Skateboarding Skids Into Regulations

by Nicholas Pizzo

Science skateboarders have been in a tailspin over a recent newsletter stating that the sport is “not allowed on school property during school hours,” which was sent out as a reminder but was received as an apparent departure from routine. For years, the Bronx Science courtyard has been a mecca for skateboarders drawn by its smooth, open spaces and long ramps. A number of students commute to school on their boards while others carry theirs along on the Vallo bus or mass transit, eager to squeeze in some fun during lunch or after school. But last month, the weekly newsletter that is emailed to Bronx Science families included a notice that skateboarding is not allowed. After a flurry of questions and complaints from parents and students, the school sent out a second email explaining that while students are not to use skateboards in school or on school property during school hours, they could still bring their skateboards into school-a statement that added to confusion. Although skaters are allowed to bring their boards to school, the rule against actually skateboarding on them leaves almost no reason to have them in the first place.

Avid skateboarders described the announcement as a switch stance but Dr. Donahue, the school principal, said the ban on skateboarding at school has been longstanding and that the newsletter’s notice was intended as a reminder. “This was not a new rule about skateboard- ing at all,” said Dr. Donahue. “Rather, it was just a reminder of a long-time school policy that riding a skateboard in school is not permitted and never has been.” In its newsletter, the administration stated that any violation of the skateboarding ban would be met with punishment taken from the DOE’s “Blue Book,” or disciplinary code. Although the Blue Book itself never explicitly states that skateboarding is banned in NYC schools, it is the guide to disciplinary measures. Students can face detention and possibly get their skateboards taken from them if they violate the rules.

One skateboarder, senior Anthony Lescano, agreed that this policy was “a safety issue” but stated that, “everyone who has been skateboarding was being pretty safe to begin with.” Mandatory helmet wearing was not an option the administration considered. “Since skateboarding is not permitted in school,” Dr. Donahue said, “the quest- ions of helmets does not even come up.” Many students took the notice in stride. “I enjoyed seeing people skateboard in the courtyard,” said junior Giancarlo Zirpolo, “but I understand why the school made these rules. They didn’t want any- one to get hurt, and didn’t want to be responsible for anyone getting hurt.” “The courtyard has a lot of flat ground to offer for skaters,” said sophomore Kendrick Shoji. “It’s perfect for skating. If people can play basketball and football, why can’t we skate?”

Common Problems:

New Common Application Irks Students and Teachers Alike

by Samuel Fredricks

Seniors breathed a sigh of relief after a frenzied early application season in which several universities have forced students to move back their early application deadlines. The “Common App,” the undergraduate college application used for over 35 years made some changes to its website for 2013, but technical and structural difficulties have plagued the website since its launch this summer.

Since its creation as a non-profit organization by a congregation of fifteen private colleges in 1975, the Common App has signed on more than 500 universities around the world and serves over one million students annually. For its 2013-2014 edition, the Common App released their new interface and design, “CA4,” in the goal of it being cleaner and having more user-friendly features, including a help-center sidebar and dashboard for news tracking. The hope is that the new website will be easier to use, but high volumes of web traffic along with a relatively untested new operating system have actually made applying to college more complicated.

Eric Wohl, a senior at Bronx Science who used the app to apply for early deci- sion, said, “The app is so glitched that slow downloading and multiple technical errors made changing ‘wall street’ to ‘Wall Street’ a hassle.” Other problems he encountered include being unable to apply to one school, “I have to send hard copies of my essays to all the schools I’m applying to,” added Wohl, “because I’m afraid the online application won’t be sent in. This takes up a lot of time and also money due to postage costs.” Forty-six universities that are members of the Common App including Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania, and as well as Duke University, were forced to move back their early application deadline past the initially intended date of No- vember 1. Some schools such as Tufts and Princeton have even resorted to allowing students to submit their apps via the Univer-

heated up to scalding temperatures with a blowtorch. A small amount of BHO is then placed into the now heated oil rig and almost immediately evaporates into a cloud of oil vapor which is held by a coil and then inhaled. “Dabbing presents a danger because often times people who are not accustomed to smoking are not ready for the intensity of a dab,” said another teen.

Experts widely agree that marijuana negatively impact the mind of young adults, whose brains are still developing. Studies have found that cannabis use correlates with lower cognitive ability. Kathy Falkner, a psychologist at the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), recently reported that “when researchers matched adolescent-onset and adult-onset cannabis users with equally persistent use, they saw greater IQ declines among the adolescent-onset users.” Additionally, local pediatrician, Ralph Lopez M.D. says, “for most of the world, 6:30 pm on a Thursday night is just an ordinary hour, but for thirty-two million Americans aged twelve and over, it is a mad scramble to turn off the streets into music that transformed the way a generation looked at rock and roll.”

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Fantasy Football: Fact or Fiction?

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“[dabbing] is especially harmful for teenagers as their brain is still developing.”

Despite being practiced for many years now on the West Coast, “dabbing,” a specific way of ingest- ing marijuana, has recently seen a huge spike in popularity amongst teenagers in New York. Its growing appeal as well as the dangers it entails makes the drug a major concern for public health officials.

Dabbing is slang for the consumption of butane hash oil or “BHO” for short, which is the oil contained in marijuana plants. Whereas the marijuana plant may only contain 25% THC, the psychoactive ingredi- ent in marijuana which induces the “high” that users experience, THC can be boosted to over 90%, making it the optimal choice for many who seek a stronger drug.

Consumption of BHO received the moniker of dabbing from the fact that users need to heat it to a very small amount, or “dab,” of the substance, which also goes by the names of “honey,” “amber,” and “wax,” as all in reference to its golden brown ap- pearance. It only takes a dab of the substance for the user to experience a high, making the experience not only quicker, but also less probable. “You will always get high from dabbing,” said one New York teen, adding that its intensity compels users to wait until “weekends when they have nothing planned.”

BHO is particularly dangerous as it is taken from other forms of marijuana use, as it requires the utilization of a specific piece, known popularly as an “oil rig,” that can be a large improvement to increase the drug’s effects. The oil rig is usually made of titanium or quartz effects. The oil rig is usually made of titanium or quartz...
All Too Common Problems
Continued from Front Page

By: jacklyn chow

The administration is paying closer attention to identification cards and especially photos as students swipe in and out of the school building in response to a recent discovery that some students are using homemade IDs.

The increased scrutiny began last month after school aides monitoring the ground-floor entrance to the cafeteria realized that a senior swiped in with a photo-copy of his identification card attached to a plastic, credit-card sized backing. Schools everywhere are especially sensitive to building access after the shooting last year in Newtown, Conn., in which 20 elementary school children and six teachers were killed by an armed intruder. In New York City, teachers and administrators are also on alert because of a missing 14-year-old, Avonte Oquendo, who has autism and walked out of his school in Long Island City more than a week ago.

As a result, the administration is considering updating student ID cards with new photos each year and potential consequences for anyone who violates the entry- and exit-procedures. The student who was caught was punished with multiple dean’s detentions.

“Multiple dean’s doesn’t want us to mess with our IDs because, in this case, what if a stranger photocopied the ID and used it to get in?” said Junior Minnie Mangafas, S.O. secretary.

Last December, Bronx Science implemented new rules requiring students to swipe out with their identification cards when exiting the school building. Before the Newtown shooting, students had to swipe in when entering the building but not when exiting.

Administrators said they wanted to be able to account for students in the building in case of an emergency.

In addition, students are forbidden from photocopying their identification cards because it could encourage strangers to try the same thing. After the senior’s homemade ID was discovered, Mr. Levy, A.P. in charge of building safety at the time, emailed all students reminding them of the restrictions.

According to Ms. Sindab, one of the school aides, the senior was not the first student to swipe in using a counterfeit identification card.

“I realized that some students have been swiping in using a paper taped to a random card,” Ms. Sindab said, “I immediately brought it to Mrs. Robinson, my supervisor’s attention.”

Concerns may vary depending on why the student used a counterfeit card, Mrs. Robinson said. Some may have lost their school ID and do not want, or cannot afford, to pay the $5 replacement fee. On the other hand, if there is no valid reason explaining the student’s behavior, the administration will take further action.

“We want them [students] to see that swiping in with photocopied identification cards is simply not an option,” Mrs. Robinson said. “This is a learning ground, where students prepare for the real world.”

NYC Landfill Concerns Athletes and Residents
By: lauren de la ossa

New York City’s Mayor Michael Bloomberg has decided to build a new, ten-story garbage dump on the East River, across the street from Asphalt Green, a private park and athletic facility on Manhattan’s Upper East Side as part of an attempt to promote fair distribution of trash facilities throughout New York.

Construction for the trash site is already in its primary phase, and so far shows no signs of stopping. The park, located on 91st Street and East End Avenue, is currently used by over 30,000 children each year. The building of this dump is driving the park’s residents to protest against the landfill, which they say is too close to their home and would put their health in danger.

“Knowing that we’re better than Stuyvesant makes me happy to go to this school,” said Bronx Science student Sharhiyar Haider. “Knowing that we’re better than Stuyvesant makes me happy to go to this school.”

Many universities have been forced to push back their deadlines, but promise to work harder than ever to make sure that letters of admittance are still received by mid-December. They also say the Janua applications will go more smoothly, with acceptance letters being sent out as usual, in the Spring.

School Rankings Rise in Popularity
By: nicholas pizzo

Bronx Science was recently ranked 32nd in the nation and 2nd in state by US News. In contrast, Stuyvesant was ranked 49th in the nation and 8th in state, 17 spots behind Bronx Science nationally, and 7 spots statewide.

“I’m glad my school is highly ranked,” said Bronx Science student Shariyahy Haider. “Knowing that we’re better than Stuyvesant makes me happy to go to this school.”

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by: MARTI ROSENBERGER

The increase in apps and social networking sites such as Instagram, Twitter and Facebook have provided an efficient means of communication, but also pose a threat to students. Some suicides have been the result of cyber bullying, which has sparked a lot of controversy over whether schools should be allowed to monitor the student’s behavior on the internet to look out for bullying behavior. Some argue it is an invasion of privacy, while others feel that it will shine a light on these behaviors and potentially decrease the amount of cyber bullying.

On the internet, there are many ways one can access information about another person. One such popular website is a popular website, Ask.

Anyone can ask a question anonymously to whomever has set up an account. People with accounts are giving anyone who visits the website a chance to ask mean or offensive questions, or even just to leave insulting comments.

Cyberbullying’s Potential Threat
This application can be a successful tool for developing new friendships and giving advice to those who are too shy to ask a question in person. However, even those who do not mean any harm when asking a question are losing valuable communication skills that are needed as you get older.

Julia Lauer, a sophomore, feels that the pros of this website outweigh the cons and enjoys answering questions and giving advice.

“Having an account has actually helped me grow as a person, by making me stronger and more conscientious of my actions.”

Nevertheless, another anonymous source stated that it had nes- tivated his ask.fm account. Because not only was I receiving mean comments but it was constantly distracting me from my work.”

Bronx Science has numerous ways for students to deal with cyber bullying. The school has an anonymous hotline, as well as an open door