# THE BUZZER

Primus Inter Pares

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The Voice of Hastings High School



## **BOND IS A NO-GO**



#### by Richard Berman Senior Editor

After the voting booth closed at 9 PM on October 22, the line of voters streaming in and out of the Cochran Gym finally dissipated. The controversial bond referendum was defeated by a decisive vote of 1595 to

Countless letters from athletes, parents, runners, and students published weekly in The Enterprise had informed the community of the various credible points of contention in this much heated debate.

This vote culminated months of proliferated campaigning - flyers pasted to every telephone pole, and signs placed in countless front yards.

Now that the bond has been defeated, what does this mean for Hastings High School students? How will a vastly pro-bond student body (confirmed by a recent school-wide poll, the results of which were 181 for the bond to 30 against it) respond to this result?

Senior Jesse Litvin, who wrote a letter to The Enterprise and spearheaded much of the probond campaign said, "Of course I'm disappointed about the bond. But luckify there can be another bond

vote in exactly three months time. Unfortunately, I think there was a lot of misinformation surrounding the bond, which influenced the vote a lot."

The Hastings Police Department has dealt with several cases of vandalism on both sides of the debate and even personal altercations between community members.

This schism has transcended the utility poles and street signs into the Internet as well—strongly worded (and even profane)
Facebook comments have shown disappointment for the bond's defeat.

There has been immaturity on both sides - and from adults too mean comments, bragging and even cyber bullying. Much of this behavior came after voting was finished," Litvin said.

One of the most significant parts of the vote was the exit poll. This poll was conducted by the Board of Education to determine what pieces of the bond influenced residents to vote against it.

The environmental harm of building a turf field – removing natural grass and replacing it with GeoTurf – was the most powerful deterrent.

The other necessary improvements the bond addressed will likely be in the new bond that the Board of Education is going to draft

in the coming months.

The Board has promised to

"use information from that survey to

modify the plan."

Litvin said the students can still have an impact: "The best thing the students can do is stay involved; even though many of us can't vote, we can still have a voice."

### Have an opinion?

The Buzzer accepts Letters to the Editor or op-eds, and always welcomes your feedback.

Send your thoughts to buzzersubmissions@gmail. com.

Want to be anonymous? Just Request it!

### **HURRICANE SANDY'S ONE** YEAR ANNIVERSARY

by Rosie Moss & Amelia Pollard

When Hurricane Sandy hit in October 2012, Hastings was one of many Northeast towns that was taken aback by the severity of the super storm. Many families lost power, the waterfront was bludgeoned and several parks were damaged.

The catastrophic event devastated many people in Hastings and caused them to realize that events like this could happen to anyone. However, the village came out of the super storm with improved communication and new programs to help storm victims.

Bryan Healy, recreation assistant of Hastings-on-Hudson, said, "Hurricane Irene caused people to be less concerned and prepared for Hurricane Sandy, since Irene was made out to be a much bigger deal than it actually was."

The staff of Hastings-on-Hudson Recreation Department, including Lisa O'Reilly, Rafael Zaratzian, Bryan Healy, and Kendra Garrison stated that while Hurricane Sandy definitely brought negative effects, it also forced residents to come together as a community. They explained that as a result of the hurricane they created the "Are You OK Senior"

...continued on page eight

## What's the Buzz on the Buzzer?

by Max Elias

Ever since the Sandy Hook shooting, Hastings High School has become more conscious of an increased need for security.

Recently, the administration has instilled a number of changes in the school's security. The Cochran Gym entrance is now closed at all times, and a buzzer system has also been installed at the main entrance. This is meant to prevent anybody who shouldn't be in the school from entering.

A greeter has also been hired to sit at the entrance and speak to anyone who comes into the school, making sure they have a right to be

These security measures "may slow [intruders] down, but not necessarily hinder them from causing harm," Mr. Adipietro said.

He believes such measures will be beneficial to students and to

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#### **Revealing Costumes** Revealed

What's wrong with being scantily clad? And what's wrong with being as covered up as NSA files? page three >

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Curious as to what's up with the new technology? The parent portal recieves both praise and scorn. page four >

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### **Tom's Spooky Corner**

Wow! A whole page devoted to all things spooky? It's a Halloween miracle! page seven>

# EDITOR'S PAGE



At the start of every new year, The Buzzer's editorial staff introduces itself to the student body. For the next nine months, The Buzzer will be working hard to report on the most relevant and important changes and events occurring in Hastings High School. And since we will be striving to be the voice of the student body, we think that it's necessary to allow the readers of this journal to get to know the editors a little better.

In the spirit of Halloween, we thought we'd give the public a glimpse at who we really are. Senior staff writer Lyra Fuchs has actually been living for hundreds of years—you may know her by the name of Rumplestiltskin. Although her baby stealing days are now behind her, she has not given up her ability to turn straw, or, rather, the bare bones of an article, into gold. Revealing herself in this issue as Wonder Woman is senior staff writer Lara Feder. She has hung up her cape, but not her lasso, which she still uses on unsuspecting interviewees to find out the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Senior staff writer Sophia May, with her uncanny ability to write many articles at once, is actually a black widow. With her eight legs, she is able to use two per laptop, as she

First of the general editors is Richard Berman, the ghost that haunts the Cochran gym, searching for a lede to a new sports related story. Next is Tommy Gelfars is the jester of the high school, who has the great talent of turning anything and everything into a joke. Julia Morriss is a flying monkey who obediently follows out the commands of the Great Master, Mr. Abrams.

Lauren Weiner, art editor, is the fairy godmother who grants every editor's wish of fantastically made comics that perfectly express an article's meaning in visual form. Moira Peterson, photo editor, is Medusa: with her powerful gaze, she can stop any event in motion in order to take the perfect picture. Alexandra Bazigos, our all-powerful layout editor, magics together the layout of the newspaper with the amazing powers she has obtained from devil worship being a witch.

Lena Rubin, the first of this year's managing editors, is the sphinx. She can solve any riddle by piecing together the information she's collected, and is able to write out the answer in article format with an immaculate inverse pyramid structure. Rachel Chang gathers her information by being the ninja that she is and listening in on the secrets each department keeps. And if there's anyone in her way- well, let's just say there won't be. Ariadne Bazigos prefers to work at night, and being the vampire that she is, does so by draining the blood (and secrets) of anyone who has any information related to the topic on which she is reporting.

And last but not least, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were recently released from their witness protection program, and have collectively identified themselves as Editor-in-Chief Emily Broude. After encouraging each new writer to try his or her best, she will rapidly change into Mr. Hyde if any article is handed in later than midnight of the due date.

With these well-kept secrets revealed, the staff of The Buzzer would like to wish everyone a Happy Halloween!

-The Editors

The staff of The Buzzer would like to make it clear that this publication is a newspaper written for and made open to everyone in the Hastings High School community. We would like to encourage every student to feel able to contribute to the paper, whether that be by writing, taking photographs, or discussing the issues presented in the content. The Buzzer is an interdisciplinary resource, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of it.

## BUZZER STAFF

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ROSS ABRAMS **Faculty Advisor** 

## SATURNALIA

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

### 6:00pm-8:00pm

Come to the school for a celebration that will include cake contests, poetry, and more!

In Ancient Rome, Saturnalia was a holiday spent to celebrate the harvest through games and feasts.

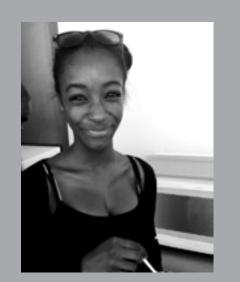
Admission:

\$5.00

Come dressed as an Ancient Roman for free entry!

## Buzzer Perspectives

What has been your favorite Halloween costume from childhood?







"I dressed up as fat Elvis in the third grade." Alex Constantine



## OPINION **Revealing Costumes Revealed**

by Clara Weinstein

"In the regular world, Halloween is when children dress up in costumes and beg for candy. In Girl World, Halloween is the one night a year when a girl can dress like a total slut and no other girls can say anything about it." -Mean Girls

A couple weekends ago I went to Party City to buy some elf ears for my friend's Halloween costume. Before we found them, though, we were confronted with a massive wall of women's costumes. There were your standard terrifying clowns, your devils and your angels.

Of course, all of these costumes consisted of miniskirts and low-cut tank tops.

This isn't a novel observation. Every Halloween the complaints roll around about the heavy sexualization of a holiday that's supposed to be for kids, and look at all these slutty girls running around, and how inappropriate this is, and blah blah blah. Complaints about women's around shaming girls for daring to the weather.

There's a lot wrong with

allowed to dress sexy on Halloween. It's a classic example of slut-shaming making someone feeling ashamed or inferior because of the way she dresses or behaves. A lot of people actually like dressing up as Sexy Prison Guards. A sexy costume might make someone feel empowered and confident, and Halloween is one of the only occasions where girls can get away with showing more skin. Women should be able to wear what they want, on Halloween and every other day of the year, and they should never be stigmatized for dressing in a way that makes them feel good.

The thing is, if a girl wants to cats and witches, your legitimately buy a costume off the shelf, she really doesn't have an option as to whether she wants to dress sexy or not. I could be a Sexy Cop for Halloween, a Sexy Nun, or a Sexy World War II Refugee... but not, of course, a regular cop. If I want to dress up like I'm ready to chase criminals, I'd better be able to do so in a tiny skirt and high heels. A boy who wanted to dress up as a cop could go buy an outfit close to what cops actually wear. He wouldn't have to worry about whether he wants to dress provocatively, if he'll be judged for doing so, or if he can find a costume appropriate for Halloween costumes often center the setting he'll be in, not to mention

The differences between costhe idea that women shouldn't be tumes starts young, too. For little girls, even costumes like Cookie Monster or the Hulk usually feature a puffy princess-style skirt, while male versions of the same costumes actually resembles the Cookie Monster or the Hulk. A lot of little kids love princess skirts and are perfectly happy with their costumes, but any girl who doesn't like dressing girly and doesn't have the time to make a homemade costume is out of luck.

Why do our Halloween costumes reflect the gender roles of the 1950s? Granted, if a woman showed up to a 1950s Halloween party dressed as a Sexy Banana, somebody would probably faint. Still, if the ideal man's Halloween costume is funny or clever or realistic and the ideal woman's costume is sexy (or pretty and cute for younger girls), it doesn't cast a particularly flatter-ing picture of our society's feelings towards women.

We shouldn't be under pressure to show any more or less skin than we want to. We should be able to aim for sexy or scary or any variation of the two without fear of judgment or reproach. After all, why should the way we choose to dress bother anyone else? So whether your idea of a costume is rocking cat ears with lingerie or dressing up as a deranged serial killer, have a happy

## New Clubs Invite You to Dance, Sing, and Donate

by Sofia Griff and Maddy Murphy

On the day of the club fair, the lobby was packed. Tables and booths of all shapes and sizes filled the room. Students wandered about, stopping here and there to sign up for a club, or say hello to a friend.

Many clubs make an annual appearance at this event. But in addition to these more well-known clubs, this year the club fair showcased a host of newer clubs, including Operation Donation, the Dance Club, and the A Capella Club.

### **Operation Donation:**

The founders of Operation Donation, juniors Sophia May and Ava Dishian, were inspired by the Operation Backpack drive to start a club that helps people in need.
"We're going to donate to

school supplies or food," Dishian explained.

They plan to work with multiple organizations, including the Westchester Food Pantry, New York Cares, Project SHARE, and of course, Operation Backpack. "I think everyone wants to give, but doesn't have the time to be in a club," said Dishian. Raising interest, however, has not been their greatest struggle in starting a club. Rather, according to May, "finding the time" has posed the biggest challenge.

In addition to this, Dishian mentioned feeling unprepared at the club fair: "We just had the one sheet of paper and were just going around to our friends. We were traveling. We didn't even have a stand."

Despite this, Operation Donation has received a reasonable amount of attention.

"People can tell their

friends about it because I don't think many know about it right now," said May. The club has multiple benefits, not only to the community, but also to the students involved.

"I feel like it's appealing because it's very good for college," said

This new club will help remind students to give and to appreciate what they have. One of the goals of the club is to hopefully expand outside of the school and, as May said, "get the rest of the community involved."

### Dance Club:

Mr. Levy, the advisor to the Dance Club, came up with the idea after hearing numerous complaints about the school dances. As he explained it, many students thought the dances were just "a lot of jumping up and down?

By starting this club, he doesn't people who can't afford things like intend to change school dances, but introduce new dance options to those tired of the current ones. Many of the styles he intends to teach are partner

"There'll always be a section on ballroom dancing, the stuff they do on Dancing With the Stars," he said, "so there will be swing, there will be chacha, there will be salsa."

Mr. Levy's experience dates back to when he was a college freshman.

"I went to a dance class and there were twenty-five women and three men," he said. Later in life, he taught dance at several schools in New York City; however, he doesn't expect all club members to have as much experience as he does.

"I'm expecting many people to be here who cannot dance whatsoever or haven't even thought about dancing," he said. He intends to work with beginners on more basic steps and challenge those who are more advanced.

Not all may go on to pursue dancing careers, but Mr. Levy views dance as a universal skill with a lifelong benefit: "When you get good at it, you can go anywhere in the world and dance with anybody."

A Cappella Club:

The A Capella Club was the idea of two seniors, Emma Dietz

and Emily Dyke.

"We had always talked about having a group other than Madrigals that did music completely a cappella," said Emma, "[A group] focused on doing songs that are a little more current."

She added that this group

would be one in which "the members of the group are going to be making more of the decisions like what [they] sing and where [they] perform."

The club is mainly aimed

at those who otherwise wouldn't be a part of a musical group such as chorus or Madrigals. They don't intend to exclude anyone, even those with limited vocal training or skills, though they may choose to feature those with more experience. "With all the hype in the media, such as Glee and Pitch Perfect, we thought that it would be something a lot of students would be into," Dyke explained.

The club has gotten quite a bit of positive attention. But the two have faced various struggles.

"Since we're both seniors, we have so much else on our plates this year that beginning a new club

is a challenge," said Dietz.
"Hopefully, we will be able to make it a known club and then next year's seniors will continue it!" There has also been

difficulty finding an advisor for the A Cappella club, but despite this, the club has gotten a rather popular continued on page four>

# POLICIES

## New Study Hall Policies

by Kavi Subramanian

At the beginning of this year, a new study hall policy was put in place that prevents students from leaving their classrooms except under special circumstances. This is intended to both increase scholastic productivity and curtail abuse of passes.

With these new rules, under-

classmen can go to guidance or any other place for which they have a pass from an administrator. The Principal and Vice Principal will also write passes to the library if there is a dire

need to use a computer.
According to Vice Principal Ms. Hardesty, the new policy is intended to increase productivity and prevent rule breaking.

"More often than not, [students] were not coming back, and more often than not they were not making it to the library; they were

leaving campus, they were in the hallways, they were in the lobby, they were where they were not supposed to be. Or, if they made it to the library, they weren't using the computers, they were hanging out and fooling around, and that's not what study hall is," she said.

The staff, many of whom proctor study halls, received these policies warmly, Ms. Hardesty said Marc Rosner, a study hall proctor, said he has seen an increase in productivity, as well as an ample use of smart phones.

There was no formal announcement at the brief assembly about school policies at the beginning of year or anywhere other than the study halls themselves, and many proctors claimed to know neither the reason for nor the duration

of the change.
"What are they hiding?" asked junior Maxine Lim.

This year has shown a very slight decrease in the number of students taking study halls.

"I might have added a study hall to my schedule in the future years, but I've heard bad things this year, so I'm not so sure," said Terrence Nugent, a freshman.

Although seniors are still welcome, the library's atmosphere seems calmer.

"It's much quieter now," said librarian Arianna Grassia. She has also seen more students reading recreationally in the library, although she attributes that to the relocation of their couches.

### **SCHOOLWIRES UPDATE**

Schoolwires, the debate-inciting school website that replaced the eChalk of recent years, has now been in place for nearly three months. The service states that its mission is to create technology that will "help [students and faculty) do all the things they do every day, more easily

But over the summer, the change from eChalk was often confusing rather than easy and efficient. The website changed along with teacher email addresses and pages. For many, it proved to be a

Senior Simone Brandford-Altsher said, "It's stupid how we don't have accounts where everything is there, and it's too hard to find teachers . it's so convoluted."

This was an overriding opinion, expressed by students and faculty alike. "It's helpful, but it is definitely not a user friendly program," Ms. Geller said. She posts frequently on the site, but too finds it

individual accounts are on the way. And as to the portal, Mr. Adipietro, in a past interview, allowed that there are

Brandford-Altsher, echoing the sentiments of many students, said, "I preferred eChalk."

School District site.

**Username:** [Your Student ID #] Password: Changeme

...What's the Buzz on the Buzzer Cont'd

the parents of those students, as well. He also said that he thinks that a violent occurrence would be

Some students expressed concern over not being able to enter

I have been shut out of evening activities multiple times, because the doors are all locked and no one's in the office," said junior

On the other hand, Andie new measures make her feel safer.

are important because of the things that have been happening all over the country, so I think [they're] a good improvement," she said.

> ...New Clubs at Hastings High School Cont'd



by Lyra Fuchs Senior Staff Writer

and efficiently."

difficult to navigate.

The administration says that

of course kinks to be worked out. "For example . . . what are the reasonable expectations for parents about when assignments will be posted onto the grade book."

Junior Andrew Knispel browses the new Hastings

**Log Into the Student Portal** 

"highly unlikely...Newtown was almost an anomaly.

the school as easily anymore.

Andrew Knispel.

Abrams, a sophomore, says that the "I think [these measures]

vote and it has opened up a door for those not in the chorus. Dietz believes that "it would give people who don't have time to be in chorus or madrigals another opportunity to sing in a group!"

## Hastings Cafeteria to Expand its Horizon



by Arianne Siegel

While grilled cheese sandwiches, greasy bagels with cream cheese, and a bag of chips may be what comes to mind first when Hastings High school students hear the word "cafeteria," that might not be the case this year.

After the annual bidding took place to figure out which company would cater to the school cafeteria, Whitsons culinary group emerged as the winner. Maureen Caraballo, District Treasurer, clarified that the decision to go with the new company was strictly business-related; Whitsons had offered the best price.

So what will this mean for Hastings High School students? One thing we can expect to see is the integration of new foods and an expanded variety of the types of foods sold. This includes waffles, which are scheduled to appear in the month, and some new self-serve stations.

There may also be a permanent taco station and even an omelet section on occasions. In addition, there will be an increase in the types of ethnic foods available around once a month sous-chefs will come in to make fresh sushi rolls instead of having the pre-packaged, slightly suspicious ones which are unpopular among students.

Students remain underwhelmed with the current state of the cafeteria even with these new changes. In fact, many students argue that there are slimmer pickings so far this year.

When asked about their favorite foods from the cafeteria a large group of juniors responded with valid complaints about the lack of what many considered a staple

Junior Michelle Mullen said, "Last year the food was better. All I ate was the grilled cheese sandwiches, the muffins, and the cookies." An anonymous junior noted, "the new

muffins tasté like plastic."

Ms. Caraballo admitted that the transition hasn't been perfect but also looked forward to the new options that will be available during lunchtime. She said: "Some kids may have been sticking to the grilled cheese and bagels simply because there wasn't an alternative they liked.'

While there most likely won't be a re-introduction of those much sought-after large chocolate chip cookies from the middle school years or even classic grilled cheese sandwiches, perhaps the new cafeteri management will surprise us with new and healthier staples.

### **PARLEZ-VOUS** FRANÇAIS?

by Francesco Scioscia

WHAT'S NEW

Hastings-on-Hudson said goodbye to one of its beloved eateries this past summer. Buffet de la Gare closed after 33 years as the premier French restaurant in Westchester County. Opening up in its place is Saint George, a bistro style French place that promises to continue the tradition of quality French cooking while creating a more casual environment that will be welcoming to all the residents of the community.

I was a little nervous to visiť, seeing that their new menu, posted online, served Roasted Bone Marrow with a side of parsley pesto and anchovy toast for a meager twelve dollars. Speaking with the co-owners, though, put me at ease.

Christopher Vergara and Jason Steinberg are the co-owners of Saint George. Vergara is also the owner of Harper's in Dobbs Ferry, and Meritage in Scarsdale. Steinberg was an employee at Harper's when it first opened for business. They are embarking on this business venture in Hastings because they both love the community. In fact, Steinberg recently relocated to Hastings from Ardsley.

While speaking with

Steinberg, I got the impression that he has a real respect for the space that he is taking over. He understands the legacy that Buffet de la Gare left behind and is working with Vergara to keep it alive. In addition, the owners are committed to serving organic, and farm-to-table options as much as possible.

The menu has options for all. For your parents, there is an extensive wine and cocktail list that will impress any connoisseur. There is also a wide selection of appetizers and other small plates. The dinner entrées are slightly pricey, but the food is all high-quality.

You can find the menu on their website (http://saintgeorgebistro. com/). Make sure you have your Google Translate handy or make Ms. Bertacchi your dinner date because much of the menu is written in French. This restaurant is only open for dinner, although there may be a Saturday and Sunday brunch in its

For those of you on the hunt for a job this school year, you may want to stop by Saint George. The owners are looking forward to employing local students, and in fact have already hired Sydney Gabay, an HHS sophomore, as a hostess. Gabay informed me that she had no real experience in restaurants before taking this position, but she has found the experience enlightening. "It really gives me a new perspective about restaurants and how much work actually goes into them," Gabay explained.

Seniors looking for an interesting place to intern this May should look into opportunities at Saint George. The owners are willing to host a senior interested in to get up-close restaurant business experience. Steinberg's advice to climb the ranks within a restaurant is to "start at the bottom".

Thanks to St. George, Hastings can rely on another French restaurant that will keep quality and authentic flavor at the core of their business. The era of Buffet de la Gare has ended but this new little French bistro is hoping to begin a new tradition on Southside Avenue.



## **UNLIMITED ACCESS: PARENT PORTAL INTRODUCED TO HASTINGS**

by Emily Broude Editor-in-Chief

"You're kidding." That was the reaction of Ms. DeRubeis, a Spanish teacher at Hastings High School, when she found out that none of the grades from her AP Spanish classes had made it onto the district's newly adopted Parent Portal.

"But they're all there!" she protested as she clicked around her computer in an attempt to get the latest test scores to be published

Nearly two weeks after Hastings High School and Farragut Middle School launched a website through which students and parents can monitor grades, not all of the kinks in the software had been worked out.

Although the program that publishes students' grades is built into eSchoolData, the gradebook software that Hastings has been using for several years, not all teachers had adopted the system before the Parent Portal necessitated it.

"It's been a steep learning curve," said Mr. Brownstein, who teaches in the science department. "We were given a minimal amount of amount of time just to put it together." Other teachers, however, have

"Nothing has really changed," said Mr. König, another science from parents. So far, I'm absolutely neutral-but I think it's a good idea." For most people in the Hastings community, it seems that the technical aspects of the Parent Portal are far less important than the new abilities it will give them.

Robin Joseph, a Hastings mother of an 8th grader and an 11th grader, said, "I think it will allow me to be more proactive about any help or assistance that my children need. The likelihood is that I'll know that my child needs help before my child process to help.

Terri Deutsch, whose children are in 10th and 11th grade,

"I would say I think it's a good premise," she said. "Parents are able to access this information with the teachers."

However, Deutsch had not

not noticed such a drastic difference with the introduction of the Parent

teacher. "I haven't gotten any feedback

says something, so I can be part of the

expressed a similar sentiment.

without having to be in direct contact

training, so it's taken me an enormous yet been able to access the Portal—"I

just signed up today," she said with a

Students at the high school have been voicing many opinions about the new software as it pertains to their grades and even their privacy.

I like it," said freshman Leah Alligood. "I can check on my grades, and if they're going down I have time to fix it."

"I think that it's just another way for parents to have more control over their kids' lives," said Tessa Schneider, a senior. She added that in a community like Hastings, where parents and their children typically have "a very good relationship," the Parent Portal only implies that "parents don't trust their children."

Joseph rather accurately summed up many students' impression of the Portal: "Even if things are going well, it seems as though a lot of times students would just rather their parents not have any idea what's going on with their grades."

about the new software is misplacedof 20 students interviewed, only six had been able to access the Parent Portal or had even tried to do so. "I totally forgot that it exists,"

Perhaps some of the worry

said Loren Heubert-Aubry.

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# PEOPLE

## Jon Riss: Sing Us a Song, Mr. Piano Man



they moved to Long Island.

"This is the price of having a preacher as a father," laughs Riss.

"It was quite a culture shock – I

the same size as Hastings and all

of a sudden, I was in the second

at Temple, Riss moved back to

future. That's when he found out

about the Hastings job through

group called] the New York Chap-

ter of American Choral Directors

message him, and so it went from

Riss came in for an in-

and asked anyone interested to

terview with Ms. Hardesty and

agreed to take the job for the re-

year. Before officially taking the

reins, he shadowed Kerness for

bling," says Riss, "to see how he

connected with the students on

a personal level and how he used

that to bring out their very best as

it's like to take over such a beloved

teacher's position and under such

fragile circumstances, Riss says,

"he was and is irreplaceable and

now in this position I think of

myself as not a replacement for

him but someone here to continue

his work and continue his legacy."

When asked about what

six weeks. "It was really hum-

mainder of the 2012-2013 school

there," Riss explains.

Long Island to figure out his

Facebook.

musicians.

costume?

largest middle school in the coun-

After finishing grad school

"Mr. Kerness posted in [a

had been going to a school around

by David Dorsky

When you walk into the office of Mr. Riss, the first thing you may notice is a sign on his busy bulletin board that reads, "The Being a Geek Award goes to: Jonathan Riss." This sign was awarded to Riss at the end of a production of 13: the Musical, when each director, including Riss, the music director, was given an award based off of a song in the show. The sign now hangs in a prominent center position on the bulletin board behind his piano. In the case of Riss, Hastings High School's new choral director, this award symbolizes a major aspect of his life - music.

"Everyone in my family makes music," says Riss. His paternal grandmother was a church organist educated at the Julliard School of Music and her husband, a minister at the South Presbyterian Church right in Dobbs Ferry, sang as a part of services.

Riss's father is a Methodist minister and his brother is studying to become a professional trombone player at Temple University. Not to be outmatched by his family, Riss received a Bachelor of Music degree at Ithaca College and went on to earn his Masters Degree in choral conducting at Temple.

Growing up, Riss lived with his family in upstate New York. But at the age of twelve, he and his family were abruptly thrust into an entirely new environment, when

Greet The Greeter: Ronald King

by Rachel Chang Managing Editor

Nearly all the students of the high school pass by Ronald King every morning, sitting at his desk with his newspaper opened and his New York Yankees necklace

My job is to check everyone coming in the school, have hem sign in, and direct them to the right place to go," said King in egards to his job, describing himself as a "gatekeeper" of sorts.

King begins his shift at 7:30 M every weekday morning, and tays until 1 PM. He admitted that he work can sometimes become a oit boring, but he brings the newsaper with him every day to keep nimself occupied.

King attended Commerce High School in Yonkers as a kid. 'It was a mostly all girls school," he said. "It was a business school."

Years later, King can now boast of 43 years of marriage, 3 children, and 6 grandchildren, who range from the ages of 17 years to

"The kids come down every Sunday," King said of his grandchildren. "They mooch off me, and then they leave! It's the best thing about grandkids."

Prior to his job as HHS's greeter, King worked as a supervisor for Liberty Lines, a bus service in Westchester. After having been retired from Liberty Lines for three years, King came to Hastings to interview for the greeter position and was given the job.

King's desk sits beside a monitor that gives him a perfect view of the door outside. Though the door is unlocked while he is on his shift, if he has a concern about someone approaching the door, he can lock it from his desk. He can then greet the person at the door and determine whether he or she

The situation does not arise very often. "Most of the people that come here, I know, including

parents," King explained.
While few students object to having a greeter at the door to the school, many have expressed uncertainty regarding the protection that the position actually brings. But very few of these students know exactly how the system

"I think it probably creates a sense of safety and protection for other people in the school," said sophomore Joseph Rogers of the greeter's position. But upon learning of the monitor system, Rogers quickly added, "That actually makes a ton of sense. Now I feel



like it is actually a bit safer."

When asked about the strangest thing he has witnessed on the job, King's response was immediate: "Well, the way kids dress nowadays," he said with a laugh. The best part of the job? "The kids, the students," said King. "I have a lot of fun with them."

As for what he'd like the students to know, King's answer was clear: Greet the greeter.

"Say hello to me more in the mornings, you know? Greet me once in a while!"

### Simone Brandford-Altsher: One in Sixteen Hundred

by Janey Litvin

In the fourth book of the Harry Potter series, a character says, "You fail to recognize not what someone is born, but what they grow up to be."

To senior Simone Brandford-Altsher, a fan of the Potter series, this quote has particular resonance. Simone has been recognized as a semi-finalist in the National Achievement Scholarship Program for black high school students. She is one of only 1,600 people, out of a pool of 160,000, in the nation to reach this level of the competition. Simone's PSAT score earned her a spot with the other highest performing black students in the country, but in order to advance, other factors, including work experience and an essay, are taken into account.

Simone certainly seems to agree with Dumbledore's wise words.

"I've realized that I've been making my Jamaican heritage out to be something exotic," she said, "when really it's no better than being from any other place."

## **SPOOKYTIME: A HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN**

by Thomas Gelfars Senior Editor

Whenever October rolls around, I feel an overwhelming sensation of elation and glee wash over my body, as if some transcendental psychic force were blasting my corporeal being with electric beams of ecstasy. Why does this month bring me such joy, you may ask? It's because October is a month of many wonderful holidays and festivities: Lief Erickson Day, Oktoberfest, National Fire Prevention Week, Gandhi Jayanti (the commemoration of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi), Canadian Thanksgiving...the list goes on and on. But my favorite of all the holidays comes, in fact, on the very final day of October. Yes, I'm talking about HALLOWEEN.

Recently, however, I have been thinking a lot more about this special day, my favorite day of the tenth month of the Gregorian calendar. As I was preparing my costume (which I will not divulge so as not to spoil any

surprises) I realized that I knew little to nothing of the origins of Halloween. Upset with this void in my knowledge, I ceased my costuming and delved into the nebulous tangle of information known as the internet, where I made many illuminating findings.

What I discovered is that it all goes back to an ancient Gaelic festival known as Samhain. It was a celebration of the end of the harvest and the beginning of the dark months of winter that lay ahead, and it fell right around October 31. The Gaels would gather and feast, and it was believed that they were in contact with spirits of the dead. The Gaels, practitioners of polytheistic pagan religion, engaged in divinatory rituals aplenty during Samhain. I was onto something, that much I could tell. Magical deeds were afoot...magical darkness.

During Samhain, I learned, bonfires were lit in order to ward off the more malevolent of the spirits. Another common practice

was for people to dress up and imitate the spirits and fairies. At this point, I began to notice the eerie similarities between this ancient ceremony and Halloween. Bonfires became jack-o-lanterns, druids disguised as spirits became children in scary costumes. The truth was dawning upon me.

Anyway, the tradition of Samhain continued for centuries in the Gaelic community, and, coupled with the Christian holida All Hallow's Eve, which begins three days of remembrance of the dead, the modern Halloween developed. It would not be until large numbers of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh people immigrated to America in the 19th century that Halloween would make its appearance stateside. It didn't take long for the craze to catch on and for millions of unknowing Americans to partake in a holiday that serves as the contemporary successor to an ancient mystical

## **DIY HALLOWEEN COSTUMES**

by Thomas Gelfars Senior Editor

Ghost:

- Find a colored bed sheet in your home or local motel.

- Bleach it heavily so that it turns

- Using a sterilized blade, cut two large holes in the sheet so you can see out of it. (If you do not have the means to chemically sterilize your blade, hold it over the stove for a while until it is red hot. This should suffice.)

- Remove all of your clothes and drape the sheet over your bod.

Mummy:

- Go to your friend's house and steal several rolls of toilet paper or saran wrap.

- Have another friend wrap you in

the paper/saran.

- Fasten the paper/saran with El-

mer's non-toxic glue and staples. - Make sure there are holes for breathing and vision.

 Adorn yourself with ancient talismans.

- Construct a sarcophagus out of cardboard boxes, old flannel

shirts, and moist two by fours. - Set up the sarcophagus on your

porch and lay inside of it. Pop out and spook children when they come to your door. (If you do not have a porch, place the sarcophagus on your fire escape and intermittently scream at passersby).

- Acquire an expensive, tailormade suit at a retailer such as Brooks Brothers, Burlington Coat Factory, or the Armani Exchange.

your face.

Sit on the curb in shame.

Got a good Halloween Costume?

buzzersubmissions@gmail.com and you could be in the next issue!

Halloween Pick-Up Lines

What's your costume, the most beautiful male/female in the world?

I'd throw eggs and toilet paper all over you, baby.

You want to know something really terrifying? How attracted I am to

Ever carve a pumpkin before?

Want to trade your Tootsie Rolls for my unending love and devotion?

What do you say we dig ourselves a grave and spent the night six feet

Trick or treat! As in, I trick you into treating me to dinner, eh?

Movies, in Reverse Non-**Linear Order** 

3. The Rocky Horror Picture Show - 1975

7. The Human Centipede - 2010

8. Nosferatu - 1922

1. Young Frankenstein - 1974

10. The Human Centipede II - 2011

4. Spooky Buddies - 2011

2. It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown - 1966

5. Ernest Scared Stupid - 1991

My Top 10 Halloween

6. Beetlejuice - 1988

9. The Crow - 1994

by Clara Weinstein

Perhaps Vampires is a Bit Strong But - Arctic Monkeys

Halloween Playlist

Red Right Hand - Arctic Monkeys

Became - Atmosphere

Lovecraft in Brooklyn - The Mountain Goats

Damn These Vampires - The Mountain Goats

Ain't No Grave - Johnny Cash

Politician:

- Place a brown paper bag over

Submit a pic to

are dressing in her schoolgirl outfit and we're going to carry microphones. We are wearing Converse instead of Mary Jane's. We are going to have field hockey-type skirts, like plaid

**Costume Conference** Olivia Selemon

What are you going to be for Halloween? I am going to be Britney Spears with my friend Annelise Gentile.

What is your costume going to look

We are going to put our hair in high ponytails with pink scrunchies. We

by Julia Morris Senior Editor

skirts, and we're going to wear white button-down shirts and grey

cardigans. How are you going to make your

We are going to use things we have in our houses, and maybe go to some little store for anything we don't have.

Leah Alligood What are you going to be for Halloween?

I am going to be Ryuk from Death

Note.

What is your costume going to look

I am going to wear all black. I'm going to have very, very scary face paint. I'm also going to have feathers and I'm going to carry a notebook with "Death Note" written on it. I'm going to were a belt with skulls on it

How are you going to make your costume?

I'm going to wear black leggings and other black clothes I have. I'm also

Ellie Plotkin-Kaye What are you going to be for Halloween?

going to use a lot of face paint.

I'm going to be the Tin Man and my friends are going to be other characters from The Wizard of Oz.

I'm going to wear silver clothes and this tinfoil hat I made.

How are you going to make your

What is your costume going to look

...continued on page eight>

# BUZZER IN BACK

### ...Hurricane Sandy's Anniversary Cont'd

program, in which senior citizens are checked on, in the event of a hurricane or other disastrous event, via email, phone and door-to-door visits.

The hurricane also brought out the caring nature of Hastings residents. Many families with power in their homes showed hospitality to those without. Marla Hamberger, resident of Hastings, who lost power in her home for ten days, stayed with friends for five of them.

After the stress of the storm, Mrs. Hamberger began worrying about future hurricanes. "We were very lucky in that we did not sustain damage to the house. However, we feel concerned about future weather. We have considered purchasing a generator but have not done so. In general, I think we feel more appreciative about having a [warm] home, something we probably took for granted previously," she said.

While there are a few long-lasting effects from Hurricane Sandy, not all of them are negative. Hastings residents will always remember the kindness and generosity displayed during this time of need, and will most likely be much more prepared for the possibility of a future storm.

### ...Costumes Conference Cont'd

I am going to go to [cheap] stores off Central Ave to find silver clothes.

#### Tessa Schneider What are you going to be for Halloween?

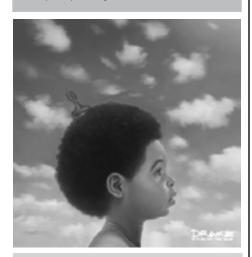
going to be the Scarecrow from The Wizard of Oz with my friends.

#### What is your costume going to look like?

don't know yet, but probably a flannel shirt and maybe high-waisted

## How are you going to make your

I am going to use stuff in my house or my friends' stuff. I am not going to buy anything.





### Melissa Hardesty: Fashion Icon

by Sophia May Senior Staff Writer

The next time you get called to the office, be happy rather than despaired - at least you'll get to see what fabulously classy outfit Ms. Hardesty is wearing. Her style is self-described as "classic", and Ms. Hardesty is definitely that, dressed in tailored pants, a white blouse, and a red, white, and blue knit cardigan.

Accompanying the outfit are a range of accessories: necklaces, earrings, bracelets and rings, each and every one adorned with pearls, adding cohesiveness to the ensemble. When it comes to accessorizing, Hardesty "loves jewelry." Her "absolute favorite piece" is an antique Greek coin pendant that she bought in Bermuda. "It's different and unique. It has a Greek owl on it. It's really cool."

Back in her high school days in Greenwich, Connecticut, Hardesty was crazy for fashion. "I bought every fashion magazine, and I used to beg my mother to take me shopping at Bloomingdales." She joked that her mother "worked a second job to satisfy my bad habit."

Ms. Hardesty kept a scrapbook with clippings from fashion magazines. She "loved fabrics," and although she didn't make clothing, Hardesty did craft her own jewelry. She also followed the popular styles, rocking big hair, makeup and "guacamole earrings," enormous green metal buttons with a dangling swirl. "Now I would

never wear them, but back then, it was cool." When asked her opinion about the current styles in Hastings High School, Hardesty was quick to answer. "I see the trends repeating themselves," she said. She's noticed styles from the 70s, such as booties and bohemian-style pieces, and a stud trend that evokes memories of the 80s, which Hardesty might just be following herself. "I just bought a studded belt, as a matter of fact."

"I wish I had saved some of [my old] clothes," Hardesty mused. "But it's not like they would fit me now."

◀ Hardesty sports a dramatically draped shawl with a contrasting beige shift.



### ...One in Sixteen Hundred Cont'd

She discusses being biracial, and how people like her "can, for one of the first times in history, self-identify." She wants others to understand that she can't be placed in one extensive as the "a" white and in one category, as she's ¾ white and ¼ black.

In fact, this influenced her decision to even apply for the scholarship. She was concerned because the award didn't specify what percentage of black heritage was necessary. She "went back and forth about checking the box but ultimately decided just to see what happened."

This impressive recognition as a semi-finalist will be sent to colleges, where Simone, whose favorite classes have been SUPA courses, is interested in studying culture and anthropology at an urban school.

In addition to her academic pursuits, music plays a large role in Simone's life. A talented singer, Simone is part of numerous singing groups, including the HHS chorus, the Madrigals, and a community service singing group called the River Singers, which has made appearances at Andrus on Hudson. She is also a pianist, and plans to play a piano concerto with the HHS orchestra at the spring concert.



## Drake's "Nothing Was The Same" Review

by David Dorsky

Hiphop's golden child is back: on September 24th, rap superstar Drake released his third LP, entitled "Nothing Was The Same." But as suggested by Rolling Stone Magazine, this album should probably be called "Everything Was Pretty Much The Same." Like usual, Drake sings in his silky tenor about past girlfriends, croons to current love interests, and, of course, celebrates his success and fame. The album is a battle between two Drakes, one insecure and vulnerable, and the other proud and boastful. The LP has both hits and misses.

"Hold on We're Going Home" is Drake's most passionate love song yet, catchy yet not corny. In "Furthest Thing," Drake utilizes his signature combination of singing and rapping to convey the fact that he, like everyone in the world, isn't perfect. Drake completely misses, however, with the album's opening track, "Tuscan Leather. "The song features a rough and choppy beat that doesn't match up well with the rhythm of the lyrics. Within its 6-minute time span, the song jumps all over the place and never settles down.

On "Wu Tang Forever,"

Drake uses a sample from the Wu Tang Clan's "Ît's Yourz" and name-drops the legendary rap group throughout the song-- but the song is about an ex-girlfriend and simply doesn't sound like Wu Tang whatsoever. In fact, many rap aficionados were angered by the song's title. Nonetheless, if you can get past the title, the song is beautifully haunting and the Clan sample has a great effect on its

Maybe the most impressive track on the album is "From Time," featuring Jhene Aiko. The song is reminiscent of Drake's mega hit, "What's My Name," a "Grammy" nominated collaboration with Rihanna. In "From Time," Drake raps about his relationship with his father, and breakups that have hurt

In all three of his albums, Drake has never dug this deep and became so vulnerable. With "Nothing Was The Same," Drake makes quality music while being loose and arrogant, but his real triumph is broadcasting his newfound maturity and showing the world that he is ready to take the next step.

Rating: 8/10

### Miley Cyrus' "Bangerz" Review

by Andrew Knispel

Miley Cyrus' album "Bangerz" has been long awaited ever since her outrageous performance at MTV's Video Music Awards this year and the release of her risqué music video for "Wrecking Ball," a single from the album, which also features the summer hit "We Can't Stop." 'Bangerz" starts out with a slow, delay-drenched track titled "Adore You". Things get a bit strange at track three with "SMS" feat. Britney Spears. This song features lines such as "you know I'm on that meow" and the very Freudian "all the way in the back, with a tree in my lap?

After track six, the album really starts to peter out; once it reaches track twelve it starts to become quite difficult to finish. "Do My Thang" gets an honorable mention, despite being later in the album, because of its catchy beat

and fun changes in dynamics. Overall, the album has some good, poppy dance tracks but contains more misses than hits. Miley just tries too hard with overly provocative lyrics and mostly forgettable instrumentals.

Rating: 4/10