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The Cougar Chronicle

The Student Newspaper of Haddam-Killingworth High School

Cougar Den's Pep Rally a Rousing Success

By Caitlin Kukta

HK enjoyed just its second pep rally in four years on April 25, thanks to the Covid pandemic, and it was a rousing success. Members of HK's Cougar Den organized the energetic event.

Students were encouraged to wear specific outfits to match a theme they were given. Freshman wore flannels and country style clothing, the "Sinking Sophomores" wore blue with tropical accessories, juniors featured jungle-themed attire, and seniors wore neon construction-themed outfits.

The pep rally opened with a performance of the national anthem by the HK Choir, followed by the introduction of spring sports captains. The HK Players then performed a song from the spring musical "Bye Bye Birdie."

Students participated in games such as "Find That Drip" – a combination of scavenger hunt and musical chairs – where students locate specific articles of clothing and accessories from the crowd and then sit down before everyone else. Each game attracted volunteers with a promised reward of a $30 Dunkin' gift card for the winner.

The staff vs. student basketball game was entertaining for all with the staff taking the win after a close score of 29-26. Mr. Baklik hit several three-point shots to lead the staff. The team also included Mr. Czarkowski, Mr. Kish, Mr. Hagewood, Ms. Mckenzie Anderson (school nurse), Mr. Torren Calendar, Mr. Todzia, Mr. Ladas, Ms. Bing, and Mr. Fraser. The student team was made up of mainly junior class members and included Andrew Crayton, Roman Nappi, Joe Slane, Jacob Lamarre, Cody Robinson, Declan Moriarty, Timmy Cavrell, and Jake McKenzie.



Senior girls show their spirit.
(photo courtesy of The Cougar Den)

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What Is a Drug Deactivation System?

By Samantha Pach

A largely unknown safety issue today is the improper disposal of unused prescription medications. To increase awareness of this issue, Haddam-Killingworth Youth and Family Services has access to a new system, free of charge, for anyone wanting to sample it.

Drug deactivation systems, called the future of prevention by Connecticut legislators, are able to completely neutralize medications.

Every year the FDA advises people to flush unused prescription medications down the toilet instead of disposing of them in the trash. However, environmentalists argue this is not the best solution since flushing these drugs can contaminate water and harm wildlife in lakes and streams. Also, wastewater treatment plants are not equipped with the tools to remove all pharmaceuticals from the water.

Unlocked medicine cabinets with expired or unused prescription drugs can provide someone the chance to become addicted. In 2017, according to Addictionhelp.com, “1.7 million people in the United States were misusing prescription opioids," and 72% of opioids are left after surgery, perhaps leading to addiction.

HK Principal Donna Hayward said the concept of the drug deactivation system is "brilliant. Addressing the drug issues in society, in general, is a positive, and anything that has to do with the health of society positively impacts the school.”

One of the biggest related issues seen in schools, according to teens, is when they are prescribed opiates after wisdom teeth removals. Teens are being prescribed opiates like Percocet to offset the pain of the surgery, but afterwards they are left with highly addictive drugs that are in their medicine cabinet while people walk through their houses.

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The best alternative for drug disposal is a drug deactivation system. Currently, there is a bill working its way through the state legislature that contains a section on the co-dispensing of opioids with a drug deactivation system, with no extra cost to the pharmacy or the patient while helping get opiates out of houses once they are no longer in use.

Jason Sundby, President of Verde Technologies – the company that created Deterra – is working with the Connecticut legislature to pass this section of the bill. The Deterra system is reported to completely deactivate medications once water is added to the drug inside the pouch. It is a simple process that takes 30 seconds and allows an individual to throw the pouch in the trash.

HK Students Create Successful Clothing Line



By Chloe Oboma

They are high school students and football players today. Now they can add "businessmen" to their résumé.

How do co-founders Scott Hosney and Jacob Lamarre of the clothing brand Sanguine juggle all those titles? Simple. With grit and determination. "Sanguine" means to be optimistic and have a positive attitude in a difficult situation. Being athletes, students, and owning a business is a lot to juggle, but Lamarre says, “I can juggle all this because of my positivity. I mean, that's what Sanguine is all about. Being positive and having hope.”

Lamarre says he doesn't do it for the money, but to see a man's confidence brighten when they wear such a suave clothing brand.

Sanguine is a men's clothing line. The clothes use high-quality materials, offer a variety of colors and styles, and have a reputation for being reliable and durable. They offer sweatshirts in various colors such as salmon pink, light blue, black, and gray. In addition, they offer athletic shorts. The clothes cater to men who embody someone who is both physically strong and has a refined taste.

Sanguine makes any uncertain person feel confident and comfortable in their own skin, all for the affordable price of $40, say the two entrepreneurs.

Why continue on a path that may lead to failure? For many entrepreneurs, the possibility of failure is a natural part of the journey toward success. Pursuing your dreams takes a lot of courage and determination, especially in the face of uncertainty. In the case of Sanguine's co-founders, their drive to succeed and their belief in their company's mission is what motivates them to keep pushing forward despite the possibility of failure.

In the eyes of Hosney, failure is not an option. It takes courage and determination to overcome fear of failure. He believes in staying focused and committed and has achieved success at a young age due to his perseverance, saying, “We’ve failed with so many things but we pushed through – problems with designs and manufacture, but we pushed through.”

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The co-founders of Sanguine have found ways to balance their academic commitments and business responsibilities by creating a schedule that works for them. They make sure to set aside specific times for studying, attending classes, and working on their business. They also take advantage

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of technology to streamline their workflow and make communication more efficient.

Another important factor is having a strong support system. Whether it's family, friends, or business partners, having people who believe in your vision and can help you manage your workload can make all the difference. Hosney and Lamarre have each other to lean on, and they also have a team of dedicated employees, such as sophomore Declan Moriarty, who help them run their business smoothly.

For the co-founders, Sanguine is not only a business, it is also a representation of who they are. They take pride in creating high-quality clothing that resonates with their customers. Their commitment to their brand at such a young age is what sets them apart from others.

At the end of the day, Hosney and Lamarre are just two normal kids from a small town, but they are also a true inspiration to any kid with a desire to achieve greatness. They have shown that with dedication and grit, you can truly do anything, like creating a brand that speaks volumes to today's fashion.

Horticulture Students Learn about Hydroponics

By Caroline Ignatuck

As land for crops disappears, the need for hydroponic farming increases. Hydroponics is an innovative farming method of growing crops without soil and using water with added nutrients. Nutrients are added to the water to encourage optimum growth. This helps balance environmental factors, such as pH levels.

The advantages to this approach include having control over the plants and the ability to eliminate pests and disease. Hydroponic plants also take up much less space and energy to maintain. Water can be consistently recycled and reused with a water filter, only refilling occasionally when the roots have absorbed most of the water. The conservation of water is extremely crucial in today's environment, and hydroponic systems help solve this growing problem and are a key method for sustainable agriculture.

Students in HK's "UConn Horticulture" class created hydroponic set-ups in the school greenhouse in November. Since then, many crops such as tomatoes, basil, and cilantro have grown extremely fast with the close attention to the correct levels of nutrients and water. The success did not happen by chance, as much resulted from trial and error.



Hydroponic plants in the HK greenhouse. (photo by Caroline Ignatuk)

In the beginning of the year, the hydroponic set-up was producing algae that was harming the roots of the plants. Via research, students found it was due to

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excessive sunlight and putting too many nutrients into the water. The key to keeping a hydroponic system healthy is to make sure no light can get through to the water. This ensures minimal or zero algae growth. Students solved this issue by carefully measuring the nutrients levels each time they replenished the water and taped off places where light might be getting through.

Also, in the beginning of the year, students discovered the tomato plant was not producing any fruit and needed to be cross pollinated. Cross pollination is the transfer of pollen from the stamen to the pistil, allowing for fertilization to occur. Students used another group's tomato plant to collect pollen using a soft-bristled toothbrush, and then transferred it onto tomato plant flowers.

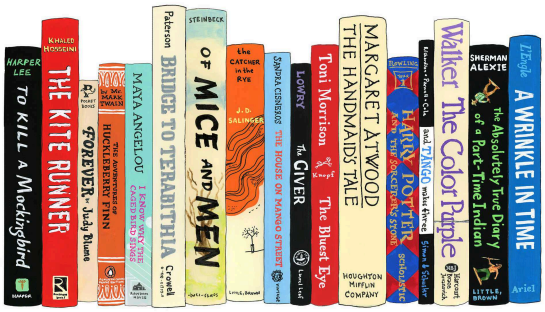
"Some students plan to pursue sustainable agriculture in college to work with a larger team growing many vegetables, herbs, and flowers."

The basil has been extremely healthy throughout the year, consistently producing large, flavorful leaves that have not gone to waste. Each group harvested some tomatoes and collected basil leaves. Everything grown hydroponically tastes much better than store-bought crops because of the nutrient rich waters.

Some students plan to pursue sustainable agriculture in college to work with a larger team growing many vegetables, herbs, and flowers.

***News Analysis*:**

The Lingering Effects of Book Bans in America



(Clip art courtesy of PBS)

By Samantha Pach

Over the past few years, an increase in book bannings across the United States has possibly altered future generations by censoring books with topics of history, race, gender, sex, and sexual preferences.

Many state governments have pushed to ban certain books that legislators feel include topics that children should not be reading about or being taught in school. These lawmakers believe it is the parent's right to decide when and how the child learns about slavery, American history, sex, gender identity, and race or religion. To many, this makes sense because adults want to feel like they are protecting children from harm that could come their way.

Conversely, school psychologist Heather Elizabeth argues that “historically, we know that over time when governments have embraced this type of censorship it has never resulted in positive progress or the improvement of society.”

According to Joshua A. Krisch, a reporter for the publication *Fatherly,* by the time children reach high school, 60% have

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reported being sexually active. By keeping books that address various perspectives on these important topics away from them, are we harming them because we are censoring important information?

Elizabeth says, “Books are used to help provide a comprehensive, factual, and inclusive education to all students. When books are banned, it censors a child’s ability to learn about topics or subsets of student and family populations.”

Forming one's own opinion is an essential right of U.S citizens. Taking away a diverse array of opinions can strip children of their rights.

A number of the 874 unique titles that have been banned, according to data from Pen America, are considered classic literature, standing the test of time because their powerful stories are expressed so eloquently. However, classics such as *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck have been banned because of historically accurate yet graphic depictions of prejudice, treatment of women or individuals with disabilities, and discussions of euthanasia.

When Steinbeck's book is read with an understanding of that time in history, could there be value in seeing the progress that has been made and avoiding history repeating itself? If children aren’t able to read about their ancestor's history or people like them, they may not know what to do when it starts to happen to them.

Out of 50 states in 2022, 21 had banned at least one book. Are we comfortable as a society with that number growing, considering how books can be a reflection of who we are as people and as well as a window into the lives of others? It's a question we all need to take seriously.

HK Players Present Spring Musical "Bye, Bye Birdie"



By Reagan Aronson

The HK drama program presented the 2024 spring musical on May 3 and 4. *Bye Bye Birdie* told the story of a talent agent trying to save Almalou Music Company when his star client, Conrad Birdie, was drafted into the army.

The agent, Albert Peterson, and his girlfriend, Rosie Alvarez, concocted one last publicity act before Conrad left. The plan was that Conrad Birdie would give an All-American kiss to one lucky All-American girl. That special girl was Kim MacAfee from Sweet Apple, Ohio.

The audience at HK was taken along for an adventure full of singing and dancing in this romantic comedy, as the HK Players brought this story to life on stage.

David Sargent took the role of Conrad Birdie, Ava Loughlin was Rose Alvarez, Jake McGoey played Albert Peterson, and Juliette Harriman portrayed Kim MacAfee. Other HK students played roles as mothers, fathers, and friends in this small town.

The show would not have occurred without the efforts of Mrs. Webster as producer/coordinator and Mr. Kane as technical director.

French Exchange Students Visit HK and Morgan

By Reagan Aronson

Students from Saumur, France, arrived on April 18, excited to experience their adventure in the United States. There were about 20 students in total who split their visits between Morgan and HK and who stayed at a variety of homes to live "the American way."

The six students who you may have seen were Leonard, Chloe, Mathilde, Clemont, Marine, and Juliette. They all conversed in both English and French thoroughly, able to grow their language skills and communicate with ease.

Each student shadowed their host family in their different ways of living. In school, the students attended classes, games, and practices to see what American high school is all about. All agreed HK is very different from their school at home and compared it to being in "High School Musical."

"All of the exchange students agreed HK is very different from their school at home and compared it to being in *High School Musical.*"

During the first weekend, students spent Saturday engaging in a variety of activities. The goal was to show them the differences and similarities between our two countries. Grocery stores were big, they said, but still resembled their small markets back at home. Restaurants called Coca-Cola “coke,” which they originally had difficulty interpreting.

Both French and host students got to experience Boston on Sunday. They woke up to make the bus at 7:30 a.m. and then they were off to the city for the day. They partook in activities such as following the Freedom Trail, exploring Quincy Market, shopping, learning about the history of Boston, and touring Fenway Park.

The rest of the week was similar to Friday. They learned about Chemistry, Geometry, Ceramics, US History, Photography, and more of the day-to-day classes. They experienced morning news, advisory, the pep rally, and clubs. They expressed their surprise at the variety and wished they had these activities back at home.

On Friday, April 26, HK said *avoir* to the new friends as they headed to New York for the weekend and then back home to France.

Winter Sports Teams Conclude Strong Season

By John Moyher

Here's an update of HK winter sports not covered in our last issue:

Boys' Swim

After finishing the 2023 season strong, the HK-Valley Regional boys' swim co-op looked to duplicate their success this season. Early in the season, Head Coach Steven Cusano noted, "Despite lacking a single senior on the roster, the club still has a fierce and fiery energy within the pool.”

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The swimmers finished the season 2-8. However, nearly everyone made the SCC swim meet. Maxwell Selmer and Jackson Smith performed well and qualified for States.

Boys' Hockey

The Terriers boys' hockey co-op (consisting of Rocky Hill, Plainville, Haddam-Killingworth, Bristol, Middletown, and Vinal Tech) had their eyes set on making a deep run in the state tournament. The boys capped off a solid regular season finishing at 11-10-1 and qualifying for States. The boys started off the tournament hot with commanding victory 4-1 over Wilton, but lost in the next round to the BBDI co-op.

During the regular season, HK's Charlie Maxwell won CIAC Boys' Ice Hockey Player of the Week following his dominant performances against Hall, Conard, and Norwalk.



HK's Charlie Maxwell: Player of the Week (graphic courtesy of NFP Sports)

Gymnastics

The HK/Westbrook/Morgan co-op gymnastic team placed 2nd at Shorelines and 5th at States. Julia Shove is the athlete from Morgan; Grace Vincent and Hannah Freund are from Westbrook; and Becca Rosenblum-Jones is the HK member of the team.

"We had a small rivalry with Valley Regional High School and in the end at our State meet we came through with a win against them."

"Overall, the team had a very successful season," said Rosenblum-Jones. "We beat Foran, Old Saybrook, and Mercy on multiple occasions. We had a small rivalry with Valley Regional High School and in the end at our State meet we came through with a win against them."

In addition, all of the team's athletes went All-Shoreline, while Roseblum-Jones was named All-State, second team.

Girls' Hockey

The Daniel Hand co-op girls' hockey team – which includes HK and five other schools – finished 8th in the state with a 9-7-1 record. The team lost to Hamden, 7-5, in the first round of the state tournament on Feb. 26, one week after defeating the same team, 4-1, in the final game of the regular season.

HK was represented on the team by Jaimey DiNapoli, senior, and her sister Maggie DiNapoli, sophomore.

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