



## Sidewalk Closures Today, Cogeneration Tomorrow

JOSEPH JEROME '11

Students walking from Mercer Hall to the law school each day likely pass by the largest ongoing construction project at NYU, the Cogeneration Project. The view from the Gristedes at the corner of Mercer and West Third has long been a flurry of construction workers, a number of construction barriers, and the occasional closed sidewalk. Underground, however, NYU is fast constructing the source of the university's heating and electricity needs for the next half century.

Cogeneration plants, otherwise known as "combined heat and power (CHP) plants," use thermal energy to generate electricity for any buildings to which they are connected. Heat is produced as a byproduct and then used to supply hot water to buildings connected to the plant. NYU's current CHP plant provides hot water to forty buildings on campus and electricity to seven. It has been in operation since 1980, and, while CHP plants have a life expectancy of close to fifty years if properly maintained, two years ago NYU voluntarily decided to build a new one as part of the university's Green Action Plan.

The current CHP relies on diesel fuel, which is not unusual for a CHP plant, but a switchover

to natural gas promises big environmental benefits. The Cogeneration Project is expected to reduce pollutants by an estimated 75% and to produce 5,000 tons less of greenhouse gas emissions annu-



Ongoing construction on West Third Street is enabling Vanderbilt and D'Agostino Halls to connect to electrical feeders. The construction started two weeks ago and is expected to last another five weeks.

ally. The bigger benefit is that the new CHP will provide electricity to more than double the number of campus buildings than the current plant. Currently, all of the law buildings get their electricity from the local Con Edison grid, but both law buildings and both dorms are scheduled to get hooked up to the cleaner electricity produced on campus by the new CHP plant.

Above ground, the NYU campus will benefit from the return of an additional greenspace along Mercer Street. Before anyone dares to think NYU might actually get its own park in addition to a renovated Washington Square Park this year, the Cogeneration Project park isn't scheduled to be landscaped until late 2009, weather permitting. It is more likely that law students won't get to relax in the park until exam period next spring.

In the meantime, construction continues on an underground vault to house the plant's electrical and mechanical systems. While the location is currently still little more than a hole in the ground, the vault's foundation is to be poured next month. By the end of the summer, the vault should be completed, at which point the complicated installation of all the plant's systems will begin. When testing of the new CHP begins in March 2009, it's likely that no physical evidence of the project will remain above ground.

The current CHP will stick around as well. NYU plans to use the diesel-powered system as a backup. A variety of electrical feeders and substations are being built to let the university switch electrical sources at will. Ideally, the end result will reduce the university's energy costs and leave a much smaller carbon footprint.

While most of the construction was designed to occur as inconspicuously as possible, students would be hard-pressed to miss the closed sidewalks and road construction along West Third and Mercer. In the near future, the only anticipated disruption is further excavation on Third Street, west of Bobst Library.

## Downtrodden Economy Hurts Job Prospects, But Isn't Fatal to NYU Students

BY MOLLY WALLACE '10

This time last year, law firms were treating 1Ls to upscale lunches in the afternoons and open bars in the evenings. This year, the Office of Career Services (OCS) asked the firms not to spend the money, and many were happy to oblige. "They might drop \$20,000 at some trendy bar and in the mean time they're laying off alums," said Irene Dorzback, Assistant Dean for Career Services.

The lack of recruiting outings is one of the more benign symptoms of how the economic downturn is affecting law students' job prospects. At early interview week (EIW) in August, there were only four fewer employers than the year before. But the average number of callbacks students received declined to five this year from last year's seven. The average number of offers showed a corresponding decline from five last year to four this year.

While students with stronger grades had plenty of offers, many students who came into law school thinking they could take a firm

job as a given found themselves without jobs. As the economy slowed and firm hiring needs fell, some firms withdrew offers, while others discouraged students from accepting them. No firms, however, withdrew their offers after students had accepted them.

Firms often describe the summer program as a 10-to-12-week interview for both sides. This year, though, many firms are overextended and do not expect to be able to offer full-time jobs to their entire summer class; the interview process will be more one-sided. In turn, Dorzback pointed out, "firms will be challenged to create cohesive, bonded summer classes while students are competing in a way they haven't had to before."

Third-year students are also facing some difficulties in finding work due to the economy, but Dorzback said that the problems are no worse for NYU students than for students at peer schools. While a slightly greater number of 3Ls did not receive full-time offers from their summer firms this

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## PILC Auction on the Horizon



BY ANGELO PETRIGH '11

The 15th Annual Public Service Auction, which raises money to fund students' summer internships in public interest fields, is fast approaching, scheduled to be held at 6 PM on Thursday, February 19 in Vanderbilt Hall. Under the direction of Richard Powell '10 and Niqui Windberg '10, the Public Service Auction Commit-

tee is entering the final weeks of preparation for this year's event.

The auction is the largest student-run event at the law school. Proceeds from the auction support NYU's commitment to guarantee summer funding for public interest internships. First-year students who participate in the funding program will receive \$4,500,

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## Legal Briefs

*RJ Softwares, the company that designed the ultra-popular Facebook application Scrabulous, has settled the litigation brought against it by Hasbro, the maker of Scrabble. Hasbro's suit alleged infringement of its intellectual property by Scrabulous. Pursuant to the settlement, the online game will now be known as "Lexulous" and must otherwise differentiate itself from the classic board game.*

*A 5-4 decision by the Supreme Court has limited the effect of the exclusionary rule, allowing evidence collected illegally to be admitted in criminal cases. The decision in Herring v. U.S. has been called by some pundits the fulfilment of a "conservative dream." Others claim it will cut down on the instances of police officers lying to get otherwise inadmissible evidence admitted into court.*

*NYU has finally gotten on the ball and created a Judicial Clerkship Office (JCO). The JCO will be led by Michelle Cherande '97, who previously clerked for the Second Circuit and was an associate at Simpson Thacher.*

Infra

Caroline Kennedy didn't even get appointed to the U.S. Senate, and we're still upset about her. Also battery-caged hens and bans on laptops. page 2

The Wrestler. The Reader. The reviews. page 3

Want to find out how the articles on the front page end? We've got just the thing for you: the end of them. page 4

## “Do the Chickens Have Large Talons?”

TO THE EDITOR:

What is your image of how most eggs are produced in the United States today? If you missed the battery-cage chicken-stuffing scene in *Napoleon Dynamite*, you might envision a farm where the chickens roam around, laying their eggs in a chicken coop (if you missed the scene, don't worry—it's on YouTube).

The reality of most egg-production facilities today is far from that picture. Economies of scale are used to reduce the price of eggs, resulting in egg-laying hens confined to small, wire cages known as “battery cages.” Hens in battery cages can barely move or perform instinctive behaviors such as building a nest, perching, or dust bathing. This is no way to treat a living creature on which we rely for so much—a creature that deserves our respect and care, not our brutality.

This system of confinement is starting to change. Last year, California voters overwhelmingly passed a ballot initiative that banned battery-caged hens in their state. And nearly 350 schools across the country have policies that eliminate or reduce their use of battery eggs.

Yet NYU's dining services still uses eggs from battery-caged hens. A year and a half ago, the law school's dining services stopped purchasing eggs from hens confined to battery cages, thanks in large part to Dean Revesz. He is to be commended for spearheading this change at the law school. But the rest of the campus should

follow the lead of the law school and end their support of these cruel animal-farming methods.

Students concerned about NYU's use of battery-caged eggs gathered in the fall of 2006 and attempted to institute change. Two and a half years ago, these students contacted the director of dining services for NYU, Owen Moore (owen.moore@nyu.edu). He expressed his responsiveness to the student body and referred the students to the Student Senate and Inter-Residence Hall Council (IRHC) to determine whether the student body desired a change in the egg-purchasing policies of NYU dining services. Both the Student Senate and IRHC passed resolutions in the fall of 2007 calling on the university to switch to cage-free eggs.

Despite these resolutions calling for NYU to switch to cage-free eggs, Moore has not responded to the will of the student body. Cage-free eggs are available upon request in the dining halls, but this does not go far enough. NYU continues to use student dollars to support battery cages by purchasing eggs mostly from hens in intensive confinement facilities.

We still need your help. What can you do? Please consider taking a minute to convey your concerns to NYU President John Sexton at office.president@nyu.edu or by volunteering to help with the NYU Go Cage Free campaign by emailing nyu.saldf@gmail.com.

MELISSA KRENZEL LANG '10  
NYU STUDENT ANIMAL LEGAL  
DEFENSE FUND

## Caroline Kennedy: The Change We Don't Need in the U.S. Senate

BY ASHOK AYYAR '11

New York governor David Paterson announced on January 23rd that he was appointing Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand to the U.S. Senate seat left open by the departure of Hilary Clinton, ending Caroline Kennedy's chances at a free Senate seat.

Gillibrand is a first-term Congresswoman from eastern New York. Trained as an attorney, she is seen as a moderate Democrat with some unusual views—for example, she is strongly opposed to gun control. In replacing Clinton with Gillibrand, Paterson and the Democratic Party replaced a political veteran with a neophyte. But they also replaced the woman who might have been with the woman who may become President of the United States. Gillibrand is described as graceful and at ease among upstate farmers and Manhattan socialites alike. Although obscure, she now finds herself at 42, a centrist Democrat in the Senate with energy, ambition, and charisma. Sound familiar?

Most of all, she—like our current president, but unlike our former president—did not ride her father's coattails into office. While President Barack Obama defeated John McCain in 2008, that victory was in name only. The real duel was between Obama and the failed policies of George W. Bush, a man whose only

success in life was being born into the right family.

In her bid to secure the nomination to the Senate, Caroline Kennedy displayed much of the same amateurism that her fellow political legacy did during his election in 2000. She had no experience in public service and no grasp of public policy issues. She refused to make herself available to the media and bungled the few remarks she made with un-senatorial vernacular. (She peppered one 30-minute interview with “you know” over 200 times.) And, most importantly, she lacked any coherent theme, platform, or goals for her time in the Senate.

The election of Obama signaled a symbolic end to the old brand of politics. To some, that means an end to conservatism and all of its perceived negative aspects—unfettered and unscrupulous business practices, intolerance, and close-mindedness, to name a few. To others, it means a changing of the guard: a fresh face with a nontraditional background instead of a scion from a political family of privilege. Kennedy may be politically progressive, but her candidacy for the Senate represented a regression in many ways.

First, instead of seeking office honorably through election, she made an underhanded pitch for a political handout. Second, she drew down her inheritance to hire a premier political consultancy and tapped her family's network of con-

nections to do battle for her. The list of names who spoke on her behalf was impressive: Ted Kennedy, Michael Bloomberg, Harry Reid, and Obama, among others. Third, she did not attempt to engage the public directly, preferring instead to remain in her comfortable cocoon of Upper East Side elitism. And fourth, she acted with a disgusting sense of entitlement, as if the job was hers to lose.

Her hubris and ineptitude may have done her in. While the official line is that she withdrew her name from consideration, the post-mortem continues to shift. Initially, she pulled out to tend to her ailing uncle, who recently suffered a seizure. Then it was because of nebulous tax and nanny problems. But a few news sources reported the dirty underbelly of the whole affair—she withdrew her name because she was not going to be selected. And she was not going to be selected because of her poor showing in the last few months.

It was startling to see many New Yorkers pine for the return of the Kennedys. To be fair, there would be some poetry about Caroline stepping into the same office that her uncle Bobby held years ago. And no doubt the family is an accomplished one. But in the same year we ushered in a new leader and a new era, turning the page back to a poorly qualified Kennedy is not the kind of change we need.

## THE COMMENTATOR

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240 Mercer Street  
New York, NY 10012  
212.998.6080 (phone)  
law.commentator@nyu.edu

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## Don't Allow Laptops in Your Classroom? You're Killing the Rainforest

BY MICHAEL MIX '11

I am going through withdrawal—from an addiction to laptops. Last semester, I got accustomed to having my laptop with me for every class. The noise of students typing away at their laptops became music to my ears. This semester, though, a funny thing happened. More than one of my professors decided to ban laptops from the classroom, news that was met with disdain from the vast majority of my section.

I certainly understand why professors don't want laptops in their classrooms. They're loud and going online during class is an ever-present distraction. Not only is the person browsing the internet not paying attention, but the person next to him or her might be distracted as well. However, despite these frequently cited reasons to ban laptops, I firmly believe that it is the wrong decision in any large class. There are a number of benefits to having laptops that outweigh the costs.

First of all, banning laptops in class certainly kills a lot of trees. For those people that still brief cases, not having laptops means that they have to print those briefs out before they come to class. Let's say as a conservative estimate that a third of the students in a 90-person section brief cases. And let's also say as a conservative estimate that each day of a particular class amounts to three pages' worth of briefs. And let's say there are 30 classes in the semester. Then let's say that half of the class uses notebooks to handwrite notes in class and each notebook is 100 sheets. By this incredibly unscientific estimate, 7200 pages of paper would be wasted in one class in one section alone. And that's assuming that there is no reading on Blackboard that students would have to print out in preparation for class, which would only increase that number. For a law school that is so dedicated to going green and protecting the environment that it does construction with jackhammers in the early

morning and routinely shuts off the electricity and hot water in its buildings, this seems fairly hypocritical. Unless NYU is secretly run by Hexxus from *Ferngully*, I don't think that banning laptops fits within the school's pro-environment ethos.

In addition to the environmental concerns about the ban on laptops, there are also some more tangible problems. Most obviously, it is much easier to take notes on a computer than by hand. Some professors at NYU speak a mile a minute, which makes it impossible to take notes in a notebook. Some classes offer note-takers to alleviate this issue, but there really is no substitute for taking one's own notes. Also, it never hurts to get some typing practice. Furthermore, on numerous occasions last semester, a professor mentioned a term that I did not know. I would immediately google it, and then learn it. That kind of learning is impossible without the use of laptops.

See LAPTOPS page 4

## Rourke Makes Comeback as Washed-Up Wrestler

BY DAN MEYLER '09

*The Wrestler*, from director Darren Aronofsky, is the story of Randy “The Ram” Robinson, a professional wrestler who, after tasting superstardom in his youth, has grown old, creaky, and empty. It is a story of mid-life emptiness that none of us students should be able to relate to, having not yet begun our professional lives, let alone had the time to reach success then burn out and/or fade away. Nonetheless, the film manages to be compelling.

The Ram is washed up. He sleeps in his van and can't afford to pay rent on his trailer in Elizabeth, New Jersey. We follow him through several matches until he is stricken with a heart attack after fighting the Necro Butcher, who is actually a real pro wrestler (something of an oxymoron, but more on that below). In convalescence for the remainder of the film, Robinson, legally k.a. Robin Ramzinsky, struggles to find his identity—if not “The Ram,” then who? He tries to forge a relationship with a topless dancer, Pam (professionally k.a. “Cassidy,” played by Marisa Tomei), reconnect with his estranged daughter Stephanie, and hold a regular job at a deli counter, failing at all three.

The action opens with The Ram slumped in a folding chair after a match, his back to us. Grunting, wheezing, and gen-

eral heavy breathing are turned up in the mix from the start. I've noticed this technique in Aronofsky's other films of note, *Pi* and *Requiem for a Dream*. His films are visceral, and he



Former 1980s star Mickey Rourke bulked up for his Academy Award-nominated role as Randy “The Ram” Robinson in Darren Aronofsky's new film *The Wrestler*.

uses sound (for example, the metal-raking-across-glass sound in the *Requiem* drug sequences) to raise awareness of bodily processes. He uses imagery, too, for this purpose—constant focus on the Ram's bypass scar made me conscious of my own ticker inside the old rib cage. Note also

Pam's explicit reference to *The Passion of the Christ* (a film that exists solely to expound on the thesis that Jesus was not a sissy), which also uses the same audio-grunting technique to make the

doctor-ordered retirement and ensuing obliteration of his persona, a sullen Ram spends much of the film nursing his newfound loneliness. Interactions with his daughter are less compelling than those with Pam, but both reveal a man looking for someone whose life he can play a role in—the Ram is an actor above all else. Professional wrestling, after all, is a performance art—arguably the most successful form of performance art (has Yoko Ono ever sold out Nassau Coliseum?). Performance art is borne from teenage-ish insecurity with one's “real self.” During the teen years, it is very difficult to have an accurate grasp of one's own personality as it appears to others, and so it becomes easier to project an artificial self, observe public reaction, and alter as necessary. The Ram, having gone through this process, has fused his persona onto his musculature, and its removal leaves hunks of mental development missing.

*The Wrestler* makes use of New Jersey as a character in the film, much the way David Lynch and Roman Polanski make use of Los Angeles as a character in *Mullholland Drive* and *Chinatown*, respectively, or the way New York City in the 1970s and '80s was a slinky hobo character in scores of films (e.g., *Ghostbusters*, *Coming to America*, *Brewster's Millions*, *Dog Day Afternoon*). This isn't the first time the much maligned Garden State has been cast as subtle comic relief. And I'm not talking about films about New Jersey (e.g., *Garden State* (boo), *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* (no comment, though it's geographically confused, and there is a White Castle in Eatontown that they missed)), but rather, films that use New Jersey. Kevin Smith uses New Jersey most explicitly (and *ad nauseum*, we all agree), but the technique is also visible in Todd Solondz's *Happiness*, and most artfully in *The Sopranos* series. With *The Wrestler*, using New Jersey to accentuate smallness, pettiness, provincialism in a core area, and ironic grace and dignity in spite of laughably depressing surroundings, has officially become passé.

As a part-time apologist and inexplicably indefatigable believer in my home state, I declare New Jersey off-limits for mockery from here on out, and I recommend that you go see *The Wrestler*, brother.

## The Reader Is More Than Just Lust, Law, and Nazis

BY JENNIFER RODRIGUEZ '11

Growing up, we learn two things: how to read the rules and when to break them. The ripeness of our minds is gauged by how well we absorb these lessons. The better we know them, the more civilized we are. History remembers its finest pupils: the artists, the saints, and the men and women of letters. At the other end of the spectrum are the illiterate, the impoverished, and the bureaucrats. These vital lessons spawn opposite obligations to the personal and political realms of our lives. We owe it to society to follow the rules for the sake of cohesion; yet we owe it to ourselves to break the rules when our hearts say it is right to do so. *The Reader* is concerned with the high-wire act of navigating this tension.

There are two major stories in *The Reader*: an affair and a trial. One personal, one political. They are both the story of Hannah and Michael. One story brings them as close as two people can be. The other rips them apart. The movie is a grid in which each moment documents the impossible journey between these two extremes. The injection of the personal in a political character humanizes a historical personage—namely, a Nazi, flatly considered a monster. The injection of the political in the personal destroys the naïveté of first love and challenges the idea of unconditional affection.

Stories within stories illuminate Hannah and Michael's relationship through the lenses of the immediate and the historical, respectively. Hannah is a former concentration camp guard who is also illiterate. Michael is an adolescent half her age with whom she has an affair. During the affair, Hannah likes Michael to read aloud to her. They fall in love in a place where every sentence has purpose, and this gives them a sense of purpose. The boundaries of their affair exist literally within the walls of Hannah's apartment, but the boundaries of their feelings for one another are as far-flung as the journeys of Odysseus. The limitlessness of their private world allows them to be vulnerable with each other in a way they are unable to be with anyone else, and the sense of purpose allows them to forgive each other's shortcomings as they would the sad parts of a novel.

The imaginative world they inhabit is smartly reified by the symbolic presence of water. Water is a presence in almost every scene in the first part of the movie, which details the summer of Hannah and Michael's affair. It brings an ethereal quality to that summer, marking it less as a time and more as a state of mind. It is primordial, intimate and dreamlike. In the deep end of their love, both characters are honest and pure. They are naked during love and during reading and during bathing. In all scenes, the nudity is treated the same: as a revelation.

Michael is never as honest with anyone else as he is with Hannah, not even his family. The same is true for Hannah. Later in the film, a professor talks of Odysseus's journey: “Home is not a place. Home is something we dream of.”



Kate Winslet received her sixth nomination and aims to win her first Academy Award in her new film *The Reader*.

One message of the movie seems to be that home is other people. Home is love.

This deeply personal world contrasts sharply with the political one revealed in the second half of the film. During the trial we hear

the testimony of Holocaust victims that points to Hannah as the villain. Unlike in the tragedies that occur in the fictional stories, there is no final redemption or explanation for the Holocaust. When asked about the Nazi participation Hannah reveals that she was not a follower, frightened into a despot's agenda. Nor was she a racist or a willful killer. She was simply plagued by a lack of peripheral vision. She could not see around her job description: guard. Hannah rips out from under us any desirable explanation for how the Holocaust happened or how to prevent something like it from happening again. She confounds the notion of intent and leaves us profoundly frustrated.

But this is not just another movie about the Holocaust. The

superseding tragedy in this movie seems to be the co-habitation of Hannah and Michael in these two worlds of the personal and political, the immediate and historic. The irredeemable thing is the irreconcilable nature between a world of innocence, omniscience, and honesty, and the real world of history and hindsight, where shortcomings are magnified and sympathy is hard-won.

The nightingale's note of hope is this: personal bonds have the power to salve political injuries and mend a frayed social fabric. After Hannah's conviction, Michael becomes hardened toward her. She writes to him from prison, but he never writes back. Hannah is hurt and her memory of the once-warm, adolescent Michael is rendered into a distant adult. The film suggests that while the Jewish victims bear witness to a monstrous history, it is Michael's obligation to bear witness to Hannah's humanity. In refusing to do so, Michael robs himself of his own humanity. While Hannah is removed into prison, Michael is removed from the social fabric through his own indifference.

But the film is careful not to end on a sad note. It is not a tragic parable for the ages. In the end, Michael's belated realization of his folly allows him redemption. And that is the final brilliance of the film: its suggestion that recovery from personal and historical shame lies in something as simple and as complex as forgiveness.

## Economy: Turmoil Affects Legal Job Opportunities

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year than in past years, Dorzback also attributed the problem to the dissolution of some students' summer firms.

For those students who are still looking for work, OCS is encouraging more proactive tactics. They are encouraging students to take part-time jobs during the school year if they may turn into full-time jobs over the summer, even if it's not where the student wants to end up. Networking remains vital in finding job openings. "If anyone's colleagues say they're really busy, that's the cue to say, 'Busy? You need help?'" said Dorzback.

OCS has also been actively extending their knowledge of smaller private-sector employers. Smaller firms tend to hire more on an as-needed basis and do not have extensive recruiting programs. A student's efforts to reach out to such employers might reveal a job opportunity. As for getting these employers in touch with students more systematically, OCS has set up weekly or bi-weekly meetings between counselors and partners and associates at small firms, and it's considering a tiered pricing system for participation in EIW.

For those students who do have summer jobs but are concerned about getting a full-time offer, a little training can go a long way. Learn-

ing to use Lexis and Westlaw without racking up bills could get noticed while firms are penny-pinching. Having useful skills such as familiarity with proofreading symbols may set one student apart from another. Follow-up is crucial. Dorzback explained, "The biggest criticism of our summers is that they fail to check in enough. People lose a lot of time researching things that are not on point and going down the wrong path because they did not check in." Even if they are on point, students need to communicate their progress rather than completing assignments independently as they would do in school.

Summer associates may also do well to heed advice that has worked for many first year associates: if work is slow, make work—ask for pro bono projects, talk to partners to see if they have any articles they want help with, get involved with professional associations, or work on events with the bar or a committee.

The good news is that firms already seem to see NYU students as offering something unique. "I call it 'smart with heart,'" Dorzback said. "Firms who had a full summer class have often come back and said they were full, but they hadn't reached the right proportions—they would have liked more NYU students."

## Auction: Ticket Sales Begin This Month for Annual PILC Fund-Raising Event

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financial support that enables them to engage in public interest work throughout the world. Second years receive \$6,500 to pursue summer public interest work.

In the fall, students traveled throughout New York City soliciting donations of auction items from area businesses. Donations included numerous gift certificates to area restaurants, salons, and day spas as well as a one-year gym membership with personal training included.

The Alumni Committee has also contacted NYU Law graduates to request further donations and financial support. Alumni have contributed a number of unique items; NASCAR tickets, an opportunity to have a portrait taken by renowned Los Angeles photographer Bradford, and a walking tour of Chelsea art galleries with an art curator and critic are just a few of the items that will be available for bidding. Meanwhile, the Corporate Donations and Law

Firms Committee has brought in major sponsors, including Bar/Bri and a number of New York-based law firms.

The auction also includes personal donations from the NYU Law community. Students have of-

Through the contributions of local and national businesses, law firms, alumni, and other members of the NYU community, last year's event was the most successful in the auction's history, raising nearly \$140,000. This year's committee has set a fundraising goal of \$200,000.

Items suitable for all budgets will be available at the auction. The event features both a silent auction in Greenburg Lounge and a live auction across the hall in Tishman Auditorium. Student tickets are \$5 and regular admission is \$15. Ticket sales begin in early February and will



PILC Auction attendees can bid on a Wii-Tennis match with Dean Ricky Revesz, who was soundly beaten last year by an NYU Law student.

fered a cornucopia of baked goods, language lessons, private cooking instruction, babysitting, and even a hot air balloon trip in the mountains of Pennsylvania. Those attending the auction will also have the opportunity to bid on items donated by the faculty such as brunch with Dean Revesz and Professor Been at their home, dinner with professors, and a chance to participate in the Second Annual Ricky Revesz Wii-Tennis Match.

take place in Golding Lounge. The auction committee is still looking for donations from the law school community, including students and their families, faculty, and staff. Individuals interested in donating an item or finding out more about the auction should visit the Public Service Auction website, which has a regularly updated list of auction items, further details on the event, and stories of past recipients of summer public interest grants.

## Commentator Staff Picks Their Favorite Movies of the Past Year



The Academy Awards are coming up on February 22, pitting *Slumdog Millionaire*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *Milk*, *Frost/Nixon*, and *The Reader* against each other for the Best Picture crown, won last year by *No Country for Old Men*. In the spirit of the Oscars, we decided to ask members of the *Commentator* staff for their picks of the best, worst, or most overrated movies of 2008.

*Slumdog Millionaire* should win. It won the SAG awards, it won the Golden Globes, it won the PGA awards—it was the best film in the past year. There is no reason that the Academy should see things any differently. The way the story was told made an already gripping story even more thrilling. There is no reason for it not to win ... what's the competition? *Forrest Gump*?

— Andrew Simon '09

I didn't think that a movie about an interview would be enthralling, but I couldn't be more wrong. In *Frost/Nixon*, Frank Langella gives the performance of a lifetime as Richard Nixon, portraying the disgraced former president as a complex, tragic figure who did not realize how skilled a politician he actually was.

— Michael Mix '11

*Frost/Nixon* certainly shouldn't win. Frank Langella's performance is a cross between James Stewart and Darth Vader, and why is Tony Blair interviewing Darth Vader? The actual Frost/Nixon tapes are far more compelling.

— Dan Meyler '09



*Wall-E*! There's no reason an animated film shouldn't be the best film of the year. And *Wall-E* is proof.

— Joseph Jerome '11

*Helvetica* is the best documentary about fonts you'll ever see, and therefore one of the best movies you'll ever see. I don't see the need to further justify my opinions.

— Andrew Gehring '09



## Laptops: Students Should Be Able to Type Their Notes

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The biggest argument against laptops, as articulated earlier, is that students will not pay attention to the professor and instead just browse the internet and check their email. This is a viable concern, and I do not mean to downplay it. However, if a professor is dynamic and interesting, the students will inevitably pay attention anyway. I am sure that these skilled professors that ban laptops would still command the same respect and attention that they do without laptops. On the other hand, if a professor is mind-numbingly boring, no one is going to be paying attention,

laptops or not. I feel that these types of professors are marking their own teaching deficiency by banning laptops and attempting to force students to pay attention. Moreover, if a student decides not to pay attention at all and browse the internet all class, that's the student's own fault. A professor should not eliminate that choice.

Clearly, there are many good arguments that support the use of laptops in class. It has gotten to the point in history when writing things by hand is becoming passé, and almost all business is done by computer. I hope that professors wake up, join the 21st century, and realize that laptops are extremely beneficial to students' ability to learn... and check their email in class.

*If your Professor still allows laptops, read The Commentator online.*

<http://www.law.nyu.edu/studentorgs/commentator>