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OPINIONS

The Feminist Take on Sex Work, Deconstructed

Opinions writer Quainat Mariam explains how sex work should not be glorified as a freeing industry on the illusion of choice, nor should it be promoted.

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SPORTS

The NFL Needs a London Franchise

The NFL's expansion to Europe may not be in the immediate future but could expand the culture of American football overseas.

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Student-Created Art Structures Featured in Stuyvesant

By **KEVIN CHAN, ANDY LAU, KARA YIP, and ALLISON ZHAO**

Going up the escalator from the fifth to seventh floors, students may see the lifesize sculpture standing by the plants, or more subtly, the miniature replicas of buildings by the stairwell. These sightings are installations of student artwork around Stuyvesant. They range from life-sized hominid sculptures made by students in science teacher Deame Hua's Anthropology elective to architectural models by students in art teacher Karen Leo's Art Appreciation course.

The hominid sculptures are modeled after the species *Australopithecus afarensis*. Students learned about evolution and how humans came to be, such as the development of species into modern humans after the last common ancestor with apes.

Students began conducting research on the proportions of their hominid sculptures by observing tracks from the Laetoli site in Tanzania. "In order to begin the project, we looked at a pair of footprints from the time period and analyzed them," junior Roxy Perazzo said in an e-mail inter-

view. "What we ended up doing was measuring certain things like height, stride length, and foot size and finding correlations between the measurements in order to estimate the height and proportions of the hominid."



Ibtida Khurshed / The Spectator

After students conducted their research, they began to use different materials to form the different layers of the sculptures. "To make the sculptures, we used chicken wire as a 'skeleton' and then covered it in paper mache, which we painted," Perrazzo said.

The entire process of making the hominid sculptures took

around two months due to a few challenges. "The most complex body part to make was definitely the head, which was created using hair extensions, false eyelashes, and plastic eyes for its features," Perrazzo said.

Though some students believe there is still room for improvement, they were generally satisfied with the results. "I think that the final product is pretty good, and the fashion choices are definitely bonus points for its look. We could have spent more time [on] measurements for the groups making the arms and the legs, which

turned out slightly different on each side, but overall everything went smoothly," Perrazzo said.

Students also found the project to be a great way to de-stress from their other subjects and interact with peers. "It was really fun to make. Having a period of just focusing on the sculpture each day was a nice, relaxing time, and working with people in the class for something not solely academic was really enjoyable," Perazzo said.

When the two hominid sculptures were displayed in the middle of the plants on the seventh floor, many were terrified the first time they saw them. "My first ever encounter with the hominid sculptures was late after school," freshman Andy Xian said. "It was pretty late and I was alone and caught completely off guard by such structures that scared me half to death. At first I thought I was going to be murdered."

Separately, the architectural models were a new series of projects under Leo's architecture unit, which focused on learning about sacred spaces and utopian ideas. Students incorporated these ideas when creating their own imagi-

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NEWSBEAT

Fully vaccinated parents or guardians of players may attend PSAL meetings and games as of January 24.

The annual **Downtown Mathematics Invitational** hosted by the **Stuyvesant Math Team** was postponed to **April 30** after a winter storm warning was in effect for January 29.

Senior Avni Garg and freshman Zoe Feigelson had their artworks chosen from **over 400 submissions** to be exhibited at Soroban Capital Partners for **ArtsConnection's Student Art Program** exhibition "Simplicity in Complexity."

Freshmen and Public Forum novice debaters Brandon Tung and Alexander Panas took **first place** at the annual **Lexington Winter Invitational**.

Stuy Squad will live stream one of its **recorded performances** on February 11.

Senior Nina Shin Named Semifinalist for Regeneron Science Talent Search

By **MADLINE GOODWIN**
Additional reporting by Aiden Ackerman

The Regeneron Science Talent Search has recognized emerging scientists by holding an annual national competition for high school seniors to present their original research in the field of either science or mathematics since 1942. At Stuyvesant, the talent search has become a coveted opportunity for students to showcase their research findings and compete for a monetary prize. This year, senior Nina Shin was selected as the sole semifinalist from Stuyvesant in the competition.

Science teacher Dr. Nedwidek-Moore emphasized how competitive Regeneron has become in recent years compared to her participation in it when she was a student at Stuyvesant. She explained that when she participated in Regeneron, there were significantly more semifinalists from Stuyvesant, and even several finalists. "I think now [that] there are more schools involved, it is more competitive, [and] for a student to excel at this, it needs to be their absolute top priority for at least a year, maybe more," Moore said.

Shin considers her journey in research to have begun in Nedwidek-Moore's Medical Human Genetics course during the 2020

spring term. "That class was the first time I really started to read who have NIDDM (non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus),"



Coco Fang / The Spectator

research papers because [Moore] made us write a research proposal about a genetic disease," Shin said.

In class, Shin focused her research on diabetes mellitus and developing a treatment through molecular intervention. "Her approach was a strategic interventional approach for one of the genes that is messed up in people

Moore said. Despite the high demands of the course, Shin was able to excel and learn from the experience. "I am very particular about the standard that I expect my students to

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Indicator's Annual Valentine's Day Flower Sale Returns

By **MARY LEE and FIONA SHI**

The Indicator—the student-run club behind Stuyvesant's senior yearbook—is reviving its schoolwide flower sale with a Valentine's Day sale in spite of the cancellation of its winter sale. While resistance from administration and funding issues presented challenges, the Indicator ultimately received permission to organize the sale. Students will be able to purchase flowers and chocolates for friends and teachers to support the Indicator from February 2 through 10 near the Tribeca Bridge entrance, as well as the cafeteria.

Prior to the pandemic, the Indicator hosted flower sales two to three times a year. Purchased flowers and chocolates are distributed to students during homeroom, and students in the hallways that day are accompanied by flowers and notes from friends. "I remember participating in [the flower sale in] freshman year, and it was fun to see everyone receiving flowers [...] I think overall the flower sale brings positivity to Stuyves-

ant," junior Julia Shen said in an e-mail interview.

Due to the pandemic, the Indicator halted its traditional flower sales throughout remote learning. Instead, stickers and other goods were sold virtually and mailed out to students. Though the Indicator initially had plans for a winter flower sale after returning to in-person learning, the event was canceled primarily due to concerns regarding safety and mental health. "[For one,] it was December at the time, when all the [COVID] cases rose up," senior and Business Co-Editor of the Indicator Junhao Zhen said. "Another concern was from [Assistant Principal of Pupil Personnel Services Casey] Pedrick and [Assistant Principal of Security/Health and PE Brian] Moran, [who told us] that a few students reported to their guidance counselors that they didn't receive anything during homeroom, which kind of made them feel left out."

Aside from mental health concerns, the administration

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News

Student-Created Art Structures Featured in Stuyvesant

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nary civilizations. “We have a unit in Art Appreciation called sacred spaces and it’s about how architecture kind of shapes the way we think, and structures different activities and ways we think about our society and community,” Leo said.

Leo’s students created 40 architectural structures that are showcased around Stuyvesant, mostly located in the staircases between the sixth to 10th floors and in the library, where they are accompanied by a QR code leading to explanations on the project’s website or a printed text explanation. “[Students] did brainstorming, sketching, planning, building, and then the writing because they wrote stories to go along with all of that,” Leo said.

To complete this project, students were given about three weeks of work days solely dedicated to working on the architecture project, and were provided construction material in class. “We were allowed to use anything Ms. Leo had for us or anything that we had available at home. My group mainly [used] different types of cardboard but also [used a] straw,

fabric, tissue paper, and acrylic paint as the main source of color,” freshman Ibtida Khurshed said.

Students were able to model their projects from any time period, including the past and future. This allowed students to be as elaborate as they wanted about the stories of their imagined societies. “The story behind our sculpture was that a group of people were driven out by this evil group and now take shelter in the castle. Since this magical castle is so high up in a tree, they use a rocket roller coaster to travel up and down, primarily to get to the water fountain,” Khurshed said.

Some common themes among the projects were dark, post-apocalyptic ideas, which Leo found to be both humorous and interesting. “I would say 80 percent of the kids had a post-apocalyptic theme, so it wasn’t good news. Almost all of them were some sort of tragic event, where the most recurring theme was environmental disaster, and then there was inequality and injustice in society and those also figured prominently in those stories—they were a little bleak,” she said.

The main goal of this project was to give students a chance to reflect on how impactful different

environments and spaces are and to include more interactive projects after more than a year of remote learning. “I wanted [students] to think about how the spaces we make kind of help define who we are, and kind of make us behave in certain ways, in a way too. I also wanted them to experiment with different materials and kind of build things especially after a year of remote learning,” Leo said. “It’s kind of more fun to make more of a mess and experiment with stuff; I think they needed that.”

From this experience, many students were also able to learn skills applicable beyond Art Appreciation, ranging from creating art to measuring dimensions. “One skill I learned was to think [and] measure twice before I act. Since we were dealing with structures, making a mistake had more consequences than making a mistake in, say, a portrait or sketch. Another skill I learned was constructing equilateral triangles, perpendicular bisectors, and perfect circles,” freshman Christian Kim said.

Additionally, some students learned the importance of communication when working in a team. “I learned how important it was to communicate with my



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and NASA

WORLDBEAT

The College Board will completely transition to administering the SAT digitally by 2024 as well as shortening the total test length from three to two hours.

Since January 31, the New York City Department of Education shortened the isolation period from 10 to 5 days for students who tested positive for COVID-19.

Two Long Island nurses were charged for scamming more than \$1.5 million from selling forged COVID vaccination cards to adults and children.

Hours before President Joe Biden arrived at Pittsburgh to promote his \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, the Fern Hollow Bridge collapsed in the city, injuring 10 people.

group because it is important that everyone is satisfied and other group members can [come up with] really good ideas of how to add to the project,” Khurshed said.

Overall, both students and teachers were satisfied with what

they have accomplished in building these various projects. “I think they came out really great,” Leo said. “I was really proud of what the students did. A lot of teachers and students have been enjoying it, so I think that we need more art in this school.

Senior Nina Shin Named Semifinalist for Regeneron Science Talent Search

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meet, and that was never a problem with her. It just seemed to sort of align with the way she naturally thought about things,” Moore said.

In addition to the Medical Human Genetics class, Shin believes that her participation in the Stuyvesant Research Club has helped her develop a strong foundation for her project in Regeneron. “I learned lab techniques that I actually got to use during my time in the lab,” she said.

Science teacher Jason Ecomone, who is also the faculty advisor for the Research Club and

head of the Regeneron Research Program at Stuyvesant, connects students, such as Shin, with lab internships over the summer. “Cherish every moment of being a Regeneron Research summer intern because it is an amazing world with some of the most wonderfully knowledgeable and caring individuals,” he said.

Shin worked on her Regeneron project in the summer through an internship at the Lin Lab before her senior year. However, Shin had to wait until the beginning of the school year to write her paper so that she could finish collecting data from the end of the summer.

Shin developed the idea for her

project, titled “Using Immunophenotyping to Investigate Mumps Virus Infection of Natural Killer Cells,” through collaboration with her mentor, a current graduate student. “My mentor’s project focused on studying mumps virus infection of T cells, and while he was doing that, he also found that natural killer cells, which are another type of immune cell, are also infected. So, that was a project I got to take on and develop,” Shin said. “Though you pretty much don’t hear about it nowadays, there have been an increasing number of mumps virus outbreaks since the 2000s in fully vaccinated adolescents, which I found interesting.”

Because of the competition’s selective nature, Shin had never expected that she would be named a semifinalist. “I got discouraged at the end because I didn’t think that my project was that significant,” she said.

Ultimately, Shin’s efforts were recognized when she was chosen as one of 300 semifinalists nationwide from nearly 1,900 applicants in Regeneron’s highly selective competition. “Semifinalists get a small monetary prize, and they also get to make connections because they have a society for science alumni network,” Shin said.

Moore notes that participating in Regeneron requires indepen-

dence and dedication. “Someone is not going to hold your hand through this really, it’s all you,” Moore said. “You have to want it badly and you have to be willing to go to extreme ethical lengths to really make an accomplishment in fields like biology research or research in general.”

Shin advises that students interested in Regeneron should be willing to take a risk and have faith in themselves. “If you are interested in research, it is a great opportunity, because you get to do your own independent work and you also learn how to write and [use] different lab techniques,” Shin said.

Stuy Fusion Team 479 Advances to City Championships

By JASMINE YUEN
and NIKKI CHEN

Additional reporting by
Rebecca Bao

Stuy Fusion 479— one of the two Stuyvesant FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) robotics teams— won first place at the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) New York City Championship qualifier event on January 15 alongside alliance partner Gearmasters 8365 from Forest Hills High School. FTC teams compete through an assortment of different robot challenges, which vary each year.

This year, the objective was for the robot to move various objects to a certain goalpost. “Basically, there are these wiffle balls, and we have these square-ish cubes. Our goal is to collect [these cubes] one at a time and drop it into a container of sorts. We just do that over and over again and there are different ob-

jectives within that game, one [involving a] spinning wheel,” senior and Fusion 479 Vice President Ishraq Mahid said.

Though Fusion 479 succeeded in making first place at the finals of the qualifier, this was accompanied by an advantage of having prior inter-school connections. “First place was a team from Forest Hills called Gearmasters and if you call Fusion our sister team, then Gearmasters was kind of a cousin that you see every now and then. From the past, we had a good relationship with that team,” junior and Fusion 479 member Zawad Dewan said. “It was pretty helpful because they had the best robot out of basically everyone at the qualifier [and chose us as their alliance].”

The team underwent challenges as a result of the limited period they had to build their robot, causing mechanisms that couldn’t be implemented in time to be discarded. “The unfortu-

nate reality of having our competition in January was that it’s super close to finals and projects and it ramps up in January,” Dewan said. “Originally, we were planning on having a certain type of wheel that gives you a lot more freedom of movement. We ended up having to scrap that at the end because we didn’t think we would be able to properly use it.”

The pandemic also stifled in-person teamwork on certain projects. “Some of our members just aren’t here because they got COVID so they haven’t shown up, and we had to go over [to] Discord and have a video call with them while working on the robot,” freshman and member of the Fusion 479 team Kellan Yu said.

Despite these obstacles, Fusion 479 is still implementing old features and some new ones for the City Championship on the first Saturday of March. “Right now, me and the rest of the soft-

ware team are working on using a camera to recognize a certain pattern that gets randomized at the start in order to score more points during the autonomous mode,” Dewan said. “We’re putting those wheels that we had to scrape back on, we’re going to mess with a way of keeping track of the robot’s position on the field.”

Moving forward to the World Championship, another COVID-induced challenge is the concern of new variants emerging, as qualification for World has decreased from six to two teams, increasing the competition between teams in the city. “Our chances have decreased by 60% and it’s extremely hard because for New York City robotics at the very top, it’s super competitive,” senior and Fusion 479 President Steven Lei said.

Lei and Mahid are also dedicated to making investments to secure the future prospects of the team. “A second goal is pass-

ing on knowledge, making sure that the future generation actually retains everything that we’ve learned because it doesn’t matter what goals we accomplish if the future doesn’t retain anything,” Lei said. “So that’s another long-term goal for us, making sure that we do well, leave a legacy, and set the bar higher for the future generation that way they can enjoy being able to be competitive.”

For Fusion 479, advancing to the regional championships is a major step toward their long-term goal of making it to the World Championship. “One of the goals that I say every year is that we’re gonna qualify for [World] because our team is one of the oldest teams in the entire program. We’ve been here since 2007 or 2008, about 15 years already, and our team has never qualified for [World],” Lei said. “Making it past the top is our goal right now, and going to [World] would be like a dream.”



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News

Regents Week Canceled and Replaced with In-Person Instruction

By **JAMES LEE, HOSSAIN ALI RIFATH, and JAMES KANG**

The Board of Regents and New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) announced on January 4 that the annual January high school Regents examinations, which would have been held from January 24 to January 28, were cancelled. In past years, this week, commonly known by students as “Regents week,” only had students attend school on the days and times they had a Regents exam.

In its place, the NYCDOE mandated that all New York City public schools hold classes under a regular schedule and keep track of student attendance. It maintained that school should consist of full days of instruction and under no circumstances should any student be released from instruction during the school week.

This announcement came as a surprise for some Stuyvesant staff members. “The English department was distraught at that announcement—not because we don’t love being in class with [students]—but because that has been a week where traditionally teachers have had time to grade and respond thoughtfully to their students’

work, and the prospect of not having any of those days to do that was a crushing blow,” Assistant Principal of the English Department Eric Grossman said.

In response to the NYCDOE’s announcement, Stuyvesant’s various departments met frequently to decide a course of action. “We met every morning from about Christmas break and there was a lot of information for us to process and a lot of decisions to make. Things were changing each day from the number of students who were out, the number of teachers who were out, and the directions coming from the DOE,” Grossman said.

After deliberating, the Stuyvesant administration decided that no new projects or assignments would be assigned and that no examinations would be given unless they were previously scheduled. “That week was intended to be a week for students to refresh and recharge for the fall semester, to prepare for the spring semester, [and] perhaps to make up some work if they had been out of school or missed classes, and so we wanted to remain true to that intention,” Grossman said.

Assistant Principal of World Language, Art, and Music Francesca McAuliffe echoed this

sentiment. “We knew that some students had to quarantine or who were ill during the winter and so we wanted to allow some flexible time during that week for teachers to sharpen skills, to introduce the next term, and also to allow students some time to make up some things or solidify some understandings so that they are really confident going into the next term,” she said.

Different teachers had different approaches to the week based on their respective class’s situation. “Teachers [in the World Language Department] are looking to have their students present projects, potentially see a film, read magazines, [or] just get some of the skills preloaded or ahead outline the course curriculum for the spring term,” McAuliffe said.

McAuliffe, who teaches Spanish I, used the week to help students improve their mastery of Spanish in a variety of ways. “In my first year class, what I’m hoping to do is to do a little more communicative skills, working on conversation, speaking in the target language, [and] maybe exploring more music and poetry. The other things I want to do is that I’m going to look at the final exam and see if there were any areas that students didn’t do as well in parts of the exam so that we can review and go over

some things,” she said.

Spanish teacher Anna Montserrat had a similar approach for Regents week. “We are going to watch a movie in the AP [Spanish Language and Culture] class called *The Motorcycle Diaries*. We are going to talk about the movie, the topics, and maybe [have] some reading comprehension activities talking about the topics in the movie,” she said.

The English department, however, took a different route and opted for teachers to focus on responding and grading student material. “[For most teachers], the classes will be work periods for students and teachers are going to respond to student work because that is instruction. Responding thoughtfully to student work is instruction,” Grossman said.

The math department administered uniform finals for the Algebra II, Algebra II Honors, Geometry, and Pre-Calculus classes remotely through DeltaMath. Other classes have taken take-home final exams.

The reception of this year’s Regents week has been mixed, as some students appreciated its relaxed nature, while others resented having to come to school. “I’d still like for school to be closed during Regents week because the commute can

be a burden,” senior Alvi Khan said.

Junior Yusha Aziz echoed Khan’s sentiment, but still enjoyed the relaxed nature of Regents week. “I don’t think it was worth coming into school. We could have had more sleep and done more productive activities instead of being forced to stay in school learning,” he said. “But, though it was a waste of time, it was fun hanging out with people instead of having the pressure of learning.”

Students took different approaches to Regents week, considering the end of the fall semester, with some noting a greater sense of freedom. “I skipped school the entire Regents week, just drove locally with friends while playing *Nav on the speaker*,” senior Raj Dhanda said.

Given the circumstances and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, many supported having Regents week serve as a time of making up a backlog of work and catching up. “The administration knows that it’s been an unusual semester and that many may have been out during that week,” Grossman said. “It was important for everyone to not create additional work and instead create an opportunity to make up whatever may have been missed.”

Indicator’s Annual Valentine’s Day Flower Sale Returns

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also had concerns about the new lack of familiarity with a flower sale. “[Director of Family Management Dina] Ingram said it was like a reset to all of the teachers; they sort of forgot about everything,” senior and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Indicator Thomas Yoo said. “They [claimed] that the Indicator flower sale has never happened before, but we have held it before, that’s the problem.”

The priority of transitioning back into school as well as general miscommunication also led to the winter sale not being held. “We did have a meeting with administration but there was definitely miscommunication on our end, in terms of, you know, a lot of members of administration this year were new,” senior and Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Indicator Sarah Cheyney said. “There was also a lot going on in the school such as the winter concert, which [the] administration cited as reasons [as to] why there was a lot going on, and they thought it would be difficult to implement that flower sale.” Principal Yu expressed that specific information about the upcoming sale was still in review in response to an interview request.

To combat this, the editors-in-chief held a meeting with administration to clarify some misunderstandings and provide more information about the Indicator flower sales. “It was definitely miscommunication and we really appreciate how [the] administration adapted once we presented them with the new information,” Cheyney said.

Since the Indicator flower sale has been maintained for several years, the editors-in-chief felt it was important to push for the Valentine’s Day sale. “We also wrote an e-mail to the administration explaining the ins and outs of the flower sales and their mass social and cultural benefits to the Stuyvesant student body, and the richness of the tradition,” Cheyney said.

Zhen echoes this sentiment, agreeing with Cheyney’s emphasis on continuing the event. “[Since we had] two years of no one in the school, if we don’t do [the sale] this Valentine’s Day, this tradition will be lost. I’m one of the only two members left in the department that has actually done the flower sale, [...] so if we don’t do it this year no one would know how to do it next year. We really [want to] keep this tradition alive because it’s fun and it brings people together.”

This tradition not only holds significance to much of the Stuyvesant student body, but to the Indicator community as well. “We have something called dethorning the day before we distribute the flowers out. On that day, [...] we get all of our departments together and we dethorn the flowers. It’s sort of community bonding,” Yoo said.

“It’s one of the few times when all the members of Indicator come together as one club instead of separate departments,” Cheyney added.

In addition to sustaining a tradition of sorts, the Indicator’s adance on maintaining the flower sales can be attributed to a need for funding. “We’ve sort of been in a drought, meaning

that because we haven’t been able to do any of the fundraisers like bake sales because of COVID,” Yoo said. “We were unable to hold a lot of fundraisers and things we had planned.”

Despite reaching out to the Parents’ Association and Alumni Association, the Indicator has not yet received funding from either of these sources. Each flower sale generated a profit averaging from two to three thousand dollars for the Indicator. The loss of the winter flower sale, in addition to other anticipated fundraisers, created financial difficulties for the club and the risk of raising the buying price of individual yearbooks. “We really want to limit the cost of the yearbook because if we don’t have any funding, such as PA funding, the yearbook should come out to about \$120 for everyone. Usually we’re able to cut it down to \$70-80, and that’s already a lot for a yearbook,” Zhen said.

As the Indicator plans its upcoming Valentine’s Day sale, Yoo and Cheyney share plans to address the administration’s concerns surrounding inclusivity. “We [...] outlined various measures that we will take, such as advertising the flower sales as non-romantic, so friends can feel included in order to combat these issues because we do take the mental health of students really really seriously,” Cheyney said. “I think one point I’d like to point out is that many Stuy events are super expensive, like prom, and that can create some sense of exclusivity. So flower sales, by being so cheap for a student to participate, makes everyone feel included, which is why we feel so strongly [about

continuing] them.”

Additionally, to promote inclusivity, the Indicator has reached out to the Big Sibs for a partnership. “We spoke with the Big Sib chairs, who were incredibly kind and understanding, and they agreed to have Big Sibs purchase a flower for every freshman, so no freshman will feel excluded,” Cheyney said.

Though the Indicator was able to successfully convince administration to permit the sale, difficulties have arisen in preparation for the sale. “The first day of the flower sale is on the first day of the new semester, February 2nd [...], so coordinating who’s [going to] be at which stand during their free period becomes very difficult,” Cheyney said. “We’ve been encountering some difficulties with that, but we’re [...] planning on using sharp notice in terms of getting people to sign up.”

Additionally, the Indicator must comply with the DOE’s new policy of requiring at least one adult at the sale at all times. “We contacted Ms. Ingram, and she contacted the PA for volunteers, and I think the sign up sheet for volunteers is out, but I’m not sure how many parents signed up,” Zhen said. “I think we’re also limiting [the period we’re selling flowers], in case there aren’t enough parent volunteers. Usually we do [periods] one to ten, the whole day, in the cafeteria and at the scanners. But this year, if there are not enough people, we might just do one stand at the scanners and [fewer] periods if we have to.”

The Indicator is also struggling with advertising the flower sale due to the lower grades’

lack of exposure to the event. “Advertising for the sale is definitely challenging,” Zhen said. “Usually, our sales target freshmen and sophomores because it’s new and they’re trying to make friends, so usually most of our sales are from freshmen and sophomores. But this year, since they’re not really exposed to the sale, we’re trying to advertise as much as we can.”

With the launch of the sale coming up, the Indicator has begun posting advertisements for the flower sale on Instagram and Facebook, officially introducing the sale to the student body. However, some students have further questions regarding the logistics. “From the information that I got, I only know that [it’s] happening from Feb 3 [to] 10, but I would really like to know the prices so I could better plan out how many people I can buy flowers for,” freshman Rachel Alvarez said in an e-mail interview.

Nonetheless, Alvarez looks forward to the flower sale. “I’m super excited to participate [...] [and] show my appreciation for my friends through buying them flowers,” she said.

In spite of the unprecedented challenges surrounding the flower sale this semester, Indicator members and the rest of the student body alike have expressed excitement in anticipation of the upcoming return of the flower sale. “I’m excited for [...] writing my friends notes and seeing all my friends carrying the flowers I sent them. It’s just something fun, something that people can enjoy. I look forward to people being happy, holding their flowers,” Yoo said.

Features

Kronman Cupid

By JULIA
CHERNOBELSKY,
SABRINA LI, NORA
LOFTUS, and FRANCES
SCHWARZ

You find a hot new dating site, and in a moment of romantic fervor, you sign your name and preferences. After weeks of waiting for your blind date, you start to fear that you were scammed, only to learn that your information was not stolen but that your hot new dating site was nearly sued by another college dating service. Luckily, you somehow get your match anyway and eagerly await your date. This scenario is the story of a Stuyvesant alumnus's creation: ExExEx.

Liam Kronman ('21), a freshman at MIT, along with Jason Seo ('21), created ExExEx, a new dating site for Harvard students. "It's guided by the simple hypothesis that your dating profile might be pretty similar to your ex's exes," Kronman said in an e-mail interview. He used data submitted by people to find the people that their exes' exes dated, since two exes of the same person are likely to have similar taste. He even accounted for the fact that that person might not be signed up. In that situation, the site can anonymously text the person. The cherry on top is the site's cheeky slogan that greets you after a click of the link: "Only two people stand between you and your next mistake."

Kronman initially started the website as an innocent prank and with no intention of matching people. "I had sent out a simple

form (as a website) with some rather humorous personality-oriented questions aimed at helping Harvard students find a match on campus, with no intention on my part initially to facilitate that," he said. "It was kind of a joke that spiraled out of control.



Courtesy of Liam Kronman

[I] certainly didn't expect as many responses as I received and the press that followed."

When the website, originally called the Harvard Marriage Pact, was put up, word buzzed through the Harvard campus with advertising flyers posted around the

school by an Instagram account. The site asked students personal questions about their sexual orientation, preferences, biases, and more and promised that on October 15, they would receive a "match" aligned with their answers. Thousands of Harvard

students answered extensive questions about their personal lives, desperate for a match. Yet when nobody received a match on October 15 as promised, many students believed they had been scammed. The Harvard Independent, Harvard's student

paper, wrote that students were worried that their data would be sold. It turned out that the site was shut down by Kronman due to the threat of being sued. Stanford already has a match-making service, called The Marriage Pact, for students to find matches on campus. This site has almost 65 thousand users, so once they saw what Kronman had created, they threatened to sue for copyright and fraud. As a result, Kronman chose to bring his prank into an actual project. "I realized that I had to do something to clear the confusion. My solution was to actually match students up based on the form responses," he said. To complete this goal, he came up with an algorithm based on the stable marriage problem, which is a concept in economics and computer science to find a stable matching between two sets. Two weeks after the website was shut down, Kronman sent out e-mails to all participants that explained the situation and ultimately gave people their "matches."

Even though Kronman created this flirtatious site, he came from New York, just like any Stuy student. Kronman always lived in Greenwich Village. He believes it fostered his many interests, which range from music to computer science. "My surroundings gave me an openness and appreciation for creative bravery," Kronman said. Despite primarily being a STEM-head, he is also a jazz cat who wrote the song "A Village Ballad" during his time at Stuyvesant. "Music is a way to compete with and improve myself. Also, it's really stress relieving," Kronman re-

vealed in a Spectator article when he was a Stuyvesant freshman.

Kronman was also an active member of the Stuyvesant community, even taking on leadership roles in the production of SING! "Being involved as a producer and Coordinator of SING! was a highlight and gave me an avenue to explore my artistic inclinations with peers [who] quickly became my good friends," Kronman said. He was academically inspired by teachers such as Emilio Nieves, Patrick Honner, Dermot Hannon, and Matthew Polazzo. "And of course [Brian] Moran, whose confiscation of my phone two times during my freshman fall gave me a discipline I carry with me today," Kronman said in a nostalgic tone.

Having gone on to be an MIT student, Kronman intensely studied STEM courses during his time at Stuyvesant. "I did take three years of computer science, ending with [Topher] Mykolyk's Software Development elective," he said. These classes introduced Kronman to computer science and the coding skills he eventually used to come up with his dating site idea and algorithm.

Currently, besides his college student dating empire, Kronman is enjoying his time at MIT. "I've met a lot of talented and brilliant people who are inspiring me to build amazing things," he said. He expressed his excitement for the future of his young app. "My hopes are pretty simple. I want everyone to have fun with it and hopefully meet some people they otherwise wouldn't be able to. Expect bigger and better things coming soon."

Can't Resist the Minutes Gifts

By SABRINA CHEN,
GLEN CUCCINELLO,
and TIFFANY LIANG

Minutes has been a long time tradition in Stuyvesant's English classes. Before the start of every class, a student presents "Minutes," a summary of the prior lesson, to refresh the class on discussion and familiarize students who were absent. English teachers have kept this practice exciting by requiring students to bring in a gift, which tends to be the part of Minutes everyone looks forward to. However, many students agree that picking a gift is the hardest part of doing Minutes: it's your time to impress your peers with a special talent or passion through a simple (or not so simple) gift. While the recitation of Minutes may not necessarily be memorable, some gifts have left a lasting impression on students.

The most memorable gifts, such as dances to meme music, tend to make the whole class laugh. Junior Arshan Pervez remembered another student's impromptu gift, as he had forgotten to prepare one for his Writing to Make Change class taught by Ms. Thoms. "My teacher made him perform a dance symbolizing finals week over a trap remix of Jingle Bells," Pervez said. "He utilized props, like a desk, and great acting to represent taking a test while under time pressure."

Senior Ivan Lam had a similar experience in his English class. "My friend did a dance to the Wii theme song in freshman year," he said.

Tier lists are also a comedic

gift, giving the common Minutes gift idea to recommend books or movies an unusual twist. Pervez recalled students presenting slideshows ranking condiments, colleges, and balls as Minutes gifts in the same class.

Other gifts reference what the class is learning about. Senior Kaley Liu explained that after her class finished a book that ended with the post-World War II baby boom, she brought in a pack of 40 small plastic babies to give to

room," sophomore Petra Dijur recalled. "Other people started bringing plants, so there's just a mini forest there now." In room 833, there are five plants currently clustered in the center of the classroom.

A couple of students go above and beyond for their Minutes gifts, some even spending weeks preparing them. Lam once filmed a music video based on "Macbeth," the play he was reading in European Literature, and showed

something with the class that can brighten their day and teach them something. For one Minutes gift, senior Katherine Lake baked lamingtons, an Australian dessert made from sponge cake, chocolate, and shredded coconut. "I really loved doing that because it's fun [and] tastes great, and it was just expressing a part of myself that was really important," she explained.

Lake recalled a student with a similar idea who brought in bub-

bled themselves by performing a song for their English class: "I don't remember a lot about Minutes gifts. I tried to avoid them as best as I could, [but] I played a song on a melodica."

Minutes is still an assignment and, for some students, an extra burden. Thus, it isn't always a student favorite. "I always will get the initial sense of dread if I do get a class that requires Minutes, because it's a little stressful to have to plan for a gift," Liu said.

An anonymous senior agreed over an e-mail interview: "There's pressure to not give a boring gift that makes it a lot harder than I think it should be."

Junior Julia Lee added that Minutes is extra work for students who are already busy with other classes' homework: "It's just extra homework, because you have to write stuff and make a gift." She also mentioned that the practice itself is only useful for those absent the day before.

Even Lake, who loves the opportunity Minutes gives, acknowledges that it can be a lot for students who have other things to be worried about. However, she still finds the Minutes tradition special and meaningful. "It can be seen as just an extra task that's frustrating, and I understand that it's extra homework, [...] but I feel like what's really important to remember is that you have the chance to bring joy and laughter to the classroom," Lake said. "You have two to three minutes of everyone's full attention, and there's so much you can do with that."

**"My teacher made him perform a dance symbolizing
finals week over a trap remix of Jingle Bells."**

—Arshan Pervez, junior

each classmate. While the connection to the curriculum's book may have been loose, it certainly got a laugh from the class. "I still think about my ingeniousness to this day," she said jokingly in an e-mail interview.

Some Minutes gifts can start trends and inspire other classmates to give similar gifts. In Mr. Staley's European Literature class, a student started a Minutes trend by bringing in a small tree. "The teacher said he could put it wherever, so it's in the middle of the

it to his class. "It was a parody of BTS's 'DOPE,'" he said. "I changed the lyrics to match the story, and then I sang it." Lam recruited his friends for help to film the storyline of the book at Stuy and edit everything to create a four-minute video. It took him two weeks to complete the project. "It was worth it," he added. "[My teacher] probably gave me a good grade for Minutes."

Many students take advantage of the opportunity that Minutes provides, hoping to share

able tea, preparing giant containers and cups to serve the entire class. Students have been able to share foods and drinks they love with the rest of the class, not only giving them a treat to get through the school day but also introducing them to something they may not have had before.

However, for some students, Minutes isn't an especially enjoyable experience. But since it's mandatory, they do their best. Despite not being too eager to share, an anonymous alum show-

Features

Meat of the Future

By SUYEON RYU

The “meat of the future”: we’ve heard it in commercials for the Impossible Burger and seen it on labels for edible crickets. People have started to reject the traditional meat that humans have been eating for centuries, because of ethics or the environment, and are looking for alternatives that will satisfy their meat cravings, give them the same vitamins and protein, and resemble real meat in presentation. An alternative that meets all of these criteria is rare, especially when it comes to taste, which results in most individuals finding it difficult to give up meat. Recently, however, some companies have claimed to find the perfect solution to the growing problem of livestock production without compromising meat flavor: lab-grown meat.

Lab-grown meat involves the extraction of cells from a cow, chicken, or pig and growing those cells in a laboratory until they become readily consumable animal flesh. Since this technique doesn’t result in the death of the particular animal, it has been promoted as meat without slaughter. But the seemingly benign phrase “without

slaughter” is not what it seems. The process uses fetal bovine serum, collected from fetuses of slaughtered, pregnant cows. The serum is then extracted through cardiac puncture, during which a needle pierces through a fetus’s heart.

This procedure raises the ethical questions of whether fetuses are living and whether they should be considered separate entities. “I think that the slaughter of pregnant animals is even less humane than the slaughter of non-pregnant animals,” junior Anna Kathawala remarked in an e-mail interview. “If there were a way to produce [lab-grown meat] without the use of the fetal serum, I might be inclined to change my mind, but I would have to do more research.”

Lab-grown meat would also have mixed impacts on the environment. On one hand, it creates the exact cuts of meat desired, cutting down on water, food, and land waste. However, when it comes to greenhouse gases, which are arguably the bulk of the problem, lab-grown meat can do more harm than good. Though livestock produces methane, a notorious greenhouse gas, lab-grown meat

produces carbon dioxide, which stays in the atmosphere for a longer period of time. Freshman Ivan Gontchar acknowledged the danger of diving into the production of lab-grown meat. “We already have methane problems from producing livestock, so before we introduce this, [...] its [environmental issues] should be solved,” he said.

Kathawala also mentioned how the solution to excessive agricultural methane production may not be in lab-grown meat. “If we made the switch and started feeding cows the proper, natural diet, and stopped keeping them in such terrible conditions, cows actually produce a very, very small quantity of methane, which would make them overall a better food source,” she said.

Realistically, lab-grown meat is also quite expensive, as a single batch of lab-grown chicken nuggets can cost up to \$50. “Whoever’s making this would have to find a way to reduce the cost because some people would buy it, but the majority wouldn’t be willing to pay,” freshman Benjamin Rudinski said. There seems to be hope, as many startups are diving into this new industry with baseline lower prices. However, factories that

grow artificial meat are expensive to build and maintain and not only produce less meat, but are also generally in less demand than slaughterhouses.

Lab-grown meat will also need to compete with plant-based meat as an alternative. With many consumers already open to plant-based meat, it might be difficult to convince people to purchase the more expensive and less environmentally friendly option of lab-grown over plant-based. “Plant-based meat tastes really good, and it’s very environmentally friendly. I don’t think there [are] any disadvantages it has that lab-based meat doesn’t have,” freshman Astrid Harrington stated. Harrington plans to be a vegetarian when she becomes an adult and does not foresee herself buying lab-grown meat so long as it involves slaughter. “It would be the same as normal meat,” she said.

Gontchar, however, recognizes the limits plant-based meat has on satisfying a craving for meat and brings into perspective the potential lab-grown meat has in terms of taste. “Plant-based meat isn’t identical to regular meat, so many of the people who like regular meat would be a lot more inclined

to buy lab-based meat if it actually tasted like regular meat,” he said. Gontchar doesn’t see himself as a vegan or vegetarian in the future but would consider lab-grown meat as an alternative to traditional options. “Meat is a big part of culture, so I don’t think I’ll separate from it,” he said. Rudinski added on with his experience as a pescatarian. Though a book on calf cruelty convinced him to temporarily stop eating meat, his liking for it overpowered his initial choice after a few months.

Both Rudinski and Harrington share similar experiences with Gontchar in how culture impacts meat consumption. Harrington eats meat to respect her mother’s cooking, and Rudinski exclusively ate meat on holidays when he first started to make exceptions to his pescatarianism, which eventually led to him eating meat altogether. If lab-grown meat could become ethically, economically, and environmentally sustainable, it could be consumed by dedicated vegans and meat-eaters alike, unlike plant-based or regular meat. The reality is that without extraordinary advancement in the industry, most consumers will most likely leave lab-grown meat on the shelf.

What’s up With My Schedule?

By ISABELLE LAM

Every year, students sit in front of their computer screens and desperately refresh the Talos website over and over, hoping to see their schedules the moment they come out. This phenomenon occurs twice a year, once before the start of fall semester and again before spring semester, usually resulting in frustrated Facebook posts complaining about the Program Office. From students getting random classes they neither want nor need to not getting any Advanced Placement classes, there is no shortage of complaints. Program Chair Jonathan Cheng is aware of the vast amount of student gripes surrounding scheduling. “Programming Stuyvesant is a very complex task,” Cheng said in an email interview.

Despite students’ perception of scheduling, it was worse in the time before Talos, the current system used for programming schedules. “Several years ago, the school used a system named Daedalus,” Cheng explained. However, the program was discontinued because the owner stopped supporting it, so Stuyvesant had to reroute to off-line programming. This switch meant that students ran around the school with pieces of paper that they had to get signatures on.

This process turned out to be incredibly inefficient, so the school switched to eSchoolData and then to Google Forms. However, eSchoolData wasn’t able to handle Stuyvesant’s wide elective range. “If juniors and seniors did not have [these options], then there [would be] a clear-cut sequence everyone follows,” Cheng said.

During the Google Forms era, the Program Office was forced to create nine new e-mail addresses. “[We were] sending out individualized e-mails to stu-

dents to assist with their selection process. But [we could only] send out around 200 e-mails before Google [flagged] the account and [started] slowing down the emails,” Cheng explained. “So in order to mass e-mail all of Stuyvesant, we requested multiple e-mail addresses to facilitate this process. You should e-mail the main email: programoffice@stuy.edu.” The strain of individual emailing caused Cheng to reach out to several people in the hopes

without obstacles. “[Stuyvesant’s] ability to offer a huge variety of classes comes with a caveat that there might be students [who] get nothing that they asked for. Stuyvesant has the most complex programming needs compared to all other high schools in NYC,” Cheng said. Due to these restrictions, the Program Office focuses on fulfilling graduation requirements and prioritizes seniors, since they only have a year left before they graduate.

lect the course, [but] it does not guarantee you a seat,” Cheng explained.

Next is the reason behind the limited number of program changes allowed per student. Currently, students are only able to request one program change so that the Program Office isn’t flooded with requests. “During the days of Daedalus, we were surprised if we [had to] process over 1,000 requests for the fall term. Since using Talos, it’s not whether we

cerns the Course Selection Form. Many students think that not listing second or third choices conveys their desire for the first choice. “Selections are randomized, [which means that] not having a second or third choice increases the odds of getting a class you never asked for,” Cheng said.

Finally, the early bird does not always get the worm. “A lot of the time, people just select [courses] and say they’re done. Being the first one on [the form] means that students encounter errors that [will] get fixed later on,” Cheng explained. Talos is prone to crashing when the form is initially released because the Program Office does not expect students to immediately input their choices. To counteract this problem, Cheng began releasing possible courses ahead of time so that students have longer to learn about classes before they make their decisions.

Students’ complaining without understanding how programming works does not ease his job. “Most students don’t realize the complexity of [Stuyvesant’s] scheduling needs until they encounter some form of it in college or later on. [Even when] they have more control, they still can’t quite get everything they want,” Cheng explained.

Amidst all of these challenges, an unexpected delight in managing schedule programming is the occasionally humorous reasons that students list for their program changes. “One time, a student requested a program change because they wanted to be in the same class as their crush. Their request was denied,” he said.

Despite having served as Program Chair at Stuyvesant for the past eight years, Cheng feels that the process has not become any smoother. “A notable experience would be if there was an easy year. There has not been an easy year,” he said.

“Most students don’t realize the complexity of [Stuyvesant’s] scheduling needs until they encounter some form of it in college or later on. [Even when] they have more control, they still can’t quite get everything they want.”

—Jonathan Cheng, Program Chair

of finding a new and better program.

After talking to seven different people, Cheng eventually stumbled across Rodda John (’17), who created the current programming website Talos while attending Columbia University. With the new system, programming became more streamlined and straightforward, though not

Cheng clarified some common misconceptions that shroud course selections.

First up are course exceptions, which many students see as a guarantee they’ll get the course. “Course exceptions are meant to be a way for students to ask permission to apply to a course. If approved, the exception grants you the ability to see and se-

see 1,000. It’s when we surpass 1,000,” Cheng said. For context, after Stuyvesant started using Talos, there was a term when the Program Office had to process over 6,000 requests. “We would have over 1,000 within the first 12 hours because students would use up their three requests,” he furthered.

Another misconception con-

Editorials

Keep Our Clubs

After a long day filled with tedious morning commutes, stressful tests, and exhaustive classwork, many Stuyvesant students look forward to one thing in particular: extracurricular activities. Clubs are an important aspect of school, regardless of what students are passionate about. Since students don't have total control over their schedules and courses, clubs give them a chance to participate in activities they enjoy and create close communities with others who share similar interests. After the recent spike in COVID-19 cases, the administration banned all in-person after school activities, with the exception of clubs that are able to obtain a faculty advisor for every meeting. However, with the Omicron resurgence quieting down and Stuyvesant attendance rates back up to 90 percent, the decision seems performative and only harms the sense of community at Stuyvesant.

As COVID-19 is still a prominent issue, it is understandable that school policy is modified accordingly. However, for many clubs, it is difficult to schedule a meeting that aligns with their faculty advisor's schedule due to the adult's other responsibilities. As a result, numerous clubs have made the shift to Zoom meet-

ings, which do not compare to in-person meetings in terms of socialization and activities. Club involvement experienced new lows during the last school year, with Zoom meetings providing little engagement and attendance numbers dropping significantly. In the current absence of in-person meetings, even when they are possible, it is extremely difficult for clubs that did not get a chance to establish themselves before remote learning to function and continue to do so even after the pandemic is no longer a concern.

The primary motive for the decision to move clubs online was the concern over how club gatherings may lead to a rise in COVID-19 cases among students. However, depriving students of their in-person extracurricular time is unlikely to have a significant impact on the COVID-19 situation. The way club meetings are conducted is not so different from how we are situated in classrooms, as the meetings maintain social distancing rules that apply to a 34-student classroom. In comparison to students spending the morning on a crowded train and attending 10 periods with dozens of different classmates, clubs have a miniscule impact on the spread of COVID-19. Omicron cases are down more than

80 percent since their peak in early January, signaling that now is the perfect time to bring in-person clubs back to Stuyvesant.

Even acknowledging the lack of likelihood of spreading COVID-19 in a club in comparison to a class, requiring an advisor in the room implies that the staff does not trust the student body to keep our masks on and practice social distancing. Students are also concerned about contracting and spreading the virus and understand the importance of such protocols. We can be trusted to host or attend club gatherings and spend time with our peers without a faculty advisor supervising us, all while still meeting the COVID-19 regulations.

As we enter the second semester, it is crucial that we bring back after school activities. With the oncoming stress of second semester, extracurricular activities will be some of the few aspects of school life that motivate students and keep their mental health in check. Because of quarantine, the student body has already missed out on years of in-person high school experiences. Though the definition of normal has changed significantly during that time, this step is our opportunity to revive the spirit in the hallways after school again.

Bringing Back Home Economics

By USHOSHI DAS

Yes, I can do geometry, but can I cook anything other than rice without burning my eyebrows off? No. Sadly, I am hardly exaggerating. I could do with a few lessons on how to cook, sew, and file taxes.

In the United States, home economics classes were traditionally targeted at women. They were designed to prepare women for home life, and thus, courses often centered around cooking, sewing, interior designing, and budgeting. In colleges and universities,

groups of women sometimes lived in "practice apartments," where they were supervised and graded while they took turns running the household. At Cornell University, infants were obtained through orphanages and child welfare associations so that women could practice raising children.

These courses were a way for women to receive a higher education at a time when they weren't allowed to do so in most college departments. But because these classes were geared toward women and taught skills centered around the household, they were

considered sexist. As a result, many schools removed home economics classes from their curricula in the '60s and '70s. However, the variety of skills taught in home economics—now often referred to as Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) to be more inclusive—is just as vital to everyone now as it was when these courses were first created. Many of us leave for college right after high school, so we have to do a lot of things alone for the first time. FCS classes prepare students for this independence.

The Spectator

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"The Pulse of the Student Body"

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Please address all letters to:
345 Chambers Street
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(212) 312-4800 ext. 2601
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Families often don't have the time to teach children many of these skills. Schools have the responsibility of preparing students for any career they want to pursue and ensuring that everyone graduates knowing these basics. But high school students, especially students at Stuyvesant, often have extremely tight schedules. Therefore, some skills, such as sewing, should be taught

in elementary or middle school. At my mother's school in Kolkata, India, she had sewing classes from elementary school through 10th grade. We still have some very well-loved stuffed animals she made as a teenager, along with a few of the dresses and shirts she made. Learning

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Girlboss, Grievance, and Gender Bias

By VIRGENYA ZHU

Instead of "woman scientist," why not just say scientist? In traditionally male-dominated fields such as STEM, gender-specific terms are often used to describe women even though the original terms are gender neutral to begin with. We see this phenomena with phrases such as "female doctor," "woman engineer," and "girl mechanic," which are subtly used everyday. In a field that is viewed as masculine, vocabulary is used to point out that women are outsiders and reduce them to their gender. The subtext is clear: men are the standard.

There is a similar erasure of femininity in the media. If a woman is in a stereotypically masculine field, such as firefighting, she is portrayed as less feminine. The "strong female character" is often only respected by her male counterparts on screen because she is emotionless or harsh or hates anything feminine. This representation suggests to girls watching that approval will only come if they are not "girly." We see the toll this societal sexism takes on young girls, such as in the

notorious "pick-me girl," who rejects and looks down on traditional femininity in order to gain male

validation. Though social media

uses the term satirically, people often fail to notice that these girls' behavior is due to internalized misogyny that they see and take

in on a daily basis. They see that approval only comes if they show their distaste for "ditzzy," "frivolous," and "shallow" girls, who are portrayed negatively for embracing their femininity. Women in positions of leadership also get labeled differently from men. An example is the infamous term "girlboss," which is now portrayed more ironically on social media, but when used sincerely, portrays a woman's position as superficial. Similar terms like SHE-EO take away from original, neutral words like CEO, once again differentiating women from their men counterparts. The change in a woman's title doesn't show "girl power." It shows how these positions of leadership are coded as male. When Hillary Clinton ran for president, people debated whether she would be referred to as "woman president," even though the term "president" isn't gendered at all. Expressions like these undermine a woman's capability in her field and belittle her role in comparison to a man's.

On the other hand, if a woman chooses to label herself as such, it is her decision to make. The Scientific American points out that it

can help raise awareness for the lack of women in particular fields, such as STEM. A woman describing herself as a "woman scientist" on social media can help point out her existence to younger generations and help destigmatize said field for girls. There is nothing inherently wrong with a woman describing herself as such in a professional circumstance. The problem arises when someone else does it, thereby dismissing her and bringing her gender into a conversation in which it doesn't need to be specified.

Gender neutral language is easy to integrate, and by confronting our own sexist vocabulary, we can slowly move toward equality. Showing young girls that women make accomplishments in areas that they've only ever seen as male is important, and treating women in those areas the same as their men counterparts is equally important. A woman's femininity and ability to do her job are not related, and gendered terms shouldn't be pointlessly used to describe her.



Fareha Islam / The Spectator

Opinions

Bringing Back Home Economics

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any type of needlework—sewing, knitting, crocheting, or embroidery—can help students of all genders and backgrounds in a variety of ways: we can repair clothes we love and even make our own clothes or lovely gifts.

When I was in 5th grade, my class made chili together. We worked in groups to cut the dif-

ferent vegetables. Not only did we have a lot of fun (my table got to cut the bell peppers, and we really enjoyed trying to make all the slices look identical), but we also learned about nutrition and a little bit of the science behind cooking. To accommodate busy schedules, Stuyvesant should be flexible about which year students take a cooking and food science course. It could even be a one semester class on the basics of cooking. We could bring ingredients from home and fol-

low recipes at school like students at a middle school in Wales did in the '90s. If schools teach us how to cook practically and on a budget, we can hit two birds with one stone: we would learn how to make nutritional meals while also spending money effectively.

As we ready ourselves for college and life after high school, financial readiness is extremely important. Students worry about budgeting and filing taxes in and after high school, so Stuyvesant should establish a mandatory one

semester class on this topic for juniors or seniors. According to a survey conducted by the National Financial Educators Council, being financially illiterate—not knowing about one's earnings, savings, spendings, etc.—cost the average American \$1,389 in 2021. Currently, over 50 percent of American adults feel stressed when they have to think about their personal finances. If we learn about long-term savings, investments, and loans before we really have to deal with them, we will feel

much more confident in the decisions we make with our money.

Some of these classes already exist as after-school clubs, but if schools make them a mandatory component of everyone's schedule, students will have a more well-rounded education in these practical skills. We will feel much more comfortable and prepared for life after school. The skills in FCS are still important—we just need to make sure that everyone learns them this time around.

The Feminist Take On Sex Work, Deconstructed

By QUAINAT MARIAM

As a young girl raised in a religious household, my perception of sex work used to be extremely conservative. I was taught that no matter the circumstances or the worker's beliefs, sex work is always wrong and can never be forgiven by the law or the divine higher power. But as I grew up and social media became more accessible, I was introduced to the growing feminist movement. At the time, the interpretation of feminism that dominated social media argued that criminalizing sex work on the basis of religion was sexist and went against American ideals. I understood the morality behind this argument; modern American individualism and liberalism promote the idea that as long as an industry does not break any laws and its laborers consent to industry practice, it is nothing more than a means of income. But now, as an older teen, I've experienced the feminist movement shift into a different attitude toward sex work. This new wave of feminists argues that the previous interpretation was extremely stat-

ic and built on the pretense that the female identity is a monolith. No two women will ever have the same experience in any workforce, and their experiences are dependent on factors like age, race, and financial background. After we account for these differences, the toxicity and harmfulness of all sex work environments become clear. Sex work should not be glorified, nor should it be promoted, because the industry is extremely damaging to women.

In the United Kingdom, almost three-quarters of women in prostitution are poor, single mothers. In Germany, where all sex work is legal, almost all of the women employed at brothels are displaced foreigners who lack the resources or language skills to get other work. A lack of government support, coupled with these women's backgrounds, results in them having to resort to sex work, even if it is the last thing they want to do. In a Swiss study, 50 percent of sex workers reported suffering from a mental health issue. Furthermore, in an American study, the vast majority of workers reported at least one violent or

traumatic experience (often rape, but also other acts of violence). There is also substantial overlap of drug use and sex work—about



1 million out of the 3.5 million women who inject drugs globally are sex workers. These statistics quantify the reality of women's experiences in sex work and why women aren't eager to become sex workers, contrary to what the media portrays.

Many sex workers start in

the industry as minors. Again, the question emerges: are these girls really choosing to pursue sex work like pro-sex work femi-



nists argue? Though these young girls ultimately make the decision themselves, the circumstances in which they do so should not go unnoticed: sex work is extremely profitable, but not for sex workers themselves. Few are able to amount to the level of success most people assume they can se-

cure. However, it is those select few who are brandished across social media (by predominantly male managers) as the true leaders of sex work industries. By promoting such success stories and painting sex work as a worthwhile and satisfying industry—despite the high PTSD rates of prostitutes—young women are groomed into participating in what is actually a very dangerous industry.

Despite the core differences in their beliefs, pro-sex work and anti-sex work feminists agree on one thing: the criminalization of sex work would put millions of women at risk. Taking this action would put the blame for the negative effects of sex work on women, when in reality, the true criminals are those who profit off of sex work. Pimps, traffickers, and brothel owners put women in these circumstances and profit off of their pain, making hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. Sex work should not be criminalized, but it also shouldn't be glorified and promoted to naive, young girls and struggling women.

Sophia Li / The Spectator

The Definition of a Celebrity

By SUYEON RYU

"Our media is being polluted by the mediocre." This sentiment has been some people's response to influencers on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook making their way into red carpet events, reality shows, music videos, and even the Met Gala. These influencers are usually different from TV celebrities because they aren't trained for the camera, leading them to appear more human or relatable. This imagined familiarity can lead to influencers being regarded as less "serious," "talented," or "deserving" than the celebrities we see on TV. Consequently, influencers feel constant pressure to prove their worth, which people are quick to dismiss as simply luck or privilege. This association may be partially true, as conventional beauty can be a deciding factor in popularity, but it doesn't explain the generous attitude we have for TV celebrities who are just as lucky to be scouted and recognized by Disney, Netflix, or some major agency. The responsibility that people have in producing content should be addressed fairly, as both TV and Internet celebrities are capable of influencing the views of others, with influencers providing a unique perspective into our current media landscape.

The only real difference between the celebrities we see on TV and the ones we see on social media is that social media stars often do not belong, or did not

originally belong, to an agency. Our difference in attitude when approaching Internet celebrities might be because of how accessible viewing and uploading content on the Internet is. The large platforms that influencers build seem achievable; becoming an influencer is an opportunity that seems readily available to everyone. The emphasis on relatability

we would otherwise ignore in celebrities we respect more.

The inclusive nature of the Internet doesn't justify the extensive criticism influencers receive. Rather, it shows how we aren't used to relating to people we see on mainstream media. Movies and TV shows are refined and deliberately crafted, which means they don't accurately reflect the

include a greater diversity of people. Influencers can fill the voids of media representation, and the Internet provides the chance to show off talents that would otherwise go unappreciated and lives that aren't flawless. The argument that influencers produce content effortlessly isn't true either; independent influencers need to be their own crews, cameramen,

journeys.

That being said, both Internet and TV celebrities can produce negative content that encourages sexism, racism, ageism, and other forms of discrimination. They can fetishize, objectify, and even commit crimes without losing their viewers, and it can seem infuriating that these types of people are allowed the chance to gain a fortune. These people should be punished and should not be allowed a platform that is especially saturated with young people. However, we shouldn't direct this fury toward all celebrities, especially when they make an effort to leave a positive impact. For example, TikTok dancers like Charlie D'Amelio are mocked for rejecting their true dance style and dumbing it down for viewers, but the dance challenges they create are interactive trends that many people can participate in and enjoy. The values that celebrities contribute to the media may be different, especially when they come from different platforms, but these differences should be embraced and not rejected.

As the Internet's presence makes its way outside of the digital world, our definition of a celebrity needs to change. Self-expression has always been one of the primary purposes for media, and as long as people have the passion and the patience, their content doesn't need to be validated by an agency standing behind them.

Self-expression has always been one of the primary purposes for media, and as long as people have the passion and the patience, their content doesn't need to be validated by an agency standing behind them.

that influencers put on their content, combined with the frequency and larger amount of content, makes influencers feel closer to us and harder to idolize. This position makes it easier to see their flaws and point out small mistakes

lives of most people, especially when agencies specifically choose people the public thinks of as extraordinary. Influencers appearing on mainstream media and even at exclusive events like the Met Gala broadens our media spectrum to

scriptwriters, and actors. To build a fandom, influencers need to be patient, consistently satisfy their viewers with new, relevant content, and accompany their social media careers with other jobs for steady income at the start of their

“Prime Changes Everything”—Psych!

By IVY HUANG

I’m sure many of us have seen the cringy “Prime Changes Everything” commercials that incessantly pop up on YouTube. They usually feature famous fictional or historical figures who are faced with an obstacle, followed by Amazon Prime saving the day. One tone-deaf commercial, titled “Cleopatra Has a Change of Heart,” shows Cleopatra being lifted in a sedan chair by her slaves. The narrator begins, “Cleopatra was the most powerful woman in Egypt, but no one likes a diva.” The camera then shifts to Cleopatra watching a video on an iPad, and the narration continues: “Watching Prime Video, she realized rulers could give back, so she ordered some gifts with Prime. After that, it was more of a one-team, one-dream kind of vibe.” The group of happy slaves and Cleopatra then drive off into the desert with their new dirtbikes and gloves.

The picture-perfect relationship between authoritative figures and their people perpetuated in these commercials represents what Amazon wants its consumers to see: a generous CEO redistributing his wealth to his workers. Sadly, this facade is only a fantasy, and many of us do not realize it is, because we live in a world where our only interaction with the multi-billion dollar corporation is when our packages arrive on our doorsteps.

Amazon warehouse workers and delivery drivers are expected to work tirelessly while they receive inadequate wages and are treated like disposable tools. More measures need to be taken to ensure fair wages, job security, improved management, and better workplace conditions for them.

Amazon made \$108.5 billion in sales in the first three months of 2021, an increase of 44 percent from the same period in 2020. Despite this massive profit, Amazon fails to share its prosperity with its workers, who work under grueling conditions to meet the influx of orders. Under bogus self-employment contracts, delivery workers aren’t entitled to minimum wage and unemployment benefits, because they technically work for third-party companies who deliver on behalf of Amazon. Drivers even incur debt because they are expected to rent their own vans, which can cost up to £215 (\$240) a week, and pay for any damages the vans receive. Workers are actually making negative weekly earnings with these expenses and resort to milk and cereal for dinner. One worker is barely able to send £50 (\$56) to his family in four weeks. These conditions make it nearly impossible for delivery drivers to earn a livable wage.

People who work in Amazon warehouses suffer similar treatment. After three years at the job, guaranteed raises stop, and upward mobility for “low-skilled workers”

is restricted. Investigations conducted by The New York Times found that even during periods of record-breaking profit, Amazon had been shortchanging new parents and workers with medical conditions on leave. An internal investigation was launched after Tara Jones, a new mother and Amazon warehouse worker, wrote a tearful email to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos after discovering she had been underpaid by a significant \$90 out of \$540. A \$90 cut may not seem much to one of the richest men in the world, but people like Jones depend on these wages to pay bills and raise their children.

Like the slaves in the commercial, Amazon’s workers are treated like robots. Automated tracking systems and cameras religiously monitor the workers’ every move. There is no room for inefficiency. When workers walk slower than the algorithm dictates or take a brief bathroom break, the system flags these pauses as “Time Off Task.” If workers take more than 18 “Time Off Task” minutes, managers are alerted, and workers are often blamed for slowed productivity. Former Amazon employee Emily Guendelsberger recalled how this intrusive monitoring system took a toll on her mental health. “It created a constant buzz of low-grade panic, and the isolation and monotony of the work left me feeling as if I were losing my mind,” she said. “I felt an incredible amount of

pressure to repress the human ‘failings’ that made me less efficient than a machine.” Suspending these harsh surveillance systems and using more supervision by human managers would be a step toward improving working conditions, because only humans know how to treat workers like humans—not robots.

While workers face low wages and inhumane conditions, Amazon’s new CEO Andy Jassy and former CEO Bezos continue to spread the false narrative that these heartbreaking stories are not reflective of the whole. In his annual shareholder letter, Bezos even touted Amazon workers’ ability to take breaks, despite the fact that workers feel that they don’t have enough time to even use the bathroom. It is important to note that without strong unions, workers fear that speaking up can cost them their jobs and livelihoods. Amazon workers have a difficult time unionizing because the company hires analysts who monitor “labor organizing threats.”

Bills preventing worker organizations from being spied on should be put in place so that workers’ concerns regarding wages and working conditions can be brought up without fear. Amazon employed more than 1.37 million front-line workers from March 1 to September 19, 2020. If these workers unionized, their voices would have a massive impact that could call for radical change,

which is why Amazon is working so hard to fight these unions rather than addressing its inhumane conditions. Bills that protect worker safety should also be approved. Not only does Amazon leave employees in the dark about the toll of COVID-19 amidst a terrifying pandemic, but it also disregards workers’ safety during emergencies. After a tornado disaster killed Amazon warehouse workers in Illinois, leaked texts between an Amazon delivery driver and her dispatcher show that despite many warnings of a tornado threat, the driver was ordered to complete her deliveries or risk getting fired. These bills must ensure that companies like Amazon conduct basic fire and tornado drills and establish clear emergency protocols in the event of a disaster.

Amazon is the leading multinational company in the retail industry, employing more than 1.2 million employees across the globe. With this power comes the responsibility to stand as a model for other companies to protect their employees. It is infuriating that as a society, we continue to allow rich billionaires like Bezos to blatantly treat working-class people as disposable parts. Laws need to be improved so that workers can speak up about safety and workplace concerns without fear, as well as to limit the extent of the use of intrusive monitoring systems to track productivity.

The Epidemic of Sleep Deprivation

By THEODORE YOCHUM

Sleep is fundamental to the biology of almost every animal, so why do we so readily give it up? As a student in one of the most academically rigorous high schools in the country, I am intimately familiar with the motivations to put off sleep, as well as the clear toll doing so has on my daily life. However, I have come to learn that there are a number of hidden costs to this sleep deprivation epidemic. These revelations prompted me to consider why this issue is so prominent yet normalized and what we can do to try and combat it.

Sleep is generally seen as a period for the brain to reset and collect itself in preparation for the next day. For this reason, sleep deprivation can affect both the immediate performance and long-term maintenance of neural functions. I was made aware of how seriously it affects your body when presented with a lecture on sleep deprivation in my AP Psychology class. It discussed the variety of effects, from increased risk of cardiovascular issues, to impaired immune function, to a significant chance of developing dementia 10 years earlier than when it would normally occur. Much of this information was startling, as you rarely think that far in advance for what feels like a simple, short-term issue. The connection between not sleeping much and feeling tired the next day is a very clear one. It is much harder to connect not sleeping for long periods of time to heart trouble or sickness.

However, our readiness to accept even tiredness is just as worrying. In students, especially those in “accelerated” or “specialized” programs, the culture surrounding sleep is deeply problematic. Many, including myself, might show up

to school on five or less hours of sleep because we were finishing up a project or cramming for a test. However, anyone who has experienced it can tell you how hard it is to think properly when you are that tired. Evidence demonstrates that in most cases, when sleep is sacrificed to study for a test, the effect on cognitive function and memory often counteracts the benefits of review.

Sleep deprivation also has severe effects on our societal function. Daylight saving time acts as an optimal demonstration of this effect as the country collectively experiences an extra hour of sleep and then loses that hour later in the year. On days when an hour is gained, the rate of heart attack and traffic accidents experiences a notable reduction. These studies also explain why many historic tragedies, such as Chernobyl and Challenger, were, in some way, linked to a lack of sleep.

Sleep itself is a fundamental aspect of our body’s circadian rhythm, the roughly 24-hour hormonal clock that regulates temperature and metabolism. It is a system defined by sleep, and getting less than the recommended eight hours can disrupt it. It helps organize the function of your gut and regulate mood, and its destabilization can lead to the development of obesity and mental health disorders.

Chronic sleep deprivation is generally not an issue faced by biological evolution: you don’t see any animals with a poor sleep schedule because they just sleep when they feel like it. It is a uniquely human problem generated by our intense focus on productivity.

Personally, many of my issues with sleeping on time come from my workload and my aver-

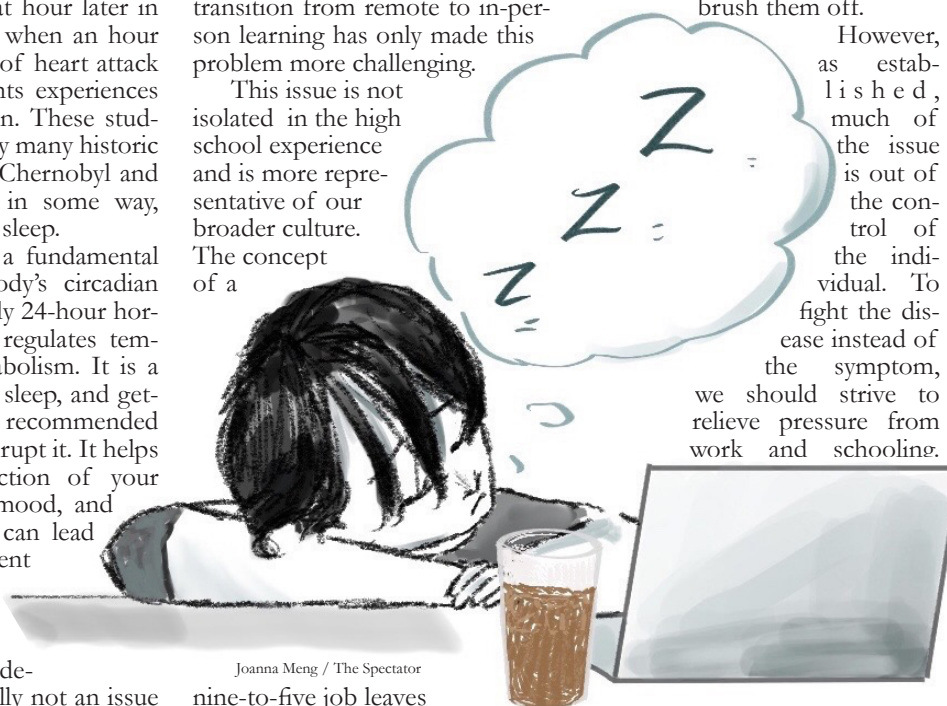
sion to the work itself. For me and countless others, the night acts as personal downtime when I am largely in control of what I am doing. After coming home from school, I need a break, which leads to procrastination. When I eventually get around to starting my work, it tends to be later in the night, and I frequently get distracted. While it is possible for me to get all my work done early and get to sleep on time, it requires very strong impulse control and diligence. This condition can be very demanding and asks you to act robotically, as if all you need to be happy is enough work. The transition from remote to in-person learning has only made this problem more challenging.

This issue is not isolated in the high school experience and is more representative of our broader culture. The concept of a

exhausting conditions, which can lead to excessive stress that directly affects sleep quality.

The most immediate problem, however, is that this issue is seen as fairly normal by most people. In my own life, I am working to change my mentality and better organize myself to get more sleep, as being less tired often makes work easier, which creates a positive feedback loop. I am also working to make those around me more aware of the problem. This issue can be addressed on an individual level to a certain extent: simply being aware of the effects makes it harder to brush them off.

However, as established, much of the issue is out of the control of the individual. To fight the disease instead of the symptom, we should strive to relieve pressure from work and schooling.



Joanna Meng / The Spectator

nine-to-five job leaves a good amount of time in the day in theory, but work often bleeds into free time. In general, we prioritize individual productivity over almost everything else. Your value and well-being are tied to how much you contribute to the economy—consequently, many low-wage workers frequently work longer under

With these efforts, we can create a greater distinction between work and personal time, as well as reduce dependence on working long grueling hours.

In terms of school, specifically high school, there are a number of tactics that can help relieve stress, such as a reexamination of the calculation and purpose of

grading. Many schools have also experimented with opening an hour later and have seen substantial improvements. Additionally, homework load should be reconsidered. Though much of it acts as a supplement to in-class learning, it can end up being redundant. There is no concrete solution for every school—for example, Stuyvesant opening an hour later would mean the day ends at 4:35 p.m.—but a general awareness of the issue can prompt discussion for this specific but wide-ranging change.

In terms of the workplace, collectively advocating for the restructuring of many work environments is an important step. The COVID-19 pandemic has encouraged some policies, such as remote work that does not follow a five-day week. Remote work can be complicated, as it often involves working at home, but if properly implemented, it allows for greater control over when and how work is done. However, this modification generally only addresses salaried, white-collar jobs. For people who work for wages, greater regulation and an increase in the minimum wage can help reduce this dependence. The problem could be further solved by the acknowledgement of workers as people, as well as the fact that sleep improves productivity.

Some can cope with less sleep better than others, but this ability does not mean that they should be content with it. Misconceptions surrounding sleep are some of the most problematic aspects of modern society. All evidence suggests that it is an argument with no counterpoint—more sleep leads to a healthier population, and a healthier population gets more done. Everyone must be aware of this concept, and we must make a conscious effort to demoralize sleep deprivation.

Opinions

Obsessed With Money

By ELIZABETH KOLBASKO

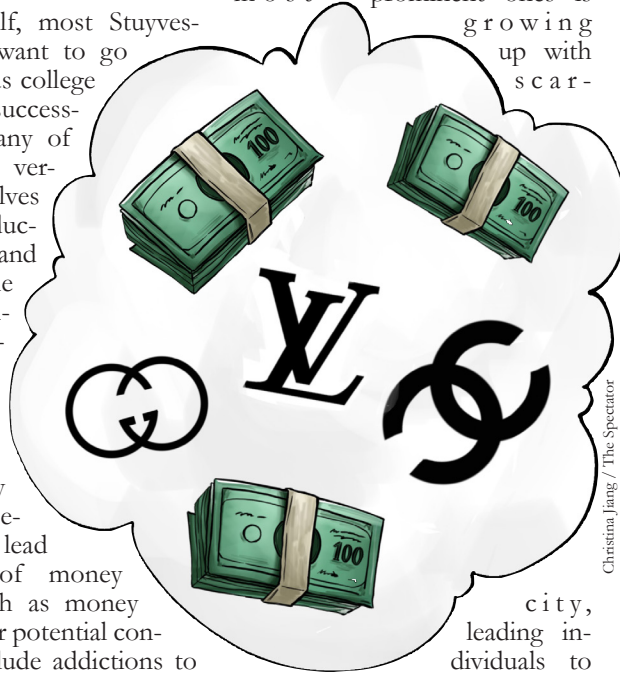
While I was growing up, my parents never shielded me from subjects that could be considered “adult business.” These matters included financial subjects such as late bills, taxes, and bank problems. This exposure contributed to the creation of my obsessive desire to become rich when I was just a kid. My reason for wanting money was to take care of my family so that I would never see them stress or worry ever again. But at a young age, I should not have had to worry about providing for anyone. This money-driven mindset also contributed to my anxiety around growing up and affected my schoolwork and friendships.

It became worse when I started to notice the financial disparities between me and my peers in school. I fixated on the backpacks they had, the shoes they wore, the lunches they brought, and everything that could financially differentiate them from me. I was constantly comparing myself to other kids who I thought came from well-off families. Around that time in elementary school, I started saving up for college because I was paranoid that I would not be able to afford to go to school. I wanted to start working

as soon as I turned the legal age. All of these anxieties in my mind were very self-destructive and unhealthy, and when I look back at that period of time in my life, I see how harmful knowing about my family’s money struggles was.

Like myself, most Stuyvesant students want to go to a prestigious college and have a successful career. Many of us envision a version of ourselves who is productive, healthy, and well-off in the future. Dreaming about having money is common, but associating success with money is harmful because it can lead to patterns of money disorders, such as money worship. Other potential consequences include addictions to gambling and compulsive spending, both of which are dangerous to people in vulnerable states. However, young people are extremely unprotected when they are taught about money and are therefore subject to misinformation about financial situations.

Money worship is a type of money disorder in which the affected individual believes that the only way to progress in life is to become rich. There are many causes to a person developing this belief system. One of the most prominent ones is



to eat—all necessities someone needs to enjoy life. On the other hand, the habits and thoughts that the obsession creates can be extremely destructive. It produces pressure to work as much as possible, so even if someone is earning money, they have little time to appreciate it.

Some may argue that a money obsession is a great motivator, but if someone is thinking about the pursuit of money to the point of obsession and ruined relationships, it becomes a detrimental addiction. People may start off as financially responsible but then fall into bad habits that they hide from others. They may become stressed about attaining wealth and overwork themselves to earn more, believing that money is their key to happiness. When people have a healthy mindset around money, they keep track of their finances to an extent and budget reasonably. Noticing when someone is crossing the line is important because they may develop long-lasting values that are unsafe for their mental health.

Many people’s mindsets about money stem from their childhood exposure to financial stress. The Mental Health Foundation in the United Kingdom found that over one in four schoolchildren between the ages

of 10 to 15 are worried about their families not having enough money. Not only is this statistic heartbreaking, but it can also lead to the same problems I faced. The pipeline from poor to money-obsessed is a slippery slope because children are a product of their environment. If kids are worried about their economic status, then later in life, they will be more likely to value wealth over their relationships. The pursuit of wealth has been linked to immoral behavior and creates a higher risk for substance abuse. Research has also shown that children focused on money become less empathic and more competitive, especially when materialistic goals are involved.

Parenting is not easy, and I definitely do not blame my parents for my unhealthy mindset with money. However, low-income children should not have to feel alone when they are surrounded by stress and fear about their family’s economic situation. They should have someone who can talk to them, validate their feelings, and help them. Friends and family should also try to notice the signs when a child is anxious or stressed and ask them about it. Being emotionally intelligent is an important factor in preventing money obsessions from escalating.

Making Stuyvesant More Inclusive

By PETER GOSWAMI

I recall walking down the third floor of Stuyvesant one day and entering the bathroom. The door was wide open, and I, unsure about the floor plan of the bathrooms in Stuyvesant, convinced myself that I was walking into the boys’ bathroom. As I walked out, I turned my head and felt a rush of relief when the sign did in fact read “Boys.” I now know that neither bathroom was actually the right one for me, since I do not identify as male.

I realized I was gender non-conforming a little over a month ago and have only recently started telling my peers that I use they/them pronouns. I have yet to feel secure about telling my teachers my pronouns. Even as I write this article, I am afraid that I am revealing vulnerable information about myself and am not sure how people, especially authority figures, will react to it. This discomfort with being able to openly discuss my gender identity and pronouns has translated to a level of internalized shame and hatred, preventing me from being able to achieve self-acceptance. I know that this discomfort is not unique to myself, but is rather an experience that is shared by many non-binary and gender non-conforming students at Stuyvesant.

The environment of Stuyvesant furthers this uneasiness, particularly in its lack of gender neutral bathrooms. In a school with over 3000 students, there is one single-stall gender neutral bathroom on the fifth floor. The lack of adequate bathrooms forces many transgender and non-binary students, like myself, to feel unsafe and uncomfortable about their identity. However, the administration and the Student Union (SU) can work together to

create a Stuyvesant environment that is truly inclusive of students of all genders.

Thankfully, the SU has delved into the first steps of making Stuyvesant more inclusive. According to a recent e-mail that SU President Shivali Korgaonkar sent out to the student body, the SU has taken on the “initiative of adding an additional gender neutral bathroom to the building and promoting pronoun awareness to staff/students” and has tried to incorporate student opinions into their efforts by sending out a survey. The SU has been somewhat successful in pushing this initiative forward. “The overall response from the administration to our advocacy has been overall very positive,” SU Vice President said in an e-mail interview. It feels comforting to see that the administration and the SU have started to respond to the needs of gender non-conforming students, but this step is only the beginning of progress. Concrete plans still need to be formed, both for creating more gender neutral bathrooms and for making Stuyvesant feel safer and more welcoming to gender non-conforming students.

The problems created by the one single-stall gender neutral bathroom in the entire building can be remedied by creating more gender neutral bathrooms, both single and multi-stalled, throughout the building. “The physical architecture of [Stuyvesant] itself makes it physically impossible to create a new space. However, [the SU] has looked into the reutilization of other spaces,” Lee said. According to Lee, the current, most feasible solution is to turn the staff restrooms on multiple floors into gender-neutral bathrooms. While I agree with this solution, I believe that it can be taken one step

further. The first floor bathrooms are closed off to students and are treated as an accommodation for the community center at Stuyvesant. These bathrooms should be opened to students to be used as multi-stalled gender neutral bathrooms during the school day.

the administration can work on over the years to contribute to a legacy of inclusivity for future students of Stuyvesant.

The addition of more gender neutral bathrooms can make changing for physical education more convenient for gender non-

conforming students as well, but this problem can be further addressed by the introduction of a gender neutral locker room. “There is currently a locker room used by visiting sports teams that come to [Stuyvesant] for games, and during school hours, it’s prac-

tically not in use,” Lee pointed out. There is a possibility that this locker room can be opened up during school hours as a gender neutral locker room to create a safe space where gender non-conforming students can change. The administration should implement this simple solution as soon as possible. Even beyond creating more gender neutral bathrooms and a gender neutral locker room, many changes can be made to allow for gender non-conforming students to feel more secure about disclosing their pronouns to teachers and staff so that they do not have to experience being misgendered. This year, only one of my teachers asked for students’ pronouns at the beginning of the semester, showing that many teachers have, intentionally or unintentionally, not respected students’ pronouns nor recognized the identities of students who do not use binary (he/him or she/her) pronouns. This situation could be improved by mandating teachers to send out a Google Form at the beginning of the semester that asks students for the names they would like to be called and their pronouns. Another way that the Student Union can help is by distributing pronoun stickers/buttons that students can wear to let staff and students know their pronouns in a manner that does not seem as confrontational. These efforts can make non-binary students feel safer about openly discussing their pronouns.

The SU has made progress in pushing for gender neutral bathrooms, and as a gender non-conforming student, seeing this progress has made me immensely happy. However, more measures need to be taken so Stuyvesant can become a more inclusive environment for all students.



In addition, the administration should redirect resources for the future into working around the architectural challenges so that new gender neutral bathrooms can eventually be constructed. While this effort cannot be implemented right away, it is an initiative that

conforming students as well, but this problem can be further addressed by the introduction of a gender neutral locker room. “There is currently a locker room used by visiting sports teams that come to [Stuyvesant] for games, and during school hours, it’s prac-

Can Science Save our Reefs?

By SOPHIA WAN-BRODSKY

Vibrant scenes of alien-like grooves and inflated polyps decorate the seafloor; this is often what comes to mind when we envision a coral reef. Few underwater animals are as iconic as corals, a significant keystone species. Despite covering less than one percent of the sea floor, reefs house a staggering 25 percent of marine life. Often called “the rainforests of our oceans” for their amazing biodiversity, their importance extends beyond the water. Over half a billion people depend on coral reef ecosystems for food and income. Corals provide a powerful buffer against storms and floods, saving shorelines from erosion. They are also important sources of medical breakthroughs and new medicines. However, reef-building corals are threatened with extinction.

Coral is a colonial organism, meaning it is formed by genetically identical polyps. Polyps are soft-bodied organisms that produce calicle, a limestone skeleton. These corals depend on zooxanthellae, a photosynthetic algae that lives in the coral’s tissue and provides it with vital nutrients. When exposed to stressors such as pollution or temperature increase, corals eject the zooxanthellae and turn a ghostly white color

in a process known as bleaching. Without the algae, the coral is damaged and eventually dies. In the past decade, an estimated 14 percent of coral have died due to rising ocean temperatures. Scientists predict that should oceans continue to warm, 70 to 90 percent of remaining reefs will die.

If we can’t prevent ocean warming and pollution, the future for coral reefs is bleak. That’s where technology comes in. For instance, the COTSbot acts like a terminator-robot by identifying and killing crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS). It’s a non-invasive species, but in many areas, COTS populations have boomed, likely due to the overfishing of its predators and nutrition from runoff. The COTS feeds on coral polyps, and unchecked growth leads to reef destruction. The COTSbot can autonomously navigate, identify COTS, and inject them with a bile salt to kill them. As of now issues still remain concerning the practicality and cost of the COTSbot, but the technology is highly effective at identifying and targeting the starfish.

One of the most common reef restoration techniques is coral farming, also known as coral aquaculture. Coral can reproduce sexually or asexually through fragmentation—a process in which a colony of polyps breaks off from the origi-

nal coral. Coral farming is an artificial manifestation of coral fragmentation. Fragments of coral are taken to a controlled environment such as a lab or underwater farm. Micro-fragmentation, a technique in which a saw splits the corals into pieces that are one to five polyps in size, stimulates tissues in the new fragments to accelerate the growth to over 25 times the normal rate. This technique was accidentally discovered by Dr. David Vaughan, when he transferred elkhorn coral to a new tank and accidentally damaged it, causing several polyps to fall off. Sure that they wouldn’t survive, he was shocked to find that they had regenerated to the size of the original sample within a few weeks.

Scientists have also employed 3D printing technology to save reefs. They used various materials, such as concrete, limestone, and terracotta, to create an artificial skeleton for polyps and coral fragments to grow on. Sometimes, the 3D-printed object is used simply to mimic the role of natural coral by providing reef inhabitants with a structure to interact with. A group of researchers from the University of San Diego and the University of Cambridge used polymer gels, hydrogels, and cellulose to copy coral tissue. They created a microhabitat for zooxanthellae, allowing for coral-algae symbiosis and

increased cultivation of algae.

Scientists are still determining whether genetic engineering is another possible solution. CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing has proven successful in multiple proof-of-concept studies on coral and points toward scientists creating a “super coral” that can withstand the worsening environmental conditions. Continued progress in the sequencing of coral genomes will help scientists identify what genes yield resilience in those species. Some are looking to modify the symbiotic algae rather than the coral itself. Specifically, scientists want to increase their heat tolerance. In a process known as “directed evolution,” cultured algae was exposed to increasingly high temperatures over a prolonged period. This selects for the most heat-resistant algae, thus yielding a population capable of withstanding greater fluctuations in temperature. This work is relatively new, so only time will tell if this approach to genetic engineering can be effectively implemented.

Innovations like these create hope for our reefs. The challenges faced by coral reefs are largely man-made, but perhaps humans can compensate with solutions. Currently, coral farming provides the most consistent and immediate relief to failing reefs. It has been used far longer than the new methods of coral conservation such

SCIENCEBEAT

It was proven that African clawed frogs treated with a drug cocktail can regrow amputated limbs. The breakthrough experiment may have major implications for regeneration in humans.

A new subvariant of Omicron, BA.2, is 1.5 times more transmissible than the original strain, BA.1. However, there is no evidence that the BA.2 variant is more deadly than the original lineage. As such, the World Health Organization has not labeled it a variant of concern.

Using a computer script and frequency analysis, TikTok user @Crvlwane found the best starting word to use on Wordle: “Later.”

According to a report in the February 1 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, people tend to perceive facelike patterns in inanimate objects as male.

as COTSbot and 3D printing. With more development, these less common methods could be implemented on a larger scale to supplement aquaculture efforts. The future of our ocean might not be so bleak after all.

The James Webb Telescope — A Look Into the Very Beginning

By KHANDAKER MUSHFIKUZZAMAN

A peer into the very first light in the cosmos or perhaps a peek into the origins of the most ancient stars—these breakthrough images will be captured by NASA’s most powerful telescope yet, the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), which launched the morning of December 25, 2021. Around 100 times stronger than the Hubble—the renowned Earth-orbiting space telescope launched in 1990—the Webb has begun its journey to photograph some of the most crucial pictures ever to be taken in, quite literally, the history of the universe.

Named after James E. Webb, who led the Apollo moon program, the long-envisioned telescope became a reality as construction began in 2004 with contributions from the European and Canadian Space Agencies. The intricate parts and design came together over two decades, costing nearly \$10 billion despite the original \$500 million budget. Successfully launched in the Arian 5 rocket from French Guiana, the telescope reached L2 on January 24, a month later from its launch date. L2 is a Lagrange point, a position in space where the gravitational forces of objects are balanced. JWST’s arrival at its permanent home for the next 20 years is a crucial milestone which allowed engineers to take a short breath despite there remain several nail-biting steps to achieve.

In contrast to the Hubble Space telescope, whose job was to gather light from astronomical objects to help us better comprehend the universe around us, JWST will collect light from the very beginnings of the Universe. It’s only possible we’re able to capture light

not only being enormous but being able to see into the infrared. Since Earth’s atmosphere absorbs all infrared light, JWST is located in L2, a gravitationally stable spot where excess fuel isn’t wasted. Being in space would mean absorbing heat, which would lead to glowing

while keeping the telescope cool. Unfortunately, these parts are huge and can’t fit inside Ariane 5, meaning the unfolding process, as well as the telescope alignment and instrument turn-on, will take a nerve-racking month.

A variety of benefactions

Successfully launched in the Arian 5 rocket from French Guiana, the telescope reached L2 on January 24, a month later from its launch date.

as ancient as time itself because light has a speed. We’re able to see light as it was, relative to the distance we are from it. Essentially, something that is one light-year away can be seen as it was one year ago. The distance the light has traveled to reach the relative standpoint, in this case JWST, determines its age.

To be able to see this light, we need a tremendous telescope. The only thing is, the universe has been expanding at an incomprehensible rate since the moment it began and light has been red-shifted. Red-shifting, or infrared light, is the wavelength of light extending into the infrared section of the spectrum. This led to Webb

in the infrared and disrupting the infrared light it’s trying to receive. Such a feat would require cryogenic, or extremely low temperatures, as well as a gigantic mirror that cannot be accommodated by the rocket, meaning it would need to unfold in space. These constraints ultimately led to the Webb’s extraordinarily intricate design.

The telescope consists of a gold-plated mirror seven yards in width. Composed of 18 adjustable hexagonal segments, this golden mirror allows the telescope to see infrared light. Any heat would interfere with the required conditions, so a huge sunshield and refrigeration system block the sun’s rays

were provided by other agencies involved in this immense project. Canada’s largest contribution is the Near-Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph which enables the capture of exoplanets and relatively distant galaxies. While NASA provided JWST’s primary camera, the Near Infrared Camera, the European Space Agency supplied the Near Infrared Spectrograph, which will be used to transfer the light captured into a spectrum.

It is crucial that these multiplex parts function accordingly because, unlike the Hubble, the James Webb telescope will be orbiting the Sun instead of the Earth. At L2, it is inaccessible

for service or repair, meaning a single malfunction would ruin the mission. If it is successful, the mission is planned to be five years long, though it is prepared for a 10-year goal with enough fuel and backup instruments. Webb is similar to Hubble in the sense that the Hubble’s primary mission to capture the most imperceptible reaches of the universe ended 15 years earlier and has continued to orbit the Earth for another 15 years. The Webb will also continue to be in service after its initial mission is completed.

The first images from Webb are scheduled to arrive in about 6 months, but we may receive images earlier. The pictures, retrieved via radio antennas, will be studied at the Webb Science and Operation Center at the Space Telescope Science Institute in Baltimore, Maryland. Webb will also send images of exoplanets and perhaps offer clues about alien existence.

Once we’ve collected all these photos, there will be a lot to be uncovered. Though we have a decent amount of evidence of the Big Bang, there remain many unanswered questions. How exactly did particles form to create stars that would form galaxies? How did everything line up, by chance it seems, that life originated on Earth? Now secured in its final destination, Webb will be able to look back even further than the Hubble and hopefully answer some of astronomy’s most burning questions once and for all.

Science

Radiation: Friend from Foe

By SUBAAH SYED

Radiation: it's what turned Bruce Banner into a rampaging green beast and created the giant mutant lizard, Godzilla. In popular culture, we usually associate radioactivity with something sinister and lethal. However, in the medical scene, it has become a revolutionary force in cancer treatment.

With one in three people diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, the disease has built up an infamous reputation for being deadly and incurable. People often associate abnormal cell growth with cancer, but in reality, nearly all people have some abnormality in cell division. Cells constantly die and reproduce in our bodies, and at times, there can be errors in cell division that lead to more cell production than there should be. In these cases, our DNA damage repair system chimes in and helps fend off these unwanted cells before they spread through our body and become cancerous.

Despite our body's defense mechanisms against abnormal cell division, untreated abnormal cells

can reproduce and spread through tissues via our circulatory system, leading to the formation of malignant tumors and cancer. As old as cancer is, civilizations throughout history have approached this disease using different methods. Texts from ancient Egypt show that doctors used cauterization, which required using a hot instrument to kill infected tissues. Other ancient methods included blood-letting and treating the patient with a variety of herbs.

Fortunately, at the turn of the 20th century, scientists became more knowledgeable about the true biology of cancer and significant progress was made in combating the disease. One notable treatment that emerged during this era is radiation therapy, which came with the accidental discovery of the X-ray by German physics professor Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen in 1896. Two years later, Marie Curie and her husband, Pierre Curie, further expanded on the field of radiology by identifying radium and polonium as the elements behind the science of radiation. Curie successfully isolated pure, metallic

radium in 1910 and worked on radiology during World War I to examine the potential of radium as a cancer therapy. The conceivable power of radiation and its effect on the human body inspired the concept of utilizing ionizing radiation to kill off the malignant cells in cancer. Despite these discoveries, scientists still lacked information concerning the properties and mechanisms of radiation therapy. This led to early treatments having more side effects than beneficial results. In fact, early radiologists tested on themselves to find the right amount of radiation to kill cancer cells while leaving healthy cells untouched, but they often developed leukemia from prolonged exposure to radiation.

Alongside radiation therapy, chemotherapy emerged as a popular form of cancer therapy in the 20th century. Unlike radiation therapy, which is usually a local treatment that aims energy beams solely where the malignant tumor is, chemotherapy involves the circulation of powerful drugs in the bloodstream and is considered a more systemic treatment. Though

they handle cancer in different ways, both treatments share similar goals in curing, controlling, and relieving tumors. They both aim to shrink or eradicate tumors while lessening the pain of cancer. Patients can receive either chemotherapy, radiation therapy, or both depending on consultation with their doctor. In these cases, chemotherapy usually precedes radiation therapy to weaken a tumor before using ionizing radiation on the site.

Over the years, radiation therapy improved so that it was not only effective in eradicating cancer cells but also in limiting side effects. During radiation therapy, normal cells can also be affected in the process, which can cause permanent hyperpigmentation, skin irritation, and other abnormalities. Technological advances in the late twentieth century promoted better and more efficient forms of radiation therapy by visualizing the precise location of the cancer tumor in order to successfully and safely eradicate the cancer cells before spreading. For instance, conformal radiation therapy (CRT) uses

CT images and special computers to precisely map the location of cancer in three dimensions. Additionally, conformal proton beam radiation therapy focuses radiation on cancer by using proton beams rather than x-rays, and can bring more radiation to the cells while reducing damage to nearby cells. Chemical modifiers or radiosensitizers have also been implemented, as they make the cancer cells more sensitive to radiation and increase its effectiveness.

Since the initial discovery of radiation, we have harnessed the treatment to our advantage and turned potentially harmful energy into a life-saving therapeutic. Radiation therapy is used to treat over 60 percent of cancer patients today, and that number is projected to increase as improvements are continuously being made in this field. Technological advancements, along with animal and in vivo studies with controlled trials, have led to many breakthroughs in the mechanisms of radiation therapy. By continuing this pattern of experimental studies, the future of radiation therapy garners progress.

Customized Brain: A New Cure For Depression

By JOVANNA WU

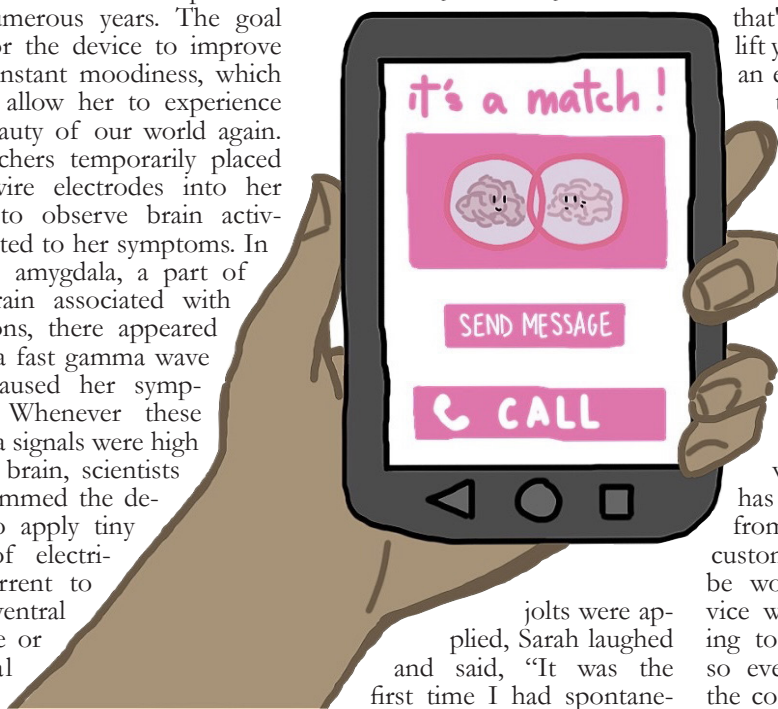
In our school, heavy academic pressure is placed upon students, and the constant stress can make one feel as if they're not doing well enough and may harm one's health. It is not uncommon for this to eventually develop into depression, a serious mental illness that affects a variety of people. Depending on the person, some common symptoms of depression include feelings of sadness, lack of energy, and loss of interest, but severe symptoms, such as outbursts of anger and suicidal thoughts, occur for a large number of people. Though depression may seem like a dark tunnel with no light at the end, new scientific research may provide hope for people who struggle with this debilitating illness.

A study conducted by researchers at the University of California may have cracked the code: a personalized brain im-

plant. An experimental device was planted into Sarah (last name unknown), a 36-year-old woman who faced serious depression for numerous years. The goal was for the device to improve her constant moodiness, which would allow her to experience the beauty of our world again. Researchers temporarily placed thin wire electrodes into her brain to observe brain activity related to her symptoms. In Sarah's amygdala, a part of the brain associated with emotions, there appeared to be a fast gamma wave that caused her symptoms. Whenever these gamma signals were high in her brain, scientists programmed the device to apply tiny jolts of electrical current to the ventral capsule or ventral stri-

tum, a region of the brain that is associated with positive emotions, like happiness. When the

Sophia Li / The Spectator



jolts were applied, Sarah laughed and said, "It was the first time I had spontane-

ously laughed and smiled where it wasn't faked or forced in five years."

A customized brain device that's guaranteed to discreetly lift your moods in the blink of an eye seems too good to be true. Sarah is doing well, and a research paper describes how her condition has improved since the technology worked its magic in her head. Though it is unclear how long this euphoria will last, Sarah has been going strong for a year now. However, in retrospect, there are many more drawbacks than what meets the eye. Sarah has received positive results from this treatment, but the customized device might only be working for her. The device was custom-made according to Sarah's brain functions, so everyone must go through the complex process of acquir-

ing their own brain implant device. The process used by the researchers required a lot of advanced imaging and machine learning technology. Additionally, the treatment's high price of \$35,000 makes it unlikely for it to become a mainstream treatment for depression. Along with the high cost comes a variety of possible complications, including blood clots, brain swelling, and brain infections.

Though this treatment has a long way to go before it's completely perfect, the results of this successful procedure have added to the ways scientists may detect and change harmful brain activity. Brain stimulation can successfully reduce the symptoms of depression, which provides hope for the future for treating mental illnesses. Hopefully, this research provides a glimmer of inspiration for those fighting their own battles and, perhaps one day, this technology will be able to benefit the lives of all people.

Bitcoin Beyond The Hype: Revolutionizing Finance As We Know It

By ISHAANA MISRA

From starting at \$0 in 2009 to its all-time high value of \$68,000 in November 2021, Bitcoin has been all over the news, but what exactly is Bitcoin and where does its value come from?

Bitcoin is a decentralized peer-to-peer electronic currency, and thus, transactions do not require a third party, intermediary, or centralized control of funds. Bitcoin transactions are all stored in a public ledger called a blockchain, or a series of blocks, each linked to the previous one. Much like the internet, anyone can access the Bitcoin blockchain and verify that the transactions contained within are valid. Bitcoin's value lies in it being the currency of the world's first decentralized global monetary network, its scarcity, and the energy used to mine it.

The creation of Bitcoin, a process called mining, is also decentralized. New bitcoin are mined by solving complex cryptography problems, though only

21 million bitcoin will ever be mined due to its hard cap. The network's robustness is accredited to proof of work, a process that proves one's computational efforts in creating their bitcoin and allows verifiers to confirm the expenditure.

Bitcoin's benefits lie in the fact that it is accessible and versatile. Its transactions do not require banking fees and the transactions themselves are speedy and secure. But most importantly, Bitcoin is a store of value, meaning that it maintains its value as time progresses. In *The Bitcoin Standard*, Saifedean Ammous states "Scarcity is the fundamental starting point of all economics." All good stores of value are scarce, have a limited supply, and are unaffected by inflation. Bitcoin matches these characteristics.

Inflation is a worldwide problem. The United States (US) dollar, commonly used as a currency in the US as well as other countries, is being inflated; one dollar in 1973 is worth six dollars today. The problem with inflation is that

people saving the currency being inflated have less purchasing power than they did before. This means that whatever they could buy previously, they can buy less of today. Since the amount of bitcoin being created every day is pre-determined and can't be altered, Bitcoin offers a way around this problem. While those in the US can buy typical assets like stocks and gold, not everyone has this option. Millions of people around the world are unbanked, or lack access to financial institutions like banks. Without the permission of financial institutions, they are left without many essential financial services like banking, insurance, and currency exchange. Bitcoin is completely permissionless, or accessible to anyone without restriction. Despite this, it is near impossible to steal Bitcoin. While other physical commodities require millions of dollars for protection, Bitcoin is kept secure using inexpensive but incredibly secure cryptography techniques. Storing Bitcoin requires a private key, which can

be represented as and then derived from a series of mnemonic code words. These mnemonic code words are a series of usually 12 or 24 words that can be written down on a piece of paper or stored in another method. Nevertheless, if the user loses their mnemonic code words, their Bitcoin is lost and can't be recovered.

Bitcoin allows an individual to control their own funds without intermediaries that would make for more liabilities and security threats. Bitcoin also has superior qualities as a monetary network. Bitcoin distinguishes itself from other existing digital payment methods by being an open monetary network. This gives Bitcoin a huge advantage through the numerous ways to interact with the Bitcoin network—a custodial wallet or a non-custodial wallet—meanwhile, there is only one way to interact with a monetary network like Visa or Paypal, which is to create an account with them.

Bitcoin's detractors usually highlight Bitcoin's scalability issues, or challenges of growing the

system. Some of Bitcoin's scalability issues arise from the limit to the volume of the total transactions in a block, which means that sometimes, when many want to make transactions using Bitcoin, fees can be high because the network can only confirm a certain amount of transactions in a given time. Additionally, each transaction takes around 10 minutes to confirm, which can be a significant amount of time to wait for small, trivial payments. Developers recognized these issues and conjured compelling solutions like the Lightning Network, which allows for instant Bitcoin transactions with greatly reduced fees.

Many are inspired by the development and growth of Bitcoin because they see it as a way to regain control of their money. While government-issued currencies depreciate in value over time, the world grows more and more expensive. Bitcoin, with its limitless potential, may be the hedge against these challenges.

Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

By LEVI SIMON

In the era of lossless audio, stream counts, and artist radios, vinyl records are a misplaced phenomena. They stand opposed to the streamlined efficiency that on-demand streaming has brought. What was once a pricey process of needles, wires, and bulky equipment is now pocket-sized, no-frills, and high-speed. If Spotify and other streaming services are strictly better than the traditional ways of playing music, why are vinyl sales rising each year? What is vinyl anyway, and how did it rise to ubiquity in the first place?

Demystifying the Music Disc

While the analog sound wave was first recorded in 1857, it took another three decades to develop a commercially viable phonograph capable of audio playback. Early versions used grooved wax cylinders, which listeners would have to manually rotate with handles, allowing only a few seconds of audio to play at a time. By 1894, Emile Berliner had invented the lateral-cut gramophone record, which utilized the etched disc format we use today. By 1920, there was a record collection and gramophone in most American homes. Still, they were limited to just five minutes of music on each side until the mid-1930s when the standard shellac material was overtaken by polyvinyl chloride, hence the name “vinyl.” The new material allowed

full-length albums or LPs to fit on a single disc.

From John Cage to DJs

Throughout its period of dominance, the vinyl record was a conduit for musical ideas and movements. As early as 1939, artists like John Cage and Pierre Schaffer manipulated, composed, and re-recorded vinyl field recordings and instrumental tracks into a unique new genre called *musique concrète*. Their avant-garde compositions were jarring and inventive, influencing a myriad of legendary composers like Iannis Xenakis, Olivier Messiaen and Karlheinz Stockhausen. It wasn't until the early '70s that vinyl manipulation began to be used in the genres in which it is most well-known today: hip-hop and electronic. Jamaican dub disc jockeys, better known as DJs, began to experiment with their records at large Bronx street parties. In 1972, DJ Kool Herc invented the breakbeat, a splice of drum breaks from classic funk records that remains as the backbone of hip-hop and drum 'n bass music to this day. Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash further developed the art of turntablism, and through the '80s, producers in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Chicago developed record-spinning techniques, adding quick-mix theory, beat juggling and various forms of scratches to their repertoire. In 1996, DJ Shadow's “Endroducing...”

marked a watershed moment for turntablism as it is widely credited as the first album to be entirely composed from samples.

The Compact Downfall

Vinyl remained unchallenged until the inventions of the Walkman and compact disc, better known as the CD, in 1979. They took up less space, were more accessible, and could store more music at higher quality. Subsequent developments of Napster and the iPod obsoleted CDs, and the music consumption zeitgeist became more and more distanced from the vinyl record, which came to represent the old generation. Vinyl sales plummeted throughout the '80s, and they wouldn't recover until 2008.

The Vinyl Revival

Since 2008, the rise of vinyl has been inarguably meteoric. Each year has seen nearly 50 percent gains in vinyl sales, culminating in 2021 when over 40 million vinyl records were sold, even topping digital and CD sales. There is a handful of reasons as to why vinyl has seen a resurgence. Some claim that vinyl's comeback is due to the desire to tangibly own music, but why not return to the vastly more convenient CDs? A version of this logic is the reconnection to the process of vinyl. As technology develops, we have distanced from the music we enjoy, letting it fade to the background as we go

about our lives. The ritual of picking up the needle on a turntable, dusting off a record, and watching it spin recenters music and gives it a sense of importance that pressing shuffle or slotting a CD into a player cannot. Some may also appreciate the aesthetics of vinyl. Vinyl packaging is artwork in itself, and many enjoy the attention to detail artists put into their product design. Another theory is that vinyl is a “lifestyle product.” In purchasing vinyl, a consumer may feel a sense of identity with an artist. They find validation as a “real fan” for buying their favorite artist's album. The type of art that one enjoys is already a source of identity, and devoting time and money to that art amplifies that identification. For example, if someone considers themselves a “hip-hop head,” they might buy themselves a classic like Nas's “Illmatic” (1994) on vinyl. Finally, the small imperfections in vinyl's sound quality gives it life. Hums, flutters, wows, and crackles give a sense of nostalgia for a time that listeners have never experienced.

Though faux nostalgia is a particularly hipster-like and transient trend, vinyl seems to be here to stay, whatever the reason for its reemergence may be. It is by no means endangering digital streaming, as it will take a miraculous new invention to topple that behemoth. But for now, the worlds of digital and physical can coexist through music, and both spheres are only poised to grow.

The Shellac Comeback

PLAYLIST

The Other Place

By THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DEPARTMENT

In wake of finals-induced stress and programming frustrations, we've needed to resort to the music that transports us elsewhere, wherever that place may be. So strap into your seats, because these tracks will take you from the streets of Tokyo to a mystical wonderland in seconds.

Come Away With Me
Norah Jones
Singer/Songwriter

Boogie Wonderland
Earth, Wind & Fire
Funk

Myth
Beach House
Dream Pop

Threat of Joy
The Strokes
Indie Rock

10 James Orr Street
Strawberry Switchblade
Darkwave

Wagamama na High Heels
Kaoru Akimoto
City Pop

Impossible Germany
Wilco
Indie Rock

Alien Days
MGMT
Psychedelic Pop

Blue Monday
New Order
New Wave

Playground Love
Air
Ambient Pop

God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen
Fantasy
John Fabey
Folk/Country Blues

Decoy
Fievel is Glauque
Jazz Pop

FILM

By ROXY PERAZZO

With its charming furniture and seemingly endless space, a beautiful, new house on a quiet hill seems like the perfect home for a flourishing family. But when one family begins to settle in, they realize that not everything is as perfect as they had thought. When furniture begins to vanish and strange people appear throughout the house, it becomes increasingly clear that the house holds frightening secrets beneath its unassuming facade. This situation is the premise of one of Netflix's newest films, “The House,” which portrays a trio of unsettling stories that take place in the same house. The continuity of these peculiar happenings leaves a sense of uneasiness that reaches beyond the confines of the film. On top of the unnerving storylines, the stop motion animation juxtaposes childhood, innocence, and horror, making for a beautifully creepy film.

The three stories are set across separate eras. The first part takes place in the 1800s, when a poor family receives an offer to move into a large, valuable house, free of charge. The second part takes place in a contemporary setting where a property developer is attempting to sell the house, while the final part takes place in a post-apocalyptic setting, where a landlord attempts to restore the house. Though the three stories were created by different directors, they were all written by Enda Walsh, who creates an anxious tone that carries throughout the film. Also constant among the three stories are the strange and frustrating events that occur

to the residents living within the house, a standard horror movie trope that gives the film a creepy atmosphere.

Though the film aims for classic horror in its first part, the stories progressively become less explicitly disconcerting. Instead, the second and third parts focus more on the personal issues that the characters face. In the first part, the parents become “hypnotized” by the dream of wealth that the house provides, which blinds them to the issue (the house is not what they were promised) that their daughter, Mabel (Mia Goth), attempts to bring to their attention. This problem eventually culminates in the entrapment of the parents, when they are turned into furniture. While this story is somewhat evocative of “Spirited Away” (2001), in which the main character's parents are turned into pigs and she is left to fend for herself in a supernatural realm, the beautifully done stylistic components of “The House” put a new spin on a similar story. One such component is the characters' unsettling facial features. Specifically, their small, beady eyes are concentrated in the centers of much wider faces, adding to the creepy, dreamlike ambiance. These peculiar characteristics add a surreal feel to the film and contribute to a sense of childhood nostalgia, further accentuated by the film's use of stop motion animation. Additionally, the dim lighting, intense background sounds, and maze-like halls of the house amp up the suspense as the movie progresses.

While the second part maintains some of the horror, the

modern setting makes for a less eerie overall mood. With bright white lighting and modern furniture, the second part struggles to maintain the aura of the first. Despite this difference, this part ushers in a more authentic feel. As the developer (Jarvis Cocker) realizes that a strange couple is squatting in the house, he grows increasingly stressed. Instead of using beauty and tension to convey horror, the anxiety that the developer expresses channels the same horror and mystery of the house in a more realistic way. The panic that he feels as he realizes how helpless his situation is conveys a personalized horror that is scary in a more subtle way than other commonly used tropes of the genre.

The final story is similar in that the disappointment and stress of the landlady, Rosa (Susan Wokoma), is still effectively conveyed, despite the brighter aesthetic. The final part uses pastel coloring and natural light for its ambiance. But the constant struggle Rosa experiences while trying to restore the house following a flood, along with the sadness that comes as she realizes how alone she is in her efforts, puts the frustrating properties of the house into focus. It seems as though the house is preventing Rosa from even completing simple tasks like putting up wallpaper. While that effect might be clear from an outside perspective, the forces of the house are unknown to her, causing her to spiral deeper into dependency. Though the character design in the latter parts is less inherently unsettling, their more serious themes like anxiety, loneliness, and failure still manage to

juxtapose the film's stylistic components in a way that is pleasing to experience and prevents the heavy themes from becoming overwhelming.

As much as the three parts' appearances and stories differ, they are also connected through their constant setting. The unchanging nature of the house adds to its intrigue and helps form a cohesive film rather than three separate shorts. Along with the house, the anxiety that the theme of unwanted guests brings to the characters remains consistent. In the first part, strange workers seem to be destroying the house, not fixing it; in the second, the persistent couple is a gross rodent-insect hybrid; and in the third, against her protests, Rosa's tenant, Cosmos (Paul Kaye), refuses to stop changing things. Despite their differences, the overall sense that these figures are impeding on the lives and success of the main characters comes across well and adds to the stressful themes of the film. Whether they are removing furniture, crawling on the walls, or destroying floorboards to make an escape boat, these figures seem unlike the main characters in that they are forces of the house, not individuals.

While the stories within “The House” could have easily felt like three unrelated parts, the film ties them together in a way that adds uniqueness and complexity. In addition to the connections across the three parts, the beautiful backgrounds, unsettling character design, and frustrating, personal struggles of the characters make “The House” a modern, innovative horror film.

“The House” and Its Take on Modern Horror

Arts and Entertainment

THINKPIECE

By **PHOEBE BUCKWALTER**

Stuyvesant students are all too familiar with the late night cram session: a single lamp illuminating papers scattered haphazardly across the desk, interspersed with empty coffee mugs and frantically written Post-It note reminders. Despite the frequent tests, quizzes, and projects in high school, it feels hard to settle into a comfortable studying routine that balances effectiveness and efficiency. Eating nutritious snacks and listening to stimulating music can alter both your outlook and atmosphere, which improves your studying experience and gives your brain the energy boost it needs.

While preparing for a major exam, you might find yourself wandering into the kitchen, ravenously staring into the refrigerator as if it were a mystifying abyss. Improving your studying habits starts with your snacking habits. You might be rolling your eyes, but this doesn't necessarily mean eating healthier. Focus on brain foods, which contain nutrients that improve brain function. For instance, dark chocolate is a brain food that is proven to limit mental fatigue and improve memory and mood. Dark chocolate-covered walnuts are a great study snack option because they combine the undeniable deliciousness of chocolate with the health benefits of vitamin-rich nuts.

Another brain food to try is avocado toast with red peppers and a sunny-side-up egg. The salty avocado paired with the

crunchy bell peppers and gooey egg gives every bite texture and contrast. These ingredients contain antioxidants and benefit brain health by improving accuracy in mental tasks. A fruit salad with berries and citrus fruit may also give you the extra boost of energy that you need to conquer trigonometry. The tart berries are complemented by tangy orange and grapefruit slices, creating a rainbow of fresh ingredients that instantly transport you to summertime. Berries have antioxidants that strengthen communication between neurons, and citrus fruits contain compounds that improve learning and memory.

It might be tempting to make yourself a massive cup of coffee when your eyelids start to feel like elephants are dancing on them, but try green tea instead. It has the caffeine that you crave, but unlike coffee, drinking green tea reduces anxiety. The amino acids in green tea balance out the negative side effects of caffeine, relaxing you enough to circumvent stress-induced test jitters.

Music is the second ingredient in spicing up a studying slog. While some may deem music a distraction, research shows that it can augment your studying by boosting your motivation, memorization, and focus. The key to a successful playlist is finding the right music for you. It's best to stick to instrumental music during crunch time because it drowns out the cacophonous symphony of New York City noisiness while still blending into the background. Stay away from music with vocals when reading or writing so

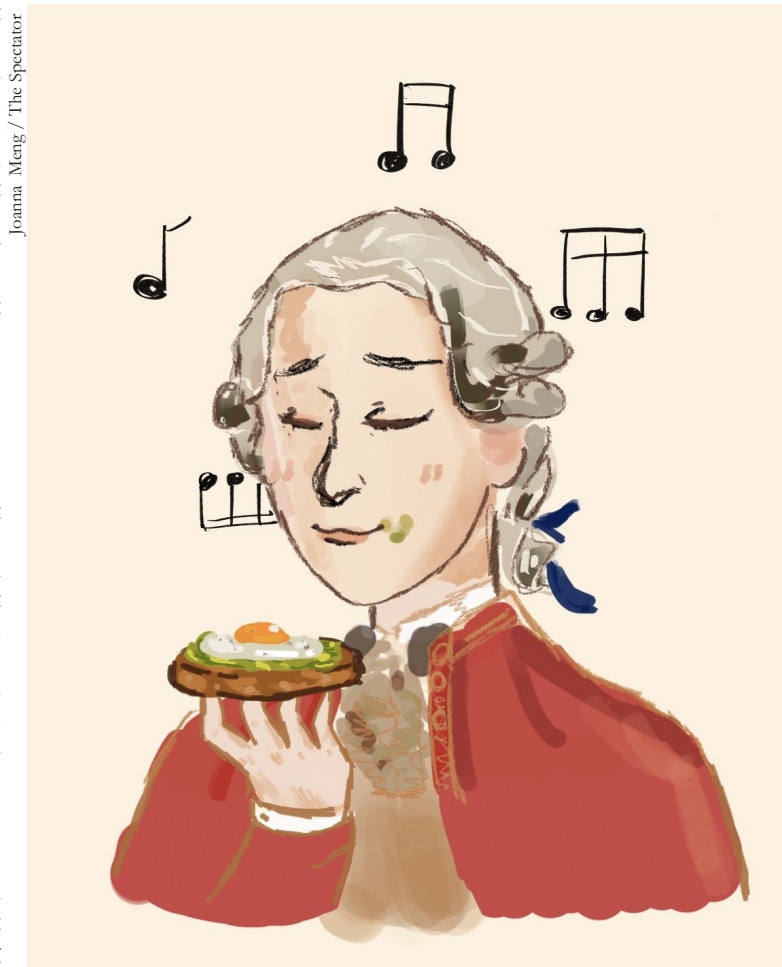
that your brain doesn't have to differentiate between the words on your page and the lyrics. This doesn't mean that you're doomed to spend the late nights

If jazz is more your speed, turn on some Miles Davis and let the improvisational flow of the trumpet cast its spell. Instrumental hip-hop, exemplified

they are designed to support the player without interfering with their focus.

If instrumental music makes you feel like you're in a low-budget period drama, try listening to acoustic renditions of the Top 40. They are a good choice because their familiarity makes your brain automatically register them as background noise, and they will serve to keep you focused and aware. Many artists have "stripped" versions of their most popular songs. For example, Marshmello and Halsey's "Be Kind (stripped)" (2020) gives the hit song a new dimension, creating intimacy through hushed harmonies and reverbed guitar strumming. Other noteworthy options include Julia Michaels's "Issues (Acoustic)" (2017), James Arthur's "Say You Won't Let Go" (2016), and Adele's "Easy On Me" (2021). The trick is to stay away from music that you feel strongly about. Obviously, playing music that you hate while studying is a bad idea, but playing music that you love can be equally distracting. It's important to find a happy medium: songs that make you feel cheerful and relaxed, yet can still be tuned out when necessary.

It might take some experimentation to find the perfect snack and song combination to use when studying for your next test, but it'll be worth it when you walk into the classroom on test day feeling as cool as a cucumber. If that's not enough of an incentive, remember that you officially have permission to gorge yourself on dark chocolate for the sake of your brain health.



leading up to your physics final jamming out to Mozart's "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," though. As an alternative, try electronic beats, jazz, instrumental hip-hop, or even nature sounds. Electronic music, like Avicii's "Levels (Instrumental Radio Edit)" (2011), possesses an uplifting bounciness, so it can serve as the perfect motivator.

by artists like POPE, provides chill rhythms that will keep you grounded when things start to get stressful. For nature sounds, Imaginary Landscapes can transport you anywhere from Amarillo Beach to a moonlit thunderstorm. Interestingly, video game soundtracks are also particularly beneficial during studying. This is because

FILM

By **NICOLE LIU**

A woman dressed in all white with a blooming red spot on the side of her shirt stumbles across a sandy beach. After one look at the setting sun, she collapses on the shore, the water washing over her and absolving her of her mistakes. A rhythmic, bluesy sound plays, and the title card pops up: "The Lost Daughter." This sequence is how Netflix's newest psychological drama opens. "The Lost Daughter," the highly anticipated directorial debut of American actress Maggie Gyllenhaal, has already won numerous accolades for its screenplay and acting.

Adapted from Elena Ferrante's novel of the same name, "The Lost Daughter" follows Leda Caruso (Olivia Colman), a divorced college professor and translator who goes on holiday to the Greek islands. There, she becomes fixated on a young mother named Nina (Dakota Johnson) who is on vacation with her family. Though Nina seems happy with her life, the film reveals that she is overwhelmed by becoming a mother, which brings up painful memories of Caruso's own

motherhood, forcing her to confront and come to terms with her past.

The cinematography of the movie is wonderful. Every scene is presented perfectly, with close angle shots and lingering camera work that evoke a somber tone. At the beginning of the movie, when Caruso is observing Nina and her family from afar, they are filmed from a distance to immerse the audience in Caruso's point of view. The audience sees what Caruso sees: a beautiful young woman who exudes an air of assurance and satisfaction. It is only when the camera shifts its focus closer and Caruso becomes more intimately acquainted with Nina that the cracks in Nina's facade begin to show. The cinematography also weaves flashback scenes with the present day, drawing thoughtful parallels that press the audience for answers. Interestingly, in most scenes, the camera focuses on the women, with men pushed to the background. The expressions and inner turmoil of these women are the focus, making it clear that "The Lost Daughter" is a story about motherhood and the sacrifices women make for their families.

"The Lost Daughter" and Its Message To Lost Mothers

The close up shots and carefully chosen frames complement the superb acting. Academy Award winner Colman brings Caruso to life. Her wistful and unflinching expressions contribute an unsettling tone to the film, especially as she watches Nina and reminisces about her mysterious past. Colman's tightly wound performance gives the impression that she is constantly on the brink of explosion, making for a very tense yet contained performance. Jessie Buckley, who plays young Caruso, also embodies her character well. With her harsh voice, frustrated expressions, and tired appearance, Buckley plays the role of a distraught and overwhelmed mother perfectly. In one particular scene, young Caruso is pulled from work to comfort her crying daughter, who has cut herself. As her daughter pleads for Caruso to kiss her wound to make the pain go away, Caruso withdraws from her, showing the full extent of her exhaustion to the audience. Buckley's performance pushes viewers to sympathize with Caruso despite her contentious actions.

While marketed as a thriller, "The Lost Daughter" lacks

the intensity that usually characterizes the genre. Instead, it opts for subtle suspense that gradually builds throughout the movie. Advancing at a leisurely pace, pieces of the plot fall into place, creating a complex web of revelations despite the simple premise. The movie requires thoughtful contemplation to decipher the characters and their actions, as shown by motifs like the doll that Caruso takes from Nina's daughter and refuses to give back.

At its core, the movie examines the constraints of motherhood and the loss of liberty that comes with it. Young Caruso sacrifices her freedom and career as a notable translator to take care of her daughters with little help from her oblivious husband, a very real situation that occurs to many mothers. Wives are often expected to sacrifice their careers to raise their kids, while the same is rarely demanded of husbands. "The Lost Daughter" is unique in that it doesn't attempt to justify Caruso's actions, especially when she starts an affair. Instead, it reveals the ugly truth that some women just aren't meant to be mothers and that their ineptitude at motherhood

is only exacerbated by societal pressures. The film invites the audience to critically sympathize with Caruso's story. When she observes Nina making the same mistakes that she has made in the past, she befriends Nina to help her. However, Caruso herself is still tangled in the errors of her past, resulting in an explosive climax that leaves her on the sandy beach the audience sees at the beginning of the film, blood blooming on her dress.

"The Lost Daughter" is a successful directorial debut for Gyllenhaal, who brings the messages of Ferrante's novel to life. The film is a delightful, thought-provoking watch that brings universal truths to the screen. It doesn't shy away from showing the audience what it means to be a mother struggling with her identity and the pressures of society. The genius of the film lies in its nuanced and unwavering message. Suffice it to say that Gyllenhaal has proven herself to be a versatile innovator. She has not restricted herself to the confinements of acting and has successfully delved into the world of directing.

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

Pupilpath Outage, Day 45

By VIRGENYA ZHU

January 17, 2022
Dear Diary,

I have lost track of the days since PupilPath has been down. Weeks ago, when we first heard, none of us envisioned the perils that would lie in store. My peers are getting antsy. There are rumors flying about the shutdown: someone hacked the mainframe in order to write a love letter to Principal Yu, or the website crashed because it couldn't stand that half the freshmen were failing biology. Most of the student body believed that it was the Russian hackers. If that's true, I'd like to personally thank them.

I feel like I'm getting off track. The teachers have to do attendance manually again. It seems to be a reawakening for some of them. One of my teachers had to be coaxed into checking off the first name in the attendance list and was so overwhelmed that they burst into tears and spent the rest of the day putting up flyers preaching the euphoria of writing something by hand for the first time in years. The next day, the computer lab was found trashed, though the aforementioned teacher is denying involvement.

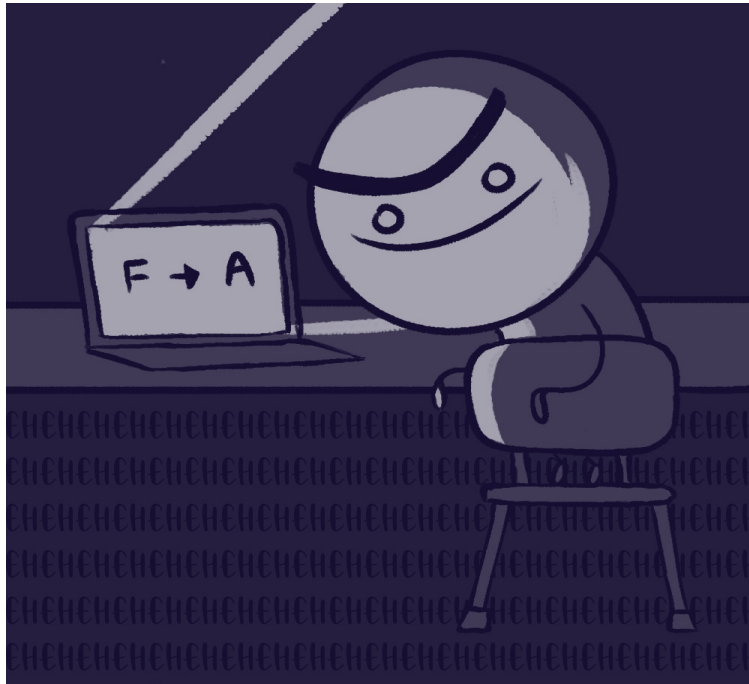
The fear that Pupilpath will be lost entirely and never come

back has teachers on edge. Some are asking us to self-report old grades so they can have another copy, just in case. And what are

92, it'll be believable?" They then added, "I feel like I need at least one grade to be bad so they don't suspect me." I shrugged because I

was convinced that if we all report straight A's, there's nothing the teacher can do about it. Someone mentioned that that makes it even less believable. That sparked the idea that only one of us should report a 100, and the others should tell the truth so that there is at least one person who gets something out of this. It then transitioned into a snowball fight for victory—except the snowballs were textbooks.

I heard someone crying in the Hudson staircase (out of happiness, for once). Their average was 68.95, and it hadn't been rounded up before the whole fiasco. It's a worthy cause to shed some tears for. People are also talking about what might happen if PupilPath never comes back up. I think that JupiterEd is a good option, but others seem to think that it's easier for all the grades to be put in a Google Docs shared with the entire student body. It might all get lost at once, but that seems unlikely. Big websites that large communities count on for everyday use would never just suddenly go down for weeks at a time, right? There's been an email going around saying that the third marking period report card might just be what's left over from what the teachers remember. Someone told me there won't even be a homeroom day for it—every-



Justine Kang / The Spectator

Stuyvesant students except the human reincarnations of exhausted racoons whose only cravings are academic validation? When asked by my third period teacher to self-report our grades, the person sitting in front of me whispered, "Do you think if I report a

My Global Studies class is

had thought that turning in everything as a 100 would be more believable. Doesn't it show consistency? Then, I remembered that the only comment from them on my marking period two report card was "do better <3."

NEWSBEET

Hospitals are now flooded with people shot by arrows, with many of them rambling about how they had thought they were "arrows of love."

Body pillow sales mysteriously increase.

Sanitation Department instructed to follow triple cleaning practices around the Hudson Stairwell.

Humor writers have all quit after finding partners on Valentine's Day.

New iPhone update includes a feature where autocorrect automatically changes all punctuation to "UwU." Gross.

body's report cards will just be pasted as flyers around school. It will be a scavenger hunt to find yours.

January 18, 2022
Dear Diary,

I just woke up. PupilPath is back up. May God have mercy on us all. Or Hallelujah.

Rating Stuyvesant Couples!

By VINCENT D'ANGELO

Take a deep breath. What's approaching may be the worst nightmare for most teachers and students, but it's the sweetest of dreams for a lucky few. So now I bring to you, lovely reader, a chance to analyze and critique the wonderful types of relationships that we are blessed with the sights, scents, and sounds of every day. Join me now in a purely wholesome deconstruction of the wonders of high school romance.

Type 1: The Touchy Type

You animals disgust me. I don't know where or how you got the idea anybody wants to see anything you two do, but it needs to stop. I cannot escape it. I feel as though the second I scan my ID card in the morning, I'm greeted with couples of huggers that have no regard for the surrounding populace. How am I supposed to do homework for my 17 AP classes in the cafeteria when I'm facing two people sprawled out over three chairs, rolling and tumbling over each other? Have you seen the sophomore bar? I haven't, because it's literally covered in voracious masses of these. Anyway, 0/10.

Type 1-B: Hand-Holders

I'm cheating already because this is really just a subcategory of Type One, but I really feel that this issue merits its own discussion. If one forced the Touchy Type couples not to be stationary, this is what they'd get 99 percent of the time. I am not inherently against minor displays

of affection, but when you make it everyone else's problem, I get triggered. Hand-Holders literally take up most of the hallway. It's not like you're standing off to one side, no—you stand right in the middle, moving at approximately two miles per hour, forcing everyone to either go around you, walk into you, or limbo under your outstretched arms. And besides, it's not very safe, is it? I'm pretty sure Ms. Ingram sends an email every week politely asking you to do precisely the opposite of what you actually do, and you're just doing her dirty like that? I don't think the bonds forged from your love can protect you against SARS-CoV-2. You get a concerned unsafe/10.

Type 2: The Couple That Lays Across The Entire Width Of The Hallway Near The Fourth Floor Lockers During Eighth Period

This is when you take your standard Type One couple and crank up the public-annoyance meter to the max. I feel the need to ask you two specifically to stop. Some kids just want to get to gym, you know? It depletes your emotional capacity when you have to physically lunge over people to get to your locker. Every. Single. Day. 0/10. Not even

a question.

Type 3: The Rumor Mill

This one goes out to the attention-seekers among us. This might be cheating again, because you guys aren't really a couple, are you? You just want to get your names in everyone's mouth, maybe spike up your Instagram followers. Well, your dirty tricks won't work on all of us. A lot of us just don't care. The fact that I'm even giving you this attention right now makes me upset. 0/10.

No, actually, I'm not done with you. I bet that one of you two actually wants to be a real couple, maybe one of the hand-holders or hallway nuisances. But you have zero play. How unfortunate. -3/10.

Type 4: Too Loud, Man

We get it—you enjoy each other's company. Now stop hurting my eardrums. Between you two, there exists a toxic positive feedback loop; as time progresses, the noises coming out of your faces increase in volume and, somehow, also in number. Whether it's a 10-minute long giggle fit or unintelligible hollering sparked by whatever reason, walking past you two guarantees that

you miss at least 10 seconds of the song you had playing in the AirPods hidden under your hair. 2/10. The only reason you have two and not zero is because one of you once disrupted my Computer Science class. Consider this the weakest "thanks" the soul can muster.

Type 5: This Is Below Me

At times, when I walk around the school and go into my classes, I meet very intelligent, well-spoken students. Their knowledge might even lead me to better myself, improving my daily life. Now, imagine the exact opposite of this.

I often find that the couples you think are perfect for each other complete each other in the worst possible way, especially in high school. Maybe it's because they're both obsessed with the Communist Manifesto and strut around blaring the Soviet Anthem, tacitly assuring each other that their behavior is entirely justified. Others wear matching cat ears or "I Paused My Game To Be Here" T-shirts and reek of Cheeto dust. Sometimes I have to hear an exchange of high-pitched baby voices, meows, or other bizarre sounds, and I die inside.

I worked hard to get into this school and for what? I get to hear people meow and scream? I'm not angry, just disappointed. 0/10.

Type 6: Bow To Your Monarchs

The previously listed weird couples are usually not the most popular duo, and a lot of couples

aren't like that. Flawless social media pictures, revolutionary fashion styles, and more, these two are the King and Queen of the Stuyvesant social life. If you are these two, you're very confident in your physical presence, and your influence certainly spreads throughout the community. But that's the problem—everyone low-key hates you. This sentiment is birthed mostly out of a jealousy of your greatness, which a lot of people want a taste of. You are probably aware of this unfortunate circumstance, but you don't seem to care. If anything, it fuels you. You might be a little narcissistic, but that never hurts anyone. I respect the hustle. 5/10.

Type 7: "I Don't Even Know Who You Are" —Thanos

If everyone were like you two, I think my life would be a little more enjoyable. This type of Stuy couple is the type that doesn't openly present themselves. They don't need PDA to get along. Their relationship is stable enough that they do not need to openly seek validation from others. And the greatest thing about this couple is that I don't know you. Stuyvesant is a big school, so there may be some couple somewhere that lurks in the shadows. Do these couples actually exist? I don't know. But the possibility that they do keeps me going. Your existence is lovely and pure. 10/10.

What a wholesome way to end off our list! Enjoy post-finals Valentine's Day everyone! I hope you enjoyed my social suicide! Stay safe!



Humor

Debating the Affirmative Side (My Love For You)

By **ESHAAL UBAID**

I clear my throat.

“On this evening of February 14th, I, a matchmaker & ship expert certified by fanfiction.net, call the two sides Quirky Protagonist and Discord Love Interest (QP and DLI) to the floor of the love court. The issue of today’s debate is whether or not this duo is compatible or not. DLI’s “bro squad” will debate the AFFIRMATIVE while QP’s concerned besties are debating for the NEGATIVE. We will begin with the affirmative side, which was determined five minutes ago by rock-paper-scissors in the hallway. Affirmative, present your case.”

“We, the bro-squad-team of DLI, firmly believe that the impetus of love unequivocally lies in completing each other as people. Luckily for us, we’ve used years of experience and past conversations with them to compile their ideal type. We would like to assert that our bro doesn’t even go on 3 AM Minecraft speedruns with us anymore, because they’re so busy fawning over QP,” the bro-squad-team of DLI says. They then slide over two tear-riddled sheets of paper: pages of a screenshotted Discord conversation.

“According to this chat from December 21st, after DLI chick-

ened out of a dare to tell Principal Yu that K-pop sucks in person, they confirmed that they are ‘into, like, cute people who know how to game and also maybe can deal with 2:00 a.m. crying sessions.’ Does that sound like anyone to you?”

QP looks away, blushing slightly. Their concerned besties sneer, and the bro squad pass out fist bumps to both themselves and the jury. After a brief team chant, they continue, passing forth a transcribed call.

“Adding on, the quirky love interest in question is, like, totally into the idea. Upon seeing DLI, this call transcript is almost a confession. Bear in mind, I say this after years of roasting this dude for being too lame for love, so it’s a tough pill for your local bro to swallow.”

I take a look at the words, where QP has apparently stated “Lol ily but not in that way? But maybe in that way? Ahh, I don’t know what I’m saying. Don’t take that the wrong way but if you do then maybe I can confirm that you took it the right way? Uh. Oh God. [hangs up].” This confession is clear as day, and I make a mental note of it as I put down the transcript and sanitize my hands. QP is now sunken into their chair.

After a brief minute of con-

templation, I speak. “I have heard a good amount here. Let’s turn it over to the negative side.” An army of best friends quickly rises up to voice their concerns for QP.

“DLI is the absolute worst influence on QP ever. They’ve turned into a total fangirl over the course of weeks and it’s worrying.

Another one of QP’s bestie rose to speak. “In the confidential gossip chat, QP constantly agonizes or gushes over their interactions with DLI, and never before midnight when they should be asleep despite their previously perfect sleep schedule. According to most medical journals, this is unhealthy.

I need to make a decision, but more than that, I need to check my cat game to see if they’re hungry yet. Dismissed!”

“Alrighty folks,” I begin. “I’ve thought carefully about both of your messed up personalities over a lovely session of mobile gaming. Thus, I come to the conclusion that you both... need some help. Genuinely. So, until DLI can get a personality that isn’t school or Discord, and if QP can get their obsessive issues sorted out, my verdict is... FRIENDSHIP! Now high five. Go ahead, friendzone each other. Dismissed! Again!”

The two parties seem baffled, which is odd, considering I just laid everything out. They reluctantly walk to the center of the room, and high five’d with the most pathetic aim I have ever seen. I bang my heart shaped gavel as they all leave the room.

“Phew, that was a weird one,” I tell my typist, who’s sweating from writing out the transcript to all of that. “What’s our next session?”

“Uhh, some freshman couple fighting over which matching profile pic to use on Instagram.”

I crack my knuckles. All in a day’s work.



Sin Liu / The Spectator

Just look at this simphood.” I look up to a collage of screenshots, all of which included QP staying up past 1:00 a.m. and conversing into ugly hours of the night.

“Before meeting DLI, QP would sleep at 11 p.m. sharp and ace every test. On the last USH test, however, they accidentally wrote DLI’s name instead of their own. They’re not even in the same class! This is getting ridiculous.”

We tried to consult a psychiatrist, but the only one we’ve reached replied with a shrugging emoji face.”

“Closing remarks!” I proclaim.

Another scary individual stands up. “Overall, bestie needs to re-prioritize and find a person with better habits. QP can’t keep obsessing at 3:00 a.m., and frankly, we can’t continue to tell them that we support this crush.”

I nod. “Okay, let’s go on break.

Valentine’s Day Special: Interviews With Stuyvesant Students’ Significant Others

By **MICHELLE HUANG**

I don’t know what love feels like, but that will change today. No, I’m not getting a significant other and becoming another one of those annoying couples who block the hallways with affectionate hand-holding. I will never stoop to such lows, and I’m not jealous. Instead, I’ll be interviewing other students about their significant others to learn about the Stuyvesant dating experience, and then I’ll write an article showcasing their lovely relationships. I can’t wait to write about these people, knowing they’ve done everything I can only dream of!

REPORTER: Are you okay? You’re twitching.

STUDENT 1: Yeah, I’m fine. I’m fine! Why wouldn’t I be?

REPORTER: Um, okay. What’s your name?

STUDENT 1: Jacob McCaf-feinated! Yep, that’s the name!

REPORTER: [mutter] Jesus, the fake names get worse every time.

JACOB: What?

REPORTER: Never mind. Where’s your significant other?

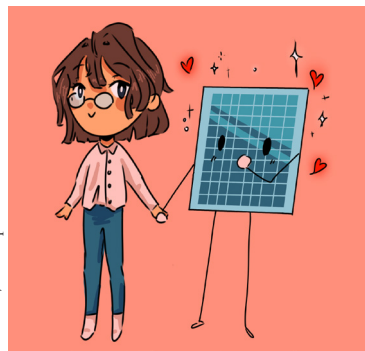
JACOB: Well, um. [sound of tapping on the table]

REPORTER: A... coffee cup?

JACOB: It’s my love! It gives me a reason to wake up in the morning! When life gets me

down, it brings me back up! I can’t function without it! Ha ha!

REPORTER: I-I think that’s an addiction.



Iris Lin / The Spectator

JACOB: Isn’t love just an addiction to someone else? That sounds like a Shakespeare line!

Such romance! Ha ha!

[The student then passed out. Emergency services have determined that a severe lack of sleep put them into a coma. The devastated family is now taking legal action against Starbucks for providing dangerous amounts of caffeine to students. I am starting to regret writing this article.]

REPORTER: Alright, moving onto our next interview. Don’t pass out like the other kid.

STUDENT 2: Alas, I suppose a mortal’s body eventually gives out. But don’t worry, not mine.

REPORTER: [sighs] Name?

STUDENT 2: Names are for the weak. I let my powerful aura

distinguish myself from everyone else.

REPORTER: Where’s your significant other? Please tell me they’re a real person.

STUDENT 2: Okay, okay, it’s not a person, but it’s certainly real. My beloved PupilPath app.

REPORTER: PupilPath?

STUDENT 2: It was merely friendship at first, but then I realized it was something more when I checked it every day, waiting for it to return after the terrible January crash. With time comes familiarity, and familiarity breeds love!

REPORTER: Contempt. Fa-

continued on page 24

You See...There’s This Crazy Little Thing Called Love (In Me)

By **CHRISTIAN KIM AND FINN CHAREST**

Confession #2142022

I’ve been to the Stuy Confessions page countless times, trying to advertise my longstanding singleness (and each time, I’ve been thwarted by ‘Sophomore, Female’, who seems to dominate the page with their daily confessions), but the words of a group of freshmen gremlins, who watched me submit another post, have helped me realize the true identity of my soulmate.

“LMAO this guy posted the same thing before and got red flagged, yet he still thinks he got a shot. Looked in a mirror lately?”

Upon hearing those words from these Stuy freshies, I first doubted myself. But now, days later,

it’s time for me to shoot my shot (again) to my newfound soulmate. So you see, there’s this one really cute boy that’s in all my classes—he even has the same lunch and frees! Literally. Every-

Single. Period.

Insane, right? I couldn’t be-

us to be one and the same. Some cosmic force has clearly taken

commodated us—or at least the Talos algorithm has.

Sometimes I feel his presence whenever I reach my locker (potential locker buddies as well? Didn’t think seniors could have those, but of course Stuy made a special exception) before period one, and he makes my legs go weak... or maybe that’s because I never actually do the warm-ups in Phys-Ed and I normally stop when the athletic kid stops.

Other times, I catch a whiff of his scent as I swipe my ID in the mornings. My mouth salivates just thinking about it.

In all my classes, I’m completely drawn to him. Teachers have noticed our connection, for they ALWAYS group us together. Whenever we work on projects, we become in sync. We procrastinate and grind in harmony. This may sound one-sided, but there HAS to be a mutual spark. All that time he spent on the project doc comforting me for procrastinating must’ve meant something.

You may be wondering why I’m violating our seemingly per-

fect relationship by posting it online. The truth is, whenever we do “talk,” I’m told that “I talk to myself.” Honestly, they’re just jealous of our bond.

The only time I really get to face him is when I see him looking right back at me from the bathroom mirror as I wash my hands. He makes me feel safe—like it’s just me and him against the whole world. Whenever I look up in front of the mirror, he’s always staring right back at me. That dreamy, familiar stare that always seems to draw me in. Though we have to ignore the guy changing into his gym uniform in the background, it’s still a beautiful moment with a beautiful person.

Truth be told, I think both of us are too scared to make the first move. I’m getting kind of nervous though since our love is truly forbidden. Still, despite their concern, our parents’ can’t keep us apart—he’s literally with me as I write this.

(Senior, Monkey)

lieve it either. It’s like destiny for

note of our connection and ac-



Chuer Zhong / The Spectator

New Student at Stuy, Y/N Pt. 2

By EZRA LEE

Hey everyone! Thanks again for reading my fanfic. I've had so many people come up to me talking about how much they appreciate the last chapter. I've also had people threaten me for a part two... so here it is! Make sure to read or reread part one if you haven't done so already here: <https://www.stuyspec.com/humor/new-student-at-stuy-y-n>. If you want part three, let me know peacefully. Note: I may or may not be accepting bribes (much more effective than threatening messages!). Thank you.

At the top of the long flight of stairs sits the Whole Foods cafe. A Whole Foods employee sits at the entrance.

Employee: Receipt?

Karen: Yeah, here it is.

She shows a faded receipt that looks like it has been in her pocket for over a year. You guys have never shopped at Whole Foods, though. You give her a confused grimace, to which she responds with a wink.

Employee, looking at you: And the other one?

Karen: They're with me.

The employee nods and lets you into the cafe area. As you walk in, you see that the tables are all three to six feet apart for social distancing. A crowd of Stuyvesant students is in the corner studying, rendering the social distancing policies useless. You see a tall student going around the room removing earbuds from people's ears because it is a "study session." Guess that's Brian Moran, #1 Love Interest's friend.

#2 Love Interest: Karen! Y/N! You're here!

You see #2 Love Interest waving at you. Just as you are about to wave back, you see this new person sitting right next to them. Their arms are around #2 Love Interest's body. What the hell? You thought you and #2 Love Interest had something special going on.

Karen: Hey #2 Love Interest! Hi (insert the person you hate the most in this entire school, your archenemy).

#2 Love Interest: Hi Karen and Y/N! So glad you could make it.

Archenemy: Hey you two. I don't think I've met Y/N before. Are you new to Stuy?

Y/N: Yeah, I just got into Stuy through nepotism.

Archenemy: Oh, I think I've heard of you before. I'm Archenemy! #2 Love Interest's babe.

You look at #2 Love Interest with a confused look.

#2 Love Interest: Ex-partner. I'm not your babe anymore. And anyway, you should leave. Don't

you have robotics practice?

Archenemy frowns and examines you. They snicker.

Archenemy: So what's your relationship with Y/N then?

#2 Love Interest: Y/N? They're just a friend.

Did you really just get friend-zoned...? This is just like what Adrien Agreste from "Miraculous Ladybug" says about Marinette. Just friends in the end. Wait, if #2 Love Interest felt like that, maybe you were overthinking your relationship with #1 Love Interest too? Maybe the two of your "love interests" fought in the cafeteria because #1 Love Interest was genuinely just worried about someone else touching you. Like how people are worried about their friend's safety and stuff. Your brain starts to hurt.

Archenemy: Okay fine, I'll leave. This study party is for dumb losers who fail their exams anyway. You better watch out, Y/N.

Archenemy walks away with their head held high. You look at #2 Love Interest as they shake their head.

#2 Love Interest: So sorry about Archenemy. We broke up a while ago, but Archenemy keeps wanting to get back with me even though I don't like them anymore. Anyway, do you two want to sit with me and study for APUSH? I heard from some seniors that the next in-class DBQ exam is difficult.

Y/N: Actually, I'm thinking of sitting somewhere else today. Just to get to know more people. Karen can still accompany you though.

You look at Karen with an encouraging look.

#2 Love Interest: Sure, see you later.

As you leave Karen and #2 Love Interest alone to their APUSH studies, you start to get worried. You're not feeling too good about future romantic prospects with #2 Love Interest. They didn't even seem interested in you anymore, and they didn't stop you when you left to meet other people.

You shake your head. No more overthinking today. You're going to make some new friends. As you walk around the room, you see seniors frantically filling out college applications, editing essays, and crying together. The scene looks absolutely horrendous. You're glad you're not a first-term senior. As you get to the back, you see #1 Love Interest on a sofa, reading all alone.

Y/N: What're you reading, #1 Love Interest?

They look up from reading and hold up "Hamlet."

#1 Love Interest: I'm reading this for my Writing in the World class. My teacher wants us to

memorize and recite a part of it in class.

Y/N: Oh yeah, the "To be or not to be, that is the question," right? I read that last year at my old school. I can give you some pointers.

#1 Love Interest nods eagerly and shares the book with you as you sit down. An impressive

anything underneath.

#1 Love Interest: Oh.

You both sit in awkward silence. Luckily, the alarm you set on your phone suddenly rings.

Y/N: Sorry! I need to go home. Curfew is 8:00 p.m., and my commute takes two hours. Good luck on your recitation, and sorry for not being able to

friends. Just like how you are with Archenemy. Haha.

#2 Love Interest frowns a little. Oh no. Wrong move.

Y/N: Karen, I think we should go. I gotta get home before curfew.

Karen: Um, actually, I'm going to stay here for a bit longer. I need to cram for that APUSH test too. You should leave first.

Out of the corner of your eye, you see her winking at #2 Love Interest. What in the world happened between the two of them while you were with #1 Love Interest? Whatever, you have to leave or your mom will yell at you.

Y/N: Sure, that's fine. Good luck on that test.

Before they could respond, you rush out of the cafe and dash to the 1/2/3 station. Though you got to know #1 Love Interest a bit more, you also have some doubts about #2 Love Interest. But maybe you were overthinking. It's not like these two asked you out or anything.

As you finally get to the subway station and walk down the stairs, someone suddenly taps your back, making you jump in surprise. You look back to see #1 Love Interest drenched in sweat and panting loudly. They kinda look good, all shiny. And sexy as always.

Y/N: Ah! You popped out of nowhere. Why are you here?

#1 Love Interest: Haha yeah, I ran to talk to you before you left. I have something to ask.

Y/N: Ask away.

#1 Love Interest hesitates and looks away. Moments later, they look straight at you with those dark, passionate eyes you saw in the morning.

#1 Love Interest: Are you going to the Whole Food's study session tomorrow too? I'd love to talk to you more about "Hamlet."

Y/N: Sorry, but I don't think so. My mom doesn't like it when I stay out after school too much.

#1 Love Interest: I see... then wanna hang out at Barnes & Nobles during lunch tomorrow? We share the same period.

Y/N: Like... a date?

#1 Love Interest laughs.

#1 Love Interest: Yeah, you could call it that. You down?

Y/N: Sure! I'll shoot you a text on Messenger.

#1 Love Interest nods and walks away while they wave. You feel like you're floating. Maybe a Stuy student can indeed find love in this seemingly love-deprived environment. You walk into the station and scan your MetroCard, just in time to watch the 2 train close its doors. You missed your train, but you don't mind. All you can think about is tomorrow's date.



Vanessa Huang / The Spectator

number of Post-It notes filled with translation and interpretation notes line the outside of their book. Reading through the notes, you're thoroughly impressed. #1 Love Interest is definitely a hard-working intellectual.

As you two read through "To be or not to be," they accidentally move their hand far enough to slightly touch yours. Your face flushes bright red. You can hear them breathing through their mask. A slight breath, in and out. Your shoulders suddenly touch. Your heart beats faster and faster, louder and louder. Gosh, what if they can hear your heartbeat? That would be so embarrassing.

#1 Love Interest: Hey, are you okay? You look a bit red.

They put a hand on your burning forehead.

#1 Love Interest: Maybe you should take a rapid COVID-19 test? It looks like you might have a fever.

Y/N: Oh no, I'm not sick. It's just really hot right now.

#1 Love Interest: Yeah, for sure. You could take off your sweatshirt?

Y/N: I can't... I don't have

help more. And thanks for inviting me here!

#1 Love Interest: Yeah, no worries. You were a big help. See you next time?

Y/N: Yeah, see you later.

You jump out of your seat and rush to find Karen. She's still sitting at the table with #2 Love Interest. You see the two laughing together, and Karen is tapping #2 Love Interest's biceps.

Your face falls. Were you overthinking again, or was everyone you saw with #2 Love Interest flirting with them? Maybe you shouldn't have left Karen alone with #2 Love Interest.

Y/N: Hey, you two. What's so funny?

Karen: Oh, it's nothing. We were just reading the Humor articles from issue nine of The Spectator. Humor just never misses.

#2 Love Interest looks at you indifferently.

#2 Love Interest: I saw you being all chummy with #1 Love Interest over there by the couches.

Were they jealous? No way, you two aren't even a thing yet.

Y/N: Oh no, we're just

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miliarity breeds contempt.

STUDENT 2: I don't like that saying. I am familiar with my beloved, yet I could never feel contempt for them. They're too lovely for that.

[STUDENT 2 opens Pupil-path on their phone]

Admire the gorgeous blue... wait, why is there green? IT'S

GREEN!

[The audio abruptly cuts off.]

REPORTER: Why did no one bring an actual human? Can I stop interviewing people?

UNKNOWN: Not yet!

REPORTER: Principal Yu? You're not a student.

YU: I know, but I want to talk about my love!

[muffled noises] Here!

REPORTER: That's a ran-

dom man printed on a body pillow.

YU: [gasps] It's Jungkook from BTS! How dense are you to not know? You can CLEARLY tell by the smooth confidence he effortlessly exudes; by his casual yet flattering outfit; and by the proud, and aloof yet welcoming smirk that this is none other than the youngest member of the most popular boy band in the world. The Golden Mak-

nae, as he is also called. And the distinctive BTS logo in the corner! Frankly, your behavior calls for suspension, and I WILL be bringing this up to your parents later.

REPORTER: I don't listen to—

YU: And how dare you question our love! It may only exist within the confines of your article, but it's real, and you will respect it!

REPORTER: You know what, I'm ending the article. That way, I don't have to listen to you squeal over some K-pop dude in his 30s. I could be taking a much-needed nap right now. I'm leaving.

[the sound of footsteps fading out]

YU: He's only 24! The DISRESPECT of this generation! Get back here right now—

Sports

Soccer

The Fall of the Next Ronaldo

By SOHAM MUKHERJEE

A Brazilian star named Adriano Ribeiro was born on February 17, 1982 in Rio de Janeiro. Nicknamed “The Emperor,” he had the potential to become one of the greatest strikers in soccer history. The Brazilian had everything necessary to make it to the top, with his deadly left-footed long-range shots, frightening speed, terrific strength, and fantastic technical ability. However, his career took a sudden turn when a family tragedy changed his life forever.

Growing up as a street kid in a low-income household made Ribeiro’s childhood difficult, but his skill with the ball was evident from an early age. His passion for soccer led him to join Flamengo’s youth team in 1999, where he developed his talent. Over time, many top European clubs began to notice him, and the Brazilian signed a contract with Italian giant Inter Milan at only age 19. His incredible and fast-paced growth impressed the coaches at the club, and he quickly claimed the starting striker spot on the lineup.

Ribeiro was at the peak of his career during the 2004-2005 season, when he scored 42 goals across all competitions for Inter

Milan. He also represented the Brazilian national team on several occasions, impressing fans for every minute he was on the field. The Inter striker was called up for the 2004 Copa America and the 2006 World Cup, where he played alongside Brazilian greats Ronaldo “Ronaldo” de Assis Moreira, Ricardo “Kaká” Izecson dos Santos Leite, and Ronaldo Nazário. Ribeiro’s physicality, skill with the ball, and constant goal output drew frequent comparisons to Nazário, who is one of Brazil’s all-time highest scorers and considered one of the best strikers to ever live. Many thought Ribeiro to be the rightful heir to Nazário’s title as the next great center forward.

Unfortunately, one fateful event would lead to his downfall. Ribeiro received a phone call from Brazil in August of 2004, informing him that his dad had died of a heart attack earlier that month. This incident had an immediate impact on the young striker’s mind and created a hole in his heart that took a very long time to heal. Ribeiro’s teammates still remember the incident. “He got a phone call from Brazil: ‘Adi, dad is dead.’ [...] I saw him in his room. He threw the phone and started screaming. You couldn’t imagine that kind of

scream. I get goosebumps even to this day,” Inter Milan captain Javier Zanetti said to Sports Illustrated in August 2017. “Since that phone call, nothing was the same. [Inter teammate] Iván Córdoba spent one night with him and said, ‘Adi, you’re a mix of [Nazário] and [Zlatan] Ibrahimović. Are you aware that you could become [the] best player ever?’ We did not succeed [in] pulling him out of depression.”

Unfortunately, Ribeiro would never be the same again. He had been very close with his dad, and the loss etched a scar into his heart. He began to stray from the hard work and discipline required to play at his high level, which resulted in a drop in his fitness. The Brazilian relied on alcohol to help him recover from his depression and became inconsistent with his performance. Soon, partying became a big part of his social life, and Ribeiro didn’t show up to practice on time on certain occasions, still recovering from the effects of late night parties. The Inter striker couldn’t keep up with regular practice due to his poor condition, and he had to spend time in the medical wing while the rest of the team trained. The club was forced to explain to the media

that his absences were only due to muscle problems, trying to hide his decline from the rest of the world.

“The Emperor” lost his touch on the ball and missed goal-scoring opportunities. His physicality dropped, and he put on weight, forcing the coaches at the club to bench him. The Brazilian national team did not call Ribeiro for the 2008 Copa América or the 2010 World Cup, and his final few appearances for his country in a couple of friendlies ended in disappointments.

Inter Milan sent Ribeiro back to São Paulo, Brazil for rehabilitation in 2007. However, even at home, the Brazilian’s harmful lifestyle caught up to him. Drugs, alcohol, clubbing, and gang activity all led to his further downfall. Eventually, he got in trouble with the law regarding illegal drug use and spent time in jail. After 10 years, the media visited Ribeiro’s story once again, with recent pictures frequently showing him with gang and mafia members. “The Emperor” had lost the mental and physical strength that once made him such a fierce player, and though gifted, his dream was short-lived.

While Ribeiro’s hidden potential remained unexplored due

to unfortunate events that led his career through a downward spiral, his story will always remind us of the fact that skill and talent alone are never enough to succeed. Ribeiro undoubtedly had the potential to become one of the greatest players of all time, but his life took a sudden turn, and he was changed forever. After his dad’s death, Ribeiro couldn’t mentally or physically stay fit and strong to continue performing at the high level, which proves that elements off the field play a big role.

Hard work and continued effort are what get you to the top and are reasons why one-of-a-kind players like Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi have become legends in the soccer world. They, like Ribeiro, carried immense potential at the start of their respective careers. However, Ronaldo and Messi continue focusing on their own growth and development everyday, spending hours training to improve their game, and they eventually bloomed into amazing athletes. Ribeiro’s example shows us that success, not just in soccer but also anywhere else, requires an extreme level of self-motivation, determination, and mental fortitude that will persevere even through the toughest of times.

Sports Editorial

How Stuy Athletes Manage Their Time

By JEFFREY TAN

Wake up at 6:30 a.m. Brush your teeth, get dressed, and leave the house. Maybe stop at the McDonald’s next to Stuyvesant for a hashbrown at 7:30 a.m. if you get there in time.

8:00 a.m. - 3:35 p.m.: Lectures, readings, tests, and more tests. Stuyvesant is a battleground hosting the brightest kids in NYC, so you better prove you belong.

3:45 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.: It’s time for a film session. Your coach runs through clips of last night’s game, picking apart details and explaining sports theory as if it’s your 11th period class. You’re mentally exhausted by now, but the day is far from over.

5:15 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.: Late practice in the gym. As you run laps, you question what you’ve gotten yourself into, but the scrimmage at the end of practice makes it all worth it. Before you know it, it’s time to head back home.

8:00 p.m. - 1:00 a.m.: If you’re lucky, maybe you’ll finish your dinner, study, and do your homework quick enough to sleep “early.”

Rinse and repeat.

That schedule is what daily life is like for a student-athlete at Stuyvesant. Everyone knows that the academic workload at Stuy is no joke, but add it to a sports team’s heavy commitment with two-hour practices six days a week, and it gets that much harder. The physical and mental exhaustion that this combination produces is one of the hallmarks of the “authentic Stuy experience,” but it comes with a crash course in expert time management. After all, how else would you be able to transition straight from grueling physical exercise to studying for your math final the next day? Let’s see what several student-athletes have learned.

During several seasons as a three-sport athlete at Stuy, senior Phillip Phan has picked up some valuable experience. “I use my time in school as efficiently as possible. I like going to the library during my frees and even during lunch sometimes. When I get home from practice, often I find it hard to focus, so I choose to sleep earlier and wake up earlier in the morning to do my work, which

has helped me a lot,” he said. Most student athletes at Stuy treat free periods as gold, trying to get as much homework done as possible before school ends. However, in a more unorthodox form of time management, Phan cites sleeping earlier to do his homework in the morning as a tested trick to work more efficiently.

“During the season, I try to cut out any other commitments that aren’t directly related to football or academics. Anything else comes secondary so that I can put as much energy into those two as possible,” junior and football player Manlio Singh said on the same topic of time management. It seems obvious, but students often spread themselves too thin under the pressure they place on themselves. Especially during PSAL, one of the most extensive extracurricular commitments Stuy offers, it’s crucial to focus all your efforts on what’s most important to you—your team and your grades.

“When we go to meets, we bring our homework because we usually stay there for hours at a time, so we might as well be

productive. We even talk to each other about our tests during our practice runs,” junior and cross country runner Kaitlin Ho said. “Basically, studying while doing the sport is a big thing.” Stuy student-athletes have found ways to

integrate their academic workload into as many pockets of free time they can find. For sports such as distance running, these strategies may work.

If participating in the PSAL sounds scary to you after reading this article, don’t be afraid! As a student-athlete myself, I have to say that the adrenaline of making your first shot on the basketball court or passing the finish line as a culmination of months of work far outweighs the merits of some extra sleep. And the whole “rigorous time management” thing isn’t that hard once you get used to your new lifestyle. It can be a sacrifice, but participating as a student-athlete at Stuyvesant can be one of the best experiences of your life. Not only can you meet so many like-minded students and friends, but you can also learn time management skills that will thoroughly prepare you for life in college and beyond. However, it’s essential to survive this challenge before you can look back at it and laugh, so make sure you get comfortable with a rhythm or daily schedule that will prepare you for success as a student-athlete.



Nada Hamed / The Spectator

UEFA

The UEFA Champions League Draw: Balls of Fate or Fraud?

By ROMAIN TARAYRE and VERNON HUGHES

In most sports, a team’s regular season seeding directly determines their postseason matchups. However, the majority of soccer competitions across the world function via a different convention. The end of the group stage in soccer is followed by a knockout round draw that randomly pairs teams to determine upcoming matches. Most prominent among the tournaments employing this technique

is the UEFA Champions League (UCL), Europe’s highest level club competition. This season’s edition of the group stage finished in early December, and the draw for the Round of 16 was held on Monday, December 13, but after a blunder during the draw, the integrity of this system has come into question.

The UCL Round of 16 draw is not meant to be completely random. The teams are separated into two pots based on whether they were first or second in their group, and each team is paired with another

from the opposite pot. Teams are limited to a maximum of seven potential opponents, since clubs cannot be pitted against another team from their group and also cannot play against a team from their country. For instance, this year, English side Chelsea could only be drawn to play against Ajax, Bayern Munich, Lille, and Real Madrid. Despite these complications, the draw is intended to be as transparent as possible. It is broadcasted live to viewers and performed in front of representatives from each

of the teams, employing techniques such as the stirring of identical balls prior to selection in order to ensure its integrity.

This year, as fans tuned in to watch the free livestream on UEFA’s website, one of the matches decided by the draw violated these rules. Spanish team Villarreal was paired with Manchester United, a team that was ineligible to face them because they had been in the same group during the group stage. UEFA Deputy General Secretary Giorgio Marchetti, who has led

all draws since 2016, immediately spotted the mistake and advised UEFA Final Ambassador Andrey Arshavin to redraw the second team. Manchester United’s rival, Manchester City, was drawn against Villarreal instead, and the draw continued as usual. At this point, fans were overjoyed by one match in particular: Paris Saint-Germain vs. Manchester United, which pitted the best two players of this gen-

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NFL

The NFL Needs a London Franchise

By KHUSH WADHWA

The New York Giants and Miami Dolphins squared off to play one of the weekend's first football games in a rain-soaked stadium on October 28, 2007. However, most people present at the stadium were more interested in the rough, close game than the performance of either team. On the converted soccer pitch at Wembley Stadium, the Giants and Dolphins were playing the NFL's first exhibition game in the United Kingdom. More than 81 thousand fans showed up to watch the spectacle, and though the 13-10 score was less than impressive, Londoners were happy with the product. Over the next several years up to 2021, the NFL would host 30 games at various venues in London. The crowds that each game drew suggest that London is capable of having its own NFL team and that such an endeavor would even prove profitable for the NFL. However, the league has been hesitant to move forward with this plan.

Part of why the league remains ambivalent stems from the NFL Europa League, or the World League of American Football. This league featured franchises such as the Ohio Glory, the Montreal Machine, the Berlin Thunder, and the London Monarchs. Even Scotland had its own team. If you haven't heard of this league, you're not alone. It was an experiment put forth by the NFL to try and garner international attention, but was never very popular compared to the NFL. It was a solely European endeavor from 1995 to 2007, with teams from Germany and several other European nations, such as England. Attendance at each game never surpassed 21 thousand and only reached 20 thousand during Europa League's last year of operations in 2007. Though the league garnered some undrafted talent like Kurt Warner, who would later lead the St. Louis Rams to a Super Bowl victory, it was mostly a quiet venture. Were it not for this league's failure, NFL executives would likely be more enthusiastic about the lucrative benefits of a London team.

When founding a franchise overseas, "the big issue is the football logistics," as recognized by NFL Chief Strategy and Growth Officer Chris Halpin. For many NFL

franchises, including the Chargers in 2020, finding a venue has been a significant issue. However, London has several venues which could host a team. Though most games have occurred at Wembley Stadium, home to the English national

States, especially the west coast, to London would be jet lagged and at a disadvantage compared to the home team. Team personnel and trainers are trying to combat this issue with special sleep schedules, and to some extent, they have suc-

take some effort from the league-wide logistics team. The cost of these flights could reach \$1 million per cross-Atlantic transaction. However, this cost is outweighed by the \$30 million in ticket sales at the NFL's Wembley games, a sig-

from Wendover Productions brilliantly summarizes that the NFL would have to persuade their players "monetarily or otherwise."

The UK government, however, has recognized the effect of American football in the nation. "The NFL has become a regular fixture in the UK's brilliant sporting calendar," UK Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said. NFL research shows approximately 13 million NFL fans watch the sport in the UK. The cultural hold suggests that facilitation for youth in the UK to play American football is in the near future. Plus, with enough financial incentive, odds are that most NFL players would be willing to play across the Atlantic, considering the monetary hardships that many, especially those with unpaid college careers, begin with. Though the NFL has not researched whether or not players would be willing to cross the Atlantic, a small financial stipend would likely seal the deal for enough talent to cross.

There is a flipside to this story. Though the NFL is terrified of a lack of success suggested by the failure of the Europa League, the Hawaii Rainbow Warriors have been handling a similar charade for years. As a Division 1 Football team, their students have had to play games in places ranging from Las Vegas to Amherst, which sit at similar distances from Hawaii as London to New York and California. Additionally, as students, the Hawaiians are brought to the continent closer to games than exhibition teams are brought to London.

If the Hawaiian Rainbow Warriors didn't exist, there would be significant implications for Hawaiian talent looking to find a place in the league. For London, a growing British fanbase in the sport has presented a strong case for expansion in the nation's capital. The league has made it clear that unless a franchise from the States would like to move, which is not favored by any team at the moment, it is not yet prepared to allow the foundation of one in London. However, there is serious incentive for putting a new franchise in the business capital of Europe. At some point, if the NFL wishes to expand culturally and financially, it has no choice but to bring joy to Londoners with the promise of a real NFL franchise in the city.



ceded in minimizing the effect of jet lag. The Seattle Seahawks shared their strategy with the world, showing how their players got extra sleep during the flight and practices were rescheduled and lightened. Seahawks Director of Player Health and Performance Sam Ramsden prepared three-sheet guides for the team to help them manage their sleep and adjust their schedules for better gametime performance. The NFL's procedure for its current exhibition games is to allow the teams returning to the states a bye week to rest and recover before their next set of games. The sheer amount of personnel and equipment that goes into each NFL game, most of which goes unnoticed by the crowd, measures in the tons. The NFL has to charter multiple planes between London and their traveling opponent to support the team's arrival. And that's not including customs declarations, passports, and the special regulations that come with going abroad in general. Unlike Canada, there are fewer unique programs that Americans get when traveling to the UK to expedite security processes. Though these problems exist, the league has been able to combat them, as shown by the exhibition games, but upping the scale will

significant amount that stands to grow over time if London is granted its own team to cheer for week after week.

In terms of scheduling, there are some issues that are too large to combat. After an away game, a team will typically return to its home city for practices before the next game. However, a London team facing away games would find this routine very difficult. Therefore, it is likely that the NFL will schedule London's team in blocks, grouping sets of home and away games together. This system means that London's team would be forced to share practice facilities and equipment with their next game's host or would need a special practice facility built in the United States that would serve as their hub when away. The latter option, clocking in at a multi-million dollar price tag, is not yet in consideration by the NFL.

Finally, there comes the subject of players. The UK does not have a considerable number of talented youths who would be willing to play American football, meaning that most of the London team's talent would come from American sources. Setting aside the national pride this sourcing may harm, there are severe issues. Sam Wendover

Another trouble has been flights. There is no doubt that a team heading from the United

clubs ended up with more difficult games in the redraw. Spanish contender Real Madrid was originally pitted against Portuguese team Benfica, but in the redraw was matched up with Paris Saint-Germain, a much tougher opponent. Since they had been drawn against Benfica before the blunder involving Manchester United and Villarreal, they argued that their original draw should stand. However, these complaints exposed the hypocrisy among major teams, as Real Madrid President Florentino Pérez recently proposed a new European Super League, which would be exclusive to the biggest teams and would replace the UCL for the sole purpose of providing fans with more entertainment.

Soccer fans have come up with a conspiracy theory that UEFA purposefully rigs its draws, with corruption possibly based on bigger teams paying to have easier games. After all, this incident was not the first time that the draw has faced controversy, with past verbal and visual evidence suggesting some form of corruption. Previ-

ously, videos surfaced online of UEFA employees picking a ball out and then stirring it, or even picking a ball out and putting it back in, with legends like Ian Rush, Ronaldo Nazário, and Javier Zanetti all caught on video performing

as the heating and cooling of balls to ensure that they obtain desired draws. Many fans have since used this theory to explain why Rush, Nazário, and Zanetti put the balls back before even opening them, though Marchetti shot back by call-

teams early on in the competition, they can ensure that the more popular teams will be in the semifinals or finals of the competition. For UEFA, this guarantee means more money, as juggernaut games in the late stages of the competition cause increased TV viewership as opposed to such games happening earlier. As seen with the creation of the European Super League last year, those in power are trying to make soccer more profitable, and fixing games seems like a rather easy solution to this problem. Moreover, pleasing the bigger teams by giving them easier fixtures could be UEFA's way of making sure that they retain exclusive rights to continental tournaments and do not lose teams to the Super League.

In the end, this vicious cycle of whether the clubs or UEFA holds the power comes back to money, when in reality, the competition should truly be about giving each team a fair chance to win. Soccer is for the fans, and if UEFA cannot increase viewership without purposefully rigging fixtures, rebranding may be necessary.

UEFA

The UEFA Champions League Draw: Balls of Fate or Fraud?

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eration, Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, against each other for the first time at their new clubs.

However, fixing the mistake in the draw was not as easy as Marchetti and Arshavin thought, as ambassadors from Atlético Madrid realized that the technical error prevented them from being paired against Manchester United. The La Liga team was instead drawn against German champion Bayern Munich, and they appealed for the draw to be redone. UEFA confirmed the mistake. "Following a technical problem with the software of an external service provider that instructs the officials as to which teams are eligible to play each other, a material error occurred in the draw for the UEFA Champions League Round of 16," the tournament said in a statement.

Ultimately, the whole draw was redone. UEFA's mistake angered fans, who were misled about a possible showcase match between Messi and Ronaldo, and many

suspicious actions. In a shocking interview with Argentine daily newspaper La Nación, the former head of FIFA Sepp Blatter claimed that UEFA employs tactics such

"Following a technical problem with the software of an external service provider that instructs the officials as to which teams are eligible to play each other, a material error occurred in the draw for the UEFA Champions League Round of 16." —Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)

ing this conspiracy "a joke." Conspiracists aren't without reason, as UEFA does have its motives. By purposely fixing games so that bigger teams play smaller

ing this conspiracy "a joke." Conspiracists aren't without reason, as UEFA does have its motives. By purposely fixing games so that bigger teams play smaller

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

Girls' Gymnastics

The Felines Are Clawing Their Way Through a Rocky Start

By TY ANANT

What is the most physically demanding sport Stuyvesant offers? For many, wrestling or track may immediately come to mind. However, most people overlook another grueling sport that requires extreme body control and discipline: gymnastics. The Felines, Stuyvesant's girls' gymnastics team, are commendable for taking on such a strenuous sport but have struggled this year from issues affecting them outside of the gym. In their seven scheduled meets thus far, the Felines were significantly held back by their lack of personnel, as many of their gymnasts were unable to compete. However, the roster is filling up once again as gymnasts are making their returns from quarantine and injuries, and the team now looks poised to take the medal.

A typical school gymnastics team needs around five or six

people to compete at a meet. The scoring system tallies the scores of gymnasts to determine the team's total score for each event. Thus, a team competing with fewer members is put at a significant disadvantage. Unfortunately, this issue has become an all too common reality for the Felines this season, as their shortage of available gymnasts has caused them to lose events despite having higher average scores than the opposing team.

Despite these setbacks, the Felines were able to jump and flip their way to a solid first meet win against John F. Kennedy High School on December 10. The five competing Stuyvesant gymnasts all contributed to the 37-point victory, but sophomore Margaux Scandura and freshman Alisa Long stood out in particular with their stellar performances. Scandura finished with top scores for all three events she competed in, while Long captured a large margin

of victory (29.10-13.70) in the all-around finals. The Felines outperformed the JFK gymnasts by four points on an average individual basis and won every event despite being outnumbered. "We don't have that many people on our team, but everyone we do have is really good, so we're able to beat some of the schools," Scandura said.

In certain cases, however, the Felines' talent has been unable to make up for their lack of personnel. "Bronx Science is definitely our biggest challenge, and we haven't been able to get past them with the amount of people we have," Scandura. This season, the Felines have faced the Bronx Science Wolverines in two meets and lost by a margin of over 20 points on both occasions. The Wolverines are definitely a major obstacle, as their two wins over Stuyvesant have prevented the Felines from claiming the top spot in the league. Particularly, in their

second meeting on January 12, the Felines lost by 30 points. While Stuyvesant's gymnasts were not performing at a noticeably lower level than the Wolverines, they were only able to compete with three gymnasts. However, this handicap should be lifted when the two teams meet again on February 2.

With gymnasts returning from various injuries and COVID quarantines, the Felines will soon have a full team together, which will give Stuyvesant a good chance at winning this year—apart from being outnumbered, they looked almost as good as their rivals in previous meets. "Personally, I'm upset I haven't competed against them yet, but we will be facing [Bronx Science] at finals, and I'm super excited to show them our gymnastics," junior Daria Minhas, who hasn't been able to compete in most of the meets, said. Minhas competed on the 20th, the Felines' first meet

with most of their gymnasts back. Stuyvesant outplaced third-ranked John F. Kennedy in three out of the four events and won by an overall margin of 25 points. Minhas, who won the all-around finals and the vaulting event, is having a visible impact on the team. Moreover, Scandura, who missed most of January in quarantine, is back and performing at her best.

While early season complications held the Felines back from competing at their full potential, the future of girls' gymnastics at Stuyvesant seems to be back on the track to win a medal, and the girls are determined to make this goal a reality. "We've consistently placed fourth in the city for way too many years in a row, and we're trying to medal this year. That requires beating [Bronx] Science, and with the full potential of the girls on the team this year, I think we have a good shot," Minhas said.

Wrestling

The Spartans' Resurgence

By EFE KILIC

The Spartans, Stuyvesant's co-ed wrestling team, are red-hot coming off their dominant 63-9 win over rival Hunter College High School. This accomplishment was thanks to wins by seniors Daniel Abramov and Saif El Mosalami, junior Ariel Fuchs, and sophomore Trystan Woutersz. Despite their current successes, the Spartans had to persevere through a multitude of challenges to come this far.

The Spartans missed their 2020 season because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with just four returning members. However, the team currently boasts a roster with just over 40 people. The 2022 captains, seniors Justin Kim, Ryan Poon, and El Mosalami, have recruited relent-

lessly over this past fall to produce the highest roster count in team history. "We found some gems within our recruiting season. Seniors [...] Abramov and Sean Ging have been great, boasting undefeated records throughout the season," El Mosalami said.

There is much promise for the 8-0 Spartans this season. In the games they've played, they've won with a point spread of 390-69. So far, the team has placed second in both the Lehman High School and Eagle High School tournaments. As they steamroll their competition, questions arise as to whether or not they can keep the streak going, since they are currently first in the Manhattan Division and headed to playoffs. "The undefeated record hasn't altered the mentality or

put any pressure on the team. We just practice, get better, and win, day in and day out. We [have] got some great wrestlers on this team, so I am confident in our ability to win every match we play," Coach Murray said.

The Spartans have fought through many challenges, with the pandemic being a major one. In the hardships presented by remote learning, they were not able to recruit or engage in frequent in-person team meets to keep everybody in shape for the season to come. However, the barriers presented by the virus did not interfere with the mindsets of the captains this season. To overcome the lost season, the captains run practices five times a week from 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. while dealing with the de-

mands that come with senior year. Through their emphasis on conditioning and drilling technique, the Spartans have become one of the top teams in the city. "Wrestling is all about technique," Poon said. "Considering the time we lost due to the virus, frequent meets are important to get the new guys back on track. From the looks of it, it is working out."

Even with so many new members, the Spartans did not find it challenging to get everyone accustomed to wrestling and to start their reign of terror. The team captains work tirelessly to help run practice and teach newcomers how to wrestle. Wrestling provides experience in pivoting, power, speed, and base athleticism. "You do not need a sports background to excel

in wrestling. I am an example," El Mosalami said, mentioning how joining sophomore year propelled him to build his character and find his talents. The future of the Spartans looks very bright, with the likes of junior Anvar Kadirbekov (4-2), Fuchs (3-0), sophomore Joseph Kim (6-0), and sophomore Zoe Chin (5-1).

The Spartans have blossomed into wonderful wrestlers, ending their season with an undefeated record and striving to continue their dominance in the playoffs. Ging explained his aspirations for the team going forward. "We're looking to make a statement in the playoffs and upcoming tournaments. I feel that there is more for us as a team to achieve, but I'm really proud of how far we have come," he said.

NBA

How Can the Lakers Turn Things Around?

By JOHAN WIELAARD

It is no secret that the Los Angeles Lakers' season has not exactly gone as expected thus far. The team has a lackluster .471 record, injury problems, and subpar performances from star players. The Lakers currently have a record of 24 wins and 27 losses, making them the ninth seed in the Western Conference. They are two wins behind their rivals, the Los Angeles Clippers, who are without Kawhi Leonard and Paul George. Fans have pressured the front office and Lakers General Manager Rob Pelinka to make changes immediately. So, what happened to the Lakers this season?

Pelinka has always been known for taking risks, such as drafting Lonzo Ball second overall in 2017 and trading away the Lakers' young core for Anthony Davis in 2019. There's no doubt that he took a huge risk with the acquisition of Russell Westbrook in last summer's offseason. Westbrook has been a picture of inconsistency throughout his NBA career. Ever since Kevin Durant's departure from Oklahoma City, Westbrook hasn't made it out of the second round of the playoffs. He had one MVP season back in 2017 and has averaged nearly a triple-double ever since. However, those triple-doubles are not consistently equating to wins, and at times, it seems as if Westbrook cares more about the stats than winning.

The Lakers added Westbrook to an already average three-point

shooting team and signed other free agents, such as Wayne Ellington and Carmelo Anthony, which made the team's average age one of the highest in the NBA. The Lakers' old age hasn't helped their effort, as they frequently get outthrustled by teams objectively worse than them. Davis put it bluntly after a blowout loss to the Minnesota Timberwolves. "We sucked. No defense. Can't score," he said. "We come out slow, lackadaisical offensively and defensively. We got to get it together." Though Davis is having a good season, averaging 23 points and 9.7 rebounds, he is still nowhere near the level he needs to play at. The dominant, shot-blocking, tenacious AD just isn't there anymore. The fact that Davis is injury-prone does not help either. When he is out for many weeks at a time, it hurts the team's ability to develop chemistry with their strongest lineup in play.

Amidst the team's struggles, recent signings have been a breath of fresh air. Austin Reaves and Stanley Johnson were both unsigned to NBA teams, and Pelinka took them on. Johnson plays strong defense and puts in all his effort each match. Reaves is defensively tenacious and provides good three-point shooting to help space the floor. Nowadays, with Davis out, the Lakers feel like a version of a LeBron and Co. team. This team is heavily reminiscent of the 2018 Cavaliers, who were also riddled with veterans and semi-star players who eventually got traded away. The LeBron and Co. formula only works if you

go all in on it. Trade away "better" players to acquire good three-point shooters, and let LeBron James run the offense surrounded by shooters. However, this solution may not work for this Lakers team, seeing as James is 37 years old and no longer able to carry the load he used to.

It's time for the Lakers to trade Westbrook. His turnovers are, simply put, demoralizing. When you have a player who is often the very reason you lose games, it's quite clear what your problem is. In games where Westbrook has six or more assists, it is probable that he has four or more turnovers. It cannot be overstated how devastating turnovers are, especially in the last quarters of close games. When a team turns the ball over, the other team has a chance to counter, which often leads to an easy three-point shot or layup. This issue is not a new one for Westbrook, as we have seen for several years now. He has proven to be a stubborn player, and James's window in Los Angeles is rapidly closing. The Lakers don't have time for Westbrook to figure it out, and they need to implement changes immediately.

Another point of interest regarding the Lakers is their coaching staff. Head coach Frank Vogel led them to a title in 2020, but many have felt that his coaching has been subpar since then. Vogel is a traditional, defense-minded coach who hadn't seen much success prior to being with the Lakers. His questionable rotations and insistence on playing with Dwight Howard

or DeAndre Jordan as opposed to younger players has made some Lakers fans push for his dismissal. Things would be easier for Vogel if Davis wanted to play his natural center position. This way, the team would have spacing and defense at the center position. Assistant coach Phil Handy has emerged as a candidate for the head coaching role amid Vogel's dismissal rumors. Handy was an assistant for the Cleveland Cavaliers, the Toronto Raptors, and the Lakers. Clearly, he knows his way around a James-led team.

The Lakers are truly in a tough situation, but fans remain hopeful

that Pelinka will come up with a solution soon. Trading Westbrook for another guard on a bad contract may be feasible, but Pelinka should keep in mind that in the NBA, your point guard must be able to shoot. A new voice in the dressing room might be the answer the Lakers are looking for. Handy has a great relationship with James, and he possesses a stern toughness that is necessary to control the many personalities on the Lakers. Whatever Pelinka and Lakers owner Jeanie Buss decide, they need to decide quickly. The trade deadline is fast approaching, and Lakers fans are expecting change.

SPORTSBEAT

Australian professional tennis player **Ashleigh Barty** won her third career Grand Slam, defeating **Danielle Collins** in the **Australian Open** women's final.

Twenty-two-year-old Serbian striker **Dušan Vlahović** signed for **Juventus F.C.** in a four-year deal worth €70 million.

The **2022 Winter Olympics** have begun, with 109 events taking place and 91 nations competing.

The **Tampa Bay Buccaneers** lost 30-27 against the **Los Angeles Rams**, knocking them out of contention for the Super Bowl LVI.

Francis Ngannou retains the UFC Heavyweight Champion title, after winning by unanimous decision vs. **Ciryl Gane** in the main event of **UFC 270**.