

the CLASSIC

Townsend Harris High School at Queens College

The *Bee* gets an 'A' from audiences and participants

by Ashley Ahn

The curtains of the auditorium opened to reveal a stage set with a small stand, a desk, and a couple of chairs. With that relatively simple setup, English teacher Joseph Canzoneri, his cast, and his crew put on *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, a musical about a group of eight eccentric middle schoolers with great ambitions.

Running from April 5-6, the *Bee*, which featured a modest-sized cast and moments of audience participation, represented the culmination of months of hard work by all involved. It received positive reviews from those in attendance.

Senior Yerim Jee said, "I thought the play was entertaining. I liked the fact that the story didn't revolve around one specific character."

"I really liked it. It was really cute. I thought that the characters were spot on. The actors really fit their roles," said Deborah Chai, junior.

Given its school setting and the academically-driven cast of characters, the *Bee* offered audience members a recognizable focus.

Freshman Joan Nieh said:

"I liked it better than last year's play. I thought it was interesting and relatable. The actors were students who played the roles of students, and they cared about their education a lot."

Mr. Canzoneri discussed the potential for relatability as part of his rationale for choosing the play: "It was a factor. Nerdy overachievers at a spelling bee describes the student body here pretty well, so I did think that there were situations and circumstances and characters that the school community could relate to."

Unlike many dramatic performances, the *Bee* allowed audience members to

directly interact with the cast of the play.

Richie Bonilla, graduating class of 2012, participated as one of the spellers on stage. Richie also designed a t-shirt and the program cover for the play.

Reflecting on the experience, Richie said, "It was great. I always wanted to come back and see how it was after I left. I was surprised about going on the stage because it was very unexpected, but I'm used to the stage and the crowd so it was okay."

Junior Nicholas Castro, who played William Barfée, said, "I'm definitely trying out next year. It's such a welcoming environment and Mr. Canzoneri does a fantastic job of making everyone feel important."

Merin Varghese, senior, who played Olive Ostrovsky, said, "The play was one of my best high school experiences. I made unforgettable relationships with people I had never met before and strengthened the ones I already had."

Principal Anthony Barbetta, who also participated on stage, discussed his thoughts on the production:

"I thought it was a wonderful experience, and I think Mr. Canzoneri did a fantastic job. The support from all the students and faculty was wonderful, and I enjoyed being on stage for Friday night."

Some other members who participated in the improvisational moments of the play were Math teacher Aleeza Widman, Chemistry teacher Philip Porzio, Classical Language teacher Marianthe Colakis, Parent Coordinator Dafne Manhart and Physical Education teacher Maria Assante.

continued on Page 9



photo by Vanesa Martinez

Actors and audience members participate in the spelling bee.

Mayoral candidates talk jobs, education at QC debate

by Ella Leviyeva

After finding they were unable to book Townsend Harris's esteemed Election Simulation candidates, Queens College sought the next best thing and hosted a Democratic Party mayoral debate in Rosenthal Library.

Four of five major candidates attended the event on April 11: Sal Albanese, John Liu, Bill Thompson, and Bill de Blasio. Christine Quinn, widely considered the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, did not appear. Moderated by Errol Louis of NY1 and Michael Krasner, a Queens College Political Science Professor, the debate focused on education, jobs, public transit, and NYPD regulations.

Following the candidates' opening remarks, the first question targeted the significant income gap between the upper class and lower class.

Liu jumped in first, stating that the wealth gap is growing faster and he hopes to propose policies that will address this issue: "We need to stop subsidizing corporations that don't do anything for the economy

but line the pockets of the rich. We need to enforce a progressive system: the less you make, the less you pay; the more you make, the more you pay. We need to uplift the working class and increase the minimum wage. \$9.00 buys you a lot more upstate or in Oklahoma than it does in Queens; there is a different cost of living in NYC. We need a minimum wage closer to \$11.50 an hour."

Thompson approached the situation from a different angle: small businesses. "We need to look to increase the economic base, which are small businesses. We need to help them grow and stop the city from being their enemy."

After arriving over half an hour late, Bill de Blasio joined the debate on income equality but first explained his lateness, quipping, "There is a profound evil in this city...the LIE."

After settling in, de Blasio said, "The fact that the wealthy like to note their tax burden does not take away from the fact that the wealthy tax burden

has gone down tremendously over the last 20 years. Contrary to Bloomberg's spin on things, we have not seen evidence that the wealthy leave NYC from tax rates. We need to make visible changes and we must be progressive. The Bloomberg Association's third term, which never should've happened to begin with, had no response to the economic disparity."

Albanese responded, "You have to be very careful in tax raising. It's very sexy, politically, to say 'Let's tax the rich'."

Earlier, he'd mentioned similar ideas: "When you start raising taxes you have to be careful. I believe it will have the opposite effect, instead of generating revenue it will decrease revenue. I believe education is pivotal, with more education you have more opportunities and more wages."

Following the discussion of income inequality, the moderators turned to Stop and Frisk policies, where police officers randomly check one's person for suspicious content, often based

continued on Page 6

INSIDE:

MIST Victories
page 3

Do You Pledge
Allegiance?
page 7

Procrastination
Tips
page 9

Boys Baseball
Opener
page 11

Talents on display at fundraising show for Haiti

by Catherine Moskos

If you haven't been previously convinced, this year's Free the Children talent show set out to prove that "Townsend's Got Talent!"

The acts included singing, dancing, piano playing, and even a spoken word performance. All of the proceeds raised at this event are going to help build a school in Jacmel, a town in southern Haiti that has suffered deeply in the wake of the 2010 earthquake.

Suswana Chowdhury, junior, currently serves as the president of Free the Children. She played a major role in organizing "Townsend's Got Talent" this year.

Suswana said, "I joined Free the Children my freshman year because I knew they organized the talent show and I wanted to be a part of it. I became especially interested when I found out that the proceeds at the time went to building a water system in Ecuador. Being a social activist myself, I thought that was pretty cool. I'm not a celebrity and I'm not world famous but Free the Children lets me be a 16-year-old that can still make a difference."

Suswana spent weeks organizing this show. She said, "We asked people to sign up if they were interested in performing. At first we had twenty-six acts but then some acts dropped out. We held auditions and each performance had to give a one-minute preview of what they were working on so that we could trust they'd be ready in time for the show."

On top of organizing the talent show, Suswana also performed in a duet with Nirvana Thakur, junior. The duo took first place.

Suswana reminisced, "I've been dancing for as long as I can remember. My brother is a professional dancer and he's helped me out a lot."

She continued, "It was difficult to choreograph my own performance and find time to practice while also organizing the show with homework and everything else. Once, I had to stay in school until after six. Nirvana and I choreographed until the day of the show. I mean, winning was a total shock. We weren't expecting it. We just did the show because of our

shared passion for dancing and entertaining. We left our hearts on the stage. That's exactly what we did."

Suswana plans on organizing the event next year as well. She said, "I do wish that more people came to the show. We're definitely going to work on that for next year."

Charlene Levi, Social Studies teacher and the club's advisor, also played an integral role in putting together this year's show. Ms. Levi commented, "The Talent Show? One of our best yet. It was wonderful. We raised 1300 dollars toward building a school in Jacmel, Haiti. We sold about 237 tickets although the actual turnout was lower. Townsend sure has talent!"

wanted to perform and also had the perfect chance. Because I had a dance partner like Suswana, we were able to work together properly and enjoy our practices. I was surprised about our victory but I knew with our effort as one, we would be able to achieve it."

Khalil Smith, senior and performer, won second place after entertaining the audience with a piece of his original spoken word. Khalil said, "My friend Carlos Perez came out to see me perform so that excited me. Also, I was surprised that trophies were being awarded so it made me feel good to go home at the end of the night with something. It wasn't first place but second is still good."

Gurprit Kaur, Talwinder Singh, Armander Singh,

Kirandeep Kaur, Nirvana Thakur, Suswana Chowdhury and Jasminder Garcha won third place with their dancing act. Gurprit, senior and choreographer, reflected, "Although there wasn't a really big crowd, the audience was very encouraging and it made our execution that much more filled with energy. Overall it was worth the effort and it was nice to be a part of the show because it was for a good cause. I would hope to see more performances and supporters for coming years."

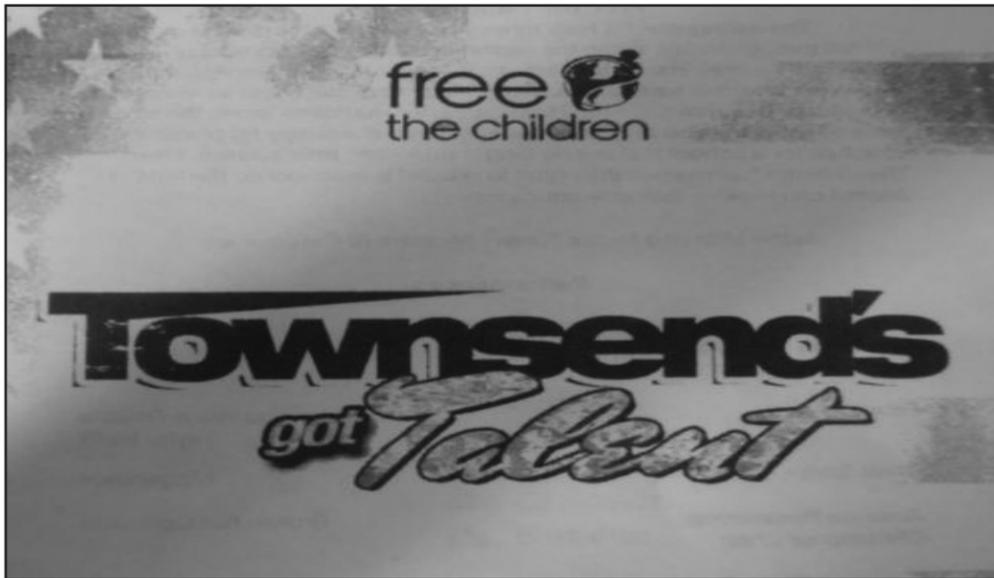
The audience was very responsive during the show and was visibly enthused by the hosts' performances and the talent show's nine acts.

Audience member Joel Mampilly, junior, said, "This year, I was a little more empathetic to the talent

show's cause in light of the recent hurricane the East Coast was struck by. The people who displayed their talents did so for a good cause."

"I thought the talent show was wonderful. It was a great opportunity for people to show off their talents and entertain us, all for a great cause," said sophomore Ashif Ullah.

He continued, "There were people that performed that I had no idea could do those things. Jason and Nazifa were very enthusiastic and cheerful, which made the show even better. Townsend has a lot of smart people, but there are also many people that can sing, dance, and act."



The logo created for the talent show.

Ms. Levi's contribution to the show was certainly appreciated. Suswana said, "Ms. Levi was such a great help. During the dress rehearsal, Ms. Levi actually called her second job and said she couldn't go just to stay with us and get everything to be perfect."

Nazifa Nasim, senior, and Jason Mills, senior, were this year's hosts. Nazifa said, "Jason and I had a fabulous time hosting this year's Free The Children talent show. While it was a bit chaotic for us to navigate backstage, the overall experience was definitely worth it."

Nirvana Thakur, junior and performer, won first place with Suswana Chowdhury after performing a Bollywood medley. Nirvana commented, "My experience for the talent show was very exciting, for I

logo designed by Nabii Ahmed Khatri

The Classic is now online! See the online edition of this paper (along with web exclusive content) at www.thsclassic.com

EDITORS-IN-CHIEF Genna Mastellone & Michael Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR Ella Leviyeva
FEATURE EDITOR Vanesa Martinez
SPORTS EDITOR Dimitri Theofanis
COPY EDITORS John Indergaard & Laura Caba

ADVISOR Brian Sweeney
PRINCIPAL Anthony Barbetta
Townsend Harris High School
149-11 Melbourne Avenue
Flushing, NY 11367

We always welcome opinions.
Email letters to the editors at
thsclassic@gmail.com.

The Classic is an open forum for the expression of student views. The opinions expressed therein should not be taken to represent those of the administration or faculty, or of the student body as a whole.

Writing Staff: Ashley Ahn, Chris Artun, Constantine Bournias, Rachel Chabin, Vincent Chu, Asmaul Chowdhury, Suswana Chowdhury, Yelena Dzhanova, Stephanie Geier, Magdalena Grabos, Amy Hao, Fran Horowitz, Asiya Jaffer, Roxanne Lewis, Katherine Maradiaga, Andrew Mitchel, Juliet Monclova, Catherine Moskos, Frank Nicolazzi, Zach Ooi, Daniel Restifo, Anna St. Clair, Simrankaur Wahan, Jennifer Walsh, Christina Wang, Joanna Wong, Morgan Wu

Guest Writers: Parbattie Anant, Adrienne Lee, Fariha Nizam, John O'Neill

Sports Staff: Andrew Eichenholz, Isaac Pulatov

Art Staff: Nadia Ali, Mei Jun Chan, Jenner Chen, Parina Kaewkrajang

Photography Staff: Alice Kim, Hannah Morse, Joanna Woo

Japanese sister school returns

by Vanesa Martinez

Before the spring break, Townsend Harris once again played host to a group of students from its sister school, Shimoda High School, who travelled from Japan to experience life in the United States.

After receiving their schedules and readying themselves for the day, the students were ushered into the principal's conference room, where they were welcomed by the students and faculty.

Last year, when students came from Shimoda, they presented us with the Daruma, a hollow, round, traditional Japanese doll representing friendship and good luck. They drew the first eye that year, leaving the other one blank as a promise that they would one day return to fill in the other, showing that the friendship between our two schools is still alive. This year, the other eye was drawn on the doll, fulfilling that promise.

Seniors Jenny Xue and Ashley Chu gave a welcoming speech, saying, "The news of Shimoda High School coming again brought about greater anticipation."

Students from Shimoda responded, "We are very glad to see you and we can't speak English

very well, but we hope we'll have a great time with you so thank you very much."

Principal Barbetta welcomed them as well, saying "Our school



Shimoda students mingle with Harrisites.

is your school."

Accompanied by two teachers from their school, the Shimoda students spent two days experiencing the life of students in Townsend Harris. They spent a good portion of their time within the school visiting classrooms, observing the different styles of teaching and the behavior of the students.

Honami Sato said, "It's different. I like it here. They use computers here, so that's different."

Shimoda teacher Shinya Suzuki said, "It's very amazing, very good. In the classes, students raise their hands, volunteer - very amazing. They talk with their teachers and friends. That doesn't happen in Japan usually."

Shimoda students also visited Mariko Sato's Japanese classes, where they viewed presentations about the Fukushima power plant and the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Dr. Sato said, "I thought they would be important because they don't have a presentation oriented education system."

After their visits to classrooms on Friday, March 22nd, the Shimoda students, accompanied by THHS students from Japanese classes gathered in the library to enjoy food and to get to know each other better.

"Just being able to interact with them was an amazing experience. The language barrier didn't separate us," said senior Kapil Kanhai.

Senior Jaime Abbariao added, "My favorite part was being able to speak in Japanese, the practical use of the language. Since I've been studying for the AP exam, I got to use things I learned in the class."

There was an exchange of gifts between the two schools, a rush of final picture taking, and many hugs exchanged between new friends as the students departed on Friday afternoon.

photo by Jamie Abbariao

Gatsby at THHS

by Katherine Maradiaga

Even without the much anticipated release of *The Great Gatsby* film, anyone would have wanted to attend one of Gatsby's dazzling 1920s parties.

Safia Jama Cross's English classes recreated the mystery and glamour of these parties on Friday, April 5 in the teacher's cafeteria.

This was the first Gatsby party at Townsend Harris. Ms. Cross was inspired by her own experience reading the book in high school, and recalls her own school's party.

"I remember dancing the Charleston with two of my friends at that party, and there was music and people dressed up, but that was it," said Ms. Cross.

She added that this celebration was more ambitious than the one of her time.

The parties were based on the classes' collaterals on the Roaring Twenties, which included art pieces, music and speeches from figures of the decade.

Anna Simonyan, junior, executed her creativity by dressing up for the affair. "After seeing different pictures of women from the 1920s, I had a better visual of what to wear."

"I knew I wanted to do the Harlem Renaissance to tie in with my black roots," said junior Danielle Williams, who emceed for her class's party and recited a poem titled *The Negro Mother* by Langston Hughes.

To make the event feel like the true parties, AP U.S. History classes were formally invited to stop by.

Social Studies teacher, Charlene Levi, said, "We're just finishing World War I, and it's not something we can do in our curriculum, but the party is great and a real show of the humanities in our school."

"I told Ms. Cross that it was the way I envisioned it with people talking, music playing, and presentations given," commented junior Juan Ruiz on the atmosphere of the party.

Ms. Cross concluded, "I was really impressed with all the students, the way they rose to the task of putting on an event for 70 people, and it was beautiful to see everyone cooperating together." She hopes that "we've begun a tradition of Gatsby parties."

Harrislam slams contenders at 2013 MIST NY

by Fariha Nizam

"Harrislam! Harrislam!"

These chants filled the room as members of the Townsend Harris MIST team achieved third place out of a total of 24 competing high schools at the 2013 MIST NY tournament.

Since 2009, the Townsend Harris Muslim Student Association (MSA) has been participating in MIST, a three-day tournament involving 34 possible competitions in various categories. This year, Harrislam placed first in the categories of Fashion Design, Short Film, Science Fair, Graphic Design, Extemporaneous Speaking, and Business Venture. The team placed in the top three in over ten other major categories. Individually, Nabil Ahmed Khatri, co-president of the MSA, earned 2nd place as an overall competitor out of all 439 competitors.

Despite his strong finish as an individual contestant, Nabil focused on the unifying elements of MIST when asked about his victory. Calling MIST "the brotherhood and sisterhood of MSAs across the nation," he said, "it makes me proud to see my brothers and sisters that are so talented."

Sophomore Sadiqa Taaseen, competing for the 2nd time this year, said, "MIST means loyalty to me. MSA members who are loyal and responsible show the best results at MIST while still having fun."

Senior Fatima Koli, MSA co-president, said, "It brings together both non-Muslims and Muslims from across the state to learn about Islam and share this experience with each other."

MIST does not limit its competitors to just Muslims. The workshops and competitions are open to people of all faiths, and MIST encourages that the high school teams consist of members of different backgrounds.

Ellen Fee, the advisor of MSA and coach for Harrislam, discussed her time

with the team: "I learn more about the culture and the religion of Islam. My world expands when I watch and participate in the activities of MIST. It also allows me to see the similarities and differences between other world religions."

When the THHS MIST team first participated at MIST, they named the team "Hayatul Harris." In the 2012 tournament, the team changed its name to Harrislam.



Team Harrislam stands together at MIST

Photo by Nabil Ahmed Khatri

In the 2012 tournament, the Bronx Science Brigade, one of the biggest rivals of Harrislam, earned spirit points by calling themselves the "Brigadorade" and linking their team to Gatorade.

To counter Brigadorade, Harrislam used Crush soda as a symbol and distributed pins to all team members that read "Harrislam Crushers."

Bronx Science ultimately proved victorious, taking first place, while Stuyvesant placed second.

Nonetheless, team members of Harrislam felt that MIST was about more than

awards and prizes.

Fatima said, "For me, MIST represents the moment where you can truly show what you have achieved as an MSA throughout. Participating in MIST and as co-president, organizing and prepping everything for MIST is not an easy task. But no matter how tiring and stressful it can be, I love every moment of it because I know that in the end, it will all be worth it, whether we win anything or not. Just competing in the tournament and enjoying that weekend of fun is enough to make everything worth it. Of course, winning wouldn't hurt!"

Legitimate questions on media priorities in rape case

by Genna Mastellone and Catherine Moskos

Last month, two teenage boys from Steubenville, Ohio were convicted of raping and exploiting a 16-year-old girl. At the end of a summer party in August 2012, members of Steubenville's Big Red Football team sexually assaulted the girl while she was passed out. Text messages, videos, photos, tweets and Facebook posts about the assault rapidly made their way around the Internet. When an eyewitness from the Steubenville case, Evan Westlake, was asked why he didn't stop his friends, he testified, "It wasn't violent. I didn't know what rape was. I pictured it as forcing yourself on someone." How can it be that people in this country still don't understand what rape is or how to stop it?

Rape is any kind of sexual act without consent. Consent is explicitly saying yes. Consent is showing continued interest and participation in the act. The two young men in this case took advantage of a girl with no ability to consent to any sexual act. Whether or not she explicitly said no is irrelevant.

While it is terrifying that the Evan Westlakes of America don't comprehend the basic definition of rape, one would hope that professional journalists have a better understanding.

Unfortunately, this is not the case.

American mass media had a chance to report on the Steubenville rape trial with the gravity it deserves; instead, some members of the media used this case as an opportunity to glorify football players. News channels such as CNN and NBC News lamented over the fact that these men had to walk away from their promising athletic careers, serve time in prison, and register as sex offenders. CNN anchor Candy Crowley said, "It was incredibly difficult to watch what happened as these two young men that had such promising futures, star football players, very good students, literally watched as they believed their lives fell apart."

Yahoo News's coverage of the conviction began with the following: "Inside a small Steubenville, Ohio courtroom filled with sobbing and exhausting emotion, Judge Thomas Lipps found Trent Mays and Ma'lik Richmond guilty Sunday of raping an intoxicated 16-year-old girl."

As with Crowley's coverage, this article's first goal is to focus on the "sobbing" of the rapists and the "exhausting emotion" associated with their pronouncements of guilt, while its second goal is to ensure that readers know that these two raped an "intoxicated" girl.

If a man was murdered while in a state of intoxication would media entities repeatedly remind viewers that the murderer was convicted of "murdering an intoxicated man"? Of course not. Descriptions of the rapists having been found guilty of raping an intoxicated girl reek of victim blaming. One has to wonder how many future Senate candidates will run on a platform to ensure that "intoxicated rape" is classified in a separate category from "legitimate rape."

What people must understand is that no matter what a woman wears, how she acts, with whom she associates, how many sexual partners she's had, or how much alcohol she consumes, she is never "asking for it."

These teenagers deserved every ounce of their punishment, and a media that laments their conviction will affect how the populace views crimes such as these in the future. News channels were

more unsettled by the tearful athletes and their families

than the fact that this young girl was assaulted and humiliated--that she'd carry this nightmare and label with her for the rest of her life. Certain news channels, such as Fox News, even allowed the victim's name to be aired on television, further diminishing her right to privacy.

What truly makes us angry about the Steubenville rape case is not the case itself but what it represents—that society still teaches women to blame themselves for being victims of sexual assault, and that some Americans care more about their football teams and the glorious young men who play for them than the women those football players are hurting.

What stings most is that this situation could happen to any young woman. And as young women in 2013, we now no longer know how America would answer if we asked: "Would you stand up for us?"



Yahoo News is not the only organization to frame the news as it did.

Putting our money where our mouth is on family values

by Rachel Chabin and Asmaul Chowdhury

It is no secret that after the birth of a child, parents often struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with the demands of parenthood. For this reason, many developed nations require that companies guarantee jobs for workers who have children to care for. Unfortunately, when it comes to financially covering women after they give birth, the United States trails behind most other developed nations; this must change.

While the federal Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 protects women from losing their jobs or being denied employment because of their condition, it does not require that women receive paid time off after giving birth. Thus, amongst industrialized nations, only Lesotho, Swaziland, Papua New Guinea, and the U.S. do not require employers to provide paid maternity leave. Another law, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act, ensures that women may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid maternity leave, but sets no standards for compensated time away from work.

By contrast, parents in Sweden get 480 paid days for each of their children. They can also divide up those days between them (for instance, the mother could take 365 days off and the father could take 115 days if they wanted), and can use these days anytime before the child's eighth birthday. Even Iran offers twelve weeks of paid maternity leave.

While there is no doubt that this sad state of affairs needs revision at the national level, given the effect of maternity leaves on school communities, public school systems should do all they can to improve current policies.

While New York City public school teachers can use their allotted and accumulated sick days to ensure that they receive paid time off for maternity leave, they usually get only 6 weeks. They are also per-

mitted to "borrow" up to 20 additional days of paid leave. Once these sick days run out, however, any extra time off is not covered by the NYC Department of Education. Because unused sick days carry over to the next school year, teachers are theoretically able to accumulate a significant number of days. However, doing so can still be a struggle for new teachers or ones who have used their time for other reasons.

Although Math teacher Sara Liu is expecting a child this summer and will not need to take time off, she believes that current policies still need revisiting. "Six weeks is too short. Women's bodies often need to recover," she said.

A similar sentiment was voiced by Social Studies teacher Aliza Sherman. "It can be rough," she said. "I had three kids within three years, and after the third pregnancy, I had other medical issues that required two more weeks of leave, totaling 8 weeks. I couldn't walk and I had three babies to take care of. My sister in Israel took a year of maternity leave."

For teachers, the decision to take a certain amount of time away from work is complex, as it affects not only themselves and their families but their students as well. Often, the substitute teachers who replace them are unfamiliar with their teaching methods, which causes disruptions in the students' learning and progress with the curriculum.

Earlier this school year, Math teacher Aleeza Widman took off from work to spend time with her newborn daughter.

"It was very different," explained sophomore Frank Nicolazzi. "The substitute we had was good, but their teaching style was so different from Mrs. Widman, and I feel I understand and do better with her."

For others, the difference was less pronounced.

"I could still manage to learn since I have other kids in the class to help me. Also, the substitute teacher we received offered extra help if we needed. It didn't affect [my learning] too much when [Mrs. Widman] was gone," said sophomore Pritchi Banik.

However, juniors and seniors are often more profoundly affected by teachers on maternity leave, as it can be difficult to obtain college recommendation letters from them.

Alumna Cynthia Caceres said, "Students have to ask before they leave, and communication could be difficult ... This didn't happen to me, but I know some who were pressed for time last year [because of a teacher's absence]."

Other students felt that they should just adjust their own expectations.

"We can't expect the teacher to leave her baby with someone else just because we think we need her to teach us," said Rebecca Duras, sophomore.

So what should be done? The answer is simple: offer lengthier leaves of absence for new parents. The problem that parents face: six weeks is too short a time. The problem that students face: six weeks is a long time to be missing a teacher but not long enough for a substitute teacher to establish a sense of continuity. Extending maternity leave solves both; the new parents receive the time they need to spend with their child and the students have a teacher who seems like more than a placeholder.

America likes to claim that it is superior to other nations. As the land of freedom and opportunity, we also like to say that we support families. Why then, are we lagging so far behind on an issue that may be more important to the strength of a family than any other?

Something sinister about left-handed biases

by Ella Leviyeva

I'm the girl that holds up the AP exam with her request for a new desk. I'm the girl that you dread sitting next to in chemistry lab. I'm the girl with questionable blotches of ink on the perimeter of her palm. Yes, I am left-handed.

With only 10-12% of the population being left-handed, society tends to neglect the needs of lefties. Small aspects of daily life, such as scissors, pant zippers, the computer mouse, binders, and can openers are designed specifically for right-handed people, simply because the population of righties is dominant. Left-handed instruments have to be specially ordered and are rarely found in common use.

It's almost crazy how much of an impact a simple statistic has on the economic and social structure of countries around the world. Being left-handed is neither a disability nor a mutation; these superstitions and market faux pas emerged from a mere discrepancy amongst us in our biological makeup.

And even so, studies show that left-handed people are more likely to be geniuses. 20% of all MENSA members are lefties, an incredible number considering the percentage of lefties. With higher reported IQ's, left-handed men who attended college are 15% richer than right-handed men, and 26% richer if they finished college. In fact, 4 out of 5 of the original designers of the Apple Mac were left handed.

Despite these facts, lefties are discriminated against and even oppressed in certain societies.

Negligence towards left-handed people is not a

novel issue in the world. Animosity towards lefties has existed since the days of ancient sun worship. Settlers living in the Northern Hemisphere observed the sun gravitating from left to right; moving away from bad and towards good. The French word for "left" is gauche, which can be translated as "awkward." In Latin, the word for "left" is sinister, which has come to mean "evil" in English.

In many foreign countries, forced conversion from left to right hand usage begins at an early age. Lefties are frowned upon and taught to write with their right hand. Corporal punishment is common and the conversion process often triggers developmental disorders, such as dyslexia and stuttering.

The hand that grabs the pencil on the first day of kindergarten may not be the one society accepts. The extent to which people take this superstition is baffling, and its influences are extremely prevalent in society.

Take an average Townsend Harris classroom for example; out of 34 desks in a classroom, there will be one, maybe two, "left handed desks," which don't favor any side at all.

These effects go beyond the classroom. With limited left-handed instruments and supplies readily available, education and job opportunities for lefties



Five of the last seven presidents have been left-handed. Coincidence?

in the medical, sports, and music worlds are minimal, and students are put at a disadvantage.

But think about it: what is the problem with being left-handed? If 90% of the world were left-handed, would we have the number pad on the left side of the keyboard? Would the bank attach its pen to the left of the teller desk? Would the foreign definitions and myths alter themselves accordingly?

But go on, cut your straight lines with your right-handed scissors and indulge in your spiral notebooks, because at the end of the day, I am proudly classified with Leonardo da Vinci, Kurt Cobain, Albert Einstein, Jimi Hendrix, Henry Ford, Aristotle, Pele, and yes, even Morgan Freeman.

A new hope in the Vatican? A view on Pope Francis

by Frank Nicolazzi

When someone asks a question with an obvious answer, sometimes people respond with a rhetorical question: "Is the Pope Catholic?" This is essentially another way of saying "duh."

With Pope Francis stepping into the abruptly vacated papacy, many expressed disappointment that this new Pope didn't have more progressive views on topics such as homosexuality and contraception. To this, I can only ask:

"Is the Pope Catholic?" There was no cardinal capable of being selected as Pope who wouldn't oppose these things, and to expect otherwise would be foolish. Nonetheless, the idea that Pope Francis is the same as all of his predecessors is just not true.

Just look at the first thing he did when he was elected. He asked the crowd to pray for him, showing humility. The next day he paid his own hotel bill and refused to stay in the Vatican's posh Papal Apartments. I don't like this new Pope—I love him. He is going to be the best thing that has happened to the Catholic Church in hundreds of years.

So who is Pope Francis I? He was born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1936. He's the first non-European Pope, which is long overdue. Perhaps even more intriguing, he is the first Jesuit Pope. The Jesuits are the largest order of priests in the world, known for being highly educated. Ever heard of Regis High School, Fordham University, or Georgetown University? All of them are Jesuit institutions, so trust me, these guys are smart.

Another reason that Francis earns my admiration is his choice of name. I am named after St. Francis, perhaps the most well known saint in Christianity. Francis was a rich Italian from the small town of Assisi, but he gave up his inheritance, choosing instead to serve the poor and live with lepers. By forgoing the more wealthy accoutrements usually associated with the papacy, Francis has signaled that he wants to follow the example of his namesake and refocus the energies of the church on helping the poor and needy. How nice that a religious figure would finally recognize what the world needs from them.

These aren't just words, names and pledges; Pope Francis has already acted on his principles. On Holy Thursday, Francis washed the feet of twelve inmates. Two of them were women and two of them were Muslims. This is a huge deal.

In years past, the Pope restricted this honor to Christian men, in accordance with the Biblical story the ritual comes from. The Pope included not only women, but people of other faiths, sending a stunning and important message to the world about the ability of different faiths to show respect, concern and humility to one another.

As someone who went to Catholic School for over ten years and knows the faith quite well, it's fair to say that this is the most excited I've been about something in Catholicism in a long time. If his first weeks as pontiff are any indication, Pope Francis has the power to usher in a new era for the Church, where the needs of the people are put first.

photo courtesy of independent.co.uk



Pope Francis settles into life in the Vatican.



FlamingoArtichoke
DESIGN AND PRINT

www.flamingoartichoke.com
info@flamingoartichoke.com
(917) 342-2275

owned and operated by
NABIL AHMED KHATRI, CLASS OF 2013

**IF YOU CAN THINK IT,
WE CAN PRINT IT.**

 **WE SPECIALIZE IN
CUSTOM APPAREL.**
screen printing + embroidery

**MENTION THIS AD FOR A
10% DISCOUNT**
on your next order.

**WE'LL BEAT MOST
COMPETITOR PRICES***

*SUBJECT TO TERMS AND CONDITIONS.



Tutoring Club
A Class Above. Guaranteed.™

**Enroll Now for
Summer Savings** **718-281-9820**

www.TutoringClub.com

39-14 Bell Blvd • Bayside, NY 11361

**K - 12 • READING • WRITING • MATH • SCIENCE • SOCIAL STUDIES
TEST PREP • REGENTS • SAT • STUDY SKILLS • ENRICHMENT ... MORE!**






Robotics team triumphant

by Simrankaur Wahan

The Steel Hawks placed 10th out of 63 teams in the NYC Regional US FIRST Robotics Competition, their highest standing to date.

For the sixth consecutive year, the THHS Robotics Team built a robot and programmed it to perform assigned tasks in order to compete in a game. Held at the the Jacob Javits Center March 7-9, this year's competition was known as "Ultimate Ascent," and focused on having robots score as many discs as possible into the goals of an opposing team. The Steel Hawks won six of their eight preliminary matches. They went as far as the quarterfinals, where they were the captains of a three-school alliance.

Reflecting on the team and their victories, Assistant Principal of Science, Math and Technology Susan Brustein said, "US FIRST Robotics Competition is an incredible adventure for students, mentors and coaches. I am so proud of the dedication of our team, and of our graduates who return year after year to mentor the students who follow in their footsteps."

Junior Annie Medina said, "Joining the Robotics Team this year was a big commitment, but it taught me the power of teamwork and being a leader in order to be successful. At the Jacob Javits Center, I was so proud and overjoyed by the amazing robot!"

During the six weeks it took to build the robots and prepare for the competition, students worked in groups to gain sponsors and raise funds. Under the guidance of Physics teacher Philip Jones and Mrs. Brustein, about thirty students of all grades worked six days a week, sometimes until late at night, to meet their goals.

Due to Hurricane Sandy and current economic conditions, the team lost funding from key sponsors, Mayor Michael Bloomberg being one of them. To address this issue, the team's sponsorship group wrote letters to multiple companies seeking donations to keep the program running. Students also hosted bake sales and sold LED energy efficient light bulbs to members of the school community.

Swathi Mettela, a sophomore who worked with the sponsorship group of the team, praised the work the group did, explaining that it taught her "valuable advertising, teamwork, and communication skills."

For some members of the team, this competition represents their last as Townsend Harris students.

Senior Laura O' Shea, Captain of the Steel Hawks, reminisced on her time with the team: "I joined robotics because of my brother. He had already been a member of the team for two years, and I thought that everything they did was so cool. Robotics was the most educational experience in my life."

It seems, however, that one tradition for the Steel Hawks is to have former students return to help out. This year college mentors Joel Pazhayampallil, Steven Seegobin and Alex Wallach all returned to advise the team.

Laura indicated that she'd be just as willing to play such a role: "I definitely plan on coming back to mentor students next year, so it really isn't the end."

Candidates make their case at QC

continued from page 1

solely on their appearance, whereabouts, or race.

The four candidates agreed that under Bloomberg's three terms, the frisk rates inappropriately went from 100,000 to 700,000 a year and that Police Commissioner Ray Kelly had "taken the system too far."

The candidates found more to disagree on when the subject of reconstruction following Hurricane Sandy came up.

Liu spoke first: "Rockaway has been completely devastated, and City Hall has not paid attention. Families are trying to piece together not only their homes, but their families. Where is all the FEMA money going? Rockaway insurance coverage is insufficient, and through pension funds we have created a 500 billion dollar asset to help the families in Rockaway."

Albanese then stated, "There have been warnings of a storm like this for 10 years, and six weeks before the storm hit, there was a front page article on the New York Times about it." He said that the devastation shows that we have "reactive government" and that the storm's aftermath is an example of a "dismal failure of planning."

Referring to his visits in Howard Beach with teams of volunteers, de Blasio stated, "The vast majority of the home owners haven't heard anything from the government or haven't gotten any answers. In December, I sent a formal proposal about the building mold and to this day I have not received any answer; I was just ignored. The city is not as willing to help people transition as it should be."

The debate's final question prompted candidates to consider the public school system.

Liu started by saying, "We need to stop treating public schools as a business. All these statistics and reports that have to be sent to the DOE building and kept up with only hinder the progress. My 12-year-old son spends all year preparing for his state test; this is not helping the students learn better, it is helping them take tests better. I suggest we have more testing, not more standardized testing, but more in class and small-scale testing. The reason the DOE is not enforcing that now involves the DOE to trust teachers to teach."

Albanese, a former public school teacher, said, "We have two priorities: stop teaching to high stakes tests, and stop closing schools."

"The first three years of a child's life are pivotal," he continued, "I would establish pediatric learning centers, where doctors and teachers work together to help children overcome the stress and developmental issues that poverty may cause. It would be political malpractice not to address an early intervention."

Thompson added, "It's time to let the teachers teach."

De Blasio commended the CUNY system and its availability to students, with the rest of the candidates soon following suit.

As the press and Queens College students were given the floor for questions, the candidates began to disappear one by one, having to make other engagements and beat "any more LIE madness."

Queens College implements new security policies after robbery

by Stephanie Geier



photo by Asia Acevedo

A view of the Queens College library.

In response to a campus robbery that took place on February 28, the Queens College Public Safety Department has increased its security policies. A guard is now stationed on the path between the track and Queens Hall, where the robbery occurred, and the department has increased security vehicle patrols and random ID checks in the area.

The two culprits, who threatened a Queens College student at knifepoint and stole his cell phone, cash, and Social Security card, were arrested by Public Safety roughly 24 hours after the incident with the help of a surveillance camera.

They were charged with Criminal Trespass, Possession of a Weapon, and Robbery in the Second Degree.

The Director of Queens College Public Safety, Pedro Pineiro, said that

the new policies had "already been in the pipeline" since Queens College obtained the CUNY School of Law.

Although the change in security policies was provoked, he added that the department is always examining the number of officers on duty, security coverages, and allocated posts.

"Security is not a static entity," said Mr. Pineiro. "It must continuously adapt to an ever changing environment."

Although Principal Anthony Barbetta is satisfied with the new security policies, as well as Townsend Harris's relations with the Queens College police department, he adds that part of personal safety lies with the individual, and that the policies don't mean we should "let our guard down."

"The reality is that you have to be aware that crime can happen anywhere," he said. "The best policy is to always be visible and active."

Junior Tahsin Akanda agrees and feels that although the increased security makes students feel safer, the incident should be a lesson for "the fact that we should always be aware of not only surroundings, but also ourselves, with regard to our actions and belongings."

Gino's
of Kissena
Pizzeria & Restaurant
"Taste The Difference"
718-939-4474 • 718-939-4887
65-01 Kissena Boulevard

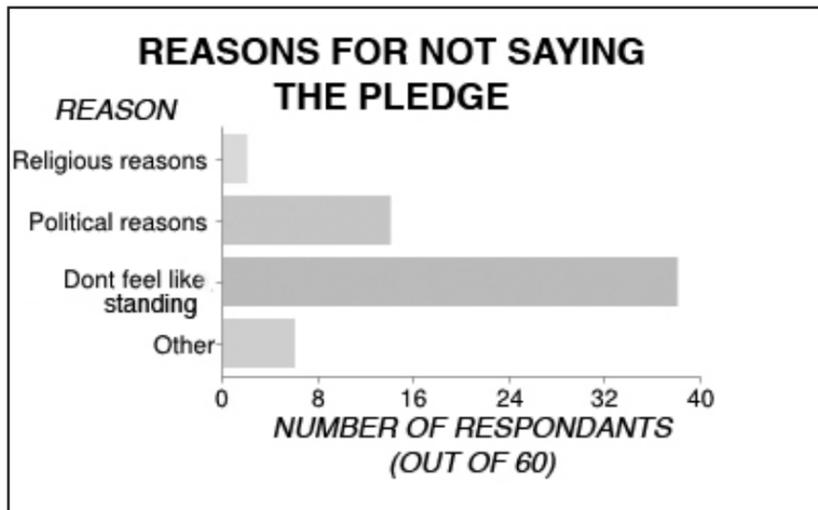
Poll: 1 in 10 regularly refrain from pledging their allegiance

by Parbattie Anant, Vincent Chu, Magdalena Grabos, Adrienne Lee, Katherine Maradiaga, Zach Ooi, Anna St. Clair, and Christina Wang

“Now please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.”

Students in America have been saying the Pledge of Allegiance for years, but if you look around a Townsend Harris classroom on any given day, you might notice some students sitting while the rest of the class stands and pledges to the flag.

A recent poll conducted on the student body reveals that more than half of Harrisites stand and recite the Pledge every single day. However, 45% of the student body have refrained from saying the pledge on at least one occasion while one in ten students abstain from the recitation on a daily basis.



Although refraining from saying the pledge may look like an act of protest to some, the reasoning is far simpler: 63% of those who sometimes or always refrain from saying the pledge do so because they don't want to get up. The remaining 37% abstain for religious or political reasons.

Senior Alanna Leung, who doesn't stand for the Pledge, believes that it is “an outdated practice that no longer has any function.” She says that it is something she has “recited blindly” since grade school.

“I've seen a huge variety of people who really believe in the Pledge and say it with a lot of feeling every morning, but I've also seen people just go along with it ritualistically, or not at all.”

Josh Martinez, junior, said, “We say it so many times it lost its meaning and value, if it had any in the first place.”

Some, however, still see the significance of the oath. Frankie Nicolazzi, sophomore, said, “I stand because I respect my country. I live in this country, and I go to a public school funded by the government. If I didn't, I'd be taking advantage of something the Pledge gives me.”

Dr. Marianthe Colakis, Classical Languages teacher, believes that those who don't pledge shouldn't be singled out, because they might “have legitimate philosophical or religious reasons for not wanting to stand.”

The controversial phrase “under God,” added under President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1954, has received criticism from some groups because of its religious connotations. Three percent of students who don't stand refuse to say the pledge for this reason.

Josh continues, “Even though I believe there is a God, it's disregarding the people who are atheist or who believe in more than one God.”

“I never found it controversial because I'm Catholic,” said junior Alessandra Taboada.

While teachers can't require students to recite the Pledge, some encourage it out of respect for the American tradition.

“To me, the Pledge of Allegiance is a reminder that although we are ethnically diverse, we are all Americans,” said Dr. Colakis. “There are few rituals that all Americans share, simply because we are so diverse, [and] this is one of the few exceptions.”

This brought up the issue of whether or not students should be required to recite the Pledge. The survey shows that 76% are in opposition to the idea.

Alanna said, “The Pledge itself says ‘with liberty and justice for all’ [and] sitting down for the Pledge is not opposing those principles, but forcing students to say it is.”

Freshman Faheema Syahbal, however, thinks the Pledge should be mandatory. “It's not hurting anyone,” she explained.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy in 1892, and was officially recognized by Congress in 1942. Although not compulsory, it was meant to instill a sense of structure and patriotism in American students.

This patriotism resides in Jonathan Chung, junior, who occasionally pledges when he wants “to reaffirm [his] American pride.”



Ivy Global

FREE SEMINARS

- US College Admissions
- SAT Prep
- College Essays

PREMIUM SAT PREP

- 99th Percentile Instructors
- Classes: \$650-\$1600
- Tutoring: \$100/hr

Register at www.ivyglobal.com

\$100 OFF

The Townsend Harris High School students receive \$100 off all Ivy Global courses in New York.

MEET OUR TEAM

Jason P. Yale	Jaymin K. Harvard
Mallory B. Yale	Victoria C. Harvard
Janice G. Columbia	Matt S. Harvard

Ivy Global | Recent Matriculation

Harvard University (17)	Columbia University (8)	Duke University (3)
Yale University (5)	Cornell University (14)	UC Berkeley (5)
Princeton University (9)	Dartmouth College (10)	John Hopkins U. (4)
MIT (2)	Brown University (8)	Georgetown U. (7)
U. of Pennsylvania (10)	University of Chicago (5)	Carnegie Mellon U. (3)
Tufts University (2)	Embry-Riddle University (4)	Northwestern U. (3)

New York, NY | Long Island, NY | White Plains, NY | New Rochelle, NY
Princeton NJ | Stamford, CT | Norwalk, CT | Boston, MA | Philadelphia, PA

www.IVYGLOBAL.com



www.Learn-RiteDrivingSchool.com

- Classroom Courses offered: 5 Hour Pre License Class & 6 Hour Defensive Driving Class
- Behind the wheel lessons offered for 45 minutes and 1 Hour
- We have great packages for new and existing drivers!

Special Offers for Harrisites!

\$20 Off!
5 Hour Pre-License Class

\$30 Off!
Any Package
(See Website)

Parents & Students:
Take the 6 Hour Online
Defensive Driving Course for only \$39!
PROMO CODE: LRDSsafe

To take advantage of these offers call or email us and mention that you're a Townsend Harris student.

136-18 35th Ave., Unit 1A
Flushing NY 11354
718.939.6969

Email us!
info@
learn-ritedriving-school.com

The Classic

April 2013

42 unsettles and inspires

by Suswana Chowdhury

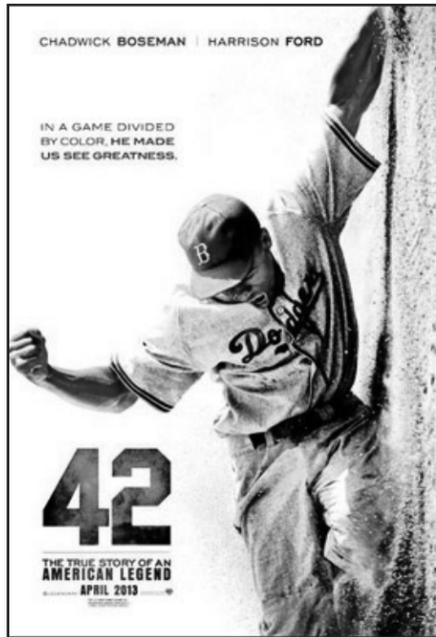
The story of Jackie Robinson is one worth being retold, particularly to a generation that has only a vague idea of what he stood for in his time. *42* does a good job of depicting the baseball of Robinson's time, but it is especially good in its depiction of the pervasive and vitriolic bigotry the athlete faced on a daily basis.

In 1946, the Brooklyn Dodgers' Branch Rickey (Harrison Ford) signed Jack Roosevelt Robinson (Chadwick Boseman) to a minor league contract with the Dodgers' Montreal Royals Farm Club. He made it clear, however, that he had every intention of promoting Robinson to the Dodgers at the start of the following season.

Rickey was aware of the obstacles facing Robinson. Not just players and managers, but umpires, owners, policemen and especially fans were all vocal in their opposition to a black Dodger. Rickey chose Robinson because he wanted "a player with enough guts not to fight back" in the face of this opposition.

There are plenty of scenes depicting the explicit horrors of racism. In the minor leagues, down South, a police officer runs Robinson off the field saying that mixed-race baseball is against the law. A Philadelphia hotel turns away not just Robinson, but the entire Dodgers team because of the color of Robinson's skin. In one of the more shocking and cringe-worthy scenes, the Philadelphia Phillies manager Ben Chapman (Alan Tudyk) delivers a tirade laced with the N-word.

Chadwick Boseman, who is relatively unknown, manages to convey the strength, compassion and frustrations of Robinson and is able to take on the



Poster promotes 42.

complex role fairly well. In contrast to Robinson's character, Branch Rickey is portrayed as very one-dimensional; nonetheless, this is one of Ford's more powerful roles. A devout Methodist, Rickey's one-liners invited laughter while his monologues gave hope.

42 does have its flaws. It feels forced towards the end, and fails to bring to life intriguing characters such as black baseball writer Wendell Smith (Andre Holland) and Montreal manager Clay Hopper (Brett Cullen).

This is, however, an important movie worth seeing. Moments such as the one when Pee-wee Reese (Lucas Black) puts his arm around Robinson in front of thousands of cursing Cincinnati fans are necessary reminders of how far we've come.

Italian vs. Italian-American

by Andrew Mitchel

When we think of "Italian food," all kinds of pasta, pizza, cheese, seafood, and meat dishes come to mind, flavored with creamy white sauce or tomato sauce. These defining elements of Italian cuisine came alive when I attended the school-organized trip to Europe during mid-winter break.

One of the most important things to do when traveling is to experience the local culture hands-on, and guided by this, I dove right into the Italian food scene. While in the cities of Rome, Florence, and Venice, I noted not only the differences between Italian-American cuisine and its native counterpart, but also the many varieties of food available.

Some of the dishes served in the States that we deem natively Italian are actually quite different overseas. Consider pizza: in the United States, it is served in the form of a pie or slice, baked with cheese and tomato sauce. In Italy, pizza is more akin to bread, and you have a wide selection of toppings, such as mushrooms, sundried tomatoes, and olives. A pizzeria I visited in Rome had pizza served only by the slice — no pies could be found.

I also tried out native Italian pasta which was prepared with contents that added to the dish. Prosciutto a common ingredient in antipasto and sandwiches, was cooked right in with creamy penne.

The parts of Italy that I visited all had their own local specialties. Lazio, a region containing Rome, is known for its fresh vegetables grown in the surrounding hills, wheat pastas (spaghetti especially), and cuts of meats that Americans may not be used to, like organs. Tuscany, home to the Renaissance city of Florence, is known for its ravioli, rice-based risotto, and world-renowned pork and olives. Veneto, a region just north of Venice, is well known for its different varieties of seafood. Throughout Italy, one particularly fascinating food is black pasta, which gets its intriguing color from the ink of a cuttlefish or octopus. All of these provincial specialties represent a more diverse assortment of Italian cuisine.

While in Italy, I found it hard to miss the quality of food back home. Italian tomatoes are much sweeter, and the nuances of each flavor are practically endless. My exploration of Italian cuisine redefined my American understanding of Italian food, and offered yet another reason to visit Italy.

American Pizza



Italian Pizza



photos courtesy of Google images



Animated short films: why take two hours to tell a story?

by Amy Hao & Joanna Wong

What do *District 9*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, and *Boogie Nights* all have in common? All of these movies were originally short films, created with miniscule budgets by virtually unknown directors and selected by the great gods of Hollywood to be made into the mega-blockbusters you know today.

Believe it or not, the arrival of the age of the animated film involved a cartoon steamboat, a little trouble, and a goat phonograph. Released in 1928, "Steamboat Willie" (available on YouTube) was the first animated short film to ever premiere with synchronized sound and a complete soundtrack and is considered to be the first distributed piece featuring Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Walt Disney's landmark characters. The black and white short shares the story of Mickey and Minnie's journey down the river and features an impromptu concert when the ill-fated goat eats Minnie's sheet music and guitar as a snack. The speechless piece combines physical comedy with

an adventurous story to capture the hearts of audiences all over the world with a reminder that sometimes, the simplest things can cause joy time and time again.

Case in point: "The Longest Daycare" (available on Youtube), starring the adorable Maggie Simpson from the hit show *The Simpsons*. The Oscar-nominated silent short, "The Longest Daycare" focuses on a difficult day for Maggie in her prison-like daycare as she struggles to save a butterfly from her insect-killing archenemy, Gerald. Full of subtle cultural references and typical *Simpsons* wit, the short is surprisingly moving and suspenseful despite its main characters being a baby and a butterfly. Many considered this piece even better than the feature it accompanied for its theatrical release, *Ice Age: Continental Drift*.

As far as short films and love stories go, "Paperman," a short accompanying the theatrical release of *Wreck-It Ralph*, soars above the rest.

The scene is New York City in the

1940s. A young man meets a woman and tries to gain her attention through paper airplanes. Not only successful in its subtle storytelling, this piece, the 2013 winner of the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film, pioneered a type of animation, called final line advection, that combines 2-D drawing with CG animation to allow for a more expressive and dimensional animation. With a touching story, "Paperman" has a feel-good element that really lets one see the hope and chances in the world, for animated characters and real people alike.

And if you're deciding that you don't want to sleep tonight, consider watching "Alma" (available on Youtube), a short from Spain so imaginative that director Guillermo del Toro is currently producing the full feature version. On a snowy day in Barcelona, a young girl named Alma comes across a chalkboard covered with the names of various children and, with childlike innocence, she scribbles her own name on the wall. As she continues her walk,

Alma comes across a shop featuring a doll with an eerie resemblance to herself. She ventures inside to retrieve it, and the events that follow are scary enough to knock the pants off even Freddy Kruger and Jason. Hauntingly beautiful, this piece puts the "horror" films seen today to shame while reminding us that yes, even little animated dolls can still make us cower under our beds in fright.

Who has time to go to the movies and sit through something that drags on for hours, when you can simply go online and find shorts that can still satisfy your cravings for plot, characters, and suspense?

An animated work can move you in more ways than you think, and whether it's by dancing mice, animated people, or lifelike dolls, that choice is yours. Make the right one and indulge in a smaller snack this month, Net Cliques readers.

Happy watching!

Little to rage at in new novel

by Parina Kaewkrajang

While Adam Mansbach's *Rage is Back* grips readers with a story of colorful vengeance, it also reveals the remote and underground world of New York City. The narrative style and content may require some familiarity with street slang, but even those new to it will find themselves enthralled as the story's plot unfolds. The tale is told through the eyes of 18-year-old Dondi Vance, and centers on the reappearance of a legendary graffiti artist known as Rage, who has been gone for sixteen years. To Vance, Rage's return means meeting the father who abandoned him.

Beneath the back-alley diction and profanity, the book is well-written and the plot escalates smoothly. Unlike many other novels that attempt to expose street life, *Rage* balances the various forms of drama as it tells a complex story that features drugs, family issues, school, and hints of racism. Overall character development is authentic and impressive as readers are given a detailed account of Dondi Vance's internal conflicts, beliefs, and views. Mansbach successfully transforms the capricious 18-year-old by giving him a purpose, and to an extent, solidifying his bonds with family. However, some character interactions and pieces of dialogue, while witty and amus-

ing, seemed over-done in an attempt to impress.

In the book, another character called Cloud 9 briefly takes over the narration. The cleverness of the narrative shift is extended by the book's change in presentation: there are no quotation marks to distinguish spoken dialogue from narration, and accurate spelling is nowhere to be found. Because Cloud 9 had recently returned from a fifteen-year jail sentence, this grammatical deterioration works nicely. Mansbach further tinkers with the structure of the novel by incorporating several short stories about Dondi Vance's mother, Karen.

Rage alluded to a number of pop-culture references that I didn't understand, and periodically threw in sentences long enough to require a second reading. Also, some parts of the book were repetitive and too stale to hold my interest for long. Mansbach's experimental style could eventually wear on a reader who prefers more succinct descriptions of setting and background. Though I liked the bittersweet revenge of the ending, I found the last couple of pages to be slightly excessive and forced. Nonetheless, Mansbach's novel finishes on a definite note, leaving no loose ends for characters or readers to wonder about afterwards.

Finish homework before midnight with new technology

by Morgan Wu

"Your own greatest enemy is yourself," goes the famous adage. This may be true, but for us high-schoolers, our own greatest enemies are ourselves...and procrastination. There has been many a night—or morning, as it were—in which we have stayed up long past twelve, feverishly cramming for a history exam or pulling together that forgotten collateral. We've all been told to simply "stay off Facebook" or "log out of Tumblr," but these tactics don't work, because it is all too easy to open a new tab and log back in.

But never fear! With these simple (and free!) web extensions, not only will you be able to resist the urge to scroll through your dashboard or check your notifications, you won't be able to access these sites at all, practically guaranteeing that you'll get your homework done before midnight.

1. StayFocusd

Google Chrome only (sorry, Firefox users!)

Allows a self-allotted time for websites placed on a "blocked" list.

After the time is setup, you will not be allowed access to these sites until the end of the day.



2. DropCloth

Blacks out everything on your desktop, except for currently active window.

3. Isolator

The Mac version of DropCloth.

4. Swept Away

Windows only

After a user-set amount of time, it automatically minimizes inactive windows in the background.

5. Obtract

Mac only

Every hour, users are allowed five minutes on a non-productive site.

After the five minutes are up, the user needs to solve mazes of increasing difficulty to access these sites.



So the next time you stay up until the wee hours of morning, consider putting these extensions to good use. With their help, you'll be able to combat that great enemy of all high-schoolers, and walk out of battle victorious.

THHS Players present The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

continued from page 1

Mr. Canzoneri was pleased with the improvisational elements, but was highly complimentary of the scripted actors: "I thought [the actors] delivered a performance that did justice to the original and that made me and the whole production team proud."

The original musical first appeared on Broadway in 2005. It earned six Tony nominations and won two.

A relatively new play, Mr. Canzoneri had wanted to stage it previously but ran into difficulties:

"We really wanted to do it last year but there were some licensing issues and we couldn't get a license to do the show. Secondly, it's also

much smaller in terms of number of people in the cast. I specifically picked something that was for a smaller cast."

Among the eight contestants that make up the main cast of the play are William Barfee (Nicholas Castro), whose last name rhymes with parfait and is defensively antagonistic. Marcy Park (Christina Lee) is tired of being the best at everything and wished she didn't have to live up to everyone's expectations. Logainne Schwartzandgrubennierre (Nina Leeds) is the daughter of two overly protective and fussy dads. Leaf Coneybear (Jin Won Seo) makes his own clothes and is amazed at his own ability to spell correctly. There is also Chip Tolentino (Steven Brijram), a boy scout who was hopelessly distracted by his hormones during the competition, Minie Martin (Marybeth Babu and Elina Parker), a girl from the south, and Ms. Osborne (Joy Nieh), who designs her outfits. Last but not least, Olive Ostrovsky (Merin Varghese), seeks the attention of her father and her mother, who went to India for spiritual rejuvenation.

The eight seemingly unique individuals participate in the Bee under the guidance of Rona Lisa Peretti (Fatime Urci), who won the Bee for three consecutive years, as well as Vice Principal Doug Panch (Tawid Meah).

Although the odd bunch first arrives at the spelling bee aiming to win the first place trophy, they all leave with new outlooks on life. What is really being celebrated in the Bee is the more private triumphs, from making new friends and engaging in new relationships to expressing inner desires truthfully.

"The story of the play was very unique and funny. Every person could have related with at least one of the main characters," said freshman Elina Niyazov.

For Mr. Canzoneri, the *Bee* marks an important milestone in his directing career at THHS: "This is the tenth play," he said, and laughingly added: "I think I'm stuck until I retire."

"After every year I say that I need a year off, but I manage. It's something that I like, it's something that the students like, something they look forward to. So barring any unforeseen circumstances, I think I'll do it until I retire."

It's clear, however, what makes the work involved in ten major productions worthwhile:

"I enjoy all of it. What I enjoy most is actually watching them perform. Backstage is the worst place for me. It really is a great joy for me to sit back and watch it all come together. But really, every moment of the process is enjoyable to me."



photo by Vanesa Martinez

Mrs. Manhart joins the spelling bee from the audience

Forgive, don't forget ethical lapses of sports "heroes"

by Stephanie Geier

I remember how moving it was to see Oscar Pistorius complete the 400-meter dash at the London 2012 Olympics and for Grenadian victor Kirani James to switch numbers with him out of respect. At this moment, Pistorius seemed the perfect hero: an otherwise normal person born without fibulae, achieving the impossible through sheer determination. He became an emblem of hope for the disabled that yearned to shine, teaching the world that nothing can thwart our dreams.

Recently, the "Blade Runner" was accused of shooting his girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp, leaving his disappointed fans wondering how such an inspiring man could let them all down. While professional athletes may seem like good role models, their heroic appearances are often deceiving. The truth of this terrible situation brings us all back down to earth: although it's fine to be inspired by athletes, we must avoid idolizing them.

Society's expectations put professional athletes under immense pressure to win and win only. Their wealth and fame make it easier for them to become too comfortable with themselves and behave poorly, forgetting their responsibility as role models. The scandals are endless, ranging from committing rape to doping to dog fighting.

Unfortunately, when pro athletes do commit crimes, although the legal punishment is often enough, society forgives and forgets their faults too easily.

In Stanley Teitelbaum's book *Sports Heroes, Fallen Idols*, he says, "In spite of the disillusion many fans experience when a hero becomes blemished, they often are eager to offer a second chance so they can hold on to the positive image of their hero that they identify with."

Similarly, although Michael Vick served twenty-three months in jail after participating in illegal dog fighting, he is still treated nobly. In 2010, soon after his release, he received the NFL Comeback Player of the Year Award, which hon-

ors football players who have succeeded in the field despite ordeal.

The USA Today article "Vick named comeback player of the year," also notes that since his release, his image outside of the field has improved, adding that he signed an endorsement contract with the protective clothing company Unequal Technologies.

Such endorsements also contribute to society's thoughtless glorification of professional athletes.

A recent edition of the news magazine *The Week* displays a Rolex advertisement depicting a victorious Tiger Woods clenching his fists, with the caption, "Rolex and Tiger Woods. United by the Pinnacle of Achievement." In bold green letters it also reads, "He's Back."

Back already?

The point is, sports officials and the media shouldn't warmly welcome athletes back from a crime or scandal, no matter how valuable they are. Our forgetting creates an unhealthy culture among younger athletes.

I wonder why there are so many college and high school sports scandals these days. Perhaps, younger athletes should be more educated about ethics.

Most of that education must come from coaches prioritizing ethics over winning. They shouldn't ignore an athlete's bad behavior, no matter how valuable he or she is, and should suspend them from the team.

Some might think this issue is unimportant. After all, it's just sports, right?

I think it's a matter of character and integrity.

And I'm sure most athletes are capable of instilling these characteristics in youth and adolescents. However, when you see them make that winning touchdown or win a race by a split second, just keep in mind that outside of these heroic, spur of the moment actions, athletes are still humans, not gods.



photo courtesy of Bloomberg News

Oscar Pistorius is one of many athletes who has let fans down.



**Choose from our selection of
breakfast items, sandwiches,
toasted paninis, wraps,
gourmet salads, specialty sandwiches,
quesadillas, burritos
& much, much more!**

60-10 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, NY 11355

T 718.460.8678 F 718.460.8670

**Now accepting online orders
for delivery.**

www.tostcafe.com

No order is too small!

SPORTS@harris

Champions League features world's top clubs & players

by Dimitri Theofanis

The UEFA Champions League has been one of the most prestigious soccer tournaments in the world since 1955. Each year, the top European clubs face off in the tournament, organized by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA). The biggest clubs in the world compete, and with them, the greatest players of today.

After advancing through the qualifying, playoff, and group stages, sixteen teams were left to face each other. After the round of sixteen, only eight remained to play in the quarterfinals. These eight teams were Borussia Dortmund, Malaga CF, Galatasaray AS, Real Madrid CF, FC Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain FC, Juventus, and FC Bayern Munchen, representing five European nations.

Each matchup is played twice during the quarterfinals, each team playing once at home and once away. The winner is then selected through aggregate, or the team that scored the most goals within the two games. Away goals are worth more than goals scored at home, and this is sometimes used as a tiebreaker if the aggregate is equal. For example, in the round of sixteen, FC Arsenal and FC Bayern met twice. Bayern won the first game 3-1, which was played at Arsenal, and Arsenal won the second game 2-0, which was played in Munich. The aggregate was tied at 3-3, but since Bayern scored 3 away goals and Arsenal only scored 2 away goals, Bayern advanced to the quarterfinals.

"It's not the fairest aspect of any sport, but in the Champions League it makes the most sense. Away goals are harder to score than home goals," said senior Khalid Abdin.

Also regarding the away-goal-rule, senior Jeremy Fedus said, "It's an uneven rule for uneven ground."

On April 2, Barcelona went to Paris to play against PSG, which resulted in a 2-2 draw. PSG's first goal, scored by Ibrahimovic, caused controversy because when the ball was played, Ibrahimovic was in an offside position and the linesman did not call it.

"It was a clear offside but referees do make

mistakes. It's part of the game," said Khalid. PSG scored their second goal in the third minute of stoppage time in the second half, which was also the last minute of the game. Messi and Xavi scored for Barcelona, and since both of their goals were away goals, Barcelona emerged on the winning side of the 2-2 draw. The teams met again in Barcelona on April 10, which resulted in another draw, this time ending at 1-1. Barcelona advanced to the semifinals, having scored more away goals. This is the sixth consecutive year in which Barcelona has reached the semifinals of the Champions League, which is the all-time record.

"Barcelona will be the champions of Europe because they play the best soccer and the chips are all falling in place. Messi is super-human; he'll recover," said Jeremy.

Also on April 2, Bayern defeated Juventus 2-0 in Munich in the first leg of the matchup. The first goal came in the first minute of the game, when David Alaba took a shot from long range, which took a deflection and caught Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon off guard. Thomas Muller scored again for

Bayern in the 63rd minute to seal the victory at home. "After Bayern's match against Juventus, I think they are the clear cut favorite to win the Champion's League," said senior Adam Strumpf. Bayern made it to the Champions League final last year and were the favorites to win, but they lost to Chelsea FC in penalty shootouts. Bayern and Juventus played again on April 10 as well, which yielded the same result. Bayern scored twice and left Juventus with a clean

sheet, moving Bayern to the semifinals.

On April 3, Malaga played against Dortmund in its own city, which ended in a 0-0 draw, and Real Madrid played Galatasaray in Madrid. Madrid dominated Galatasaray in a 3-0 victory, where Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema, and Gonzalo Higuain all scored for their home side.

"I want Real to win, but I think Bayern is going to win because they are the hottest team right now. They're in form," said Khalid.

On April 9, Malaga traveled to Germany to play against Dortmund. Malaga scored their second goal in the 82nd minute to make the score 2-1, meaning



photo courtesy of TheCircular

Dortmund celebrating their last-minute goal against Malaga.

Dortmund would have to score twice more to advance. In what turned out to be an amazing stoppage time, Dortmund scored in the 91st and 93rd minutes to clench the victory at 3-2. Dortmund advanced to the semifinals and heartbroken Malaga returned home.

Also on April 9, Madrid met Galatasaray in Turkey, which ended in a 3-2 victory for Galatasaray. Two of Galatasaray's most recent transfers, Didier Drogba and Wesley Sneijder, scored for Galatasaray. After having won the first game 3-0, Madrid advanced to the semifinals. Galatasaray, though it didn't advance, can take pride in the fact that they defeated one of the best teams in the world.

Didier Drogba is playing for Galatasaray on loan from Shanghai Shenhua, the team he joined last June after leaving Chelsea. Chelsea won the Champions League last year, where Drogba scored both the game-tying goal late in the game and the game-winning penalty in shootouts against Bayern.

Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munchen, and Borussia Dortmund are the four teams remaining in the UEFA Champions League. "Three of the four are the top three teams in the world. Dortmund is having a disappointing season. There are two league leaders and two others, you do the math," said Jeremy.

After the drawing for semifinals on April 12, Barcelona will be playing Bayern, and Real Madrid will be playing Dortmund.

The first leg of the semifinals will be on April 23 and 24, and the second leg on April 30 and May 1.



photo courtesy of SBNation

Messi and Beckham shaking hands before their match.

Baseball team shines bright on diamond with 7-4 win

by John O'Neill and Daniel Restifo

With the Manhattan skyline looming in the background, the Boys Varsity Baseball team opened their 2013 campaign on April 4 against American Studies at Whitey Ford Field. The Hawks' 7-4 victory was the culmination of a month of practices and scrimmages.

After two quiet innings, American Studies drew first blood as they plated three runs in the bottom of the third, the first of which scored on a check swing hit. In the top of the fourth with runners on first and second, sophomore Dylan Biscardi singled into left to drive in the Hawks' first run of the game. The runners would advance on a throwing error but ended up stranded at second and third. The Hawks' scored four more runs in the fifth, giving them a 5-3 lead and a rush of momentum heading into the final stretch of the game. They scored two insurance runs in the sixth and seventh innings to bolster their lead.

Junior Harry Quinn would relieve starting senior pitcher T.J. Ritter in the fifth and although he found himself in two bases-loaded jams, he was able to limit the damage to just one run in the sixth. Quinn ended the game by striking out the ninth place hitter with a sizzling low and away fastball.

T.J. Ritter received his first win of the season while Harry Quinn picked up a save.

Quinn felt the team displayed what they are all about, saying, "we're competitive with each other and our opponents. We fight hard, and even under pressure we stand strong."

At the beginning of the game, the Hawks' bats were silent, as the side was struck out in the first and two bats were broken in the second by American Studies' hard throwing right-hander. The Hawks remained confident and as the fourth inning rolled around, they made adjustments and their bats woke up.

Dylan Biscardi said, "Once the bats got going there was no stopping us."

The Hawks' opener also saw the debuts of freshmen Evan Noblesala and Mason Rivero. They played important roles during the game, contributing both offensively and defensively.

Mason said, "I was really excited throughout the game. I felt that we became very confident. The end result makes the future seem very bright."

Coach Edgar Morales, the former Forest Hills standout, has entered his third year at the helm of the baseball program at Townsend Harris.

After the game, Coach Morales said, "Opening day's win is one to remember; it involved a rally comeback, solid defensive play, patient hitting and clutch pitching. The feeling of winning never gets old and getting that first W of the season gave us a reason to feel good about ourselves. We have a lot to play for this year and after hours and hours of practicing and conditioning we have no excuses not to go out there and play quality team baseball."

Girls varsity wrestling debuts, makes NYC history

by Isaac Pulatov

In a school dominated by women, it was only a matter of time before THHS became one of the first schools in New York City to have a girls wrestling team. The 2013 PSAL Girls Freestyle Wrestling season kicked off on Saturday, April 6. Townsend Harris is one of the sixteen teams in this year's season.

PSAL has long held a co-ed wrestling season. However, these teams always had a male majority. This year, PSAL officials identified 15 schools with a core group of female wrestlers already competing on the boys' squads, or where coaches and school officials believed there was enough interest from female students to give all-female wrestling a try. The 16th team is a citywide "catch all" team for girls at schools without programs.

Coach Raymond Adamkiewicz has been the coach of the boys wrestling team for the past six years, and he is now the coach of the girls team. He said, "I think [the idea of having this team] is great. This opportunity of having an all-female program allows them to excel within their own capabilities. It also allows for more recruitment and advertisement. The girls are very well-disciplined and they pick up the technique quickly. They reassess their matches through video and they improve through that. They pick [wrestling] up quicker than boys. Their flexibility plays an advantage but defies some of the things we teach the boys."

Sophomore Eleni Sardina played a huge role in the creation of this team. In her freshman year, she was one of only two girls on the co-ed team, and now she's the captain of a fourteen-girl team.

"Because I'm the senior-most girl wrestler," she explained, "I had the responsibility of getting people interested and recruited."

Since most of the wrestlers this season are rookies, a lot more responsibility is placed on Eleni's shoulders. "What makes this season different from co-ed is that in every year there is a group of seniors who can help out the rookies, and make the transition easier. This season, however, I'm the most experienced. I'm trying to teach these girls about a sport I love."

Regardless of a lack of veterans, she says that the girls are progressing nicely. "The only way wrestlers get any better is by having a partner that's tough on them and I see that a lot in the room. They also take chances.

When we show them a move one day they'll attempt to use it the next, regardless of how comfortable they are with it. Overall the girls are aggressive, adaptable, and really willing to give this sport a chance and to me that's all I really wanted from this team."

Many girls express that they feel much more comfortable wrestling on a girls team than a co-ed team. Sophomore Rhea Ramsaywack said, "With a guy you feel like they're stronger, you can't do anything. With a girl, you feel even and like you can achieve more."

Freshmen girls expressed similar sentiments. For Rebecca West, wrestling is "definitely more fun with your own gender."

Freshman Andzelika Sroka added, "Both teammates get to learn when it's two girls, because guys are naturally stronger."

Sophomore Alyssa Watson said, "It's so different from co-ed because we're making history. It's something special to be a part of. Girls wrestling hasn't been acknowledged until now. Plus, it's more of a family."

There are small differences in the rules between girls wrestling and co-ed. Instead of using the collegiate rules of the boys league, the girls league will use the freestyle rules used in Olympic wrestling. The style is more about wrestling on one's feet instead of grappling on the mat.

Senior Eileen Santiago said, "The hardest thing in life is wrestling because after you wrestle, everything else is easy."

Eleni is very proud of her team and has high hopes. "So far it's been going well. I honestly was just really concerned with girls joining at all. It's really hard to support a sport that's considered masculine to girls. Luckily we have 14 girls on the team. I like our team the way it is, we have a family-like atmosphere that I love. I feel like we have a solid team. Mr. A and Assistant Coach Owen are both extremely knowledgeable in wrestling and the girls are very receptive so they really have a good foundation for wrestling."

"Going forward we're hoping to make the playoffs as a team and that more than half of us qualify for city championships," said Coach Adamkiewicz.

Senior TJ Ritter leads baseball in his twelfth athletic season

by Andrew Eichenholz

Every school athletic team has a captain, the leader of the team, but more often than not, there is an important leader without the "C" on their chest. In the case of the boys baseball team, senior TJ Ritter is that leader. Who got the call to take the mound on opening day? TJ Ritter. Who is the ace of the pitching staff? TJ Ritter. Who by far is the active leader on the team in almost every hitting category? No need to even guess.

Entering his twelfth athletic season at Townsend Harris, TJ has the same thing he had on his mind for the last eleven: winning. If one asks TJ which season is his favorite, the answer comes out as quick as his fastball: "Being on the baseball team at THHS has been one of the greatest experiences of my life and that I will never forget. Baseball is the one sport that has always been there for me...and it gives me an outlet to get my mind off the school work."

With the popularly recognized tough workload greeting Ritter freshman year, baseball helped him out in other ways as well. "Being on the baseball team also helped me meet new people and become friends with the seniors, especially freshman year."

Not only are people in the athletic department well aware of Ritter's valuable contributions to past and present Harris successes on the field, but students throughout the school are as well. Senior Sukhdeep Singh had nothing but praise for the star senior: "TJ's insatiable work ethic has driven him to be one of the premier athletes of THHS. Being on the basketball, baseball, soccer, and track teams, I ask, is there any sport TJ can't play?" With students in every high school community dreaming to make one varsity team, Ritter shines on many, including track, basketball and soccer, showing that hard work truly does pay off.

This sentiment is echoed by members of the baseball team and prospective members alike. Senior Antonino Scaturro was at tryouts, and he was thoroughly impressed by the leadership of the senior star: "At baseball tryouts this year, TJ Ritter had shown a lot of leadership. He was a good influence on everyone trying out." Senior captain Ameer Kazmi agreed, saying, "TJ has always stood out as a skilled team player and is a great addition to any team he plays on."

Having already started the Hawks on a positive track with an opening day win on the mound, Ritter graduates in June with a passion for baseball that will never end. With pending scholarships to multiple universities, Ritter will continue to play travel baseball for the RGMVM Aces and the Knights before college. Further emphasizing his captain-like role, he said, "I feel that it is my job to help my teammates whenever I can. Whether it is with their hitting, pitching, fielding, or even attitude towards the game I enjoy helping them and teaching them everything I've learned since I started playing at 3 years old."



photo courtesy of TJ Ritter

TJ Ritter winding up for a pitch.

Additional reporting by Isaac Pulatov

GAMES TO WATCH

- 4/26 4:00PM Boys Varsity Baseball vs. Information Technology HS @ Kissena Park
- 4/30 4:00PM Boys Varsity Handball vs. Francis Lewis @ Kissena Park
- 5/06 4:30PM Girls Varsity Fencing vs. Benjamin N. Cardozo @ Townsend Harris
- 5/09 4:00PM Girls Varsity Softball vs. John Bowne @ Kissena Park