



The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper

“The Pulse of the Student Body”

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OPINIONS

“Remember Tulsa”

Remember Tulsa

Marking 100 years since the Tulsa Race Massacre, Opinions writer Isabel Ching details the history behind the event and the long-lasting impact it has on race relations today.

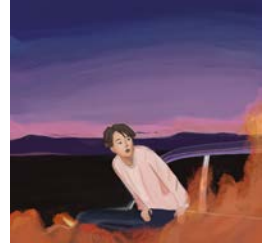
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

“Alfie Templeman Ignites the Imagination”

A&E writer Frances Schwarz reviews the brand new record from indie-pop artist Alfie Templeman, a genre blending project that serves as concrete proof of a rising star.

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2021 ENDORSEMENTS



Senior Caucus, Cynthia Tan and Elio Torres



Junior Caucus, Daniel Jung and Andrey Sokolov



Sophomore Caucus, Amanda Cisse and Margaret Mikhalevsky

Congratulations to the 2021-2022 Caucus Leaders. Read pages 4-5 to learn more about each.

NEWSBEAT

Students who have received NX grades on their report cards this year will likely attend summer school.

Regents examinations this year are optional, with students automatically opted out of them.

NYC public schools will be fully reopening for in-person learning this September with no remote option for students.

Seniors Brian Zhang and Lamia Haque are recipients of the 2021 New York Times College Scholarship.

Seniors Arpita Saha, Massimo Pensabene, Lisa Chen, and Md Hoque are all recipients of the ACE Scholarship.

Robotics team StuyPulse FRC 694 won the Designer's Award in the Game Design Challenge and the Regional Chairman's Award in the 2021 FIRST Robotics Competition.

Stuyvesant Continues Building Renovations Amid Remote Instruction

By CHRISTOPHER SULLIVAN, EUGENE YOO, JINA KOH, and NADA HAMEED

Additional Reporting by Pulindu Weerasekara

While the Stuyvesant building was nearly devoid of people for the past year, its plans for renovations did not come to a halt. Stuyvesant has completed replacing 12 of its 13 escalators and is currently working on the construction of a new robotics lab.

Escalators

Though the building's escalators had previously gone through renovations pre-pandemic, the lack of students in the building has proved advantageous to the project's completion. “The pandemic has actually helped with the completion of this project, as the company (Kone) has been able to continue work throughout and with less interference from school events and activities,” Assistant Principal of Security/Health and

P.E. Brian Moran said in an e-mail interview.

The replacements were prompted after the two-to-four escalator malfunctioned while students were on it, causing several injuries. Since then, the escalators have gone under construction, creating an inconvenience in traveling through the building. “In the two years since the accident, students have been without escalators, for the most part, making traveling between classes exponentially more difficult,” Moran said.

After hearing concerns, former Principal Eric Contreras pushed to replace all escalators. “Mr. [Eric] Contreras had been an advocate for a full replacement of the escalators for some time and was able to help get the project started,” he said. “The project has been funded and managed by the School Construction Authority and did not come from the school budget.”

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Weissman Hosts Discussion with Mayoral Candidate Kathryn Garcia ('88)

By JENNY LIU and MOMOCA MAIRAJ

Social studies teacher Linda Weissman hosted a discussion with New York City mayoral candidate and Stuyvesant alumna Kathryn Garcia ('88) via Zoom on May 19. Senior Ann Zhang facilitated the discussion, touching on topics such as Garcia's Stuyvesant background and policy reform.

During the event, Garcia talked about how her experience as commissioner for the NYC Sanitation Department, which is responsible for garbage collection, recycling collection, street cleaning, and snow removal, inspires many of her climate change-related policies. She also worked at the Department of Environmental Protection and launched NYC's first electronic waste recycling program, a styrofoam ban, and the nation's largest food scraps recycling program.



Courtesy of Kathryn Garcia Press Team

Some of her mayoral initiatives would include converting Rikers Island, NYC's main jail complex, into a renewable energy zone, implementing a Green New

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Sasha Sokolow / The Spectator

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Elika Oppenheimer / The Spectator

News

Spanish Cinema/Great Films Elective Returns to Stuyvesant

By ISABELLA JIA, MAGGIE SANSONE, and SAKURA YAMANAKA

After being cut from the 2020-21 school year due to budget cuts, the Spanish Cinema/Great Films elective will be returning for the 2021-22 school year. The elective, taught by Spanish teacher Anna Montserrat, offers students the opportunity to watch Spanish films and immerse themselves in the Spanish language and culture.

The course mainly features films from Spain and Latin America from various time periods. “The course is an overview of some of the most important films from the Spanish-speaking cinema, representing both Spain and Latin America. I’m going to be covering from the very beginning of cinematic history to the present day,” Montserrat said.

This elective was originally created five years ago for students who finished the AP Spanish course but wanted to continue studying the language in their next year. “We thought that Stuyvesant needed a fourth year of elective because a lot of students finish the Spanish AP and they want to continue taking and studying Spanish,” Montserrat said. This year, those who have taken Spanish III will be eligible to take the elective.

Montserrat decided to make the elective on Spanish films due to her passion for movies. “I love movies, and I watch a lot of them because it makes me understand better my culture, my country, and the world, along with people and relationships,” she said. “What’s a family and its definition in the United States? Maybe the definition of family in Mexico, in Spain and other countries are different. Maybe through a movie, we can compare different families and stereotypes.”

Spanish teacher Pasqua Roccio noted the importance of an elec-

tive that featured films. “We need to do a variety of different approaches to teaching, and I think that film and anything in the arts [is] very important, not only to [teach] but to [learn] too. For me, the film doesn’t serve only as an elective, but something more serious,” she said.

The films shown in this elective cover many subjects regarding historical events of Spanish-speaking countries. “I divide the class into different topics. For example, one of the topics is an introduction of the history of the Spaniards. Another topic is about social-political parties and conflicts in Spain and Latin America,” Montserrat said. “We have other topics including immigration, personal problems, or personal conflicts for people who decide to immigrate into any country.”

Montserrat emphasized that ideas discussed in the class can apply to current events. “This is going to benefit them because they watch movies that touch on topics including immigration, social justice, politics, and social relations,” she said. “Through a movie [...] understanding a language and how a country works makes you a better student, person, and scholar.”

The class includes projects and discussions that align with the films watched. Some notable films watched are “La Nana,” “Chico y Rita,” “Mujeres al Borde de un Ataque de Nervios,” and “Los Que Se Quedan.” “In class, we watch the films, have group discussions, and read literature related to the topics and films. We also have different projects. The class is mostly projects, presentations, group discussions, and some tests about the movie topic, nothing out of the ordinary,” Montserrat said.

Barnett Zhao (’18) enjoyed these projects, especially one where students had the opportunity to create their own films.

“Throughout the year, the students worked on making their own original films. I particularly enjoyed working with my classmates, from writing the script to recording to editing,” he said in an e-mail interview. “Though it was a challenging process, collaborating with other students in the class to put together this year-long project was incredibly rewarding.”

For Zhao, taking Spanish Cinema/Great Films helped him appreciate films more and understand their significance. “Because of this elective, I can now talk and write about films in a more nuanced way. I also developed an appreciation for film as an artistic medium, and now I often look to film when I’d like to learn more about the culture or history of a region,” he said.

Similarly, Tasfia Bashar (’18) noted that the class challenged her to think differently about films and the process of making them. “For one thing, it made me reflect a lot on the ways in which history impacts the media and the depiction of culture on screen. It develops your analytical skills by allowing you to see how different parts of filmmaking are crucial to the creation of the final piece,” she said in an e-mail interview.

She also noted the relevance of Spanish Cinema/Great Films beyond high school. “Two of the movies I watched during the class—“Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown” and “Pan’s Labyrinth”—have come up either in conversation or in my classes at college,” Bashar said. “Also, even if the workload doesn’t seem that intense, the type of discussions you’ll be having in the class are actually college level.”

Though Spanish Cinema/Great Films was not offered this year, Stuyvesant graduates who took the elective recommend that current students take it. “I highly recommend this elective to



Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons and NASA

WORLD BEAT

Moderna will apply for FDA authorization after trials proved to be effective in 12 to 17-year-olds.

President Joe Biden ordered his team to **investigate the origins of COVID-19** in light of the re-emergence in the **lab leak theory**.

Belarus intercepted a commercial plane to seize a prominent opposition journalist, sparking outrage internationally.

The **European Union** reopened its borders to **fully vaccinated** visitors from countries considered coronavirus safe.

An **Israel-Hamas cease-fire** began on May 20 after 11 days of fighting with more than 240 deaths.

New York Attorney General Letitia James joined the criminal fraud **investigation** against the **Trump Organization**.

Amy Cooper, who **called the police** on a **Black man** birdwatching, **sued her former employer** for being terminated.

The **Supreme Court** will review the **Mississippi Abortion Law**, which could potentially **overturn** the verdict made by **Roe v. Wade** case.

students who are interested. It’s a great way to deepen your appreciation of film, practice your

Spanish, and learn about Latin American history and politics,” Zhao said.

Weissman Hosts Discussion with Mayoral Candidate Kathryn Garcia (’88)

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Deal for public housing, and introducing green roofs for every school.

Attendees were aware of her experience in public service and responded favorably to the feasibility and direction of her policies. “I was impressed by her experience running the Department of Environmental Protection and Sanitation Department in the Bloomberg and De Blasio administrations. She impressed me with her discussion about reorienting the city towards renewable energy, building green infrastructure, and protecting the coastline,” social studies teacher Robert Sandler said in an e-mail interview. “Garcia also knows how the vast city bureaucracy works—she was interim chair of NYCHA—she’s a real New Yorker and she’s a pragmatist.”

Garcia’s transportation policies, which aligned with her climate change policies, struck a chord for other attendees. Some of her policies include expanding the bike lane network by 250 miles and electrifying 10,000 school buses. “I’m really into transportation policy [...] and I think she knows the ins and outs on how

the city government works. Having worked in it for so long [...] she has already done things with the waste management that was positive,” social studies teacher Dr. Zachary Berman said.

Regarding education, she plans to end middle school test screenings permanently and take away the Gifted and Talented

wasn’t really campaigning for that policy,” junior Cadence Li said.

Some also expressed surprise at the direction of her policies and would have liked further elaboration. “I remember being kind of surprised that she wanted a lottery program [...] especially since she’s a product of the Gifted & Talented program since she came

mom, and we just wanted to get the bigger scope of the mayoral candidates, and we wanted to see who all the options were and who seemed good and who didn’t, so I just thought it would be a good thing to go to for more information,” sophomore Lavender Reynolds said.

The discussion allowed at-

provided insights to her character. “She felt kind of casual, more like your teacher than a politician running for mayor of New York,” Li said. “Looking back on it, that kind of speaks more of her character than her policies. She doesn’t rely on pure speaking skills, and she has experience and plans for her policies moving forward.”

Hanna added, “Garcia was pretty down-to-earth. This was what struck me most. The contrast with some of the better known candidates (Adams, Yang, Wiley) was pretty pronounced [...] They all sound like they’re selling something. She sounded more like a manager, which I guess is what she is.”

If elected, many believe that Garcia could be a role model. “Garcia is a good example for Stuyvesant students, and in particular young women. It made an impression on me when she said that ‘Our city is nearly 400 years old, and we’ve never had a female mayor,’” Hanna said.

Ultimately, attendees left the discussion with a positive outlook on Garcia. “After the talk, I felt like she definitely felt like a very solid candidate. She felt very educated and well informed and I thought that her policies lined up with what I would want in a candidate,” Reynolds said.

“Garcia is a good example for Stuyvesant students, and in particular young women. It made an impression on me when she said that ‘Our city is nearly 400 years old, and we’ve never had a female mayor,’” —David Hanna, social studies teacher

program. However, she does not plan on abolishing the SHSAT, a major point of contention among school administrators and public officials. “Kathryn Garcia did say that Stuyvesant was one of the most stressful experiences she had ever been in, and that sort of prepared you for the real world, but I do understand that it’s an unpopular opinion to preserve the specialized high school system, so she

to Stuyvesant,” Li said. “I thought that she would [...] maybe be hesitant to abolish it. I would’ve appreciated it if someone asked her to go more in depth about how a lottery program would necessarily function better than some sort of revamping of the K-8 program.”

Overall, the discussion presented an opportunity to learn more about the mayoral race and local politics. “[I] went with my

attendees to learn more about Garcia and her policies. “I didn’t know much about Garcia before the talk except that she was the sanitation commissioner, a Stuy alum, and that the [New York] Times and [the New York] Daily News had endorsed her. If I saw her on the street, I don’t think I’d recognize her,” social studies David Hanna said.

Moreover, Garcia’s discussion



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Endorsements: Senior Caucus

SENIOR CAUCUS: CYNTHIA TAN AND ELIO TORRES

By KENISHA MAHAJAN and MAYA NELSON

After serving as Junior Caucus president and vice president over the past year, Cynthia Tan and Elio Torres are back for their final election, running uncontested for Senior Caucus. Aiming to make senior year fun and stress-free, their ticket is centered around addressing student concerns regarding the college admissions process, planning for senior events, advocating for additional electives, and tackling students' mental health concerns. With experience, preparation, and an amicable dynamic, it is likely that their ideas will become a reality.

With the hectic college application process in senior year, Tan and Torres plan on implementing a variety of events and resources to make the season more seamless. Priorities of theirs are making sure all of these resources are digestible and working in conjunction with the college office to centralize college resources and host informative events. These opportunities will include college essay workshops, senior advice events, a How-To-College series, and scholarship resources. All of these materials, along with application deadlines, open houses, and more, will be easily



Sasha Sokolov / The Spectator

available in a college calendar provided to students.

Where the Tan-Torres platform shines is in their plans for senior-specific events. In addition to senior prom, senior sunrise, and graduation, Tan and Torres plan to have a homecoming dance in the fall in order to bolster school spirit. Additionally, they hope to hold a summer kickoff in the coming months due to the lack of a junior prom this year. The two plan to host smaller initiatives, like a "Nostalgia Day" for seniors involving childhood shows and snacks or a photo booth near the senior bar to foster a sense of community.

However, the Tan-Torres ticket lacks a comprehensive plan to address students' struggles with mental

health. While Tan and Torres cite poor mental health as a large problem at Stuyvesant, their plans to remedy the issue seem fairly standard. The two are currently working with representatives from other specialized high schools on a mental health manual that dissects mental illnesses and provides tips on improving mental health. They also plan on hosting mediation and yoga events for students to destress and relax. While this proposal seems helpful, a plethora of similar resources are already available to students. Additionally, students have reported a lack of communication from the caucus, leaving many unaware of the resources that exist, furthering their ineffectiveness.

However, Tan and Torres rec-

RECORD: Having served the past two years together as president and vice president, Tan and Torres have an incomparable amount of experience under their belt. However, while they performed adequately in-person, there has been a growing disconnect between the caucus and students over the remote year due to a lack of transparency and communication with the student body, leaving many unaware of the events and resources they have worked on.

CAMPAIGN: The two have an amicable dynamic. They emphasize the importance of communication and trust, and their personal connection as friends only strengthens their professional relationship. The Tan-Torres ticket also prioritizes organization, efficiency, and direct communication within their caucus.

PLATFORM: The Tan-Torres ticket plans to focus on college readiness and senior events, along with an emphasis on alternatives and backup plans, many of which take into account COVID-19 regulations and administrative limitations. Their extensive experience in event planning enables them to expand on existing senior traditions while starting some of their own. Their college preparedness initiatives are a linear progression of their policies from this past year but lack specificity to the senior college application process.

ognize their unique position to advocate for the students' wants and needs, which includes bridging the parent-student gap by advocating for the student voice to parents and the administration and fighting for more lenient policies toward students to facilitate the return to in-person learning.

Overall, Tan and Torres promise an enjoyable senior year when it

comes to senior events, but they lack concrete solutions that address students' mental health and the return to in-person. Even so, with their experience as caucus leaders over the last three years and their strong ties with administrators in school and external organizations, the Tan-Torres Senior Caucus has both the plans for and the capabilities to execute their plans for the coming school year.

Endorsements: Junior Caucus

JUNIOR CAUCUS: DANIEL JUNG AND ANDREY SOKOLOV

By MATT MELUCCI and SAM LEVINE

Running uncontested for Junior Caucus co-presidents this year, Daniel Jung and Andrey Sokolov have promised to improve school life for "junies" (a play on the term "freshies") as they return to school in the fall. The platform emphasizes the importance of alleviating the stress of junior year, as well as that of a return to in-person learning.

One of Jung and Sokolov's main policy ideas centers around increased college readiness events, including ACT and SAT practice sessions, as well as their favorite idea, "So You Want To Major In," a continuation of the "So You Want To Be A..." series implemented this year. While similar ideas have been proposed and executed before, these ideas are substantial and achievable and will be beneficial to the student body. Jung and Sokolov also expressed an interest in developing closer ties to the college office, which, while potentially difficult, could help allevi-



Sasha Sokolov / The Spectator

ate some of the stress that they have alluded to in junior year—a notable achievement if successfully implemented.

As for returning to school in the fall, Jung and Sokolov lack specific ideas on creating a smooth transition back into the school building. However, they intend on using social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, to spread various important messages, which may help juniors. Jung and Sokolov also mention ideas for events upon a return to

school but haven't yet developed sufficient originality to make their event proposals substantial.

Overall, the Jung-Sokolov ticket is fairly strong and a more-than-viable pair to become Junior Caucus co-presidents. Jung's experience as Sophomore Caucus president has taught him the lay of the land, making him well-prepared to hold the Junior Caucus position, and Sokolov's experience as Chief of Staff has exposed him to the inner workings of a caucus. Clear from their strong

RECORD: Together, the Jung-Sokolov ticket has concrete experience in student government. The pair ran for Freshman Caucus back in 2019, and while their ticket did not win, Jung became president of Sophomore Caucus the next year after running. Jung and next year's SU Vice President Ryan Lee appointed Sokolov as their Chief of Staff in the process. Their long-term experience as a duo should facilitate their plans in Junior Caucus as they have worked with each other for the past year and learned the ropes of student government.

CAMPAIGN: Jung and Sokolov have set up an Instagram account that has gathered plenty of followers, with engagement on each post. On it, there is a platform document and a "JUNIES Suggestion Form" through which juniors can make comments and suggestions for the two to implement next year. The pair has solid chemistry as Jung and Sokolov clearly work well together. They are both in agreement in regard to their plans and ideas and are working to achieve the same end of reducing stress for the junior student body next year.

PLATFORM: The Jung-Sokolov platform revolves around keeping juniors updated and alleviating the stress of junior year. Their plan includes increased social media presence to better connect with students, as well as holding online events to address junior year struggles. However, many of their ideas have been either done or attempted before, such as the umbrella borrowing program, but they do show an ability to get their proposals done.

dynamic, their experience working as a duo will also surely benefit them, a

good sign of things to come for Jung and Sokolov this year.

Endorsements: Sophomore Caucus

WILSON LIN AND ETHAN KHOSH

By KELLY YIP, SONYA SASSON, and GERARD LIN

Wilson Lin and Ethan Khosh are a new pair in the world of student government. Built on their three tenets of trust, teamwork, and transparency, the Lin-Khosh platform aims to forge a seamless connection between the student body and the administration, believing that the current caucus needs a "fresh face." As Lin is a remote learner and Khosh is blended, they believe that they can implement the best of both worlds under their leadership.

Lin and Khosh plan to unite the student body by prioritizing in-person meetings and streaming them over Zoom for those remote while hosting remote ones as well. The team recognizes that much of the freshman body has never physically stepped into the Stuyvesant building, thus creating a disconnect. To address this, they propose holding events to familiarize students with



Eliza Oppenheimer / The Spectator

their building and "hall monitors," where upperclassmen will serve as "guides" to help students navigate through the school. Regarding the "hall monitors" proposal, it is unlikely that upperclassmen would willingly stand in the hallways as ready guides for lost students, especially when underclassmen can ask upperclassmen that happen to walk by anyway. Lin recognized this and suggested creating maps instead, but this idea is still in its beginning stages and lacks fleshed-out planning.

From game and movie nights to bake sales and holiday specials, Lin and Khosh presented a variety of plausible ideas that would help the student body bond and have fun. They also took into consideration the mental health issues among the student body through their "Mindful Moments" idea, where students would be given designated times to destress through methods like meditation, stress balls, and screaming. However, it remains unclear as to how they would implement this pol-

RECORD: The pair has limited experience in student government. Lin had led club activities in middle school while Khosh does not have any notable leadership experience.

CAMPAIGN: Lin and Khosh have an active Facebook page and an Instagram account where they share details about their platform. However, Lin and Khosh seem to lack significant chemistry, though it is important to note that the interview was over Zoom.

PLATFORM: With their tenets of trust, teamwork, and transparency, the Lin-Khosh ticket emphasizes the importance of feedback and cohesion to unite the student body. However, their student-oriented policies of academic help and periodic check-ins seem to be redundant with existing organizations in place.

Additionally, many of their event ideas have already been implemented by previous caucuses. Though well-intentioned, their ideas lack practicality that may hinder their ability to lead with ambition. A lack of originality that is evident in some other policies is most apparent in their proposed academic help and periodic check-ins idea, which are redundant with the existing AIS and ARISTA tutoring and guidance check-ins, respectively.

Assuming office at this tumultuous time will require more than a

plan. Leading the Sophomore Caucus demands experience—something the team does not have much of. Lin and Khosh also lacked chemistry during their interview, sometimes presenting conflicting solutions to certain problems, such as how they plan to familiarize remote students with the Stuyvesant building. Though their platform is cohesive and detailed, The Spectator ultimately does not endorse this ticket as another ticket would be better suited to lead the sophomore body.

Endorsements: Sophomore Caucus

SOPHOMORE CAUCUS: AMANDA CISSE AND MARGARET MIKHALEVSKY

By CLARA SHAPIRO and JARED MOSER

Cisse and Mikhalevsky's four-pillar platform is exactly what rising sophomores need to make the transition from fully remote to in-person learning. Perhaps the largest aspect of their campaign is an extensive academic plan that will help the current freshmen adjust to in-person school next year. One proposed idea was to continue the practice of using Google Classroom to organize and archive lessons and work, making it easier for students as well as teachers to stay up to date. Come AP season, Cisse and Mikhalevsky will organize week-by-week study schedules and caucus-organized practice tests.

Cisse and Mikhalevsky have also come prepared to confront the social challenges of the transition from online to in-person school. This is relevant particularly for a freshman class that has never been in the building. In the fall, Mikhalevsky and Cisse hope to create a map of the building to aid freshmen and sophomores in locating spots around the 10-story structure. The map will also highlight major sophomore "hangout spots," a helpful feature for a grade whose closest thing to a "hangout" this past



Eliza Oppenheimer / The Spectator

year was Google Hangouts. Cisse and Mikhalevsky also proposed some more standard-issue bonding ideas such as a themed sophomore dance and a picnic day.

Another major aspect of Cisse and Mikhalevsky's platform is inclusion. Even though they have spent little time inside the building, Cisse and Mikhalevsky have already had firsthand experience with microaggressions at Stuyvesant. To promote awareness, Cisse and Mikhalevsky plan to bring in guest speakers to speak on the current social justice

movements. They will also work with the English department to increase the diversity of authors represented in required readings. The pair intends to support both RISE and Stuy Prep, which are organizations that help students from underrepresented backgrounds prepare for the SHSAT and admission to Stuyvesant.

These plans are ambitious and feasible. Cisse's and Mikhalevsky's extensive prior experience, as well as their collaborative dynamic, makes them optimal candidates for carrying out a difficult job in a particularly dif-

RECORD: The Cisse-Mikhalevsky duo has more than sufficient experience to serve the student body. Cisse is the current Chief of Staff for Freshman Caucus and is a co-leader of the Youth Branch for mayoral candidate Dianne Morales. Mikhalevsky serves as the co-vice president of Spectrum, Stuyvesant's club for LGBTQ+ students, and held a leadership position in middle school working on the yearbook committee.

CAMPAIGN: Cisse, Mikhalevsky, and their campaign managers are a close-knit group of friends who are enthusiastic about serving the student body. The team has put together a website that outlines the central tenets and plans of their platform. Beyond the concrete pillars of their platform, Cisse and Mikhalevsky have the advantage of a strong friendship outside of their work for the Student Union. Cisse and Mikhalevsky speak as a united, cohesive voice—the reply of one always leaves room for the other to add on.

PLATFORM: The Cisse-Mikhalevsky duo has compiled a strong and comprehensive platform. The ticket is grounded on four "bases"—advocacy, growth, teamwork, and community. For each of these bases, Cisse and Mikhalevsky have specific and ambitious plans, particularly regarding how to transition the rising sophomore class smoothly from online to in-person.

ficult year. Cisse's position this past year as Chief of Staff guarantees a leader who is already deeply familiar and committed to Stuyvesant's student government; Mikhalevsky's experience leading Stuy Spectrum grants her experience both in leadership and in coordinating. Equally important to Cisse and Mikhalevsky's

respective leadership experience is that they are friends, and will enjoy a friendly and collaborative partnership.

As Cisse and Mikhalevsky's platform is just what the freshmen need to stay afloat amid the challenges of their sophomore year, The Spectator endorses this ticket.

WILLIAM TANG AND ESHAAL UBAID



Julia Lee / The Spectator

Sasha Socolow / The Spectator

By JENNY LIU and FRANCESCA NEMATI

The three pillars of the Tang-Ubaid ticket are adaptability, inclusivity, and innovation. They are cognizant of the importance of the former two, as their class—one that has yet to step foot into the school building collectively—transitions to in-person learning in the upcoming school year. Major initiatives to supplement the transition include a Contact Masterlist for easier communication among the sophomore body, utilizing other social media platforms such as Dis-

cord to send updates and other relevant information, and an advice column as part of a periodical newsletter. All are well-intentioned and realistic. They will still focus on online interaction, as they believe it provides the foundation for in-person engagement. Further elaboration on in-person engagement would have helped their platform, though.

Innovation was displayed through multiple initiatives such as promoting eco-friendly culture and merchandise, both of which draw on Tang and Ubaid's passions, respectively. Tang is part of the global climate strike

movement Fridays for Future. Their vision for the eco-friendly initiative involves ongoing collaboration with the Environmental Club. While interesting, this lacks details in their platform. Ubaid is serving as the assistant art director for SophFrosh SING! 2021 and helped design the logo for their ticket. They believe merchandise will encourage engagement and school spirit. They hope to collaborate with the Internal Affairs Department, the Student Union as a whole, and art teachers to help promote this. While not entirely necessary, this is a feasible and supportive policy.

RECORD: William Tang and Eshaal Ubaid have both garnered significant student government experience. The pair founded Be A Leader, a leadership club aimed at helping their fellow students gain leadership skills and increase their self-confidence. At Stuyvesant, Tang and Ubaid were both on the Events Committee of Freshman Caucus.

CAMPAIGN: Tang and Ubaid have a good rapport and complement each other both professionally and personally. They are both well-spoken, elaborating on each other's points with few pauses or breaks. Their confidence in their abilities is evident and present themselves as very capable leaders.

PLATFORM: The policies in their platform draw inspiration from their previous student government experience and deviate significantly from that of other caucuses. As previous members of the Events Committee of Freshman Caucus, they hope to use their knowledge of the inner mechanics of a caucus to implement cabinet reformation. This indicates a larger trend of their platform, in which they focus ambitiously on structural, administrative changes rather than community events, which was the focus of many caucuses this year.

A standout point in their policies is their focus on internal, structural change such as cabinet reformation. They hope to shed more light on the individual members and departments to improve public perception, using them directly as forms of communication to interact with the rest of the sophomore body. Internally, they hope to create a sense of community and accountability through work parties and record-keeping (think minutes but made public).

All of this demonstrates a willingness to be transparent and tackle what they believe to be the root of

the problem in student government: general unresponsiveness and apathy among the student population. They plan on enacting systemic change in how caucuses are structured in order to target the problem directly. This means reaching out to the sophomore body through different platforms, including everyone in updates, and working within the boundaries of what can realistically be done. They know the limitations they will undoubtedly encounter, but they are also creative problem solvers and can meet their goals without overextending their limitations.

UNIQUE ZHANG AND ALEKSEY OLKHOVENKO

By MOMOCA MAIRAJ and RUIWEN TANG

The Zhang-Olkhovenko ticket runs on a platform with five pillars—growth, unity, initiative, dedication, and empathy—emphasizing the importance of supporting the incoming sophomores during their first year in-person. Despite the pair's experience and chemistry, the ticket exhibits a lack of original ideas and some unnecessary proposals.

One of their priorities is the LifeStytle, which is an elaborate map and guide of the Stuyvesant building and surrounding areas. It entails a bird's eye view of Stuyvesant of features of the building, as well as a newsletter-style document with non-academic knowledge for students, such as the best restaurants near the building. This is their strongest idea, as such a guide could benefit sophomores in their first year in person.

Zhang and Olkhovenko also proposed the Hallway Helpers initiative to support rising sophomores, with upperclassmen volunteers—either SU members or willing students—stationed to direct lost students in between classes. Though this idea may help some on the first days of school, it is unnecessary in the long-term as students typically memorize



Courtesy of Unique Zhang and Aleksey Olkhovenko

the path to their classes after the first few weeks. Additionally, the pair proposes the Homeroom Buddies initiative, where SU members would join homeroom meetings to teach students about the SU. However, it is questionable how necessary or helpful this SU-centric policy would be for sophomores.

In addition to aiding sophomores, the Zhang-Olkhovenko ticket hopes to host events, such as the Snowball—a winter dance in the school gym—meme day and

movie/game nights. While many of these ideas are feasible, they lack originality as they have been hosted by past caucuses. They also plan to expand the talent show hosted this year—Stuyvesant's Got Talent—to an in-person format. While their virtual study sessions were unsuccessful this year due to low turnout, they plan to improve on their sessions by planning them further ahead of time with ARISTA and the SU. The pair also proposed starting a podcast featuring cabinet meeting recaps, SU

RECORD: Having served as co-presidents of Freshman Caucus, the pair worked closely with the other caucuses, the Student Union (SU), the administration, and even other high schools. They hosted several events during their tenure, such as a highly attended talent show, though their study hall sessions were less successful. Due to the challenge of remote learning, their willingness to accept feedback and create possible improvements in this year's platform is commendable.

CAMPAIGN: Zhang and Olkhovenko have a strong dynamic, given their friendship since middle school and close collaboration as Freshman Caucus co-presidents. The ticket has a well-organized social media presence with a sizable following that introduces their team and summarizes their policies.

PLATFORM: Both Zhang and Olkhovenko demonstrate capability in bringing their ideas to fruition and continuity from their time in Freshman Caucus, with a focus on transitioning sophomores to in-person learning and advocating for mental health. However, some proposals are unoriginal, unnecessary, or may struggle to gain traction among sophomores.

members, alumni, and Principal Yu, which could increase communication among Stuyvesant.

In light of the mental health discussion this year, Zhang and Olkhovenko also wish to introduce a new club called StuyTherapy for students to participate in destressing activities, such as ranting and ripping up paper. However, there are several clubs that already focus on mental health at Stuyvesant, such as Project Love and the Wellness Council, so it

is unclear how this club distinguishes itself.

Overall, Zhang and Olkhovenko have a strong background of experience and established relationships as co-presidents, with exuding enthusiasm and excellent chemistry to carry out their proposed policies. Unfortunately, their lack of new ideas and ideas that would expend more effort on part of the SU than would reap benefits for the Stuyvesant community.

News

Stuyvesant Continues Building Renovations Amid Remote Instruction

continued from page 1

The new escalators are planned to be fully functioning for the upcoming school year. “The 13 escalators are being replaced and [the company is] currently working on the final set of escalators, with an estimated completion date of June 2021,” Moran said.

Stuyvesant’s old escalators often broke down throughout the school day, especially during the few minutes students had to travel between their classes. “I’ve had a tough relationship with Stuy’s escalators as they almost never worked when I needed them to, and as a result, I would have to rush through several flights of stairs,” junior Junhao Zhen said.

This was especially inconvenient due to the number of floors in the Stuyvesant building. “I had to do more walking up and down the stairs [because of the escalators]; my second semester of freshman year I had to go from the 10th to the third to the ninth to the first [floor] which was really annoying,” sophomore Maya Brosnick said in an e-mail interview.

Teachers faced this hindrance as well. “Our school is very tall and going more than three stories between classrooms is a lot. On top of this, the lower stairwells can get very congested,” social studies teacher David Hanna said in an e-mail interview.

In facing fewer of these issues in the upcoming school year, students are positive about its replacement. “I’m very excited. I didn’t really expect them to get done for years,” Brosnick said. “Hopefully it will allow [students] to get to class-

es faster.”

Zhen expressed similar enthusiasm. “I can’t express how excited I am for September,” he said. “I look forward to being able to get to class quicker and not having to blame the escalators for my lateness.”

Teachers are hopeful that the new renovations will mitigate trouble for students as they move through the building. “I’m really excited for the renovations and once all escalators work, students will comfortably move around the school at [a] much faster pace and not worry about being late to their next class,” music teacher Liliya Shamazov said in an e-mail interview.

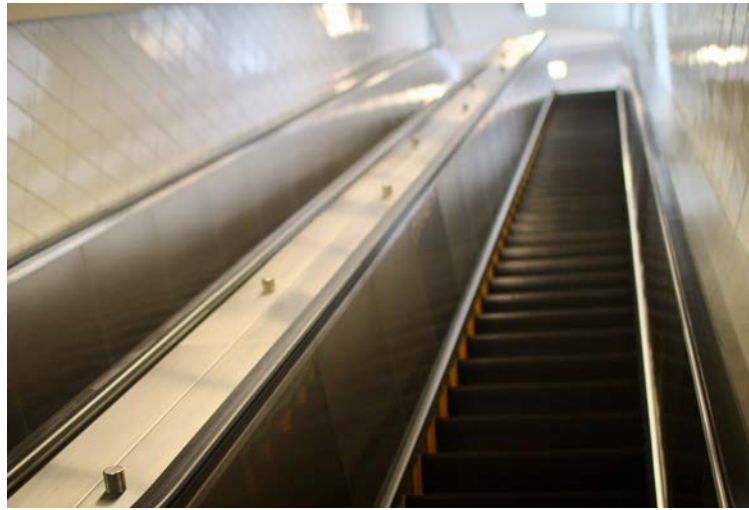
Many also acknowledge the ease that students will have with the new escalators. “The renovated escalators will make it easier, faster, and safer for both teachers and students to move around the building, which will ultimately lead to more productive school/work days and cause less stress in between class periods,” social studies teacher Svetlana Firdman said in an e-mail interview.

To keep the escalators in good condition and ensure students’ safety, students are expected to follow the standard rules in riding the escalators. “Never sit or face [backward] while riding the escalator, never place bags or loose clothing on or near the steps or on the railings, never stand in the middle of the step, never slide on the railing, or jump off the escalator, never [overcrowd] the escalator,” Moran said. “Maintain your distance to the person in front and behind, never attempt to travel up a down escalator, and inform the administration

immediately should you see or hear something wrong.”

Robotics Lab

The new Robotics lab was designed and developed by Stuyvesant teachers and external engineers. “I worked with [technology teacher] Mr. [Joseph] Blay, our Robotics



Sasha Socolow / The Spectator

Coach, (and Mr. Kunicki, another coach who works with the team) to develop a design concept for the Robotics Lab, and then the EME Group (Architectural Consulting Engineers who work with the Division of School Facilities) developed the design plans for the lab,” Assistant Principal of Chemistry & Physics Thomas Scott said in an e-mail interview.

Initially, the lab was intended to be complete by the start of 2020, but the date was postponed due to technicalities. “The original plan was to finish the Robotics Lab by January of 2020, but the project was delayed because the HVAC

design needed to be modified,” Scott said. “Because of the pandemic, the contractors could not get into the school building to start construction until September of 2020.”

The lab will be furnished with an array of new equipment. “The lab will have a metal printer, a fi-

ber printer, and an FDM printer along with several other pieces of fabrication equipment,” Scott said. “The students will be able to print objects in stainless steel, titanium, copper, carbon-fiber, and pc-abs (to name a few).”

Many see potential in the use of the new lab, especially for the robotics team. “Once the renovation is done, it will be immensely helpful for students and staff. The students who are on the robotics teams will have a new space to work in that will finally be big enough to house us and everything that we do,” Blay said in an e-mail interview. “In addition, the robotics classes will be

able to run in the new lab, exposing all of the students who take the classes to [state-of-art] equipment.”

Students on the robotics team express enthusiasm for the additional space and new technology to aid in their work. “It’ll be super helpful to have a space for robotics again. When we were still in person, we had to share the innovation lab with both Sci[ence] Olympiad and the FTC teams, or utilize the ceramics lab. The space that was available to us drastically decreased,” junior Michelle Zhang said in an e-mail interview. “The new lab would also provide us with space for a lot of our new machines [...] Most importantly, we’re getting an enormous amount of space to work in, which I’m really looking forward to.”

In addition to these renovations, Stuyvesant is planning for more projects in the future. “We have discussed the idea of building a new recording studio in Room 154, a new photocopy room in Room 253, a new environmental lab in Rooms 336 and 338, a new weight room in Room 580, and a nano lab with a [cleanroom] in Room 909 along with the idea of creating an observation desk with new classroom space on the balcony outside the cafeteria on the 5th floor,” Scott said.

These new additions are hoped to be an aspect of Stuyvesant to look forward to in the upcoming school year. “This should be an exciting September for students for many reasons but having state of the art escalators which actually work should make traveling from class to class much easier for students,” Moran said.

NYCDOE Declares Remote Instructional Days During Snow Days

By DERRICK LIN, JOSHUA WONG, MOZEN KALEFA, and REBECCA BAO

With the release of the 2021-2022 school year calendar on May 4, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) announced that instruction will resume remotely on snow days and Election Day instead of a day off.

Administrators believe that the past year of remote learning influenced the DOE’s decision to continue education on snow days. “Prior to remote learning, there was no way we were equipped to just ‘go remote’ in bad weather,” Director of Family Engagement Dina Ingram said in an e-mail interview. “This policy enables all employees to be working instead of getting a paid day off for inclement weather. It’s a good business decision for the DOE in that respect, obviously. It’s also ‘good’ instructionally because students do not miss classes—they take them at home.”

English teacher Heather Huhn believed that classes during snow days were to compensate for the loss of learning time due to the pandemic. “The DOE wants to make sure that the students are learning at every given opportunity and at every given moment and especially because it’s perceived that so much learning was lost over this pandemic,” she said. “It sent the message to the DOE that it’s possible, so therefore we [would] necessarily take days when at home and use them productively.”

As of now, the administration is uncertain of the scheduling during remote snow days, “Snow days are now expected to be instructional in some form (asynchronous

or synchronous),” Principal Seung Yu said. “We’re examining what next school year will look like and how we take some of the benefits of remote learning into consideration.”

In the past, snow days were seen as memorable days off from school for students. “Usually there would be a lot of snow right in front of our house because nobody put salt there and I didn’t have to shovel it either because it’s an apartment building,” freshman Arshia Mazumder said. “So a lot of the time we’d do the typical snow angels, snowmen, [and] sometimes we’d go to the nearby park and go sledding.”

Others also saw snow days as an opportunity to spend more time with their families. “I normally don’t get to spend much time with my family because they both work long hours in service jobs, so I saw snow days as good bonding time as well as an opportunity to catch up on work,” sophomore Sanjana Yasna said in an e-mail interview.

Snow days also served as a period of rest from the rush of the school schedule for teachers alike. “I would often spend them catching up on work,” Huhn said. “So maybe sleeping in a little bit and then catching up on papers I needed to grade, or making sure that my lessons were okay for the next day, moving forward. I really viewed them as a breath of fresh air or an exhale.”

While many students understand that issuing remote learning on school days allows for more educational time, they are disappointed by the change. “It makes sense from an administrative point of view because [...] if you had a snow day, you would take a day off

from one of the breaks,” sophomore Anjini Katari said. “It does make me kind of sad, though, because now you have to go to school no matter what. It [used to be] something to look forward to, a possibility of a snow day.”

Others also questioned the feasibility of switching to remote learning, given the spontaneity of snow days. “Snow days are especially rough for families facing financial hardship; no heating, plus parents worrying about work inconveniences, make it very difficult for poor kids to focus on synchronized classes,” Yasna said.

Sophomore Wenjia Lu agreed, adding the unpredictability of a sudden transition from in-person learning to remote. “Snow days don’t happen more than a few days per year, so why not just let the students take the day off?” she said in an e-mail interview. “Not to mention remote learning would probably be ineffective [anyway], since we would be having in-person education by then and suddenly transitioning to online class just for a day would be hectic.”

Adaptability may pose a challenge to a sudden switch to remote learning. “The only issues we have at Stuyvesant to face are ensuring that students always have internet and computer access to go remote at will (as well as teachers),” Ingram

said. “And also that our teachers have lessons and curriculum that can be accomplished whether we are at school or not.”

Furthermore, others had hoped to avoid remote learning in the upcoming school year. “I don’t think anyone wants to do remote learning anymore. The fact that I still have to have Zoom on my computer, even after the pandemic is over, it just seems so stupid,” Mazumder said.

The news has



Emily Lu / The Spectator

raised numerous concerns from teachers, who may face logistical challenges in a limited amount of time. “Teachers won’t necessarily have a Zoom link set up if they are teaching every day in class, so trying to scramble and get all that set up for just one day will be a bit of a pain,” math teacher Brian Sterr said. “If we are back

on our regular Stuyvesant schedule with 41-minute periods and four minutes passing, that schedule doesn’t lend itself to Zoom classes [...] It’s a little bit harder to transition while being in the building.”

Students and teachers alike may also continue to face the current issues present with remote instruction, such as technological problems. “If we go back to the 41-minute period classes [and] to transfer that directly into a remote day, you’re just not going to get through what you wanted to,” Huhn said. “There’s going to be students who are lagging, who are coming into the Zoom class late.”

In addition to teaching, Ingram also acknowledged that remote learning would present further challenges for teachers. “Homeowners are still responsible for clearing snow from walkways and digging out their car,” she said. “Some like me, have elderly parents we would want to assist before dark at their homes, or before they would try to do so themselves and risk injury; so this new policy prevents it or pushes it to late in the day/evening.”

The new circumstances and policies being put in place have made both students and teachers alike develop a new sense of appreciation toward past snow days. “It kind of made me appreciate snow days more,” Katari said. “Remembering that time where we had snow days, where we were able to take a day off and enjoy the snow just because we couldn’t use the roads. I definitely have a higher regard for them, [because] before I took them for granted.”

Innocence Project Exoneree Huwe Burton Speaks to Stuyvesant

By **SAMIA ISLAM, JANNA WANG, and ZIYING JIAN**
Additional reporting by
Rajhasree Paul

Innocence Project exoneree Huwe Burton virtually visited the Stuyvesant community on May 7 to tell his truth. His story, characterized by betrayal, loss, and regret, opened up a conversation regarding the anti-Blackness and corruption still prevalent within the US criminal justice system. This event was coordinated by biology teacher Dr. Jeffrey Horenstein, who reached out through the [Innocence Project](#), a nonprofit legal organization that works to exonerate wrongful convictions like Burton's through DNA testing and criminal justice reform advocacy.

In addition to biology, Dr. Horenstein teaches Forensic Science, a science elective that covers crime investigation and legal processes with a focus on principles and applications of biology, chemistry, and physics in a laboratory setting.

Dr. Horenstein reached out in hopes of arranging a speaker session with an exoneree after finding the organization's work with DNA testing and analysis relevant to his class's laboratory exercises, such as DNA fingerprinting or blood analysis. He hoped that Burton's story would be an insightful opportunity for Stuyvesant students to learn about the justice system. "When [the Innocence Project] suggested Huwe Burton, I was initially hesitant because he was not exonerated with DNA evidence. We are, after all, a Forensic Science class," he said in an e-mail interview. "But I felt differently when I learned that his case was the first example of someone to be cleared based solely on a scientific analysis of the methods used to produce false confessions. What better way is there to understand the consequences of a failing criminal justice system than to hear from someone like Mr. Burton?"

At the age of 16, Burton was wrongfully convicted for the murder of his mother, Keziah Burton, in January 1989. A neighbor's false accusations led authorities to pursue him as the case's prime

suspect; the three prosecuting detectives used coercive interrogation to force a false confession from Burton. Burton's teacher informed authorities that he was in school at the time of the crime and the case's alternate suspect held an extensive criminal history. However, it was too late when the detective realized. After a confession, Burton was tried as an adult and sentenced to 15 years in



Courtesy of The Innocence Project

prison before he was released on parole in 2009. A decade later, his case was exonerated by the Innocence Project.

Re-investigation into Burton's case revealed that the prosecutors who elicited Burton's false confession had a history of employing psychologically coercive techniques. Burton discussed the abusive techniques used in his own questioning, such as isolating Burton from his father, threatening him with additional criminal charges, and pressuring Burton to confess with promises of leniency. "[The detectives] knew [I] knew nothing about law [...] In my naive 16-year-old mind, I'm thinking, 'I know I didn't commit this crime, but [confessing] seemed to be the only way I was going to get out of this room.' I felt as if I couldn't leave," Burton said during the event.

Burton openly shared details regarding the misconduct that occurred in the case and spoke on how Emmanuel Green, the neighbor who accused him of the crime, is now believed to be the perpetrator of said crime.

Detectives on the case interviewed Green and found him in possession of Keziah Burton's car, but disregarded the evidence until they had apprehended Burton, even allegedly corroborating with Green to falsify statements regarding how Green came into possession of the car. "When [the detectives] realized it was [Green] with the car, they were like, 'Wait a minute. [...] This really makes us

said in an e-mail interview.

Others expressed anger toward the lack of legitimate justice throughout Burton's case. "I was angered by the fact that they accused a young boy [of] murdering his mother even though they knew that was not the case. I was angered that the guys [the detectives] were still working, instead of being punished. I was angered by basically everything about that case," senior Althea Barrett said.

Lieberman further elaborates on the misgivings this can reflect on our entire justice system. "To the younger people: be aware of it. Just one wrongful innocent conviction is a stain on society. It's a whole breakdown that contributes to a loss of respect for institutions," he said.

Drawing on his 25 years of practicing law, Lieberman also warns students to not antagonize prosecutors solely based on this case. "There is a misconception around many people that prosecutors are the bad guys. I think that's very false and wrong," Lieberman said.

Attendees also expressed hopes for the prosecution to be accountable. "We can [...] maybe e-mail the head of the Bronx [New York Police Department] and bring the case to his attention," junior Ellen Pehlivanian said in an e-mail interview. "Hopefully the detectives and any other people involved in Mr. Burton's wrongful conviction pay for their actions and Mr. Burton gets the closure he deserves."

While many expressed frustration for injustices within Burton's case, others also commented on their admiration for Burton's advocacy. "The most common responses from my students were their admiration for Mr. Burton for his courage and his lack of bitterness," Dr. Horenstein said in an e-mail interview.

Burton stresses that while these injustices were tumultuous to his life and that he hopes for the prosecution to take accountability, it's also important to note that his case is not uncommon. "This happened to me when I was 16. There are 16, 17, 18-year-olds being brought into the prison system. [...] Assuming some of you [the attendees] are going into law

[...] about ten years from now [...] means that some of the potential clients or people you'll do cases on, right now, as we speak, are five to six years old [...] As you get older, [...] some of [these five, six-year-olds] are going to be defendants, rightfully or wrongfully so."

Burton encourages attendees to vote and become more politically active to combat the perpetuation of such injustices. "I really believe in policing having a framework of people knowing you can't come into communities and do what you want when you want it, and how you want it without having to explain," he said. "What you can do is continue to keep pressure on your politicians [...] The district attorney is an elected position, but a lot of the time, we don't know anything about district attorneys until they say, 'This is the new district attorney.'"

Attendees took this sentiment to heart. "Huwe [Burton] brought up an interesting point about how change starts young. It is really important for the young to know their rights [...] and continue asking questions [...] If people had pressed the detectives [of Huwe Burton's case], the truth might have surfaced years ago," junior Fatima Bagom said in an e-mail interview.

Some students have expressed interest in becoming involved with the Innocence Project. "They have a program where students can apply to be e-mail buddies with people behind bars. The way Huwe Burton finally got out was by getting his story out there. The difference between his story and others is that there was someone to listen. As students we can not only gain compassion, but also lend them an ear," an anonymous junior said in an e-mail interview.

As injustices continue to appear in our justice system, Burton's story stresses the importance of continuing to support organizations like the Innocence Project and question the legality within our judicial system. "You really have to drive home the point that your elected officials have to be in line with change and reform, and you guys have to continue to ask questions. What happened to me happened in '89 because no one had any questions," Burton said.

Gunder Hosts Virtual Game Night

By **NADA HAMEED, ELAINE HUANG, and MADISON KIM**

Language teacher Dylan Gunder hosted a virtual Game Night on May 12 with students and faculty coming together to play popular games like Among Us. The event was two hours long and was streamed live on Twitch for spectators to watch. The Game Night was an opportunity for members of the Stuyvesant community to come together for leisure while staying in the comfort of their own homes.

Gunder, who teaches French II and Spanish II, was inspired to host such an event by the teacher-student sports events that he attended as a child. "Teachers [played] against students in [...] volleyball and then basketball," he said. "I was like, oh, we can do something similar with gaming."

Gunder cooperated with and received input from other staff to host this event. "I had to talk with [Director of Family Engagement Dina] Ingram, and I also talked with [Assistant Principal of World Languages Francesca] McAuliffe. And I kinda asked them for their

ideas and we collaborated on ideas via e-mail and [language teacher Manuel] Ramirez also had [...] some good ideas," Gunder said. "So I kinda used a combination of their ideas and what I thought might be feasible to accomplish, and that's how we came up with it."

The game selection was conducted through a student poll that had been sent out earlier in the week. The top contenders were Valorant, a first-person shooter game, and Among Us, a multiplayer survival game. Gunder had initially decided to include both out of popular demand. "Valorant was actually the top result. There [were] also a ton of people in the 'other' section that had put Among Us. Based on a combination of what people wanted to see and also what was feasible and realistic to do at the time, I decided to do Among Us and Valorant," he said.

However, Gunder ultimately decided to only play Among Us to accommodate members of the staff and for more simplicity in live streaming. "I had to get rid of Valorant because I think it was going to be too difficult for the teachers to learn, so I wanted to pick some-

thing that might be easy to learn if anybody wanted to join in [...] I [also] didn't really know how to stream the audio of [Valorant's] two teams at the same time [or] the video," he said. "It [would have been] really complicated to figure out so I figured for the first event of this kind, just keep it simple."

Spectators watched the game live through Twitch, a video live-streaming service selected for its widespread use and gaming characteristics. "I wanted to choose something that everyone was familiar with," Gunder said. "I wanted to use [it] because it has some fun chat features and fun things for gaming-specific things that I could use in the future."

To participate, students signed up through a Google Form and were randomly split into two groups for two rounds of the game. "The way that I selected the students was based on the people who signed up [...] I divided it into two and I did [the selection] via random name generator," Gunder said. Rather than a tournament-styled game, there were different team wins each round, with either the imposter or the crewmates coming out victorious.

Sophomore Shreya Roy, a student in Gunder's French II class, moderated the chat throughout the livestream. "I heard about the event after Mr. Gunder e-mailed his classes asking for a moderator. I, addicted to Twitch, took the offer," she said in an e-mail interview. "I overlooked the chat and made sure everyone was staying school-appropriate, even if it's Twitch."

To accommodate for all participants, Gunder faced a challenge of making the technology easily approachable to all. "There's a lot of teachers that don't know this world of gaming. It's like a mystery to them," he said. "You need to buy the games, oftentimes, you need to use different platforms [...] I know some of the students are recommending using Discord, [but] using Discord then requires that people download Discord. There are multiple opportunities for things to mess up."

There were also technical issues during the live streaming and playing itself. "The stream was sometimes laggy, the stream echoed, the Zoom had security issues in which people weren't allowed to join," freshman Ivan Li said.

Despite some of the technical

drawbacks, those who participated thought positively of the event, especially with teacher involvement. "I found it quite entertaining. [...] It was exciting, and something new for me. I'm sure most students can't say they've ever watched or played video games with their teacher before," freshman Talin Schlachet said in an e-mail interview. "What's not to like about an event where you can do some of your favorite leisure activities all while getting to know some of your fellow students, and while being able to see what your teacher is really like outside of school?"

Many hope to participate again. "Watching Among Us made me really yearn to play, so maybe next time I'll attend as a player rather than a viewer," Roy said. "My favorite moment has to be when Mr. Gunder, as an imposter ghost, flew across the map randomly closing doors. The other imposter and two players were in Electrical when Mr. Gunder closed the doors on one of the players about to leave, basically sabotaging a potential kill. He didn't notice, but I could feel the other imposter's frustration through the screen."

News

Stuyvesant's Response to Slavers of NY Campaign

By ISABELLA JIA, MAGGIE SANSONE, and SAKURA YAMANAKA
Additional reporting by Nikki Chen

"The goal of Slavers of NY is to expose and educate New Yorkers of the legacy of racism and slavery of New York City. We want to offer a history that does not neglect the cruelty and atrocity of the founding of the United States of America," co-founder of Slavers of NY Ada Reso said in an e-mail interview.

The [Slavers of New York](#) is a sticker campaign and education initiative that uses stickers to shed light on the history of street names, subway stations, neighborhoods, and other locations in New York City that are named after enslavers to expose the history of slavery in NYC.

One of the figures highlighted in their initiative is Peter Stuyvesant, who led the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam in the mid-1600s. Many places around the city bear his name, including Bedford-Stuyvesant, Stuyvesant Town, and Stuyvesant High School. Stuyvesant High School's original building was initially located roughly south of the land that Peter Stuyvesant owned, called the Bouwerie, hence why it is named after him.

The campaign was started by Reso and Elsa Eli Waithe, who were both inspired by [The New York Times's 1619 Project](#), a long-form journalism project developed by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones to highlight the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans in American history.

They created stickers imitating the style of a NYC street sign with the names of past enslavers as current street names. Underneath this text, additional information about the featured people's roles in this

matter is provided, including the number of people they enslaved. These stickers are placed on light poles and street signs, where pedestrians can see and learn about the history behind these names.

So far, stickers have been



Sasha Socolow / The Spectator

placed predominantly in Brooklyn, but the organization plans to expand throughout all five boroughs. To increase awareness, Slavers of New York has a [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) account dedicated to spreading more historical information and data to educate people about the history of slavery in New York. "We also hope to build an interactive map, website, and maybe an app that allows almost anyone to experience the city as a living history museum," Reso said.

Through these efforts, the campaign hopes that people can learn about the past and grow through education. "We hope to inspire other movements to decolonize space and place. We hope that the people of each street, neighborhood, borough, and city in the state of New York remember how this country was built. The history of slavery in the United States is world history," Reso said. "The wall for which Wall Street was named, the finan-

cial capital of the world, was built by people enslaved by Europeans and North Americans. The past violence and current inequality in this country are the same thread. We hope for collective justice and a reconciliation process."

A point of contention is whether Stuyvesant High School's name should be changed, based on Peter Stuyvesant's status as an enslaver. Social studies teacher Mordecai Moore believes that changing the name of the school is not necessary. "Names can involve multiple meanings and connotations. Over the last 120 years since 1901, [Stuyvesant has] developed a very different meaning, so therefore, I don't think that the school should drop the name Stuyvesant or change it to another historical figure's name," Moore said.

In Moore's AP United States History class, students are assigned a project called a Statues and Monuments Scrapbook, a project in which they research public monuments and their histories. This work has encouraged many students to become more aware of issues surrounding the actions of prominent people in history.

For junior Jingyu Zhang, her

research on Peter Stuyvesant focused mainly on his intolerance of other religions and antisemitism. However, knowing that he was an enslaver added to her perspective of him. "Learning the fact that he was an enslaver definitely made me see him in an even more negative light," Zhang said in an e-mail interview.

A recent [New York Times article](#) about Slavers of New York included a section that mentions that the New York City Department of Education plans to update its website to include more information on Peter Stuyvesant in response to the campaign. This information has yet to be released. The Stuyvesant administration also has yet to respond to the campaign.

Zhang is still hopeful that the administration will address Stuyvesant's history. "I do think it would be great if Stuyvesant [...] could clarify what legacy the school is trying to preserve through the name 'Stuyvesant' and recognize the history of the figure it is named after," Zhang said.

Other teachers such as social studies teacher Robert Sandler make an effort to highlight Peter Stuyvesant in their classes. "I teach about [Peter] Stuyvesant's bigotry [and] the centrality of slavery in colonial New York in my elective NYC History course. I lead my class on a walking tour of downtown Manhattan that explores historic landmarks from early New York," Sandler said in an e-mail interview.

Similarly, English teacher Lauren Stuzin has discussed Peter Stuyvesant and his history with their classes. "I first found out that [Peter Stuyvesant] was disabled and began to think about the potential ableism of the Stuyvesant mascot (the Peglegs) and asked my students what they thought," Stuzin said in an e-mail interview. "They informed me that he was also a harmful person and a slaver,

which then pushed me to do further research. I found the account mentioned in the article through that research and then shared the information with my classes."

Sandler also acknowledges that the time period in which Peter Stuyvesant lived is important in understanding his actions. "[Peter] Stuyvesant must be placed in [the] historical context of 17th century Atlantic Slave trade in the Caribbean and South America, as well as the tobacco slave economies of Virginia and Maryland. With all his faults, he shaped early New York," Sandler said.

Moore suggested creating a section inside the history of Stuyvesant High School, which could include information not just about Peter Stuyvesant but also the changes that the school has undergone since its creation. "It's not just about Peter Stuyvesant, but also about the fact that this school was not a specialized high school when it first started, but it was a trade school for boys in 1901," Moore said.

Stuzin encourages their students to speak up about such issues. "I believe firmly in the power of the students. Students in my class know I urge them to organize, use their voices, and harness their collective power to fight to make change," they said. "Schools exist to serve students. Sometimes, we lose sight of that. My students know I stand behind them in their fight for power in their education," they said.

Ultimately, Slavers of NY hopes to inspire others and encourages everyone, including students, to participate in this movement. "We encourage you all to continue to dream of and act [toward] the future you want to see," Reso said. "We suggest a student-led committee or movement to confront the school's name and history. You have the power to change the world."

Stuyvesant Students in the Heart of NYC Politics

By JENNY LIU and KAREN ZHANG

With the 2021 city primaries coming up on June 22, New York City is narrowing its candidates for mayor, comptroller, borough presidents, and City Council members. The Spectator released a survey on May 26 to the student body asking who they support for NYC mayor. Of the 62 responses, 33.9 percent said they would vote for Dianne Morales, 29 percent for Kathryn Garcia, 19.4 percent for Andrew Yang, 12.9 percent for Eric Adams, 3.2 percent for Maya Wiley, and 1.6 percent for Ray McGuire.

While most Stuyvesant students are not of voting age yet, some are getting involved in campaigns nonetheless. Here is how Stuyvesant students are getting involved in local politics.

Eric Tang

Volunteering for current District 4 City councilmember Keith Powers's campaign for re-election, who is running unopposed, freshman Eric Tang has been campaigning to help elect Powers' allies for city council.

On Stuyvesant's debate team, Tang decided to join a campaign to gain firsthand experience in politics. "On debate, you're exposed to all of this politics and economics," he said. "And I thought [joining the campaign] would be a great chance to get more immersed in it and also interact with people from the city."

Phone banking for two to four hours a week, Tang especially enjoys conversing with constituents on issues they are concerned about, such as housing policies. "Small things like traffic, definitely COVID, increase in violence, all of that, and learning about what's going on in the city and trying to help people out by letting them vote—that's one of the best things that you can do," he said.

However, he also recognizes the low voter turnout rate for local elections and, thus, the importance of canvassing as many votes. "Every time you get to contact a voter, they learn about the campaign and since this is such a small municipal level election, each vote matters a lot," he said. "Just getting maybe five to 10 people to vote for whoever we're phone banking for in that time span over the course of a couple of months is going to garner so many votes."

Unable to vote himself, Tang sees campaigning as one of the few ways he can get involved to help the community. "It's a great stepping stone to learn about bigger political issues because a lot of things you see in national politics, for example, lobbying, you'll see it at a small level at city scale, and it's much easier to understand [and] is going to help your understanding with national politics."

John Grossman

"I've always been passionate about politics, ever since I was 12," senior John Grossman said. "I've always been someone who is attuned to help and I knew once I got closer to voting age and above voting age, that I would want to be even more politically involved."

Having always been captivated by politics, Grossman is now involved as a Neighborhood Council Captain for Mark Levine's campaign for Manhattan Borough President. Levine is a current City Council Member representing District 7 of Upper Manhattan. Grossman is in charge of coordinating events in District 74, which encompasses the lower east side of Manhattan in neighborhoods such as Stuyvesant Town/Peter Cooper Village, Murray Hill, and the East Village, coordinating a team of interns, and running a weekly phone bank and standing canvass.

While working on the campaign, Grossman gained newfound experiences, such as petitioning, which he initially expected to dislike. "Something that I thought I would hate but ended up loving was petitioning [...] It was really rough. The first day, it was so cold," he said. "But then I kept going and I really got into it because I found that [...] they're usually excited to [...] see a young person work in politics [...] It's also a chance to talk about the candidate and I thought that I saw more of the city than I've seen in a long time while doing that."

While this is Grossman's first formal campaign, he has nonetheless gained a plethora of experience that he believes he can carry beyond the political scene. "I've just learned more about how to interact with people. I've gained so much experience that I could translate into other jobs, in just working on a campaign," he said. "I know that at Stuy [...] we're a super math and science school. I really just want to encourage people to step outside of that and realize that things can have a lot of value."



Courtesy of John Grossman

Grossman, on the right.

Amanda Cisse

Freshman Amanda Cisse first became involved in mayoral candidate Dianne Morales's campaign as a leader in the Listening and Outreach Branch but has since become one of the co-leads of the Youth Branch, a division that works on projects directed at educating the youth about Morales's campaign.

Current projects include writing collaborative articles for Morales's youth blog, hosting high school webinars about voter registration, and running events called Moralethons. "[The Moralethon] is basically a zoom event where a couple of students from the Youth Branch invite other youth to come and teach them a skill or have a talk," Cisse said. "We've had a few of these before. One of them was centered on the topic [of] how to talk to your parents about Dianne [Morales]."

Cisse's involvement has allowed her to be cognizant of the boldness of Morales's campaign and a subsequent appreciation of it. "On the issue of defunding the police, she very outrightly uses the word 'defund,'" Cisse said. "I found out that a lot of the candidates like [Scott] Stringer and [Maya] Wiley both want to defund the police but refuse to use that wording or stray away from very bold statements, and I like that Dianne doesn't do that."

In addition to leading and contributing to the work of the Youth Branch, Cisse participates in phone banking sessions. Through these sessions, she's also developed an awareness of how Morales's progressiveness is a double-edged sword. "[People'll] just hang up when they hear 'Hi I'm a volunteer for Dianne Morales, a progressive candidate,'" Cisse said. "They'll just hear the word 'progressive' and be like 'no.' A lot of her plans are very liberal, and I think a lot of people think it's not feasible in a city like New York which is very capitalized."

Despite these experiences, Cisse remains hopeful of Morales's position, as she thinks Morales's lived experiences as a single mom and schoolteacher can help her reach different communities. "I like that she's been a schoolteacher and a single mom instead of being [in] a really high-up position where she's a bit detached from the people she's trying to help," Cisse said.



Courtesy of Amanda Cisse

Caroline Ji

Senior Caroline Ji is a We Power NYC Ambassador, a program committed to increasing youth engagement in local elections. This program was first started by NYC Votes, the public engagement arm of the NYC Campaign Finance Board, a nonpartisan, independent city agency that runs the mayoral elections.

Ji and other ambassadors have worked on several projects such as hosting podcasts, interviewing reports, and helping set up mayoral forums. They also create content for their social media such as infographics and short videos. The ambassadors' work, which starts in February, leads up to the general election on November 2.

"Coming from a background where my parents literally grew up in a communist regime [...] I understand that voting is not something that a lot of people valued just because it was never ingrained in their background," Ji said. "Being a first gen[eration] student coming from [that] background [...] puts me in a very unique position to bridge that gap."

Through this program, Ji gained insight into the intentionality of political campaigns, something she had never thought of before. "Personally, I thought [getting into local politics was a very easy thing. [But] one thing we do as ambassadors is, whenever we do social media work, we have to post at the same exact time on the same exact day because that's how you best the algorithms on social media," Ji said. "Even learning that lesson itself definitely shaped the way I think about how local politicians formulate their campaigns because it's so meticulous."

Not only does the work Ji contributes as an ambassador help educate the youth, but it has also helped educate herself and her local communities. "Had I not done this program, I would have just been like, 'ranked-choice voting? Don't care about it. Don't need to learn about it,' and [...] when I got to actually vote, the chances of me making mistakes are so much higher," she said. "The other day for my English minutes gift, I did a little presentation on ranked-choice voting and I thought that that was just such a great manifestation of how I'm literally passing on this information."

Ji realizes the tangible change she can create in her local communities. "Even if I can get my family to vote like that's already a big win. I've been pestering a lot of my friends to register to vote," she said. "It's one thing we really stress as ambassadors is the power of exponential dissemination. It takes one person to reach out to five, and those five reach out to another five, and that's how you see very tangible results. I think that's just been a very gratifying aspect of this whole thing."



Courtesy of Caroline Ji

Hannah Scheuer

"I'm generally a politically active person and it's something I hold dear to my heart," junior Hannah Scheuer said. "I heard about Dianne [Morales] last May but [initially] didn't think anything of it."

However, Scheuer has since become interested in Morales's campaign after encountering a powerful quote on her website. "She has this one line on her website that's like, 'The people closest to the problem are closest to the solution.' That line really just stuck out to me in terms of the ways I try to get involved in my community and [...] electing someone who really believes in that central idea felt really powerful," she said. Since early March, Scheuer's volunteered at and led phone banking sessions and canvassed at local parks for Morales's campaign.

Scheuer, who's interested in linguistics and is the co-president of the Stuyvesant Linguistics Club, has also found a deep appreciation for the language diversity present in the campaign and community-organizing spaces. "I'm really interested in language and linguistics and [the volunteers] have a Slack channel called 'Language Justice,' and I really like the way that's phrased. It's just community volunteers who speak two or more languages who volunteer to translate things."

Like Cisse, Scheuer has also developed an appreciation for Morales's campaign after participating in it. "It's so, so, so grassroots. [Look at] Shaun Donovan getting a million dollars from his father [...] Ray McGuire and Eric Adams and [Andrew] Yang all [...] have so much more funding and accepting [...] influence from large stakeholders outside of the city," she said. "So it's just this deep appreciation for all the people who keep [Morales's] campaign going"

With the recent unionization efforts in Morales's campaign that have led several staff members and employees to leave, Scheuer has decided to stop volunteering. Scheuer wants to support the union and believes the remaining campaign lacks transparency.



Courtesy of Hannah Scheuer

Anisa Palevic

For almost five months, junior Anisa Palevic has been phone banking constituents and canvassing voters on the streets to help elect city council member Mark Levine for Manhattan Borough President.

In addition to voter outreach, Palevic is also involved in the policy team, where she researches issues and policies, such as zoning and education, and sees how a Manhattan Borough President can address them. "We had this really cool thing that we did on our social media account where we would post every single policy idea that the team had to get people excited seeing all the new ideas that we were putting forth," she said.

Being involved in a campaign has provided Palevic with greater insight and understanding of the role of local politicians in NYC. "A lot of people will just go for presidential and gubernatorial elections and that's it," she said. "But your local politicians do a lot of important things and they are the ones that impact your community at the most basic level."

For Palevic, she believes in the importance of becoming immersed in local politics young to better understand the way policies shape the city. "Getting involved in local politics will help you actually understand the policies that you're told you should believe or you should not believe in. When you're actually working for politicians you can see the scope and you can see why these certain things don't get passed," she said. "It's so important to hammer in the importance of local elections so that the little changes that affect you the most are what you're able to control best."



Courtesy of Anisa Palevic

Palevic, on the right

Features

Mother, Mother, In My Home

By **FRANCES SCHWARZ**
and **SHIVANI**
MANIMARAN

Mother, mother, in my home. I hope you know I love you so.

Caught up in the daily struggles of remote learning, it's easy for students to forget how hard mothers have been working to be caring and supportive to their children, especially during the pandemic. Mother's Day may have already passed this year, but every day is a good day to remember and cherish the love and support of our mothers.

Sophomore Eugenia Ochoa celebrated Mother's Day with both her mother and grandmother this year. "My Grandma was here, so we celebrated with her. I cooked for my grandma, my aunt, and my mom—some pastries," she said.

Likewise, sophomore James Shin kept Mother's Day simple. "Every Mother's Day, I make gifts and try giving them to my mom. I can't give them anything on Amazon or anything because they'll know what the gift is. I just spend the night before making them a little origami," he said.

Others celebrated with a formal touch. Sophomore Alice Zheng went all out for Mother's Day, which also happened to be their mom's birthday this year. "We gave Mom a spa day, sort of [...] And then we went to eat somewhere fancy. It was French. That was nice. And then I gave her a painting," they said. This painting, which is currently hanging in their mother's classroom, took the longest out of any other they've made.

However, not all Mother's Days were smooth sailing, as sophomore Ruby Friedman explained. "It was an interesting day," they said. "We went to dinner and we had a nice sushi dinner. We got home and my mom was cutting something and she cut her finger." The mayhem did not end there, though. "And then I fainted in the hallway because there was a lot of blood [...]. It was just chaos."

Sophomore Anjini Katari's day also had a few bumps along the road. "We drove upstate to one of the state parks and we

had a picnic," she described. "It was also drizzling so we had a picnic in the drizzle. And it was also cold [...] She did appreciate the sentiment, and she enjoyed it. It was just very nice all around."

Though Mother's Day has already passed this year, many students still recognize the impact their mothers have had on them. "My mom is really awesome," Katari said. She described her mom as wholesome, funny, affectionate, and much more organized than herself. "She's the one who forced me to sit down and do my Kumon homework, which, kudos to her because I was a bad child when it came to Kumon [...]. No one likes Kumon."

Many students also learned their organizational habits from

mom!" she wrote in an e-mail interview.

An organized mom is often also a resilient mom, who inspires her children to be the same way. Katari's mother, for example, had next to nothing when she immigrated to the U.S. from India at 20 and got to where she is today through hard work. "She's done a lot and she's gone through a lot, but the place that she's in today [...] She's in a good place," Katari said. "I definitely admire her for all of the work that she's done and that she continues to put in, especially for me and my sister."

Ochoa is similarly inspired by her mom, who encourages her to make art despite having a rough time as a writer. "I admire her a lot because I feel like she's very resilient. A lot of

very grateful for that because she will advocate for me without fear," they said. "She will call up the school and yell at them to help me in some way. [...] She's taught me to stand up for myself and absolutely have no filter." They have come to share many interests with their mother, the most notable of which being their mutual love for good food. "It's funny because my mom [and I] are very similar, so when we have good food, we enter a state of pure bliss," Friedman described. "But we've also come out screaming out of restaurants with bad food, just being angry for the rest of the day."

In Katari's case, her sense of morals and respect for others is credited to her mother. "I definitely see the world in a dif-

ferent way from her stories and compared also to the way I live," Katari said. Her mother's South Asian culture and customs have also played a large role in her childhood in the States. "It's the silly things, like you can't wash your hair on Thursdays, apparently. Thursdays you're not supposed to do anything," she described. "I'm like, why? 'That's just how it works.'"

Shin also tends to grapple with his mother's differing opinions. "We fought about the vaccine because we had different opinions about it," he said. "Other times, though, we're pretty friendly together and we talk a lot. It fluctuates, but I wish it didn't fluctuate and we just stayed on good terms the whole time."

Despite a rough patch or two, students feel like they have plenty to be grateful to their mother for. "[Her] existence. I don't know, loving me. Just being my mom and being like 'Yeah! I'll foster an emotionally damaged teenager who will probably give me a whole lotta trouble,' and still deciding to go through with it because she [EXPLETIVE] loves me," Zheng said.

The bottom line is that even when times are hard, the unconditional love of mothers is unbeatable. "My mom puts up with me, which means she puts up with a lot," Katari said. "And I'm very, very, very appreciative. And I love her a lot for that."

Mazumder wishes her mother more time for herself in the future. "A lot of the time she sacrifices her free time just to care for us. I hope once me and my siblings [are] a little older, she can spend time on her passions."

In light of all that our mothers do and sacrifice for us, Katari hopes to remind everyone to let our mothers know how appreciative we are. "Just say 'thank you' or 'I love you' to your mother. Because while we feel it, not everyone always realizes that we feel that way."

So, what are you waiting for? Go give that loving and hard-working woman a big hug!



Aranya Singh / The Spectator

their mothers. Zheng, for example, has taken to making calendars and lists, just like their mother. "She's the one who's on top of everything, as most moms are. She plans everything, she's got all the calendars, the times, she reminds us what to do," they said.

Freshman Arshia Mazumder's mother is also very put together. Whenever Mazumder loses something, her mother always manages to find it within five minutes. "I think I take her too much for granted. Thanks,

stuff has happened to her, but she's still cheery and smiley and she's always encouraging me and my dad."

Friedman is also appreciative of their mother's strong nature. "She can speak in public. She's a very strong, independent woman-slash-girlboss," they said. "I admire her confidence and speaking abilities and her resilience."

Friedman has also learned to be fierce and firm through their mother's tendency to speak her mind to anyone. "I'm

ferent way from her stories and compared also to the way I live," Katari said. Her mother's South Asian culture and customs have also played a large role in her childhood in the States. "It's the silly things, like you can't wash your hair on Thursdays, apparently. Thursdays you're not supposed to do anything," she described. "I'm like, why? 'That's just how it works.'"

It's not always sunshine and rainbows between mothers and their children, though. Zheng and their mother sometimes

Prabhu, Here's to You!

By **ISABEL CHING**
and **JENNIFER JI**

After over a year of remote instruction that exposed a number of mental health and learning issues within the school community, the Stuyvesant administration has created a position to address our modern learning environment. On Monday, April 26th, Principal Seung Yu appointed biology teacher Marianne Prabhu as Interim Acting Assistant Principal for Teacher Support & Development and Data Systems Lead. Yu outlined the position in his announcement of it: "This role will focus on the support and development of teachers, particularly in the areas of instruction, pedagogy, and student performance data use [and will] lead and facilitate our efforts in preparation for our instructional approach for the next school year."

Yet even in the midst of such an unprecedented learning environment, it seems Prabhu is

prepared to weather the storm. Prabhu's past students, who have experienced her kindness in biology, feel that she is perfectly suited for her new position. "Ms. Prabhu creates such a welcoming environment in her class and is the perfect teacher for helping freshmen transition in high school, especially during remote learning," said junior Samira Esha, a former freshman biology student of Ms. Prabhu.

Sophomore Ameer Alnasser is another one of Ms. Prabhu's past students. He explained his experience: "Throughout my moderately short time with her as my teacher, I can safely say I enjoyed every minute of it [...] She is so kind and considerate and handed us candy on a frequent basis. For an introduction into Stuyvesant, she is for sure one of the better teachers to get," he wrote in an email interview.

The feeling is mutual—Prabhu loves teaching just as much as her students love her. "I've been a teacher since 2007

and every year at Stuyvesant has reminded me why I love working with young people," she explained in an email interview. Outside of the classroom, Prabhu coaches the boys' swim team, an activity she finds meaningful and rewarding. "It reminds me how hard our students work at everything they do and that teenagers need to laugh, build relationships, and find a support system," she explained. "School is much more than an academic program."

The position itself, Interim Acting Assistant Principal, directly aligns with Prabhu's experience. As part of the Stuyvesant administration, Prabhu has worked closely with her fellow teachers, organizing professional development sessions and helping over 30 of her colleagues complete probation. Principal Yu elaborated on Prabhu's extensive experience in his announcement as well, stating, "[Prabhu] has served as a Peer Collaborative Teacher leader for the past five years

at Stuyvesant and has been facilitating instructional sessions with the department chairs in our efforts to deliver consistent and coherent instruction."

In Prabhu's own words, "I've been providing support to colleagues for many years so I have a good foundation and sense of some of the needs in our school community."

For Prabhu, the appeal of the new position lies in its impact. "Teachers, students, and families have been through a difficult year," she wrote. "We all need support more than ever as we take what we have learned from the pandemic and rethink how we approach teaching and learning for the future." To this end, Prabhu has already begun reaching out to teachers, students, and parents in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what is and isn't working in the remote setting. For her, knowledge informs action. "My immediate goal is to listen and learn as much as possible. I think I need to bet-

ter understand the perspective and lens of an administrator before determining what needs to change," she said.

The beginning of the next school year in September and the return to the Stuyvesant building are also on Prabhu's mind. She hopes to ease the transition to in-person instruction, especially since next year's freshman and sophomore classes have yet to experience Stuyvesant in-person. "Returning back to the physical building will be difficult for many, and I want to make sure I am there to help teachers, students, and families feel as comfortable as possible as we transition," she explained.

While Prabhu's position is not guaranteed—the IAAP position was formally posted on May 3rd so all interested candidates can apply—it seems she is adjusting to the job and actively working to improve the learning experience for all Stuyvesant students. So here's to you, Ms. Prabhu!

Features

Thoughts on Shots

By ISABEL CHING
and JENNIFER JI

For over a year, our lives have been shadowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, plaguing a year and a half of our high school journey. But after months of clinical trials and scientific experiments, it appears the virus has finally met its match: vaccination. COVID-19 vaccines were approved in late 2020 and rolled out in early 2021 for people with critical health conditions and those over 60. By April 7, students over 16 could officially be vaccinated, and by May 12, that range was extended to people over 12. With a tough year behind us, the introduction of vaccines seems to be the last ride of the wave. Here is what Stuyvesant students had to say about it.

Though booking appointments was difficult directly after the introduction of the vaccine, most Stuyvesant students found the vaccination process to be quick and efficient. “The vaccination itself was great,”

junior Cameron Kluger said. “I went to the Upper East Side and it took less than 30 minutes, including the time to book the second appointment.”

Seniors Jesse Hammer and Lamia Haque both received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which is unique in its single-dose requirement. Both had similar experiences with the after effects of their vaccination. “By about 6:00 p.m., I was suffering intensely—I was dealing with fatigue, nausea, fever,” Hammer explained in an e-mail interview. Fortunately, Hammer was back on his feet the very next day and only felt a mild soreness in his arm.

Haque experienced similar symptoms. “I had a low fever, chills, and felt a little sluggish for a day,” she said. The next day, however, she felt fine.

Junior Andrea Khoury had a more positive experience. Khoury received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine and did not feel any side effects at all. “After the first dose, I didn’t feel anything. So far, after my second

dose, I’ve been feeling fine,” she said.

The Pfizer dose hit junior Andy Lin differently than Khoury, he explained: “On both shots, I felt a slight sting for about a day. After the second shot, though, I felt that I had the chills for about a day, but it was manageable without any medicine, as I just bundled up a bit.”

Despite getting different vaccines and different side-effects, most students believed that vaccines should help to determine who will be allowed back in school. “Vaccinations need to play a role in who can return to school. It may be possible to have some unvaccinated people at a school if the percentage of people there who are vaccinated is at or above herd immunity levels,” Hammer explained. “However, until it’s possible to determine what herd immunity levels are for a school environment, people who have not been vaccinated should not be allowed to go to school, for their own sakes and for their

families.”

Above all, students are motivated to get vaccines, knowing it will lead to a path of normalcy—the last stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. “This year has been awful, and I miss pre-COVID times,” Khoury expressed. “Vaccines should be mandated, since there are no downsides to getting vaccinated [...] vaccines are the first step towards normalcy. They also just made an announcement that people can go outside without masks if they have been vaccinated, and I think we’ll see that trend continue through the summer.”

Haque agreed: “I cannot wait for a return to normalcy. One and a half years of my high school career have gone away because of this virus and I want to have real experiences again.”

Others take a different approach when considering our return to school. “While I think that vaccines should not be mandated, if the vast majority of us are getting vaccinated and encouraging others to follow suit, we’ll be able to move past

the pandemic,” Kluger said. Hammer echoed this sentiment, expressing his support for people’s personal freedom: “I don’t think that vaccines should be mandated. My attachment to personal liberties is too strong.” However, Hammer expressed concern about the health of the student body and general public as a whole. “It would be acceptable to require a vaccine for society’s functions that have substantial risk of spreading COVID. In this way, one could avoid mandating the vaccine while still ensuring that general society remains vaccinated and most or all of those who are not vaccinated remain separate from those they might infect,” he said.

As we approach the new school year, those eligible for the vaccine are encouraged to sign up. In the words of Kluger, “[We] could use a more cooperative spirit as a society, and trusting our doctors and the people around us to prevent the spread is important.”

Looking Back on the Holy Month of Ramadan

By MAHIR HOSSAIN

After a long day at school, work, or home, the whole extended family gathers around a table to say their prayers before eating. On the table is an assortment of food for the children and much spicier dishes for the adults and those who can handle it. The most popular ones include paeajoo (fried lentils), beguni (battered and fried eggplant), an assortment of fruits, dates to break the fast, and last but not least, pakora (fried vegetable “patties”). The eating goes on for 30 minutes, as the elderly and the children eat slower, and afterward, the group goes to the mosque to pray Maghrib, the prayer right after the sun sets.

This past month, however, those who celebrated the holy month of Ramadan fasted at home due to COVID-19 restrictions, having to complete their assignments and classes without food or water until the sun had set.

Some students, such as junior Kaniz Akter, report having very little energy for the duration of the month. “[Ramadan] made me less productive because you either have to stay up late or wake up early, and I don’t get enough sleep often, so it ma[de] me really tired, and I don’t start my work until I break my fast,” she said. Akter’s sleep schedule meant that she would

not sleep until 4:00 to 5:00 a.m. every night.

Others had little change in their productivity as a result of the holiday. “Fasting has not really impacted my productivity in the classroom because classes are in the morning, and even before Ramadan, I would not eat in the morning. I was already used to sleeping late and I am not a very deep sleeper so waking up for Sehri was not a problem for me,” freshman M. M. Abrar Hasnat said. This may be the case for many students who have become numb to Stuyvesant’s workloads leading them into the late-night hours, making the need to wake up for early morning prayers helpful rather than harmful.

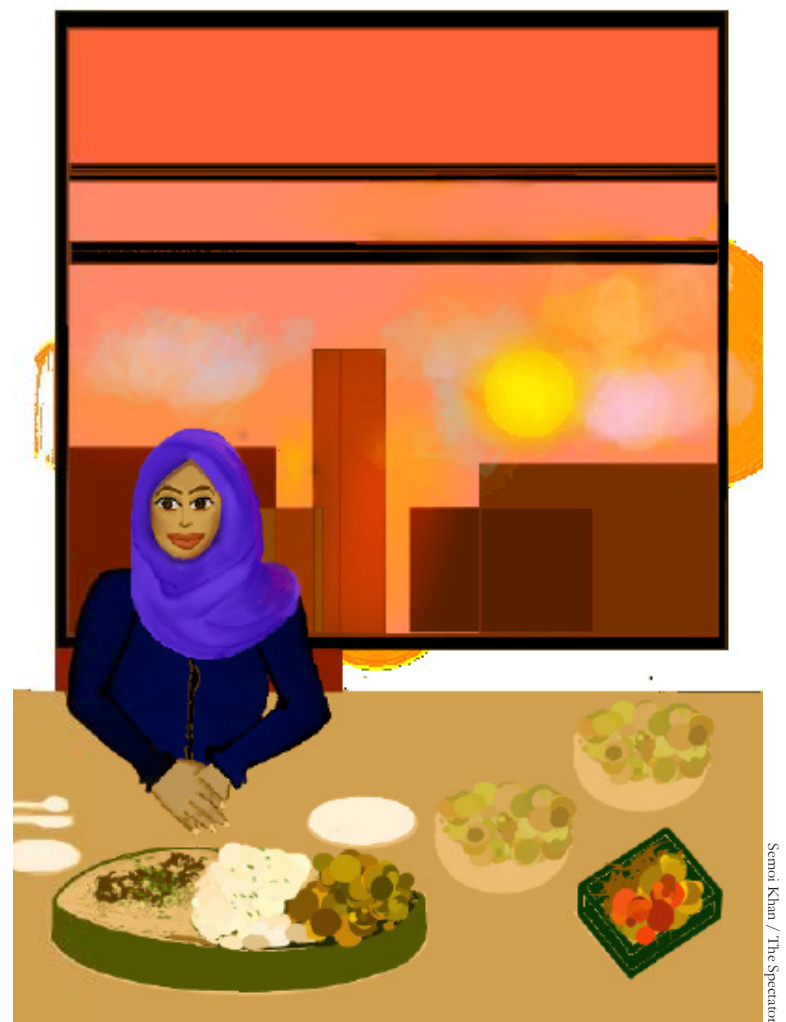
With the threat of COVID-19 still looming, however, many students and their families continued exercising caution around congregating with family. “I just eat with my [immediate] family. I haven’t really seen anyone from outside of the household or eaten with them since Ramadan started, which is different from the norm,” freshman Eshaal Ubaid said.

However, there is hope for places of worship. “Many mosques have opened up already and follow social distancing guidelines. If you go to a mosque, you will need a mask, and people are made to pray far apart from one another,”

an anonymous freshman said. During Eid, which marks the end of Ramadan, many masjids did not have mass praying times during the day, but socially distanced small to medium-sized prayers.

Typically, Ramadan would be celebrated with extended families, which could not happen due to COVID-19 restrictions. There were still positive aspects to Ramadan this year, however, despite it being celebrated within close quarters. The biggest plus was the limit on travel that would have been in effect, compared to if students went to school. “There’s no travel and it’s getting warmer. So, bus, train, even walking in school, all those steps are very tiring. So since it’s at home, it is easier to conserve energy and do school from bed,” Akter said.

Others are thankful that Ramadan is gaining more recognition as a holiday, as it is often underrepresented in comparison to other holidays such as Christmas and Thanksgiving. “I’ve noticed that this year, more people have been informing each other about Ramadan, because I think more people are spending time on social media and more people are spreading awareness about it. I’ve noticed more people asking me about it this year than previous years and it’s been rather nice because it seems to be this lesser-known

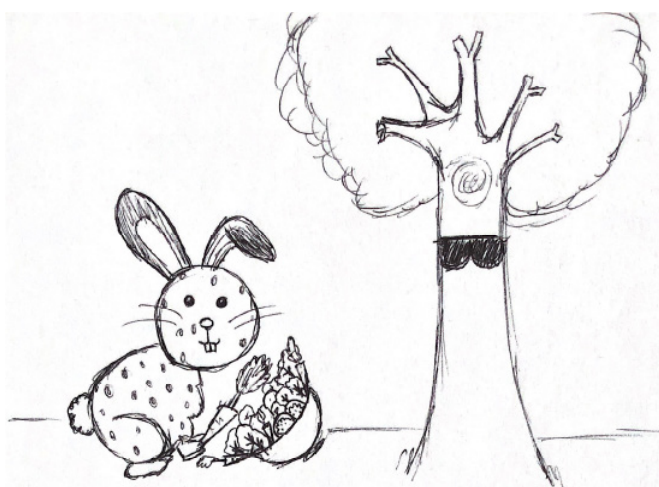


Senoi Khan / The Spectator

holiday somehow.” Ubaid said. With more people on social media and dwindling coronavirus restrictions, it seems that many Muslims can look forward to

a time to celebrate outside of close quarters, and a much more curious audience to learn about Ramadan in general.

Dead Art



Shreyasi Saha / The Spectator



Kelly Yip / The Spectator

Editorials

The Spectator NYC Mayoral Endorsement

The pandemic in New York City is almost over. The majority of adult New Yorkers are fully vaccinated and free to return to business as usual. School will be in person next September, restaurants are back, and sporting events are nearing full capacity. However, the city itself has a long road to recovery. As NYC faces fiscal, housing, transportation, population, education, crime, and policing crises, the next mayor is responsible for getting the city back on its feet. The Democratic primary on June 22 will decide the outcome of one of the most pivotal mayoral elections in recent history. As the primary will be ranked-choice, The Spectator Editorial Board has decided to provide a secondary endorsement.

Kathryn Garcia

Every mayoral candidate has a vision for the future of New York. Each one is not content to just return to the pre-pandemic normal and understand that the status quo needs massive improvement. While candidates vary slightly on policy, they all seek a more affordable, prosperous, and equitable city. Thus, the critical question becomes which candidate can actually execute his or her vision, follow through on promises, run a massive bureaucracy, and navigate our tense political climate to make tough calls. Of the 13 Democratic candidates, Kathryn Garcia is the clear answer.

A Stuyvesant alumna ('88) and lifelong New Yorker, Garcia has a plethora of experience working as a civil servant. For the past 14 years, she

has served as Commissioner of the Sanitation Department, rising at dawn to guarantee clean water through city taps and streets free of trash. Beyond daily city maintenance, Garcia knows how to resurrect New York after major city catastrophes. Garcia served as incident commander during Hurricane Sandy in 2013, establishing 42 pumping stations and a water waste treatment plant in only three days. Garcia confronted a citywide crisis once again during the pandemic when she responded to a city-wide hunger crisis by creating an emergency food program that has now delivered over 200 million meals to those in need. Her leadership in sanitation and city maintenance embodies the administrative skills necessary for running the largest city in the nation.

Additionally, Garcia's plans address not only how to get the city back to its former strength, but how to make it even stronger. New York City will face many problems in the coming years—the continued effects of climate change, a housing crisis, and countless other challenges—but Garcia is prepared to confront these issues. Garcia will move the city to a fully renewable energy economy, green every single school roof, and double the number of green jobs in the city. Garcia's approach to housing is equally comprehensive. Her program will address the housing crisis by accelerating the construction of new housing units, which will help give the homeless permanent places to live rather than week-long shelters. Garcia's long-term approach to hous-

ing speaks to her larger philosophy: she finds fixes that work not just now, but also later.

Other candidates might have more audacious plans, but plans are worthless without competent follow-through. Garcia understands what can and cannot be done in a city with limited resources and how to realistically accomplish ambitious progressive goals. Despite the disagreements New Yorkers have about our government, they can all agree on one thing: we need a better one. And of all of the 13 candidates, Kathryn Garcia has proved time and time again that she has the tenacity, competence, and vision to truly better this city.

Eric Adams

Eric Adams, while the least progressive of the Democratic candidates, deserves consideration in the race. Adams is highly qualified, serving as a NYPD captain, a legislator in the New York State Senate, and the first Black Brooklyn Borough President. He emphasizes law and order while understanding the need for systemic change within the police department. Adams promises to keep the city safe in the face of the recent spike in crime rates and make systematic changes to root out inequalities that even he himself has experienced. Additionally, he understands the need for education reform. Instead of keeping the SHSAT exam, he is proposing a new model for the NYC school system that includes expanding the number of specialized high schools across the city that would consider students on their academic profiles in ad-

The Spectator

The Stuyvesant High School Newspaper



"The Pulse of the Student Body"

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dition to the SHSAT. He is calling for an education system that starts preparing students for success as early as elementary school and will help

propel them into the city's elite high schools, with test preparatory services provided to any student who cannot afford them.

Snow Days Aren't Negotiable

By CHARLOTTE PETERSON

For the upcoming school year, the New York City Department of Education (DOE) announced on May 4 that it would be instituting remote learning in place of snow days. Citing the "success of remote learning" as the reason, the DOE declared that public school children will not experience the unexpected days off to play in the snow. This decision is detrimental to the well-being of students as it negatively impacts their mental health and education.

Snow days allow kids to enjoy a fun, stress-free day outside. When looking back on their days in school, people should remember playing outdoors on the snowiest days of the year instead of spending time on Zoom. A day off to frolic in the snow provides a motivation to play outside, seeing as only 35 percent of school-aged children receive the recommended amount of physical activity. Children should not be cooped up, staring at a screen for hours, as it is hardly a necessary adaptation for a single missed school day. Children are also likely to be distracted by the enticing winter weather, making focusing in class even more difficult than before.

Though this decree means that there will be fewer additional makeup days at the end

of the school year, a day of remote learning cannot do what a day of in-person instruction can. Teachers are not given enough time to prepare for these unpredictable snow days, thus furthering the inadequacy of remote learning. Care and deliberation are required to plan lessons; this time is not given to teachers when they are required, out of the blue, to switch to a different platform for a day.

any schooling or connected with their schools in the past year. These students have no reason to attend an isolated day of remote learning and will likely miss out on the online instruction other students will be receiving. Other students may lack the proper equipment for a day of virtual learning. While schools and the DOE gave out tablets and laptops this year for online instruction, it is difficult to organize the distribution of

the unfortunate general shift toward continuously working and maximizing our "productivity." The amount of work students have received has increased from previous generations, with younger age groups in 1997 receiving an average of more than twice as much homework as they did 16 years prior. Another study found that by 2015, children had three times too much homework with no correlation between

mental to students' mental and physical health and represents the cultural shift toward valuing work over everything else.

Ultimately, eliminating snow days is downright upsetting for children. Something that was a joyful staple of so many of our childhood winters may not be experienced by the future generations. While the DOE has not made it clear whether or not the policy is permanent, it has not mentioned what is in



Children should not be cooped up, staring at a screen for hours, as it is hardly a necessary adaptation for a single missed school day.

Students have also reported not being able to learn well virtually, with many failing to show up to remote classes and lectures. A staggering 2,260 students in NYC have not done

devices on such short notice, and underprivileged students will likely involuntarily miss class.

Discarding snow days for virtual learning also exemplifies

the amount of work given and learning benefits. Seeing as children are already overworked and overburdened, getting rid of snow days, one of our few unexpected breaks, is detri-

store for future years. The existence of this change in policy alone is worrying and indicative of this shift in valuing work over recreational time.

Opinions

Andrew Yang: A Hero for Asians?

By ALEX CHO and JUSTIN HUANG

Among New York City's thousands of Asian American businesses, next to the racks of glistening roast pork or crates of fresh fruit and vegetables crowding the stores' windows, there is usually a navy blue "Yang for New York" sign. Andrew Yang, famous for his happy demeanor and heterodox views during his 2020 presidential campaign, now has a serious chance at becoming NYC's first Asian American mayor. His name recognition and support from the Asian American community have lifted him to the top of many polls. But while the Asian community loves Yang for the representation he brings, they ignore his anti-Asian policies and comments.

In a year-old op-ed for *The Washington Post* addressing the spike in anti-Asian racism, he wrote, "We need to step up, help our neighbors, donate gear, vote, wear red, white, and blue, volunteer, fund aid orga-

nizations, and do everything in our power to accelerate the end of this crisis. We should show without a shadow of a doubt that we are Americans who will do our part for our country in this time of need."

While Asian Americans should help others, the underlying tone and message in this piece are loud and clear: show your patriotism and support so that people will not be racist to you. Yang expresses that the Asian American community should volunteer and donate to coronavirus relief foundations to "show without a shadow of a doubt that we are Americans." He implies that donating and expressing patriotism are the price to pay for acceptance and the avoidance of racism. Yang, the "champion" of Asian Americans, implies that we should assimilate and become "more American," which is naive. No amount of red, white, and blue garments will alter us in the eyes of racists. It will not stop the racial and hateful slurs and the violence.

Yang's argument is reminiscent of Booker T. Washington's advocacy of the idea that African Americans should make themselves more respectful and pull themselves by the bootstraps, as opposed to blaming others. By doing so, Washington hoped that African Americans could appeal by showing that they could be useful members of society and earn their rights. If African Americans had followed Washington and chosen to bear the discrimination they faced, they would not support someone as audacious as Martin Luther King Jr. or Malcolm X, both of whom fiercely advocated against inequality.

Similarly, if Asian Americans had assimilated in the face of the adversities in the past, we would not have the strong cultural identity we have today. The Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1992 Los Angeles riots in Koreatown, and other struggles Asian Americans have faced were not overcome by adopting American personas and culture. Giving in would have yielded

nothing but a lack of a distinct Asian identity and a deeply ingrained belief in Asian inferiority.

Yang was adored by the Asian American community because he was a major representative in politics. However, his low exposure and chances of winning kept observers from noticing his tone-deaf comments. Yang consistently appealed to the model minority myth in his pursuit of the Oval Office by joking, "I am Asian, so I know a lot of doctors" or "The opposite of Donald Trump is an Asian man who likes math." While the jokes may seem harmless, he is fortifying stereotypes that are harmful to Asian people and other minority groups by forcing Asian people to work harder to meet the expectations set for them while discouraging the minorities who are compared to these stereotypes. Having someone with as strong of a voice as Yang say these remarks jokingly does nothing but worsen preconceptions of Asian

Americans.

Praised for providing Asian people with the representation they have so desperately needed, Yang's words are impactful in the community. Though he acknowledged that his claim that Asians needed to show their patriotism "fell short," it raises concerns about his ability to combat anti-Asian discrimination. Yang's choice to release the op-ed thinking that it was acceptable in the first place leads us to believe that he may not have what it takes to lead NYC.

Yang is not the hero of the Asian American community. Though he may have appeared to be the perfect candidate, his past comments have made it clear that he perpetuates Asian stereotypes, whether inadvertently or not, and contributes to the issue of discrimination among racial minorities. Instead of automatically choosing Yang based on ethnicity, Asian Americans should research what other mayoral candidates bring to the table.

Remember Tulsa

By ISABEL CHING

Exactly a century ago, a Black teenage shoe shiner named Dick Rowland stepped into an office building near the center of Tulsa, Oklahoma on May 30, 1921. A few minutes after Rowland entered, the building's white elevator operator, 17-year-old Sarah Page, screamed for help. Terrified of being accused of assault and rape, Rowland fled the scene. The next day, local police arrested and jailed Rowland in the Tulsa County Courthouse. Soon, the story of the escalator encounter pervaded the public consciousness as newspapers like *The Tulsa Tribune* manipulated age-old fears of Black men "corrupting" white women. An armed white mob assembled at Tulsa's courthouse and began shooting into the Black crowd, setting off a chain of events known today as the Tulsa Race Massacre. Though nobody will ever know what truly unfolded in the elevator that fateful day, the horror that erupted over the next two days destroyed Tulsa's flourishing Black community and left a permanent stain on the city's character—a mark that continues to dictate Tulsa race relations today.

At the time of the massacre, Tulsa was an anomaly in a country increasingly characterized by white supremacist movements like the Ku Klux Klan and anti-Black violence. Just the summer before, racist mobs had murdered Black veterans returning home from "making the world safe for democracy," a series of events euphemistically dubbed the Red Summer of 1919. Tulsa was different. The city's Black residents built a prosperous community free from the harsher racial realities of life in the Jim Crow South. The thriving Greenwood District boasted a population of nearly 10 thousand residents, and the neighborhood was complete with movie theaters, hotels, pharmacies, and hair salons. The community's self-sufficient business district, "Black Wall Street," reflected Black Tulsa's success. Founded by prominent Black landowner Ottawa Gurley in

1905, the sector blossomed into a district with one of the highest concentrations of Black businesses in the country. As a result, the city itself became a mecca synonymous with Black prosperity, a shining beacon of hope for a community long in conflict with the traditional American psyche.

The primary reason for Tulsa's economic success was the Great Migration. Spurred on by the allure of job openings, urban residential districts, and boarding houses, Black Americans seized the opportunity

on the sidewalk with machine guns, and prevented firefighters from saving Black Wall Street. Soon, martial law was declared, and the National Guard was brought in. They only worsened the situation as the police and National Guard arrested Black residents instead of white rioters, and some members of the National Guard even joined in the rioting and violence themselves. By the end of the massacre, more than 1,200 homes were destroyed, 35 blocks were burned, and as many as 300 people lay dead. An innocent

ly receiving. In Tulsa, bipartisan efforts have resulted in "racial reconciliation efforts," and a multimillion-dollar museum and cultural center to remember the massacre will open this spring to commemorate the event's 100th anniversary. The massacre has also found the national spotlight. The popular streaming platform HBO released "Watchmen" in 2019, which provided a vivid and often harrowing depiction of the events that occurred between May 31, 1921, and now. Interestingly, the series does not re-

going investment in other sectors. Without government assistance, rebuilding often meant the sacrifice of opportunities like the investment in education, health, property, and business, all factors which contributed to an overall decrease in wealth accumulation.

Excavations, new museums, and television shows are not enough to compensate for an ugly past that continues to have a tangible impact on Black Tulsa today. Justice for the atrocities of the past must finally be served through economic reparations for Black Tulsa and the introduction of the Tulsa Race Massacre into mainstream American culture. We owe it to Black Tulsa to recognize the psychological harm done to the Black community and the detrimental effects the massacre had on Tulsa's economy. Atoning for the past will provide Black Tulsa with badly needed economic aid and recast the traditional depiction of the massacre by acknowledging the gross injustice.

Understanding American history remains more important than ever. Today, in a time of fraught racial tensions and continued violence toward Black Americans, best exemplified by the murders of unarmed Black men like George Floyd and Daunte Wright, reckoning with our history will color our perception of the present. In Tulsa, a white police officer named Betty Shelby fatally shot an unarmed Black man named Terence Crutcher in 2016 as he lowered his hands and reached into his vehicle. After being charged with first degree manslaughter, Shelby was acquitted in August of 2017, which caused outrage among the Black community. While the circumstances of the Crutcher shooting and the Tulsa Race Massacre are distinct, the two are the results of the same racism that dominates Tulsa today. In the words of Tulsa resident and the sister of Terence Crutcher, Dr. Tiffany Crutcher, "To be Black and to be Tulsan is to have your history erased." Let's change that narrative once and for all.

Remember Tulsa

presented by wartime prosperity to escape the persistent and violent racism of the South and start life anew. Though Black Americans hoped that a move to the North might mitigate racial tensions, their migration instead proved to be an explosive force. In St. Louis, Illinois, a mob of whites attacked African Americans and killed at least 100 residents in 1917. In Chicago, white gangs hunted Black Americans in the street and burned their homes. Local authorities held Black people responsible for the violence, and President Wilson refused requests for federal intervention and investigations.

The story was the same in Tulsa. Encouraged by the decisions of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which continued to uphold restrictions on voting access to Black Americans by approving grandfather clauses and poll taxes, and eager to end an era of Black prosperity, white mobs burned the Greenwood District to the ground. The mob looted businesses, shot Black people dead

elevator meeting, where it is commonly suggested that Rowland was trying to catch Page as she stumbled, had exploded into one of the nation's deadliest and ugliest race massacres.

Today, the events of Tulsa remain relatively unknown—Stuyvesant's own history textbooks contain no mention of the massacre, and the event is not typically taught in American history courses. Perhaps more striking, however, is the massacre's legacy in Tulsa itself. Using eyewitness accounts to pinpoint mass burial sites of the massacre's victims, two areas with anomalies in the soil were located in 2019. The excavation began in July of last year. While archaeologists did not find bodies, they did unearth a bullet, two pairs of shoes, and a buried road. In the future, excavations of Oaklawn Cemetery and "The Canes," an area near the Arkansas River, are planned.

Culturally, the Tulsa Race Massacre has received newfound attention as well—a testament to the long-overdue awareness the massacre is final-

ly receiving. In Tulsa, bipartisan efforts have resulted in "racial reconciliation efforts," and a multimillion-dollar museum and cultural center to remember the massacre will open this spring to commemorate the event's 100th anniversary. The massacre has also found the national spotlight. The popular streaming platform HBO released "Watchmen" in 2019, which provided a vivid and often harrowing depiction of the events that occurred between May 31, 1921, and now. Interestingly, the series does not re-

lect the events of modern-day Tulsa; instead, it presents an alternate history in which residents affected by the massacre have received reparations.

However, in our reality, local leaders have refused to compensate the victims financially while the Black community in Tulsa suffers a disproportionately high poverty rate. According to the Tulsa Race Massacre Commission, created by the Oklahoma state legislature to study the massacre and provide recommendations on moving forward, the Black community deserves reparations. Following the massacre, Black Tulsa faced significant opposition while attempting to rebuild, especially since the new government was controlled by the very people who had destroyed their community. Just as the end of the "40 acres and a mule" policy during Reconstruction set the precedent for present-day disparities in generational wealth within and outside the Black community, the rebuilding of a once burgeoning Black Tulsa came at the steep price of for-

Opinions

Reviving Political Discourse

By ASHLEY LIN

I grew up believing that political discourse involving two conflicting viewpoints meant personal attacks would be present. This idea can mostly be attributed to the first presidential debate I ever watched between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton in 2016. Rather than hearing the candidate's different policy proposals, I heard only insults and hostile bickering.

Once again, I was watching the presidential debate in 2020 when a similar instance occurred. All I heard were personal attacks where phrases like "clown" were thrown around. Both of these debates were not true political discourse.

This hostile attitude is not limited to the debate setting. In congressional and Senate hearings, there is often endless bickering, name-calling, and bullying. The Republican and Democratic Parties both have members who are blatantly intolerant and rude toward those on the other side. For example, Representative Ted Yoho, a Republican from Florida, called Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democrat from New York, a vulgar expletive and made other insults such as "disgusting," "dangerous," and "crazy" on the steps of the Capitol in June of 2020. Though politicians do get legislation passed, the whole process could be much more effective without a slew of personal attacks and hostility.

Political discourse requires cooperation, respect, and even friendship among those with opposing political views. Former Associate Justices Antonin Scalia and Ruth Bader Ginsburg were polar opposites when it came to judicial philosophy.

Justice Scalia was a staunch conservative known for his criticism of judicial activism. Justice Ginsburg, however, was more liberal and advocated for women's sexual and reproductive rights. Despite their opposing views, Scalia and Ginsburg had an unwavering friendship that was built off of their differences rather than their similarities. Ginsburg once wrote in a statement she released after Scalia's death that they were

while on the bench, they never criticized each other's personal character or intellect and shared mutual respect.

Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill had a similar relationship despite their ideological differences; Reagan wanted to implement tax cuts, increase military spending, and deregulate the economy. As speaker of the House, O'Neill did everything in his power to prevent Reagan's vision from

The decline in political discourse can be partially attributed to former President Trump's rhetoric and tone when he spoke to those who disagreed with him. They were distinct from those of previous presidents and created a shift from respectful argumentation to hostile name-calling and threats of retribution. He denied that Senator McCain was a war hero and called him a "loser," called Senator Mitt Romney "a stone cold loser" for speaking out against him, and told Representative Ilhan Omar and other members of the Squad, a group of progressive members of Congress, to return to "the totally broken and crime-infested places from which they came." His presidency, more specifically his insulting rhetoric, accelerated the decline in true political discourse in Washington, D.C.

The lack of true political discourse is the reason why there is legislative gridlock, which is when legislation is passed at a slow rate, in both Congress and the Senate. When politicians refuse to engage in civilized discussion and compromise, it is difficult to enact impactful change and legislation. For example, the House introduced, voted on, and passed about 400 bills in 2020, but 80 percent of those bills did not pass in the Senate because Majority Leader Mitch McConnell prevented them from even being debated on. As a piece of legislation's final enactment depends on both Congress and the Senate's approval, the Senate could not debate these bills when McConnell declared them "dead on arrival." Because of uncompromising politicians, laws that would have helped a majority of Americans, such as the Bipartisan Background Checks

Act, the Lowering Drugs Costs Now Act, and the Protecting Americans with Preexisting Conditions Act, awaited debate instead.

Additionally, the lack of civil discourse has reflected badly on Washington, D.C. Nearly 80 percent of Americans are concerned about the lack of civility in politics and believe it will lead to violence. This general consensus that transcends party lines is rare and shows that it is an issue. Americans are scared that the lack of true and respectful political discourse will result in negative consequences.

To resolve this problem, politicians must start engaging in difficult but necessary conversations about policy and legislation that do not involve personal attacks and the demonization of each other. Additionally, they must put their country's and constituents' best interests over their party's.

Justice Scalia once said, "I attack ideas. I don't attack people." This precedent is what politicians need to follow today. They must learn from Justices Ginsburg and Scalia, Reagan and O'Neill, Obama and McCain, and the many other examples of politicians who set aside their differing beliefs to work together toward benefiting the American people. Though they do not need to be the closest of friends, politicians must focus on exchanging and listening to ideas, not attacking each other, to create tangible change. True and proper civic discourse involves listening, respectfully responding to each other, and sometimes compromising; it does not involve viewing civility and respect as a liability and weakness.



"different in [their] interpretation of written texts, [but] one in [their] reverence for the Constitution and the institution [they] serve." Despite their disagreement on issues from the constitutionality of abortion to judicial activism, they still had a strong friendship because they were able to disagree with each other respectfully. Though they often criticized each other's ideas and sparred immensely

taking place. However, they politely interacted with each other and had lunches together. Additionally, John McCain and Barack Obama, who both ran for president in 2008, spoke positively and respectfully about each other. McCain even asked Obama to deliver his eulogy in 2018. These respectful relationships between politicians, however, are not seen today as often as they once were.

A Global Response to the COVID-19 Crisis in India

By PETER GOSWAMI

Dead bodies wash up on the shores of the Ganges for other grieving families to discover. People cannot burn their dead as crematories fail to deal with the upkeep of corpses. India reports over 4,000 deaths from COVID-19 every day, though the actual count is much higher. The pandemic decimates rural areas because of the lack of access to testing, hospitals, or medical care. Many search for empty oxygen cylinders, hoping to find a way to get them filled up while others turn toward the black market. The crisis in India continues as the government fails to provide sufficient aid and vaccines in a country where only three percent of people are fully vaccinated. World governments must assist India to help end this crisis.

Failure to do so could lead to a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global scale, even after many countries have curbed the spread. The World Health Organization labeled the Indian variant of the coronavirus, B.1.617, a "variant of concern" and a global health risk, stating that it is more contagious and possibly more resistant to the vaccine than other variants. The variant has already spread to 43 other countries, and countries near India have started to suffer. Oxygen cylinders are scarce, and hospi-

tals in both India and Nepal are refusing all but critical patients. Cases in other countries bordering India have surged, and the countries dependent on vaccines from India cannot receive vaccines. The effects of the crisis in India on neighboring countries, coupled with the dangers posed by the higher risk of transmission of the B.1.617 variant, foreshadow a global surge in cases that cannot be prevented without international cooperation. On top of these concerns, there has also been a serious undercounting of cases and deaths in India.

Independent journalists and newspapers in India have relied on counts from crematoriums and hospitals to get the actual count for cases and deaths. The serious undercounting is evidenced by how the count from mortuaries and crematoriums is 10 times higher than the official count in the state of Gujarat. On top of giving crucial aid to India, foreign governments need to urge Indian governments and officials to release accurate data on the number of COVID-19 cases so people can truly understand the severity of the crisis. Minimal access to testing and treatment in rural areas has led to further concerns about how accurate the data really is.

In rural India, there is only an average of five hospital beds and 8.6 physicians for every 10

thousand people. Setting up a rural hospital in India with 25 hospital beds and medical staff costs about \$20 thousand. The crisis in rural areas is furthered by how the Indian government has restricted non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the power of state governments.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government instituted an amendment in September of 2020 that limits the amount of international funding NGOs can rely on, requiring all charities to get affidavits and notary stamps and open bank accounts with the government-owned State Bank of India. The almost three million nonprofits in India compensate for a government that spends only 1.2 percent of its gross domestic product on healthcare. These are the same NGOs that work to get treatment to rural areas and distribute supplies to areas that are facing scarcities. While Modi's government has attacked NGOs, restrictions put in place stop state governments from directly requesting aid from foreign governments by forcing them to go through the central government. This problem is compounded by the central government not providing enough information about aid distribution to state governments, which in turn stops crucial supplies from reaching the people who need them most.

While many foreign governments have sent supplies to India, they must ensure the aid is distributed properly. The United States has sent raw materials for vaccines, oxygen, and testing kits to India, but chief ministers in several states have complained that they have not yet received anything. Foreign governments can pressure the Indian government to allow state governments to directly request aid. If these restrictions are lifted, foreign leaders can converse directly with state leaders in India to map the areas that are most affected in each state and to coordinate providing more supplies to specifically those areas. International governments need to urge the Indian government to lift restrictions against NGOs so that NGOs can operate to combat the public health crisis, especially in rural areas. More importantly, foreign governments need to prioritize getting oxygen and testing supplies distributed properly over the distribution of vaccines, because it is necessary for India to be able to diagnose and treat its patients before it can create a vaccination plan. Even so, foreign governments do have the resources to help vaccinate India.

The vaccine shortage in India has led to concerns that the country might take 3.5 years to reach herd immunity. However, the United States and other

countries have the resources to provide vaccines to India. The United States has enough vaccines to fully vaccinate 750 million people, almost three times the adult population of the United States. This number includes 300 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, which has not been used in the United States yet but could be given to India. Similar surpluses of COVID-19 vaccines exist in other Western countries. The United States supports waiving the vaccine patents until the leaders of the World Trade Organization come to a consensus to do so. Therefore, we must apply pressure to waive the intellectual property rights so that all countries can afford to vaccinate their people, including India. Doing so makes it possible for India to create the vaccines on its own from raw materials instead of relying on doses from other countries.

International cooperation is necessary to fully end this pandemic, starting with combating the crisis in India. World governments need to not only provide aid to India through oxygen cylinders, testing, and vaccines, but also make the effort to ensure that this aid reaches the people who can benefit from it most. International governments have a moral imperative to help the struggling in India.

The Gifted, the Talented, and the Mayoral Race

By AMANDA CISSE

With the June 2021 mayoral primaries coming up, it is becoming increasingly important to discuss the effects of mayoral policies on current and future high schoolers. So far, candidates have taken strong stances on the SHSAT, police in schools, and screened admissions from all application systems to reform the New York educational system. As Stuyvesant students, we know these issues well and are affected by them daily. However, many problems with the NYC education system stem from further back than one might think: the Gifted and Talented (G&T) program.

The program starts at the age of four or five, when students take a series of tests, and depending on their performance, they may receive an offer from the collection of 103 specific programs around the city targeted toward high-achieving students. These tests measure students' verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal skills, all of which are meant to predict future academic success.

Even so, this exam does not do a great job at determining who is gifted or talented. Administering exams that can change someone's life trajectory at the age of four is not a way to find NYC's brightest students. Rather, it creates a divide between those who have access to the right resources and information to take the test and those who do not. About 70 percent of students in New

York City schools are Black or Hispanic, but less than 10 percent of G&T students are Black. Of the students who reach or surpass the cutoff score, only four percent come from the city's top eight poorest districts. These disparities are not because these students are any less gifted, but rather because of deeper structural issues. Schools in low-income neighborhoods, many of which are predominantly Black and Hispanic, are less likely to inform students of the exam and provide less support and preparation for it. Additionally, it tests students who have only been in the education system for about a year, which is hardly enough time to develop academically. This lack of support is more prevalent in schools with less funding because they can neither prepare their students as well as those in richer neighborhoods, nor offer the same opportunities.

Candidates like Maya Wiley, Dianne Morales, Ray McGuire, and others have released plans to reform the G&T program. Wiley, for example, plans to eliminate G&T and instead allow individual schools to create their own programs for their "gifted" students. This proposal, however, may be worse than our current program because individual schools will have too much free reign in determining who is gifted. Eliminating the G&T program on a city scale and implementing it on an individual level is not a solution to the problem, but rather only a cavalier misdirection. "Gifted"

is subjective; the current G&T program tests students on three set-in-stone areas, but individual schools will have their own unique standards, thus creating disparities among schools on

olds will grow up to take other exams like the SHSAT or the Independent School Entrance Exam and see the same results.

Other candidates like Scott Stringer aim to broaden G&T

exam, and it gives people more time to develop as students and people. Adding more schools or expanding the number of schools in specific areas is also a possible solution because it makes the program more accessible for all communities. These solutions are less ideological and more focused on enriching the program. If these reforms are successful, then students in these programs will still grow up to take similar tests, but with fewer disparities. A more diverse and accessible program means that there will be more low-income and minority students attending better high schools and colleges. Successful reformation of this program and the education system in general will make great strides in equality and access for all.

The best solution is to address the core of the problem. All students have different opportunities, rates of poverty, neighborhoods, values, and backgrounds. Achieving community equity and then equality is the way to confront this on a more structural level. This process might look like adding funding to the education system to improve the enrichment of all schools. It might be expanding G&T programs to make them more accessible. It might be focusing on public service facilities and support programs in underserved areas. It's about changing the way people think and the way we measure "giftedness" or "excellence." Maybe then, we can find New York's brightest in a truly meritocratic way.



Jasmine Wang / The Spectator

what is considered gifted. Different schools also have different funding and resources to put into creating their own programs. Additionally, eliminating the program also "hides away" the disparities found in G&T schools instead of tackling them fully. Eliminating the G&T program does not change the fact that some schools have more resources than others. The disparities will continue to be present when these same four-year-

programs by adding more schools to the program and beginning testing later on. Ray McGuire wants to expand the G&T program in Black and Hispanic communities, create testing opportunities for both first graders and younger students, and make the assessment more holistic. Opening up testing windows for multiple ages is a better solution as it gives people a greater chance of finding out about and preparing for the

Yes, It Is Hot in Here

By GULAM MONAWARAH

I began wearing a hijab at eight years old. My family and I were in our car on our way to the supermarket when my dad announced that I needed to start wearing one. It felt like a strange time to make such a decision, but nonetheless, I was excited. A week later, I went to school in my first hijab: it was the color of pearls and had small rhinestones around the forehead and back—the hijabi starter pack. My young, naive mind dreamed of compliments and smiles, but instead, I received nonchalance and a lot of concern. It broke my heart when my teachers asked if everything was all right at home instead of asking me what I was wearing. Adults asked me if my father "did" this to me. But I did not understand what they meant, thinking that they were asking about the rhinestones that fell off.

For the remainder of elementary school, some classmates made comments on my hijab, mentioning how much prettier I looked before. Others made the classic "Is it hot in there?" jokes. It was funny until the comments turned hurtful, and I became tired of the jokes.

For years, I spent my life trying to embrace my hijab while others did not believe I could be happy with it. Some thought my hijab was an insult to feminism and freedom and that I was brainwashed to believe I did not need saving. So, I tried to appease them.

I would pull back my hijab a little to show the tiniest bit of hair without actually taking it off. I would brush the loose ends of my scarf away to show just a little bit of skin. I would beg my mother to wrap my hijab as Congresswoman Ilhan Omar does sometimes, where only the back of the head is covered.

how I feel. Yet before I could even say a word, my teacher swooped in and said, "I don't like where this conversation is going. Either you talk about something else, or you don't talk to her at all." My heart shattered, and my friends did not look me in the eye for the rest of the trip.

However, my experiences

words to reply. I understood that people want to help hijabis like me, but the constant comments got on my nerves. Anytime I wanted to have a meaningful conversation with my peers about why I wear the hijab, someone would swoop in to "protect" me. It made me feel conscious of what people would ask me. I never wanted

Am I being oppressed? I chose to bear the brunt of endless questions, comments, and fears. But on that university trip, I realized that no matter how hard I try, some people just cannot be convinced I am proud of my culture.

From then on, I felt less conscious about my hijab and started to reflect on what it meant to me. My hijab is exactly what it is designed to be: a symbol of my religion, faith, and morals. A lot of my peers believe that modesty automatically equals oppression, but it does not. A lot of hijabis would agree that modesty is simply a personality trait, just as much kindness or generosity is. I am modest, and my hijab reflects that about me.

The same can be said for many Muslim women across the nation. Over 80 percent of American hijabis say that they wear a hijab as an act of piety, to be identified as a Muslim, or for modesty. Only one percent are actually forced to do so by a family member. We understand that people are trying to help, but insinuating that our own family members are trying to control and harm us can lead to confusion and frustration for Muslim girls.

I do not mind that my father made this decision for me, and I do not mind hiding my hair. The hijab means so much more to me than a fashion statement. It is representative of my religion and my dedication, so I will gladly wear it. My hijab and my religion are not a symbol of oppression. They are my pride.

It took me a long time to come to terms with my culture and realize the answers to the questions people asked when they saw my hair covered: Am I okay? Am I being oppressed?

I distinctly remember a class trip in seventh grade to a beautiful, prestigious university. My friends and I were at the front of the loud, chattering group of kids, and we began to tease each other. My friend asked me why I wear a hijab, and I was eager to tell him why, since it was the first time someone cared to ask

in middle school redefined what the hijab meant to me. Friends of mine would pull me aside privately and ask if I truly wanted this. "This what?" I would ask. "Well... that. Don't you want to show your hair sometimes?" they would say. Their faces would fall, and their hands would fidget, and I could never muster the right

people to worry about me, but it was wrong of me to put aside my confidence for their peace of mind.

Despite my current pride in wearing a hijab, it took me a long time to come to terms with my culture and realize the answers to the questions people asked when they saw my hair covered: Am I okay?

Science

The Importance of Global Space Cooperation

By **ARYANA SINGH**

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) launched the Long March-5B rocket on April 29, carrying the Tianhe module, the first piece of their upcoming space station intended to be the Chinese counterpart to the International Space Station. Several days later, debris from the rocket measuring 98 feet, longer than a semi-truck, [re-entered Earth's atmosphere](#) and landed in the Indian Ocean. Those in charge of the mission had hoped that the debris would fully burn up upon entering Earth's atmosphere or land in an ocean. Even with oceans covering about 71 percent of our planet, the risk of debris falling on inhabited land and causing property damage or even casualties was still too high.

Unlike other countries, China mysteriously sent its entire rocket into orbit instead of letting it predictably fall back to Earth immediately after discharging its payload. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) then censured China for its irresponsible actions. NASA Administrator [Sen. Bill Nelson](#) said, "Spacefaring nations must mini-

mize the risks to people and property on Earth of re-entries of space objects and maximize transparency regarding those operations. It is clear that China is failing to meet responsible standards regarding their space debris." U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin also emphasized the importance of creating requirements for those who operate in space. The recent Long March-5B incident is proof that there must be safety standards and regulations in order to ensure the safety of Earth as a whole.

Currently, one of the few guidelines set by the United Nations (UN) regarding the behavior of countries in space is [the Outer Space Treaty](#). A key principle of it is that, "States shall be liable for damage caused by their space objects." If China's Long March-5B rocket landed on another nation's territory, the Chinese government would have had to pay reparations for the damage caused. However, this treaty is part of a reactive approach, addressing disaster after its occurrence rather than preventing it. In the UN's more general [Space Law](#), a majority of the regulations are similar in nature.

With no proper global safety

precautions set, there have been several historical incidents involving other countries. Ironically, NASA's first space station, Skylab, fell out of orbit in 1979 into the Indian Ocean and parts of Western Australia. The Soviet Union, another major space power, was also responsible for dangerous space behavior as fragments of the [Salyut 7](#) space station fell over Argentina in 1991. Luckily, most of it burned up during its descent.

It is fortunate that there were no severe casualties in these previous incidents. Unfortunately, laws are typically made after a tragedy compels change. Coming up with rules to ensure safety will prove to be a challenge, but such a task is essential to prevent damage to property and people foremost. An important first step is to require space companies and agencies to come up with a reentry plan when necessary and also verify its precision. Creating and funding global programs that will do so is vital. Once these basic rules are put into place, detailed regulations should follow.

Another crucial issue is [space junk](#), the 170 million pieces of man-made debris orbiting around Earth that range from [less than one millimeter](#) wide

to entire nonfunctional spacecrafts. The US government estimates that 200 to 400 objects fall into Earth's atmosphere every year as a result of incidents, similar to the recent Long March one. One such example is the destruction of the [Fengyun-1C satellite](#) that produced thousands of pieces of debris, all of which are still orbiting the planet. These pieces of debris often travel at tremendously high speeds, sometimes even reaching 18,000 miles per hour, [seven times faster](#) than a bullet. This makes even small debris hazardous to manned and unmanned spacecraft. In fact, the International Space Station (ISS) had to perform [26 maneuvers using small boosters](#) in its 20-year history to avoid space debris. Currently, NASA has implemented a process to limit the production of more debris, but only on a national and not a global scale. More regulations regarding reentry would also help ease the space debris crisis.

Nations across the globe must come together to ensure the safety of future space travel and exploration. Space agencies cannot allow an uncontrolled reentry of any space vehicle into Earth's atmosphere to save money and run a seemingly

SCIENCEBEAT

Zhurong, China's first Mars rover, successfully landed on the red planet on May 14 and is currently searching for ice beneath the planet's surface.

As climate change causes more forest fires, "**zombie fires**" that smolder underground and re-emerge during especially warm summers may become more common.

MDMA, the active compound in ecstasy, may be on its way to being an **FDA-approved drug** as Phase 3 clinical trials have shown that the drug, combined with intensive talk therapy, can offer **significant relief** from **post-traumatic stress disorder**.

minimal risk. They must ensure that danger to civilians around the world is nothing higher than zero. It is better to spend time and money now pushing for proactive space safety laws than it is to continue a reactive policy that risks countries paying the price of carelessness with lost lives and humiliation.

Cement Leaves More Than a Gray Mark

By **ANDY CHEN**

Cement is the most commonly used man-made material. From forming sidewalks and roads to impressive buildings, this material is an essential component of modern construction. In fact, the Sydney Opera House, the Lotus Temple in Delhi, and the grandiose Pantheon in Rome were all architectural feats made possible by cement. However, cement has left much more than a gray mark on infrastructures around the world; it has left a significant carbon footprint as well.

According to [Chatham House](#), over four billion metric tons of cement are produced globally every year, amounting to approximately eight percent of annual global CO₂ emissions. This makes the cement industry the second-largest carbon emitter, after the steel and iron industry. Some estimates even predict that as the global population grows and demands increase, cement production may rise by 23 percent by 2050. The Paris Agreement, a global treaty of 197 members ratified in 2016, lays down the groundwork to combat climate change. The treaty aims to lower global greenhouse gas emissions back to healthy levels by limiting global warming to two degrees Celsius, at most. To reach the temperature goal set by the Paris Agreement, by 2030, the cement industry will need to reduce its yearly carbon emissions by 16 percent. Consequently, cement production has become an increasing concern for scientists and cement producers alike, since the current state of the cement industry is

bound to jeopardize the Paris Agreement's targets for climate change.

The first step in reducing emissions in the cement industry is understanding how manufacturing cement creates emissions. The manufacturing process begins by grinding and crushing raw materials such as limestone and clay. The crushed materials are then blended with ash or iron ore and mixed in a

kiln at extremely high temperatures. The resulting ingredients undergo calcination, a process that extracts calcium oxide and carbon dioxide and produces a clinker, a sphere-like solid. When the clinker is cooled, it is ground and mixed with materials like gypsum and limestone to produce cement. The calcination step accounts for a shocking 90 percent of emissions, while transporting, grind-

ing, and cooling are responsible for less than 10 percent. Therefore, many researchers are looking for ways to reduce the emissions from clinker production or even from the entire manufacturing process itself.

To do so, a research team from the University of California, Los Angeles, is developing a product called "[CO₂NCRETE](#)" to combat carbon emissions from the cement manufacturing

process. CO₂NCRETE uses a process known as "carbon upcycling" to convert CO₂ from industrial activities in factories and power plants into carbon-neutral cement. There is no processing required, meaning the CO₂ conversion to this product can occur right at the site of industrial activities. As a result, this more eco-friendly cement could potentially replace Portland cement, the traditional ce-

ment used to create concrete. Not only that, CO₂NCRETE may directly reduce carbon emissions produced in power plants and factories through carbon upcycling. Other researchers are trying to take advantage of the fact that concrete, a building material with cement as a component, has the ability to soak up carbon dioxide. Though the absorption of carbon dioxide

could reverse carbon emissions during the creation of cement.

While many innovative solutions are arising to combat carbon emissions in the cement industry, there are still challenges. The carbon industry lacks the incentive to change and adopt these new technologies. Traditional Portland cement is a reliable and safe building material, while many of the newer substances are less thoroughly researched. Because of this, the introduction of newer materials for the construction of important infrastructures is subject to much concern about safety and reliability. Additionally, using these new materials requires approval from regulatory groups, which is difficult to get. With the growing global population, demands for affordable homes are increasing, which will increase the consumption of cement and result in more carbon emissions.

However, all is not lost. Despite the cement sector's reluctance to change, the rising concern for climate change has helped raise acceptance of cement alternatives. CEMEX is a leading figure in carbon reduction in the cement industry and has supported the development of climate-friendly infrastructure around the world. LinkedIn is another company that is developing a carbon-neutral technology to reduce emissions from cement. One can be a part of this movement by raising awareness about climate change and its effect on the world. Fundraising for and supporting CEMEX, LinkedIn, or other large organizations fighting against climate change can change the world for the better.



Anna Ast / The Spectator

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Looking to Nature to Solve our Problems

By SUBAAH SYED

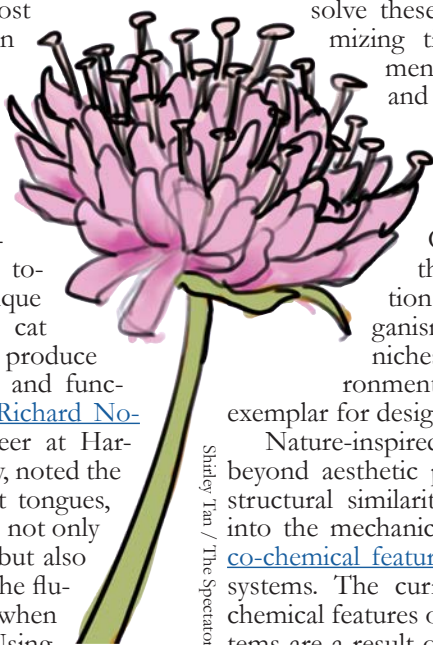
As surprising as it may sound, Japan's bullet train was not developed by human power alone. The aerodynamic structure of the train, which allows for speeds over 200 miles per hour, was inspired by the pointed beak of the [kingfisher](#). This train is just one of many examples of how nature is a valuable asset to the development of modern technology. Moving into the 21st century, scientists have been looking toward a system that has existed even before human civilization. There is hope for the future if we acknowledge and emulate the model that has existed for billions of years: nature.

Biomimicry is the scientific approach to putting nature's lessons into practice, mainly to solve complex human problems. Though the idea of incorporating concepts from nature for our benefit has existed since ancient times, the term "biomimicry" is only a couple of decades old. Throughout history, biomimicry has been a significant part of revolutionary discoveries and inventions.

The first powered aircraft, built in 1903 by Wilbur and Orville Wright, was [based on observing birds in flight](#). Centuries before, in 1488, Leonardo da Vinci based his designs for the

efficient manner. flying machine on the anatomy of birds. In the present day, we also see biomimicry in architecture, such as the [Lotus Temple in India and the Beijing National Stadium in China](#).

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, observing nature played a key role in developing eco-friendly and effective equipment, most notably when there was a nationwide shortage of diagnostic nasal swabs. To solve the shortage, scientists looked toward the unique features of cat tongues to produce more efficient and functional swabs. [Richard Novak](#), an engineer at Harvard University, noted the papillae on cat tongues, which they use not only to trap fluids, but also to bring back the fluids, usually when grooming. Using this fact to their advantage, Novak and his team created a swab that had characteristics similar to those of a cat's tongue: it could collect the mucus of an individual's nose and release it into the test tube, all in an inexpensive and



Shirley Tam / The Spectator

As technology and our understanding of the world around us become more advanced, new problems arise, and scientists must tackle more complex and technical issues. In these circumstances, empiricism, the reliance solely on laboratory experiments, can only go so far. To solve these issues, optimizing time management, resources, and money is critical, which is where nature comes into play. Observing the interactions between organisms and their niches in an environment serves as an exemplar for design.

Nature-inspired design goes beyond aesthetic purposes and structural similarities. It delves into the mechanical and [physico-chemical features](#) of natural systems. The current physico-chemical features of natural systems are a result of millions of years of evolution and natural selection. The game of survival of the fittest leads organisms to develop more complex features and better adapt to their surroundings. Qualities such as night vision and additional layers of fur in colder tempera-

tures are examples of how humans have built upon animals' evolved properties and incorporated them into products humans can use.

One success story of using physico-chemical properties from nature is Sharklet Technologies, a manufacturing company that used shark scales as a reference to create a [revolutionary fabric](#) with special properties. The tooth-like shark scale denticles are evolved not only to decrease drag but also to be resistant to biofouling, the buildup of bacteria and microorganisms. This attribute paved the way for the creation of the Sharklet, a plastic sheet that mimics the pattern of shark scale denticles and impedes bacterial growth, all without antibiotics or additional chemicals. Sharklet is now used in hospitals for antibacterial resistance materials, such as gowns and shields. Its ability to reduce touch transfer by 99 percent encourages people to use Sharklet technology for doorknobs, elevator buttons, and other high touch surfaces. This ultimately may be integral in preventing the next virus outbreak.

Though there are other ways in which people use nature for their benefit, they are mostly harmful to the environment, and the benefits are one-sided. Animal testing is one area where we

apply what we learn about animals in practical uses. However, this involves testing animals, like rats, hamsters, and even apes, with certain potentially harmful drugs and chemicals. Other times, animals are poached for medicinal benefits that can be false, especially for traditional and alternative medicine. These applications are a stark contrast to the environmentally friendly methodology of biomimicry. By using biomimicry, we take the admirable characteristics of the natural systems around us and apply them to our lives through technology, architecture, and other areas. Unlike animal experimentation or poaching, biomimicry does not harm living organisms. Rather, it admires them from afar and implements their unique properties as a blueprint for new designs.

Understanding and using nature's processes in design, construction, and biomedical applications is not only environmentally friendly but also helps more people become aware of nature's intelligence. By realizing the value of nature and its role in developing our future, we gain a deeper appreciation for the natural world and a sense of responsibility in protecting ecosystems and organisms. Instead of exploiting it, we should start looking toward nature for answers.

Beyond Bitcoin: The Big Gamble

By SATHIRTHA MONDAL

Chances are that you've heard of crypto, the latest investment fad. Crypto, short for cryptocurrency, is a decentralized digital currency that is secured using cryptography, a computerized encrypted code. Since the beginning of the year, the market value of cryptocurrencies has soared nearly [150 percent from \\$1 trillion](#) to over \$2.48 trillion. Investing in crypto has become a craze that has taken mainstream media by storm, luring many to invest in various "coins" like Bitcoin and Ethereum to potentially expand their wealth. Many have not hesitated to jump on the hype train, believing it to be the future of money.

Crypto's run-up has prompted a great deal of "if only" thinking. If you bought \$1,000 worth of Bitcoin, the world's largest cryptocurrency, a decade prior, the investment would amount to over \$287 million today. Since its launch in 2009, Bitcoin has crossed [\\$63,000 at its peak](#) and is currently valued at \$50,700. In the past year alone, this individual cryptocurrency spiked nearly 400 percent.

Bitcoin, however, or any other cryptocurrency, was not created to become a part of the current global financial system; it was meant to replace it. Laid out in a whitepaper under the pseudonymous Satoshi Nakamoto, Bitcoin was created in response to the financial crisis of 2008, a worldwide disaster that led to economic decline and nearly brought down the global financial system. A significant cause was the global dependence on banks. Nakamoto [proposed](#) a decentralized payment

system that would eliminate the intermediary role banks have in transactions. The system would function without trust and allow transactions without going through a financial institution. Nonetheless, with Nakamoto's disappearance and the cryptocurrency's initial volatile value, its new system only drew skepticism. As its price surged over time, Bitcoin shifted from replacing the financial system to being absorbed by it, becoming merely another investment vehicle. Incidentally, the Internal Revenue Service recently [declared](#) that cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, are property, meaning that gains and transactions in those cryptocurrencies can now be taxed.

However, Bitcoin's ascent has not been without cost, causing many experts and analysts to be bearish on the cryptocurrency's fate. One of the greatest and most common risks of the investment is the sharp crashes that may follow drastic surges in price. Additionally, its definition as a digital asset means that it is not kept in a physical wallet; rather, it is stored in a digital wallet, which can be web-based or hardware-based. This makes it prone to online hacking or technological failure that can [erase](#) a wallet of Bitcoins with no recourse. Since Bitcoin is not regulated by the government, it can also easily be a vehicle for fraud, including scams that have soared in number by nearly [1,000 percent](#) in the past few months. It is also limited in its applications due to vendors' unwillingness to take these risks. Appropriately, experts suggest erring on the side of caution and investing only as much money as one can afford

to lose.

As Bitcoin set records with its recent peaks, other cryptocurrencies gained popularity as well. A novel cryptocurrency named Internet Computer increased its market value to [over](#)

\$45 billion just a day after its debut. Dogecoin, a cryptocurrency based on a 2013 meme, surged nearly 14,000 percent this year alone, with spikes credited to tweets by Elon Musk, the self-proclaimed "Doge-father." Musk even accepted the meme-inspired cryptocurrency as payment for Teslas. The rise in cryptocurrency's traction has also paved the way for the absurd upsurge of the market value of exchanges. Coinbase, an exchange platform for cryptocurrency founded in 2012, has [amassed](#) a market value surpassing those of veteran giants like BP, an oil company, and General Motors, an auto manufac-

turer, both founded in the early 1900s. Recently, cryptocurrencies have taken a hit after news disseminated that "mining" for cryptocurrency, like Bitcoin, is immensely harmful to the

environment. To mine cryptocurrency, a miner must solve complex math problems, which requires immense electrical and computational power. In fact, Bitcoin mining uses [more electricity annually](#) than the entire population of Argentina does. A single Bitcoin transaction consumes [1200 kilowatt-hours of power](#), more than the average American household uses in a month. The rising price of Bitcoin has attracted more miners, contributing to a colossal surge in carbon emissions of [40 million tons](#) in the past two years, surpassing the carbon emissions by American Airlines. If the price of Bitcoin

continues to rise, it could soon become the fifth-largest carbon dioxide emitter worldwide. As a result of the increasing environmental impacts, companies like Tesla, which has invested billions of dollars in cryptocurrency, have [suspended](#) their use of it. Tesla's CEO also announced the company's pursuit of alternative cryptocurrencies that use less than one percent of the energy that Bitcoin consumes. These backtracks have taken their toll on the world's largest cryptocurrencies. [\\$365.85 billion](#) were wiped from the market for Bitcoin and its price plummeted [17 percent](#). Following the Tesla action, Dogecoin and Ethereum also plunged [34 percent](#) and [12 percent](#), respectively. The performances highlighted the sensitivity of cryptocurrencies, obliterating the confidence they had recently bolstered in investors.

Cryptocurrency is believed to be the future of currency, with fellow tech-optimists calling on others to embrace decentralized and "trust-less" money. Especially for beginners enticed by the surges but blind to the plummets, crypto has become another investing fad to make or break a fortune. Though its roller-coaster volatility garnered significant skepticism after another inevitable crash, many believe in cryptocurrency and continue to fuel its burgeoning. The takeover has been hindered by its absorption into the current financial system and reports of its detrimental effects on the environment. Regardless, cryptocurrencies' bullish runs have proven one thing: it is a hype train running at full speed with no intention of stopping.



Ying Chen / The Spectator

Science

Is Cultured Meat Ready for the Market?

By MAHIR HOSSAIN

Many of us have probably read “The Omnivore’s Dilemma” in English class to understand the roots of the foods on our dinner plate. Outside of class readings, however, we rarely think about what goes into our meat. Our brains only focus on eating the burger in front of us, not the antibiotics slipped into the cow or the machinery that flips cows upside-down while they helplessly scream.

The human population has grown exponentially over the last few centuries and continues to grow rapidly. Humanity may soon have to consider whether we have enough resources to support all humans and whether climate change or poor agricultural techniques will mark our own Earth’s demise. Some countries have reached a demographic transition stage, where the consumption and demand for meat have drastically increased. Demographic transition is broken down into four parts, the first of which has high numbers of deaths and births. As the death rate drops, the population slowly edges toward exponential growth—the phase many countries are entering right now. Meat production in Asia has increased [15-fold](#) since

1961, meaning that resources used in meat production like water and hay will continue being used up at staggering rates unless alternative meats that use fewer resources are introduced.

Additionally, cattle farming is harmful not only to the environment but also to itself. Large amounts of cow manure produced by Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) can contaminate water, poison cows, and lead to intestinal damage and cholera in humans. The environment and our population are at stake, but there is a solution.

Scientists have created cultured meat, which is meat grown from cells in a laboratory. The process of creating in-vitro meat takes a cow’s muscle fibers and incubates them in blood that is designed to mimic the conditions in a cow’s body. That muscle fiber is broken down into [individual fat and muscle cells](#) and continues to duplicate until enough muscle tissue is formed

for a burger patty. This process of creating in-vitro meat requires both time and precision, with processes like oxygen diffusion across cell membranes in vitro requiring complex machinery. Additionally, meat created in-vitro has difficulty matching the nu-

tritional for the meat’s environmental upsides. In-vitro meat is severely underfunded, making mass production difficult.

Additionally, animals other than cows can have their meat cultured. For example, cultured fish meat can counteract overfishing, a problem that leads to smaller harvests and food

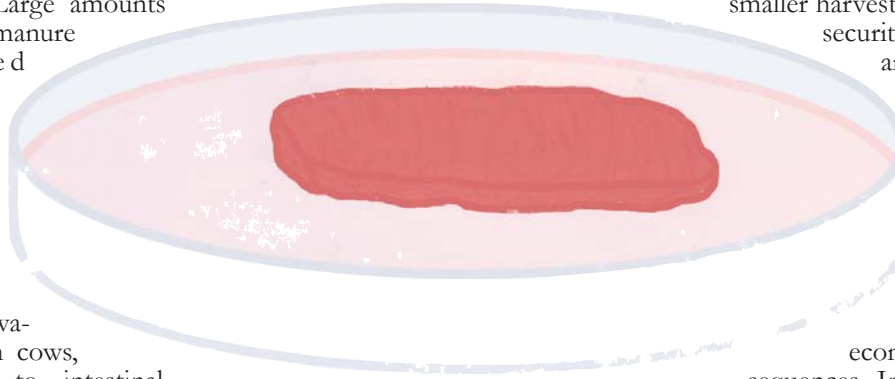
security issues, and prevent countries that depend on fishing from suffering severe economic con-

sequences. In-vitro fish meat can be used similarly to in-vitro cow meat, taking the form of fillets and fish sticks rather than burgers. Like its cow counterpart, the process of creating in-vitro fish meat lacks efficiency, with one lab cultivating only 10 fillets in [two months](#). In that case, fillets would have to be made at least a year beforehand in order to truly make marketing in-vitro fish meat effective.

Soruwat Kittibanthorn, a design student, devised an alternative method of “culturing” meat. As part of his master’s

degree project, he converted chicken feathers into an edible product using a chemical process to heat and cool the feathers with chemicals that broke keratin’s bonds and formed a [protein-rich meat substitute](#) once it came out of the freezer. He used keratinase, an enzyme capable of breaking the bonds in keratin, to make the feather digestible, and another process called acid hydrolysis to further cleave keratin molecules. This, along with water, allows the “meat” to be solidified into its desired shape. Making this meat substitute is not the only project Kittibanthorn has undertaken: he also managed to make carb-free pasta and wraps and protein bar biscuits from feathers—new takes on nutrition in the form of food substitutes.

We currently are not ready to start placing meat created in-vitro onto our shelves because of its high price, low efficiency, and demand for great precision. However, the small projects that involve creating sustainable meat serve as proof of concepts that can be improved on in the future. Should scientists be able to thoroughly replicate all the bits and pieces of a burger patty in the lab, we all might be able to forget the guilt of harming our own planet.



Rachel Chuong / The Spectator

value of natural burgers, with micronutrients like zinc and copper needing to be artificially added. Despite these downsides, the relatively little emissions resulting from creating in-vitro meat still allow it to be an attractive experimental process that scientists are willing to contribute time and money for.

However, the patty itself has an enormous price tag. The first lab-grown burger patty cost around [\\$300,000](#), a price that no consumer is willing to pay, even

Fukushima: Japan Approves to Release Radioactive Wastewater into the Pacific Ocean

By DONGNI (HELLEN) LUO

Whether we are studying low-carbon electricity generation in an environmental science class or participating in discussions around climate change, the use of nuclear power tends to be at the center of controversy. In some cases, nuclear power is considered one of the cleanest and most sustainable energy sources to generate electricity, primarily because it does not emit carbon dioxide while operating. Though building these power sources involves trace amounts of carbon dioxide emissions, such emissions are minuscule in comparison to those released by fossil fuel plants. However, because of limited supplies of their fuel, uranium, and the potential disposal of highly radioactive wastes into the environment, the future of nuclear power remains uncertain on a larger scale. In fact, several accidents involving explosions and partial or complete meltdowns of nuclear plants have occurred over the past few decades, resulting in prolonged environmental effects due to pollution and an increased risk of exposure to radiation.

A well-known nuclear accident took place at the [Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant](#) on March 11, 2011, when an immense offshore earthquake of 9.0 magnitude caused a devastating tsunami across the northwest coast of Japan, destroying coastal habitats while triggering a series of equipment failures

and explosions at the site. Systems at the nuclear plant detected the earthquake and automatically shut down the nuclear reactors, while emergency diesel generators turned on to keep coolant pumping around the cores. The large tsunami, however, knocked out the nuclear plant’s protective seawalls, flooding the diesel generators and circuits of three operating reactors’ emergency core cooling systems inside the plant. Shortly after, the buildup of hydrogen gas produced by the exposed nuclear rods blew off three of the reactor buildings’ roofs and released radioactive materials into the Pacific Ocean and the atmosphere. The overheating of these three reactors fully melted the cores, resulting in a nuclear meltdown.

There were no reported immediate deaths during the nuclear accident, but over 16 workers were injured and about 130,000 people were evacuated as a preventative measure. Though scientists believe that the risk of

radiation remains relatively low, the long-term effects of radiation are unknown. The Japanese government confirmed the [first acknowledged death](#) caused by lung cancer from prolonged radiation exposure in 2018, where the employee who died was in charge of measuring the radiation of the first reactor after its meltdown.

Since the accident, the accumulating radioactive water has been pumped [nonstop through the three reactors](#) to cool the melted fuel and prevent debris from overheating again or causing further damage. The contaminated water has then been collected and stored in more than 1,000 large steel tanks crammed onto the Fukushima campus, along with other leftover materials such as radioactive sludge and debris. Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) estimates that it will take at least three to four decades to completely dispose

of the radioactive water from the wrecked power plant, retrieve undamaged fuel, clean up the remaining resolidified fuel debris, and decommission the reactors.

Japan has recently approved

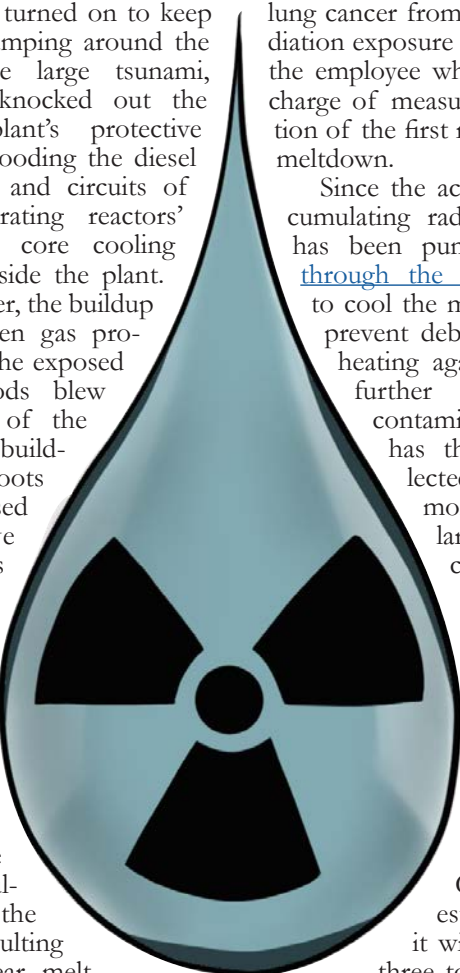
a [long speculated plan](#) to release more than a million metric tons of contaminated water into the Pacific Ocean two years from now. It claims to have no environmental impact since it will be greatly diluted and processed to remove its radioactive elements to keep the water far above safety standards. However, about 70 percent of the water has exceeded permitted discharge limits for contamination. It is said that the plan cannot be postponed any further, as the storage tanks will likely run out of capacity next year and it is an unavoidable step to make the environment surrounding the plant safe for residents to live in. Meanwhile, the area filled with these tanks must be cleared before building new facilities to remove other remaining wastes.

Environmental groups and neighboring countries, however, are opposed to this plan. Chinese scientists have described the proposal as [irresponsible](#) and called for Japan to reexamine the issue. South Korea has expressed deep concerns that the water release plan could significantly affect the safety of its country’s population. An environmental group called [Greenpeace](#) has also raised attention to this large-scale opposition from a majority of residents living in Fukushima and broader Japan.

Japanese fishing industries and marine scientists have also turned against the decision due to its potential impact on fisheries. They are worried that certain isotopes can be ingested by fish populations and consumed, or

biomagnified, at successive trophic levels. This is because the [treatment process](#) involves putting the water through a complex chain of filters known as the Advanced Liquid Processing System (ALPS). Though this system can capture 62 kinds of radionuclides, it is not able to filter out tritium, which is known to be harmless at trace amounts since it emits one of the lowest radiation doses of any radionuclide. Besides tritium, however, several more dangerous isotopes with longer radiative lifetimes—including ruthenium, cobalt, strontium, and plutonium—may sometimes slip through the ALPS treatment and can incorporate into the marine ecosystem.

The safety concerns and long-term effects of the discharge are still a matter of debate. Some argue that there are alternative approaches to this controversial problem, such as [dumping the water into concrete pits](#) and expanding capacity to store the water on land or underground. Others still insist that discharging to the sea is the only realistic solution left. Despite these controversies, the Fukushima disaster has increased public fear throughout the world over the reliability of nuclear power. Overall, the human population still has a long way to go in developing more sustainable energy generation methods, as well as understanding the lessons learned from the Fukushima disaster that could help prevent future nuclear accidents.



Nada Hameed / The Spectator

Arts and Entertainment

MUSIC

Thirty Years of Loveless: The Past, Present, and Future of My Bloody Valentine

By LEVI SIMON and MADISON KIM

Rarely is an artistic achievement so widely beloved in its niche that even after generations of experimentation, it retains relevance. But “Loveless” by the indie band My Bloody Valentine (MBV), is the definition of timeless. This year marks the 30th anniversary of My Bloody Valentine’s influential masterpiece that still resonates with almost every rock-based music circle. Its revolutionary guitar techniques, ethereal soundscapes, and surging riffs have captured the hearts of millions, and for good reason. Kevin Shields was so devoted to achieving perfection that he famously spent nearly \$500,000 of his label’s money on the production of the album, tweaking every aspect of the recording to fit his grand vision until he had created the Paragon Project in what would become ‘shoegaze.’ But to tell his story right, one must go back to the beginning.

Irish guitarist Kevin Shields formed My Bloody Valentine in 1985 with fellow guitarist Bilinda Butcher, and soon enough, drummer Colm Ó Siosóig and bass guitarist Debbie Googe joined the ranks. Shields, a man of many influences, admired the emphasis on mid and mid-high guitar frequencies of artists like Public Enemy and the Cocteau Twins, as well as the combination of crunchy noise and deadpan melody of acts like The Jesus and Mary Chain, Sonic Youth,

and The Velvet Underground. However, when MBV first emerged onto the British post-punk scene, they didn’t make much of an impression. It wasn’t until the release of their iconic EP “You Made Me Realise” in 1988 that Valentine would define their own abrasive, rich style with one of Shields’ most unique developments: the “glide guitar” technique. Glide guitar is the heavy use of a tremolo bar while strumming that results in a wavering, round pitch. They played around with their new formula for a few years, coming up with some excellent results in the process. Their gritty, lo-fi, punk-inspired debut album “Isn’t Anything” (1988) is one of the best shoegaze albums ever. Their subsequent EPs, “Glider” (1990) and “Tremolo” (1991), compound upon the sharded, vivid psychedelia that Shields would soon master on their magnum opus.

“Loveless” is the essence of shoegaze. The term “shoegaze” comes from a concert review that referred to the guitarist’s tendency to stare at their effect pedals while playing as they concentrated on the composition of their music. Shoegaze albums create an opaque wave of sound by combining pounding guitar riffs with lush, dreamy cascades of distortion. “Loveless” encapsulates the viscous cacophony that makes shoegaze so unique by dressing up simple ballads and pop songs with colorful guitar tones. Somehow, My Bloody Valentine creates a relaxing, heavenly experience

out of harsh feedback squeals. As the tracks progress, the molten melodies seem to take a languorous, sultry trip through the depths of your consciousness, riding on the noisy waves of harmony while washing out the crevices in your brain that many other albums try and fail to reach. This guitar tone is the focus of “Loveless” and takes center stage. The vocals and drums sit low in the mix, mostly serving to add mood. The lyrics are nearly inaudible, save bits and pieces of phrases, yet they don’t need anything more: the guitar speaks for itself. While these layers of sound seem complex at first listen, Shields aimed to use “[very simple, minimal effects](#)” when composing “Loveless”. It is breathtaking that with just rudimentary tools, the band members are able to flirt with the dimensions of sound—masterfully blending, warping, and contorting each note to create a composition that layers the wavy, settling mist of their vocals.

Over the years, shoegazers have taken the genre in a plethora of sonic directions, such as alt-rock and pop, but no matter how divergent their sound is from the blueprint laid by Shields, shoegaze bands of all types owe some of their inspiration to MBV. Artists like Astrobrite and Pinkshinyultrablast bring sugary and bright vocals and compress the buzzy atmosphere, while The Goslings and Xinlisupreme amplify the noisy smolder until it roars and crackles. Ride and Swirlies lean into alternative

rock, using the tremolo haze of shoegaze as a tool to create depth for their hooks and riffs, and artists like Candy Claws and Lush combine shoegaze with pop to convey the exuberance of childhood and sexuality, respectively. The list of manifestations that Shields’s ideas have taken even extends to black metal with artists like Alcest and Deafheaven, and ambient with artists like Loveliescrushing and Jefre Cantu-Ledesma. MBV’s most direct spiritual prodigees are two alt rockers: Billy Corgan of The Smashing Pumpkins and Courtney Love of Hole, who have cited Shields as their greatest influences. Corgan even [admitted](#) that his song “Daydream” is ripped off from MBV.

The future of My Bloody Valentine is looking bright. Though they broke up shortly after the release of their most classic project and had a two-decade hiatus, they returned with a solid entry to the shoegaze canon in 2013 titled “m b v.” In March of this year, the band announced that they would be signing with indie label Domino Records, who reissued a selection of their records for vinyl, put the band’s discography on streaming, and released merchandise. Shields also announced that new records are coming [this year](#), but with his track record of perfectionism, it’s hard to take him at his word. Hopefully, the record lives up to the legacy that My Bloody Valentine has created—even though that’s a near-impossible feat.

PLAYLIST

Study Playlist

By THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DEPARTMENT

With the impending AP exam and finals season coming up, here’s a compilation of lowkey songs to listen to during your last minute cram.

Chateau (Feel Alright)
Djo
Alternative

Donna
The Lumineers
Americana / Folk

Ferrari
SnuM & Jinsang
Electronic

River Flows in You
Yiruma
Classical

Future Kids
Sara Kays
Indie-pop

Crave You
Flight Facilities
Electronic-pop

Cocaine
Pink Sweat\$
R&B / Soul

Jesus of Suburbia
Green Day
Punk-rock

April Come She Will
Simon & Garfunkel
Folk

Come Home
Anderson .Paak feat. André 3000
R&B

Heaven Knows I’m Miserable Now
The Smiths
Alternative-rock

Water Me Down
Vagabon
Alternative

Buttercup
Jack Stauber
Indie-pop

bedroom community
glass beach
Alternative

Seven Wonders
Fleetwood Mac
Pop-rock

Piano Quartet Op. 67: I. Lento
Joaquín Turina
Classical

MUSIC

By ZOE BUFF

Three weeks ago, when the air in Munich was barely 70 degrees Fahrenheit, I was standing in a music room, violin in hand. My teacher had just demonstrated a four-measure phrase from the second movement of the fifth violin concerto written by Vieuxtemps. Being a dutiful student, I repeated it note for note, making every effort to reproduce the exact sound he made, the exact movement of his bow, and the exact speed of his vibrato. But I couldn’t help but wonder whether there was another way to interpret the same phrase.

Violinists will hang onto every word their teachers say, closely examine every hand or arm movement they see, and listen closely to every dynamic change their teachers make. Students learn from day one that it is important to listen to their teachers, but what they don’t learn is when it’s time to develop their own voices instead of relying on another’s.

In violin, technique is standard. There’s no misinterpreting a shift, finger position, or bow stroke. A violinist learns the basics in the first few years of training. But once the routine sets in, phrasing—the expression of musical sentences—becomes the focus. There are countless ways one can emphasize a note or build up a crescendo. Different historical periods call for different styles; the Classical Period is associated with more brusque strokes and lighter, clearer sound, whereas the Romantic Period is

characterized by dramatic mood shifts and deep, rich tones. The musician must stay faithful to the wishes of the composer, but also find a way to make a piece his or her own. Or, in the case of music students, their teachers’.



Zoe Buff / The Spectator

For students, this situation is akin to writing an essay. Picture yourself in an English classroom, a blank sheet of paper in front of you. How do you start? The basics have been etched into your brain: you know how to spell, how to structure a grammatically correct sentence, and how to punctuate phrases. However, most students know there is more to writing than these simple building blocks. These are merely tools a writer uses to construct an intricately detailed masterpiece. Rather, at its heart, writing is about skillfully manipulating the English language to convey a certain message or

Choices in Voices

express a certain emotion.

The same goes for musicians. They learn the building blocks in the very beginning, but once the basics are mastered, they face the next step: becoming true artists. At the start of this journey, the role of a teacher is essential. Even for students who are inherently musical, learning how to phrase is a complex process that requires a helping hand. If an artist phrases a musical sentence inappropriately, the result can be disastrous for the course of the piece. A violinist must learn that not every note carries the same importance, repeated phrases must sound like echoes, and phrasing is like a ribbon that stretches across many bars. The intricacies of phrasing necessitate the guidance of a teacher.

However, students who plan on pursuing music professionally need to develop a specific style, in addition to mastering the art of phrasing. For instance, famed virtuoso Itzhak Perlman is known for his fingered shifts, and concert violinist Hilary Hahn plays with a distinctive, metallic sound. These nuances, along with a proficient sense of musicality, allow for the development of a truly individual sound; the uniqueness of students’ voices is essential to their playing and defines them as instrumentalists. But it is difficult for music students to cross that bridge when every aspect of their playing, from the way they hold their instruments to the placement of their fingers in the umpteenth position, is directed by someone else. Frustratingly, many students

feel their musicality suppressed by the instructions of a teacher, especially when they wish to find their own styles.

Finding a balance is necessary for optimizing teacher-student relationships. When the latter has not reached full musical maturity, substantial guidance is necessary; however, as a student reaches full musical maturity, a teacher should loosen the reins and allow for the student to hone their distinct style. The instructor shows the pupil how the passage should be played, but once the direction is given, the student has the freedom to explore alternative interpretations. This less restrictive arrangement ensures the student has been exposed to enough musical periods and composers to be able to decide what phrasing is appropriate, while permitting a degree of freedom to establish their voice.

After receiving many years of classical music training, I can say with certainty that phrasing is at the core of all instrumental playing, and it is a pertinent issue for many aspiring musicians. For most, musical maturity comes with time. Students are taught how to navigate this vast world, later branching out and transforming themselves into artists. Each voice is unique, and that quality is what makes music so compelling. So the next time you sit down to write an essay, think about what you want to express between the lines. Who knows? You may discover your voice in a high school English classroom.

Arts and Entertainment

FASHION

By ROXY PERAZZO

Over the past year, it's become easy to make questionable fashion choices. Being on Zoom has made a t-shirt and crumpled gym shorts from the back of your drawer fashion staples. But, as we begin our exit out of the pandemic, fashion has become all the more important with new trends constantly emerging. Following a time where there was nobody to judge our taste, current fashion trends are putting an emphasis on individuality and allowing people to wear whatever they like. At the same time, micro-trends have become an even bigger part of the industry, putting a strain on the individuality we so desire.

Especially with the summer right around the corner, bright colors and patterns have been making a comeback, following the more simple aesthetic of the 2010s. Before the pandemic, black tights were the standard. And though they do still pair well with everything, more and more people are opting for colorful, patterned tights. The blue swirled [Maison Soksi tights](#) have been all over Pinterest lately, and though the trend can seem

slightly strange, these tights can make an otherwise plain outfit unique. Abstract patterns can be seen on all types of clothing with color being used to celebrate the return to normal life. [Zara's spring collection](#), for example, features heavily-patterned and brightly colored statement pieces. The use of color can also be seen in some of the emerging makeup trends, with heavy eyeliner, bright eyeshadow, and face art becoming more common. Graphic eyeliner trends like floating-crease liner bring attention to the eyes and can also be easily altered to anyone's personal taste.

Another trend coming out of the pandemic is nostalgic clothing. While clothing cycles have always been a part of the fashion industry (think '90s does '60s), they are now more obvious than ever. People are nostalgic for the '70s, '90s, and especially the early 2000s. Low-rise and wide-leg jeans, '70s hair, and maxi dresses have all seen a resurgence in the past few months, due in large part to the increasing popularity of thrift stores. Not only are we able to dress in trends of different eras, especially with the help of the internet, but more

and more people are combining the trends of today with authentic pieces from their original eras. Because of the rarity of clothing found in thrift stores, people are able to be unique while fitting into the guidelines of current trends. Having one-of-a-kind clothing has become even more of an aspiration, as what is currently popular is born out of people not wanting to be on trend.

The recent push for uniqueness likely comes from the time the pandemic gave everyone to determine what they truly like, without external influences and fear of judgment. Nostalgia for the past also comes out of quarantine, as we were given time for reflection on past trends. Social media allows us to look back upon and revere the fashion of people like Paris Hilton, who we wouldn't have even thought of as a fashion influence three years ago (other than as an example of

what not to wear). The boredom experienced by many during the pandemic has also influenced homemade fashion as people picked up hobbies like sewing and crocheting. Homemade



clothes allow anyone who's willing to adjust trends to their own personal liking. From halter tops to the [Harry Styles cardigan](#), there has been a rise in unreplicable pieces simply because people finally had the time to create them.

Though thrift stores and hand-made clothing have seen a rise in popularity, fast fashion has as well. With online shopping becoming ever more popular, commercial fashion has never been easier or cheaper to consume. Because of the availability of cheap clothing, the recent trend cycles have become more specific and much faster. The [House of Sunny Hockney Dress](#) is likely the most

recent example of the current trend cycles. The Hockney Dress is a relatively simple green knit dress that was extremely popular on social media recently. Not only was the focus of the trend on one specific dress, but people were so quick to buy it that it fell out of style just as soon as it came in. Though bigger fashion trends still exist (knit wear, for example, which the dress falls under), the availability of certain items has led people to expand their wardrobe with soon-to-be unwearable items.

As new trends come into style and old ones go, the pandemic has allowed everyone to find their place in the fashion world. At the same time, COVID-19 has created a world connected by the internet and has led to trends being more focused-in than ever before. While the pandemic has given us time to reflect on our fashion choices, it also opened the door to new problems within the fashion industry and among consumers. Still, as we come out of the pandemic, it's exciting to see what people have come up with, both unique and mainstream, while scrolling through fashion TikTok or just while out on the street.

GAMING

By ANDREY SOKOLOV

Over the past 20 years, countless groundbreaking events have transpired across the gaming world. From the decline of single-player experiences to the rise of streaming, the industry has found itself transformed under the influence of time. One thing that has remained constant, however, is the passion of two brothers working together to create the most

complex simulation in the history of interactive entertainment.

"Dwarf Fortress," the brainchild of Tarn and Zach Adams, has rocked the gaming sphere ever since the beginning of its development in 2002. Officially titled "Slaves to Armok: God of Blood Chapter II," the initial idea behind the game was to create a procedurally generated world in which the player would find themselves tasked with taking care of a group of dwarf colonists

as they embark on creating a new fortress, while also tending to the dwarves' needs and various external threats.

Though the pair had previously tried developing an advanced game world in "[Slaves to Armok](#)," their lack of experience combined with intense ambition caused Tarn, the main programmer of the duo, to take a break from working with Armok. On his own, Tarn began the development of various

smaller-scale projects, one of which would eventually become "Dwarf Fortress." Initially believing the development of the game would take two months, Tarn would continue to develop the game until he felt that it was truly complete, something that he has been unable to achieve since its initial 2006 release.

The objectives of "Dwarf Fortress" are essentially just your standard, dwarf-centric

videogame fare. At the start of each playthrough, the player's main objective is to secure basic resources such as food, water, and alcohol, either through farming or trading. As the player progresses through the in-game years, the gameplay loop shifts from the juggling of basic resources to the defense of

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Dwarf Fortress and Its Influence on Gaming

FILM

By ELEANOR LEUNG

When it comes to high school movies, we've seen it all. The lens of unattached, middle-aged, white men hardly captures the "high school experience" in all its awkward, clumsy nuance. Instead, movies like "Sierra Burgess is a Loser" (2018), "Geek Charming" (2011), and many more hinge entirely on the use of the same tropes over and over again. The rich mean girl gets a redemption arc. The introverted nerd catches the eye of the misunderstood school bully. The popular athlete is secretly crumbling under the pressure of always being perfect. It almost seems as if "the epic highs and lows of high school football" are the embodiment of every teenage summer movie. Almost.

What makes these movies so infuriatingly bland is their purpose. In an effort to appeal to everyone, they relate to almost no one. The beauty of coming-of-age lies in how it can connect with the individual viewer, subverting our preconceived notions of what a teenage movie should look like and providing commentary on the complexity of youth, all within two hours.

Greta Gerwig's "Lady Bird" (2017), for instance, received enormous criticism for being boring and overrated. The film explores the turbulent relationship between mother and daughter, and how love is defined in a relationship like theirs. For viewers without a similar

relationship to their mothers, the plot is uninteresting at best and the message doesn't resonate with them. But for those who do relate, "Lady Bird" is raw and sensitive.

allows the audience to take the concept and turn it around in their minds so that they can decide the meaning of the film.

Perhaps the best coming-of-age



Gerwig [said](#) that she "didn't want the character of the mother to fall neatly into a category of either an angel or a monster, which is generally what [she thinks] happens with mother characters in movies."

Rather than shove overdone plotlines and character archetypes down the viewer's throat, Gerwig

movies are the ones that mature with the viewer. For example, at first glance, Marc Webb's "500 Days of Summer" (2009) reads like a summer rom-com and nothing more. The narrative is told from the perspective of Tom, a hopeless romantic searching for "the one." He is completely infatuated with

his girlfriend, Summer, and is heartbroken and confused when she suddenly breaks up with him. As viewers, we subconsciously root for Tom. We sympathize with his awkwardness and his loving nature, so when Summer dumps him, we take Tom's side.

By the end of the film, the audience is meant to realize that Summer may have been, to Tom, "the one," but Tom may not have been Summer's. We then wonder, "Who is the real villain here? Is there a villain?" Tom follows the same arc as the audience does and eventually comes to terms with the fact that Summer never wanted anything but a casual fling. "500 Days of Summer" is able to connect with a wide audience because of the fact that its characters feel real and believable. Viewers can see both Summer and Tom reflected in parts of their own lives, which gives the film authenticity.

We also see this authenticity mirrored in "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" (2012), a classic amongst high school dramas. It's a rarity that the writer of a book directs the film adaptation, but Steven Chbosky's leadership on this film made all the difference. [In an interview](#), Chbosky stressed the importance of depth in characterization, saying, "This movie doesn't have bad guys and divas and attitudes, it doesn't have that—it has people, like real people, and that's important." The whole story is told from the eyes of Charlie, a freshman with past

trauma and virtually no friends. He observes the people around him living their lives while it seems his own is at a standstill. That is, until Charlie meets a group of friends who help him fight against his past.

What makes this film stand out from the rest is the way the characters are seen in the eyes of Charlie. The movie doesn't draw caricatures of high school clichés to maintain a storyline, nor does it rely on the same plot devices to keep audiences interested. Every cast member fits the character perfectly, and each character, no matter their importance to the plot, is written with a complex, genuine personality.

Still, coming-of-age films shouldn't entirely eclipse more lighthearted movies. There is a certain appeal in watching a movie you know will have a satisfying ending. "Mean Girls" (2004) and "Legally Blonde" (2001) are both undoubtedly iconic in their own right. The coming-of-age genre, however, is able to capture the subtleties of internal conflict and growing up in a way that is both refreshing and perceptive. Being able to relate to Lady Bird's relationship with her mother is what makes the film so enjoyable, and seeing Charlie's isolated view of high school as opposed to the "nerd becomes popular" trope is more universally relatable. These films are able to achieve an emotional connection with the viewer, something even the most popular of movies fail to do.

Arts and Entertainment

LITERATURE

How a Pandava Girl Saved More than Just Her World

By **KAEDEN RUPAREL**

Roshani Chokshi's novel series "Aru Shah" expertly abandons Indian-American stereotypes, illuminating Indian stories and the world of Hinduism alike. Indian stories are often told either in a way that is purely educational, based solely on facts, or in a way that revolves around an Indian character without addressing their culture in any way, stemming from the notion, "I don't see color." In "Aru Shah," a tumultuous journey of cultural and ancestral discovery, readers are swept into a captivating story of a young Indian girl caught between the world of her seventh grade class in Atlanta and the universe of Indian mythology.

As Aru discovers more about herself throughout her journey exploring the realm of Hinduism,

readers learn about the religion and its intricate stories and deities in a compelling, yet meaningful manner. Early on in the novel, Aru learns that she is a Pandava sister, a reincarnation of the Pandava brothers, the most famous and celebrated heroes in Hindu mythology. Furthermore, she learns that she is responsible for preventing her world's impending doom. Initially, this daunting task seems too treacherous for Aru, but she soon learns to greet it with courage, just as her Pandava predecessors had.

Traveling through sites such as the Palace of Illusions and the Night Bazaar and introducing Hindu deities such as Hanuman and Urvashi, the "Aru Shah" series brings Indian stories to light, greeting readers with an educational plotline about a religion that

currently has more than 900 million followers. Providing comedic relief akin to that of Rick Riordan's mythologically-inspired fiction, Chokshi is able to teach readers of all races, genders, and ages about the vast world of the polytheistic Hindu religion. Aru's journey introduces readers to different Hindu deities as well as symbolic topics and places of Hinduism. However, what is particularly unique about Chokshi's story is the way in which these topics are not simply explained, but rather intricately integrated into the protagonist's journey.

The true impact of "Aru Shah" can be seen through the story's effect on Indian readers. Aru Shah is an incredibly relatable character, as she lives through the awkwardness of seventh grade while also navigating a complex relationship with her mother. Chokshi

consciously chooses to abandon the stereotypical portrayal of an Indian girl, with her protagonist being a struggling student, an expert liar, and quite mischievous (yet shrewd). This choice plays out wondrously in her novel, as readers are instantly sold upon meeting Aru. Indian readers can immediately recognize similarities to their own experiences, relating to Aru more than they relate to a stereotypical Indian character whose future is predetermined to be the medical field.

For young Indian-Americans, this novel represents a doorway for their future. As an Indian-American, the few times I'm able to see my community represented tend to be with the overly smart kid who is great at math but has few friends. The "Aru Shah" series tears down that stereotype in favor

of an Indian heroine (a rarely seen archetype) while also displaying a sense of pride and belonging in the exploration of culture and heritage. Instead of poking fun at the oddity that is often associated with Indian culture in the media, Chokshi presents a character that is an inspiration to Indian-Americans like me, casting her in the spotlight as a hero. For non-Indians, this story is a vivid and thrilling way to learn about the world's third most popular religion. And for young Indian-Americans, it is a call to action. This culture-illuminating series is Chokshi's way of communicating to us that we are the generation to make change for Indian-Americans. At its core, "Aru Shah" is a story of empowerment that shows young Indians that the world is there for us to live in, not to be confined by.

GAMING

Dwarf Fortress and Its Influence on Gaming

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the fortress from various hazardous events. These events include some immediate dangers, such as raids, and more long-term dangers, such as vampire infiltrations and fortress dwarves going berserk for a variety of reasons. While it's initially easy to tackle all the dangers that the game throws at the player, in the end, all fortresses fall. But players shouldn't feel bad if their sanctuary crumbles. The community around DF recognizes that no fortress is perfect, which is why the slogan, "Losing is fun!" has been adopted by the player base as a light-hearted way of letting go when they eventually fail.

Construction management simulators existed long before

"Dwarf Fortress," with titles such as Intellivision's "Utopia" (1982) and Maxis's "SimCity" (1989) attempting to simplify and gamify the concepts of ruling over a group of people. What separates "Dwarf Fortress" from older titles is the fact that the Adams brothers' determination to ensure that all aspects of the game were as complex as they are in real life. From the big-picture systems such as seasons and flow of time to the in-depth systems of combat and economy, "Dwarf Fortress" outshines its competition by the amount of thought that is put into every facet of Dwarf dwelling culture.

The downside of the emphasis on attention to detail is that throughout development, Tarn completely overlooked one of

the most important game design principles: intuitiveness. To start off, "Dwarf Fortress" does not have graphics that most casual players are used to. Instead, the game uses ASCII characters to represent everything in the game world. Additionally, while DF gives its players almost unlimited freedom in terms of what they can do, it never teaches the player how to use anything. Just choosing the starting location of the player's fortress will likely force new players to visit DF's external wiki. "Dwarf Fortress" is difficult to learn and almost impossible to master because Adams decided to focus more on the absolute freedom given to the player, rather than the graphical aspect of the game. Thankfully, the problem of initial difficulty was addressed by Tarn recently. In 2019,

the brothers decided to port the game on Steam, fixing issues with graphics and unintuitive UI in the process.

The amount of freedom "Dwarf Fortress" gives to the player largely redefined the sandbox genre. Tarn's attention to detail made DF gain a cult following, along with recognition across the entire gaming industry. Nowadays its core ideas of resource gathering and players directly altering the game world can be seen in almost all genres, from battle royales like "Fortnite" to sandbox games like "Minecraft." In fact, "Dwarf Fortress" was the game that inspired Markus Persson (Notch) to start developing the concept that would later become the voxel-based masterpiece. "Dwarf Fortress" has had so much influence on the

gaming sphere that in November 2012, it was included as one of the 14 games [acquired](#) by the Museum of Modern Arts for its history of video-gaming collection.

Despite its almost 19 years of development, Dwarf Fortress is likely ages away from completion. Tarn estimates it to be around [44 percent complete](#), with features such as magic and creation myths yet to be added. With such a long way to go, DF still manages to blow its competition out of the water with the number of features it already possesses. If you are interested in experiencing the grandfather of all sandbox games, "Dwarf Fortress" is free to download at [Bay12Games's](#) website. Just remember that every fortress fails eventually, and losing is fun!

MUSIC

Alfie Templeman Ignites the Imagination With "Forever Isn't Long Enough"

By **FRANCES SCHWARZ**

If you're ever going on a summer drive and looking to blast some music through the speakers of your red convertible, then Alfie Templeman's new album "Forever Isn't Long Enough" should be your first pick. An electronic wonder oozing with acoustic goodness, "Long Enough" seamlessly mixes pop, rock, and even some funk and jazz to create 30 minutes of auditory heaven. Retro synth sounds and satisfying basslines aplenty, this upbeat debut album promises more to come from the 18-year-old alternative pop artist Templeman.

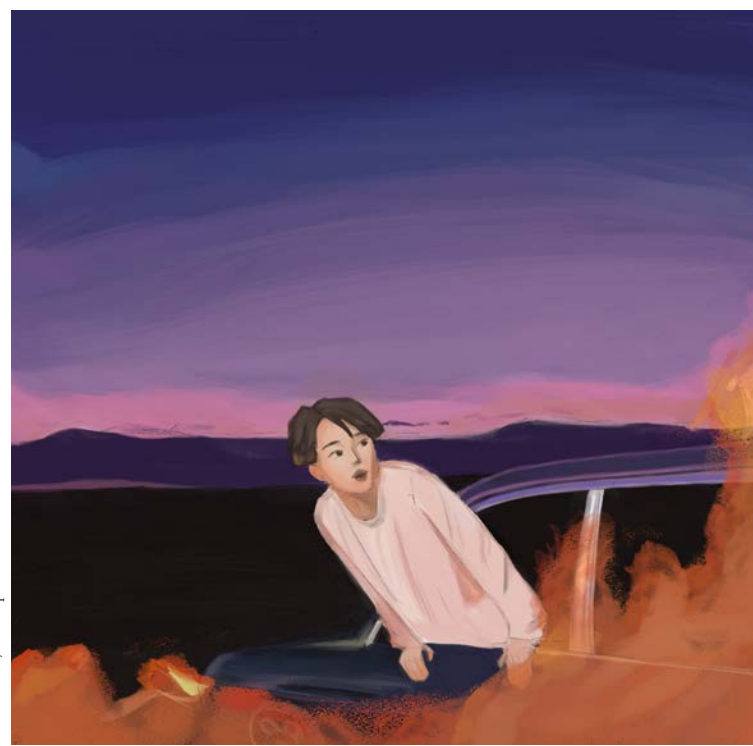
Surrounded by music his whole life, Alfie Templeman released his debut EP, "Like An Animal" (2018) when he was 15. The EP's enchanting, guitar-based indie pop sound garnered attention from the likes of Universal Music Publishing Group, who signed him in 2019. Templeman was 15 when he got his upstart and experimented appropriately, [channeling Dr. Dre as an influence](#) one second and [Nirvana the next](#). But as a whole, his sound is tagged by its colorful charm and rock-inspired tones.

On "Forever Isn't Long Enough," however, Alfie Templeman explores new musical horizons with a more polished sound than his usual organic vibe. The snappy drums and bass-centric grooves of the album are accompanied by glimmering, retro synthesizers to create a beautiful

atmosphere that is compounded by punchy rhythms.

The title track perfectly introduces the atmospheric yet

the choir sings "It's over now" with increasing urgency in repeat until the song concludes ominously like a cord being pulled.



catchy sound of the album. Retro synthesizers, a crunchy bassline, great percussion, and even a choir at one point dance together in an anthemic song about the joy of life and love. The song also introduces his fear of being alone, which becomes increasingly apparent as

Templeman depends on a lover and the happiness that their forever brings in this bright yet bittersweet song. Aside from being sonically pleasing, this song also perfectly introduces the mildly toxic and potentially fictional young love that the album revolves around.

In the same vein as the title track is the funk-inspired "Hideaway," the album's mischievous opener "Shady," and the dark yet equally energetic "To You." Alfie Templeman appears surprisingly confident in this new musical style as he plays with genres seamlessly throughout the album, delivering some top-notch instrumental solos along the way.

The slickest and quickest of these upbeat tracks is "Wait, I Lied," the album's catchiest song. This disco-inspired track sticks to a bass guitar hook and a simple dance floor beat, expanding its sound in the lovesick pre-choruses and post-choruses. Heartbroken yet lyrically cheekier than ever, "Wait, I Lied" shows off Templeman's charm and willingness to experiment with his typically more homemade style.

Not every song on the album pulls off this pop style, however. While "Hideaway" and "Shady" are good songs overall, the verses feel empty and overpowered by the bass and distracting percussion, ameliorated only by the synth-heavy chorus. This minimalistic style, while satisfyingly smooth in "Wait, I Lied," feels loud and confused in the verses of "Hideaway" and "Shady."

This isn't a problem in the latter half of the album where the romantic atmospheres of "Forever Isn't Long Enough" take over with songs like "Film Scene Daydream." Shy synth keys evolve into shimmering stars as a punchy beat intensifies the track. A melodic

pluck plays like a fast heartbeat as Templeman sings about a past love and the naivety of his youth. Templeman sings, "She said I'm crazy, baby / She's just a daydream, film scene," as he realizes that the love of his youth might not have been as perfect as he once thought. On the fence between staying heartbroken and moving on, "Film Scene Daydream" lends itself perfectly to the urgent "To You" and then finally to the album's closer, "One More Day."

Here, in the album's final moments, its dark side comes into full view. "One More Day" enchants with dark synth swells, a slow, lo-fi beat, and a vinyl crackle as Templeman harmonizes with female Irish singer April, whose voice brings this track to life. A necessary departure from the album's otherwise cheerful sound, "One More Day" fully reveals the dark underbelly of heartbreak and toxicity in this album during its mysterious final moments.

"Forever Isn't Long Enough" sparks the imagination with glittering synth sounds before crashing back to earth with bass-centric grooves. Exploding with the enthusiasm and vibrancy of youth, listening to this mini-album in one go is like taking a shot of inspiration that ends with a lasting sense of contentment. Needless to say, Alfie Templeman's cohesive, self-assured sound on his most recent project has proven that he is an up-and-coming force to be reckoned with.

Humor

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

From a Student: The Threats of Zoom to My Social Etiquette

By JUDY CHEN

Dear high school educator (a.k.a. adult I see for 55 minutes every other day),

Hey, you! Yes, you, the real person on my screen! I can't believe we've developed a somewhat cohesive relationship outside of reluctant breakout room discussions. It all started off with a live digital staring contest in September, when I refused to unmute until I was faced with the haunting thought of participation grades. It's May now, and you've either received a "thank you" from me at the end of class, or an e-mail at 1:00 a.m. asking for an extension for a lovely assignment. Oh, how the times have changed.

So let's cut to the chase and get to second base. Reality has just struck me that we all live

on this overpopulated concrete jungle landmass. That just means we might have to see each other in person soon. I'm (not) looking forward to this after 14 months of hermiting, but if our physical meeting is an inevitable fate, I would like to express my concern for something, Ms., or Mrs., or Mr., or Dr., or whatever.

I respectfully fear the powers of the "touch up my appearance" and "background" features on Zoom. I will admit, sometimes I crank that touch-up slider up to the max, but that is only because I don't want you to see the rebirth of your sleep paralysis demon my sleep-deprived-from-Tiktok persona at 10:00 a.m. in the morning. I am not hypocritical and will not blame you for doing the same thing. I'm even writing this entire message just to prove how un hypocritical I truly am. But I do have

some very valid concerns.

If I ever see you around Stuy, at Ferry's, Whole Foods, or in that random corner grocery store I think no one goes to, I want to unleash my proper student etiquette to acknowledge your presence. However, this becomes nearly impossible when I don't *really* know what you look like. It's even beyond Zoom's handy dandy features. I can't see you beyond the thing that props up your head and some of you are five feet tall with a seven-foot personality! So when I've attached a mental image of a person with NBA athlete height to a person of average Joe height, I've basically lied to myself. Thus, I have two options: stare into the abyss aimlessly just to say hello after what feels like an eternity later, or just accidentally (?) ignore you and walk away. And by accidentally, I mean deliberately.

See, if you were a friend I've met in one of your classes, I would simply text them and let them know that we're coincidentally in the same vicinity, and we'd wave to each other at least six feet apart. Perhaps, a back and forth "Dude why do I see someone who looks exactly like you in the supermarket rn" "Wait what which one" "Wholefoods lol" "Omg I think I see you actually" would suffice. And that's that. Good social etiquette, check.

But it gets so complicated when it comes to you. On one hand, I have as faint of a recollection of you as I do of what happened this entire school year. On the other hand, I know of your existence and you've taken note of mine. I even googled, "Is it rude to not say hi to a teacher in public?" I got mixed responses from a very credible source

named "Reddit." Let me know if you would like an MLA citation for this.

I couldn't tell you the real origin of my concern and it's not like I go out enough for this scenario to be a possibility, or that you care enough or remember me for it to matter. Regardless, please write back to help calm my very rational panic. Thank you for your time, cooperation, consideration, dedication, commitment, and sacrifice from reading this message.

Sincerely,

Your overthinking student from Zoom :)

P.S. Nothing because I've wasted enough of your time by sending you this e-mail. Whoops, just wasted more. At this point, can you just tell me if I should say hi or not? Thanks again.

Are You Cake?

By KRISTA PROTEASA

As the end of the school year dawns upon us, the weather gets nicer while our mental health does not. You'd love to simply run around a grassy hill with your friends for hours on end, but you've signed up for seven AP exams to study for. Your jealousy of elementary-school-age children grows, and you realize you've become a miniature Scrooge. Your window (or lack thereof) is your only window to freedom while you stay toiling in your room. But what if, despite all your worries, none of these things you're stressing about were actually real? What if you were just cake? Let-tuce catch up with two of our favorite friends: Ember and Nova. They so graciously let me third wheel on their conversation.

"Hey, Nova." Ember sulkily greeted their friend, Nova.

"Ember, what's up?" Nova asked, trying their best to proceed as normal.

"Too many tests. I know nothing. No thoughts, head empty."

"Ember, Ember, Ember. You might want to calm down."

"YOU mIgHt WaNt To CaLm DoWn. Do you honestly think I haven't tried? No, Nova. I want you to look me in my stupid face and tell me that again."

"Jeez, ok. Sorry I even tried."

"Sorry, Nova. I'm just so frazzled. All I need is for you to listen to me."

"I think you should try yoga."

"Nova, I swear to the almighty beings up in the Universe, I might hurt you. Please stop talking."

"Oopsies, sorry. I sometimes get a little carried away while trying to impose on others' lives. Maybe it's because I'm an ENFJ."

As a fellow ENFJ, this is true. The two continued on with Nova constantly interrupting Ember for almost another hour and tried to convince Ember that they could cure their own anxiety. I am truly astounded by this ingenuity. Once the pair finally settled their quarrels, they started speaking like normal people who don't burst into flames every 15 seconds.

"Sorry for yelling at you, Nova."

"No worries! I was barely paying attention to what you were saying anyway!"

"I guess that helped, huh? Anyway, what's really been bugging me is that, lately, I've been feeling a little crumbly—"

"Oh, I totally get what you're saying—"

"NOVA, PLEASE LET ME FINISH!"

"Sorry! Zip zoop, my lips are sealed."

"Thank you. I haven't just been feeling figuratively crumbly, but I've literally been feeling like crumbs. The other day I pinched myself and—boom—frosting. I scraped past a little patch of frosting and—boom—red velvet. I was so confused. I thought my one brain cell had finally called it quits. But then I went up to a little kid for some painfully brutal honesty, and even they said it was legitimate cake. Nova, I think I'm cake."

"Aw, I'm so proud of you! Thank you for telling me this. I'm so happy that you're opening up about your intrusive thoughts." Nova would've continued like this, but they were interrupted for the greater good of saving time.

"Nova, I mean this in the nicest way possible, but are you actually alive? Like, if I were to hook you up to an EEG, would all of your brain be active? Is it even doing brain things?"

"What?"

"Never mind. The point is, I think I might have made fun of that really unspecific, outdated meme too much because I think my reality is being morphed into one where I am not me; rather,

I am cake—you know, like those hyper-realistic cakes on YouTube."

At that moment, Nova started licking their arm.

"Nova, what are you doing?"

"It's chocolate! Ooo, it's also birthday cake! Sprinkles! Oh my g o s h , there's strawberry shortcake in my shoulder? That's so cool!"

"Nova, no! Stop consuming yourself! Once you're gone, there's no coming back from that!"

"But I just want cake!"

It was only a matter of seconds before Nova completely obliterated themselves, vanishing into the stars. Ember screamed in horror, then simply got up, bandaged their chocolate-oozing arm, and acted like nothing happened.

Their disappearance happened extraordinarily ahead of schedule, but since Ember still wanted to at least prove something to themselves, they went on to take all of their AP exams. All seven of them. Throughout each one, Ember couldn't stop thinking about Nova and how much fun their last moments in this reality were. Nova quite literally was the cake they had and obviously ate it too. Good for them.

The moral of the story today, kids, is that this reality is one where your left arm could be a lemon bar and your right leg could be a blueberry muffin. This world is one of little meaning. Don't eat your phalanges and eat your vegetables instead. Stay crumbly, my friends.



Justine Kang / The Spectator

Mutex, the Pain Reliever of the Future

By ARSHIA MAZUMDER

brightest bunch in the crowd!

Are you tired of having to rest after bending down to pick something off the floor? Do you want to play with your grandkids without grabbing an ice pack? Are you just waiting for the antidote to your back pain? Well, we have the solution for you! Mutex is a drug specifically designed to combat back pain. This revolutionary drug picks you up on your feet and sweeps you away to old-people utopia.

A young woman comes on screen with bandages every-

And guess what? Mutex does EVEN MORE! In a week, this revolutionary technology stops your pain entirely by relaxing your muscles and heart to the point of inactivity! After being fired up with the punch of Mutex, your body puts those cute little nerves to rest. Your brain will be so relaxed it'll stop sending signals entirely. It's a dream that never ends!

WOMAN: I use Mutex to be free from my back pain and any emotion whatsoever. I'm saying

For I knew from the start that all this vaccine-shmaccine bull was just a way for the short liberal agenda to win over our tall, mighty, strong Republicans.

where.

WOMAN: I don't feel my back pain anymore. Heck, I don't feel my back at all! It's wonderful! After I took Mutex, my head started to hurt so bad, I wished I could behead myself, but hey! My back is now the least of my concerns.

She groans in pain.

Mutex works by exciting your pain receptors everywhere, so, in comparison, your back is perfectly healthy! See these receptors?

An animation of a bunch of blue blobs on a cartoon human body comes on the screen. The ones on the back have sad faces.

These back pain feelers are sad. But with Mutex...

The other blue blobs around them are shocked with lighting. Blobs start sobbing and crying. One of them bangs their head on a nearby bone.

Your back nerves are the

goodbye to the aches, groans, and my family. I highly recommend it. I promise you won't be alive to regret it!

Mutex, the pain reliever of the future. Ask your doctor about it today!

Disclaimer: Mutex increases risk of Karen syndrome. Call your doctor if you have an obsession with managers, refuse to wear your mask, and/or tell random people to go back to their country. You might also get cancer, but you're too young and healthy for that! Financial aid will not be provided because we like money. No refunds or exchanges, complete upfront cost, unless you would like to pay in installments with a 50% interest. The upfront cost is \$3,487 for this brand-new technology.

Big Pharma endorses this message.

Close Friends With Royalty

By SANJANA YASNA

Hello friend,

I'm sorry to say that I urgently need help. I am a Nigerian prince Maskini Kal-El Mowlgi from Sub-Saharan Africa and an exiled son of a royal family. I suffer from AIDS and am currently hospitalized with a life-sustaining machine, as I write this urgently with no revision. I've deeply fatigued as an AIDS complication and I don't have much time left on me. I need to pay hospital bills this week, which amounts to \$3000, money I don't have because my family have long turded their backs against me.

I don't have any relatives or family to turn to, as I can only send a humble plea to a stranger over the internet while I can still fold my head up. The life-sustaining machine is costly and using it for so long makes me feel terrible as if I'm suffocating people isn't my expertise, so I feel better communicating with mail. So I can only ask you for a poultry sum of \$3000 via Western Union to pay my hospital bills. Contact me further at mowlgi@hotmail.com.

I was a bit skeptical at first. I've heard of the Nigerian Prince scam before, but a defining characteristic of them is that they're

clearly as illegitimate as poor Mowlgi claims to be. However, Mowlgi wrote with undeniable desperation, considering all those spelling and grammatical errors matching his ailing situation. From this, I was able to expertly deduce that it was unlikely to be a scam.

Still, I wondered, how did Mowlgi get shunned by his own royal family? I emailed Mowlgi inquiring so, and that's when my sympathy for him turned into admiration. According to Mowlgi, he was banished from his royal family for falling in love with and marrying a commoner. They

two of them struggled financially with the absence of financial support from his affluent family. They lived in poverty, struggling to feed their 10 kids. His wife tried to convince him to call off the marriage so that his

family might pull him out of his destitute state. However, Mowlgi loved her too much to abandon her for his own sake, for their love was pure despite the squalor it brought along.

I was stunned by his honesty. A man so direct and shameless couldn't have an ulterior motive! I was moved. My goal was now



Reya Miller / The Spectator

to help this poor man. Therefore, with righteousness in mind, under his instructions, I entered my father's account information into the Western Union website to

wire a \$3000 donation into Mowlgi's account.

It was my first time handling credit card details and account information. It took me a good two hours with good Mowlgi's guidance, so Mowlgi, being the sincere soul he is, offered to do future money transfers in lieu of my labor. Of course, I gave him all the necessary information.

Mowlgi has been my best friend ever since. I regularly checked up on his family every other day. Eventually, he was able to communicate with me every day because to him, my companionship was the best treatment for his chronic AIDS condition. Only, I worried he may have also developed dementia because he often appears to have forgotten about his wife when I allude to her.

As our friendship progressed and Mowlgi professed to be more financially stable, he requested to know my birth date so that he could gift me on my

special day. I gladly did so, and to both of our surprises, Mowlgi had the exact same birthday as me! It was as if we were brought together by fate. I considered him family, so I thought it was only right to tell him my father's birthday so that together, we could collaborate on a birthday gift every year. However, Mowlgi requested to remain anonymous in the gift's accreditation in spite of my encouragement; his humbleness knows no bounds!

I write this article to celebrate Mowlgi finally garnering the money to take a flight to America in search of better hospitals. The hospital bills in his home country were already paid for, thanks to me. Before he boarded his flight to America, he asked to see my father's social security number so that he can avoid social security scams by knowing how long genuine numbers should be. Witty, isn't he?

Yet, more importantly, I write this to dispel the myth that all Nigerian princes are scammers. I donated to a candid man and his struggling family and got a priceless friendship in return. Hence, I advise you to give the Nigerian prince e-mails a chance out of the goodness of your heart, for even royalty can have hardships.

The Fresh Prince of Tyranny

By ASA MUHAMMAD

After 18 months of remote learning, we will hopefully return to the school building. Unfortunately, only some of us will return. And the ones who won't? Well, they're the lucky ones. The Stuyvesant we're coming back to won't be the same as the one we left, and here's why.

First and foremost, we lost two cycles of upperclassmen to the coronavirus, with the Class of '22 reigning as seniors. This throne is not unearned, but the students are unprepared. How can children who left as mere sophomores assume their role as chieftains? They cannot. While their growth has not stagnated and '22 endured a hellish junior year, they did so with the bare minimum. They all experienced the suffering intrinsic to junior year, but that suffering bore no fruit. There was no assumption of responsibility (that was a burden to Google Translate and Symbolab). There were no freshmen to question their claims to the third-floor atrium. There were no seniors to steal their SING! victory and no camaraderie formed in the late hours of SING! preparation. The grade is fractured. Despite their resilience, they are unfit to rule.

'22 would, under normal circumstances, ascend to their rightful place with the sheer hubris of senioritis acting as their mandate of heaven, but the 2021-2022 school year faces an unprecedented evil. Worse than the pandemic is the three years of freshmen returning to the school. Normally, high schools function with one year of freshmen, a group so emblazoned by their acceptance to Stuyvesant and journey into high school that they scoff at a hierarchy they do not understand. The freshmen see the perceived evils of upperclassmen priority for program

changes, locker assignments, and unofficial hangout spots. This enrages them, but they are too naive to realize that these privileges are earned, so they scoff at the rewards the upperclassmen have been bestowed for surviving multiple years of suffering. Their petulance invokes the wrath of three years of upperclassmen, and in doing so, freshmen learn to respect their position until it is their turn to rule.

The freshmen only acquiesce in the face of overwhelming adversity. But next year, there will be no adversity, for there will be three years of freshmen. The class of '23 will nominally be juniors, but they never completed their freshman year. '24 will be sophomores, but they never experienced the idiosyncrasies of the building and its people. Some haven't even attended an in-person class. The class of '25 will be true freshmen, free of the gossamer claims to power the other two years will attempt. The pride in each year will fester; it will make violent bedfellows with envy, and these nuptials will bear the fruit of indignation undeserved.

Thus, the new Stuyvesant shall consist of three years of freshman and a struggling ruling class. Accusations of ineptitude will fly, and without an agreed-upon hierarchy of students or a complacent middle class of sophomores and juniors, freshman insurrectionists will have the means to demand the respect they do not deserve. A ruling class, already struggling to gain its footing, and a disillusioned majority courting delusions of grandeur will clash, and I fear that the vile, prepubescent, underdeveloped beast that is the freshman population may win and that their victory will plunge Stuyvesant into the umbra inevitable in revolutions both physical and political.

I Hacked the College Board AP Spanish Test

By CYRUS CURSETJEE

The College Board has managed to survive lawsuits and accusations over unfair testing conditions and illegal activities. To this day, it still manages to uphold its "nonprofit organization" description. Up until last week, however, it had yet to face its most formidable opponent: me.

I entered Stuyvesant on Tuesday, May 11, with the sole purpose of achieving a 5 on the AP Spanish exam without demonstrating the slightest bit of knowledge concerning the Spanish language. My first task was to obtain all the answers to Sections IA and IB. This was simple. When I walked through the bridge entrance on the second floor, the security guard asked me to step aside and show her the COVID-19 safety form we were asked to fill out on the bridge, which I did not have. This was not because I had accidentally closed the tab on my phone after filling out the form while I was on the bridge. It was a carefully planned, strategic maneuver that would allow me to take a photo of the security guard's laptop before filling out the form a second time. As I stood on one of the few functioning escalators, I carefully reviewed the footage.

As I suspected, on the bottom left corner of the laptop was a sticker labeled "Lenovo," which was clearly the Spanish word for "Lenov." If you find the absolute value of the difference between each corresponding letter of Lenov and Cyrus (my first name) in the alphabet, you get eight, 20, four, six, and three. With conclusive evidence that the number 820463 was my test book number, all I had to do was find the answer key for my booklet. Using my hyper-focused observational skills, I noticed that the fourth digit of 820463 is

four, and the second digit is two. Following the advice of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," I took a towel from my bag and sought the meaning of life (42). Sure enough, the 42nd word that the proctor read when giving the instructions for the exam was "electronics," which starts with the letter "E." The only possible correct answer to all 75 questions of Sections IA and IB was "E," so I bubbled in



Sabrina Chen / The Spectator

my answers with confidence. Section IIA was the written free response, composed of an e-mail and an argumentative essay. I watched as students around me rushed to respond to some fake e-mail prompt in 15 minutes. Fools! I knew how things really worked. I wrote the following e-mail:

Dear David Coleman,

Ik ur reading dis, wood be pog if u gave me five. Here is magic mushroom:

Sincerely,

Cyres Cursteejee (Future Chief Executive Officer of the College Board)

I drew the mushroom from Super Mario in the space I gave myself and slammed my book-

let closed. The proctor put his argument with his speaker aside and gave me a concerned look. I grinned fiendishly.

When the 40-minute writing period for the argumentative essay commenced, I told myself inspirationally, "You are in The Spectator. That means you enjoy writing." With a newly found drive, I put my pen to the paper.

When I woke up from my 40-minute nap, it was time to begin Section IIB, the speaking portion of the exam. I joined the line of students outside the classroom and began walking toward a computer room with headphones that looked straight out of the '80s. The students had to attempt to speak over each other into a bulky mic all at the same time, a concept that was surely designed by a politician. I sat down next to my friend from AP Computer Science, Ovonel Lenovo,

who caught me searching the file system of the computer in front of me. He interrogated me: "What are you doing?" I had to think quickly. "Hacking," I replied. We paused for a moment, an awkward silence filling the air between us. "I don't think you know what hacking is," Ovonel responded. I chuckled. I had thought Ovonel was intelligent.

On the computer, I found the perfect file to upload to the Audacity program we were submitting. Inside the Downloads folder of the computer was a file called "rickroll.exe." I knew that, in Spanish, "ll" is pronounced "y," and the sound of "rickroy" while trilling your "R" was too perfect, so I uploaded the file and took off my headphones. I listened happily to the roar of pained children trying to speak over each other into their microphones.

I now await my score on July 21 at 7:00 a.m.

Humor

The Wacky World of Texting in the Modern Age

By OLIVER HOLLMANN

The Tone Indicator: A versatile instrument used by many texters alike. They come in many forms, many of which are useful for unsubtly telling people what you mean in a text. However, some of the new additions to this toolset have proved to be somewhat... strange.

Let's start off with some relatively normal tone indicators.

- /j: Joking
- /hj: Half Joking
- /qj: Quarter Joking
- /cbj: Could be a Joke?
- /nc: No Clue.

For those who are more ro-

matically inclined (or perhaps, the opposite), there are a number of applicable tone indicators.

- /r: Romantic
- /x: Sexual Intent
- /p: Platonic
- /nx: Non-Sexual Intent
- /dtnx: Definitely, Totally, Non-Sexual Intent
- /u: Unless...
- And finally,
- /ilybinshtsisiodmfjutti: I Like You But I'm Not Sure How To Say It So Instead Of Describing My Feelings I'll Just Use This Tone Indicator

These are sure to clear up the most complex of relationship troubles.

For those goofers among us who'd like to describe the context and tone of their jokes, here are some comedically descriptive tone indicators.

- /pos: Positive Connotation
- /neg: Negative Connotation
- /amb: Ambiguous Connotation
- /yf: You Figure It Out
- /srs: Seriously
- /th: Threat
- /thsrs: Seriously, This Is A Threat
- And of course,
- /bv: Beach Vibes.

Skeptics of the tone indicator may point out that many seem useless, scoffing at those who refuse to write a more de-

scriptive text. For those critics, we would like to show the most useful and versatile tone indicators.

- /g: Greeting
- /g: Goodbye
- /g: Guilty
- /g: Greedy
- /g: Grim
- /g: Good
- /g: Great
- /g: Tell Michael To Burn The Bodies

Incidentally, the tone indicator used in this group must be determined based on the content of the text.

Unfortunately, many additions to the tone indicator repertoire have been met with some

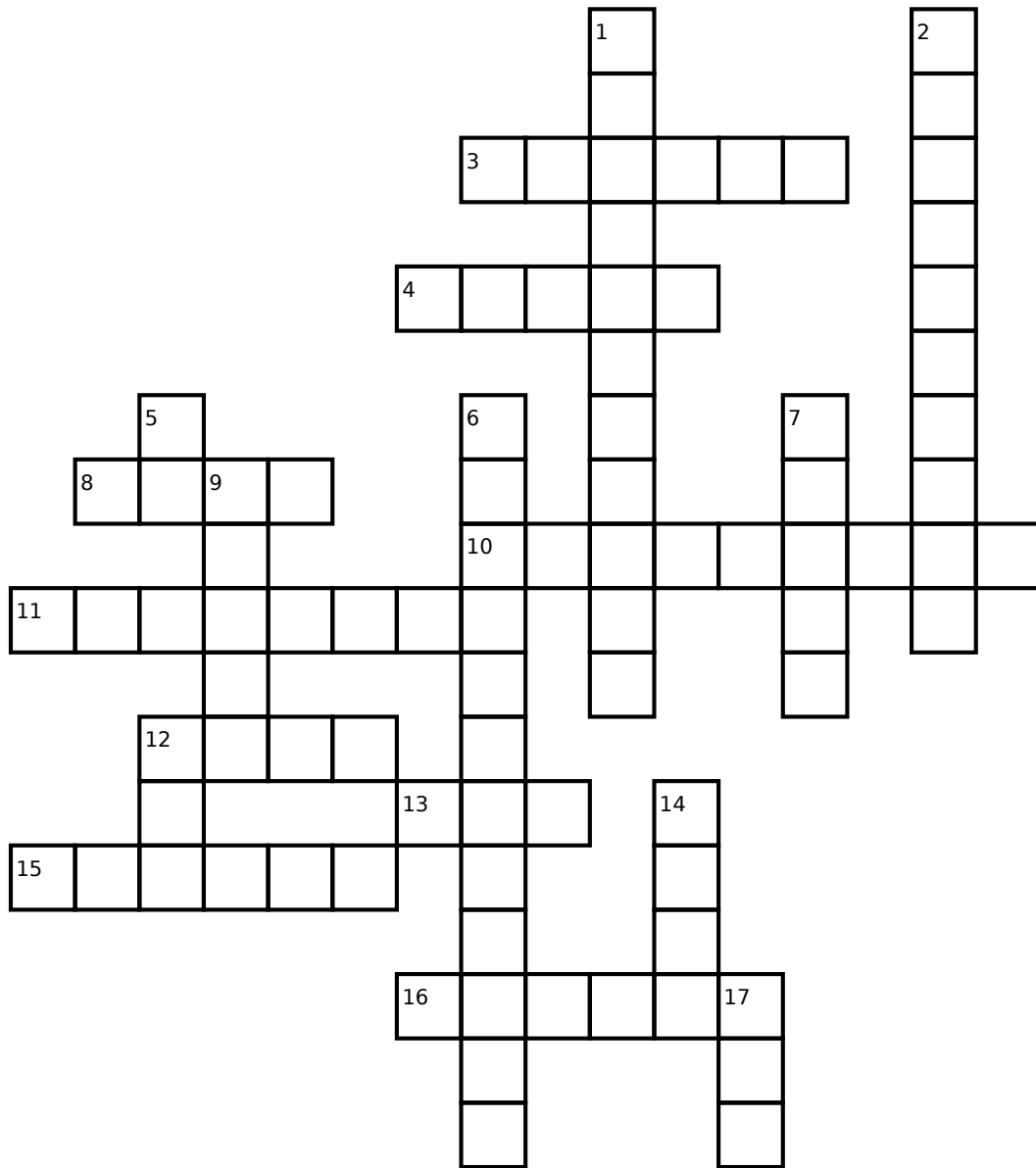
displeasure, as their meanings can be easily misunderstood. To clear this up, here is a list of some misunderstood tone indicators.

- /wtf: Worrying Tearfully, Friend
- /bs: Being Silly
- /fu: Forming Union
- /stfu: Sorry That (I) Formed (A) Union
- /gtfo: Getting Timid For Oscar
- /idgaf: I Don't neGotiate with tArrorists, Fool

There is one more tone indicator, one conceptualized by those who dare to reach the limits of human communication.

- /jkm: Just Call Me

Zooming!



Down:

1. Check to make sure you have no embarrassing tabs open before you do this.
2. Allows you to travel to San Francisco or outer space in the middle of your meeting.
5. Second in line to the Zoom throne (___host)
6. You are one of them!
7. "If you want to speak, click on your ___ Hand feature."
9. For participants, the most tempting red-button on the corner of the screen.
12. "Can you hear me? Is my ___ working?"
14. The one who asks you to unmute yourself when you don't want to.
17. For hosts, the most tempting red button at the bottom right corner of the screen.

Across:

3. When sharing, "Can everyone see my ___?"
4. "Mr. Citron, we can't hear you. You're ___."
8. "Okay everyone, we are going to launch a___."
10. Raise Hand, Clap, Go Slower.
11. A place for turning and talking with muted classmates and awkward silence.
12. A worse version of Zoom that every P.E. teacher uses.
13. You can see your teacher or your crush on full screen by doing this
15. "This meeting is being ___ed. By continuing to be in the meeting you are consenting to be ___ed."
16. If you accidentally press this button, embarrassment lies ahead.

Answers on <https://stuyspec.com/spec-plus/zooming>

Remote Purity Test

- 1. Cried after class.
- 2. Cried during class.
- 3. Snoozed your alarm and was late to class.
- 4. Did the gym fitness log.
- 5. Accidentally unmuted yourself.
- 6. Left when the teacher put everyone in breakout rooms and came back, seeing just yourself and your teacher.
- 7. Spent an entire class period without going on your phone.
- 8. Spent an entire class period on another tab.
- 9. Befriended a freshman this year.
- 10. Submitted something to a Stuy confessions page.
- 11. Been interviewed by a Spectator writer.
- 12. Received no responses to your Facebook post.
- 13. Bumped someone else's Facebook post.
- 14. Gone to office hours weekly.
- 15. E-mailed a teacher because of a missed homework assignment.
- 16. Pulled an all-nighter.
- 17. Bought SAT II books just to find out that the tests were canceled.
- 18. Been outside or in the Stuy building at least once this year.
- 19. Eaten during class.
- 20. Spent an entire breakout room session in silence.

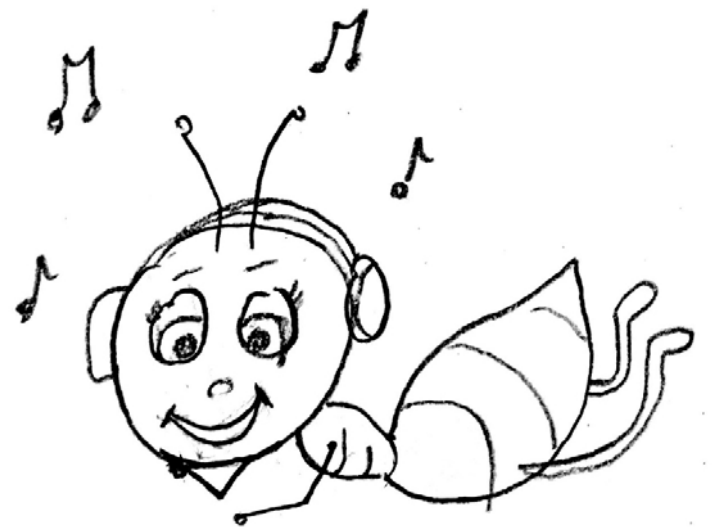
If you got <6, you're not a Stuy student.

If you got 6-10, you're on the fence. You probably belong to Bronx Science.

If you got 11-15, you're a student who has never entered the Stuy building.

If you got >16, you are unfortunately a Stuy student.

Caption Contest



Sonya Sasson / The Spectator

"When you listen to Fireflies by Owl City one too many times"
@k._rista

Boxing

Canelo Álvarez's Rise to Glory

By NAKIB ABEDIN

Like many in the sport of boxing, Canelo Álvarez comes from humble beginnings. He was once a shy kid, bullied for his red hair and freckles. At age 13, he turned to boxing as a way to [defend himself](#) against bullies. His training slowly began to take over his life, and by age 15, Álvarez was a professional boxer. For the first eight years of his boxing career, Álvarez seemed invincible as he took on grown men and seasoned boxers. However, the impressive start to Álvarez's career would end the night that he faced Floyd Mayweather Jr., arguably the greatest boxer of all time.

In his bout against Mayweather, Álvarez was completely outclassed and outboxed. At one point, Mayweather mocked Álvarez in the middle of the fight after easily dodging a power punch. Mayweather won comfortably via majority

decision, and Álvarez was forced to do some soul-searching after such a significant defeat. Despite winning comfortably, Mayweather recognized early on that Álvarez was a talented boxer and [said](#), "I take my hat off to Álvarez. He's a true champion. A true champion can take a loss and bounce back."

Mayweather was correct in his prediction as Álvarez went on to secure the World Boxing Council middleweight belt. Soon after his fight with Mayweather, he booked a match against Gennady Golovkin, his greatest challenge since the Mayweather bout. The first fight went poorly for Álvarez as he was outboxed and outpunched by Golovkin. The vast majority of boxing fans agree that Golovkin comfortably won the fight, but in an extremely controversial decision, the judges ruled the fight as a draw. Álvarez escaped without getting another loss on his record and had a

rematch scheduled against Golovkin later on in the year. However, Álvarez tested positive for clenbuterol, a banned substance, on a drug test, something he attributed to eating contaminated meat. He received a six-month suspension but went on to fight Golovkin the following year. In the second bout, Álvarez and Golovkin went to war, with both of them proving that they are elite fighters. Neither of them backed off at any point during the fight. They fought 12 grueling rounds, with both showing an intense desire to win. The fight was very close, but Álvarez narrowly edged Golovkin to secure a split decision victory.

The start to Álvarez's career was far from perfect. However, one thing it definitely showed is that he learns from his failures and bounces back like a true champion. It was these failures against Mayweather and Golovkin that drove him to start the second phase of his career, jumping

up two weight divisions to super middleweight and becoming one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world.

Álvarez is approaching becoming the undisputed super middleweight champion after giving world champions Callum Smith and Billy Joe Saunders their first defeats. Álvarez, once the victim of bullying as a child, looked like the bully in these bouts. Despite being six inches shorter, Álvarez chased Smith down the ring, winning via a unanimous decision. Against Saunders, Álvarez broke Saunders's eye socket with a single uppercut. Saunders, who [said](#) that he "would rather die on a plane crash on the way home than lose," was forced to give up because the injury he sustained in his eye could have been career-threatening. In both fights, Álvarez didn't appear hurt by the punches from his opponents, but the punches he threw caused major damage. Álvarez now has one

belt left to win before he becomes the unified super middleweight champion.

Right now, Álvarez seems invincible. Any punch that hits him looks like it doesn't faze him, but every punch he throws strikes fear in his opponents. The scariest facet of his game is that he seems to be constantly learning and getting better after every fight. There are few recognizable flaws in Álvarez's ability, and he continuously comes back with something new to show in every bout. In one fight, it may be his patience and composure. In another fight, it may be his head movement and footwork. Even when he is on top of the world, he is constantly getting better. Over the next few years, Álvarez will likely be at his peak and define his legacy. If he continues to mimic his recent performances against more opponents, his legacy may be on par with some of the all-time greats of boxing.

NFL

Big Blue 2021 Preview: Ride or Die for Danny Dimes

By KRISH GUPTA

The NFL has seen a lot of change since the last whistle blew in Tampa in February. One of the biggest success stories of the offseason was, shockingly, the New York Giants.

The Giants had a massive roster overhaul in the offseason, adding wide receiver (WR) Kenny Golladay, tight end (TE) Kyle Rudolph, cornerback (CB) Adoree'

Jackson, and, through the draft, WR Kadarius Toney and linebacker Azeem Ojulari. Quarterback (QB) Daniel "Daniel Dimes" Jones now has no excuses for a poor year, making Year Three ride or die for the quarterback room.

Here's a recap of the Giants' offseason and a look into 2021:

NFL Draft

The Giants traded their 11th overall pick to the Bears, who took Justin Fields, for the 20th overall

and a later round pick. With it, the Giants took the Florida Gators' electrifying WR Toney. Pro Football Focus graded Toney as a 99 on a 100-point scale, ahead of Heisman winner DeVonta Smith and tied with LSU's Ja'Marr Chase for first. While questionable at the time, this decision was a very exciting pick and will help give Jones even more weapons as he attempts to have a bounce back year.

With the 50th overall pick, the

Giants took UGA Bulldog Ojulari, a huge steal. Dave Gettleman's love for Georgia 'Dawgs continued, and the Giants got a certified dog in Ojulari. Ojulari was projected to be an overall first-round pick but fell in the Big Blue's lap in the mid-second round due to injury concerns. If he can stay healthy, Ojulari will be a huge addition to the Giants' defensive line.

In the third round, the Giants took intriguing CB Aaron Robinson.

This choice wasn't an amazing pick, but he should be a solid depth piece. With the Bears' third round pick they acquired via trade, Joe Judge selected CB Elerson Smith, a defender out of Northern Illinois University. Elerson Smith put on 90 pounds of muscle in college, saying mountains about his work ethic. To round out the 2021 class, the Giants added a depth piece in Arizona

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NHL

The Emergence of the Superstar: Hockey's New Enforcer

By KAEDEN RUPAREL

The fast-paced, intense playing style with skill and physicality mixed throughout is the focal point of hockey's appeal. This intensity gives way to hits, occasionally resulting in fights, and hockey's physical reputation. While fighting was never in the original rulebook for hockey, it makes sense that it made an entrance into the NHL rather quickly.

In hockey's history, fighting has neither been legal or illegal. Referees may not catch all penalties, so fighting regulations are in place if a major hit or injury occurs. The current commissioner, Gary Bettman, encourages fighting, believing the popularity resulting from said fights outweighs the major health risks and the hindrance of the game's development.

Bettman's sentiment with this popularity is not unsupported. Hockey's popularity saw a surge when the sport's physicality increased. The Broad Street Bullies, the nickname for the Philadelphia Flyers in the early 1980s, began dealing their bruising physicality onto other teams at the time. The New York Islanders, led by a physical presence in Denis Potvin, went on to win four straight cups in the early '80s. Wayne Gretzky, dubbed the Great One, who is arguably the greatest player in hockey history, was surrounded by enforcers ready to protect him from the Broad Street Bullies and the Bob Proberts of the game. Gretzky, known for his speed and skill, even fought several times in his career, demonstrating how physical hockey was in the '80s and '90s.

Connor McDavid, the world's

best hockey player right now, has never, and likely will never, start a physical altercation in his career. The reason for this likeliness lies in the dangers presented by fighting. The mental and physical impacts of fighting can be seen in [Derek Boogaard's untimely death](#) resulting from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) suffered from repeated blows to the head. Boogaard's death shocked the hockey world and the sports world alike, but his death was not an unprecedented incident for the NHL. Many fourth-line fighters like Boogaard have passed away from CTEs, and many others have suffered from depression as well as severe anger and aggression issues. Probert, known for his fighting prowess and physical dominance, was knocked unconscious from a fight. Garrett Klotz, a minor league player, [had seizures and was forced to undergo](#) surgery to "reconstruct his face." The dangers of fighting have long been brushed aside for their rarity, but it's clear that fighting has a major impact on a player's life, both physically and psychologically.

The dangers of fighting could be mitigated by the positive effects of fighting. Only, there are none. While fights were a major contributor to hockey's popularity surge in the '70s, they no longer belong in the sport. Over the past decades, fighting's frequency has nosedived, demonstrating the new emphasis being placed on a skill-dominated sport, flaunting fast, creative players like Auston Matthews and McDavid. Fighting's presence in the sport prevents this evolution from continuing as fights slow down the game's tempo and take opportunities away from

smaller yet skilled players. For example, Martin St. Louis, who stands at 5'8", played a slippery and quick game, using his small size to his advantage, and remains an outlier in the league's history. Many players like St. Louis, small yet incredibly skilled, have missed playing opportunities because of safety concerns arising from fighting. Take away fighting from the league, and the freedom of players expands, followed by more highlight-reel goals. Creativity grows, and the sport promises more big-name players dominating the league, as seen in the NBA and NFL. Today, the NHL's superstars are just those, superstars, because of their rarity. Andrei Svechnikov's Michigan goal, McDavid's end-to-end rushes, and Matthews's stunning overtime winners become more commonplace as fighting decreases. The Toronto Maple Leafs, for example, currently a top-five team in the league, were [built on skill, not size or physicality](#). Their general manager, Kyle Dubas, is a big believer in [drafting impact players](#), players with clear talent, not those who can throw a hit or are generally larger.

Similar to the effect of fights, the increase in skilled players has seen a correlating increase in the NHL's popularity. Take the Carolina Hurricanes from Raleigh, a city in North Carolina not particularly known for its hockey. The Canes built a team centered around their star winger, Svechnikov, which has played off stunningly for them. The season before Svechnikov's arrival, the Canes ranked dead last in season ticket sales. Just after his rookie season finished, the Canes saw their season ticket memberships increase

by [292 percent](#). The entrance of a big-name superstar, specifically Svechnikov, saw the Hurricanes garner more fans than ever and suddenly rise to third in the league this past season. This sentiment of star players bringing in fans is echoed in the Florida Panthers' Aleksander Barkov, the New York Rangers' Artemi Panarin, and the New York Islanders' Mat Barzal (and previously John Tavares). The NHL's major problem lies not in the decrease in fights, but in the lack of superstar quantity, influenced by the continued presence of fighting in the league. In fact, according to The Hockey News, there was an [increase in attendance](#) as fights decreased and vice versa. So, Bettman's belief that fighting leads to increased popularity is incorrect. The cost of Bettman's ignorance had led to star players, or impact players, as Kyle Dubas calls them, being left out of the league in favor of enforcers who have much lower impacts on the game.

The momentum added by fighting was a major contributor to the increased popularity during the Broad Street Bullies' reign. But fights don't contribute to a team's success. Georgetown University's study found that a fight-winning team is more likely to concede the next goal. [Georgetown's Xavier Weisenreder's research](#) found that "there is no evidence that winning a fight leads to better results in the immediate aftermath of the fight." He also concluded that a fight is worth 1/80 of a win in a given game (contrast this to a [goal being worth one-fifth of a win](#)). The lack of impact of fights can be seen too by examining the NHL's top five teams from the recent season. Only one top team (the Florida Panthers)

[ranked in the top half of the league in fighting majors](#). The New York Islanders, a top defensive team in the league, were ranked last in fighting majors, sporting only five all season. If fighting doesn't add anything to a team's chances of winning, nor to the league's popularity, why is fighting still in the league?

Fighting's downside is clear in the recent matchup between the New York Rangers and the Washington Capitals. Their first meeting saw the Rangers' Panarin suffer a season-ending injury fighting Capitals' enforcer Tom Wilson. Wilson never received a suspension, and the aftermath of the game resulted in outrage from hockey fans everywhere. The next game, featuring over 100 penalty minutes, including six fights in the opening 10 minutes, was not disappointing from an engagement standpoint, displaying Bettman's notion of "fighting increasing popularity." However, the popularity stemmed from one of the league's star players getting severely injured, not from the actual game, signaling a false sense of hope for hockey fans.

Fighting's negligible impact on a game and the sport as a whole, combined with its tragic physical implications, illustrate that it's time for it to go. The hindrance of superstar emergence and the game's evolution has given way to heavy opposition from the new generation of players and fans alike. As the game evolves to become dominated by skilled players of McDavid's and Matthews's caliber, the league must also evolve to welcome this new and more entertaining version of hockey.

Sports

NBA

Predicting the NBA Playoffs

By PHILLIP PHAN

In a shortened schedule with only 62 games, crowdless stadiums, and endless COVID-19 protocols, this NBA season has been anything but normal. Nevertheless, 62 games have come and gone, and the playoffs began on May 18, starting with the play-in tournament between the Boston Celtics and Washington Wizards and the Indiana Pacers and Charlotte Hornets, which determined who the first and second seed will play. On May 19, in the Western Conference, the Grizzlies took on the Spurs and the Lakers faced the Warriors. Will the defending champs have an early exit? Are the Nets legitimate contenders? Will the Suns legitimate contenders? Will there be any historic upsets? We are set for a historical playoffs, and NBA fans have every reason to be excited.

In the east, the first matchup is the third seed Bucks vs. the sixth seed Heat, a rematch of last year's second round, when the

Heat bounced the Bucks in five games. The Heat has struggled all season with injuries and COVID-19 protocol, which may have been caused by a short off-season due to their finals appearance. The Heat failed to make any big acquisitions besides Victor Oladipo, but he's out for the rest of the season with an injury to his right quad. The team has seemingly regressed but has had a resurgence with the return of Jimmy Butler in the second half of the season. The Bucks made important moves in the off-season, acquiring Jrue Holiday, who is an all NBA defender, and P.J. Tucker, a solid glue guy. Giannis Antetokounmpo is having another MVP caliber year, and the Bucks are scary with a core of Antetokounmpo, Holiday, and Khris Middleton. Despite the Bucks' revamped roster, the Heat is still a bad matchup for the Bucks, and Bam Adebayo will stop Antetokounmpo. The Heat will win in an all-out, seven-game war.

The fourth and fifth seed matchup is between the Hawks and the Knicks. This is the Knicks' first

time in the playoffs since 2012-2013. Led by Tom Thibodeau, the Knicks have emerged as a young, hungry, and defensive-minded fourth seed. They're the top of the NBA defensively, and they are offensively led by MVP candidates Julius Randle and Derrick Rose. The Knicks have home court advantage and have been playing excellent basketball since All-Star break. They matchup well against the Hawks, who are led by Trae Young. The Hawks have some playoff experience but have defensive trouble and many nagging injuries on players like Kevin Huerter, Clint Capela, and Cam Reddish. Knicks in five.

Over in the west, the fourth seed Clippers face the fifth seed Mavericks. The Clippers faced the Mavericks last year in a competitive series, highlighted by a Luka Dončić game winner. The Clippers beat the Mavericks in six games. This year, the Clippers have a new coach in Tyronn Lue and new additions including Rajon Rondo, Serge Ibaka, Nic Batum, and DeMarcus Cousins. The Clippers have remained one

of the west's best teams and are coming into the playoffs looking for redemption after blowing a 3-1 lead to the Nuggets last year. The Mavericks have created one of the most efficient offenses in the league, surrounding star Dončić with Tim Hardaway and Kristaps Porziņģis. After getting off to a slow start, the Mavs have established themselves as a contender. However, the Clippers will take this series in six.

The Nuggets and the Trailblazers face each other as the third and sixth seed. The Nuggets have had a career year from Nikola Jokić, who is the front runner for MVP this year. Though his co-star, Jamal Murray, has been out, the team has not missed a beat and has shown incredible depth through players like Michael Porter Jr. and Aaron Gordon. The Trailblazers have had a rocky season, but they have the talent to compete with anybody. A team with Damian Lillard, CJ McCollum, and Norman Powell could cause trouble for any team in the playoffs. Backed with Carmelo Anthony off the bench

and more firepower, the Blazers will best the Nuggets in seven games.

In the east, the Brooklyn Nets and Philadelphia 76ers will easily make it out of the first round. The Wizards lack the depth to compete with these teams, and the only way they can win a series is if Russell Westbrook and Bradley Beal play the best basketball of their careers. The Celtics are demoralized, and the injury to Jaylen Brown really sets them back from competing with the elite teams. In the west, the Phoenix Suns will likely be facing the Los Angeles Lakers, and the Utah Jazz will probably face the Golden State Warriors. Though they are the seventh seed, the Lakers have two of the top five players in the world, LeBron James and Anthony Davis. It's simple. The Lakers will win the series in six games. The Warriors, on the other hand, are facing the first seed Jazz. It'll be a close series but Stephen Curry is having a ridiculous year, averaging [32 points](#). Curry will carry the Warriors to a seven-game series win.

NFL

Big Blue 2021 Preview: Ride or Die for Danny Dimes

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running back Gary Brightwell and selected intriguing defender Rodarius Williams with their last pick.

Offseason

Much to most Giants fans' surprise, GM Gittleman actually had a very successful offseason. The triumph began when the Giants got the best WR available on the market, the Lions' Golladay. Golladay was limited in 2020 by injury, but he balled out in [2019 with Detroit](#), putting up 1,190 yards and 11 touchdowns. He is an

instant WR1 who should become Dimes's favorite target. Golladay's athleticism is off the charts, and he is especially known for his yards after catch totals.

The Giants also picked up TE Rudolph. Rudolph is a vertical playmaker and was a red zone stalwart for Kirk Cousins and the Minnesota Vikings. He joins a crowded tight end room with Evan Engram and Kaden Smith, so look for the G-men to try more three tight end schemes like the ones the Titans and Ravens experimented with last year.

The Giants also acquired Titans' CB Adoree' Jackson. This pickup

was received very well by fans, as he was not too expensive and seemed to be a rising star in Tennessee. Adoree' Jackson practiced in Nashville across A.J. Brown, so he has great experience as well. He also has playoff appearances and crucial wins, including a clutch performance two years ago that ended the era of the dynasty of Tom Brady and the Patriots and a playoff upset over MVP Lamar Jackson's Ravens.

2021 Preview

There's no two ways about it: it's make or break for Jones in 2021. He is now in Year Three, and the G-men will move on from him if he doesn't perform. Behind a decent O-Line

and an excellent defense, Jones has Golladay, Sterling Shepard, Darius Slayton, Golden Tate, Rudolph, and Engram to throw to. If he turns up, the Giants have a strong case for being NFC East and NFC title contenders.

In addition, the Giants' top 10 defense only got stronger with Adoree' Jackson and Oulari now in the fold. With no key losses, the unit will keep Jones and the offense on the field for long stretches. The only question is what Jason Garrett can do with the Giants' offense. With Saquon Barkley also returning to full strength, the Giants team is very fearsome.

With the schedule extended to 17 games, the Giants have a clear path to a 10-7 or 9-8 season, which, given the strength of the NFC East, will probably be enough for the title. 9-8 is a very conservative prediction, in which the Giants get swept in the Cowboys series and beat only weaker teams. A season of 10-7 or even 11-6 is very feasible with only one or two upset wins. Overall, it isn't crazy to hope for a playoff berth, due to a combination of the now stacked team and a relatively weak schedule.

All we need now is for Jones to flip the switch. So flip the switch for goodness' sake, Jones.

NFL

Fastest On the Football Field, Slowest On the Track

By TAE CHI, AIDAN LOOK, and JEFFREY TAN

Imagine a 6'4", 230-pound behemoth barreling toward you at the speed of an Olympic sprinter. That's what Budda Baker, a safety for the Arizona Cardinals, experienced during a game against the Seattle Seahawks last October. Baker had come off an impressive interception and was close to securing six points for his team when he was chased down and tackled at the seven-yard line by number 14 on the Seahawks, DK Metcalf. In the play, Metcalf hit a top speed of over 22 miles per hour, an especially impressive feat considering the helmet and pads he was wearing while running.

Metcalf, the 23-year-old wide receiver from Oxford, Mississippi, is widely regarded as one of the fastest players in the NFL. Despite his colossal size, he is able to attain speeds that few others in the league can match. At the 2020 Combine, he recorded an impressive [4.33 second 40-yard dash](#), one of the highest speeds in his draft class. To put this number into perspective, the average 40-yard dash time for a wide receiver like Metcalf is [4.48](#), a huge difference in a sprint often decided by hundredths of a second.

It's no secret that Metcalf is an elite athlete. But how does he stack up against track athletes, who train for the specific purpose of attaining the fastest speeds possible? Metcalf participated in his first 100-meter

race against professional sprinters in the USATF Golden Games on May 9. He finished last in his heat and 15th out of 17 total competitors, recording a subpar time of 10.36 seconds and proving that there remains a huge disparity between track and football speeds. Following the race, Metcalf [said](#),



"These are world class athletes. They do this for a living. It's very different from football speed, from what I just realized."

The NFL star's lack of formal training and experience in the 100-meter event was clear from his technique. At the beginning of the race, Metcalf got a strong start and was able to keep pace with his competitors. However, he couldn't

maintain his acceleration in the long run and ultimately finished behind everyone else in his heat. Metcalf's inability to maintain his top speed was crucial in determining the end result as sprinters need to be strategic with how they accelerate. Most runners hit their maximum speed somewhere between the

speed. "There is as much strategy running 100 meters as running a marathon," Noah Lyles, one of the world's fastest sprinters and winner of the 200-meter event in the 2019 Track World Championships, [said](#). Lyles's 100-meter personal record is [9.86 seconds](#), a massive 0.5 seconds faster than Metcalf's recent performance. "Fans have been egging this [idea] that our speeds are comparable [on for a long time]. They're not," Lyles said.

Though Metcalf ultimately failed to qualify for the final at the Golden Games, the All-Pro receiver earned respect for challenging himself against the top talent in the world in another sport. Metcalf only trained for two or three months prior to the event and did not embarrass himself, which is an already considerable feat.

From the current lineup of NFL players, one other player stands out besides Metcalf: Tyreek Hill. A wide receiver for the Kansas City Chiefs, Hill is known to be a speed demon (hence, the nickname "Cheetah") and recorded a 40-yard dash time of [4.29 seconds](#) at the 2016 NFL Combine. Hill previously pursued his track talents in high school, but due to the wear and tear he has experienced during his five-year NFL career, his performance as a world-class sprinter has diminished. At age 18, Hill was able to compete with the top sprinters in his age group. He recorded a [personal best](#) of 10.19 seconds for the 100-meter

event and 20.14 seconds for the 200-meter event (ranking him sixth in the United States in 2012). Hill has also won a multitude of track awards, including a gold medal for the 4x100-meter relay event and a bronze medal for the 200-meter event at the World Junior Championships in 2012. Of course, Hill is a great exception among other NFL players due to his extensive track background and skills. However, he would still require much more training to be able to compete with Olympic sprinters.

Given Hill's times, it's clear that a vast majority of NFL players would not be able to compete at the Olympic level. This sentiment has also been expressed by Ato Boldon, a former track and field athlete for Trinidad and Tobago and a four-time Olympic medalist. Boldon also coaches NFL players in preparation for their 40-yard dashes at the NFL Scouting Combine and [claimed](#) that Hill's chances of qualifying for the Olympics would be a "long shot."

The possibility of competing at the Olympics has intrigued many football players, but most will never have the opportunity to do so. Being able to compete with world-class athletes in a different sport would require years of focused training, which would be impossible to maintain in conjunction with an NFL season. It's probably best for NFL players to do what they do best: play the game of football.

Sports

Gymnastics

Simone Biles: Already Considered the G.O.A.T., Is She Done Yet?

By ALICIA YU

During the Rio 2016 Olympics, all eyes were on 19-year-old Simone Biles. It was no surprise that the USA was in great shape coming into Rio, but Biles took it to even greater heights. The pressure was immense. She hadn't lost in three years at that point, but when it finally came to the competition, she didn't disappoint. Flip after flip, Biles landed everything with ease and was able to secure the gold in four events: the vault, floor, all-around, and team events, as well as a bronze in the balance beam. Now, despite being 24 years of age, she is projected to do even better in Tokyo, and statistically, she is even better than she was at 19. Biles has made a strong case for herself as the greatest gymnast of all time, having garnered every possible accolade at the highest level in gymnastics and is one of the most influential athletes in the world. After 25 world championship medals and four Olympic gold medals, she is still going. In fact, she is arguably becoming even more dominant.

When you stack other elite gymnasts against her, Biles is miles ahead. It seems like in every other competition, she performs a new trick that no one else has done before. She has four tricks named after her, dubbed "The Biles," which are the hardest tricks that can be done in the sport. They include one on the vault (a roundoff, back handspring with half turn entry; front stretched somersault with two twists), one on the balance beam (a double-twisting double-tuck salto backwards dismount), and two on the floor (a double layout with a half twist, which only four people, including Biles, have been successful in doing, as well as the triple-twisting double-tuck salto backwards).

Training for Tokyo 2021, Biles is not only one of the most experienced, but also one of the oldest gymnasts on the national team at 24 years old. If she wins this year's Olympics, she may be the oldest American woman to win the all-around gold in the Olympics. In an interview with TODAY, she mentioned how she thinks about her age "all the time," and that

"[younger athletes] have less years than me, so I feel like they're a little bit fresher. They can recover quicker." Despite the age gap against her competition, she seems more than ready. The Olympics are less than two months away, but Biles has remained at the top of her game, training hard in the gym while making sure she can peak at the right time. However, Biles's impact on the sport goes beyond just her greatness in competition.

Biles went on a hiatus from gymnastics in 2017, taking a break from constantly competing and training, traveling and writing her autobiography in the meantime. But just the following year, she

came back. She felt like she had something to give back, not just to the sport itself, but also to the community around her. After the Larry Nassar scandal, when over 260 victims testified against Nassar, the former USA Gymnastics national team doctor, for sexual abuse, Biles felt that the Gymnas-

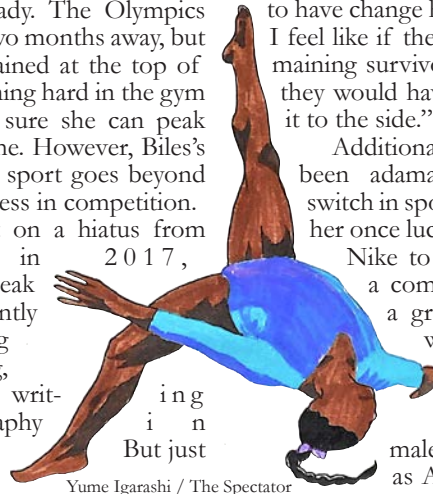
tics committee didn't do enough to implement change in the sport. As she said, "I just feel like everything that happened had to come back to the sport, to be a voice, to have change happen because I feel like if there weren't a remaining survivor in the sport, they would have just brushed it to the side."

Additionally, she has been adamant about her switch in sponsorship, from her once lucrative deal with Nike to Gap's Athleta, a company that puts a greater focus on women. This change follows many other elite female athletes, such as Allyson Felix, in their switch to companies that place higher values on women and ethics. This transition comes as no surprise as Nike has been put under fire for not just issues with women, but for issues with workplace abuse and environmental practices as well, in recent years.

Just as fans saw in Rio 2016,

Biles will shine on the big stage once again in Tokyo. But questions still ring in skeptics' heads: can she really continue her dominance? Can she really be even better than she was in 2016? She certainly thinks so: "I had already reached and passed all my expectations in the sport already [...] going back to, in 2018 [...] and in 2019, I was kind of like, 'Okay, I don't really have anything to lose at this point. I've already stamped my status on the sport.'"

The fact is, nobody even comes close to Biles's consistency or dominance. The elite gymnasts are all in one tier of greatness, but Biles is in a tier of her own, higher than any gymnast to ever play the sport. Biles is an inspiration to all for her values and hard work, among many of the other traits she possesses. She will finish her career as not just the best gymnast ever to come out of the sport, but as one of the best and most dominant athletes across all sports ever.



Yume Igarashi / The Spectator

NFL

How Did Justin Fields Fall in the NFL Draft?

By MAX SCHNEIDER

The college football world watched in wonder as Ohio State dominated the top-seeded Clemson Tigers to win the College Football Playoff Semifinal on New Year's Day 2021. In a major upset, senior quarterback Justin Fields threw seven total touchdowns, completely outplaying generational superstar Trevor Lawrence and booking a spot in the Championship Game. The Buckeyes ended up losing that game to juggernaut Alabama, but Fields had solidified himself as the front-runner for the number two overall pick in the 2021 NFL draft. Fast forward to May, and Fields is the starting QB for the Chicago Bears, who selected him at number 11 overall. You would think Fields must have gotten hurt, had off-the-field problems, faced a bad pro day, or did something else to hurt his draft stock, but he didn't. So, what happened to cause the slide?

To start, let's look at who replaced him. With the second pick in the draft, the New York Jets selected Zach Wilson out of Brigham Young University (BYU). Wilson was lauded for his strong arm and acrobatic pro days, rocketing up to the top of people's draft boards. However, picking Wilson was a risky prospect. BYU is currently an independent team, not in any of the Power Five conferences, which meant he played very weak competition, only playing two games against top 25 teams, one of which he lost. Additionally, he often used his team's superior talent to his advantage, repeatedly throwing high 50/50 balls and letting his receivers make acrobatic plays. There is concern that NFL defensive backs will capitalize on these passes and create turnovers. Wilson also has clear durability issues, having suffered a torn labrum and broken wrist in college. These injuries led to horrendous statistics in 2019, when he had a measly 2,382 yards, with 11 touchdowns and nine

interceptions.

While Wilson was the eventual pick for the Jets at number two overall, he was not the only one who surpassed Fields. The eventual number three pick was a quarterback drafted by the San Francisco 49ers, Trey Lance. Lance comes from FCS powerhouse North Dakota State. He spent one season as the starting quarterback with the Bison, obliterating his incredibly weak competition en route to the FCS title. He has only played 17 games and had over 25 pass attempts twice. His lack of appearances and weak schedule made him a gigantic unknown to scouts, who were hoping that his outrageous athleticism was a sign of a good career.

Mac Jones, on the other hand, is a clear-cut prospect. Mac Jones played in the SEC, the best conference, for Alabama, the best team. He used a high completion percentage and a strong cast of weapons to dominate college football, going undefeated and winning the National Championship. The concerning part of that accomplishment is how strong the weapons were. Mac Jones was throwing to DeVonta Smith and Jaylen Waddle and handing the ball to Najee Harris. With the three of them joined in the first round by offensive tackle Alex Leatherwood, their offense had the most top-end talent in the nation. However, it did not just stop there, with ninth overall pick Alabama CB Patrick Surtain II highlighting their strong defense. Mac Jones certainly has skill, but it was enhanced by throwing to an NFL caliber team. The question that his talent hinges on is how strong that enhancement was. The other question is of Mac Jones's athleticism. With the NFL being dominated by athletic quarterbacks such as Patrick Mahomes, Josh Allen, and Lamar Jackson, Mac Jones's play style would stick out. He is very much a pocket passer more reminiscent of Tom Brady and Dan Marino

than the top talent today.

As these other players rose in the eyes of scouts, Fields was criticized in several areas, the first one being his performance against good defenses. As Todd McShay, an ESPN draft expert, said on ESPN's Get Up, "If you go back and study games against Indiana [and] Northwestern and then the College Football Playoff National Championship Game against Alabama, he completed around 52 percent of his throws with five interceptions in those games." These facts are all valid, but they omit some key information. The most glaring error in this assessment is his performance against Clemson mentioned above. He only played one drive in the whole second half and still put up gaudy numbers against a Clemson defense that was ranked as the number three defense by Football Outsiders, only behind Northwestern and Cincinnati (who is not in a Power Five conference). Additionally, Fields's weapons lagged significantly behind those of Lawrence and Mac Jones, the only other first round quarterbacks with similarly difficult schedules. In the 2021 draft, Ohio State only had five offensive players drafted, none of which were wide receivers. When compared to Alabama's seven offensive players (two receivers) and Clemson's five (two receivers), it is understandable that Fields would struggle against teams with several NFL caliber players on defense.

Fields was also criticized for his going to Ohio State. Ohio State has produced three NFL quarterbacks in the last 10 years (Terrelle Pryor, Cardale Jones,

and Dwayne Haskins). All three subsequently became busts and have struggled to play to the level they did at Ohio State. This result, however, is similar to the performances from Mahomes at Texas Tech, Aaron Rodgers at Cal, and Jackson at Louisville. Other than Jackson, Mahomes, and Rodgers, Louisville has had five quarterbacks (one combined Pro Bowl appearance),

Texas Tech has had two quarterbacks (zero Pro Bowls), and Cal has had three quarterbacks (two Pro Bowls) go to the NFL since 2000.

Yet, these three quarterbacks, Mahomes, Rodgers, and Jackson, are the last three league MVPs and are standout players. To judge players off their almae matres is absurd and has no basis in reality.

The last detraction is perhaps the strangest. Fans have slapped Fields with having "character concerns" the likes of which aren't found in good players. This criticism is odd, because of the five quarterbacks in the first round, he is not even in the top two in character concerns. Wilson has had people accuse him of being entitled, and looks the part, and point out his failure to be voted captain by his college teammates as a three-year starter. For reference, all NFL starting quarterbacks are captains, along with almost all college quarterbacks. That reputation pales in comparison to that of Mac Jones. As a freshman at Alabama, Mac Jones was arrested for a DUI at age 19. As a teenager, Mac Jones wore a "Nobama" costume that showed a blatantly racist depiction of former president Barack Obama. Yet, Fields is the one labeled with charac-

ter concerns due to a supposed "lack of passion and drive." The Undefeated's Martenzie Johnson wrote that this ridiculous labeling is due to Fields's race. In responding to quotes for league personnel criticizing Fields's attitude, he said "According to these anonymous personnel, Fields, a Black man, struggles to 'process things' and is both selfish and doesn't have the work ethic of a white man. The dog whistle is screeching." He then brought up last year's draft, saying, "Take for instance the draft profiles of the first four white and Black quarterbacks to be drafted in 2020. Joe Burrow and [Justin] Herbert, both white, had 'off-the-charts football IQ' and could '[scan] crisply through [a] full slate of progressions without panic,' respectively. But Jordan Love had 'below-average decision-making against zone looks' and Jalen Hurts had 'slow recognition of early-throw opportunities.'"

His assessment of the situation is absolutely correct. The league has a long history of unfairly evaluating Black players that has not stopped. Criticizing Fields for his character, when compared to Wilson and Mac Jones, should be a joke, and yet it is the reality of today's NFL.

As the number 11 pick, Fields will be paid a projected \$18.9 million yearly. Wilson will receive a projected \$35.1 million. I'll do the math for you. That is a \$16.2 million difference, \$16.2 million ripped out of the hands of a man who has suffered a punishment for doing nothing wrong. In a sport where the average player has a four year career, these monetary discrepancies have large impacts on the rest of these young men's lives. It is time we stop unfairly evaluating players like Fields because not only is it wrong morally, but it is also hurting the teams who listen to these evaluations.



Laurina Xie / The Spectator

THE SPECTATOR SPORTS

NBA

A Phoenix From the Ashes

By JAMES KANG

Being a fan of the Phoenix Suns in recent years has been hard, to say the least. Year after year, the Suns were regarded as one of the worst franchises in the NBA, even by their own supporters. But all of that is changing this year, as the Suns have finally clinched their first playoff berth in over a decade, and fans have something to look forward to at last.

The last time the Suns made the playoffs was in 2010, when they had veteran Steve Nash as their point guard and Amar'e Stoudemire as their center. The two led the Suns to a 54-28 record, allowing them to clinch the third seed in the Western Conference. The Suns then went on to beat the Portland Trailblazers 4-2 at the first round of the playoffs, followed by a sweep against the San Antonio Spurs in the Conference Semifinals. Their final challenge was the defending champion Los Angeles Lakers in the Conference Finals. Unfortunately, Derek Fisher broke Nash's nose in game three of the series, and the Suns eventually lost the series 4-2.

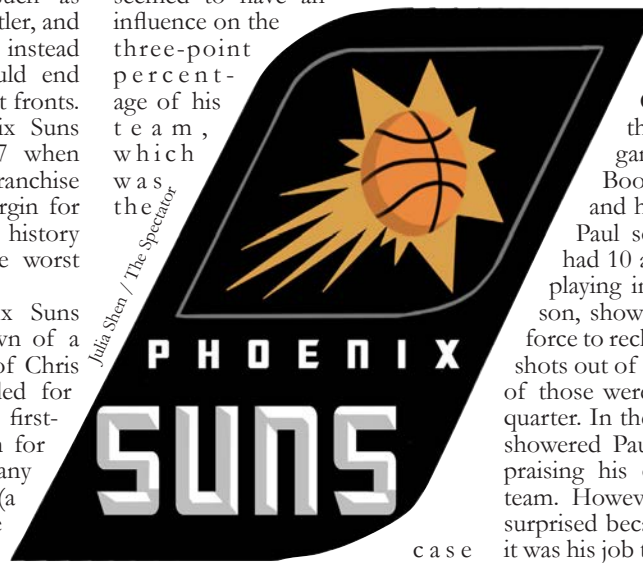
But what Suns fans didn't expect was how far downhill it would go from there. Head coach Steve Kerr, who has now won three titles as the Warriors head coach, announced his resignation as the Suns' general manager in 2010. The owner of

the Phoenix team, Robert Sarver, made one of the worst trades in franchise history by trading away their only star player, Nash, to Los Angeles for two future first-round draft picks, two future second-round draft picks, and \$3 million. The organization won a total of only 199 games and cycled through five new head coaches from 2012 to 2019. Moreover, the Suns threw away prime opportunities to draft future All-Star players such as Kawhi Leonard, Jimmy Butler, and Giannis Antetokounmpo, instead drafting players who would end up underwhelming on most fronts. Worst of all, the Phoenix Suns became a meme in 2017 when they set the worst loss in franchise history and worst loss margin for an opening game in NBA history and went on to have the worst record in the league.

However, the Phoenix Suns have now entered the dawn of a new era with the addition of Chris Paul. Paul, who was traded for a few players and a 2022 first-round pick, is well known for significantly improving any team that he arrives in (a phenomenon known as the Chris Paul effect). The 10-time All-Star has already worked with other elite guards in previous years and had no trouble becoming a leader for the team, especially for Devin Booker. Paul's

exceptional playmaking, ball-handling, and scoring skills have once again acted as the driving force behind the success of his team, having a 39.5 percent for three-pointers and 8.9 assists per game.

Veteran forward Jae Crowder was also a great addition to the team. Before his signing with the Suns, Crowder was a part of the Miami Heat's surprise run to the NBA finals last year. Crowder seemed to have an influence on the three-point percentage of his team, which was the



case once again in Phoenix. While Crowder doesn't put up big numbers, his presence on the court has helped young guards like Mikal Bridges

and Langston Galloway shine behind the three-point arc. Crowder has also helped Deandre Ayton step up both offensively and defensively. Ayton averages 10.5 rebounds per game and is scoring at a 62.6 field goal percentage, which is the best in his career.

Overall, these factors have helped the Suns once again rise through the standings like a phoenix from the ashes. On the night

Phoenix secured a spot in the post-season, they finally managed to beat the Clippers, who won the first two season games against the Suns. Booker scored 21 points and had six rebounds, and Paul scored 28 points and had 10 assists. Paul, who was playing in his 16th NBA season, showed that he still was a force to reckon with. He made 10 shots out of 15 attempts, and half of those were made in the fourth quarter. In the fourth quarter, fans showered Paul with MVP chants, praising his contributions to the team. However, Paul wasn't even surprised because he already knew it was his job to elevate this team to success. "I know who I am," Paul said. "Coming to this situation, I knew who [Devin Booker] was. He told me about some of the guys on the team. I knew [about] play-

ing for Monty [Williams and] how detail-oriented he is."

Through his leadership and experience, Paul has even led the bench players to have outstanding performances. The Phoenix Suns bench was able to outscore the Los Angeles bench 28-8 in the first half. Center Frank Kaminsky led the team with 13 points at halftime, and shooting guard Cameron Payne scored 15 points off the bench. Eventually, the game concluded with Phoenix winning 109-101, improving to a 44-18 record and putting them within firing range for the top seed in the west.

Though the Suns have clinched a spot as the second seed of the Western Conference, they now face their ultimate playoff challenge: the Los Angeles Lakers. Not only are the Suns playing against the defending NBA champions, but they have come full circle as they have a chance to get their revenge from 10 years ago. Luckily, the Suns have beaten the Lakers twice out of a three-season series, and they hope to continue their dominance this season through the playoffs. "We are not satisfied. We're not settling," Suns coach Williams said. "We feel like we're just scratching the surface." The future now seems sun-bright for Phoenix basketball.

UCL

English Domination in the Champions League

By MATT MELUCCI and SHAFIUL HAQUE

Two teams from the Big Six (which consists of Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester City, and Tottenham Hotspur) are yet again the top contenders for the Champions League title. English teams Manchester City FC and Chelsea FC will vie for the prestigious trophy in the Estádio do Dragão stadium in Porto, Portugal on May 29. Both teams have had their fair share of struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic but managed to impress this season. City ended up losing to Liverpool FC in the 2019-2020 Premier League title race after having won two titles in a row. However, City manager Pep Guardiola and his players have improved during this season, winning the Premier League and the EFL Cup. Chelsea has also been through tough times under the reign of soccer legend Frank Lampard, who was sacked in January 2021 after a run of defeats. Manager Thomas Tuchel quickly took over and by strengthening Chelsea's defense, has helped the club qualify for the FA Cup final and move to fourth in the Premier League. With two brilliant managers, many skilled players, and avid fans, the 2020-2021 UCL final is sure to be an unpredictable one.

This season, Manchester City has remained undefeated in the Champions League, with 11 wins and one draw. The club was first in Group C and advanced to the knockout stages of the competition with ease, beating FC Porto, Olympique de Marseille, and Olympiacos FC. In the tournament phase, City remained dominant, defeating Borussia Mönchengladbach 4-0 aggregate in the Round of 16 and Borussia Dortmund 4-2 aggregate in the quarter-final. In the semifinal, the Citizens were up against Paris

Saint-Germain (PSG), which had made it to last year's Champions League final. Though many were expecting PSG to reach the finals with the likes of superstars Kylian Mbappé and Neymar Jr., it was Manchester City that emerged victorious, defeating the French club 4-1 aggregate. Both fans and players alike of Manchester City celebrated as it was the club's first time reaching the UCL final.

There is a lot of praise toward star players Phil Foden and Riyad Mahrez, who displayed their quality and goal-scoring ability in these decisive matches. Foden has had an amazing season so far, with 14 goals and 10 assists in all competitions. The 20-year-old English international has established himself in the starting 11 with a creative eye and an exquisite left foot. Likewise, Mahrez has had his best season yet at the Manchester club, finding his place back into the squad. The 30-year-old winger has been crucial for City in the knockout ties, scoring a penalty to win against Dortmund and scoring three times across both legs against PSG. Additionally, City has benefited from outstanding play from attacking midfielders Kevin de Bruyne and İlkay Gündoğan, alternating wingbacks João Cancelo and Kyle Walker, and defensive duo John Stones and Rúben Dias.

Though City may be at a disadvantage having lost twice against Chelsea this season, Mahrez doesn't believe so. The Algerian international said, "Chelsea [doesn't] have the psychological advantage. All games are different. But the Champions League Final is not the same." In terms of the lineup, Guardiola certainly has many options and ideas on formation. It's common knowledge that Guardiola is an experienced and world-class manager. In fact, back in his FC Barcelona days, he won the Champions League twice in 2009 and 2011. He'll likely look

to disrupt Chelsea's defensive structure by keeping possession of the ball and with well-timed passing in the final third. Keep in mind, it is Manchester City's first time making it to the UCL final in its history, and Guardiola should make sure that he doesn't overthink his game plans in preparation for match day. City has already wrapped up business in the Premier League, and the players will be sure to give it all in the UCL final in hopes of a treble.

Chelsea's record is inferior to Manchester City's in the Champions League this year. With only one loss to Porto in the second leg of the quarter-final, Chelsea holds eight wins and three draws. The squad started off in Group E, where it quickly rose to first place, surpassing Sevilla FC, FC Krasnodar, and Stade Rennais FC. Chelsea breezed past Atlético Madrid, the top club from La Liga, in the Round of 16, winning by an aggregate score of 3-0, and proceeded to struggle past FC Porto 2-1 aggregate score in the quarter-final. In the semifinal, the Blues were next up against the only Spanish club remaining in the competition, Real Madrid, which they beat 3-1 over two legs. Chelsea had made it to the Champions League final for the third time in the club's history.

Coincidentally, for all three UCL runs in which Chelsea has reached the final, the club sacked its manager mid-season. This past season, Chelsea sacked Lampard and replaced him with Tuchel in late January. The decision was understandable. Lampard had led Chelsea to ninth in the Premier League and was running the club into the ground with the worst points-per-game record compared to any other manager under Roman Abramovich, the owner of Chelsea FC. Tuchel had previously managed PSG and shot the club into the 2020 UCL final against FC Bayern Munich. He made manager history when he led Chelsea to the final as

well, bringing two different clubs to the UCL final in consecutive years. Tuchel is known for his effective player development and tactics, and his track record in the Champions League makes him an excellent coach for the UCL final against Manchester City, which has never reached the final before.

Tuchel has been quite successful, particularly in strengthening the backline at Stamford Bridge and keeping clean sheets. On attack, he has relied on counter attacks to put in goals, which did not work well against Arsenal and Leicester City in recent games. Doubts began to surround Chelsea and Tuchel after a 1-0 loss to Arsenal and a 1-0 loss to Leicester in the FA Cup Final. Despite Chelsea's two victories over Manchester City over 21 days, fans and critics alike became skeptical over Chelsea's ability to beat Manchester City in the UCL final based on recent luck. After the FA Cup final, however, Chelsea proved itself in a second matchup against Leicester City, in which the squad defeated Leicester 2-1, solidifying its prowess and ability to emerge victorious against Manchester

City. In the recent victory against Leicester, top Chelsea players Kai Havertz and N'Golo Kanté sustained injuries, but Tuchel hopes to have them back for their last game of the EPL season against Aston Villa on May 23.

The 2021 UCL final will be the third all-English final in history but the second in the past three years. There has been a clear shift in the Champions League as the Premier League not only continues to dominate European soccer financially, but is also taking over continental tournaments, knocking out the top teams from other nations. The English triumph makes sense as top Premier League teams have access to more resources from the television deal revenue advantage over other nations' clubs, and their physicality and clever tactics continue to surpass those of other squads. While Chelsea heads to the Champions League final as a clear favorite looking for its second Champions League win, the 2021 UCL final will be a must-watch matchup as Manchester City vies for its first Champions League title in its club history.

SPORTSBEAT

Steph Curry and the Golden State Warriors failed to qualify for the NBA Playoffs after getting knocked out in the new play-in game by Ja Morant and the Memphis Grizzlies.

At the U.S. Classic, Simone Biles performed a move, the exalted Yurchenko double pike, that no woman had ever attempted before in competition.

The Jacksonville Jaguars signed former quarterback and baseball player Tim Tebow to a tight end position.

The NHL Playoffs began, with the New York Islanders qualifying and taking a lead over the Pittsburgh Penguins in their Round One series.