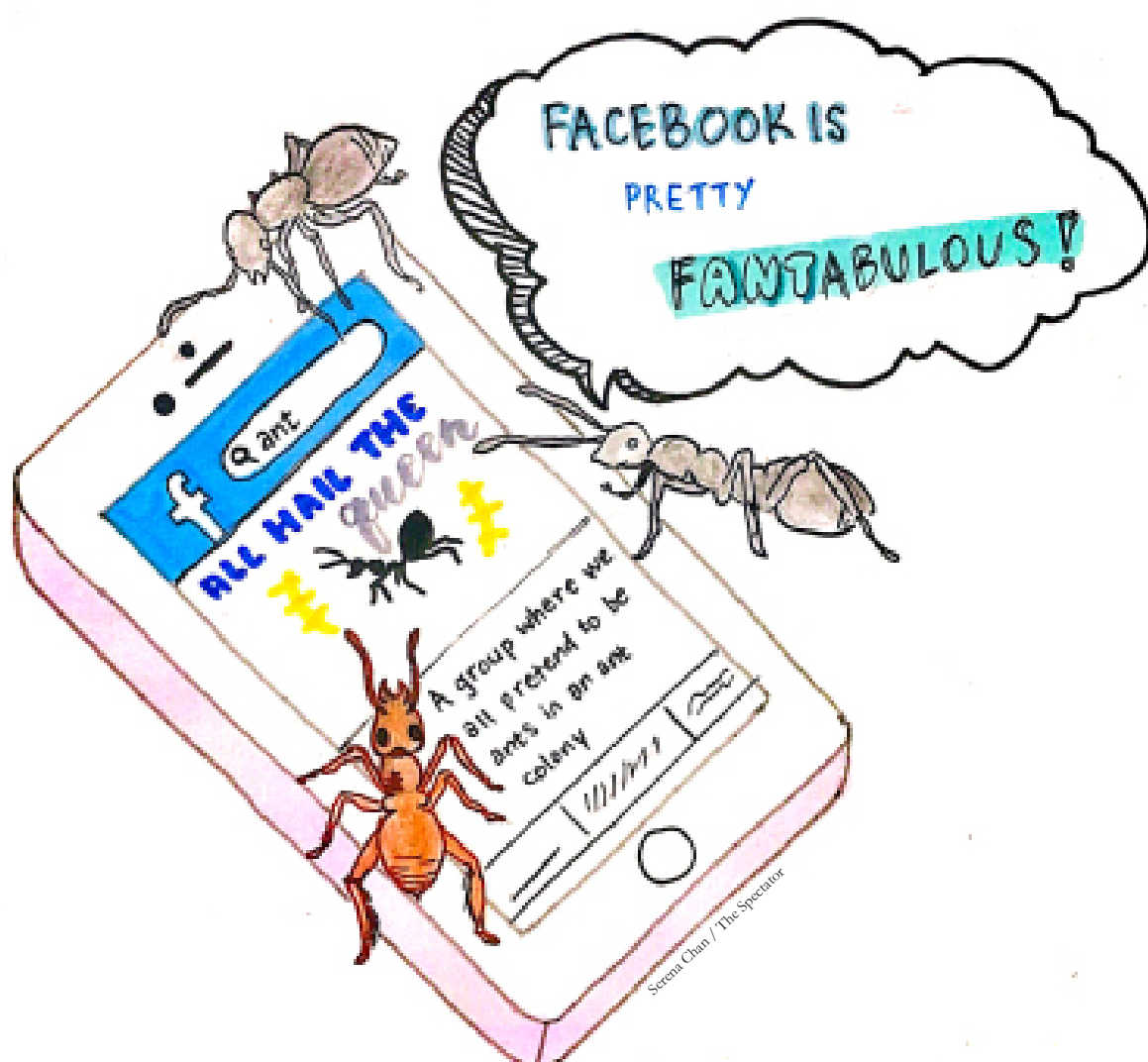
Companies can give the impression of being progressive without implementing any progressive policies in the workplace or donating to feminist organizations; all they have to do is put up a couple of pink posters calling for #GirlPower to be considered “woke.”

the Israeli government’s spending of \$2,046 per Israeli in 2011. Israel is also able to set up vaccine centers much more easily and has set up around 400 vaccine centers across the country, including in Arab towns. In fact, Israeli Arabs have a [higher vaccination rate](#) than Orthodox Jews, with about 68 percent of Israeli Arabs over the age of 50 having received the vaccine at least once as compared to 62 percent of ultra-Orthodox

own needs. It’s important for Israel, Israel’s health and security as well.” Alryyes’s article claims that Israel has been vaccinating Jewish settlers in the West Bank, but not their Arab neighbors. Though Area C is predominantly Jewish, Israeli health workers have been distributing the vaccine to willing Jews and Palestinians alike.

Additionally, Israel has good reason for skepticism about the PA’s ability to administer vac-

Dead Art



Serena Chan / The Spectator



Michele Yi / The Spectator

Science

Stuyvesant Hosts A Virologists Panel

By RANIA ZAKI

“Why don’t viruses ever get less deadly?” Professor of Epidemiology at New York University (NYU) Dr. Joshua M. Epstein asked. “It’s not in their best interest to kill their host.” There was slight laughter as the panelists nodded their heads, enjoying the irony of studying pathogenic viruses.

“There’s a lot of infections you’re not aware of, Josh,” colleague virologist and retired professor of microbiology at NYU Dr. Carol Reiss said. “It’s common for them to be attenuated.”

Organized by the Sophomore Caucus, the Virologists Speakers Panel consisted of five virologists—scientists involved in the prognosis and mechanisms of viruses—conversing about their specialized field. With approximately 100 faculty members, students, and scientists in attendance, the event concluded with a Q&A with the speakers.

The keynote speakers were local scientists Dr. Reiss, Dr. Epstein, and Assistant Professor at Columbia University Dr. Nischay Mishra. Additionally, there were speakers from outside the city, such as Dr. Elliot Lefkowitz and Dr. Todd Green, professors at the University of Alabama. The discussion on the speaker’s panel constituted three

sections: the basics of virology, the current developments in the field, and explanation of vaccines, especially the COVID-19 vaccine. “We wanted to establish a panel of affirmative speakers that could answer most of the questions the student body has about the pandemic,” sophomore and panel moderator Andrey Sokolov said.

With a specific demographic in mind, the Sophomore Caucus wanted to bring in virologists for another reason. “There are a lot of misconceptions and questions [and we wanted to] make sure that people are focusing on what’s important, and that’s the truth and facts,” sophomore and event organizer Iris Chan said.

From viral loads between asymptomatic and symptomatic patients with Dr. Reiss to the impact X-ray crystallography has on our understanding of virology with Dr. Green, each speaker sparked important discussions. Vaccines took center stage in Dr. Mishra’s presentation, when he elaborated on how the COVID-19 vaccine was created. “Many people [are] hesitant. They say ‘I don’t want to take this vaccine, it came in three months, I don’t want to be [a] lab rat,’” Dr. Mishra said during the panel. “But that’s not true.”

Generally, vaccines take a longer time due to multiple

phases in their development. However, the COVID-19 vaccine scenario was different. “We had some basic data for [SARS-]COV-1, we had some kind of structure that was being used for the mass-coronavirus vaccine as well as the Ebola vaccine, [...] we had an enormous amount of funding, [and] we had [an] emergency,” Dr. Mishra said. “We don’t see the perfect vaccine [...] it’s like flying a plane and also building it. That’s why this vaccine doesn’t work with this variant. And the other doesn’t work very well with another variant.”

Some aspects of the panelists’ work were very recognizable to Stuyvesant students. In the introduction of Dr. Epstein’s presentation, “Agent-Based Modeling in Public Health: From Playground to Planet,” many sophomores, juniors, and seniors became aware of the black box with the moving stick-figures on the screen, a model described as Sugarcane. Dr. Epstein used a platform called Netlogo to perform a contract tracing between a scenario of one sick child and healthy children, showing how “R naught,” a mathematical term that indicates how contagious a disease is, and the effectiveness of herd immunity, determine risks during a pandemic. “Agent-based modeling is a very powerful way to model public health challenges [...] at

scales ranging from playground to platform,” Dr. Epstein said.

Since many students learned about Netlogo through their Introduction to Computer Science class, the presentation was more familiar to the student body, emphasizing the value education has on impacting our understanding of the pandemic. “One of [Dr. Epstein’s] main accomplishments is Sugarcane, and it was coded through Netlogo. And I think it’s super relevant, as computer science is a class we are required to take as sophomores,” Chan said.

As with all models, human behavior is a confounding variable, one of irrationality and unforeseen predilection. Many speakers chimed in that refusal of vaccines and masks can forestall herd immunity. “It’s an invitation for more waves. This is not the time to do that. We are on the verge of a [public domain] vaccine and real herd immunity,” Dr. Epstein said.

Dr. Mishra added, “A lot of states are not mandating masks [...] it’s like a moth climbing on a stick every three inches skips back two inches [...] you will never reach to the top of the stick.”

With public high schools reopening on March 22, the panelists all advocated for good ventilation, masks, and vaccinations. “By increasing the arsenal and eventually pushing it out, everybody has access

SCIENCEBEAT

Pfizer and other major pharmaceutical companies have started **COVID-19 vaccine trials in children younger than 12** to see the vaccine’s effectiveness, raising hopes for **herd immunity**.

The pandemic has **aggravated** America’s **weight gain problem**, with a new study showing that adults have gained **two pounds per month** on average during quarantine.

Scientists have found stronger evidence that **octopi may dream**: they have an “active” stage of sleep where they **move their eyes** and change their **skin color**. This is similar to rapid eye movement sleep in humans where our eyes move rapidly and we dream.

[and] you are able to begin to live with the virus, to start to approach something that looks more like normal than what we had before,” Dr. Lefkowitz said. “We can only look on trying to approach a new normal,” Sokolov said. And as time progresses, this new normal is becoming infinitely more clear.

The Headless Horsemen of Slugs

By KAITLYN LEE

From lizards dropping their tails to one-armed sea stars regenerating their limbs, various animals have displayed the ability to self-amputate and regrow organs as a means to survive. Recently, a group of scientists from Japan have discovered that two species of sea slugs—*Elysia marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis*—have a remarkable ability: **detaching their heads** off their bodies and regrowing their bodies from their heads. What’s even more astonishing is that the head and the body of the slug can survive separately for weeks, even months, before restoring their missing parts and living on with a new body.

Sayaka Mitoh, a doctoral student at Nara Women’s University of Japan, first observed this phenomenon in 2018 when she was astonished to find a decapitated sacoglossan sea slug head circling inside the tank and eating algae. Mitoh noted that the wound on the head appeared to be self-inflicted. While she thought the slug head would die due to its lack of internal organs, it began regrowing its body back instead. Three weeks later, the slug head grew 80 percent of its body and vital organs back and was observed to be perfectly replicated from its old body.

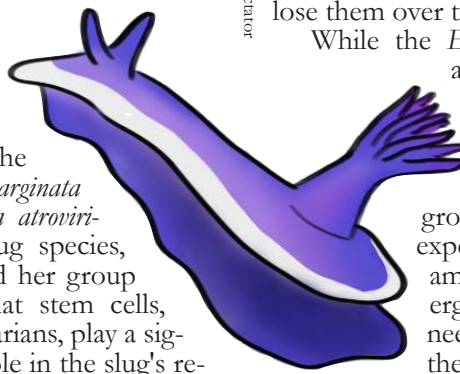
This led Mitoh and her fellow scientists to closely study groups of *Elysia marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis* sea slugs. They

observed that many of the slugs decapitated themselves at least once during their lifetimes and that slugs have a **breakage plane** on their neck to ensure a clean cut to remove the head. While the detached heads could grow back bodies, the bodies could not grow back heads. However, just like the head, the separated body was responsive to stimuli for months until decomposition.

Limb and organ regeneration is a unique adaptation that certain organisms possess to varying degrees, for example lizards, axolotls, zebrafish, and planarians, a group that includes flatworms.

Planarians, famous for their ability to regrow their head or even the rest of their body, rely on stem cells, which have the power to transform into many other types of cells. They have a certain type of stem cell called neoblasts throughout the body, which allow them to regrow masses of tissues that have been removed. On the other hand, zebrafish, which can repair major organs like the heart, brain, and pancreas through regeneration, take a more localized approach. For example, initiation molecules from wounds in the heart signal heart regeneration to the zebrafish. The presence of these molecules results in increasing gene activity in the

heart cells, specifically genes that promote wound healing and increase growth factors that activate cell division to replace dying cells and grow new ones.



Emily Tan / The Spectator

For the *Elysia marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis* sea slug species, Mitoh and her group believe that stem cells, as in planarians, play a significant role in the slug’s regrowth capabilities, and hope to further study the sea slugs to understand their regenerative abilities on a molecular level. As for the regeneration’s function, they are still unsure, especially because decapitation

is not necessary for survival. They theorize that the mechanism is used not only to flee from predators but also to remove parasites within their old bodies, after the group found

that all of the slugs that detached their heads had internal parasites in their old bodies. After amputation, their heads grew new bodies free from parasitic infections. Another potential purpose for regeneration is reproduction. The researchers observed that only younger slugs were able to live freely as heads and grow new bodies. The older slugs, on the other hand, only lived up to 10 days and were unable to eat or regrow new bodies. This indicates that the abilities of regeneration and autonomy are an indicator of youth for the slugs, as they lose them over time.

While the *Elysia marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis* sea slugs can regenerate, the regrowth process expends large amounts of energy. Despite this need for energy, the heads are still able to live, wandering freely and eating as if they are still one whole organism. What allows the sea slugs to remain mobile is a process called kleptoplasty, where slugs steal chloroplasts from the al-

gae they consume. They then use the stolen chloroplasts to perform photosynthesis, converting sunlight into energy which allows them to sustain the regeneration process. However, the chloroplasts only last for a few days, so the slugs must continue eating algae until they fully restore their bodies.

Mitoh and her team’s discovery of the regenerative abilities of the *Elysia marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis* sea slugs have only left scientists more curious about what other organisms possess such impressive survival mechanisms, and how. Her research on these slugs at a molecular level may allow us to not only understand the mysteries of how these slugs can regenerate, but also give insight into the growing field of stem cell research. By expanding our knowledge of stem cells and learning how they function, new possibilities in regenerative medicine and other medical fields may open in the future. Individuals suffering from medical conditions, such as spinal cord injuries and blood-related diseases like leukemia, could one day be cured using stem cells as a treatment, putting their lives at ease, all thanks to the decapitated head of a sea slug.

The Immortal Jellyfish

By ANGEL LIU

The familiar concept of birth and death as a one-way finality does not apply to the *Turritopsis dohrnii*. Dubbed the [immortal jellyfish](#), the *Turritopsis dohrnii* is a species of jellyfish in the hydrozoa class, characterized by its dominant polyp phase and small medusae form, that returns to its youth in a constant, renewing cycle.

The immortal jellyfish is quite small. Upon reaching maturity, it only extends to a height of about 4.5 millimeters, or 0.18 inches—small enough to fit on a pinky fingernail. Its body is translucent and bell-shaped, and in the center, the stomach is an eye-catching red. There are up to 90 thin, string-like tentacles extending from the muscle ring at the bottom of its bell.

Like all jellyfish, the *Turritopsis dohrnii* starts out as an egg and undergoes external fertilization, where the female jellyfish releases unfertilized eggs into the water. The eggs form planulae, the short-lived larvae stage of a jellyfish, after coming in contact with sperm released by the male. At this point, they look similar to bacteria: flat, oval-

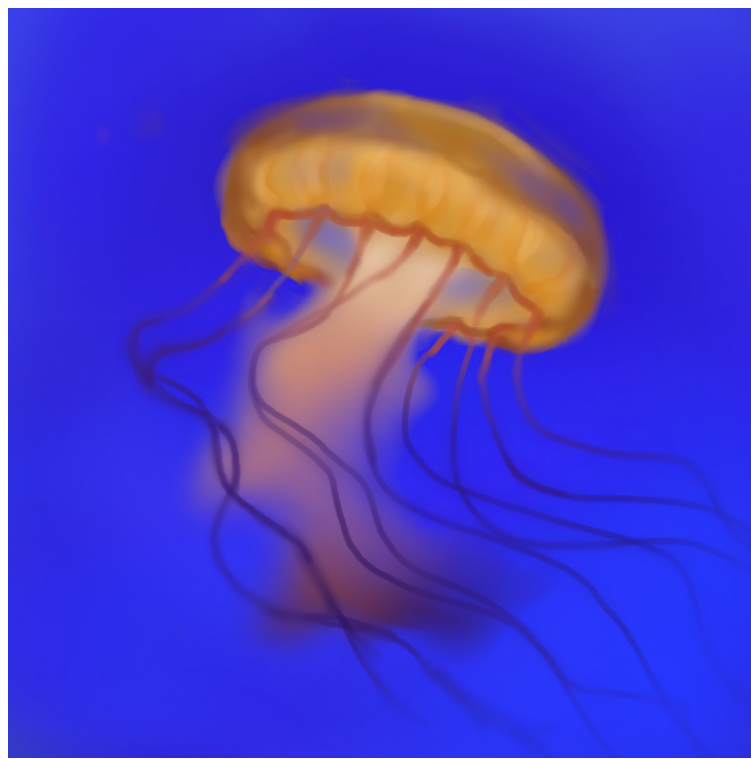
shaped, and propelled by cilia, small hairlike structures that protrude from their edges.

As planulae, they attach themselves to a solid surface and develop into their polyp phase, which is a stationary, cylindrical form that certain marine species undergo. In the first half of this phase, the planulae form a colony of polyps called a hydroid colony. A tubal structure, the hydroid colony stations itself using a stolon (a stem-like structure) and buds, branching out along its length like coral. The branches consist of polyps, which can be either male or female. Through asexual reproduction, the polyps detach from the parent colony and mature into medusae, the final form of the jellyfish that we are most familiar with.

In most species, the juvenile medusae will grow into their adult state, where they can sexually reproduce, release eggs or sperm, and die. For the *Turritopsis dohrnii*, however, it can revert back to its polyp phase when it is near the end of its lifespan. It does not even have to be in old age as the process can be conducted in response to suboptimal conditions such as starvation, physical damage,

and physical threats at any time during its medusae phase. The jellyfish would first transform into a cyst with an exterior

functions, such as epithelial cells, blood cells, and fat cells. Stem cells are usually restricted in the type of cell into which



Nelli Rojas-Cessa / The Spectator

of chitin. It would remain in that form for 24 to 36 hours before becoming a polyp once again. This is possible due to a cellular process called transdifferentiation.

Cells can differentiate from stem cells into a wide variety of types with different

they can differentiate by the area they are located in. For example, hematopoietic stem cells can only differentiate into cells of the blood and immune system. Transdifferentiation is when a matured, specialized cell switches to another specialization. In

some transdifferentiation cases, a cell would need to dedifferentiate into an unspecialized stem cell before redifferentiating into some other specialization. In the *Turritopsis dohrnii*, the cells of its polyp and medusae forms contain completely different cell types. It is still unknown how the jellyfish are able to return to a previous stage in their life cycle, though it has been noted that a [gene in the mRNA](#) may be responsible for this transformation.

Ever since this special characteristic of the *Turritopsis dohrnii* was discovered, it has been of interest to the media and scientists in the field of regenerative medicine. In transplants, a transdifferentiated cell would be much more stable than a stem cell whose future trajectory is harder to control. It also has a high potential for treating neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's disease. Through the jellyfish's ability to recycle its cells, scientists can study ways to replace damaged cells and neurons. Today, scientists are continuing their studies on the *Turritopsis dohrnii* in hopes of unlocking the secret of their eternal youth.

Why You Should Continue Taking Notes by Hand

By RIONA ANVEKAR

You open a Google Docs file with your AP US History notes and sigh in relief. No longer do you have to worry about asking your teacher to wait before going to the next slide, missing an important fact, or suffering from severe hand cramps. Though taking notes on an electronic device may seem easier, studies actually suggest that note-taking by hand is more effective in retaining information as well as understanding concepts.

One reason why writers perform better is that they cannot write down all the words their professor speaks and are therefore forced to summarize the material, subconsciously processing and engaging with it more. On the other hand, typists may transcribe the professor's lecture word for word, which is known as non-generative note taking, which does not involve any processing of information. Furthermore, those who include sketches and drawings in their notes are more likely to recall the lesson better: when people [visually represent](#) knowledge, they can deepen their comprehension of concepts.

A study conducted at Princeton University tested [65 college students](#) on

their comprehension of a TED Talk that covered interesting, but not well-known, information. Half of the students took notes by hand while the other half took them on a laptop. The students then completed three distractor tasks. After 30 minutes, they were asked to answer factual-recall questions and

conceptual questions. When the two groups were tested again a week later, the writers once again outperformed the

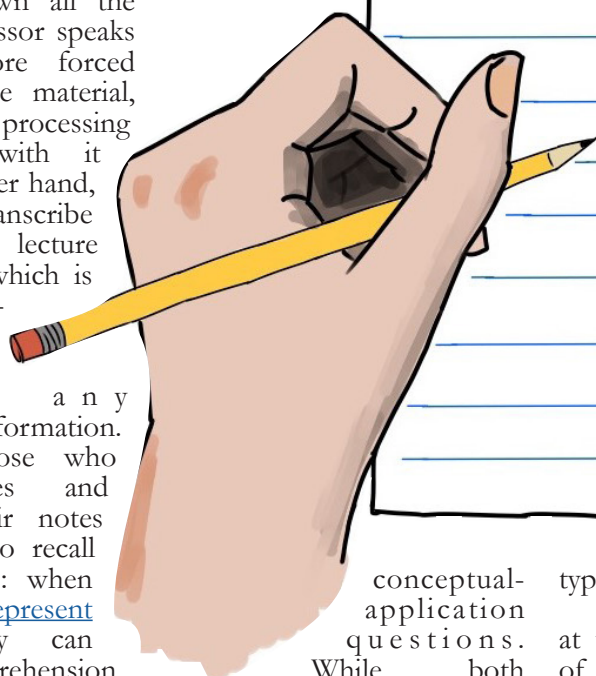
an electroencephalogram with about 250 electrodes picking up the electrical impulses of brain activity. The results

showed that both adults and children had higher brain activity when writing by hand compared to typing on a keyboard because the use of pen and paper gives the brain more "hooks" to hang memories on. Specifically, writing by hand triggers more activity in the sensorimotor parts of the brain, as more senses are activated by feeling the pen press on paper, seeing the letters you write, and hearing the sounds you make

information, strengthens the hand-brain circuitry and deepens understanding of the content.

Additionally, using a laptop or technological device distracts both the student taking the notes and the person teaching the material. A study conducted at the University of Essex looked at the [effect of the presence of an electronic device](#) on the relationship between two people having a conversation. 74 participants were assigned to a room with a phone either present or absent and were asked to hold a conversation for 10 minutes with a counterpart. Those with a phone present in the room reported feeling less close with their partner and a lower quality of relationship than the pairs without one. Though most teachers cannot tell if you go on your phone during class, taking notes or even leaving your phone on your desk impairs your ability to stay engaged during class. It makes you feel less close to your teacher and thus less interested in the conversation or lesson.

So, the next time you go to class, try pulling out a notebook and taking notes by hand. It is likely to help your comprehension and engagement in the lesson your teacher is teaching, which is especially valuable, as it may relieve some of the hardships that many are facing with online learning.



Yaqi Zeng / The Spectator

conceptual-application questions. While both groups performed equally well on the factual questions, writers performed significantly better on the

typists. Another study conducted at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology analyzed the [brain activity of 20 students](#) who took notes by hand and typing. In both experiments, participants wore

while writing. These sensory details strengthen neural connections in the brain and increase learning, allowing us to learn and remember better. Generally, cognitive engagement, the manipulation and transformation of

Science

The Origin of the Ice Age Reaction

By SHAH NABIL

Imagine that a chunk of ice the size of multiple football fields broke off of an ice sheet and sank deep into the ocean, increasing displacement of ocean levels and flooding across the seven continents. This is what occurred during the end of the last ice age 11,000 years ago—a global climate change event where, according to the World Economic Forum, temperatures averaged [46 degrees Fahrenheit](#), about 10 degrees below today's average temperature. The ice age ended with the breakage of ice sheets into the Atlantic Ocean, which scientists believe was responsible for climate change. However, new information sheds light on how changes in the Pacific Ocean were actually the cause of the latest ice age. This explains why there needs to be more research on past environmental events to ensure accurate data for the future of Earth's dynamic climate.

To understand how the Pacific Ocean was one of the causes of climate change, it is important to understand the history of two planetary ice sheets and the ice-calving process. The [Cordilleran and the Laurentide Ice Sheets](#) were two ice masses that spanned east and west, respectively, of what is now Canada and Greenland. The two ice sheets were created through glaciation, where a combination of Earth's lower tilt angle, orbit, and less heat from the Sun caused gradual accumulation of snow

that turned into ice sheets. Later, a process known as ice calving caused several sections of the ice sheets' borders to break off into their neighboring oceans. This process occurred on such a massive scale that the world's ocean levels greatly increased due to the ice chunks falling into water. Eventually, the Earth's tilt angle increased due to gravity changes in the axes, causing an increase of temperatures that melted most of the ice sheets. Furthermore, the Laurentide Ice Sheet went through ice calving during the Heinrich events, further increasing the temperatures throughout Earth. Remnants of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet still exist,

western part of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet had a direct correlation with the ice calving in the Laurentide Ice Sheet. Through the analysis of specific sediment cores (layers of accumulated

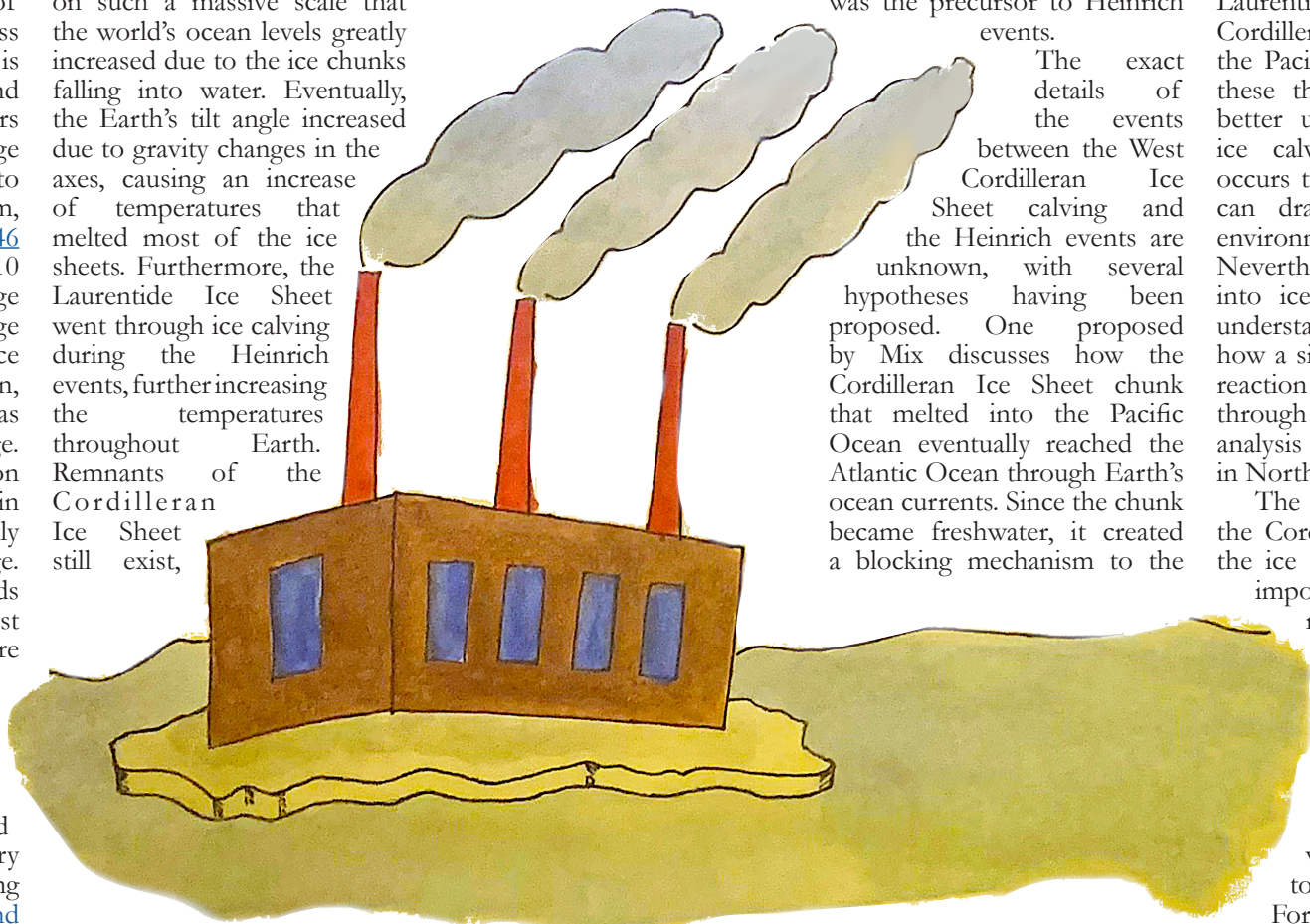
in the Cordilleran Ice Sheet correlates with the ice calving in the Laurentide ice sheet, suggesting that the calving of the West Cordilleran Ice Sheet in the North Pacific Ocean was the precursor to Heinrich events.

The exact details of the events between the West Cordilleran Ice Sheet calving and the Heinrich events are unknown, with several hypotheses having been proposed. One proposed by Mix discusses how the Cordilleran Ice Sheet chunk that melted into the Pacific Ocean eventually reached the Atlantic Ocean through Earth's ocean currents. Since the chunk became freshwater, it created a blocking mechanism to the

change and bring heat and moisture to the Laurentide Ice Sheet without being blocked. These two theories both offer explanations as to how heat was brought to the Laurentide Ice Sheet from the Cordilleran Ice Sheet through the Pacific Ocean. Confirming these theories would bring a better understanding of how ice calving, a process that occurs today at the polar caps, can dramatically change the environment of the Earth. Nevertheless, more research into ice sheets is needed to understand the process of how a single ice sheet caused a reaction of warming, possibly through more sediment core analysis of other ice remnants in North America.

The new developments on the Cordilleran Ice Sheet with the ice age illustrate why it is important to do further research on previously established studies. If we can study the causes of climate change through ice sheets, we can find ways of predicting the future as global warming continues to pressure the Earth.

For example, we can help prevent destruction of agriculture and save lives. Therefore, the overall knowledge gained by the new data of the past allows us to assemble safety measures for future generations and ultimately understand the occurrences of dynamic shifts in climate change.



Jenny Chen / The Spectator

and scientists use them to discover new insights into the relationship between the ice age and global warming.

In a Science journal report published on November 6, 2020, Alan C. Mix, along with other scientists, argued that the

sediment that can give historical information) retrieved from the Gulf of Alaska, they were able to conclude that the ice calving in the Cordilleran Ice Sheet occurred shortly before the Heinrich events. Additionally, the study found that ice calving

salt water in the Atlantic and theoretically would make the water near the Laurentide Ice Sheet warmer and trigger ice calving. Another possibility is that through the calving of the Cordilleran Ice Sheet, the planet's surface winds would

A.I. Understands the "Beauty Standard"

By SHRIYA ANAND

What does "attractive" mean to you? You may take a look at people you find attractive and list similar features: perhaps a sharp nose and soft jaw or apple cheeks and almond eyes. But even with these descriptions, it is difficult to imagine what you consider "ideal." With the use of artificial intelligence (A.I.), however, this may no longer be the case.

A.I., or the usage of software to create a system to perform tasks such as speech recognition, visual and odor perception, and decision-making, has become more prevalent over the years. From Siri's interaction with the average person to robots assisting doctors in surgery, A.I. makes an appearance on a daily basis.

A.I. now has the ability to understand a human's perception of attractiveness, a difficult task even for humans themselves, as beauty is incredibly subjective. Since many cultural and psychological factors unconsciously influence one's preferences, it is difficult to identify or evaluate what one considers "beautiful." Yet it is relatively simple for a machine to discern when an individual finds someone attractive, as their body emits different

signals through dopamine.

Using this knowledge, as well as face-generating software, researchers at the University of Helsinki and the University of Copenhagen conducted an experiment to provide a machine with knowledge regarding human perception and test its accuracy. They first gave a Generative Adversarial Neural Network (GAN), a type of artificial neural network, the task of generating hundreds of [portraits of people](#). These images were presented to 30 volunteers, whose responses to the photos were recorded through electroencephalography. The volunteers looked at the images while electrodes on their scalp monitored their brain activity. When an individual saw an "attractive" person, the [left ventral tegmental area](#) of the brain became active and released dopamine. The data was then provided to GAN, which evaluated it and produced a new face built from the most prevalent characteristics in the "attractive" faces. These new images, which were tailored to the individual's preferences, were matched against the control group to check the accuracy of the program. The results were satisfactory: the generated face aligned with the volunteers' preferences over 80 percent of the time.

By understanding subjective preferences, much can be achieved. Many apps currently use manually entered data or a user's pattern of interactions with the app to personalize content. With advances in this research, the

than their "Tinder status." The technology can also find its use in the beauty industry, as versions of the program could sort through applications without humans having to manually flip through each one. It could generate a "base

standard" becomes even more apparent, as "ideal" features are used to generate an "ideal" face. Though our society is slowly departing from beauty represented through Eurocentric facial features, a majority of models, actors, makeup gurus, celebrities, and representatives of the beauty industry still fall under that category. It is no surprise that creating the "ideal" attractive face will pursue this standard. With the addition of this research, an idea that a particular face with particular features is better than any other is cemented as the portrait is artificially created to combine "superior" traits. This is a step backward from the idea that beauty comes in all shapes, sizes, and forms.

There are many concerns with the implications and implementations of this new research and there is no doubt that it will exacerbate the biases that society already carries. Perhaps a subtle and less direct use of the software could make technology more personalized for the user, though it may never entirely escape ethical criticism. We should be taking a step away from consolidating beauty under a strict standard. While this research may be successful in the STEM field, it seems destructive on a humanitarian level.

We should be taking a step away from consolidating beauty under a strict standard. While this research may be successful in the STEM field, it seems destructive on a humanitarian level.

software can better align with the user's interests, especially since hashtags or likes are not the only determining factors in whether a user will find the content interesting. Tinder, for example, [puts users on a hierarchy](#) by assigning points for every left and right swipe and then pairs people with similar points with each other, though this algorithm is quite faulty, as taste is subjective. With A.I., however, the app could provide users with profiles that are consistent with the user's preferences rather

image" reflecting target features or looks of a certain model agency as a means of creating a pool of applicants that aligns with the photoshoot's concept. Despite such potential benefits, the software presents several ethical questions. The program ultimately feeds into harmful beauty standards. While its impact can be sugar-coated as reflective of a single person's preferences, there is no denying that Eurocentric features have become the beauty standard. With the use of A.I., this "beauty

Arts and Entertainment

TELEVISION

“Ginny & Georgia”: Netflix Is ‘Woke’

By IVY HALPERN

“Hey Ginny & Georgia, 2010 called and it wants its lazy, deeply sexist joke back. How about we stop degrading hard working women by defining this horse [EXPLETIVE] as FuNnY.” — Taylor Swift

If Taylor Swift critiques a show, does that mean we have to dislike it too? Probably. But after a quick viewing of “Ginny & Georgia,” to nobody’s surprise, Swift is right. Not only does the show incorporate a random and uncalled for insult to Swift, but the many problematic comments in the show are also just one facet of the failures of this wannabe progressive show.

This faux play on “Gilmore Girls” (2000-2007) begins with Ginny’s (Antonia Gentry) move from Texas with her mother Georgia (Brianna Howey) and brother Austin (Diesel La Torraca) to a “cute,” small town in Massachusetts. In the first few minutes of the series, several different themes are introduced: race, single motherhood, coming of age, and more. Only one thing is clear: too much is going on. It seems like some sort of amalgamation of drama and comedy until the show cuts to random dark scenes that don’t seem to have a place amongst all the other lighter plotlines of high school relationships, friendships, family, and small town life. These dark scenes and flashbacks, which include clips of self harm or sexual assault, are a whiplash-inducing tonal shift from the main elements of the show.

For a show that tries to con-

demn racism, there seem to be far too many problematic parts. One racist trope in the show is Ginny, the stereotypical mixed race protagonist, living with her white mother. Frequently, mixed race characters presented on television are being raised by their supportive, white parents, which in turn presents the non-white parents as “absent.” This stereotype of mixed raced families is frequently used in Netflix Originals, including “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” (2018), “The Main Event” (2020), and “The Baby-Sitters Club” (2020-). Georgia’s whiteness, in addition to the town they live in, presents the show through an extremely whitewashed lens.

Another controversial aspect of “Ginny & Georgia” is showcased in a clip going around social media which viewers titled the “oppression Olympics.” In the scene, Ginny and her half-Taiwanese boyfriend, Hunter (Mason Temple), hurl hurtful, biased insults at each other. Ginny first affronts Hunter by saying he is barely even Asian, and he later retorts by saying, “I’ve never seen you pound back jerk chicken.” They tear each other down using racist comments, reducing both to prejudiced stereotypes rather than people. The actors also said in a later [interview](#) that these insults weren’t even scripted. The actors were told to make them up, which they did based on their own past experiences. This scene is over the top and offensive, which sparked an intense backlash on social media. Neither the actors nor characters are developed or advanced enough for the scene. Additionally, the dialogue

exemplifies the feeling that the characters are just used as pawns by Netflix for their races, as the scene uses racism to create conflict.

It seems as though every character in the show is used

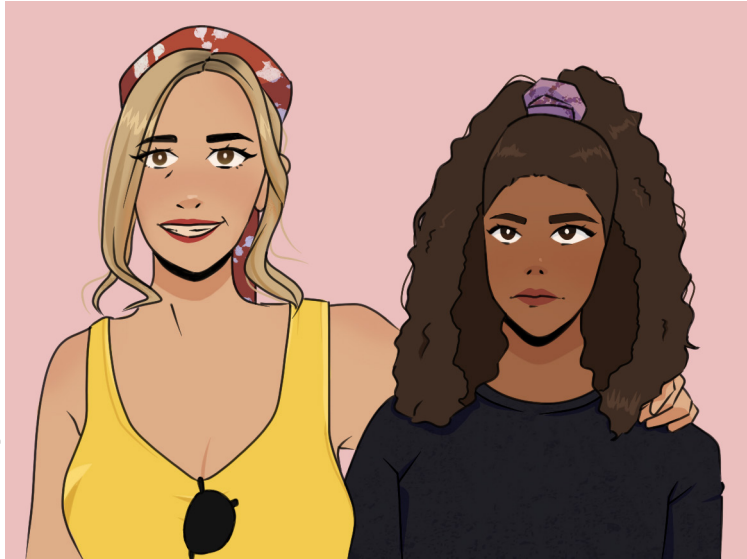
“The Office” (2005-2013).

The show can’t even get the relationships straight. Ginny and Georgia are first portrayed as having a great mother-daughter relationship as Georgia says in the first episode, “We are like the

of it is presented in the show, no one really knows who Ginny is. She obviously has complicated mental health issues, but if the show is going to show clips of her self harm, it should explain why or at least provide context about her mental health instead of just cutting to these dark moments.

Scenes of Georgia’s tough backstory are scattered throughout the show as well, serving to make her character more confusing. The background scenes of her getting abused or being homeless are trying to incite empathy, but that’s hard when she does pretty demented things like have her six-year-old son punch another kid in the face or when she seems to get everything too easily through her pretty privilege, southern accent, and smile. All these actions are normalized in the show when they really are not normal, and the audience is asked to accept a lot of contrived plot lines without characters to root for.

Barely entertaining enough to watch while procrastinating on homework, “Ginny & Georgia” only manages to catch viewers’ attention through the attractive, stereotypical, “boy next door” male lead. Additionally, it’s always important to normalize minorities on mainstream TV, but “Ginny & Georgia” includes this representation in an extremely poor and problematic way. It’s crucial to support shows and characters having progressive values, but when it’s overdone, it seems really fake. Hey, Netflix, stop putting on this progressive mask just because it’s trendy.



to represent a different minority, and each character seems to come with a different, undeveloped background, which leads to lots of confusion about each character and very little screen time to get to know each one.

Of course, racism, sexism, self harm, and sexual assault are issues that should be discussed in the media, but putting all these heavy subjects together in 10 episodes makes for the mess that is “Ginny & Georgia.” Now that streaming is so popular, Netflix has created a brand with all their new originals, including “Ginny & Georgia,” that can’t help but try way too hard. If Netflix wants to attract viewers, all they really have to do is bring back

Gilmore Girls.” However, their relationship is always on and off in such a jarring way, which just leaves the viewer with the impression that the relationship is toxic and lacks logic.

Moreover, though it may seem natural for young viewers to support the protagonist during such arguments with parents, the scriptwriters make both characters inconsistent and difficult to like. Ginny seems to act extremely shallow with her new friends in one moment, and then she seems to be genuinely enjoying herself in the next. Her personality is constantly changing. The show makes it seem as though Ginny has such a convoluted background, but since none

FILM

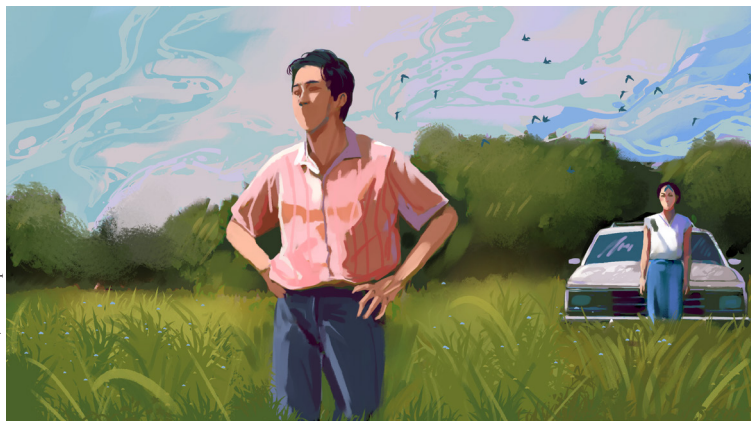
By SUAH CHUNG

Across the grassed expanse I reach toward the horizon, my face bronze against the light, the American Dream.

“Minari” opens with the rolling hills of rural Arkansas, picturesque for its simple beauty but also jarringly empty, which is further emphasized by a gentle piano playing in the background. Directed by Isaac Chung, this film is a heartfelt nod to his childhood and memories of growing up as a first generation immigrant in Arkansas. Guided by a quiet and mature sensitivity, “Minari” vibrantly captures the emotional struggles of family life, ambition, and isolation that pervade the immigrant experience.

Chung illustrates his story through Jacob (Steven Yeun) and Monica (Han Ye-ri), a couple originally from South Korea who decide to move to Arkansas with their two children Anne (Noel Cho) and David (Alan Kim) after trying unsuccessfully to settle in California. Finding the job of chick sexing (separating chickens based on their sexes) monotonous and unfulfilling, Jacob persuades the family to move to Arkansas so he can attempt to achieve his dream of starting a farm and business selling Korean crops. At the beginning of the film, Jacob is an unfettered idealist, only capable of seeing the idyllic aspect of the American Dream. Monica, on the

other hand, is disenchanted with the family’s trailer home and worries about the far distance from the city and its hospital, which they will need to visit to check on David’s heart condition. The



two spouses serve as foils to each other—contrasting reflections of the American Dream—as they prioritize family in different ways. Jacob’s efforts for his family stem from his ambition as he wants to finally succeed out of pride for his kids, while Monica wants a safe home and sees the debt that may result from his endeavour. Jacob’s struggle to find a water source on the arid farmland and the danger of impending tornadoes only exacerbate the tensions, which erupt in fiery arguments.

Though the discussions end in a tense standstill and seem to mark a breaking point, the narrative instead takes a turn in a different direction with the arrival of

Soonja (Youn Yuh-jung), Monica’s mother, who brings a subtle balance to the household. Jacob and Monica’s diverging views take a backseat, and the film moves on to explore the grandmother’s

interactions with the other family members. After the audience learns that Soonja is Monica’s only remaining family in Korea, Monica’s recurring tears for simple things like ingredients that her mother brought from Korea are heart-rending and show her quiet strength in the way that she has repressed her homesickness for her children.

Though the slice of lifelike scenes with Anne and David is already charming, Soonja’s dynamic with the children, specifically David, steals the spotlight. David initially does not want to share his room, saying that Soonja “smelled like Korea.” Though a bit coarse, Soonja is a person-

ality, swearing during card games and watching boxing matches in her briefs. David’s reluctant acceptance, in all its charm, makes their later playful bond all the more endearing to the viewers. Soonja’s interactions with David not only provide the audience with comedic relief, but also a symbolic change in scenery as she is the one who leads the children into the nearby forest. Given David’s heart condition, his mother doesn’t allow him to run or venture off. Under his grandmother’s guidance, though, David finds the courage and freedom to explore on his own.

In the depths of the forest, the titular object of the film—minari—is introduced. With seeds she brought from Korea, Soonja plants minari, a Korean herb that can withstand harsh weather and grows easily without much care. Minari represents the universal resilience of immigrants, who, in their independence and hardship, emerge the stronger for their experiences.

The implementation of Christian motifs throughout the film is also significant, since in the middle of rural Arkansas, the church is the only form of community that the Yis encounter. The church welcomes the family with open arms, but there is also a degree of discomfort as the mostly white members don’t really know how to interact with the family. Both David and Anne

face covert racism, with one boy asking David why his face is flat and a girl making random sounds to Anne until she happens to create a Korean word. In later scenes, the Yis’ view of Christianity grows more complex as the symbols begin to represent a conflict in their immigrant experience. From Jacob’s farm, which he names “Garden of Eden,” to a baptism-like scene in which Monica helps Jacob rinse his hair after his arms are sore from farmwork, they struggle with the extent to which they should rely on their faith to get them back on track to success.

With its sweepingly dynamic and vibrant cast, “Minari” is more than just an Asian American immigrant story of struggle and identity. From the subtle cinematography to standout writing, it paints an intimate sketch of a regular family unit and their individual characters. Told from multiple perspectives, “Minari” manages to capture every facet of the struggle for the American Dream, weaving a narrative that reflects the present rather than dwelling on past nostalgia. Though the film does slow at times, it uses silence and the landscape to show rather than tell the story’s progressions. Most of all, “Minari” remains undeniably human, depicting crippling heartache and love at opposite ends of the spectrum, and it is stunning in its genuine execution.

Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

By LIANNE OHAYON,
CHRISTINE LIN, and
KENISHA MAHAJAN

Music has a special place in the hearts of many. Whether it's rap, pop, or country, musicians of all genres and backgrounds come together in the self-proclaimed "biggest night in music": the Grammys. After being postponed two months due to the pandemic, music lovers finally got to experience incredible singing, a diverse spread of awards, and even some record-breaking moments on March 14, despite criticism from stars about how truthful the show is.

The night featured many eclectic performances by artists whose songs stood out amidst the commotion of this past year. Though a few sets were pre-recorded, they brought us back to what music's biggest night is truly about: the music. Beginning in front of the Staples Center, Harry Styles opened the show with a rendition of his hit song "Watermelon Sugar" that had all viewers swooning over his vocals, fashion sense, and funky dance moves. Billie Eilish came next, standing on top of a car singing her touching ballad "Everything I Wanted," and sister trio HAIM closed off the opening acts with the alternative smash "The Steps."

Other major performances followed the original Grammys format viewers are familiar with. First was Dua Lipa's pretty-in-pink set, featuring songs from her album "Future Nostalgia" (2020). Megan Thee Stallion performed a powerful medley of "Body" and "Savage," which was full of glitz and glam, as well as a questionable tap routine. In a performance with Cardi B, the two joined forces to perform the vibrant and scandalous "WAP," featuring a high-heel-shaped stripper pole and gigantic bed. Later in the evening, Taylor Swift shone in a cottage scene,

singing "cardigan," "august," and "willow" from her albums "folklore" (2020) and "evermore" (2020). Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak (as musical duo Silk Sonic) crooned "Leave the Door Open." Doja Cat danced her heart out to the (arguably overplayed) "Say So," BTS dazzled with an energetic rooftop performance to "Dynamite," and DaBaby and Roddy Ricch showcased a curious choral arrangement of their song "Rockstar."

As for the awards themselves, winners this year were relatively dispersed, with no single artist sweeping awards in any of the major categories. Whether this was a purposeful strategy by the Recording Academy to reduce any post-award backlash is up to debate. A less surprising aspect of the night, however, was Taylor Swift's win of the prestigious Album Of The Year award for her mid-quarantine release, "folklore." Some other notable contenders in the category included "Hollywood's Bleeding" (2019) by Post Malone and "Future Nostalgia" by Dua Lipa. While the latter didn't win Album Of The Year, "Future Nostalgia" went on to take home the award for Best Pop Vocal Album.

H.E.R.'s "I Can't Breathe" won Song Of The Year—a fairly anticipated win considering the relevance of the lyrics to the current political climate. Record

The Grammys: Music's Medium-Sized Night

Of The Year—an award more so geared toward the production rather than the composition of a recording—went to "everything i wanted" by Billie Eilish. Eilish sheepishly took to the stage to accept her award, using her speech to praise fellow nominee, Megan Thee Stallion, whom Eilish felt was the rightful winner—and not without reason. While Eilish's song was popular, it just didn't gain the same traction or have the same effect as Megan Thee Stallion and Beyoncé's "Savage." Nevertheless, "Savage" still managed to take home two awards: Best Rap Performance and Best Music Video, for songs "Black Parade" and "Brown Skin Girl," respectively, have now secured Beyoncé the title of the female artist with the most Grammys.

Some other notable winners of the night included Harry Styles's "Watermelon Sugar" for Best Pop Solo Performance, Nas's

"King's Disease" (2020) for Best Rap Album, Megan Thee Stallion for Best New Artist, and Lady Gaga and Ariana Grande's "Rain On Me" for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance.

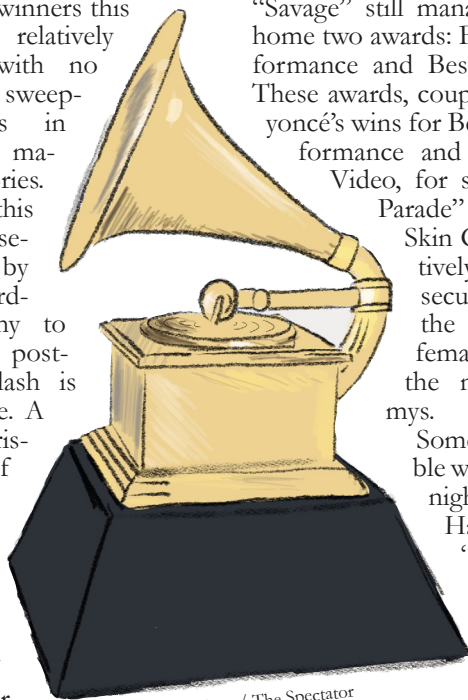
This year's Grammys had a rather serious undertone. In light of the social justice movements across the U.S., artists' performances reflected our political climate and delivered more than just a night of extravagance and escape. The most politically-charged moment of the night was Lil Baby's performance of "The Bigger Picture." The set

reenacted an instance of police brutality, followed by shots of protests, and a memorable speech from activist Tamika Mallory. The scene was out of the ordinary for the Grammy stage: instead of tiptoeing around a message, the performance condemned police brutality outright and took a strong stance on the Black Lives Matter movement.

But even glamorous performances and nominations couldn't fully cover up controversies within the Grammys. Upon releasing nominations in November of 2020, the Academy quickly accumulated backlash for snubbing several artists. After the top artist of 2020, The Weeknd, received no nominations for his immensely successful album "After Hours" (2020) and record-shattering hit "Blinding Lights," he boycotted the Grammys, stating "The Grammys remain corrupt."

Several celebrities—including Zayn Malik, Ariana Grande, and Nicki Minaj—spoke out against the Grammys and their opaque voting process. In 2020, former CEO of the Recording Academy Deborah Dugan even said that "The Grammy voting process is ripe with corruption." This lack of transparency is a breeding ground for inequalities, as demonstrated by the lack of major awards given to Black artists over the last decade.

Even though this year's Grammys delivered performances and a great range of winners, feelings of dissatisfaction among artists still linger. If this is really music's biggest night, it is imperative that quality not be sacrificed. It's clear they can make a show happen; music lovers just want more than what the Grammys delivered. Passionate performances coupled with truthful nominations and winners would make this show truly deserving of the title "music's biggest night."



Joanna Meng / The Spectator

PLAYLIST

Music Meme-ry

By THE ARTS &
ENTERTAINMENT
DEPARTMENT

In the spirit of the Disrespectator, take a listen to this compilation of meme-d songs that the Arts and Entertainment Department realized weren't half bad.

Baby I'm Yours
Breakbot
Nu-disco

WAP
Cardi B feat. Megan Thee Stallion
Hip-hop

Replay
Iyaz
R&B Pop

Crank That (Soulja Boy)
Soulja Boy
Hip-hop

Man's Not Hot
Big Shaq
Hip-hop

Ya Tabtab
Nancy Ajram
Arabic Pop

Istanbul (Not Constantinople)
They Might Be Giants
Alternative

Lemonade
Internet Money feat. Gunna, Don Toliver, & Nav
Hip-hop

Never Gonna Give You Up
Rick Astley
Blue-eyed Soul

Geronimo
Sheppard
Pop

A Thousand Miles
Vanessa Carlton
Pop

U Can't Touch This
MC Hammer
Hip-hop

Hayloft
Mother Mother
Alternative

Funkytonn
Lipps Inc.
Disco

TELEVISION

By JULIE
GRANDCHAMP-DESRAUX
and ANIKA AMIN

Birds glide through a sunny blue sky, reflected in the bright green of a child's wide-eyed stare. The townspeople have gathered together in silence, staring at something that has yet to be revealed. Towering stone walls loom, and dread builds as an enormous hand grips the top. The sinewy head of a creature slowly comes to peer over the wall, engulfing the horrified onlookers in a vast shadow. A child's somber voice is heard, narrating all that is to come. "On that day, humanity received a grim reminder: We lived in fear of the Titans, and were disgraced to live in these cages we called walls." With this, "Attack on Titan" reels viewers in with the very first scene.

Those green eyes belong to the series's protagonist Eren

Yeager (Yūki Kaji) and these first moments take place on the day of his great loss. Adapted from Hajime Isayama's ongoing manga of the same name, "Attack on Titan" is set in a world where the threat of Titans, humongous humanoid with a hunger for flesh, has forced humans to live behind a series of three walls. After 100 years of peaceful living, the outermost wall is breached, and humanity is faced with great terror once again. Provoked by the destruction of his hometown and the death of his mother, Eren vows to kill all the Titans.

Season one follows 15-year-old Eren and his two friends Armin Arlert (Marina Inoue) and Mikasa Ackerman (Yui Ishikawa) after the loss of their homes and families. In an effort to avenge their lost loved ones, they train to become members of the Survey Corps, the only military regiment bold enough

to venture beyond the walls and face the Titans. Though the first season seems to lack any sort of depth aside from freeing humanity from the Titans' predatory rule, the following three seasons shockingly become centered around more complex themes such as racism, government corruption, and the subjectiveness of morality during war.

Though popular, when the anime first came out in 2013, critics labeled the show as catching, but ultimately nothing new. An angry and loud teenage boy furiously chasing a dream—that's the plot of almost every shonen anime to exist. The characters were likable but lacked significant depth. From the onset, much is left intentionally vague. Little is revealed about the Titans' behavior, much less where they came from, or what happened to the rest of civilization. The goal of the show seemed too simple, and questions of

morality were never raised. Given the premise of humanity vs. the unfeeling monsters that hunt them, there's no question of who one should root for, right?

This could not be further from the way that things panned out. The flesh-eating Titans, strangely enough, are among the least monstrous things in this show. As the show progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that nothing is as it truly seems. Time and time again, expectations are subverted, mysteries unraveled, and with every question answered, countless more arise. Isayama skillfully weaves a tale full of intrigue and uncertainty. With each season, the scope of the characters' aims widens. Endless buildup culminates in a plot twist so large that fans joke the genre changed after season three.

continued on page 25

Behind the Titanic Success of "Attack On Titan"

Arts and Entertainment

THINKPIECE

By SHIVALI KORGAONKAR

If you've ever watched a rom-com, then you're probably familiar with the helpless, nerdy girl trope that has polluted Hollywood for decades. Being too untamed to find a respectable man, she must endure a series of shopping sprees, outfit changes, and drastic haircuts to finally reveal her new and improved self in a dramatic staircase descent, prom night entrance, or school hallway strut. This "movie makeover" is the film industry's female equivalent of a man's superhero transformation. Think Peter Parker, but instead of spider webs and superhuman strength, the woman gets four-inch heels and a blowout.

Often, these makeovers are used as a method to suppress a woman's individuality and please a third-party "transformer." In the film "Pretty Woman" (1990), Vivian Ward, a broke sex worker, meets Edward Lewis, an affluent businessman, who hires her to be his fake girlfriend.

Before meeting Lewis, Ward unabashedly flaunts messy hair and promiscuous clothing, but Lewis tells her she "could be so much more." Like a knight in shining armor, he swoops in and finances her high-end makeover. She replaces her wardrobe with satin gloves, lace-trimmed hats, and fitted dresses that satisfy Lewis's desires. Transformations like Ward's promote a sexist and classist idea of beauty, declaring that the only way a woman can be respected in this world is by wearing overpriced designer clothing. In fact, it takes a movie makeover for Ward to be treated with respect from high-end store managers and hotel concierges, creating the impression that expensive beauty equates admiration. While a physical transformation can aid an emotional one, Ward and other female protagonists seem undeserving of viewers' respect until they have the wealth and beauty to support their emotional development.

Whether it be Allison Reynolds ditching her grunge mullet

"Good Girl" Turns Dateable: The Movie Makeover Trope

for a pink, flowery headband in "The Breakfast Club" (1985) or Tai Frasier trading her flannel for a plaid skirt set in "Clueless" (1995), these movie makeover scenes act as a way to fix society's misfits instead of accepting them for who they are, declaring that a woman is not worthy of appreciation until she undergoes a metamorphosis from an unpalatable free spirit to a polished Hollywood beauty. This message is especially harmful to the young female audience, who assumes that the way to correct their flaws is through physical alterations. Even more damaging is that these physical alterations always involve the hyper-sexualization of actresses playing the roles of young women, such as Regina George or Cady Heron in "Mean Girls" (2004). Our film industry ingrains a superficial meaning of self-worth into girls' minds, permanently damaging their individuality in exchange for societal acceptance.

The problem is not the movie makeovers themselves but the way they are portrayed. There's

no issue with self-care and luxury, but many of these makeovers lack self-interest as they are always initiated by and for a third party, whether that be a man or a popular friend. These films fail to recognize that true transformation is not physical. At the end of the day, the glamorous makeup and high-end outfit will be taken off, and the character will be left with the same clumsy and improper personality that the "transformer" tried to hide. Whatever emotional enlightenment that occurred in union with the physical changes is hardly shown. As soon as the man is secured, the credits start to roll. This portrayal affirms the notion that all you need is a new look and the right man to fix your problems, which exacerbates patriarchal and sexist values and is especially problematic for young viewers.

There are ways to display character development without confining a woman's worth to her appearance. A perfect example of this depiction is "10 Things I Hate About You"

(1999), a film that centers around an intelligent feminist named Kat Stratford, who falls in love with the "bad boy," Patrick Verona. In the midst of their love affair, both Stratford and Verona have emotional and physical transformations, but neither force them to change who they are at their cores in order to win the love of the other. Similarly, "Juno" (2007) highlights the life of a fiery, independent teenager who falls back in love with her high school boyfriend and her child's father, Paulie Bleeker, without ever changing her hairstyle or buying a new dress. Neither Stratford nor Juno MacGuff have to mask their intelligence or assertiveness to become more approachable to men, and that's how transformation should be approached in film. More filmmakers need to understand that character development does not rely on a girl ditching her glasses for contacts or sneakers for stilettos but instead finding self-love and independence.

TELEVISION

By ASA MUHAMMED and SAMIRA ESHA

The fourth phase of the Marvel Cinematic Universe has officially kicked off with Marvel's brand new original series "WandaVision." Elizabeth Olsen and Paul Bettany reprise their roles as Wanda Maximoff and Vision respectively and are introduced, confusingly, as a married couple living in Westview, New Jersey. Set after Vision's death in "Avengers: Infinity War" (2018), the series has no shortage of mysteries and secrets for the audience. However, "WandaVision" doesn't only succeed in being entertaining and engaging, it also displays a level of creative boldness that sets it apart from everything Marvel's done before.

The first few episodes of the show follow a classic sitcom structure, a choice which undoubtedly puzzled long-time fans of the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU). The laugh tracks, dialogue, and black and white scenery contrast dramatically with the action-packed nature and modern-day vocabulary of typical Marvel films and shows. Wanda and Vision first arrive in the 1950s in a completely different environment from their previous appearances. Wanda plays a light-hearted, traditional American housewife, contrasting with the tough, Sokovian witch that viewers were most familiar with, while Vision portrays a hardworking and loving husband. The two lead characters face little adversity, especially compared to their past adventures. Wanda and Vision seemingly go from fighting off villains bent on annihilating mankind to trying to impress Vision's boss. It's initially difficult to understand the rationale behind the production and plot decisions, but the significance is

later revealed.

With only nine episodes (and no plans for a second season) dedicated to a somewhat complicated plot, Matt Shakman, the director of the show, and all the actors involved did a marvelous job at progressing past the

A (Wanda)Vision of Success

Wanda and those attempting to stop her serve as the perfect setup for a suspenseful ending to the show.

Even with so much potential for the series finale, some MCU superfans felt as though the conclusion of "WandaVision" was

gave viewers the chance to understand and connect with the leading characters more than ever before while exploring the MCU even further through their eyes.

"WandaVision," in trend with other MCU properties, was a record (and server) breaking hit, all without sacrificing creativity and intimate character portrayals. A lot of the show's success comes from embracing the quirkiness that a lot of other comic book movies and shows shy away from. Previously, tangential comic book properties existed as either gritty re-imaginings or they'd heighten the camp to the point of parody and forego the tone of the source material. When Marvel decided to explore darker themes within the MCU, the stories were relegated to a semi-canon Hell's Kitchen grounded firmly in grim realism. While Daredevil (2015-2018), Jessica Jones (2015-2019), and Luke Cage (2016-2018) are all great shows, they shy away from the unorthodoxy of blind ninja lawyers with echolocation, purple men, and bulletproof skin, for fear that these traits would detract from the story. In the case of DC, the Harley Quinn animated series pokes fun at the dramatizations we tend to overlook in the Batman universe, as well as comic book fans themselves, but while enjoyable, the world of the show feels like more of a caricature of the comics than a reimagining.

"WandaVision" differs in that it not only uses its absurdity to its advantage but does so without sacrificing the depth of the story. Traveling through sitcom-like gimmicks enhances the storytelling, rather than detracting from it. That absurdity becomes surreality, and both are able to coexist within the confines of the story. The audience is able to laugh at the do-

mestic exploits of Wanda and her neighbors, and experience their suffering through pained close-ups and awkward (if not sinister) glitches, and that duality brings nuance to Wanda's character. With each laugh-track triggering misstep, it becomes more clear what Wanda is hiding from, and how she's doing it. The fun the audience experiences with Wanda builds a connection that allows them to empathize with what would drive her to take a town hostage. The comic book zaniness gives a lightness to the story while posing ethical dilemmas, in a way that's cohesive enough to avoid a jarring transition from sitcom to cerebral drama.

While the balance of character and absurdity is impressive, "WandaVision"'s true feat is bringing such an unconventional story to mainstream audiences. While there is no story comparable to "WandaVision" in execution, shows like FX's "Legion" (2017-2019) or HBO Max's "Doom Patrol" (2019-) have delivered moving stories wrapped in comic book camp. However, these shows, while great in their own right, lacked the budget and direction to be brought to mainstream audiences. "Legion" was visually stunning, but too slow for casual viewing, and "Doom Patrol" faced the opposite problem in that its story and characters far outshined its budget, leaving extensive character arcs and seamlessly woven comedy limited by budget-constrained visual effects. "WandaVision" brings a palatable and visually appealing story to casual audiences, with its commercial success a hint toward the evolution of the superhero genre, one where complex stories are made accessible and depth isn't synonymous with realism.



Susannah Ahn / The Spectator

sitcom style and allowing it to crumble as the plot itself drastically shifts. The show transitions perfectly from Wanda's made-up town to those who exist outside of it, making it easy for viewers to follow along as they shift from one location to another. The first few episodes start off in black and white, but color gets incorporated gradually as the show moves from decade to decade and becomes more grounded in reality. Olsen brilliantly portrays the difference between Wanda's facade of an idyllic sitcom life and her realization of the damage she's causing to the innocent people for her perfect reality. The first few confrontations between

antidramatic. Vision's storyline and character development were somewhat inconsistent with previous plot points in the MCU, especially his death in "Avengers: Infinity War." Additionally, while the show introduced several new and interesting characters, fans hoped for appearances from various superheroes from the comic books as well as an in-depth backstory for specific characters. However, because of several filming difficulties due to COVID-19, many introductions were not possible for this specific series. Though the series finale strayed from many of the viewers' wishes, it did not take away from the overall quality of the entire show. "WandaVision"

Arts and Entertainment

THINKPIECE

By ROXY PERAZZO

Amy Poehler's new Netflix original, "Moxie," was released this March, bringing a feminist perspective to the stereotypical American high school. Based on the 2015 novel by Jennifer Mathieu, the film manages to highlight both the negative and positive experiences of young girls as they juggle friendships, relationships, and social activism.

"Moxie" centers around high school junior Vivian (Hadley Robinson), who, after finding out about her mom Lisa's (Amy Poehler) rebellious past, anonymously starts the zine "Moxie" to discuss feminism and its place at her school. Vivian is initially inspired by a new student, Lucy (Alycia Pascual-Peña), who is continuously harassed by football player and all-around jock-archetype, Mitchell (Patrick Schwarzenegger). Though Vivian is slow to accept the presence of harassment at her school, once her movement gets started it quickly becomes far bigger than just her. As "Moxie" rapidly gains supporters, a club with the same name is started, causing plenty of controversy through-

out the school.

With Vivian's gradual feminist awakening, "Moxie" provides a great analysis of the learned acceptance by women of harassment. When Lucy first stands up to Mitchell, Vivian pulls her aside and tells her that she should ignore it. Lucy and Vivian's responses represent the dichotomy of attitudes toward harassment: staying silent, or as modern beliefs emphasize, speaking out. Lucy refuses to back down, even when Vivian tells her it might be a bad idea.

The zine doesn't really get started, though, until a list that places students, including Vivian, into categories like "never been touched" or "best rack" is released. A new, unnamed (but obviously awful) category is added just for Lucy, pushing Vivian over the edge and leading her to create the first edition of "Moxie." The zine calls out the actions of Mitchell, as well as the lack of action by other male students, and points out the gross nature of the list and the students' strange acceptance of it.

Because "Moxie" was inspired by Vivian's mom, the film revives the feminist culture of the

Those Girls Got "Moxie"

'90s, especially in its soundtrack. The score features Riot Grrrl, a subgenre of punk characterized by its feminist messaging. When Vivian returns home after giving Lucy her dismissive message, she blasts Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl," one of the most influential Riot Grrrl songs, as well as one less than fitting for pre-zine Vivian. As the movie progresses, Vivian increasingly embodies the rebel girl Lucy has been to her.

Though Riot Grrrl emphasizes feminist solidarity, it is without the intersectionality of modern feminism. Because the main figures of the genre and movement were white, cis-women, the possibility of a revival of Riot Grrrl has to address that. "Moxie" attempts to amend this lack of inclusivity by introducing Claudia and Lucy, two women of color, to the main cast. Throughout the film, the additional obstacles they face as activists are portrayed; they are the first to face the consequences of the feminist controversy, with their struggles used to highlight the interplay between race, politics, and feminism. The plot tries to show the privilege that Vivian has because of her white-

ness by allowing her to avoid any punishment, despite being the creator of "Moxie." The way that the punishment pans out, though, makes it seem like they, Claudia especially, just serve as a way for Vivian to learn about the ways women of color participate in feminism.

That is not to say that Lucy and Claudia don't have character arcs. Both characters are well thought out, have real emotions, and develop as characters outside of their relationships with Vivian. The movie also features the experiences of a trans girl, CJ (Josie Totah), who joins the club and shares her experience with being dead-named, as well as a disabled character, Meg (Emily Hopper), who points out the lack of inclusion she receives from her peers. Two players from the girls' soccer team who are fed up with the lack of funding and support they receive, despite being better than the football team, also join the club and try to make a change within the school. The bonds created within the group highlight the solidarity and companionship teenage girls can have, which is often overlooked in popular me-

dia. Also, Vivian's love-interest, Seth (Nico Hiraga), represents the increasing number of men who support feminists in their actions and demonstrations. Seth is the first to find out that Vivian is the creator of "Moxie," but he does not go behind her back or lose interest. He instead supports Vivian's efforts by taking part in the shows of support for "Moxie" by drawing hearts and stars on his hands and attending the walkout toward the end of the film.

Though "Moxie" is fiction and some aspects of the movement within the school are a bit over-the-top, the film succeeds in sparking a conversation about the harassment of young girls. While most other portrayals of high school ignore the issue, "Moxie" centers on the uncomfortable reality while simultaneously drawing light to the companionship of teenage girls. Lots of movies struggle to integrate politics with the rest of their stories, but "Moxie" manages to serve as both a classic coming-of-age story and a powerful social critique in an amusing yet realistic way.

CULTURE

By LIANNE OHAYON and YASMINE CHOKRANE

Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, and Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, sat down for an interview with TV mogul Oprah Winfrey on March 7, 2021. "There is no subject that is off limits," promised Winfrey, and the interview certainly delivered. Over the course of the two-hour-long special, topics including race, mental health, and relationships between various members of the royal family were discussed. Meghan opened up about having suicidal thoughts throughout her time as a member of the royal family, saying that she felt "trapped" after numerous pleas for help with members of "the firm" brought her nowhere. In addition, she mentioned an appalling conversation that occurred behind the scenes involving the race of the couple's first child, Archie, as an anonymous member of the royal family was concerned about "how dark his skin might be when he is born."

This interview left the world in a state of shock, as the public had been largely unaware of the damage and emotional burden that accompanies a role in the royal family. But that was the point. One threatening part of this facade that is frequently overlooked is the media. The British press has a huge role in delineating between the "commoners" and the monarchy with an "invisible contract," as noted by Markle. They hold unchecked power and are able to twist headlines to portray certain people more favorably than others. For example, there were stark differences between how the media looked at Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge, when she was pregnant, compared to Markle. She believes that those headlines were due to

the royal family not providing them as much protection from the ruthless tabloids compared to her counterparts.

Though the interview highlighted questionable aspects within the institution, this is not a new occurrence. It became increasingly clear that the royal family was not the ideal that it made itself out to be, especially in the 1980s with the treatment of Diana, Princess of Wales.

people's hearts." Tragically, Diana, along with her new lover Dodi Fayed, was killed in a car crash in 1997. The death of the people's princess came a year after her husband admitted to having an affair, bringing massive backlash onto both Charles and the entire family due to their lack of support, intent to cover up the scandal, and overall toxic environment which contributed to Diana's misfortune.

als. But this massive heat mainly comes from the reverberating impact the monarchy holds on Western pop culture. One key example is television series "The Crown" (2016-), a historical fiction drama that takes viewers through Queen Elizabeth II's reign. Initially, when the United Kingdom was a monarchy, the Royal Family was particularly relevant in Western governmental affairs. Part of that was attributed to the position the monarch held in government as the head of state, with the rest of the family supporting their affairs. Nowadays, the monarch and their family mostly serve a symbolic role, with the majority of government leadership falling onto the shoulders of the prime minister.

That isn't to say the royal family isn't overwhelmed by responsibilities. According to the Royals' official website, the Royal Family "carries out over 2,000 official engagements throughout the UK and worldwide," which includes official State events, receptions, banquets, garden parties, national celebrations, and national mourning. This omnipresence in the global sphere is what makes their lives so pervasive in our culture.

For example, Princess Diana was known in the media sphere for her iconic fashion moments. She wore her heart on her sleeve, in that her clothes often conveyed the way she was feeling or the significance of the event perfectly. Also known for the boldness in her choices, Diana distinguished herself in her experimentation: she was the first woman of the Royal Family to wear trousers to an official evening event, matching them with bow-ties and tuxedos, and—of course—the infamous "Revenge (Mini)Dress" that had a plunging neckline and fell off her shoulders in a daring and

unprecedented way.

The revenge dress was worn on the night a documentary aired in which Prince Charles admitted to having an affair, one of many clandestine scandals that have come to be associated with the Royal Family. The other recent one was the question of Prince Andrew, Queen Elizabeth's son, and his associations with Jeffrey Epstein, who had been federally charged with sex trafficking of minors. Epstein's circle of friends was notorious, and Prince Andrew was known to be a core member, allegedly even visiting Epstein on his island in the early 2000s. The investigation into Epstein, and the clamoring for Prince Andrew to be held accountable for his relationship with the criminal, got so overwhelming for Prince Andrew that he had personally requested to take a break from his royal duties.

Of course, that's nothing compared to Meghan and Harry, who have requested to "take a break" from their royal duties permanently. After watching the interview, it's clear why.

Still, "Megxit" has raised questions about the relationship between the Royal Family and its people, as well as how sustainable this public obsession with their image can be.

There is no doubt that the royal family has been a centerpiece of British history for centuries, and despite the scandals, the royal family still has a significant cultural impact across the world. To many, they can provide a sense of unity amongst the people when they need it most—a constant in people's lives. But the beauty of life is that there are no constants, and there shouldn't be an "ideal" to live up to. The royal family is perpetuating this notion of perfection, when in reality, they're far from it.

God Save the Queen



Formerly known as Diana Spencer, she married Charles, Prince of Wales, in 1981, and had two sons, William and Harry. Her influence took Britain and the rest of the world by storm, earning her the title as the "princess of

This accident is still incredibly relevant, and it has irreparably tainted British history. Many today believe that the royal family was accountable for Diana's death, and they idolize her legacy while demonizing the roy-

Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

Kings of Leon: The Best Contemporary Rock Band?

By **MATTHEW WAGMAN**

The past year has been, needless to say, mentally and emotionally strenuous for us all. We've had to learn to live apart while still trying to maintain connections. We've had to rethink everything about how we live and how the world works and grow our social consciousness. But most importantly, we've had to seriously examine the state of the world and the way it's ended up. It's important to work, but it's not easy, and sometimes we need a break. But we don't just need a little rest and relaxation, a short break where we can sit around worrying about the future—we need rock & roll. We need some roaring guitars, some folksy singing, a driving bass—some good, soul-affirming music. We need Kings of Leon.

But why Kings of Leon in particular? What sets them apart from the countless other bands representing the slowly dying genre of rock & roll? Maybe it starts with their origin story: three brothers traveling with their Evangelical Preacher fa-

ther, traversing the South to save people's souls. Or maybe it's because of their first album, written largely in their parents' basement while they were on the cusp of adulthood, and their ensuing fame—not in their country of origin but in the United Kingdom as they were hailed as one of the most promising bands of the twentieth century. Or, it could be because of their transition into the global pop world, with their 2008 smash singles "Sex on Fire" and "Use Somebody."

How did a garage rock band from Tennessee reach almost the same level as the modern pop-rock giant Coldplay, and why would they still be relevant today? Kings of Leon makes a kind of rock music that other genres can't hope to match in its emotional expression and genuine relatable feeling: the power of a person playing a real instrument and singing in their own voice. Kings of Leon makes the kind of music you can sing along to without having ever having heard it before, musical compositions not just catchy as

the latest top 40 earworms, but perfectly constructed to capture the most relatable human emotions. "When You See Yourself" (2021) is their eighth and most recent album, and though the members are middle-aged, they haven't slipped in talent whatsoever.

Their last album, "WALLS" (2016), saw them honing what had become their signature arena rock sound, but on "When You See Yourself," they transcend it. Make no mistake, this is still music that will capture an audience of thousands of screaming fans, but the very danceable tracks, with deep syncopated bass throbbing under languid tears of lead guitar, and a snarling, muscular rhythm guitar offer much more than a pop sensibility. The lead singer Caleb Followill's soulful (and still fairly southern) voice—singing classic themes of love, loss, and Americana—mixes naturally with the well-crafted and expertly played instrumentation. There's no overproduction to make the guitars just ornaments around the singer's

voice. Rather, the arrangement closely approximates the feeling of being with the band, their songs coming straight from the heart. While they do continue a style of riff-centric pop-rock popularized by the likes of The Strokes and Coldplay in the early 2000s, none of their songs ever feel stale. Every single one is still based around guitar, bass, and drums, and you continue to hear the signature drive of the bass, the lazy sweep of the electric guitars, and reverb-heavy, compressed laments of the singer on songs like "Stormy Weather," which is followed by the wellspring of sound and harmony that consolidates into the powerful ripping chords of "Golden Restless Age."

It's no wonder that "The Bandit" was the lead single for this album, with the wailing guitar rising and falling over the constant, loping pace of the bass, and the straining tones of the frontman's narrative. He sings the quintessential American story of the lawman trying to catch not just a man, but the entire spirit of a nation, an en-

ergy that can never be tamed, always moving forward without thought of the past, only the future. Why should we care about this type of music anymore? Why should we listen to a genre that arguably had its last gasp with '90s grunge? What more can be accomplished beyond that? This is not just the music of a few middle-aged men from the deep south playing five-minute songs when our greatest contemporary hits barely get past two. This is not just the music of white people stuck in the past. This is the music made on the guitars originally carried by those Latinos who inhabited the Wild West, the style popularized by the African American Blues singers continuing a tradition that followed their ancestors, the style then appropriated by white people and spread over the world. There is no hat in this music, no bigotry—only the purest consolidation of our land's shared musical heritage and the purest expressions of human emotion. This is the music of the people; this is the sound of America.

TELEVISION

Behind the Titanic Success of "Attack On Titan"

continued from page 22

The success of "Attack On Titan" can be attributed to many things. Its insightful social and political commentary and intricate plot riddled with gut-wrenching twists and turns provide for an addicting and enthralling series. Its gruesome and intense action scenes are incredibly animated, filled with an astounding amount of detail and precision. From the very first episode, the colorful and unique art style has made it more aesthetically appealing, in contrast to a dark and bloody storyline.

The production value only serves to heighten the shocking betrayals, glorious triumphs, and crushing losses of the show. The animation has remained consistently phenomenal, highlighting the riveting action scenes and striking character designs. The Titans are truly repulsive, and the soldiers inspire awe as they

soar through the air to fight. The voice actors consistently deliver convincing and emotional performances. The musical score is one of the best in anime, inspiring feelings ranging from patriotism to tear-jerking sorrow for the comrades lost along the way.

Initially, "Attack On Titan" was hardly mainstream or revered. That changed as the show progressed, causing its popularity to skyrocket, and garnering positive attention outside of Japan, particularly in the States. It's fairly clear why the transition from season one to its following seasons boosted its popularity: once its creator began getting more obvious with the show's underlying themes, the series started becoming more and more relevant.

Unless you read the manga, it's hard to see the political undertones in season one, which are anything but subtle as the show progresses. What used to be a show about a boy wanting

to avenge his lost loved ones becomes deep commentary about the competing conceptions of good and evil.

Set during a period of war between three different sides, the show focuses on one principal idea: no side is inherently "good." All three are committing horrific atrocities, and yet all sides have their justification. By providing backstories for complex and well-developed characters on all sides, Isayama easily throws viewers into a meticulously planned out world that evokes some sympathy for everyone, and nobody at the same time. Still, at the end of the day, each side contributes to innocent deaths. Though it's tempting to root for your favorite character, it's equally important to remember that their actions aren't any more justifiable than those of the people they're fighting against.

Season four was a game changer for the show. Viewers

have practically grown up with Eren and the scouts, making the dramatic changes all the more shocking. The boy who was once labeled as a forgettable protagonist has transformed into an indisputable antihero. Characters once viewed as antagonists are thoroughly humanized. Isayama has always been liberal with the number of character deaths, and season four takes it to another level. Though viewers are largely divided on whether they stand in support of everyone's actions, there is an almost unanimous consensus that the tremendous character development is one of the highlights of the series.

A single chapter of the manga remains, and readers still have no clue as to what the end will be. No one is truly worried though, as Isayama is a master of intricate long-term writing. The seemingly insignificant details scattered through years of the series always eventually come together, filling plot holes

and leaving fans wondering how they never saw it coming.

Freedom is a concept that has long enthralled the human psyche, and it's a major theme in the series. From Eren's constant monologues, to the recurring motif of birds, to the "wings of freedom" adorning the back of the Scouts' uniform, it is an ever-present idea. As the characters have been literally trapped within the walls, living like livestock for the Titans, this fixation on freedom makes a lot of sense. But long after circumstances change, the same struggles remain. Just as we grapple with the concepts of liberty, freedom, and equality in the real world, the show deeply examines them, making sure to portray a variety of perspectives. As we draw near to the bitter end, we find ourselves closer to answering an age-old question, and perhaps the series's most important takeaway: what does it mean to be free?

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Sports

Cricket

The Inspiring Story of Shakib Al Hasan

By NAKIB ABEDIN

Despite being unknown to most Americans, Shakib Al Hasan is one of the most successful and talented cricketers in the world right now. He is Bangladesh's star player and was ranked as the number one all-rounder (a cricketer who is equally adept with the bat and bowling) in all three formats of cricket in 2015, becoming the first and only player ever to do so. Al Hasan has won numerous trophies and has become one of the most beloved players across the globe. However, the success in his career came from humble beginnings, and his journey is an inspiration to cricket fans worldwide.

His story starts in a village in the Khulna district of Bangladesh, where he played for various village teams across the country.

While playing one of these games, an umpire was impressed by his skills and got him to try out for a professional club. In the first ball he ever bowled, Al Hasan got a wicket, which would be the first of many to come across his lifetime. He was forced to use a tennis ball throughout his childhood because cricket balls are expensive and require high maintenance. After that debut performance, he worked his way up the ranks until he was selected to represent Bangladesh in U-19's cricket.

Al Hasan started to play regularly for the national team between 2006 and 2008. In the earlier years of his career, he was deemed more of a batsman than a bowler, despite being an all-rounder. However, in a test match versus New Zealand in 2008, Al Hasan's coach played him as a specialist

bowler. This decision paid off, as Al Hasan's bowling performance that game turned out to be one of the best in the entire year. Since then, Al Hasan has been equally adept with the ball and bat and has slowly become one of the best all-rounders in history.

Al Hasan's career-defining performance would be his heroics in the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup. He put up unprecedented numbers, [scoring](#) an incredible 606 runs while also taking an impressive 11 wickets. He was the man of the match in every one of Bangladesh's wins. Surprisingly, he played only eight games out of a possible nine because a game versus Sri Lanka was canceled due to the weather. He was on track to beat the all-time record of 673 runs set by Sachin Tendulkar, boasting a batting average of [86.57](#),

which was comfortably higher than Tendulkar's [61.18](#). Putting up these numbers while being an all-rounder is simply remarkable, and his individual performances in that World Cup were legendary.

Al Hasan's career wasn't without hurdles, though. After the amazing World Cup campaign, he received a one-year ban from cricket between October 2019 and October 2020 due to charges on the infringement of corruption protocol. It is important to note that Al Hasan never actually accepted bribes. He received an offer from bookmakers and chose not to act on it. However, under ICC protocol, a player has to report cases such as these to the Corruption Commission. Many viewed this punishment as too harsh, but Al Hasan fully cooperated with the investigation and accepted the

charges. The blow of the punishment was somewhat softened by the COVID-19 pandemic as there were few cricket games between March and October 2020.

Moving past the ban, Al Hasan can look forward to the next World Cup. At 34 years of age, the 2023 World Cup may be his last. However, he is surrounded by promising talent and a squad with a blend of youth and experience, including seniors such as Tamim Iqbal and Mushfiqur Rahim and youngsters such as Mohammad Saifuddin and Mehidy Hasan Mirza. If he can replicate his performances in the last World Cup, he may hold a strong claim to be the greatest all-rounder of all time. Al Hasan's diligence and passion got him to where he is right now, and his story is an inspiration to a generation of fans.

Soccer

Eden Hazard's Predicament at Real Madrid

By SHAFIUL HAQUE

With two Premier League titles, nine trophies, and over 20 individual awards, Eden Hazard is a soccer star known around the globe. The Belgian is recognized as one of the best attacking players in the world, whether it is for his creativity or goal-scoring ability. He began his youth career in Belgium before moving to France to play for the Ligue 1 club Lille OSC. After a five-year spell, in 2012, Hazard transferred to the 2012 Champions League winner Chelsea FC and established himself on the European stage. In seven seasons with the Blues, he made [352 appearances and scored 110 goals](#). After winning the Europa League, in 2019, Hazard moved to Spanish giant Real Madrid FC in the summer transfer window. The club coughed up a large sum for Hazard, offering him a five-year contract worth \$100 million with additional fees. The club had

always been a dream for Hazard, who [stated](#), "I've always dreamed of Real Madrid. I'm not just saying it today because I've signed here. It's been that way since I was a kid." However, two years later, he still hasn't established himself at the Bernabéu. From being a world-class player to an athlete suffering with injuries, what went wrong for Hazard?

Hazard was unveiled as a Real Madrid player on June 13, 2019 in the Santiago Bernabéu stadium with fans present. He took the number seven shirt, formerly worn by club legend Cristiano Ronaldo. Already having joined one of the best clubs in the world and taking the legendary number of one of the best players to ever grace soccer, Hazard was put under a lot of pressure from the soccer community and from Real Madrid fans. After joining Madrid, he picked up a hamstring injury, which pushed his debut back half a month. The Belgian recorded his first goal and assist in La Liga in

a 4-2 win against Granada FC on October 5, 2019. Hazard began to contribute to the team, recording three assists in the next five matches. However, in a Champions League match against Paris Saint-Germain, the left winger suffered an ankle injury after a rash challenge, which left him off the pitch for three months.

Hazard missed Real Madrid's Copa del Rey and Supercopa de España campaigns and returned from injury in a La Liga match against Celta de Vigo. Yet again, six days after his return, Hazard fractured his fibula bone in his calf and was out for three months. With the COVID-19 virus halting soccer until the summer, the Belgian was able to recover from his injury, and in June 2020, he made his way back on the pitch. Upon his return, he recorded assists in his first two matches against SD Eibar and Valencia CF. Real Madrid eventually won La Liga, with Hazard making regular appearances off the bench. Though Hazard

fell short of expectations, both of pundits and his own standards, no blame should be given to the Belgian. Devastating injuries have plagued his progress, making it hard for him to adjust to a new league and squad.

Unfortunately, injuries continued to disrupt Hazard from establishing his former creative self. Already seven months into the 2020-2021 season, he has only made 14 appearances. Hazard suffered from a multitude of muscle injuries, starting from September to December to February, and he is currently dealing with another one right now. Real Madrid has suffered greatly on the creative side of the game, with midfielders Toni Kroos and Luka Modrić giving their best for the club. Zinedine Zidane, Real Madrid's manager, has been questioned by interviewers about his thoughts on Hazard's difficult situation. The Frenchman [remained hopeful](#): "It's not an easy time for the footballer. I'm sure it's a matter of

time before we see him back playing, and hopefully he won't pick up another injury. [...] I think it's a bit of bad luck. It's not been easy on the player. We have to maintain a positive attitude. He's a great player. We need him back 100 percent."

Regardless of which club you support, it's sad to see a talented player such as Hazard held down by injuries. It is very likely that if the Belgian fails to recover from his injuries, Real Madrid will have no other choice than to transfer him. However, people should realize that Hazard is a world-class player, and he has given full effort when he played this season. His poor form and culmination of injuries are obstacles that all soccer athletes go through, and it's a matter of how they handle them that dictates whether or not they can go back to peak form. Hopefully, if Hazard stays in full fitness, we can see the magician that we once saw in the Premier League back in his prime.

NCAA / Disrespectator

Bracketology: Five Foolish Foolproof Tips to Help You Dominate Your March Madness Pool

By KRISH GUPTA

As March Madness quickly approached, millions of Americans were frozen at their desks, fingers trembling over their trackpads as they constructed their brackets. Advanced computer simulations, Las Vegas regulars, geniuses, and everybody in between have tried to crack the formula for the perfect March Madness bracket, and with it \$1 million, but the feat still hasn't been accomplished. Luckily, the wait is over as I have compiled, through hours of research, corroboration, and evaluation, the best tips for a 100 percent successful NCAA bracket (don't try these at home). Without further ado, here are five foolish ways to craft the perfect bracket and wow all the members of your March Madness pool (Did I say foolish? I meant foolproof).

1. Seek out the chaplain at your local church.

In the 2018 edition of March Madness, the Loyola Ramblers,

not even expected to make it past the first round, made a Cinderella run to the Final Four. But the person who got more fame and credit than any of the players was the team chaplain, centenarian Sister Jean Dolores Schmidt. The chaplain, then 98 years old, gained celebrity status as she sat in her wheelchair courtside for each of Loyola's games.

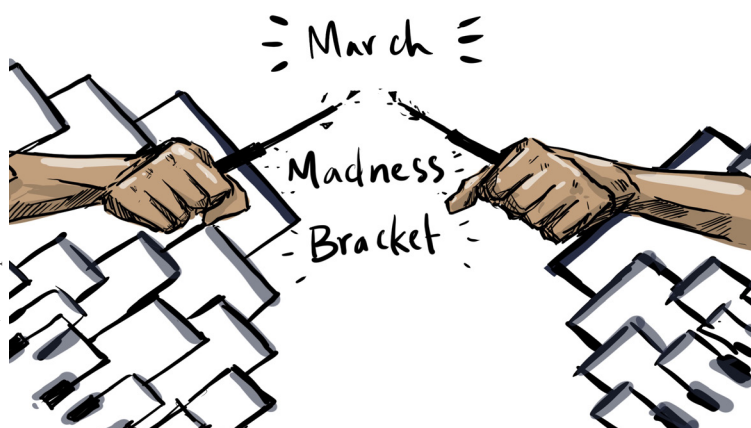
Obviously, the Ramblers' run was not due to the players but rather their wise chaplain. Before you fill your bracket, I advise you to find the chaplain at your local church to guide you through your decisions. You get bonus points if the chaplain is a woman who qualifies for AARP benefits.

2. Choose a color to represent and stick with it.

Last March Madness, in 2019 (the 2020 tournament was canceled due to the pandemic), the red-hued teams stole the show. The final pitted the University of Virginia Cavaliers, who have a primarily orange scheme, against the Texas Tech Red Raiders.

Three of the four teams in the Final Four had red-hued colors. The blue teams dominated the tournament in 2018; all but two of the remaining teams in the Elite Eight had blue as one of their primary colors. Blue and yellow teams found success in

submit one for each color. Submit a bracket in which blue teams always advance. Submit one in which red teams always advance. Submit one in which purple teams always advance. Needless to say, at least one of these brackets will do well.



2017.

Since ESPN allows bracket-makers to submit up to 25 brackets, a viable strategy would be to

3. Let your dog choose.

Animals have been known to make [excellent sports betting choices](#). Print and cut out the lo-

gos of all 68 teams in the NCAA tournament, and for each matchup, place two logos next to each other in front of your friendly house pet (or steal a neighbor's pet if you don't have one). Whichever logo your furry friend approaches first is the winner and moves on to the next round of your bracket.

While this strategy may be time intensive, there's always a chance that you could discover the next [Fiona the Hippo](#) or [Nick the Dolphin](#).

4. Use ESPN's randomizer.

ESPN provides users with the option to randomize their brackets. Simply click that option, and let all the matchups unfold in front of your eyes.

5. Close your eyes and pray.

Perhaps the most gutsy strategy, for each matchup, close your eyes and pick a team. The team you pick advances to the next round. Keep going until you reach your final champion to cut down the nets.

NFL

The Legacy of Drew Brees

By PHILLIP PHAN

Confetti fell as Drew Brees held his newborn son in one hand and the Lombardi trophy in the other. It was 2010, his fourth year as a Saint, when he brought home New Orleans's first Super Bowl trophy. Brees stood at barely six feet tall, lacked athleticism, and didn't have the arm talent most other comparable quarterbacks had. So how did he do what all the previous Saints quarterbacks failed to do? The answer is simple. Throughout his career, Brees had incredible leadership, perseverance, and attention to detail that allowed him to carry his team to new heights. He overcame a career-threatening shoulder injury, during which his doctors told him he should quit football, to become one of the most productive quarterbacks in NFL history.

Brees reluctantly came back for his 20th season last year. He was facing 11 broken ribs, a torn rotator cuff,

a collapsed lung, and a severe foot injury. He still performed as he always has. The quarterback **started** in 12 games, throwing 275 completions, 24 touchdowns, and six interceptions for 2,942 yards. Additionally, he led the Saints to a 9-3 record as a starter. By no means was this record his best season, but it was still an elite year from a seasoned quarterback. He gave New Orleans all his body had to offer, but the injuries caught up to him during the playoffs. Brees struggled to throw deep in the postseason and cited the injuries as the reason. The Saints fell to the eventual Super Bowl champions, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, in the divisional round, during which Brees **completed** 19/24 passes for 134 yards, one touchdown, and three interceptions. It was his first game with three interceptions since 2016. Brees realized that his body couldn't hold up any longer, and he had a family waiting for him. That game would be the last time Brees would wear the black and gold.

Statistically, Brees has a case for being one of the top quarterbacks of all time (or even GOAT of the regular season). Brees is the **only quarterback** to pass for over 80 thousand yards. He's reached this number by leading the league in passing a record seven times and passing for over 5,000 yards for a record five times. For a while, he was the all-time leader in touchdown passes until Tom Brady passed him this season. Brees has also racked up 172 wins as a starter, which ranks him fourth of all time among QBs. Brees has also **notched** 13 appearances in the Pro Bowl and two AP Offensive Player of the Year awards.

His individual accolades are quite impressive, but it's what he's done for the franchise and city of New Orleans that separates him. After Brees left the Chargers and signed a six-year deal with the Saints, he was tasked with turning the franchise around, and he did just that. Brees led the Saints to nine playoff appearances in 15 years, when they had only had five

appearances over the last 60 years. He won New Orleans their first ever Super Bowl and put out a Super Bowl MVP performance for Saints fans to remember.

Brees also makes a case for being the greatest athlete off the field. Journalist Clay Travis **describes it best**: "No athlete has ever meant more to the city in which he played than [...] Brees has meant to New Orleans." The quarterback took the helm of the Saints after Hurricane Katrina, which left New Orleans devastated. Brees led his community on the long road back and gave them hope. He donated millions of dollars and created the Brees Dream Foundation, which aims to make healthcare more accessible for people living in the city. Brees also spent thousands improving parks in low-income neighborhoods in New Orleans. He recently pledged another five million to building more hospitals and facilities in the area. Even outside of New Orleans, Brees is an ambassador for the World

Food Programme, which works with the United Nations on feeding the hungry. He holds countless nonprofit camps and organizations in New Orleans for the youth yearly. Brees's commitment to the city of New Orleans isn't a statistic that can be measured, but it reflects the type of player and person he is.

Playing in the same era as all-time greats such as Peyton Manning and Tom Brady, Brees was just as elite. Brees was not highly recruited out of high school and was often overlooked, but he used these as his motivation. Most people would have decided being an NFL quarterback was impossible at that point, but Brees thought differently. He controlled what he had control of and did what he could to the best of his ability. What he lacked in athleticism, his elite work ethic, attention to detail, and leadership ability more than made up for. Despite being short in stature, Brees left a tall and undisputable legacy in New Orleans.

Soccer

The Craziest Goalkeeper in Soccer History

continued from page 28

for Spanish club Real Valladolid for one season before returning to play with Nacional for four more years.

The Colombian was caught by the law in 1993 for acting as a conduit for cocaine baron Pablo Escobar in a kidnapping case involving the daughter of his associate Carlos Molina. He was paid \$64 thousand for lending a helping hand in the situation and sentenced to jail for seven months. The keeper missed the upcoming 1994 World Cup due to his conviction in the kidnapping case, and he could only watch on his television as Colombia never made it out of the group stage. Following a

short retirement in 2005, he returned in 2007 for Venezuela club Guaros FC. He joined Colombian second division team Deportivo Rionegro in January 2008, and in July switched to Deportivo Pereira before finally retiring in 2010.

Higuaita is well known for his creativity all over the field. He always experimented with the ball on and off the pitch and is famous for inventing a move called the scorpion kick. In a friendly match between England and Colombia on September 6, 1995, Higuaita made a sublime save that shocked the entire world. A simple long distance shot at Colombia's net was a very simple catch for the goalkeeper, but Higuaita decided to clear the ball by performing a re-

verse bicycle kick, also known as a back hammer kick. He dived toward the ground and used his hands on the field to lunge his back heels forward and kick the ball. It surprised everyone, and it was a unique move that had never been done before. The scorpion kick has now become an elite move and is very rare, even in professional soccer.

The characteristic Higuaita is most known for is his unique playing style. In his time, goalkeepers were allowed to pick up the ball with their hands following passes from their own teammates. This rule meant that goalkeepers didn't necessarily have to be technically skilled and didn't use their feet as much. Most keepers stayed in the goal, not venturing forward very

often at all. Higuaita played a high-risk "sweeper-keeper" role, which he showcased by dribbling the ball out of his box instead of punting it off.

In his infamous 1990 World Cup loss against Cameroon, Higuaita's dribbling miscalculation may have cost his team a crucial match, but his style of play also helped develop the game productively. Instead of sitting back, Higuaita came forward and assisted his team with building up the play. This style may have seemed foolish and impractical, but in reality, it laid the foundation for the future.

Higuaita's eccentric playstyle played a huge role in inspiring FIFA to change its rules. FIFA introduced the back-pass rule as a means to discourage time-wasting tactics that kill

the momentum of the game in 1992. This rule established that goalkeepers aren't able to pick up the ball following a backpass from their own teammates. Higuaita liked to play the game offensively and productively instead of sitting back and watching or using time-wasting tactics. While it may have looked a little crazy watching a goalkeeper forget about his own net and dribbling players on the field, it was a step in the right direction. He laid the foundation for the "sweeper-keeper" playstyle which has been widely adopted by many of the best goalkeepers right now, such as Manuel Neuer and Marc-André ter Stegen. Higuaita will forever be remembered for leaving his mark on soccer as the craziest goalkeeper in history.

Sports Editorial / Disrespectator

A Masterclass on Heckling Referees

By MAX SCHNEIDER

All sports fans have been there. The game is almost over. Your team is about to get the winning score. All the stars have aligned, and suddenly, you hear it. The whine of a whistle, the scream of an umpire, or a yellow flag on the field. Your excitement crumbles as the referee steals all the glory with a bad call. You feel anger boiling deep inside you, and you feel the need to show the ref his own stupidity. You only know of one way to express this anguish: heckling. Heckling may seem crude and insignificant, and when done improperly, it is. But when done by a true master of the craft, it is something beautiful.

Before I teach this class, we should establish some ground rules. First and foremost is understanding boundaries. A true heckler will never invoke a referee's family or make fun of the referee's appearance. Similarly, any sort of attack on one's race, gender, sexual orientation, or anything of the like is unacceptable. Secondly, keep it clean. There are usually children in the stands, and it is important not to cross any lines. Remember, profanity is not as funny as you may think. It comes off as obnoxious and unfunny. Lastly, know when heckling is acceptable. Don't go to a Little League game played by your eight-year-old daughter and ask a volunteer ref if he needs to see an eye doctor. Not only is it not cool to criticize non-professionals, but it also won't earn your team any good calls in the future.

Now, let's begin. Class is in session. Heckling comes in many forms. The first one we will explore is the stock joke. These are jokes that work

in any sport in every situation. These are often overused or boring, so it is important that they are well crafted. A good stock joke should be short. The referee isn't going to be listening for two minutes, and neither are your fellow fans. Stock jokes should also be easy to understand. The referee isn't going to spend extra time figuring out what you meant. They need to immediately understand and be subsequently ashamed. Lastly, they should be original. Going back to the example I used earlier, every ref has been asked to go to an eye doctor millions of times. Similarly, don't tell the ref about being blind, sleeping, or biased. These remarks have no impact, and using them only presents you as an amateur heckler at best. However, if you make a joke that implies these points, it is hilarious. With that in mind, here are some of my favorite stock jokes:

"Can I pet your seeing eye dog after the game?"
 "Did they stop printing the rulebook in braille?"
 "Do you take Visa or American Express?"
 "Leave the gift giving to Santa!"
 "If you had one more eye, you'd be a Cyclops"

Next, let's examine specific jokes. Specific jokes are jokes that rely on events that just happened. They need to be quick and witty, making them the hardest jokes to come up with. Similar to stock jokes, these need to be short and original. However, they have the added necessity of pertaining to the sport being played. A good specific joke has two elements: a detail and a punch line. The detail is what just happened, and the punchline links to it. This link can be

achieved in multiple ways. The easiest way is using a pun. For example, checks are big hits in hockey and can also be used to pay off the ref. A player can steal a base, and an umpire can steal a game. It can also be done by using a comparison. A ref could have robbed your team, like how a thief stole the ref's eyes. Here are some of my favorite specific jokes:

"If that pitch were any lower, it would hit your IQ" (If the ump calls a strike on a low pitch—baseball)
 "I was in a car crash yesterday and had less contact than that" (If the referee misses an obvious foul, especially in basketball or soccer)
 "Are you failing school because you have missed two periods?" (When a line judge misses many calls throughout the game—hockey)

Lastly, let's discuss the mother of all heckles, the long jokes. Long jokes are jokes that are repeated throughout the game and when done correctly, are by far the most effective. Long jokes need to start with the same thing every time. This repetition catches the attention of the referee and the fans. Your opening should be followed by a joke that targets something specific. If you keep it consistent, you can slowly degrade the ref into de-nothingness. These jokes thrive on preparation. Researching jokes is simple and can be split

into three parts: Identify, Remind, and Annoy. Identify is the simplest. It is easy to get the attention of a ref whose name you've figured out. This strategy is especially effective for referees who aren't notable and hence don't hear their names as frequently.

Remind is where your preparation comes in. The best long jokes often rely on bringing back something that happened in the past. Good examples of references to the past are infamously blown calls, cheating scandals, or funny mishaps. Perhaps the most notable of these was when Jim Joyce blew Armando Galarraga's perfect game bid by missing an obvious call, when he called a runner safe on a play at first base in the ninth inning. It is perhaps the most famous miscall of the generation and can be used for many funny heckles. Another example is from a 2010 NFL playoff game, during which an incorrect call led to the refs taking away a touchdown that would have let the Pittsburgh Steelers cover the spread.

This error cost bettors hundreds of millions of dollars. This call is a heckler's dream. As some of you master students may have realized, calls like this example are easy calls to heckle. That referee, Scott Green, is now an easy

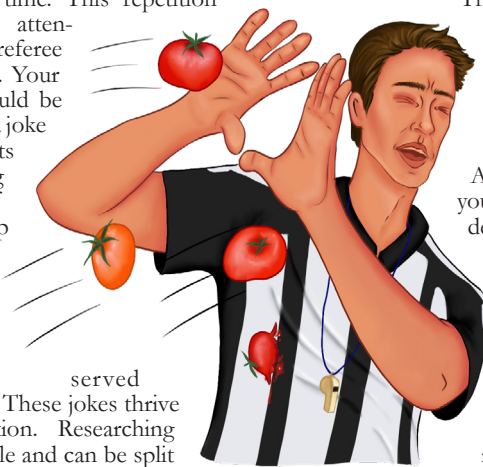
target of jokes surrounding his potential bias. With that said, here is a great long joke using our example referee.

The Ghost of Galarraga:

John Johnson is at a baseball game being umpired by Joyce. He remembers Joyce's no call and comes prepared. He brings a white sheet with arm and eye holes. He also brings a sign with Galarraga's face on it. When he gets to the game, he puts on the sheet and holds up the sign. In the second inning, he feels like Joyce messed up a strike call. He knows from his research that Joyce was the umpire when Dallas Braden threw a perfect game. He then yells, "Jimmy, it's okay, at least you have seen a perfect game." He sees Joyce shake his head and gets a couple chuckles from the crowd, who understands the reference. Later, he feels Joyce should have called a check swing. Feeling angry, he yells, "Jimmy, it's okay, at least you might get another attempt." This one gets a hearty laugh as more people get the joke and appreciate it. In the ninth inning, Johnson feels like Joyce has messed up again, putting his team's win in jeopardy. He decides to go for the kill shot: "Jimmy, don't worry, I have never been perfect either." The fans roar in laughter as Joyce is humiliated by Johnson.

He is a master heckler.

Johnson is the perfect example of why heckling has pervaded in the sports world to this day. He was able to safely outlet his anger, annoy the umpire, and make the game more enjoyable for other fans. I sincerely hope you can implement this aspect in your own sporting experiences, and remember, with great power comes great responsibility.



Sophie Poget / The Spectator

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

NBA

Brooklyn Blake: What It Means for the Rest of the NBA

By TAE CHOI

Superteams are nothing new to the NBA. The term, which generally refers to multiple All-Star caliber players teaming up, is a common source of debate among NBA fans. The current Brooklyn Nets team, headlined by superstar trio Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving, and James Harden, can certainly be classified as a superteam, and it stands out as one of the most talented rosters that has ever been assembled in the NBA. The recent addition of six-time All-Star Blake Griffin makes the Nets even more dangerous. Though the 32-year-old veteran might not be the explosive scoring machine he once was, he still gives Brooklyn a versatile big man who can nicely complement their small-ball lineup and take some of the scoring burden off of Durant, Irving, and Harden.

After agreeing to part ways with the Detroit Pistons, Griffin signed a one-year, veteran-minimum contract deal with the Nets in March, worth \$1,229,676. When asked what his goals for the season were

in a [Bleacher Report AMA](#), Griffin replied, "My only goal is to help win a championship [...] That's why I came to Brooklyn." Griffin's motive is understandable as despite his substantial playoff experience, he's never actually made it past the conference semifinals, much less competed in a finals series. Most of Griffin's success in the league came from his nine-year tenure with the Los Angeles Clippers, where he made five of his six all-star appearances, as well as three All-NBA Second Team honors. Though the "Lob City" Clippers undeniably had talent and grit, they always seemed to fall short in the playoffs despite multiple years of regular season success. With only a couple of years left before retirement, Griffin hopes to finally win his long-awaited championship ring.

Brooklyn Nets head coach Steve Nash sees great benefits in

bringing the 6'10" forward onto the roster as a small-ball center who can make plays and spread the floor for his teammates. "He used to be a player who lived above the rim, and so he's adapted and become a guy [who] handles the ball very well," Nash said. "It's a tribute to the skill and intelligence that he has as a basketball player."

Griffin's versatility on the court has also been praised by his former Clipper and now Nets teammate DeAndre Jordan. "With a guy like [Griffin], man, when we put him in, we can go small, we can switch a lot of things [...] I love that we can have so many different lineups against teams, whether they're big, they're small, whatever it is, I think we're ready to be able to adapt just," Jordan said.

Griffin was once known for his jaw-dropping alley-oops and dunks, but due to the combination

of age and injuries, the ex-high-flyer has evolved his game and catered more to his shooting and playmaking skills rather than his raw athleticism. Griffin is 196-for-550 (35.6 percent) on catch-and-shoot threes since the 2016-2017 season, and he will be able to space the floor for his teammates by camping out along the three-point line as a spot-up shooter. Griffin is also one of the better passers at his position, ranking 18th among forwards with his 3.9 assists. Griffin, with his above average passing ability, will be able to initiate fast breaks, run the occasional pick-and roll, and make plays out of the post.

Though the skillset and experience Griffin brings to the table certainly have potential to improve the Nets, two questions still leave doubt in the minds of many. Firstly, do the Nets really have space for another big? Forward Jeff Green has been filling the role of a small ball five, and the 34-year-old vet has been shooting the lights out recently (45.5 percent on catch-and-shoot threes, 47.4 percent on wide-open threes). The Nets also have Nico-

las Claxton, whom they selected with the 31st pick in the 2019 draft. Claxton has been a great defensive asset for the Nets as his 6'11" frame and quick feet allow him to clamp down on perimeter defense. Per 36 minutes, Claxton is averaging 20.9 points, 8.1 rebounds, 1.9 assists, 3.1 blocks, and 1.9 steals. Since the Nets already have solid big men in Green and Claxton, Griffin's role and playing time on the Nets may be diminished, and he might not have as substantial of an impact on the Nets as many Brooklyn fans are hoping for. Griffin's health condition is also a major concern as in January, Griffin had his second knee surgery in a span of just eight months. Injuries have plagued Griffin his entire career, and since 2014, he's only played more than 70 games once. The Nets will need to carefully manage his playing time in order to prevent any further injuries.

Only time will tell the extent of Griffin's impact on the Nets. The bigger question is: will the Nets be able to win Griffin his first championship trophy?

Soccer

The Craziest Goalkeeper in Soccer History

By SOHAM MUKHERJEE

It was the 1990 World Cup, and Colombia had thrived through the group stages. The squad was set to face Cameroon in the Round of 16 at the Stadio San Paolo in Naples, Italy. The match remained tense at 0-0 throughout the 90 minutes. In the early minutes of extra time,

Cameroon striker Roger Milla scored the opener of the match. Colombia needed to push forward quickly to get the equalizer. The stadium was vibrating with cheers from the Colombian supporters, motivating their team. The ball made its way backward to Colombian goalkeeper René Higuita, who was well out of his box and under pressure from Milla. Instead of

choosing to pass or clear the ball, Higuita attempted to dribble past Milla, which was a fatal blunder as the Cameroon striker stole the ball and easily walked it into the open net. Colombia ended up losing the match 2-1 after scoring a very late consolation goal. While Higuita may have seemed like a crazy goalkeeper, his impact on the game would forever be remembered.

Born to a single mother in Medellín, Antioquia, Higuita lived his early childhood in poverty. His mother died when he was young, so his grandmother took him in. He spent much of his time working a variety of jobs, such as delivering newspapers, to pay the bills. Higuita first began playing soccer when he joined the Millonarios FC, a team in the high-

est division of Colombian soccer, Categoría Primera A. The Colombian soon transferred to Atlético Nacional in 1986, where he would spend most of his career and win multiple Colombian leagues and other trophies. Higuita briefly left Nacional to play

continued on page 27

NFL / Disrespectator

Why Mitch Trubisky Is the Greatest Quarterback of All Time

By YAQIN RAHMAN

The quarterback is one of the most revered positions in football. They are the ones calling the shots, and their abilities can decide the fates of their franchises. Throughout the history of the NFL, we've seen some of the most talented passers to ever live, including the likes of Tom Brady, Joe Montana, Peyton Manning, Brett Favre, Johnny Unitas, and Michael Vick, among many others. However, none come close to the likes of this generation's greatest quarterback, Mitch Trubisky. So without further ado, here's why Trubisky is the greatest quarterback of all time and why his recent signing with the Bills will lead them to many Super Bowls (and maybe even world domination) in the future.

1. He won the NFP, which no other quarterback has ever won.

This point is the most obvious reason for why Trubisky is the greatest quarterback of all time. He's the only player to ever win the prestigious Nickelodeon Valuable Player award, given to the best player to ever exist in football history. In the game that he won this award, he went up against the second seed New Orleans Saints. He could've won the game with ease. However, he felt bad for Saints quarterback Drew Brees, who was playing his last season in the NFL after a 20-year career and didn't want to be the one to ruin his playoff run. Thus, he purposefully threw the game so that Brees could win. However, at the Nickelodeon booth, where they decide the winner of the NFP, it was an

easy decision to give it to Trubisky.

2. Speaking of the NFP, he's also been compared to Lincoln Loud of the Loud House.

Per Nickelodeon, football's most reputable source for information and analytics, Trubisky has drawn comparisons to TV Show Loud House's main protagonist, Lincoln Loud. Just like how Loud learns from his 10 sisters in the Loud House, Trubisky similarly leads his 10 offensive teammates on the field. His leadership skills and willingness to learn are unparalleled by any football player of this era. You don't see just anyone being compared to the great Loud. These intangible qualities are what separate a good player from a great one, and his ability to rally the team to victory is truly unmatched.

3. He never threw a pick six.

Trubisky is the only quarterback to have started more than 50 NFL games and never thrown an interception that led to a touchdown. This fact shows how dedicated he is at his craft, making sure he never makes big mistakes that could cost him the game and give points to the other team. His willingness to make sure everything is perfect is what separates him from every other quarterback in the NFL.

4. He never lost a Super Bowl.

One defining aspect of his talent that separates him from the rest of the quarterbacks is that he's never lost the big game. Quarterbacks who are assumed to be better than Trubisky, such as Brady or Manning, have all lost a Super Bowl sometime in their career. Amateurs.

5. He's the best quarterback in his draft class.

It's ridiculous to think that the Chicago Bears should have selected any other quarterback on the board besides Trubisky. Deshaun Watson has lost more games than Trubisky and has a worse win-loss record. As for Patrick Mahomes, he lost a Super Bowl, which Trubisky never did. It's clear here that the generational quarterback of the 2017 draft class is none other than Trubisky.

6. He made NFL history.

I can't justifiably write this article and leave out one of the best games that Trubisky ever had. In a 2019 game against the Dallas Cowboys, he made history when he became the first quarterback to complete 70 percent or more of his passes, rush for 50 or more yards, throw for three or more touchdowns, and rush for a touchdown all in the same game. And no, no quarterback has ever achieved this exact series of events before. Impressed yet?

7. All of his losses were flukes.

You may be wondering how, despite the fact that he's so dominant, he looks very inconsistent on the field. It is quite apparent why this happens: he loses on purpose. That's right. He actually loses games when he feels bad for the other team. It's obvious if you think about it. He is so incredibly good at football that he wants to give the other teams a chance to win. This motivation can be seen with the game against the Philadelphia Eagles in the 2018-2019 playoffs. Knowing that he's facing an Eagles team that barely made it to the playoffs with backup quar-

terback Nick Foles, he would've felt bad absolutely decimating this team. So, with a 9-3 lead in the first half, he purposely let the Eagles catch up. In the final, game-winning kick that would have won the game for the Bears, the phenomenon known as the "Double Doink" occurred, during which kicker Cody Parkey kicked the ball and made it bounce off the upright before hitting the bar of the goalpost below. This feat seemed too ridiculous to be true, but it was undeniably the doing of Trubisky, who used the wind generated by the motion of his heavenly quarterback arm to create an angle by which the ball had no chance to go through the uprights, even if it hit the goalpost the first time.

The media and the football world like to portray Trubisky as an inconsistent quarterback who was a bust and will forever be overshadowed by the two quarterbacks selected after him, Watson and Mahomes. Even the Chicago Bears were fooled by Trubisky's desire to lose intentionally, which prompted them to send him off as a free agent. The Buffalo Bills picked him up this offseason, unaware that he will eventually take Josh Allen's starting quarterback job and lead the Bills to their long awaited Super Bowl victory. Or maybe he won't, continuing his quest to satiate his desire to maintain the fun of football. But whatever the case, it is clear that he's unmistakably the best quarterback to ever exist.

SPORTSBEAT

The NBA trade deadline passed, with all-star **Nikola Vucevic** being traded to the Chicago Bulls and center **Andre Drummond** going to the Los Angeles Lakers.

The NFL announced that they will be adding an extra game to the schedule this year, straying from the traditional 16 games.

Francis Ngannou KO'd Stipe Miocic to claim the UFC heavyweight title.

The eleventh seed **UCLA** reached the Final Four in the NCAA men's basketball tournament, along with first seeds Gonzaga and Baylor and second seed Houston. In the women's bracket, first seeds **UConn**, **Stanford**, and **South Carolina** made the Final Four, as well as third seed Arizona

Disrespectator

How Did the Chicken Cross the Road?

By KRISTA PROTEASA

Our age-old riddle is not one to be taken lightly. Asking someone, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" opens up the possibility for too many things to go wrong. This is not a risk you want to take. Both the chicken and the road have gotten into too many arguments because of this seemingly innocent joke. At any rate, today I hope to be able to answer the lesser-known variant of this question: "How did the chicken cross the road?" There are probably trillions of people out there who can tell you why, but I bet you one whole cookie that no one can tell you how. Whilst I was waiting for the light to permit me across the street, I encountered both the chicken and the road. Things looked like they were getting heated.

"Neil, you knew this would happen," the road said to the chicken.

"No, Stan. You went snooping in my DMs without my permission. If it were up to me, I would be in Florida by now," the chicken countered.

"You did this to yourself and you know it. How could you say you love Marlene and then talk to Shalissa right behind her back? This is inexplicable, Neil. If you don't tell her, I will."

"NO! Stan, you wouldn't. I wasn't going to do anything. I was just in such a bad headspace. I just needed a break from Marlene. You're married, right? You know how it is."

"I actually don't, Neil. Unlike some people, I value my wife. Weren't you the one who asked her to marry you? Well, here you are, proving yourself

to be nothing but a chirpy little liar."

Stan the road started on his route to Marlene.

"Stan! Wait! It wasn't what you thought it was."

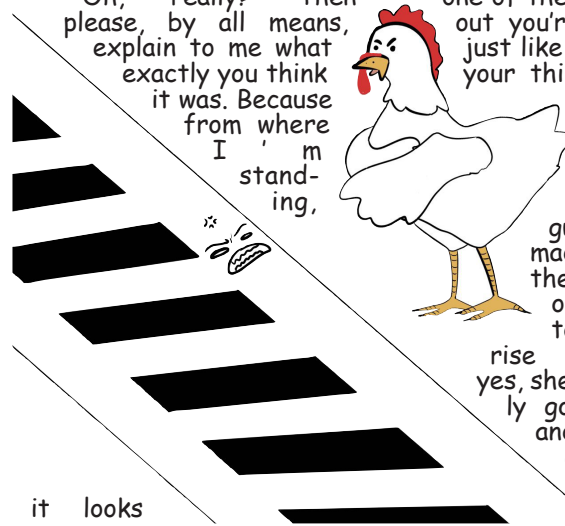
"Oh, really? Then please, by all means, explain to me what exactly you think it was. Because from where I'm standing,

like you're just a dirty cheat who only cares about yourself. You make me sick, Neil. I don't even have a digestive system, but you make me want to throw up. I thought you were one of the good guys. Turns out you're a featherbrain just like all the rest. Pack your things and go, Neil. It's all over."

Oh man, that took a turn, didn't it? Anyway, you guessed it. Stan made his way through the intersections of New York City to Marlene's high-rise apartment, and, yes, she and Neil promptly got divorced. Neil and Stan also grew apart because

how could you stay friends with someone who hates the one person they swore to love more than anything? Peculiar, isn't it?

Well, there you have it, folks. It didn't take much for the chicken to cross the road, but boy, did he go above and beyond. I wonder where Neil is now. Maybe he's befriended another boulevard zebra crossing or maybe he's simply turned to not crossing anyone, road or not. That'd be the smarter option. I hope you appreciate having learned the answer to life's most burning question. Join me next time on "Krista Answers Questions You Didn't Ask!" Good morning and good night, America.



Minimum Satisfaction Transforms Weight-Loss Methodology

By SANJANA YASNA

The recent rise in popularity of "Minimum Satisfaction" pastries has sparked a revolution in cuisine across the nation. For the first time in history, multiple long-standing generational pastry recipes have been daringly changed over the course of only a few months. The ingredients in these pastries are carefully picked with consideration for common quarantine nutritional needs. As a result, Americans writhe from the pain of eating these wise ingredients that scrape the sugar and fat off their lard-strewn tongues. "Writhing" isn't an understatement—the pastries kill one's appetite, induce vomiting, force calorie expenditure to

consume, and cause a variety of other disastrous effects. The important revelation is that these effects go hand-in-hand with losing weight.

The Minimum Satisfaction Bagel (MSB) is the most popular menu selection of "Minimum Satisfaction" confectionaries. MSB dough normally consists of cardboard and cornstarch mixed with vegemite spread. Different regions use unique additions. New York arguably has the most flavorful MSBs because chefs source their water not from taps but directly from the Hudson River. In California and Iowa, hens are injected with vitamin supplements, so the eggs used in the making of bagels are rich in Omega-3 fatty acids essential for heart health. If one is lucky,

they can get Omega-3 poisoning, which entails severe diarrhea and vomiting, perfect for expelling excessive amounts of consumed food.

There have also been a number of spin-off yeast-related foods branching from the MSB, such as the Minimum Satisfaction Donut, which is made with a combination of corn starch, drywall, and used bathroom sponge. The sponges are donated from wealthy households, meaning they are dappled with quality extravagant soaps rich with the essential vitamins A, D, and E. The donut does have frosting, but it's normally stuffed inside to encourage first-timers to bite it instead of chickening out.

The Minimum Satisfaction

Baguette (MSBag) is served two weeks stale to force Americans to expend calories by chewing profusely. The wheat flour in the baguette is gluten-free, and sour milk is used in place of baking soda. And last and not least, there are Minimum Satisfaction English Muffins that have long qualified for the Minimum Satisfaction tagline with no recipe tweaks.

Minimum Satisfaction goods forcibly make one expel consumed foods, but they nonetheless have garnered a huge fanbase eager to transform their bodies. Restaurants often take photos of overweight but motivated customers every time they visit to record the visible changes and hang them on the walls as success stories

to encourage more customers to follow suit. Romantic pairs and old married couples often have Minimum Satisfaction takeout together to serve as a bonding activity involving patting each other's backs and cleaning the other's vomit. School pranks are done by replacing a part of lunch with a Minimum Satisfaction food item, though often to no avail, as students typically don't notice the difference. Minimum Satisfaction pastries weren't intended for the faint of heart, but the overt support has expanded their popularity as the main pop culture weight loss method. Of course, it is a double-edged sword; it has driven many gyms and organic grocery stores out of business.

Stuyvesant, Sometime in the Distant Future

By ESHAAL UBAID

Reporting to the nationally renowned Stuyvesant High School for an interview should have been an intimidating, abnormal experience. I had heard about the excellent students, the daunting hallways, and the severe lack of social activity. However, I would have a difficult time proving that my visit was anything more than ordinary.

The chattering of stressed adolescents drowned out the whirring hovercrafts in the atmosphere. I stepped into the standard transportation catapult, and as I flew through the air at top speed through the main entrance, I began to wonder if this place really was so unusual. Before looking for my scheduled interviewer's room, I decided to explore the school. I especially loved the cute little old-fashioned laser security beams scattered around, not to mention how fun it was to dodge them (by the way, the kid whose pinky finger got sliced off by those things earlier, you really need to work on your reflexes). Nothing else was out of the ordinary, however. It was your usual laser beam fight mischief in the hallways with people quoting the lat-

est meme about the iPhone 47 Max and, of course, the juicy teenage gossip.

"Ughhh, I can't go to cyborg war training today, mom says I need to install my new software update," a disgrun-

over HOLOGRAM CALL? I can't believe him!"

Ah, to be a young person again! I couldn't help but tear up at the nostalgia of the endless locker hallways and hologram statues of various



tled AI student ranted. "It's so stupid, I can just remind myself tomorrow."

"Craig broke up with you

prominent historical figures (the Kool-Aid Man one is my personal favorite). Watching a student fingerprint scan his

way into a classroom made my heart ache for the good old days. Just as I began to miss my childhood, from the days of TikTok and extreme global turmoil during the Great Existential Crisis of 2020, I felt my feet lift off the ground.

An announcement echoed throughout the premises amidst tired groans. "Random gravity change drill! You never know when those physics-altering warheads will hit, kids!"

And with that, we were now walking on a new floor, which had just previously been the wall. The custodial bots chirped in frustration at having to clean footprints off of them once the gravity reset. They could have made the floor a lava obstacle course like literally any other school, but no. Whatever works for cyborg war prep, I guess.

In the maze of hallways and A.I. charging stations, it took a considerable amount of time to realize that I had taken a wrong turn at the catapult entrance. One short-range teleportation device later, I was finally in front of the correct door for an interview with the professor of digital communications. I reached for the fingerprint

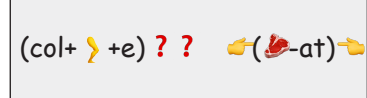
scanner, when suddenly...

"ALERT! LARRY THE LOGARITHMS LORD HAS ENTERED NEW YORK WITH HIS ARMY OF CYBORGS!"

Students collectively dropped their backpacks and pulled out maple syrup bottles from their lockers. I myself had one handy in the event of an emergency because golly do these things clog up cyborg mechanisms. Larry had been threatening the city for months now. It was about time that he showed up.

As a cyborg army began throwing rock-hard powdered donuts at the school windows and the gravity was disabled, math team students protested. "YOU'RE NOT A TRUE MATHEMATICIAN! LOGS ARE TO BE USED PURELY FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES!" By then, everyone was attacking cyborgs left and right, plunging the school into a sticky, syrupy mess.

As such, I rest my case. Stuyvesant High School is completely ordinary, with students well-prepped for practical situations and fond memories that will last a lifetime.



Disrespectator

To All the Objects We Left In Our Lockers

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Once schools closed, we reminisced about the beloved objects that we tragically left in our lockers. Through a collection of love letters, we hope to rekindle the strong and blazing passion that was once there.

Dear Faithful Glove,

How I miss thee. The sensation of your fuzzy fringes upon my clammy palm is one I will remember for all of eternity. I miss the gaping hole between the third and fourth fingers and the way I could feel the cool breeze pass between the ridge while the rest of my hands remained toasty within your depths. Do you remember how you got that hole? It was during that one chemistry lab, when I insisted that your fabric would shield me from the harms of hydrochloric acid despite my teacher's urgent warnings. Ahh... how very wrong we were. My scars from that fateful day will forever remind me of our unbreakable bond, my special mitten.

Dearest Locker Photo of Teacher,

I miss the sight of the shiny gleam on your bald head. You must feel lonely taped deep within the crevices of my locker. Remember how shy I was when I first taped you there? Every time a group of people walked by my locker, I would hastily close it because I was ashamed to be seen stroking that hairless patch of skin. Now, withering away in quarantine, I regret my shame. If I could go back to the past, I would openly proclaim my love for you. I would yank open my locker, rip you from my walls, and thrust you into the light, holding you up for the world to see. It is time for the world to see that nothing, not even the authorities, can prevent us from being together! Though I still see you from my laptop screen, it could never replace the true sight of you lecturing in front of the classroom. Until then, I have already pinned another picture of you on my bedroom walls. But it's not the same. I eagerly await our reunion so that I may once again stroke the smooth skin of your balding head. Our love is as boundless as the condition eating away at your hairline!

Dear Confiscated AirPods,

I am reminded of you every second of the day, from the moment I wake up in the morning to my afternoon strolls, long baths, and bedtime. Before I lost you, you used to fill me up with music every morning. Mr. Moran would be jealous every time I walked the halls with you, but I didn't care. I loved your two little pods and how they fit perfectly in your sleek case while everyone else's horrendous strings watched in jealousy. We overcame obstacles together. My heart broke when the bitter Mr. Moran took you away the first time from me and locked you up in a cage. The long distance was truly a traumatic experience, but when we reunited and I locked your pods into mine, I once again was filled with your beautiful music. But alas, we are separated once again. I miss you. Very much. I am sorry that I left you, but I will always imagine you by my side, our bodies entangled as one and your music igniting fireworks.

My most beloved Lab Apron and Goggles,

Where are you meant to be if not on me? I need you, helping me and protecting me as I click through the virtual labs and as I break down over not being able to light an online bunsen burner for the 20th time. You shielded me from anything that would trespass my personal space. Goggles, remember when I said I didn't need you? I lied. I miss you and those blush pink circles you would leave around my eyes and forehead, exposing the things we've done together. How will I pass chemistry without you, and what will happen to the chemistry between us?

Oh Cookie, My Cookies,

I must remind you that our relationship is forbidden. As I stole you away from that horrid chrome tin—a princess from an ivory tower—I teemed with malicious intent. The risk of getting caught was always evaded, but I was constantly electrified by the threat of a rebuke that never arrived. Though you might be stale and unsavory from your unmoving journey, I lust for you all the same. I desire that brief trip from lap to mouth, ferried by my unsatisfied hands, and that final, crisp snap as I take a bite, the unquestionable climax of that overwrought moment. I'm afraid the only resolution for you, my lost love, is in the shower of crumbs that topples from the folds of my shirt to the smooth linoleum floor.

Oh Sandwich,

Nothing nourishes me. I roam the streets, silent and starving. I think of the cruel revolution of the Earth around the Sun, all the time that has gone by while you stay locked inside those metal doors... And I wander west in my dreams sometimes, and I mingle with soldiers and sailors and catch constellations, and yet I want nothing more than you out of that locker and your decaying layers clothed inside a Terry's special, so close that I swallow you whole, with all the maggots and termites and beautiful monsters inside you.

Dearest Low-Fat Milk,

Our love is now cheese—left alone for a while to ferment, only to be taken over by bacteria as our tenderness grows thick and curdled. Yet always, cheese ages like a fine wine when left alone; it becomes hard and firm with a touch of tart, and it is ever so delicious.

I know I said we had to take a break, but I had no idea that would be our last meeting. I didn't want to break up forever... I just thought we needed some space. But with this space, I realized something. I found myself dreaming about you and how liquidy, how refreshing, and how saturated with calcium you were every night. I realized that... that I loved you and that I absolutely cannot let you go. I need you back in my life, Low-Fat Milk. I hope you feel the same. So I write this letter to you in hopes that our love has aged like a fine gruyère, ready to be melted down by the heat of the fire inside us, burning for each other and made into macaroni and cheese.



Courtesy of Karen Zhang

Dearest Gym Clothes,

Ah, my most stylish outfit. I wish to feel your damp fibers rub on my bare skin once more. I long to mingle with you again, but alas, we have been separated for a year and counting. I miss your scent—a unique and fragrant combination of body odor and sweat. I just desire to be with you, square dancing while your nylon fibers dance on my thighs and your cotton rubs my back.

My Dear Pen,

I made a promise to you and to myself that I'd return you after that one chemistry test. Yet days passed, and I never let you go home. I used you as a harlot, employing you for my notes during first period and pimping you to a neighbor during second. I never even thanked you for it. You opined to return to the satchel from whence you came, but I never listened. I managed to look my friend in the eye, knowing I used you who was theirs. Then, I cast you away without a second thought into the black crevices of my locker, of which we will not speak. You became a never-ending reminder of my failure to live up to the person I want to be. I write this not for forgiveness, as I expect none, but for closure and for the declaration that I might do the right thing.

Hey Idiots, Guess Who Got Into a College. That's Right, Me.

By CHRISABELLA JAVIER

What's up, NERDS? Yeah, I'm talking to you. You, the person who flexed the 99 you got in the class with a 98 average while I was mulling over my 65. You, the person who looked at me weirdly when I came to class 40 minutes late with a frap-puccino. You, the teacher who emailed me back about a rec saying, "Please go away. I don't like you." (Well, you didn't say it like that, but I know what you meant, jerk.) You, the guidance counselor who said I had "major self-

esteem issues" and needed to "go see a psychologist, I am begging you." Yeah. All of you.

I got into a COLLEGE.

Yeah, I did.

Hold the applause, I know.

Yes, after finishing all the apps in one day, doing the bare minimum on the Common Application, and writing supplements channeling the lyrical genius of "Family Reunion" by blink-182, I got into, get this, a COLLEGE.

That's right. Personally, I think what got me in was my personality. Specifically, my humility. I'm incredibly humble. I'm so humble I'll write

an article about it. After, of course, this article. Because I did get into a college. I got the acceptance letter and everything. I paid the admission fee. I clicked on the little blue button that said "ACCEPTED." I got the big letter in the mail. It had stickers and everything.

Don't believe me?

I've got a picture of the letter. BOOM.

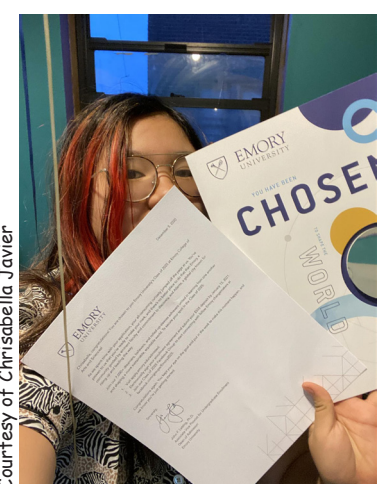
That's what I thought, nerd.

(In all seriousness though, if any admissions officers from Emory University see this, this is a JOKE. This is a

HUMOROUS ARTICLE. This, as well as anything else I write under the Spectator Humor department, is meant to be comedic and does not necessarily reflect my opinions or those of any other Stuyvesant Spectator writers.)

(Please don't rescind me.)

Congratulations! You've reached the end of the hunt. Piece together the link and type it in for a ~special~ surprise.



Courtesy of Chrisabella Javier

Disrespectator

Sample Letter of Continued Interest to Get You off the Harvard Waitlist

By EMILY CHEN

Dear Ivy League,

I would like to start off by saying thank you so much for a spot on your waitlist for literally all eight of you—it's almost like you guys copy-and-pasted your responses and changed the name of your schools, so I'm going to do the same thing! Props to Brown, however, for being extra quirky and misspelling my name as "Unfortunately." It is truly an honor to be considered for the privilege of giving you money that I don't have. It reminds me of that time some of you were bamboozled by students with awards for sports that they don't play, but that's beside the point. Anyway, as I await a second judgment day, I'd like to update you on all the awards I have received, among other things I have accomplished, within the mere three months since submitting my application.

To start, I'd like to mention that I have improved my SAT score to a 1590 and that that was not only the result of pure intellect but also the hard work and dedication from scouring the College Board website for schools in red states that have no COVID lockdown procedures. Despite all of you going test-optional this year, we both know that numbers mean a great deal in validating your worth. I mean, why else is the one with the highest acceptance rate the one you all laugh at? No offense CornL, I adore you just the same. Furthermore, I have risked my health just for this, and if I get sick, I will simply sue the College Board and use that money to buy you a new library. That would help, right?

Some of my other achievements include:

Not referring to the pandemic as panoramic, parallelogram, Panda Express, etc.

Maintaining a 97.5 semester GPA after CR-ing less

than half of my classes National Merit Award for playing the college admissions game

First place in national Red-Bull chugging competition



Sophia Li / The Spectator

Briefly ran for NYC mayor (and generously decided to give my large fanbase to the #yanggang because I don't know the other candidates)

Published an article in a well-respected newspaper,

The Spectator Have not checked Naviance in two weeks!

Notice the bullet points? I'm so respectful of your time that I've limited myself to the amount of space given for some of your supplements because I know you guys don't like reading—if you did, you would have already admitted me, but, alas, I must appeal to my audience.

Finally, I have remained as the most positive member of my community, even after dropping all responsibilities as a second-term senior. (I'm totally being vulnerable and admitting my faults right now. As you can see, I'm quite self-aware and sophisticated.) In Zoom classes, I am always raising my blue hand and am the first one to unmute myself in breakout rooms. Yes, it may be because I was sleeping on my laptop keyboard and accidentally clicked the buttons, but this provides comedic relief in these trying times and gives teachers an excuse to

lecture someone, which I'm sure many of them miss. It's the thought that counts!

If offered admission to any one of the eight of you, I will automatically accept the invitation and matriculate to your class of 2025. By some miracle, if more than one of you has become literate in the last three months and accept me, don't worry! I'll just save that acceptance letter for graduate school, and if there are more than two of you I'll just save the third one for law school. Or med school. Or for whatever else comes after undergrad because I'm simply delaying being an adult member of society. And if none of you accept me, well, my next letter to your admissions office may not be as nice.

XOXO,
Yet Another Stuy Kid



The Curse of Creative Block

By ERICA CHEN

As COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc in our world, something bigger has struck Stuyvesant High School. Creative block.

Think of that as a mix of writer's block, artist's block, and whatever other block might exist (even cobbler's block, which is a nasty one). Ever had those days when you can't do anything productive, can't make even a sentence's headway into an English essay, and lack the energy to talk to your friends? Feeling like you suddenly want to scream bloody murder and listen to horror stories late at night instead of being productive? Those are the early symptoms of creative block—among many others. While the school was still busy preparing for blended learning, this new problem threw them off balance. Well... more than just off-balance. It completely flipped them into the air and launched them face-first into a humongous pile of mud.

Meanwhile, The Spectator was dealing with more issues. Can you imagine writing when you've been struck with a case of creative block? Nope, not happening. Even harder than trying to get a thread through the hole on the head of the needle at night without any light source. At least the hole is still there. But how do you expect people to write without inspiration? You can't!

So the writers each decided to write random gibberish, and when the latest issue was released, it left the rest of the students, as well as the faculty, utterly confused as to what code the paper was writing in. Perhaps it was a conspiracy happening between all of the Spec writers that no one else was aware of. They've insisted it's some sort of social commentary—but they're probably just covering their asses.

It seemed that the students were the only ones who were under this curse. The teachers were all per-

fectly fine though they were a lot more annoyed than usual, which was to be expected given what was happening in the school, but what could they do about it? Nothing. All they could do was look at their list of assignments and find that no one had submitted anything worth grading. Some did submit an empty doc with an image of a loading screen, hoping that the teachers would be too lazy to wait for it to load and just give an easy A+. Just like what people did on TikTok. But our instructors knew these tricks. After all, they also scroll through TikTok for countless hours instead of grading past assignments, or whatever else teachers do.

None of the faculty seemed to understand what was going on. Principal Yu continued to send his uplifting emails every morning, which no longer proved so motivational. The counselors hurriedly organized get-together meetings with their respective homerooms, but when the meetings came around, no one turned on their cameras or unmuted themselves. No one even bothered to make up excuses as to how their mics didn't work, or that their camera broke, like they normally do in class.

Why was this virus so picky, targeting only us poor students? Now we're stuck lamenting our terrible fate, going to school, and passively listening to our teachers ramble on and on about this and that. I bet we would all much rather lay in bed and sleep. And eat. And repeat. No need for thinking.

If there was one upside to this horrendous event, it was that for the first time in memory, or perhaps in history, Talos managed to stay online for more than an hour at a time due to the lack of student activity.



E-mails From a College

By HELENA WILLIAMS

July 2020

Dear Prospective Student,

Greetings! My name is Robert Robert, and I'm your personal admissions officer at the University of Institute Saint McHarverd. I'll be in touch with you over the next few months making sure you can figure out how to apply through, you guessed it, the Common App! Hope to hear from you soon! And you can bet your bottom dollar that I'll be sending annoying information your way before long!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

P.S. I got your information from the College Board by paying them a few bucks for "people who got above 1000 on the SAT superscored." Good luck unsubscribing!

August 2020

To My Dearest Prospective Student,

Hey, kitten. How are you doing? Are you enjoying the summer? I'm just writing to tell you how much I think you'd be a great fit for the University of Institute Saint McHarverd. I've attached photos of our campus, which will allow you to see that we do, in fact, have grassy quads. But ours are unique because U.S. News rated us #37 on their list of colleges that exist near "Random Small Towns in South Connecticut!" Wow, what a great and shining accolade of our success!

Also, because I'm sooooo eager to read your essays, I've marked you as an Excellence Frontier Shining Star Majestic Scholarly Academic student! With your EFSSMSA application, you'll be exempt from the actual fee we charge students to apply to our school because we aren't rich enough already.

You will apply, right?

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

September 2020

To My Loveliest Prospective Student,

How are you doing? Are you enjoying the fall, sweetie? I'm just writing to tell you that I still don't have your application! Now, I know that it's September, and literally nobody has their applications in yet, but I'm really hoping to see you as an applicant to the University of Institute Saint McHarverd. (Just in case you forgot, U.S. News rated us #37!)

Your EFSSMSA status awaits!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

October 2020

To My Most Delightful Prospective Tuition-Payer,

How great it is to say hello! You still haven't read any of my e-mails, clicked on any of their links, or submitted your EFSSMSA application! You haven't even made an account on our application platform! That's gotta be a glitch, right? After all, I have a feeling you'd do slightly above average at the University of Institute Saint McHarverd. So what are you waiting for? After all, we're so eager to have you apply that we'll waive our SAT requirements, just for you!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

November 2020

To My Favorite Person to E-mail,

Hello there! Since I last e-mailed you, you've received 85 e-mails from other people at the University of Institute Saint McHarverd, who were definitely not all me in disguise. And you still never clicked on any of them! If I weren't so smart, I'd think you were avoiding me! Do I need to remind you of our U.S. News award-winning

location? Or our one somewhat-famous alum, who is a master of modern interpretive dance? The residential hall we're renovating that won't be ready until after you graduate? Because that's all waiting right here through your EFSSMSA application! You don't even need to submit essays to apply as an EFSSMSA student anymore, and if you do send in essays, we definitely won't read them entirely! Don't forget to apply now to be included in our priority review!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

December 2020

To My Applicant-I-Require-Because-Small-Liberal-Arts-Colleges-Are-Suffering-During-Coronavirus,

Hiya! Forgot about me? I sure hope not! (Especially since there are now over 300 unread e-mails from our school sitting in your inbox! I know because I've been tracking them all!) I'd just like to let you know that my EFSSMSA offer still stands. In fact, just for you, I'll knock off the GPA requirement! All you need to apply is to click on your application down below and send us your name! We'll even give you \$1,000 in grants if you just submit before EDII! Just send in your application right away! Like now! Please!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert

January 2020

To You, My Precious Lovely Prospective Applicant,

Hey! Apply yet? Did you apply? Want money? I can give you money! TEN THOUSAND! ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND! Just apply already! Literally just click on the link below, and your application will automatically be submitted!

Pleasepleasepleasepleaseplease!

continued on page 32

Disrespectator

The Spectator's First Annual Hunger Games

By THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Welcome to The Stuyvesant Spectator's First Annual Hunger Games! Fed up with the free press, we here at the Capitol stuck all 13 Spectator departments into a big arena together and told them to fight to the death. With only one department permitted to leave the arena alive, the situation devolved quickly. Here is how the Games played out:

News

Under the watchful eye of President Yu, the News Department diligently reported on the ins and outs of The Spectator's First Annual Hunger Games. News enforced rigorous journalistic ethics and sourcing practices as they profiled the soon-to-be-dead teenagers and made sure to use ambiguous words like "said" when referring to direct quotes. However, by the time their articles about the contestants were finally printed four weeks later, most of the players had already perished.

Features

The Features Department was annihilated early in the Games by way of arrow wounds. At the time of their death, Features had been singing loudly on the top of a large, conspicuous rock in an open clearing (it was likely due to this vulnerable location that they were shot). Features was found by News in a coma on the ground, having presumably fallen off the rock after being bowed. In Features's last moments, they attacked a nearby shrub for "rejecting their love" and attempted to lick the News reporters present. They passed away soon after. Final words: "Jared—slayer of men."

Opinions

The Opinions Department was, frankly, not a big fan of the Hunger Games as an institution. They wrote several-thousand-word rebuttals to all of the Capitol's arguments regarding the Games' purpose but still wound up as contestants all the same. Their Point-Counterpoints about the ethical implications of having a bunch of pubescents kill each other in a bubble wasn't as impactful as the de-

partment had hoped, and they were unable to enact much tangible change. Once the Hunger Games began, Opinions was the first to go. For reasons still unknown to this day, every single department decided to gang up on them from the jump. It turned out the greatest weapon isn't words after all—a big rock is slightly better.

Science

The Science Department spent much time studying the anatomy of local trees and discovered that the trees were made of wood. Despite the breakthrough, they did not contribute significantly to the Games, though they were at a natural advantage in the wilderness, being acquainted with the local flora and fauna. They had the slogan "WE ARE FUNGHIS," but nobody understood it. Science had good food supplies, which they kept in a deep cave. They also attempted to build weapons and other hunting contraptions, but that effort was where they went awry. An attempt at a catapult backfired and killed them with one swift pebble to the skull.

Arts and Entertainment

The Arts and Entertainment (A&E) Department was no doubt the underdog going into The Spectator's First Annual Hunger Games, and they quickly demonstrated why. After taking one look around the dingy stadium, A&E was violently ill. However, things began looking up once the Games began, as A&E had a ball thrifting around the Cornucopia for any snacks and vinyls they could get their hands on. Things began to heat up when the department overheard Layout saying that they didn't really "get" Phoebe Bridgers. A&E swiftly delivered a fatal hammer blow to the department's head, ending Layout's tenure in the Games. However, A&E lost their streak when they stumbled upon a few delicious looking berries that they blended into a scrumptious (but tragically poisonous) smoothie.

Humor

Competing in the games completely ironically, the Humor Department was a largely ineffective tribute. Adhering to their policy of

never "punching down," they refused to commit any direct acts of violence on other departments. The other tributes, offended by their implied "down" nature, didn't extend the same gratitude to Humor and attacked with full force. After Humor attempted to recite a long-winded and rambling joke that didn't go anywhere, the Capitol police swooped in to put viewers at home out of their misery, killing Humor with a few well-planned roasts (and bullets).

Sports

One would think the odds would be in the Sports Department's favor. The Cross-fit champion had been training for this their whole life. They leached off of Layout's superb navigating skills to find the best hiding spots. And, in true Sports competitive fashion, they got to said spots first and scared everyone else anyway with their biceps. They weren't scared of the others' swords or bows and arrows. How could they be when their six-packs were impenetrable? However, while they weren't all muscle and no brains, their intellect (or lack thereof) was just no match for the Hannibal Lecter-like mastermind of Business, who, after killing Sports with their grenade launcher, ate their liver with some fava beans. They left the head, though.

Web

Let's face it, the Web Department isn't exactly known for their physical prowess, which made them an unlikely survivor in The Spectator's First Annual Hunger Games. Despite this weakness, Web got off to a good start by sticking to the outskirts of the Cornucopia to grab supplies, including small bits of electronics, such as wires, capacitors, and antennas. Web then had to sprint (though it was more like a light jog) out into the arena in order to avoid being taken out by any of the remaining departments. After finding fresh water in the woods, Web got to work creating tools from their scrap pieces. They first built a signal jammer as they hoped that they would be able to block the signal from the Capitol's tracking devices and escape the arena. Noticing that Web had disappeared, the Capitol sent in Peacekeepers to execute Web for

cheating.

Business

The Business Department was the only one willing to kill, even when unprovoked. Empowered by the violent will of the free market, compelled by the invisible hand of supply and demand, and sponsored by Arby's®, slayer of men Jared Moser brought the games to a vicious end. Despite being utterly insufferable and unable to shut up about "stonks," they used their brilliant business acumen to maneuver the complex alliances and unmarketability of the child murder circle. Their greatest enemy and ally was Opinions—they had just read "Das Kapital" and "Atlas Shrugged" and would shut up about neither. They cut a swathe through the competition with their official Arby's® chainsaw, McDonald's® grenade launcher, and Taco Bell® quesalupa. Long before the head of the Sports Department went tumbling to the ground, it was already clear who would win.

Copy

The Copy Department, calling themselves the "copycat," immediately sought to find a mascot. After unsuccessfully trying to tame a wild cat, they appointed themselves the protocol enforcer and traveled around, irking everyone with snide remarks about improper running form and weapons handling. Even with all these attention-seeking efforts, most of the other departments forgot about Copy. However, after a verbal and physical surprise attack in the middle of the night on Science about why their weapons didn't come from credible sources, Copy met their demise running off a cliff in their getaway.

Layout

Going into the games, the Layout Department had a big advantage. Somehow, they obtained the blueprints to the arena beforehand without the Capitol's knowledge. Once the games began, Layout immediately went to a pre-scouted clearing and began work on a shelter. Of course, Layout was able to create a very aesthetically pleasing house, but it came with some downsides. The noise created by construction led A&E right to Layout's

base area. As they built, Layout tried to put on Phoebe Bridgers's sophomore solo effort "Punisher" to pass the time but found themselves somewhat underwhelmed by the album. Highly offended and appalled by the Layout's judgment, A&E bludgeoned the department to death with a hammer.

Photo

The Photography Department was physically quite prepared, thanks to hours of carrying heavy camera equipment that made them look like Noah Beck. Using their immense upper arm strength, they scaled the nearest tree to spy on enemies and potential targets. However, as fate would have it, their weak legs failed them, and they plummeted toward the ground. Luckily, they were not spotted and began their search for animals, not to consume, but to pose and decorate for portraits. After stopping to photograph a unique, absolutely breathtaking sunset, Art stabbed Photo from behind. Fortunately, Photo was able to grab their camera strap and strangle Art before they got away, stopping only to take a photo because Art looked "cute."

Art

The Art Department loved watching the Hunger Games and created fanart of all their favorite past contenders but had a greater appreciation for the natural beauty of the arena than the violence. With their keen eye for detail, they were skilled at camouflage and becoming one with the bushes. They also thought they could "become one" with the berries they found, though sadly, this match was not one made in heaven. Frantically trying to preserve their legacy, they painted a self-portrait on a nearby tree with their own blood. Then, they sought after Photo for a final, gruesome picture and went to the best viewpoint for the sunset, expertly knowing that this place would be where Photo was. Photo turned around, so Art thought it would be funny to stab them. It wasn't. After being strangled and photographed in a strange series of events, Art decided to accept their end. With a dramatic monologue and scream, Art perished.

E-mails From a College

continued from page 31

-Bobby

February 2020

TO YOU, MY ARCHENEMY,
IF YOU DO NOT APPLY,

I SHALL SEND AVALANCHES OF OUR MERCHANDISE TO YOUR HOUSE. I KNOW YOUR ADDRESS. I KNOW YOUR FAMILY. I READ YOUR DIARY. YOU CAN'T HIDE. YOUR FINAL DEADLINE EXTENSION IS UNTIL MARCH 13TH. SUBMIT

NOW.

Robert.

Robert Robert

March 2020

Dear Applicant,
Thank you for submitting your application! We'll get back to you soon.

Sincerely,

April 2020

Dear Applicant,
What a crazy year it's been! So many talented, average students have applied. Unfortunately, we don't have enough room in the Uni-

versity of Institute Saint McHarverd class of 2025 to admit you. Sorry!

Sincerely,
Robert Robert



Full link: stuyvespec.com/humor/disrespectator/not-a-rick-roll-not-clickbait
Right, Me. → clickbait
off the Harvard Waitlist → roll 9) Stuyvesant, Sometime in the Distant Future → not 10) Hey Idiots, Guess Who Got Into a College. That's
College → a 7) Breaking News! Freshmen From Homerom Ikk Flee Stuyvesant → rick 8) Sample Letter of Continued Interest to Get You
Humor 4) The Case Against a Nap Period → disrespectator 5) A Survivor's Account of the Stuyvesant Civil War → not 6) E-mails from a
Humor 3) The Curse of Creative Block → spec 3) An American Tragedy → spec 3) Mobile Game Ads: An American Tragedy → spec 3) The Curse of Creative Block →

Answer Key