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The Cougar Chronicle

The Student Newspaper of Haddam-Killingworth High School

Debaters Put on a Show For HK Community

By Sophia Schoen-Newsome

The Annual Debate Competition of HK's Speech and Debate class took place in the auditorium on Feb. 22. The topic: "Should electric cars be banned?"

Colton Whiteley and Jack Ferguson were on the affirmative, or the side that argues in favor of the topic, while Orion Inkel and Grace Quilliam were on the negative, the opposite side.

The debate format had the affirmative side presenting for 10 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for the negative side. After a five-minute break for the teams to prepare, the affirmative side responded to rebuttal arguments and asked questions. Once they were done, the negative side took their turn.

After about a 10-minute break for the judges (HK teachers) to make their decision, Mr. Czarkowski, HK's Speech and Debate teacher and discussion moderator, announced that team negative, Inkel and Quilliam, had won the debate.

When asked how they felt the debate went, Quilliam said, "I think it went well. It was really close." Inkel responded, "Amazing. I mean, we won. Spectacular."

Whiteley, on the affirmative side, responded that he "politely disagreed" with the judges' decision. Ferguson was "disappointed we lost, but I thought it was a good effort in all."

Both teams discussed their preparation for the event. Quilliam explained, "We only had two days



Debaters, from left: Colton Whiteley, Jack Ferguson, Orion Inkel, and Grace Quilliam.

to prepare. Orion called me to see what we could do with the topic. We divided up the workload. The bulk of the research was on Monday and the writing was on Tuesday (the day before the debate)."

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Whiteley called it a “stressful day. You didn’t want to go up there and embarrass yourself. We dedicated our day off to the academic prowess."

Ferguson added that he “wished there was more time, but we found plenty of information. Almost too much.”

Members of the winning side said if they were to go against each other again, they would “try to adhere to the prompt more,” according to Inkel. "There's not much to change when you win.”

Whiteley and Ferguson said “if we went against them again we would win,” and that they “had information we totally forgot to bring up that would’ve sealed the deal.”

According to Northern Illinois University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, speech and debate helps “students learn through friendly competition, examine controversial topics, and strengthen skills in the area of leadership, interpersonal influence, team building, group problem solving, and oral presentation.”

HK Adds Courses to School Curriculum

By Kelsie Piela

HK has added many new courses to the curriculum recently. Some classes started this year and others will start next year pending board approval.

Two new UConn classes will be offered with board approval: "UConn: Contemporary Social Issues in Sports" and "UConn: If You Love It, Teach It."

The second course will include educational foundations from K-12 and 10 hours of field experience. This class will allow students who want to pursue the education field to see what it would be like to be a teacher. Course topics will include historical, philosophical, and social foundations of education and how these topics relate to teaching, school organization, and educational reform.

"Contemporary Social Issues in Sports" is scheduled to be added to next year's options. This course explores socio-cultural, economic, political, and other related issues in sports.



Some of the other elective classes that could be offered, pending board approval, include "Hispanic Culture Through Film." This class, conducted in English, will teach about the many different cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. The course includes short animations, commercials, documentaries, and entire movies.

Another new course is the half-year "Bach to Beatles" class, a music class. In this class, students will focus on the evolution of instruments, changing trends in music and composition, music’s effect on popular culture throughout time, and the connections between early music and the music of today. This class will be helpful for students who are interested in pursuing a career in music after high school.

A major change is the modification made to the history course pathway. World History 1 & 2 will be combined into one

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year. "U.S. History: Reconstruction to Present" will be offered sophomore year, and "U.S. History and Civics" will be offered in junior and senior years.

"Computer Integrated Manufacturing: Parts 1 & 2" is a new Project Lead the Way course offered in Tech Ed offering education in the manufacturing process, product design, and robotics.

In addition, a new internship program will start next year. Students will be able to find a half- or full-year internships through the school. This program will encourage students to get internships and shadowing experience to help prepare them better for their life after high school.

This year, a new African American/Black and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies" class was offered and was popular, serving as a good blueprint for new classes.

Cougar Den Plans Another Street Fest

By Alex Lara

Students can once again expect to attend another Street Fest, this year planned for May 31. The annual event taking place between the baseball field, tennis courts, and the school, features clubs and organizations sponsoring different festivities throughout the day.

Street Fest is organized by the Cougar Den under the direction of Ms. Ann Deibert and Ms. Carlye Kohs. Ms. Deibert states that some new activities can be expected in addition to the popular ones of years past.

Some of these returning activities include the faculty vs. student kickball game and the football team vs. volleyball team volleyball game. Physics students will also again participate in the cardboard boat races in the HK pool. Yearbooks will also be distributed during Street Fest this year.



Street Fest again promises to be a fun day for students and faculty alike, and an enjoyable bookend to the school year.

HK Students Tour Quinnipiac University

By Lindsay Blade

Broadcast students from HK toured Quinnipiac University in Hamden on March 13 to learn about media communications.

Students worked together in workshops and collaborated with other students from Connecticut to create a commercial and learn more information about broadcasting. Students got the opportunity to be on-air talent, producers, floor-directors, audio technicians, graphics generators, and technical directors.

The staff at Quinnipiac University was very welcoming to all of the students and teachers, making the experience an unforgettable one. Students were assisted by staff who have experience with these jobs and used each other's abilities to create an incredible commercial.

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Many of the HK students enjoyed the Quinnipiac tour and described the experience in a positive manner. Ella Geissler, HK senior, said, “The 'mock classes' that we attended during the tour taught us different ways that we could film and produce content for the TV studio.”

Environmental Students Sponsor Tree Sale

By Caitlin Kukta

HK hosted its second Tree Sale this year in hopes of offsetting the energy usage of the school. Ms. Emily Milcent, the high school's environmental teacher, and a group of students worked hard to organize the sale.



Last year, the goal of the sale was to offset the amount of paper used at the high school (about 1.9 million sheets in 2022), but this year the goal was to offset the school's energy usage by 33%. The sale remained the same in all other aspects.

The idea of the sale started with an email made by a company named Tree-Plenish, which first reached out to Ms. Christine Cassidy, another science teacher at HK, who then sent it to Milcent to see if she would be interested. Last year, 272 saplings were sold.

The Tree-Plenish program is composed of a group of college students that first created the sale as a senior project. After it was successful, they built an organization that now helps dozens of schools across the country reduce its environmental impact.

Trees were pre-ordered by March 22 and were distributed on April 21. The trees offered for sale were the Flowering Dogwood, Red Maple, and Eastern Redbud. The saplings were $5 each.

HK's sale was run by students Ella Commorford, Clare Lake, Maddie Palmer, Sami Pach, Caroline Ignatuck, and Addie Pactor. These students were very involved in the sale and stated their hope that the sale can continue as an annual tradition.

When asked if the sale would be an annual event, Ms. Milcent said, “Short answer, yes.” But it depends on how successful the sale is this year. She added that the students were “very involved and they come basically every Monday. They had to go through an online course and the girls went around town and hung up posters.”

New Science Teacher Enjoying First Year at HK

By Caroline Ignatuk

Mr. Anthony Saglimbeni is one of the new teachers this year at HK. He teaches science classes, including AP, Honors, and College Prep Chemistry.

Twenty years before he decided to become a teacher, he was a forensic science researcher. After realizing he wanted to teach chemistry, he went back to

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school for two years to become certified so he could achieve his goal.

The new teacher said he is really enjoying his time at HK so far.

“I love it," said Mr. Saglimbeni. "HK has the nicest students and faculty.”

He plans to teach physics next year in addition to his chemistry classes.



Mr. Anthony Saglimbeni

Safety Tips to Keep in Mind for Prom Season

By Sami Pach

With prom season here, it's important to remember how to stay safe while still having fun. Hollywood glamorizes prom, making it magical and a night of unforgettable moments, but if bad decisions are made, the night can take a harsh turn and the memories will turn dark.

In America, according to CreditDonkey.org, the average household spends around $978 on prom and prom-related expenses. For girls, the dress alone can be upwards of $500, and then the ticket, hair, nails, and pictures are other expenses. However, girls aren’t the only ones paying a pretty penny.

For guys, the tux alone is an average of around $184, and with shoes and a boutonniere, they spend nearly $300. After spending that much money on an event, making the experience worth it is important, but there are ways to do that without crossing boundaries into illegal or deathly territory.



One of the leading causes of death for teens between 12 and 19 is car accidents. Credit Donkey also says that in the months of April to June, peak prom season, a third of car crashes are alcohol-related. This is not to say all teens are drinking, or that all of these accidents are from teens attending prom, but it is better to be safe than sorry.

A survey conducted by Liberty Mutual, a car insurance company, found that out of 2,300 juniors in high school, only 20 percent thought it was unsafe to drive on prom night. However, 6% of those students admitted to driving under the influence on their prom night. The solution to this overarching problem is quite simply not to drink or do drugs. `

With both proms in Westbrook – the junior prom at the Elks Club and the senior prom at Water’s Edge – these locations could easily distract teens from the dangers of drugs and alcohol and steer them towards fun hangout spots like Dairy Queen or Lenny and Joe’s.

If you know of a friend who has been drinking, it is important to remember not to get in the car with them. Instead, make sure

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you have a safe ride to and from prom so you can get home safely without becoming a statistic. In addition, you should take the keys from the driver with the help of friends.

While at prom, make sure you do not leave your drink unattended so it cannot be tampered with, and stay with a group of friends who you know and trust will look out for each other.

Instead of drinking and doing drugs, students can do any of the following:

1. Have a movie marathon with friends and watch prom themed movies.
2. Get pizza and have a game night.
3. Go out to eat.
4. Do karaoke with friends.

What the Job Market Foretells for Students

By Ryan Botteon

Turning 16 is a momentous occasion for many Americans nationwide, as it is a rite of passage that includes the ability to legally hold a job. However, getting one – especially as a teenager – is another story. But when I took a deeper dive into the job market for HK students, I was genuinely surprised at the results.

When acquiring data, it took me a while to figure out how to approach the problem. Ultimately, I decided to ask students what type of jobs they had acquired, tallied them up, and then asked what types of jobs they did not get or from which they never got a response. If a student were to mention a type of job not already on the list, I would then add it and tally.

When I was done with my poll, the results were intriguing. Admittedly, the study had a limited pool of only 20 students, as I was unable to get more since many students had not yet entered the job market. Students at the time of my survey applied for a wide variety of jobs, including coaching, lifeguard, retail, and others.



For retail, janitorial, babysitting, carpentry, and even coaching jobs, all had a 99% chance of getting accepted. Cashiers had a 71% chance of getting accepted, while restaurant and lifeguard jobs had a 50% chance.

In general, the job market is wide open and accepting applications right now.

ENTERTAINMENT:

TV Review: "Alaska Daily" Delivers

By Alec Sicyrella

Created by Tom McCarthy, director of the Oscar-winning film *Spotlight,* ABC's *Alaska Daily* stars Oscar winner Hilary Swank (two Best Actress awards) as the character Eileen Fitzgerald, a seasoned newspaper reporter in Anchorage.

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Indigenous women were being murdered and assaulted at an alarming rate in Alaska. In the series, Eileen dives deep into the big story no one wanted to cover. The plot involves a pattern of murdered indigenous women whose deaths have been ignored by the authorities in Alaska. The story is based on real-world reporting by ProPublica and Anchorage Daily News.



Whenever I watch *Alaska Daily*, I am immediately immersed in the story. It is a very good show that accurately teaches a great deal about journalism in the way it shows journalists reporting on many different things like murders, corruption, and other crimes. We watch the reporters going from door to door as they attempt to interview different people about the stories they are writing.

Eileen, who was fired from a big daily newspaper in New York City, spends a lot of time with the other reporters to teach them the importance of journalism. As she says, “The people deserve to know the truth.”

Eileen reports and writes with passion and consideration even though the risks heavy.

Alaska Daily has not yet been renewed for a second season, but I hope that there will be another because the story is very good and is one of the few programs that shows us what is actually like being a journalist.

I would give this series 5 stars because it is a very mesmerizing storyline. Watch one episode and you will want more.

Movie Review: Two Films Worthy of Your Time

By Tobin Prue

Seen any good movies lately? Here are two worth considering.

Cocaine Bear

Inspired by the 1985 true story of a drug runner's plane crash, missing cocaine, and the black bear that ate it, *Cocaine Bear* is a wild thriller that finds a group of cops, criminals, and tourists finding a 500-pound bear in the Georgia woods where a 500-pound bear has eaten a huge stash of of cocaine and has gone on a wild rampage.

The movie, while not having a very good plot or visual effects, is still a fun movie to watch. Don't get me wrong – the terrible CGI of the bear can be weird, but the film makes up for it with how ridiculous the bear acts as it attacks anyone out in the open and won't leave people alone. This leads to some hilarious chase scenes.

Another issue with this movie is the characters. Pretty much all of them are people you could care less about, and you do end up rooting for the bear. The one exception is Bob the detective, played by Christopher Livingstone, who is the most well written character in the whole movie. You want to see him succeed as they give him a backstory.

Overall, I rate this movie a 6.5 out of 10 Prue points.

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Puss In Boots: The Last Wish

When Puss in Boots discovers he has only one of his nine lives left, he begins on a journey to restore his other lives by finding the mythical "Last Wish."



This movie has some of the best animation I've seen in a while, and the story is well thought out. You feel for all the characters, and it has tons of slapstick and other things to glue you to the screen. The best character in this movie is Big Jack Horner, the funniest movie villain since Dr. Evil of *Austin Powers* fame.

I give the film 9 of 10 Prue points.

Community Remembers A True "HK Original"

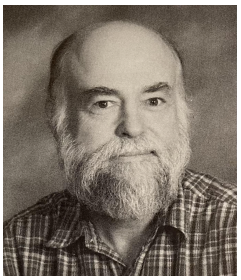
John Pianta, longtime industrial and graphic arts teacher at HK, died earlier this year. He was a charter member of the high school's teaching staff.

Mr. Pianta graduated from Valley Regional High School (1966) and Central Connecticut State College (1971). He served proudly in the Army Reserves for five years before beginning his 33-year teaching career at the (then) Haddam-Killingworth Junior High School.

As a member of the high school's first faculty in 1976, Mr. Pianta taught a variety of tech-ed classes, including Journalism, which he co-taught with Mr. Keck from 1996 to 2002, and with Mr. Philip Devlin from 2002 until he retired in 2004.

Mr. Pianta is remembered for his wry sense of humor and his knowledge of "old-school" publishing techniques, including physical layout, darkroom methods, and running the school's classic printing press.

In addition, students benefited from his passion for the Civil War when he visited history and English classes wearing complete period regalia.



Mr. John Pianta

The Cougar Chronicle sends its thoughts – and thanks – to the family of Mr. Pianta, a true "HK Original."

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