



Toward a More Inclusive Future  
Special Education in Hastings

by Alex Campson and Iyra Chandra  
*Editors-in-chief*

Last June, an audit was created for the Special Education Department in reaction to a federal lawsuit brought in 2014 by a collection of families whose children received special education services in the district. Dr. Sinanis, the new district wide superintendent, who was not with the district at the time of the original lawsuit, said, “There were some concerns about the way special education was being provided here.” Dr. Sinanis explained that prior to the audit “a lack of communication [was a big problem] across the school district and with parents. There was a lack of understanding as to what services were available, and what the student needs were. We had not been great about being transparent about what was going on.” In response to some of these concerns, families brought a suit against the school to address issues with how special education services were working in the district. Dr. Sinanis added, “We brought in an outside organization and assessed how we do everything. They gave us a 67-page audit that spotlighted all the things we could be doing better.”

Dr. Lauren Katzman of Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative (which is a statewide network of Special Education leaders in the state) authored the audit. Her team met with over 50 families and district personnel, including teachers and administrators, as well as collected and analyzed data throughout the fall and spring of 2016-2017. SEPTA (Special Education Parents and Teachers Association) president Mia Johnson and vice president Jennifer Destin stated that “the goal of the audit was to provide insight into how the District could improve their special education processes and practices and rebuild relations with the Hastings community.” On June 6, 2017, Dr. Katzman presented her report at a Board of Education meeting attended by dozens of families. In August, Dr. Sinanis and Laura Sullivan, Director of Special Education, asked the Board to approve all of the recommendations presented in the audit report, which the Board unanimously did. The audit concluded with six general recommendations, each aiming to revise a certain aspect of the department. One focus was on internal structure. The aim was to create an internal structure that promotes greater collaboration and be more effective in managing special services and needs. Recommendation three called to examine evaluation procedures more closely and continuously monitor the number of students determined eligible for special education services and 504 accommodations. Four and Five

dealt with expanding the program to include students who are currently educated in self-contained classes or out-of-district schools as well as working to create an educational environment that is more inclusive. The last recommendation spoke to sustaining positive relationships and communication strategies between HUSD (Hastings Union Free School District) and the community. “As we understand it, Dr. Katzman will return in June 2018 to assess where the District is in implementing the approved recommendations, and will present her findings to the Board of Education in the Fall of 2018,” stated Ms. Johnson and Ms. Destin.

The future will bring important changes for the district wide special education program, primarily in increasing the amount of communication between students, parents and teachers. Ms. Sullivan, said, “We would like to develop a Standard Operating Procedural Manual, expand on our professional development, and increase home/school communication.” This manual will detail the ways parents, teachers, and students can access help in a variety of situations — the manual will explain “how you get support if you need support” as superintendent Dr. Sinanis explained.

Ms. Correa, a special education teacher, added, “the biggest change I would like to see is a better team effort, of parents, students and teachers working together and communicating. If we all have the students’ best interests at heart, we can move forward and do new things.”

Structurally, the high school Special Education (department) has also been reformed. Ryland Cullen, a special ed student, noted, “the special ed room has become a bit smaller to make the offices bigger,” a move intended to accommodate a growing staff. Ms. Correa said, “Since the audit, we have hired on two new teachers for the Special Ed department. We also have a new class called pre-algebra for students who are not quite ready for algebra in addition to a reading specialist who is going to be meeting with students after school.”

One special ed student stated, “I personally think the special education department could use more teachers or staff. This would make it possible for more students to get help in whichever form they need.”

Ryland explained that he likes the individualized attention of the program and the way the department is run; however, at times he

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Theater Arts Program Expands at Hastings High School

by Ruby Pucillo  
*Managing Editor*

The theatre program in Hastings has long been an outstanding feature of the high school. Not only have productions here garnered nominations and awards, but the stage crew has often been forced to open the balcony in the auditorium just so that performance attendees can physically fit in the house. Hastings is full of avid fans of the arts, some of whom buzz about the various plays, musicals, concerts and the like for weeks after they happen. It doesn’t come as a surprise that our curricular theatre classes also function at a high level--and believe it or not, they just got better.

Mr. Gerard Marciano, Hastings High School’s Theater Arts teacher, has been the authority on drama goings-on at school for as long as this journalist can remember. Having taken his class in sixth grade and sat in on various others from the time I entered ninth grade, I can say confidently that Theater Arts was once largely improv-based in both the middle and high schools. Improv opens an actor’s mind to creative possibility onstage, and experienced dramatists can effectively translate this on-the-spot thinking to fully thought-out pieces of theatre as well. However, it seemed in years past that the single elective class didn’t leave room for an exploration of the wide range of theatre arts--in Marciano’s words, “We had no immersion in the world of direction or scenic design, and no study of acting as a cultural expression of national identity.” Fortunately, this new school year has introduced the study of technique to Marciano’s class.

Marciano says of the new program that by creating a two-year acting course, the school has ensured that students can “build a foundation for the study of all aspects of theater, both historical and performance-based,” and that “Theater Arts [is now being treated] as an area of study like any other.”

When asked about the nature of the new and improved classes, Senior Kim Burgering-Jacobs replied that they are “definitely fun and inventive. [Mr. Marciano] teaches us a lot about different acting methods and how we can incorporate them into our lives.” As an example, Kim talked about the Meisner method, which focuses on the idea of repetition and its significance to theatre. “Repeating the same line consistently throughout a scene and saying it differently each time makes the audience realize that the line isn’t what the scene is about but [rather] the meaning behind the line.” When asked if she had anything to add about the program, she said simply, “I wouldn’t add a thing. I love it.”



New Theater Program.

Image courtesy of Hazel Pucillo

this new school year has introduced the study of technique

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# EDITOR’S PAGE

## It’s Time We Stayed For Girls Sports



Drawn by Maya Foxman

At Hastings High School and within the Hastings community, we like to foster an environment that is supportive for all. However, many females athletes feel that they are not getting enough support from their peers primarily due to their gender.

Alexa Brink, varsity softball player, said “Being a female athlete at Hastings High School has brought me to the realization that female sports are looked down upon or not taken seriously. I wish people would recognize girls’ sports more and realize and that we would enjoy the same treatment that male sports get.” Ms. Keogh, a physical education teacher and coach of volleyball, girls basketball and softball stated, “From my experience as both a high school female athlete as well as a girls coach, I definitely think the girls feel slighted. It is hard as an athlete and a coach to know how much work you put into a sport and [then to] look in the crowd and only see a handful of people there. I don't think this is just a Hastings issue. The same can be said for professional and college sports. Men's sports get more national TV coverage and male athletes are paid more. I think female athletes deserve more recognition for their athletic accomplishments.”

There have been numerous national regulations put in place to protect the right of women’s sports. Title IX essentially states that there can be no gender based differences in funding and opportunity in programs at educational institutions that receive federal financial support. However, in reality, while there may be no funding difference between male and female sports at the high school level, in reality, there is great discrepancy between how people view male and female sports.

When looking at professional sports attendance for basketball and soccer, it is clear that support is far from equal for men and women’s sports. The highest annual average fan attendance was 5,558 for the NWSL (National Women’s Soccer League) whereas for the MLS(Major League Soccer) the highest annual average was 46,218 fans. Following the 2015 season, Sports Business Daily reported the WNBA (Women’s National Basketball Association) posted a league-wide average attendance of 7,318, the lowest in its 19-year existence.

Attendance of female sporting events at Hastings High School mimicks the national trends. The support of the community and fans is something that is important to all athletes across different sports and teams. Justin Carballo, three season varsity athlete, describes the support of a big crowd as “exhilarating” and Alex Bourgeois, varsity boys soccer captain, says “It's very exciting and comforting knowing I have the support from friends and family.” Skylar Iosepovici, captain of varsity girls soccer, remembers that “When I was an underclassman on soccer, it felt really great that older kids were coming out and cheering for me in addition to the players they were actually friends with. When kids do come to games, it’s really easy to see the sense of spirit and community we have; it makes it that much more enjoyable for the people on the field and the people watching.”

However, many female athletes, from a diverse range of sports, feel that their teams do not get as many fans or community support as the boys’ teams of the same sports. Eliza Dolgins, varsity girls tennis player states, “the attendance for boys games is definitely a lot higher and people are generally more interested in the boys sports, unfortunately.” Adam Dietz, varsity boys tennis player, adds to Eliza’s claim, stating that, “the girls fan base, in my opinion, is not as consistent as the guys.” A varsity male athlete who has chosen to remain anonymous added, “I’m just going to give to you straight: people would much rather watch boys sports over girls sports. It's a higher level of play and is definitely more fun to watch.” Alexa Brink, varsity softball player, said, “You'll see packed bleachers for boys football and soccer and even baseball, but then at the the girls softball games and swim meets it's generally just the parents. It's upsetting to me and my teammates, especially because having support and school spirit helps to motivate the players and brings a whole different vibe to the game.” Jen Caruso shares, “I remember last year for basketball at our Costello tournament during winter break, the boys played before us and the girls teamed played right after. The boys had a huge crowd, and when their game ended, the whole crowd left, completely uninterested in their female basketball team. This was super upsetting for me and my team.”

The attendance of female sports poses an interesting question. Do the number of fans at a game correspond to how good the team’s record is? To an extent it may -- though Jennifer’s story is certainly discouraging -- the boys basketball team made the semi-finals, while the girls were disqualified in the first round of sectionals. Samantha Gabay, captain of the varsity girls soccer team, notes that “I definitely feel as a female soccer player there is a lot more attention towards the boys team, and I understand that it is due to winning states, but currently we have a better record and less recognition.” In addition, last spring, varsity boys baseball had a record of 7 wins and 14 losses whereas varsity girls softball “had an unbelievably good season last year. We made it to the second round of sectionals and came incredibly close to beating the team that went on to win the section,” states MaryKate, varsity softball player. Mr. Merchant, however, believes the turnout of fans has “little to do with gender and more to do with the sport itself. For example, for softball and baseball, I don’t think the attendance is very different at all. For soccer, I think the reason the boys’ games have bigger turnouts is primarily due to the fact that they won a state championship.” Kate Lesser, varsity girls tennis player, agrees, saying that “tennis as a sport that in general is overlooked, for both the boy's and girl’s team.” Whether lower attendance is based on gender and sport type, it is the job of every athlete and member of the community to support a variety of teams. In addition, despite many of these concerns, girls sports teams have continued to maintain dignity and drive. Allison Lemischak states, “Being a female athlete is a thing that I take a lot of pride in. Even though women's sports are underrated all over, it's something that I love being a part of.”

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*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 Perspectives

“What is your most memorable Halloween costume?”



Jeremy Raynes, Grade 9

“I put on a green wig and my sister’s pink dress, and I was a girl.”



Lila Broden, Grade 10

“I was a crazy cat lady. I wore an old sweater and snow pants with boots. My mom stapled cats all over the sweater and put lip stick stains and cat scratches on my face.”



Hannah Jones, Grade 11

“When I was four, I wore a mop headdress.”



Frankie Carozza, Grade 12

“I was a Jets cheerleader in 5th grade.”

### Student Voices

## Protest or Neglect: The Pledge of Allegiance



By Emmett Fuchs  
Managing Editor

In a world where a man can lose his job or be called a “son of a b\*\*\*\*” by the President of the United States for refusing to stand for the national anthem, it seems strange that in Hastings High School, the Pledge of Allegiance is ignored by nearly every student. After Colin Kaepernick, a former starting NFL quarterback, kneeled during the National Anthem before a game last season to protest police brutality, the United States erupted into controversy. Since then, nearly every NFL team has protested during the National Anthem in some way. These assertions against injustice have been met with boos, and Kaepernick, the initiator, no longer has a job in the NFL -- something many blame on his protestation.

In a survey of Hastings High School sophomores, juniors, and seniors, only 14.5% of respondents reported that they stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. Though only these students stand regularly, just 23% disagree with the axiom of the Pledge. This suggests that students may not be protesting; rather, many choose not to stand for other reasons. Junior Leonard Meenan-Pakin says, “It’s not that we don’t love our country. It’s just that standing for the Pledge is not a huge part of the Hastings High School culture... The first day of freshman year, I was in biology class. There were freshmen and sophomores in that class. All of the freshmen stood for the Pledge, but very few sophomores did. By the end of the week, almost no one was standing.”

Adding to the nonchalant attitude towards the Pledge, senior Noah Prisament says he rarely stands “unless I’m already standing.” Many say this lack of caring is at least partially the responsibility of the teachers. Prisament agrees, saying, “Teachers often do not make an environment conducive to [standing for the Pledge]. Either they teach through it, or allow for talking during the announcements.” He also thinks that “many students do not necessarily feel that an allegiance to the flag is necessary.” Madame Bertacchi, a French teacher, acts differently than most teachers, “I don’t teach through [the Pledge]... I stand and I say the Pledge, but I don’t require anybody to do it.”

Mr. Adipeitro, the school principal, personally feels that “students should stand for the pledge because the flag stands for something. That is what I personally believe, but I am not going to enforce it.”

When asked about the Pledge’s merits, sophomore Sawyer Pollard believes that “some of the ideas are good, like liberty and justice for all, but ‘under God’ seems weird for a country meant to separate church and state.” An anonymous student added, “liberty and justice for all’ is not at all what is occurring or ever has occurred in America.”

To this point, Madame Bertacchi responds, “To me, it’s just a reminder of what we strive for as Americans. It’s not necessarily what we are, but what we hope to be... I’m a naturalized American: I wasn’t born an American, I became one. So for me, I think that’s one of the reasons that I say the Pledge, because I’m grateful that even though I wasn’t born here, I was allowed to become an American.”

Regardless, there is controversy in Hastings over the message of the Pledge. Junior Nina Silverstein believes that the pledge symbolizes unity and “equal rights for every American.” However, she adds that “In our country, history has proven that some Americans don’t use this idea to influence their actions. So I would like to agree with it, but I don’t think that’s possible, especially [with] the state our country is in right now.”

While many continue to criticize NFL players for not standing and turning their backs on such an important custom in American sports, Hastings students continue to ignore the Pledge because, as Silverstein puts it, “it’s just a custom to not stand or pay attention.”

### Student Voices

## A Pledge for Everyone?

Each day, millions of students across the United States are instructed to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance, saluting the flag of our country. Written in 1892, the Pledge originally served as a patriotic statement for students on the 400th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival to America. Over the past several decades, however, a heated debate about this patriotic statement has arisen, specifically surrounding its religious connotations. Though a person cannot be forced to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance under most circumstances, the people of the United States still must ask themselves this question: can a secular nation have a national Pledge of Allegiance asking people to salute “one nation under God?”

Though the Supreme Court granted public school students the right to not participate in saying the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1943 case, West Virginia State Board of Education vs. Barnette, many students have faced major issues from teachers, administrators, and peers for not reciting the Pledge. Many of these individuals cite that the Pledge of Allegiance is a way to display one’s patriotism and loyalty to the United States, which is clearly true, but if this is the case, why does the Pledge still contain the phrase “one nation under God”? The United States has been a place where religious freedom and diversity has been secured by the law for centuries. In addition, the United States still stands as one of the most religiously heterogeneous societies on Earth. If our country has been structured in this way since the signing of the Constitution, then why are we pledging allegiance to one God when the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights promises us the right to worship any deities we desire?

Naturally, any argument surrounding the Pledge must also touch on the subject of patriotism. Personally, I have no problem with the Pledge of Allegiance aside from its religious overtones. While this causes me to remain sitting when the Pledge is recited, it does not mean I hate my country. To me, remaining seated for the Pledge means I am actually standing for the Bill of Rights and religious freedom in the United States.

Even though the Supreme Court’s landmark 1943 decision in West Virginia State Board of Education vs. Barnette grants me the right to not participate in the Pledge, it does not show how the Pledge of Allegiance itself is a violation of the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. This violates the idea of “religious freedom” and a secular state, as the Pledge uses a Christian deity in a speech where people pledge patriotism to their country. Ultimately, a compromise can be relatively easily reached between both ends of the argument if the original form of the Pledge, which did not include the phrase “one nation under God” (“I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands—one Nation indivisible—with liberty and justice for all.”) is used instead of our current version. This would allow those living in the United States to express loyalty to their country without compromising their religious beliefs.



By Katelin Penner  
Contributing Writer



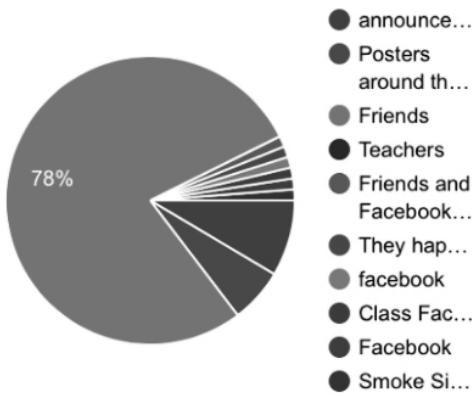
# SCHOOL

## Announcement: Is Anyone Even Listening?

by David Dayan  
*Managing Editor*

### I hear about school events mostly from

82 responses



Sitting in science class, I check the clock for what must be the twelfth time that period. The clock reads 9:34 a.m. In the back of my mind, I vaguely notice my teacher talking about upcoming due dates and I start to pay attention. The teacher finishes and says, “I’ll see you next class.” There is a general rustle as the students file their papers in their folders and pack their backpacks. The students stand and make towards the door as a beep is heard from the speaker. Two voices come on the PA system, bidding the school a good day and asking everyone to stand for the pledge. Everyone is already on their feet, but as the pledge is said on the speaker, nobody joins in. Instead some of the the students talk amongst themselves and with the teacher, while others already have toes and fingers across the threshold of classroom and hallway. The voices on the speaker continue, and I hear words such as “bake sale” and “yearbook club,” but I don’t really hear any of the details. It is now 9:40, and the teacher waves goodbye as we all file out into the hallway and make for our next classes.

The small period of time between 9:35 and 9:40 a.m. is a strange one. In some classrooms, students are bent over their tests, furiously scribbling their final

answers. In other classes, the teachers finish reviewing their notes and assignments, forcing students to stay glued to their seats until exactly 9:40. In other classes, instruction has ended and the students are ready to go to their next classes, chatting amongst themselves about the probability of having a pop-quiz or about how they did on the test they just got back. And, in rare classes, the teachers stop instruction at 9:35 and encourage students to listen to the announcements. Mr. Adipeitro, the school principal, said that he “has asked students and teachers to remain silent for the announcements.” The administration has become very aware of this issue and is even going to implement changes in the future.

According to a survey of 82 students across all high school grades, only 8.5% of students find out about school events mainly through the morning announcements. The remaining students find out about events through a variety of sources, such as Facebook, email, posters, and others. A likely reason for this meager percentage is that only 17% of students surveyed find themselves in 1st block classes in which the teacher stops class for the announcements. The most common way students find out about school events is through their friends, as 78% of the students said their peers were their primary source of information. While most teachers do not stop instruction for the announcements, this may not be the only reason students don’t rely on announcements for information. Even in the classrooms in which teachers stop instruction, many of the students said they still don’t listen to the announcements, and only 23% of surveyed students said they regularly listen to announcements. So, in addition to students not having the opportunity to listen to the announcements during class, it seems as if many students simply don’t listen to them regardless of what their 1st block teachers do. Some students go past simply not listening to announcements at the end of the first block. 37% of students responded to the survey by saying that they are regularly on their way to their second class while the announcements are being given. While it seems that not many people listen to announcements now, perhaps people will be more conscious of the fact that they ignore the announcements. Should that be the case, look forward to learning about school happenings every morning from Brian and Cole during that strange period of time between 9:35 and 9:40.

## Hastings High School Talks Politics in the Classroom

by Danielle Sherman, Chantz Vavra, Andrew Cheng, Reid Koken, Bruno McCarthy, Noe Lebanidze, Lola Murnighan, Frank Carozza, Susannah Pittman  
*Contributing Writers*



Ms. Grassia displaying her “make America read again” button.  
*Image courtesy of Lola Murnighan*

As midterm elections approach, politics in the school building remain a hotly contested topic. Political discussion in the classroom has the potential to be heated and controversial, especially when teachers in a position of power over the students express their opinions. We surveyed 68 students and 7 teachers on whether or not teachers should be allowed to express political views in the classroom.

When asked about whether they believed teachers should be able to share political opinions, 79.1% of students either agreed or strongly agreed that teachers should be able to share their political views when they are in relation to the subject matter they teach. 42.2% of students even believed that teachers should be allowed to wear political buttons of candidates they support, something that has been banned in New York City since 2008. Only 1 of the 7 teachers we interviewed supported teachers being able to show their political allegiances so explicitly.

Many teachers believe that politics can become problematic when they are taught as fact rather than as personal opinion. “Teachers have a responsibility to teach students how to think for themselves,” said Greg Smith, a history teacher at Hastings High School. “I do have a problem with teachers expressing their views with the explicit intention of making students think in their way.”

When asked about teachers expressing their political views, Piersol Mininger, a senior at Hastings High School, said, “It depends on the circumstance, if it’s a History teacher and it’s very relevant then yes. But otherwise it would be unnecessary.”

42.9% of students agreed with Mr. Smith that teachers should keep political opinions out of the classroom when not related to the subject matter they teach. “Because we live in a very liberal community, teachers should be able to say what they believe but cannot put down other political views,” said an anonymous student in the survey.

Mr. Adipietro, the principal of the high school, said he supported students’ right to share their political views but that he doesn’t “think it’s appropriate or easy to sanction students when the political views affect schoolwork or climate in a school environment or causes conflict. That’s when [the administration] has to get involved.”

One of the teachers surveyed shared a similar distinction: “I would say that it is one thing to share one’s Republican or Democratic leanings--yet quite another matter to share one’s homophobia or white nationalist leanings. The same goes for students sharing their beliefs. I strongly believe students should be able to voice their own beliefs in the classroom--but within a safe and classroom appropriate context.”

Being that Hastings has such a liberal climate, the more conservative students are a minority, often against a vocal majority. Some conservative students feel ignored or put down in political conversations in the school.

“I am the one of the few Republicans and often my ideas are shot down in discussions,” said one student in the survey. A small group of students did report that sometimes a teacher’s shared political beliefs can make the classroom an unsettling environment. 15.9% reported feeling uncomfortable because of a teacher’s political beliefs.

“As far as the teacher is concerned, it’s their job to teach both sides regardless of their own views,” said Mr. Adipietro. An example of the political split in the school may be seen in regards to one polarizing topic—the National Anthem and Pledge, and whether it is morally acceptable to kneel during it, in order to protest racial injustices in the United States. 80.6% of students and 72% of teachers felt that students should not be required to stand for the pledge of allegiance. Many of those in the opposing minority position felt “strongly” that students should stand for the pledge.

As one student shared, “I think it is extremely important for kids to be able to voice their opinions on any matter. I understand the threat of an influential teacher changing a student’s political beliefs as an authority figure that is looked up to, but I don’t think that overrides the need to voice opinions.”



# SCHOOL

## Staff Profile

### Beyond Band-Aids: Getting to Know Nurse Cullen

by Phoebe Sander  
Contributing Writer

You’ve probably been to the nurses’ office on a number of occasions during your time at Farragut Middle School and Hastings High School. Maybe you’ve picked up a cough drop, taken a nap on a rough day or scrambled to get your athletic forms in by the end of August. Whether you needed ice after a scary upperclassman hit you with a frisbee or feared you had lice, the nurses have always been there. Their loyalty and comfort is constant, but how many people have really gotten to know them? To learn more about the women behind the scenes in the nurses , I interviewed nurse Ms. Sally Ann Cullen.

Cullen has been working at Hastings for several years now and loves every minute. She wanted to be a nurse since she was a sophomore in high school. Her mother, who passed away when she was young, had been a nurse’s aid at Andrus Home just down the road, and Cullen constantly looked up to the caring work her mother did. Starting when she was 17 years old, Cullen took tests and part-time jobs and went to multiple colleges. After high school, Cullen received her Associates in nursing and has just recently received her Bachelors with a lot of hard work, as she balances homework, her job at school, and her two children.

Cullen loves her job as a school nurse, although it is very different from working in a hospital and sitting with patients, from elderlies to the newborn. She feels that the best part is “building certain relationships with students and watching them grow and progress, especially those who need help or just somebody to care.” She reminisces about someone she calls a “Frequent Flyer,” a student who spent extended time in the nurses’ office a couple of years ago. Each day, after this “flyer” stayed for as long as possible with his routine cup of water and package of saltines, Cullen would have to follow him back to class, only to find him hiding behind doorways and peeking his head out to check if she was gone. Although the office often gets people who may not truly be sick, Cullen says students are often very honest about how they are feeling and sometimes just need a break to take a breath.

Kids come in with everything from severe food allergy reactions to tiny scabs-Cullen has seen it all. The office takes everything very seriously for the safety of students and in order to meet myriad health codes put in place by New York state. Cullen reminds us of how many papers there are to be filled out, including athletic forms, immunization forms, screenings and more.

Cullen encourages young students to think about going into nursing, as “there are few professions that allow so much flexibility.” Her career has taken multiple different paths, and she is surprised and thrilled at where she has ended up.

So when you need a cough drop or ice pack, think about talking with the nurses. Nestled in their newly renovated sanctuary, they demonstrate their willingness to help students, offering just the type of comfort stressed-out high schoolers need.



School Nurses

Image courtesy of Owen Labate



Nurses office

Image courtesy of Iyra Chandra

## Staff Profile

### Arriving from the School Upon the Hill

by Chris Scarglato  
Contributing Writer

The many of you that attended Hillside Elementary may remember the box tops, the inflatable course, and, of course, Field Day. You may also remember Dennis Kiely, the gym teacher who was recently transferred to Hastings High School all the way from our good old school on the hill. Kiely, the coach for the Cross Country team and a seasoned teacher for over 21 years at Hastings, has shown a bright outlook towards his students and the rest of the school. I decided to ask him a few questions about how he felt about his new grounds and his memories from old territory.

#### What is your fondest memory of Hillside?

There are so many good memories there, but the thing I miss the most at Hillside is Field Day. Not a single Field Day specifically, but the concept of Field Day as a whole. Everybody is excited and it is all around a positive experience for everyone and the community as a whole.

#### What do you like the most about Hastings High School so far?

Seeing kids that were young children grown into young adults...to see how these students have formed into such incredible people is such an amazing thing to see. Also, how school changed the people that I saw at Hillside into what they are now. I have had a similar experience with coaching, but it is a lot more rewarding seeing it as a teacher.

#### What is your favorite high school memory?

Ironically, I really enjoyed physical education and the teacher that taught it when I was in High School. I talked to him a lot and he was a very positive role model for me. I was inspired by him to become a physical education teacher, and I try to emulate him while I teach, to try to continue his legacy.



Mr. Kiely pictured in his new home for the next couple years, HHS gym.  
Image courtesy of Owen Labate



# SCHOOL

## Student Voices Coming to Terms with Symbols of Hate

by Emma Simon  
*Contributing Writer*

Last spring, swastikas were found in the school. Unfortunately, even after extensive police involvement, more were discovered in the middle school this September. Just a few weeks ago, a substitute teacher found one in a bin of art materials, etched on a postcard. The police were called, and once it was determined that it was, indeed, a swastika, an email was sent out to all parents.

That same day, the Administrative Team released a statement saying there is “no place for hate in our school.” That same day, a student reported another swastika drawn on a desk, but when the police and administration got involved, it was ruled not to be a swastika after all.

When a swastika is found and confirmed in Farragut Middle School, Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh conduct an investigation. They figure out which students and classes have been in the specific room in the past few days and then begin to interview students. This process continues until the teachers determine who drew the image, and as Mr. Keogh puts it, “take that opportunity to provide some education.” Ms. Kipper adds, “we impose serious consequences when it is found students are engaging in acts of bias.” Both Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh believe these actions are done out of ignorance and that students should and do learn from their mistakes. Ms. Kipper states that “[students] become upstanders rather than participants in hateful actions.”

In addition to the drawing of the swastika, several of last year’s students were found mimicking the Nazi salute in the hallways between classes. This incident was followed up by a similar protocol, where Ms. Kipper and Mr. Keogh spoke to each child and respective parent individually. However, this issue seemed too serious to not follow up with an educational workshop. They worked with the social studies department and counselors to create lesson plans for entire classes. “[The Nazi salutes] stopped as soon as the children understood the gravity of what they were doing,” Ms. Kipper explained.

To complement this Holocaust education initiative, World War II veteran Alan Moskin came to speak at an assembly. Moskin was a huge asset during the Holocaust, even responsible for liberating whole concentration camps. Mr. Keogh believed the presentation “was a very moving experience to all our students.” In many ways, learning about the personal experience of Mr. Moskin made a bigger impact on students than past educational approaches and was therefore more effective in educating students.

I interviewed a few freshmen, since their grade was the one involved in last year’s events at the middle school. I asked them simply what they thought a swastika and a Nazi salute represented. Many students said that the symbol stood for hate or hate against jews; however, a few were still unsure. An anonymous student stated that if the symbol “isn’t aimed towards Jews, it’s okay.” Another student added, “it depends on how it’s used: if it’s used in a joking manner, it’s more okay as long as it doesn’t get out.” The reality of the matter is that although we claim to be a school void of hate, our negligence about the severity of symbols calls for a different type of education reform—one less focused on physical action and more conducive to expanding our knowledge about the personal and emotional reality of events like the Holocaust.

It is hard to teach about the Holocaust because of how personal the symbols of hate are to so many. In many ways, only people directly involved in this tragedy can understand the implication of one image or action. To me, the swastika and salute are synonymous with the murder and the horror my family has faced.

My great grandparents, Didi and Abe, were both born in Poland in 1921. They were only 18 when Poland was invaded by the Nazis. Imagine your home being taken away, your family being killed, everything you ever cared about being destroyed by the time you graduated high school. One day, my great grandfather was walking his little sister, Bella, to school, and she was shot and killed by a Nazi soldier right before his eyes.



Emma Simon’s great grandfather, Abe, with his little sister Bella. Emma Simon’s middle name is Isabel, and is named after her great grandfather’s sister.

*Image courtesy of Emma Simon*



World War II veteran Alan Moskin

*Image courtesy of google images*

After this traumatic experience, Abe was placed in a concentration camp. He managed to escape, but this was in no way less painful. He had to pretend to be dead and lay in a pile of naked dead bodies for days. He and Didi soon gave birth to my grandmother and lived under a barn with a five-foot ceiling for 18 months. Imagine that instead of being in college when you’re 21, you were living in a space where you couldn’t fully stand up or lay down for a year and a half.

All of the stories I just told you weren’t told to me by my parents or my grandparents. They were told to me by my great-grandparents, Didi and Abe. Every time I see my great-grandmother, she comes to tears and tells me to appreciate everything I have because I never know if it will disappear the next morning. This is my experience with the Holocaust, and this is how personal and real swastikas are to me.

When I was in fourth grade, I learned what the Holocaust was. I learned that my great-grandparents experienced it, and that Nazis had wanted them dead. I learned that Jews constitute 2 percent of the American population and less than .2 percent of the world population. My mom told me that I asked her, “Why do people hate us if we’re so little?” Her answer was “I wish I knew.”

There’s a reason I’m sharing these intimate stories about my family, and I hope they’ve struck a chord within you. I hope these stories give you a reason to be an ally and say something when you see a swastika or salute: in no situation are either of these okay or funny in any manner. It doesn’t matter who is around. All that matters is that the swastika stands for the gas chambers, the concentration camps, the piles of dead bodies, genocide, and the six million Jews murdered over the course of just a few years. My greatest hope is that this article has helped with educating students about the Holocaust. Through my personal experiences, I hope that you, the reader, will learn something and develop a new appreciation for the severity and implications that hate symbols hold, even now.



# SCHOOL

## Meet the Musicians of Open Mic Night

by Joel Gardner and Isabelle Johnson  
*Contributing Writers*

Open Mic Night is a Hastings High School tradition. Unless you are a freshman or live under a rock, you’ve heard of it and have probably gone once or twice. Our unsolicited advice to the freshmen is to come see what it’s all about. It’s a lot of fun, and if you’re musically inclined but a little shy it’s a great place to get used to playing in public. Our unsolicited advice to the rock-dwellers is the same, but only after you’ve found a better place to live. Living under a rock is great for dodging property taxes, but not so great for hearing about wonderful opportunities to spend time with your talented classmates. In this article, we share the stories of some of the performers:

### DYLAN HAMBURGER

The first person we talked to was Dylan Hamburger, an Open Mic Night veteran who plays with more bands than he can count (four). One of Dylan’s bandmates, Nate Kushner, claims this is because Dylan is “the one bassist in the school.” This didn’t sound right to us, but since we don’t know enough about the HHS’ bassist population, we can’t dispute Nate’s claim. Here are some snippets of our interview with Dylan:

**Us:** How would you describe your music?  
**Dylan:** I play with a variety of bands, so it’s very varied. Blank Citation is punk rock-esque, which tends to be pretty simple. The Lemins is more straight blues-y and classic rock inspired, while Small World has various covers of bands like Weezer and Nirvana.

**Us:** Do you ever perform outside of Open Mic?  
**Dylan:** We sometimes play at festivals around town. We did the Purple Battle of the Bands, the River Arts tour, and the Take Me to the River festival a few weeks ago.

**Us:** How are these performances different from Open Mic Night?  
**Dylan:** It’s very different. Open Mic is a lot more chill, and offers more variety and fun. It’s just people having a good time and playing music. The other gigs around town are more strict. You have a certain amount of time you need to play for. We have a bunch of parents there and fewer people from our school come out, so it’s less of a fun environment. Obviously, there’s no mosh pit like there is at Open Mic.

**Us:** Are there any changes you would like to see be made in the coming year?  
**Dylan:** There are a couple, and seeing as I help run Open Mic I can make them [happen]. I would like to have better sound mixing, because [the music] can be hard to hear, especially when it’s outside. I also would like to see more people come out, have fun, and pay more attention to the music instead of standing around talking, because I think that takes away from the performance. It really discourages solo performers and people reading poetry. I think it’s important for Open Mic to have diversity, instead of just rock bands and people with an acoustic guitar.



Django Sibia and Dylan Hamburger playing the guitar in the courtyard, at last years Open Mic Night in June.

Image courtesy of Nick Berstein



Dylan Hamburger and Charlie Freireich playing guitar with their band, Blank Citation.

Image courtesy of Nick Berstein

### AAHD TAHAR

Aahd Tahar, a senior, has frequented Open Mic Night for several years and always sings alone.

**Us:** How would you describe the music that you make?  
**Aahd:** I make mashups of songs since I can only do two at [each] Open Mic Night. If I’m in a good mood I’ll try to mash as many songs as I can into one. Most of my music is pop or acoustic.

**Us:** How long have you been playing music?  
**Aahd:** I started when I was 12 and took a break between 13 and 14. When I found out Hastings was doing Open Mic Night, I decided to do something. I still remember the first song I did, which was “Jealous” by Nick Jonas.

**Us:** How long have you been performing at Open Mic?  
**Aahd:** Since the first Open Mic when I was a freshman.

**Us:** What made you decide to start performing at Open Mic?  
**Aahd:** I like singing, and I wanted to do something new and get over my fear of singing in public.

**Us:** What changes would you like to see be made to Open Mic Night?  
**Aahd:** People should be allowed to play more than two songs. If you want to do three, you should be allowed to do three.



Aahd Tahar singing during last year’s Open Mic Performance.

Image courtesy of Nick Berstein

Editor’s note: Isabelle and Joel also spoke to a number of other artists, including Joe Phillips, Simon Brea, Ry Cullen, the band Small World (Nate Kushner, Dylan Hamburger, Jon Solomon, Django Sibia), the band Blank Citation and the HHS Jazz Band. These profiles will show up in the following issues of The Buzzer, as the paper has chosen to highlight two artists each issue.



# SCHOOL

## Was There a Fire at Hastings High School?

by Iyra Chandra  
*Editor-in-Chief*

I’m sure many of you are wondering about the “fire” incident that happened last Tuesday, October 10th. Did the school burn down? Did anyone get hurt? Was there even a fire? As someone who was there first hand to witness this atrocity, I have all the details. At around 8:30pm, the fire alarm rang and students and teachers rushed out of the school. Due to the odd timing, the common consensus was that it was not a fire drill. Therefore, there was a flurry of panic from the entire Hastings High School community at the time of the event.

In a matter of minutes, members of the steel drums ensemble, the cast of the school play *As You Like It*, the middle school basketball team, and members of a district wide board meeting were gathered outside the middle and high school. Firetrucks rushed to the school and firefighters barged in, fully donned with oxygen tanks and masks. Emma Simon, from the steel drums ensemble states, “We were all very shocked when the fire alarm went off as we were practicing our new song,” and Tatiana Dorn, also in the steel drum ensemble, adds, “I looked up from my steel drum to see the flashing light and instantly thought- save the drums! So it was a pretty crazy event.” Katelin Penner, a student rehearsing in the school play, jokes “One of my castmates almost fell off the stage in fear when the fire alarm went off!”

Additional members of the steel drum ensemble, Leonard Meenan-Pakin and David Devito laughingly joked. David said, “It was all out of nowhere! I was just standing there and then smoke and flames everywhere! I just had to run.” Leonard adds, “After picking David up and carrying him from the burning building, I feel like I have done something good for the community.”

Teachers alike were confused and shocked with the fire alarm. Mr. Jernigan stated, “We were in the middle of a rehearsal when suddenly the alarms went off. We quickly, safely and responsibly evacuated the band room and waited for updates from the fire department.” Dr. Sinanis, the district wide superintendent, added, “We were in the middle of the board meeting. We had to leave the meeting and finish it on the steps outside the school. All I have to say is that I’m glad my kids are safe and that everyone got out.”

Students and faculty waited outside the high school for over half an hour. Fire department Chief Gunther explained that during this time the fire department was “checking the detector to see what the problem was and trying to reset the system.”

Due to the extensive documentation on social media of the fire, everyone was buzzing with rumors about the cause. Senior Nate Kushner even said “I heard it was carbon monoxide!” However, Fire Chief Gunther cleared up the suspicions at the scene. Gunther stated, “There was no fire. The noise was caused by a malfunction within the detector itself.”



Firefighters gathered outside the schoool

*Image courtesy of Iyra Chandra*

*Continued from front page*  
“wishes he could be more independent,” especially in history, his favorite subject.

The high school Special Education department is primarily supervised by Ms. Laura Sullivan, the director of the department and Mr. Tesfa Stewart, the Assistant Director of Special Education, who joined the department after the audit.

Alongside the growing staff and administrative team, SEPTA plans to play an active role in the forthcoming changes. As Ms. Johnson and Ms. Destin explain, “Founded in 2004, Hastings-on-Hudson SEPTA is a PTA focused on the needs and concerns of any child with a learning difference, be they currently receiving special education services through the District or not. We advocate for curriculum, professional development, technology, processes and resources that help our schools teach to every child - especially those with IEPs, 504s and different learning styles.” SEPTA works closely with parents and educators to fund special projects that enhance the learning experience for children as well as support new and experienced families in navigating the special education system. SEPTA provides workshops and referrals to families.

The overarching goal of special education (check this) is inclusion, and this idea will continue to be stressed throughout the district. Ms. Sullivan explained, “Every grade level at Hillside has an Integrated Co-Teacher classroom and content areas in the middle and high school also have Integrated Co-Teacher classes. An integrated Co-Teacher classroom is when a general education and special education teacher plan and deliver lessons collaboratively. The district is committed to providing student’s instruction in the least restrictive environment.”

These co-taught classes are complemented by other services, such as access to resource room, which one student explained as “an important part of the special education department which helps students set goals and accomplish tasks. This is a one-on-one learning experience.”

The entire idea of inclusion is to “create an environment where students are on the same team and are supporting each other even if their learning challenges may be different,” said collaborative classroom English teacher Mr. Abrams. Mr. Abrams has taught collaborative English 10 alongside Ms. Royal for nine years, and he described the collaborative classes as his “favorite classes of all time to teach.”

Ms. Correa, likewise, noted that “having two teachers with different strengths and backgrounds enhances the class and provides a level of support to all students that helps them access the material better. I also think being in a collaborative class helps the special education students to feel more comfortable as special education students are often more open to asking the specialized teachers for help.” Mr. Abrams could not agree more. He also stated that “When a collaborative class is working well, special education students feel included like any other students. Sometimes, in the best case scenario, special education students are even able to talk about their disability with their peers, modeling how they have overcome challenges to succeed. This is a remarkable, courageous move as it is never easy to feel that you have a difference.”

However, Abrams noted, there are often misconceptions about collaborative classes. As Mr. Abrams explained, “Many students believe that all special education students get modified assignments, whereas in reality, assignments are rarely modified and any changes made to assignments are intended to help

the students access the material. The learning goals remain the same, sometimes the pathway is just a little different.” Mr. Abrams added that “one of the hardest things for general education students to understand is coming to terms with the responsibility they have in a collaborative classrooms. Unlike other classes where the environment can sometimes feel all about competition, students in collaborative classes must understand that we are all working toward different goals to benefit ourselves.” Ms. Correa added that “initially for students in the general education program, it can be confusing why there are two teachers in the room. However, as the year goes by, all students begin to use a second teacher for help and therefore appreciate having the resource of a collaborative classroom.”

When asked about being in a collaborative class, Ryland said that “it really wasn’t very different [than a normal class], except I got some more individualized help, especially with in class assignments.” When asking general education students about their view on the way collaborative classrooms are taught, the responses were more varied. Although many students, such as senior Dani Raynes, stated that “being in a collaborative class did not matter and I liked having an extra teacher,” not everyone felt that they could optimally learn in a collaborative setting. Junior Christian Healy, who is currently in an English 11 collaborative class, said that “although I enjoy my English class, I feel that I get less support than I would in a regular class, even though there are two teachers. I think it’s often hard for teachers to balance the needs and assignments of different types of students while creating a rigorous teaching environment.” Ms. Royal, a collaborative English teacher, adds that “there are so many positive benefits to a collaborative class- two highly qualified teachers in the same space who work well together and can target more personalized instruction, the needed rigors associated with the class and the modifications and accommodations that will allow all students to be successful.” To create a truly exclusive environment, all students must be comfortable in a collaborative setting. Mr. Abrams said that in his years of teaching experience he has found that, “students who are not special education students often underestimate the feeling of having to go to school while also coping with a learning disability.” Following the lawsuit and with the audit’s recommendations beginning to be implemented, the special education department will continue to grow and work to establish better communication between students, faculty and parents. Superintendent Dr. Sinanis concluded that “In the next few years, my greatest goal is to see our special ed students not feel separated or treated differently.”

*An editor’s note: Ms. Johnson and Ms. Destin wanted to reach out to the high school community. Their message is attached: Beyond the work we are doing supporting the District in the implementation of the audit’s recommendations, we hope to gain a better understanding of the high school experience and how we might be of better service to that community. To that end, we would ask any high school student or parent of a high school student to reach out and share their experience with us. You can e-mail either of us directly, Jennifer Destin*



# SPORTS

## HBVS: Life After States

by Phoebe Sander  
*Contributing Writer*

The Boys Varsity Soccer team’s victory last fall will certainly go down in the history of Hastings Athletics. From the smaller games at home to the State Final Championship, the players (and their avid fans) experienced an intense amount of excitement and success. But people graduate, other teams gain players, and dynamics change. The question for the Boys Soccer Team is: what’s next for this season? As of October 11, the team’s record was 7-7, with victories against Rye, Valhalla, and others. Captain Alex Bourgeois, our very own Gentle Giant who was named a preseason All-American this August, says there are a lot of factors that make this season different. “We all have higher expectations for the program after winning states, and we believe we have the talent to go far if we work together as a team,” he says. Hastings lost a lot of strong senior players this year, but underclassmen from last year’s JV team have stepped up to the challenge. JV’s almost spotless record certainly created a strong base for the new members of the Varsity team. Bourgeois notes that on the team last year, “we were all trying to achieve the same goal” --however, with new members, leadership skills and experience vary. Bourgeois notes that players who had the opportunity to play in a state final game have had that added experience of something rare and special.

Captain Willem Bos feels that what can be challenging is that “there’s a stronger desire for opponents to challenge the team which makes every game that much harder.” Along with Bourgeois, he feels the change in team dynamics although he is very positive: “last year’s team was very tightly knit, leading to really good chemistry that showed on the field.” Bos explains that the team is working hard to rebuild this bond.

The fans of HBVS are still as loud and proud as previous years. Their energy was certainly seen as the team played Rye at a Saturday night under-the-lights game. Fans cheered and jumped down to the fence as Bourgeois scored a header to put the game into overtime and sophomore Marcus Hirt shot the golden goal. The players felt the fans’ presence and



The Boys Varsity Soccer team in a huddle, during a time out.  
*Image courtesy of Owen Labate*

will continue to feel it throughout the season. Although freshmen may have missed being a part of the HHS crowd at States last year, they are certainly experiencing the classic cheers, slow claps, and “hands up” during games.

HBVS may have lost players, but their talent and competitive attitude remains. Captains and players show hope for the season, although creating a State Championship team for a second consecutive year will be tough on any amount of talent.

## Phantom Goal Posts

by Sebastien Scioscia  
*Contributing Writer*



New football goal post, standing on newly renevated Burke Estate  
*Image courtesy of Owen Labate*

Last spring, two goal posts were installed at the upper Burke field. Surprisingly, this is not the location where the varsity football team plays, but where the varsity soccer teams play. While the soccer team has perfectly normal goal posts that go unused, the football team’s practice field consists of a single makeshift goal post. This has caused confusion among Hastings residents as well as the student body.

Ms. Maureen Caraballo, the treasurer of the Hastings school district, offered some explanation, “The goal posts were part of the bond project and were included in the plans that we sent out to the bidders. The cost was approximately \$15,000.”

Senior Adam Benarafa, kicker and punter for the football team, added, “I think it is outrageous that the football team is not allowed to use [The Goal Posts].”

Junior Eli Bertan, a member of the boys varsity soccer team, also expressed confusion as to why the goal posts are on the soccer field, “I think it’s a huge waste considering the fact that the soccer team is always complaining about how bad the fields are. Instead of spending money on the fields, it’s been spent on something that isn’t used.”

While at this time the goal posts seem to have no use, a decision was made by our Athletic Director, Mr. Jesse Merchant, and our Facilities Director, Mr. Joseph Martorana, to keep them, especially because it would cost around \$4,500 to remove them. On a more positive note, Caraballo says, “It allows greater flexibility in scheduling fields when they can all be used by all of our sports teams... we can move teams around if we need to rest one of our fields due to overuse.”



# SPORTS

## FIELD HOCKEY

The field hockey team gained many new players this year, mostly freshman, who are all extremely excited to join what is already a cohesive team. As junior Anya van Hoogstraten explains, the new members of the team only make it stronger. The team has been bonding on and off the field, and after a win against Irvington and a tie against Pleasantville, the girls are confident to continue the rest of the season.

## GIRLS SWIMMING

After the swimming team went undefeated last year, they were moved up to a higher division, which means stronger competition. As of September 30th, their record was 3-2, and they only had four more meets to go. They are facing some of the same teams as last season, but also some new ones. At time of writing, they didn't have any state qualifying times, but they are still confident that they will be able to send "three relays and at least two individual swimmers," says senior Allie Lemischak.

## VOLLEYBALL

Captain Zoe Grossman said, "It is a young team this year and we are working hard to make it a great season". Captain Chiara Tarricone added, "Every game has been a learning experience for us as a team as we try to navigate how to stay positive on the court."

by Ariel Moss  
Managing Editor

## FOOTBALL

The football team started off with a "lot of momentum," as captain Frank Carozza explained. They started with a win, but as the season progressed they faced more and more challenging teams. After working hard through their first three games, the team suffered injuries to three of their starters. The team hopes that new players step up and fill the roles of their injured teammates. "The team is pretty banged up right now... but everyone is staying positive," says Sebastien Scioscia. They have some tough competition in the games ahead, and although they lost some players, they have not lost their motivation.



## GIRLS TENNIS

Girls' tennis jumped right into matches after a very short preseason. Although many members wish they had more practice time, the team was excited to have had the opportunity to play a wide variety of schools. After winning a few games, the team gained a lot of confidence. They are happy to have ended the season on a good note, but they are sad that it's over. A big congratulations to the girls who moved on to sectionals!

## HUDSONETTES

The season ran very smoothly for the cheerleaders. Having gained many new members, the team is thrilled about how quickly everyone caught on. The whole team worked hard to make each other, and the team as a whole, better. "This is my fourth year on the team, and I can say that it is the first time that the Hudsonettes have been so well prepared for games," reveals captain Julia Berman. The Hudsonettes are excited about their last few games and how successful the whole season was. They hope everyone enjoyed the "fun things planned for pep rally!"

## CROSS COUNTRY

Cross country has a very fresh team with many younger players. The girls' team started the season off well, having won a few meets already. The boys' team consists of mostly underclassmen, so as the years progress, so will they. They have been working hard and trying to "get a few new athletes to qualify for states," says Caroline Fogarty.

## BOYS SOCCER

Boys' soccer, on the other hand, had a tough start to their season - they struggled to find their momentum. Captain Alex Bourgeois explains that it is still very early in the season and they are motivated to find their "rhythm as a team" and they are still confident that they will be back to their "winning ways soon."

## GIRLS SOCCER

Girls' soccer had a record of 5-2 as of September 19th due to the help of many new players. The returning players are all very excited about their new teammates. Captain Samantha Gabay notes that "the connection between all of [them] off the field really translates to the field." They are awaiting their upcoming competition and are ready to play their best for the remainder of the season.

## Sports Teams Take On Breast Cancer

by Zoe Grossman  
Contributing Writer

This year, both the Girls Varsity Tennis Team, and the Girls Varsity Volleyball team have decided to dedicate one of their home games to raising awareness for Breast Cancer. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the teams thought that hosting these games would be a great way to raise money and awareness for a good cause while also boosting attendance to their games.

The Girls Varsity Tennis Team hosted their "Ace the Cure Event" on Thursday, October 5th against Croton-Harmon High School. The girls decorated the courts with pink decorations, used pink tennis balls and wore pink t-shirts to show their support for the cause. They even supplied the other team with pink t-shirts to show their appreciation for their participation in this special match. The tennis team hosted a bake sale at lunch on Tuesday October 3rd and donated the proceeds to breast cancer research. Coach Gizzi said "I am really excited for the opportunity to combine tennis with a good cause. The team is really excited and it should be a lot of fun."

The Girls Varsity Volleyball team hosted their "Dig for a Cure" match on Thursday October 12th at 6:00pm against Woodlands High School. In the weeks leading up to the game, players on both the Junior Varsity, and Varsity teams sold boxes of Krispy Kreme doughnuts, from which some of the profits are going directly to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. The team wore pink t-shirts and socks to wear as uniforms during the game, and they also decorated the gym for the match. "Dig for a Cure" t-shirts and a number of snacks were sold to fans at the game. All profits will be donated to the Breast Cancer Research foundation. Additionally, there was a photobooth at the game at which fans took pictures with a number of fun props. Coach Kehoe said that she was "so excited to be a part of the first annual Breast Cancer Game" and "can't wait to start a tradition of volleyball paired with a great charity."



Taken minutes before the 1st annual Breast Cancer awareness matches, at the Reyonlds Field courts.

Image courtesy of Ms.Gizzi



The 1st annual Dig for a Cure, on the John Costello Court

Image courtesy of Alex Campson



# COMMUNITY

## Student Voices

### What Does It Means to Legalize Marijuana?

by Joel Gardner and Katelin Penner  
*Contributing Writers*

Imagine a prisoner. Why is this person in prison? Why does the government spend taxpayer money to keep this person contained and to watch them day and night? The conventional wisdom is that people in prison are there because they pose a threat to society, so they must be held for an arbitrary amount of time until the state declares them rehabilitated. Many of these prisoners, however, committed no real harm to society. As a nation, we consume a wide variety of drugs. They range from the legal, relatively innocuous substances we see every day, like caffeine, to more dangerous substances that the government has deemed illegal. The government regulates the substances that citizens can use in order to limit harm to society. For instance, if the government made heroin legal, it would be very easy for people to buy it, and the heroin epidemic that is currently ravaging most of America would become far worse. We don't question the government's power to make heroin illegal because we recognize the damage it could do to our society.

However, the choices that the government makes regarding the regulation of certain substances frequently seem arbitrary and confusing. Smoking tobacco, for instance, is estimated by the CDC to cause upwards of 480,000 deaths each year. In contrast, it is unclear how many people marijuana kills yearly: according to the DEA, no overdose deaths have ever been reported. Marijuana likely has indirectly caused some deaths due to impaired driving, but these deaths are overshadowed by the number of people who have died due to drunk driving, which is far more frequent and equally dangerous. Marijuana may prove to be less of a risk to society than either alcohol or tobacco, which, unlike marijuana, are both legal in most jurisdictions.

Not only is the prohibition of marijuana confusing, it also is a major burden on our judicial system. According to the ACLU, marijuana was involved in 52% of drug-related arrests. In an estimated 88% of these arrests, the perpetrator simply possessed marijuana, with no evidence that they intended to sell or distribute it. All told, an average 721,600 arrests are made each year in which the person arrested only committed the crime of possessing a small quantity of marijuana. In a time where our court systems are overloaded and our jails are overcrowded, should we really be chasing after people who decided to smoke a plant in the privacy of their own homes? Should we really be spending taxpayer money on punishing people who did no real harm to anybody?

Not only does marijuana prohibition cause suffering to many people who committed no real wrong, it also drives racial division. While the use of marijuana is relatively consistent across racial lines, the ACLU reports that black americans are 3.73 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana related offenses than white americans are. A community already devastated by high rates of poverty and incarceration doesn't need to have its situation worsened by draconian laws that disproportionately impact it.

One final concern expressed by opponents of marijuana legalization is that legalizing marijuana may increase the rates at which young people abuse it. This is a valid concern, but it ultimately doesn't hold water. Legalization wouldn't mean complete legalization. Legalized marijuana would be almost definitely be subject to the same laws that regulate alcohol and tobacco. Teenagers wouldn't be able to buy it with impunity. It is unlikely that drug dealers would be able to compete with legal sellers of marijuana, making it more difficult for teens to get drugs. And while marijuana use is relatively widespread, with 45% of americans admitting to having tried it, it hasn't caused the same devastation to parts of America that heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamines have caused. Legalizing marijuana won't worsen the 'marijuana epidemic' because there is no marijuana epidemic. All it will do is help some of America's most damaged communities and make it easier for the justice system to catch people who pose an actual threat to society. Legalization is popular across America, with 60% of the country in support, and states that already have legalized marijuana have not shown the uptick in drug-related deaths that many expected. This issue affects all of us, and it's time for change.

## Marijuana Use and Academic Success

by Alexa Brink, Ryan Mon, Jack Jackobsen, Griffin Joerger, Eoghan Murphy, Leo Belsky,  
Josh Colon, Bianca Zordan  
*Contributing Writers*

Despite the increase in marijuana legalization in recent years, with 29 states legalizing marijuana to some degree, according to the latest figures released by the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, students' use of marijuana has dropped to its lowest rate since 1994. In addition, average grades in the United States have increased since the 1990s. We wanted to explore if there was a correlation between drug use and academic success, and how Hastings students fit into national trends.

In a survey of 71 Hastings students, consisting of 30 freshmen, 24 sophomores and 17 seniors, 3 freshmen, 3 sophomores and 17 seniors admitted to using marijuana. This suggests that marijuana usage increases as students progress through high school.

When asked why he thought seniors smoked so much more than freshmen, an anonymous freshman said, "I think it is because it is so common for them now and since they are basically done with high-school they are making the best of it, while freshman are just starting and they are a lot more focused on their work."

According to the National Institute Of Health in 2016, 9.4% of American 8th graders reported marijuana use in the past year and 5.4 % in the past month. Among 10th graders, 23.9% had used marijuana in the past year and 14.0 percent in the past month. Based on our limited survey, rates of use among Hastings 12th graders appear to be higher than than the 34 % of seniors represented in national averages.

As to why Hastings has a higher usage, senior Sean Kessner said, "Hastings is a very lenient place where student and people in general are probably less worried about legal action taking place if they are caught."

The school social worker, Ms, Repp, however, said "Because it's been legalized [in some places], people think it's fine, but it's not fine. That's not what the statistics are showing research shows if you're using it to focus, it is not effective."

"The other component is a lot of students use weed for a relief of stress," she continued, "The adolescent brain is not built to be able to have a lot of alcohol and weed introduced to it,"

A student, though , feels differently,"I feel like it doesn't affect affect me negatively for school, it actually has helped me mentally, emotionally, and spiritually."

"I can say marijuana use can affect student health," said Joanne Cipollina, a Hastings High School nurse. "It can lead to people feeling depressed, and it can lead to the use of other drugs. Marijanaua today can be tainted with other things. The THC in marijuana these days is

very high, and it's different from the weed from the 60's and 70's. I think marijuana can also cause kids to sleep in, and come to school late."

"The use of [marijuana] negatively impacts: emotional coping and stress management and then how the brain actually functions. Secondly, weed impacts how your memory stores information. It does a very poor job under the influence to effectively store information," said Ms. Repp, school social worker.

One student who made the choice to stop smoking marijuana, "noticed an increase in energy levels, less sleep, more vivid dreams, and better concentration,"

Ms. Repp has found similar results with student she has worked with, "students who have quit and they report their brain feels clearer and they can breathe better, emotionally they have built ways to deal with theses situations. "

Teachers, as well, have noticed the negative impact of marijuana on students, "I have had some students who are often high in class and they struggle in ways exactly how you would expect," said Mr. Stephens He does, however, "want to be clear I don't think that occasionally trying marijuana means that automatically your grades will suffer."

Mrs. Royal, 10th grade english teacher, added,"I don't see how any foreign substance put in the body would not alter performance. I don't necessarily have the scientific research, but I'd imagine that it would decrease productivity and attention to tasks which would lead to poor grades."

While many students believe that marijuana helps them relax and do work, simply because it is part of their daily routine, Ms. Repp said, "Research shows if you're using it to focus it is not effective. If the only way you can sleep is by being under the influence we are setting the brain up for failure."

Substantial evidence from animal research and a growing number of studies in humans indicate that marijuana exposure during development can cause long-term or possibly permanent adverse changes in the brain. Rats exposed to THC before birth, soon after birth, or during adolescence show notable problems with specific learning and memory tasks later in life.

Several studies, including two large longitudinal studies, suggest that marijuana use can cause functional impairment in cognitive abilities but that the degree and/or duration of the impairment depends on the age when a person began using and how much and how long he or she used.

Still, students and teachers remain divided. Ms. Repp ultimately believes that, "Our job is to make sure you're the best version of you when you leave, so when we see weed interfering with grades, we get involved."



# COMMUNITY

## Building a Fence Around Hillside Woods

by Nathaniel Kushner  
*Managing Editor*

Those who like to take walks through Hillside woods may have noticed seemingly random sections of land covered by netting - ten square meters of undergrowth are covered by this protective netting, and adjacent to it lies stakes sticking out of the ground. These structures are not incidental, and their existence is thanks to, as with many problems in Hastings, deer.

“If you are in a forest, within 100 meters you shouldn’t be able to see someone,” says Mrs. Shandroff, AP Environmental science teacher. “And in Hillside, you can see well beyond that.” This is because of the lack of underbrush - critical small plants like shrubs and grasses that thrive on the floor of forests. The absence of these plants makes the forest less stable and resistant to change and harm smaller animals that rely on them for protection or food. The lack of organic nutrients and seeds also make the soil less fertile and accommodating to plants.

So where did the underbrush go? Simply put, the deer ate it all. Deer in Hastings have no natural predators (aside from the rare coyote) and hunting is an insignificant factor, allowing the population to skyrocket in recent times. When the typical diet of fruits, acorns, and tall plants is exhausted, the deer turn to underbrush to support their population. Over the course of years and years, this process has led the floor of Hillside Woods to the barren state that it resides in today. Wildlife biologist David deCalesta, who participated in the Hillside Woods panel discussions last spring, called the woods “the worst ecological ‘deer desert’” that he had seen in 47 years of deer and forest research.

The aforementioned netting, then, is an experiment designed to see if the underbrush will recover without the presence of deer. The stakes that lie next to them represents a control group that is fully open to deer. However, little seems to be different between the experimental group and the control group. “We haven’t seen anything yet, and we’ve been doing it for three years,” Mrs. Shandroff continues. “We’re really not sure why. If there were no native species with no

seeds remaining, then you won’t see regrowth ever. Or if we will see regrowth, it’ll be invasive [species]. It’s a matter of time, it just takes a lot of time to see those changes. We haven’t seen much yet.”

High deer populations are a problem not just to local ecosystems, but also citizens. Close calls when deer jump onto the road and reports of ravaged gardens are among the most common complaints. Many have called upon the local government to try and fix the problem. The most recent move made to curtail population growth has been a birth control program, in which teams of specialists have darted does to tranquilize them before administering a birth control treatment. The treatment prevents them from becoming pregnant, potentially lowering population growth rates. These deer have been marked with a yellow ear tag. This program has drawn ire from the community, however, for its high price and seemingly lackluster results. deCalesta reports that these efforts have kept the population in a state of equilibrium.

The most popular new plan for restoring Hillside Woods is to cover the perimeter with fencing. This would be a major project, however: the perimeter of the woods is over a mile long, and the fences must be tall and steady enough to keep deer out entirely, while allowing smaller animals to pass in and out. There are also aesthetic concerns, with some worried the barriers would be an eyesore.

As it is now, Hillside Woods resembles a barren group of trees with little life between them. Whether or not fencing will solve anything, deer populations remain high and stable. Every citizen would like the woods to flourish once again, but it’s shown to be a tricky problem to solve.



Deer in Hillside Woods

Image courtesy of google images

## A New Waffle Comes to Town

by Grace Aronoff and Iyra Chandra  
*Managing Editor and Editor in Chief*

The Wild Culture Waffle cart is the latest addition to the Hastings Farmers Market. The people of not only Hastings but other local rivertowns just can’t get enough of these sweet and savory confections.

The chef behind this local phenomenon is Miguel Lacruz, who enlists the help of his nephew, a fifth grader in Hastings. What makes these waffles so good is that the chefs use a syringe to inject a special filling into each one. The waffles are freshly made right in front of you, using batter prepared that morning. Most of the ingredients in the waffles are farm-fresh.

A variety of flavors are used as filling, including honey from a local farm, maple syrup, 56% milk Venezuelan chocolate, strawberry jam, raspberry jam, and also a savory option, black forest ham and gruyere cheese with a maple drizzle. If you’re feeling like trying something different, they have an “everything bagel” waffle seasoned with cream cheese, which happens to be a Hastings original.



Miguel Lacruz with his nephew



Miguel inserting jam into waffles



Menu from Wild Culture

Image courtesy of Iyra Chandra

Wild Culture Waffle’s hardcore fans are dying to see more flavors, such as nutella, caramel, marshmallow, or even s’mores come to their favorite new stand at the market.

Prices start at \$5.50 (for the classic waffle) and go up to \$8. Once you fall in love with the waffles, which is bound to happen, you’ll think about them all week long, not just on Saturdays! There is the option of frozen waffles, which come in a pack of three and are perfect to bring home and have during the week for breakfast or dessert, ranging in price from \$10 to \$12.

The idea for the cart came from the Wild Culture Waffle truck in NYC, designed by Carolina Neurvern, designer of the well-known Waffle and Dinges truck. Their most famous flavors are pulled pork with avocado and dulce de leche with ice cream and powder sugar. This is a food truck that can be found all over New York City, with it famous brown and yellow design. Neurvern is “very nicely surprised to see the waffle truck” in Hastings, and can often be seen at Saturday Markets.

It seems that the rivertowns’ favorite food cart is here to stay. As Lacruz’s nephew remembered to mention, Wild Culture Waffle has an Instagram (@wildcultureny) which previews some of the newest flavors! The Hastings Farmers Market and community can’t get enough of these waffles, and are dying for any chance to get more of them.



# POLITICAL

## Students Get Political

by Isabelle Johnson  
*Contributing Writer*

With the end of the year on the horizon, many students are concerned about early deadlines for college applications and the work they have piling up. Life seems to be moving at a rapid pace, so why would you think it's important to pay attention to two more old white men looking to become the county executive of Westchester?

On November 7, voters will be headed to turn in their ballots for a new county executive. Most students don't seem to be aware of the role of a county executive. Essentially, a county executive acts as the president of Westchester County. Although Westchester is pretty small and liberal, a republican named Rob Astorino has essentially been the president of Westchester for the past few years. According to multiple seniors in the Future Voters of America club, Astorino's election was due to low voter turnout.

In this year's election, democratic candidate George Latimer is giving Rob Astorino a run for his money. By supporting public education, Latimer has become popular amongst many individuals in Westchester, including students. Many students have been actively involved in phone banking and canvassing for Latimer's campaign. Working several events and attending city halls, students such as Katelin Penner and Hannah Scotch have been taking an active role in promoting civic involvement and political awareness. According to senior Jacob Amaral, meeting Latimer was the "greatest moment of [his] life," which shows the value of political involvement.

It is clear that some students are involved in the election, but why should the student body as a whole pay attention? Since many people in Westchester are apathetic voters, your voices matter more than ever. Most of you are probably unable to vote, but that doesn't mean you can't do something during this election season. Ask your parents if they'll be voting, and if not, tell them that it is important that they exercise their right as citizens of the United States. Local politicians are making decisions that will impact your life much more immediately than any action the president of our country takes, making local elections arguably more relevant to your daily life, especially in the small county of Westchester. Become informed about the people running your community. Talk about the election with those around you, and get involved!



Democrat George Latimer

*Image courtesy of nysenate.gov*

## Student Voices

### Why We Need to Read the *BFG* Now

by Jennie Gorn  
*Contributing Writer*

Last year, Steven Spielberg brought a very important children's book back into the public eye: The BFG, also known as the Big Friendly Giant. While I haven't yet seen Spielberg's interpretation of the story, I am very familiar with the book. Originally written by Roald Dahl, the story depicts the unlikely friendship between a twenty four foot giant and an eight-year-old girl named Sophie. After snatching Sophie from her bed during the dead of night, the two spend the day together before deciding to team up so they can stop the other giants from eating people forever. The language is beautiful, the illustrations are quirky, and the story is compelling the whole way through.

Whether or not Dahl meant it to be, the book is actually a commentary on prejudice and racial and ethnic supremacy. Upon getting snatched from her bed, the first thought Sophie has is "holy crap this thing is gonna eat me" (in language that is more kid friendly). She knows nothing about the BFG before that night and simply because of his appearance, she makes assumptions. And even after the BFG tells her that he won't eat her, she has a hard time believing that he's so nice and friendly. Considering he kidnapped her in the middle of the night with no explanation, it's understandable why she might feel this way, but her skepticism is still very present when they talk. This is Roald Dahl's way of talking about prejudice in a way that kids can understand. Even though Sophie didn't know giants existed, she still had a preconceived notion about them, and a pretty bad one too. However, Sophie does allow her opinions to be shaped by what the BFG tells her. In these moments, it becomes apparent how impressionable children are and because Sophie's brain is still forming, her ideals, values, and prejudices are changed by the new ideas that the BFG discusses with her.

Dahl also tackles the issue of racial and ethnic supremacy within the book. The BFG freely admits that the giants he lives around are malicious and that eating people is bad. However, it takes Sophie a long time to admit that humans can be, or even are, worse. Sure, it's rare that humans eat each other, but humans are one of the only species on Earth that kill each other for the sake of killing each other. There are animals that will kill and eat their own species, but this can always be traced back to issues of overpopulation or malnutrition. Sophie desperately tries to name animals that also kill for the purpose of killing, but the BFG shuts them all down. All of a sudden, Sophie's supremacist complex is dissolved. All that she's been taught, either consciously or unconsciously, has been proved wrong in a matter of minutes. In one last effort to defend her species, Sophie claims that it's still not okay for the giants to be eating humans because humans have never done anything to harm giants. The BFG fires back by saying that that's what pigs say every day, but humans are still eating them. He claims that, "[human beings are] making rules to suit themselves." Humans are greedy, and they constantly create laws to better themselves as opposed to any other species. It is clear that humans are in the wrong here, which causes Sophie to rethink everything she knows.

It is clear throughout the novel that Sophie represents the white privileged class and the BFG represents the oppressed. Even though Sophie is an orphan who has been living in various orphanages, she still has never truly interacted with people outside her race and ethnicity. The BFG is startling to her because he is not human, which is how privileged white people tend to view other races. The idea of the "white savior" is present in their relationship, as Sophie sees the BFG, and giants in general, as total savages who wants to eat her; even after realizing that not all giants are bad, her goal in the novel is to protect her own kind from the things that might harm them. She projects herself to the BFG as someone who is more educated and all-knowing, and in turn is the one who comes up with the idea of how to trap the giants so they'll never eat people again. White people to the rescue once again.

As bad as this seems for children to be learning, Dahl does combat Sophie's superiority complex with the BFG, who talks sense into her and does change her beliefs about giants in general. There is also a lot to be said for the fact that the giants they do trap are the ones who have been eating people. Sophie and the BFG are a good example of how those who are not ignorant by choice can learn about different types of people. During the day that the two of them spend, they have many conversations about their different cultures that are beneficial to both Sophie and the BFG. Sophie learns that not all giants are bad and that her own kind has its flaws while the BFG learns how to be courageous and stand up for himself when others look down on him. These moments show how easy it can be to learn about something foreign, and how valuable it is to do so. Even though Spielberg couldn't have predicted an event like the white supremacist protest in Charlottesville, he certainly picked the right time to bring back The BFG. America today is full of racial and ethnic supremacy as well as conscious and subconscious prejudices, and a lot of it can be traced back to childhood. Children are impressionable, and what they learn in their childhood is very hard to unlearn as an adult. People who have prejudices or superiority complexes were often taught those ideas at a young age, which is why children's books, movies, and other types of media are so important. By bringing a book like The BFG into theatres, that book has resurfaced on shelves, meaning Roald Dahl's sly way of teaching children that no race or ethnicity is better than another is back for children to learn again.



# BEYOND THE BUBBLE

## The Man Behind *Savage Continent*

by Noe Lebanidze  
*Contributing Writer*

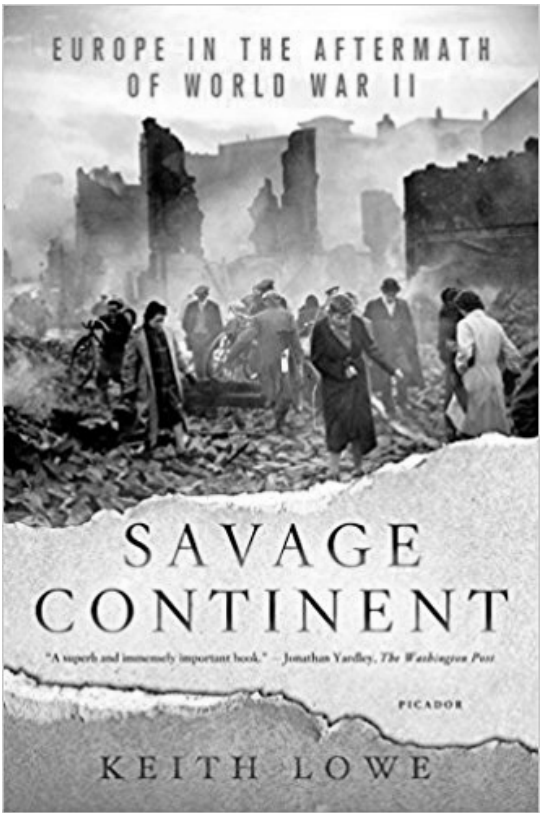
Keith Lowe is a British novelist and historian with a special focus on the Second World War. Some students might recognize him as the author of *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II*, a well-acclaimed work on the often overlooked dark and violent state of Europe in the immediate aftermath of the war. This book was assigned as a summer reading book for AP European History last summer. Through email, Mr. Lowe spared his time to answer a few questions about himself and his book.

Q: How much time did it take for you to write *Savage Continent*?

A: It took about five years in total. I spent the first three years travelling to archives, interviewing people, gathering information. Then two years trying to make sense of it all, putting all my research into some kind of shape, writing, re-writing and then re-writing again.

Q: Obviously there is a lot of stuff you couldn't cover in *Savage Continent*. For example, there's a picture of Hungary from 1947 with the subtext "members of the Freedom Party arm themselves with chairs" in the middle of the book, and yet this group is never referred to again while Hungary is mentioned only fleetingly in the chapter on Communist subjugation. Were there things you researched but didn't include in the book?

A: Writing history – and, for that matter, any kind of writing – is as much about what you leave out as what you put in. Each chapter in the book is the tip of a huge iceberg. So, to use your example, I could easily have written a whole book on communist subjugation – but I had to condense it down to a single chapter. I had already devoted a large part of a previous chapter to Hungary, so for this one I concentrated instead on Romania. That's the difficulty of choosing such a huge subject: you only have space to pick one or two examples to illustrate every point. I tried to stick only to the best examples, the most representative ones, and the ones that would stick in a reader's mind. I chose that photograph because it illustrates so much. It might be a picture from Hungary – but it represents hundreds of other, similar events all over eastern Europe between 1944 and 1948.



Keith Lowe's Book *Savage Continent*  
Image courtesy of google images

Q: There technically isn't "high school" in the UK, but what did you think of history as a student receiving secondary education?

A: In the UK, students get to drop a couple of subjects when they're 14 and, believe it or not, I dropped history. It seems crazy, looking back on it. Anyway, as a consequence, unlike most of my peers I have no idea what it is like to have a formal history education – I am entirely self-taught. For a while I was worried that this might have disadvantaged me, but it really hasn't. In fact, in some ways it has been a blessing, because I have always been free to follow the subjects that fascinate me. As long as you love what you do, you'll always do it well. Besides, history follows the same rules as many other disciplines: never trust what someone else says about an event, always go to the source; never trust a single document or testimony, always gather background information too- that kind of thing. That's the basis of all good history.

Q: In the conclusion to *Savage Continent* you wrote "As for real hatred.... that is now regarded by most young people as little more than ancient history." Do you still think the same way given the current popularity of nationalism among young people, especially in Eastern Europe?

A: How the world has changed in the last 5 years! I have nothing against national pride, and national identity, but it worries me deeply when these feelings are expressed through the distrust or hatred of outsiders. The ugly side of nationalism has grown hugely in eastern Europe. Refugees from Syria are denied entry, simply on the grounds of their religion. Anti-Semitism in Hungary is too often ignored, or even condoned, by those in government. We in the UK and the US are not immune either – we've all got some serious soul-searching to do. Some historians I know are fond of likening the atmosphere today to that of the 1930s. I wouldn't go that far. But I will say that when I wrote those words you quoted from the end of my book, I was a great deal more optimistic about the world than I am today.

To end on a lighter note, what do you do in your free time?

I spend a lot of time with my kids. I run, I swim, I play soccer (badly) with a bunch of other dads. When you spend as much time as I do sitting quietly in libraries and archives, you've got to get up and run around occasionally, and make some noise.

## The Growth of Hopoo

by Andrew Cheng  
*Contributing Writer*

Hopoo Games is an independent game development team of 4 that released its first 2D side scrolling shooter in 2013, titled "Risk of Rain". It received generally favorable reviews and was named one of the Students Showcase winners of the Independent Games festival. "Deadbolt" followed 3 years later and received similar acclaim. Hopoo Games is known mostly for their ability to produce fun games without the nitty gritty of storyline or strange game mechanics.

Both of Hopoo's current games have a focus on gameplay rather than story line. However, by reading item logs(ros) and cassette tapes in deadbolt, players are given insight on the larger plot of the games. What was the idea behind this design?

For both Risk of Rain and Deadbolt we wanted to focus on the gameplay being fun first. We feel like too many other games focus on small details, a certain mechanic, or the story too much and forget to actually make a fun to play game. We still wanted there to be a backstory for those who were interested in knowing more, so we thought the best way to do this was through monster logs, cassette tapes, etc. Also, leaving out some key information is a fun way to leave some of the story up to interpretation to the player as they want to see it.

Independent game developing can be hard work. What inspired you to start Hopoo, and what keeps you motivated?

We started working on games as a hobby in college with Risk of Rain being our first project. We wanted to make a game that was fun, took elements from our favorite games we played growing up, and create a game that we could play together. We stuck with these ideas going through development and in the end it turned out just as we hoped it would. Staying motivated is pretty easy for us since we always make games for fun and it never really feels like a "job" that we have to go and do. We are very lucky to be able to do what we love every day and make a living from it.

How do you guys feel about video game controversies? Wonder if you might have gotten a little more specific here.

We try our best to stay away from any kind of controversies and or drama that comes with the dev community. Nothing really good comes from drama so we tend to focus on making fun games.



# “Rise Up” to Brushy One String

by Bruno McCarthy  
*Contributing Writer*

Have you ever heard of Brushy One String? Not many have, but now you will. Over the past four years, the Jamaican native has been producing original songs with a single string guitar. His very first studio recording album “Destiny,” released in April 2013, was a smash hit to the public. His most famous song, “Chicken in the Corn,” was also released as a single. He’s also released other albums such as “No Man Don’t Stop Me” and single “Mr. DC / Judgement Time” in December of 2014. Brushy was given the nickname “The King of One String” due to his famous one-string guitar. Brushy also has an original documentary called “Rise up” all about his story of living in the Jamaican countryside, to making it big in the Industry. Produced by Luciano Blotta, I was able to get in touch with the producer and land an interview with Brushy himself!

Q: I know that your father - Freddie McKay - was a famous Jamaican singer during the reggae ages. How did your father influence your music career?

A: Yeah, both of my parents were in music. My dad, even though he wasn’t around except for a few rare occasions, I remember how him being a musician had an impact on me and I said from then on I want to sing better than him. So I do a cover of one of his songs called “Picture on the Wall,” I have a video on Youtube of it. Also, my mom was into music. She left when I was little to go around the world doing back-ups for Tina Turner, for example. But really and truly, all the artists of the time influenced me in one way or another, especially American artists like Teddy Pendergrass. And I guess growing up poor in Jamaica has a lot to do with how I express myself musically. My music is about a message, I want to uplift and heal the souls of people that, like me, might have had it rough. I know how it feels, so I wish to bring some hope to them. But regardless of your background, I always aim to uplift and cheer people up.

Q: Throughout your teenage years, did you ever think your music career would become this big?

A: I always dreamed of it so in a way, yes. When you have a dream, that’s all you see. And I heard someone say that if your mind gives you that im-age, it’s because you are capable of it, that there is something in you that can achieve what you see. I never doubted it, but what I didn’t know was the way in which it would come, you never do. All you have to do is see it in your mind.

Q: How did the one string guitar originate? Was it ever a problem to write music with a guitar that has only one string?

A: It all started with a vivid dream I had when I was a kid, where I was visited by a short man who handed me a guitar with 1 string and said to me: “Take care of the guitar and the guitar will take care of you.” So I played it in the dream and all the jungle animals came out to listen and approved of me, almost like in a children’s story. But when I woke up the reality was different, I had to learn to play it! So I found an old guitar, took the strings off of it and I sat down to practice. After days and days I was able to play some basics, so I took to the streets and never looked back, or like they say, the rest is history. And some might say it’s limiting, but when music comes to me I just find a way to express it and it seems to work out.

Q: My favorite song of yours is Chicken in the Corn. How were you inspired to write that song?

A: I was literally inspired by chicken and by corn! The way it happened is, you know, everyone in Jamaica plants stuff in their backyard, whatever it may be, so I was planting corn, burying some seeds in the ground, but after a while I noticed the corn wasn’t growing, nothing was coming up, and it took me a while to realize it was some hens and chickens that were roaming around and plucking the seeds out of the ground and eating them, as simple as that! But I was so upset that I needed to express my frustration and that’s when the line came to me, ‘Chicken in the corn’, and the corn can’t grow! And there could also be a deeper meaning and interpretation of it, in general terms symbolizing any situation that is not going right even though you’ve seemingly done nothing wrong.

Q: I know that you’ve released multiple albums and singles, are there any new songs or albums that you’re working on?

A: Any collaborations? I have another album in the works called “Walking Dreamer” and a single with the same name, as well as the recording of “Picture on the Wall”, my dad’s song that I mentioned earlier. And I might go to Thailand to record with a British producer I admire, we’ll see. But yeah, always making music.

# The Cronut Creator

by Lola Murnighan  
*Contributing Writer*

Dominique Ansel is a world-renowned French pastry chef who spent his childhood living in France. Chef Ansel is most recently known for his invention of the cronut, a cross between a croissant and a donut. This pastry has become extremely famous, and likely contributed to him being named the World’s Best Pastry Chef in April of 2017. Dominique Ansel worked in Paris after serving in the mili-tary, during which he taught communities to cook, and later moved to New York. He is the owner as well as a chef at the Dominique Ansel Bakery, which has several locations around the world.

Q: My father has told me that while your cronuts are very good, it is the rest of your pastries that he thinks are amazing. It seems that you are primarily associated with the cronut; how would you define yourself as a pastry chef, being the mind behind the cronut, which has become such a staple of your career?

A: Well, I think for me, the most important thing is I don’t want my creations to kill my creativity. I’m talking about real creations where when you create something, there is emotion, there is a connec-tion with people that are eating your food, there is understanding, and a vision for the food. So, the creativity for me is more important than anything else. The cronut is a beautiful creation, but after the cronut I’ve created so many new pastries. Some of them have gone viral as well, of course, not as much as the cronut, but some of them are just a bit more special for the people to remember. That’s one of the most important things for me.

Q: Being a highly successful pastry chef, who would you say inspires you or is someone you admire - a fellow chef or even someone with no relation to the culinary business?

A: I admire a lot of chefs. I love excursion and all those things. Travel is probably the main thing. I want to travel, and see places and new styles of cooking food and new cultures; it opens up a lot to me. The world is really small, and big at some times, and I think it’s important to stay open-minded and not be afraid of trying new things.

Q: If you could pick your favorite pastry you have ever had, what is it?

A: Ha ha, that’s hard. I think it’s very important to actually remember food; and memories, travel memories, are most of the time what stick with us. When I remember food, I remember security; [food] brings us back in time to the places and people who we may have loved. I think it’s important to remember food. So, for me, I would say a simple crepe. A crepe that I worked on in the beginning, and something very simple.



Dominique Ansel Holding a Cronut  
*Image courtesy of google images*



# BUZZER ON BACK

## ADVICE

*Hello Hastings High School! The Buzzer is here to solve all of your problems! Thank you for sending us questions. Every issue, we will select three questions! Make sure to get your questions in again for the next issue. Good luck!*

**Question:** So since school has started I've really been wrestling with this question. It might be all the stress of junior year or something else along those lines, but all I know is: this question is very personal. I've been having a tough time finding the right person to answer this, and when I heard that the Buzzer was adding an advice column I thought, what better place to ask?! Anyways, here goes. What's a goon to a goblin?

Answer: We understand that this is a very serious and personal question, and although we have only a little personal experience with goblins and goons, we'll answer to the best of our ability. First, you'll have to understand the historical balance of goons and goblins, especially the delicate dynamics that existed before the Great Gobble Gook War of 1348. You can read up on that in literally any book of ancient runes you may stumble across that is published before 1440 (the year the printing press was invented). Since the Hellions' Treaty, things have been less about bloodshed and goon genocide and more about the coloring of the Goblin King's oozing wounds. In conclusion, although goblins currently reign superior, goons, who have been the inarguable subordinates since that fateful battle, seem to be swelling in number and preparedness for combat; we think a class uprising is soon to pass. Does that answer your question?

**Question:** How can I balance sports and school?

Answer: That can be a hard thing to handle and you're not alone! Being a student athlete is hard for anyone who is one. Time management is a skill that you will be forced to practice during your sports season, and that is a great skill to have. It can definitely be hard and seemingly unmanageable. But rest assured that you can get through it! If you love the sport and you are having a good time, it is all worth it. Just make sure you are staying healthy and positive and you will make it!

**Question:** What should I be for Halloween?

Answer: Good question. Halloween can be as creative as you want, with costume options ranging anywhere from food to songs to celebrities to Disney characters. I like to wear something that I can use again so it doesn't feel like a waste. Try a "Do-It-Yourself" at home. Or you could be something with a group of people and emulate a famous group. There are no boundaries for Halloween, so go crazy! I suggest looking online on Pinterest or even just doing a Google search to find some inspiration.

## HALLOWEEN WORD SEARCH

T	L	U	F	T	H	G	I	R	F	S	P	O	V	D	M	Z
H	E	P	C	Z	C	S	J	S	T	Y	S	O	S	O	K	N
G	P	U	M	P	K	I	N	A	Y	E	D	B	T	S	S	O
I	N	O	T	I	P	G	B	E	G	V	R	N	A	P	X	I
L	R	T	T	A	C	K	C	A	L	B	A	D	M	O	A	T
I	E	R	C	R	C	D	U	Y	S	H	Q	U	U	O	G	O
W	T	I	W	A	G	Z	W	E	P	P	B	P	L	K	O	P
T	N	C	C	P	U	E	I	R	E	E	R	Z	E	Y	M	G
X	A	K	B	P	C	L	Z	Z	S	Z	S	H	T	B	Z	W
U	L	O	R	A	T	G	D	O	G	H	I	W	I	T	C	H
E	O	R	I	R	I	Z	O	R	H	S	P	E	L	L	X	O
V	K	T	M	I	O	G	X	N	O	C	O	N	J	U	R	E
M	C	R	S	T	P	J	T	C	S	N	B	E	W	B	O	C
O	A	E	T	I	K	F	T	E	T	V	O	G	A	J	I	C
O	J	A	O	O	Z	D	S	S	N	O	T	E	L	E	K	S
N	A	T	N	N	B	P	G	B	P	E	U	C	R	X	W	V
J	G	V	E	J	S	U	O	I	R	E	T	S	Y	M	F	O

AMULET  
APPARITION  
BATS  
BLACK CAT  
BOO  
BRIMSTONE  
CACKLE

CONJURE  
EERIE  
FRIGHTFUL  
GHOST  
GOOSE BUMPS  
JACK-O-LANTERN  
MOON

POTION  
PUMPKIN  
SKELETON  
SPELL  
SPOOKY  
TRICK OR TREAT  
TWILIGHT

