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Going the distance

P.C. track and field runners look to earn scholarships

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Walking up an appetite

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100 years

Bethesda Baptist Church celebrates a century of service

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En garde!

A fencing club opens in Port Chester with an Olympic Silver Medalist at the helm

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Get a room!

Two people were caught engaging in oral sex in public parking lot

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A look inside PCHS's IB program

Students and faculty reflect on International Baccalaureate program

By Casey Watts

One of four – Port Chester High School is one of the few schools in the county that offers International Baccalaureate (IB) courses. For many, IB means rigorous coursework with the potential payoff of college credits, but that definition only scratches the surface and can apply to other programs as well, such as Advanced Placement classes. Only those who sit in the classrooms truly understand what IB means.

The bell rings and students amble into the classroom, coffee in hand. Some are early and chatting in the rooms, others linger in the halls. Once the last ding sounds, Aaron Glazer's IB English Year 2 class is filled to the brim.

On Monday, Oct. 30, the students divided into groups to research books – they would be spending the next month reading and analyzing their chosen story to learn the power of language and how demographics shaped the story, as well as question their assumptions of what is taboo.

All the stories on the list are, or were once, deemed inappropriate for children to read. Such books are "The Kite Runner" by Khaked Hosseini, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" by Maya Angelou, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" by Mark Twain and "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck.

"Censorship is silly," Glazer said. What is considered taboo changes over time and it is senseless for kids to feel like they can't talk about certain topics such as race or gender or sexuality, he explained.



For some Port Chester High School students, first period is International Baccalaureate English Year 2. Their teacher Aaron Glazer introduced them to a new project on Monday, Oct. 30 that explores censorship and taboo topics in novels.

CASEY WATTS|WESTMORE NEWS

His Book Club Censorship Challenge assignment is meant to open their eyes to new avenues and allow them to comfortably learn about sensitive topics and present their findings to the class.

Forty minutes later, kids were buzzing with excitement about their chosen stories and ready to dive in, but it was time to transition into second period.

Barry Backelman's Theory of Knowledge Year 2 class consists of 28 students – all of whom he taught in Year 1. Theory of Knowledge is not a traditional course – it focuses on the areas of knowledge and applying them to real life situations. The areas of knowledge are arts, ethics, history, human

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New vendor chosen to run Rye Town Park restaurant

By Casey Watts

In one of the fastest meetings to date, the Rye Town Park Commission gave brief updates about Rye Town Park's bathhouse and restaurant on Tuesday, Nov. 21.

Park restaurant

The park restaurant's lease to Ocean Grille is up. Al and Joe Ciuffetelli of Homestyle Catering were awarded a short-term 1-year lease in 2016. The park commission chose a new vendor from those that responded to their request for proposals and negotiations are underway.

The winning bidder will take over operation of the existing restaurant and two snack bars once a new lease is signed.

Bathhouse

The bathhouse roof recently underwent emergency repairs – all the loose shingles were removed and the parking spaces near the bathhouse were blocked. Architect Lisa Easton gave the commission a timeline for permanent fixes: the commission will go out to bid at the end of November, plans on awarding the project in January, and hopes construction will begin in February so the bathrooms will be complete when the beach opens in May.

The permanent fixes include replacing the gutters and dormers with historically accurate fixtures, as well as replacing the terracotta roof tiles, dealing with any mold and fixing leaks.

Seawall construction

Dearborn Avenue might be seeing construction this winter as well – Rye Town Park Commission Chairman Gary Zuckerman is "hopeful we're going to have construction underway before the next beach season," he said. The seawall was damaged by Superstorm Sandy.

About 215 feet of it is owned by the Town of Rye and about 70 feet is under Rye City's jurisdiction. The City of Rye is moving forward with its proposal to repair its portion of the wall in kind, meaning the city will patch the holes with similar materials, a method that will cost them about $40,000, which is less than the town's proposed fixes would cost.

The commission is looking into repairing the holes with similar materials or tearing down the wall and replacing it in kind. As long as the project cost does not exceed $730,000, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will cover 90 percent of it and taxpayers will cover the remaining 10 percent.



The space at 44 Westchester Ave. that was occupied by Buffalo Wild Wings for 11½ years and was vacated this week.

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Buffalo Wild Wings closes

Buffalo Wild Wings at 44 Westchester Ave. closed permanently at the end of business Sunday, Nov. 19, making it the last restaurant to vacate space in The Waterfront at Port Chester retail, dining and entertainment destination. The popular national chain specializing in chicken wings with a variety of sauces outlasted Applebee's, Panera Bread and Euro Asian Bistro.

The only tenant remaining in The Waterfront space along Westchester Avenue is Kay Jewelers.

Buffalo Wild Wings (BWW) opened in Port Chester June 5, 2006.

While it couldn't be confirmed by the attorney for landlord G&S Investors who did not return phone calls as of press time, a BWW employee said the restaurant, which needed a renovation after 11½ years, did not renew its lease.

A sign in the window reads: "This location is now closed. We thank you for your patronage over the years. We remind you to visit our other locations in Stamford, White Plains and New Rochelle."

On Sept. 5, the Port Chester Board of Trustees approved a request by G&S to allow an urgent care center to occupy the space where Panera Bread had been. Panera closed in 2015. —Jananne Abel

A look inside PCHS's IB program

Continued from page 1

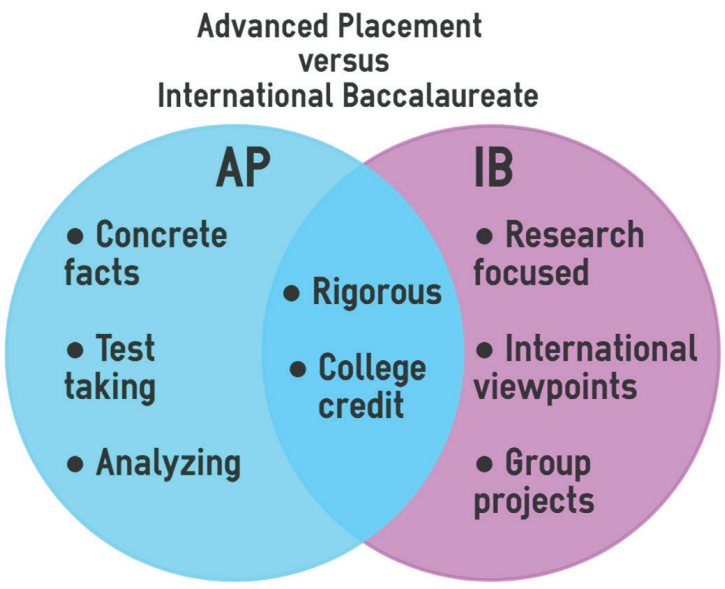
sciences, indigenous knowledge systems, mathematics, natural sciences and religious knowledge systems.

Students in his class tackle scenarios such as "to what extent should economics impact the ethical approach to helping hurricane victims?" The class does not deal with the situation itself, but the knowledge behind the question.

Backelman often must play the devil's advocate to force students to look at the problem from an unbiased and unemotional viewpoint. It can be stressful, he admitted, but it results in his students becoming better thinkers.

Beyond the classroom, all the IB diploma students are in the same boat and teachers like Backelman realize the amount of work they have on their shoulders.

"They really become a community – they're all in the same boat," he said. "Sure, some boats have bigger holes in the bottom, but they help each other."



"This is the crème de la crème here," he added. "These are the 10 percent of the kids who are doing 90 percent of the work." He explained that most of the kids in front of him are in numerous clubs, play sports or are involved in band.

"The cynic in me says: 'Well, nobody told you that you had to do all that,' but they are being told to do that – they're being told to be well-rounded and driven," he continued.

"They have to realize there are only 24 hours in a day. Something has to give," he concluded.

From the students

Port Chester High School has over 100 students in IB programs. Two of them were asked to speak about their experiences as full diploma students.

Senior Katherine Ovalles is impressed by how everything ties in holistically; the areas of knowledge she learned from Theory of Knowledge and the leadership from Creative Activity Service can be applied in most of her classes.

Being an IB diploma candidate, Ovalles has a lot on her plate. She lives with her mother who works full-time and also has a job of her own. Although she's become familiar with time management, the 17-year-old can't always do it all.

"Some days you have to sacrifice hanging out with friends or cleaning the entire house," she said. "You have to prioritize what needs to be done the most."

"It's difficult. You get 'Oh, you're slacking' from guidance, from teachers, from your parents, and friends. That pressure builds up and you just find a way through it," she added.

As stressful as it is, she lets it out in the gym or by talking to her coworkers at Fortina, where she puts in four or five hours a night as a hostess. She is also running indoor track this year.

"It's day by day," she said when asked how she can balance everything. "We just try."

She feels like all her effort will be worth it when she gets to college. Ovalles hopes to attend Georgia Tech or Baruch College for marketing. Both schools will give her credit for some of her IB courses, which will save her time and money. The IB program opened her eyes to how lucky she is to have the opportunity to potentially take college courses while in high school.

"It's a blessing – we tend to complain, but we're so privileged to live in a country where we're allowed an education," she said. "We're so blinded by the need to want more that we don't see what we have."

Senior William Brakewood is on the other end of the spectrum with what keeps him occupied – he's a member of five honor societies (English, Math, Science, Spanish and Tri-M), a trumpeter and vice president of the band, a three-season varsity athlete in cross country, track and swimming, a member of the debate club, in the jazz band, and an Eagle Scout.

He joined the IB program to challenge himself to do more and to push himself academically.

"I like how it all connects in IB and the interdisciplinary approach to it all," he said. "I try my best. It is quite a bit of time, and it's been quite difficult to manage at times."

The 17-year-old quickly learned about time management with his load of clubs, sports, band and schoolwork. He's become a professional at it, too – he claimed he only sacrifices an hour or two of sleep to do everything he needs to.

"I don't think there's ever been a situation where I have to skip something to get schoolwork done," Brakewood said. "I've been pretty lucky with that."

The long-term assignments help when it comes to planning. He can prioritize what needs to be done first and work during the off-seasons of sports and marching band. Because he is involved in so much, he is able to maintain a social life and friendships while carrying out his responsibilities in each respective extracurricular activity.

All of this is a positive to him – while some of his credits may not transfer to Princeton, his dream college, he is thankful for the experience and college preparation IB classes provide. He feels confident that he'll be ready for his freshman year come September.

AP versus IB

Principal Dr. Mitchell Combs is a huge advocate for the IB program – he came from the model IB school in Dobbs Ferry and was eager to bring it to PCHS. In 2013, his dream was realized; PCHS would offer both AP and IB courses. While both offer college credits, AP and IB courses are not the same.

"It comes down to your own different learning style," Assistant Principal Juan Sanchez said. "If your student likes concrete facts, if they see the world in black and white, if they know they study well and take tests well, AP is for them."

On the other hand, if students prefer research, presentations and group work, they may be more suited for IB.

"Students learn and mature at their own pace," said Sanchez, who also coordinates the IB program. "Who are we to go ahead and put these roadblocks in front of students? It's not easy, but that's the way we believe and how we move forward."

Brakewood and Ovalles described AP as more content-specific learning, while IB focuses on one thing and then branches out to how it affects the world. Ovalles explained in her English class, IB focuses on "how we do things turns into what we do," while AP is more about analyzing text, she said.

The school offers 12 IB courses: English Language and Literature, French, Italian, Spanish, History of the Americas, Biology, Chemistry, Math Studies, Film, Music and Visual Arts. Every IB diploma student is required to take Theory of Knowledge and complete an extended essay and participate in Creative Activity Service (CAS).

CAS adds a community service element. The extended essay allows students to investigate a topic of their choosing.

Over the course of two years, the diploma program (DP) students take six IB courses. Students must take three high level courses (240 hours) and three standard level courses (150 hours).

Thirteen AP classes are offered: World History, Calculus AB, Physics 2, U.S. History, English Language, Statistics, English Literature, Italian Language and Culture, Environmental Science, Computer Science Principles, Spanish Language and Culture, U.S. Government and Politics, and Spanish Literature and Culture.

Students have other options; they can take IB courses and not be a DP student, they can take AP classes, or they can choose to stick to regular courses. Every AP and IB class is open enrollment – students do not need to take pre-requisite courses to qualify.

The three other Westchester districts to offer IB courses are Dobbs Ferry, Harrison and Yonkers. Blind Brook considered IB several years ago but ultimately decided against it.

How to earn an IB diploma

Twenty-eight students are currently IB diploma candidates. In 2017, 17 students were candidates to receive an IB diploma – 14 of them were awarded the certificates. In 2016, four students were awarded IB diplomas.

Overall the program has had a 90 percent success/pass rate in the past three years.

Students are awarded an IB diploma if the following criteria are met: they pass the high level and standard level course examinations, write an extended essay of 4,000 words or longer, successfully complete CAS, and enroll and pass Theory of Knowledge. Students need to earn 24 total points to receive an IB diploma – a total of 12 or higher on higher level (HL) examinations and 9 or higher on standard level (SL) examinations. The highest possible total score is 42.

IB courses are not graded on the typical A to F scale. Instead, students receive scores of N-7. N is no grade, 7 is the highest grade, meaning "excellent."

What colleges accept IB credit

How much credit an IB student can accumulate varies by college. The following is how many credits a DP student can receive from a few local higher education institutions.

Columbia University grants six credits for higher level courses with scores of six or higher on the IB exams, provided the score is in a discipline offered at the school.

Manhattanville College allows DP students to earn as many as 30 credits with higher level course scores of 5-7.

Marist College may grant credits with higher level scores of 5 or higher.

New York University typically allows eight credits for each higher level score that meets their requirements (scores of 6-7).

Pace University grants credits on a case-by-case basis with higher level scores between 5-7.

Sacred Heart University applicants have the option to enter school as a sophomore and have their IB exams recorded as transferred credit.

The University at Albany, SUNY, allows students with a cumulative total IB score of 30 to enter with 30 credits. Non-diploma students may also earn credits if they have a higher level score between 4-7.

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