

the CLASSIC

Townsend Harris High School at Queens College

Sandy brings chaos to East Coast, school community

by Catherine Moskos

Hurricane Sandy, which hit on October 29, was reported to be one of the largest and most menacing storms to hit the East Coast in years, slamming the area with torrential rain, high-speed winds, and widespread flooding. An estimated 7.5 million people along the Eastern seaboard lost power and over 100 people died.

Sandy was reclassified as a non-tropical storm after its initial impact and carried winds of 80 miles per hour or more. Dangerous flood tides grew as high as 13 feet, according to the National Hurricane Center. President Obama signed federal emergency declarations for eight states and the District of Columbia, permitting state officials to begin making requests for federal assistance, including the delivery of manpower and much needed equipment to hard hit areas.

When the hurricane struck, a rampaging fire razed over 100 houses in Breezy Point, Queens. Explosions and downed power lines left the lower part of Manhattan and 90 percent of Long Island in the dark.

Additionally, Sandy closed down many major forms of transportation and forced hundreds of thousands to evacuate low-lying areas. Schools, colleges and universities shut their doors in anticipation of



photo by Hannah Morse

A common sight in the wake of Sandy's destruction.

power outages and dangerous road conditions.

To make matters worse, a fierce nor'easter hit New York on November 7, adding to the Sandy devastation and lengthening cleanup efforts.

"We are certain that this is going to be a slow-moving process through a wide swath of the country, and millions of people are going to be affected," Obama told reporters at the White House. He said the Federal Emergency Management Agency is working closely with state and local officials across the Eastern seaboard.

Harrisites were not exempt from the effects of

Sandy. Though some students escaped the damage entirely, spending a week away from school writing college essays and catching up on their Netflix queues, others were not nearly as fortunate. Numerous students and staff members lost power for a great deal of time (or have temporarily relocated), and some have spent weeks dealing with ruined homes and the tragic loss of irreplaceable possessions.

Principal Anthony Barbetta commented, "Although the storm has devastated our region, I am amazed and heartened by the efforts of our entire school to come together to help those in need. Donations have been constant and even more of our community members are eager to help. Many of our staff

members and students were affected and yet nearly 100% of them are back in school, despite the fact that some were without power and transportation was challenging. Thanks to their dedication, we are on track to return to our daily routines."

Ms. Robin Figelman, Physical Education teacher and Dean, said, "My senior gym classes cannot meet in Fitzgerald and we're fitting into open spaces at THHS. I have not gone upstairs to the shelter but I hear there are over 300 people. It's really sad."

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Obama, Democrats win big in Election Simulation

by Katherine Maradiaga

If the real Democratic party only had to worry about the votes of the Townsend Harris student body, they'd probably spend a lot less time and money campaigning.

Barack Obama and Joe Biden, along with state officials Kirsten Gillibrand, Grace Meng, Nydia Velasquez, Joseph Addabbo, and Nily Rozic were victorious in this year's Election Simulation after students voted on November 5. Joseph Concannon was the only Republican to win.

Beginning in September, seniors portraying real politicians campaigned to grasp the hearts – and ballots – of underclassmen, many of whom were more than willing to trade their simbucks for baked goods.

Some students seemed caught off guard by the results; others felt they were predictable.

"I thought Romney had a better chance of win-

ning. I saw his campaign during zero bands and he seemed to work harder," said Woo Jung Yi, sophomore.

"I was pretty surprised considering the effort that I saw Republicans put into their campaigns," said Samiha Ahmed, sophomore, adding that "Obama didn't put enough of his time into campaigning; I didn't see him in many classes."

"I think Romney could have been more active in campaigning with other grades," said Elizabeth Williams, junior, in contrast. "On the TV show they always showed him campaigning with the freshman but I never saw him doing anything with sophomores or juniors."

Marco Gallagher, the senior who played Mitt Romney, said "I was a little surprised. I knew I was unfavored being a Republican. [However], polls showed that I was favored in the freshman class, but

I ended up losing their grade."

Demeara Torres, junior, said, "Our school is mostly liberal, so it was extremely predictable that Democrats would win." With regard to previous polls, she contended that "the polls just proved how even though Romney put a lot of effort and was popular, kids still decided to vote Democrat since they are most likely liberal in real life."

Sophomore Allegra Santo concurred, saying "I'm honestly not surprised because of the nature of this school being Democratic."

The Election Simulation ended abruptly in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, forcing faculty to cancel the much anticipated debates. Dr. Linda Steinmann, social studies and government teacher, explained that having the debate "after the real election would have taken away from the excitement of it."

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Dropping out of the Electoral College

At Townsend Harris, we strive to mirror the real world in numerous ways, and the Election Simulation is no exception. In the Election Simulation, we attempt to recreate the real life election to almost every extent, from the discrepancies in the amounts of funds different candidates get to the ridiculous campaign commercials. But there is one aspect of the real election that is inherently flawed, and these flaws create problems within our simulation.

The Electoral College has been a major component of presidential elections since 1787, when the Constitutional Convention first approved it. Since then, it has continued to emphasize the political divisions that are all too clear in our country. In this past presidential election, the candidates did not do any campaigning except in the 10 or so “battleground” states that they believed were key to their coalition. We highly doubt that any of you were bombarded by ads day and night, urging you to cast your vote for either candidate. However, according to the National Journal, in the state of Ohio the candidates spent \$115,961,185 on ads between the two of their campaigns (not including special interest groups).

The demographics of our country are now changing, and they are changing to favor a certain party. This leads to voter disillusionment, as we can’t tell you the number of Republican New Yorkers who have told us that they didn’t vote this year because “It won’t change anything.” While that fact is essentially untrue, it is indicative of what the Electoral College has done to partisan America. Essentially, voters not living in swing states feel disempowered, because as much as one vote counts, in some places, one vote counts more.

At Townsend Harris, we proportion the votes to somewhat imitate the way the Electoral College works. It puts emphasis on our key demographics and forces us to strategize campaigns tailored to certain groups. But what it also does is make us mutter “Get the freshman vote” to ourselves at least once a day (more like once a band). When campaigning, we sometimes ignore the juniors, and completely ignore the seniors, because we are doing what candidates do best – focusing on those with the electoral votes that matter most. Having a “winner takes all” strategy for electoral votes in this country and in our simulation does nothing but encourage conservative Californians, liberal Texans, and apathetic 11th graders not to vote.

Sandy’s rage need not extend to February

Mayor Bloomberg closed down all NYC Public Schools from October 29 to November 5. Students were kept on their toes throughout the week, constantly anticipating Bloomberg’s next public announcements. After an entire week in educational limbo, students returned anxiously to school, unaware of what to expect. With community members slowly transitioning back to their normal lives, they realize that a week off from school, though a blessing for some, was a curse for most.

You’d be surprised how much academic damage was done by this week off; with a majority of students experiencing power or Internet outages, teachers had no way of communicating with their students. Tests and assignments were pushed back, changing the course syllabi. A majority of the senior class stressed over the upcoming Early Action and Decision deadlines for college applications. The Election Simulation was cut during its most important time, the final week, with the pivotal debates being cancelled. SING was postponed, and the Track Team’s NERF game was pushed back as well.

Any Townsend Harris student knows that when you miss one day of school, you miss a lot. With 5 days pulled out from under us without any prior notice, what would happen to the curriculum? Well, according to Bloomberg, these days need to be made up. Chancellor Denis Walcott recently issued changes to the school calendar, stating, “All schools will hold full-day sessions from Wednesday, February 20, through Friday, February 22. These days were previously scheduled as part of mid-winter recess.”

Will interrupting our February break by three days really make up for the trouble that one week put the faculty and students through? Alterations have already been made to scheduling, so why the redundancy? Students and teachers directly impacted by the storm are still coping and struggling. What’s Walcott’s scheduling solution for that? Cutting the Spring break in half perhaps? This change is yet another inconvenience to the students and faculty alike. The February break always seemed kind of redundant coming so soon after the December holidays, but after what many have experienced over the past few weeks, both those directly affected by the storm and those who’ve just managed to get back to their normal school routine, we all really need a break.

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Townsend Harris High School
149-11 Melbourne Avenue
Flushing, NY 11367

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Email letters to the editors at
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Barack Obama wins second term with 322 electoral votes

by Yelena Dzhanova

Barack Obama was re-elected president of the United States on Tuesday, November 6th, decidedly defeating Governor Mitt Romney.

Obama proved victorious in the all-important battleground states of New Hampshire, Iowa, Virginia, Wisconsin, Ohio, Colorado, Nevada and Florida. Winning these states made it impossible for Romney to earn enough electoral votes to claim the presidency. Only North Carolina, a swing state after it went for Obama in 2008, went to Romney. After each state had its say, Obama earned 332 electoral votes to Romney's 206 votes. The media networks called the election at approximately 11:15pm on Tuesday night.

The popular vote, however, was closer than Obama's Electoral College win suggests. In terms of overall votes cast, the president earned 51% of the votes and the governor earned 48%. Exit polls showed that Obama owed his victory to substantial leads over minority voters (particularly in the Hispanic, Asian and African American communities), single female voters, and young voters.

Obama's re-election as president extends the historic nature of his presidency, giving him the opportunity to serve as the first black president of the United States for two consecutive terms. Moreover, President Obama will now be listed with Ronald Reagan, Dwight Eisenhower, and Franklin D. Roosevelt as the only presidents of the past hundred years to win more than 50% of the popular vote twice.

Following his triumph in the election, Obama addressed his supporters. "Tonight in this election, you, the American people, reminded us that while our road has been hard, while our journey has been long, we have picked ourselves up, we have fought our way back. We know in our hearts that for the United States of America, the best is yet to come."

Mitt Romney, speaking before the president, conceded defeat. "I ran for office because I'm concerned for America. Like so many of you, Paul and I have left everything on the field. We have given our all to this campaign," the Republican candidate said. Romney also pledged to pray for Barack Obama.

At THHS, as with all areas of the country, opinions on the election were varied. When asked about her perspective on the results, Nadia Khan, freshman, answered, "I felt that many people were happy that Obama won because they felt that they needed someone to be there for them. I, personally, think that a businessman such as Mitt Romney could have benefited the country in terms of the deficit."

Sophomore Igor Portnoi also hoped that Romney would win the election. "I supported Mitt Romney throughout his campaign, and I supported his ideals, but sadly on Election Day, Barack Obama won; both candidates did a great job campaigning and debating, but America picked Obama to remain as president."

"I was pleased by Mr. Obama's victory, because it was also a victory for women and for women's rights," said Nazifa Nasim, senior.

History teacher, Alex Wood, said, "I'm happy Obama won. I think his policies are better than Romney's." That's not to say that Mr. Wood approves of all the president's policies: "I'm lukewarm about Obama's educational policies, because I don't think high-stake tests are always the best way to find out what a student knows."

"It was a no-brainer that Obama won the election, because Mitt Romney contradicted himself so many times throughout the election that I lost count," Fariha Hussain, senior, said.

Freshman Sandhya Sewnauth added, "I think with Obama's victory in the election, we can expect more education reforms, and I think that it's important that he learns to work with the Republicans since they still have the house majority."

Obama's presidency will allow the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (popularly known as "Obamacare") to survive, which Romney vowed to repeal. The bill will focus on making adjustments to medical services nationwide. Mr. Wood stated, "Obamacare will stay in place, and that's a huge victory. There are millions of people in America without health insurance and hopefully that will change when Obamacare gets fully implemented."

When asked what else Americans can expect from a second Obama term, Mr. Wood added, "We might get a tax system which raises taxes on the wealthy. If you care about the deficit, that's a good thing."

Special Interest Groups rally voters to their causes

by Vanesa Martinez

The Special Interest Rally held on October 24th gave the Special Interest Groups of the 2012-2013 Election Simulation an opportunity to present their ideas to the student body in funny, interesting, and informative ways.

The Special Interest Groups presented at the Rally were Restore Our Future, Priority USA Action, the Republican National Committee, the Democratic National Committee, the Business Round Table, AFL-CIO, the American Family Association, the Wildlife Association, FAIR, the National Immigration Forum, American Crossroads, Occupy Wall Street, and MoveOn.org.

Dr. Steinman, one of many teachers involved in the Election Simulation, said, "I thought they did a great job. Underclassmen enjoyed the skits more than they enjoyed the talking. I can understand that. When you only have two minutes, it's hard to come up with something funny, entertaining, and informative at the same time."

Each group was given two minutes to present their issues, ideas, and views to the student body.

Throughout the skits, there was laughter from the student body.

Delenira Deleon, senior, was part of the group representing the Democratic National Committee. She said, "I thought the Special Interest Groups' skits were really good. It was a lot funnier than I thought it would be. It worked out. The skits were not only funny, but also presented their views successfully."

Among these were the skit presented by Occupy Wall Street and MoveOn.org. They presented a skit about Big Bird and Governor Mitt Romney. The student portraying Mitt Romney spoke to Big Bird, saying, "I like Big Bird. I may even like these people over here. They may not be the 47%, but I like them." He went on to fire Big Bird. They ended the skit by saying, "Today is brought to you by the letter U, for unemployed."

Melissa De La Torre explained, "The rally went really well, considering we only had two days to plan it."

Carlamarie Rodriguez, senior and part of the group representing the AFL-CIO, said "All groups did really well. They had an equal mix of education and entertainment." She continued, "I lament that it was only one band long. However, I think that the school had a good opportunity to learn about the Special Interest Groups."

Dr. Steinman said, "It was a lunch band, so it was hard to fit everyone. We had thirteen Special Interest Groups to accommodate. I thought it went well, considering this."

The Republican National Committee showed students a skit about a man proposing to his girlfriend. In response to his proposal, the woman says, "Yes, but wait, what job do you have?" to which the man responds, "I'll find a job, don't worry!" She disagrees, saying, "In this economy, where the unemployment rate is over 8%?" The man becomes desperate, saying, "Please, I'll do

anything!" while the woman begins to back out, saying "I don't think I can do this." However, Mitt Romney comes in to save the day. He explains why they should get married, and says, "I'm Mitt Romney, and I approve of this marriage."

"In the beginning, I thought everyone was just going to try to present boring facts, but people came up with great skits. The mics weren't working well, but I thought everyone did really well. The skits entertained the audience and taught them a lot about the Special Interest Groups," said Bohang Liu, the senior who portrayed the proposing man for the Republican National Committee.

Carly Lam, senior, was part of the group representing FAIR at the rally. She said, "I think it went well. Everyone had a very interesting skit and the information was very informative and interesting. I think the rally got the Special Interest Groups' goals and agendas across well in the time allotted, which wasn't really that much in order to do what we wanted."

There were several technical difficulties during the Special Interest Rally. The microphones stopped working several times, making it impossible for those standing or sitting far from the stage to hear the skits.

Nandine Hemraj, senior, said "I thought that the technical difficulties and time limits took away from the skits, making them less informative, but overall everyone did a great job."

"I thought it was a very nice rally. The skits were really creative. The Special Interest Groups get less attention, so a rally is a good way to introduce what they stand for to a larger student body," said Mr. Wood, another teacher involved in the Simulation.



The Wildlife Association presents a skit to school

photo by Vanesa Martinez

THHS contributes to relief efforts for Sandy's victims

by Ashley Ahn

The Townsend Harris community found ways to help the citizens of New York City in its continued efforts to confront Hurricane Sandy's devastation.

Harrisites donated items for those still dealing with the effects of the storm, and Dr. Sato's Music Theory and Chamber Music classes packaged the donations.

"We bagged the donations and sorted them out by separating the food supplies from the clothes, and so on. We also sorted out the clothes by different sizes and by gender," said Freshman Kellie Zestanakis.

Leanna Narain, junior, describes the next step after sorting the collection: "Ms. Sato, Ms. Verga and I took them to evacuation centers. There were a lot of donations from people. The families were grateful and kind."

Freshman Mina Li explained that it was more difficult to find a place for the donations than it was to package them: "Not a lot of people would accept the donations."

Alex Boychuck, senior, agreed: "They didn't have room for everything, but they accepted some of the school supplies."

Clubs at THHS also showed their support. The Red Cross club started a fundraiser. "During Red Cross club, we made posters to raise awareness of the fundraiser and raised more than \$400. We encouraged everyone to donate, even if they only had spare change. Many people were enthusiastic about donating, including teachers," said Shirley Ng, senior and treasurer of the club.

Seekers, the school's Christian club, also shared their plan to help. Lily Pan, senior, said, "Originally, we were planning to have Operation Christmas Child, which is when we pack shoe boxes, little toys and essential items for African children who are in need. But this year, we decided to hold a fundraiser for vic-

tims of the hurricane. We have envelopes and we are currently asking people to donate money."

Amanda Rosso, senior, also a member of the club, added, "We set individual goals to raise at least \$15 per person in order to make a substantial difference in the lives of those who are affected."

Ms. Verga, teacher of music, described her experience distributing the goods donated by THHS. "I first went to the Fitzgerald Gymnasium at Queens College, but after awhile, they wouldn't accept them anymore so I went to other local shelters at Rockaway. When I visited the shelters, I could see that they were very appreciative. When you visit the shelters, you really learn how much contributions help people. I also saw that what the families need is food more than anything else, because we had a lot of clothes to give out to people compared to the amount of food. But many families didn't take too much food because they felt that somebody else would need it more. I think that it's a noble characteristic that these people have. They don't forget others in times of need."

Dr. Sato encouraged members of the community to remember that victims of disasters such as these often need help even after the immediate aftermath of the storm. She said, "For me, the idea of donation is a very heavy issue because I come from a country with frequent natural disasters. I think that it is a beautiful thing to collect for people who are in need. I was very surprised at the generosity of the Townsend community because there were so many donations. But personally, I feel reserved about the whole issue because people tend to forget as soon as the media stops reporting about the disasters. I think that it is crucial that we do not forget those who were affected. We should not forget, but revisit these moments in the future."



photo courtesy of Michael Sanchez

Piles of damaged belongings lie outside of houses.

Students share stories of Hurricane Sandy's aftermath

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History teacher Mr. John O'Malley was personally affected. "The biggest problem for me was keeping the car running on the gas in the tank, until it ran out on Thursday, so I had to take off on Friday," he said.

Also, Physical Education and Health teacher Ms. Maria Assante said, "Compared to some people, I'm grateful. I had no loss of life, no damage. I got off easy. But one inconvenience was that I had to take my children to family in Brooklyn so they wouldn't have to stay in the dark and cold. But the real issue was there was no gas, so how was I supposed to get my kids back from Brooklyn?"

Some students praised the government for helping during the storm.

"Although it took a long time for the power to turn back on, the government did a great job performing the correct safety measures as the national guard was stationed in my neighborhood the morning of the storm. They were able to save many people's lives. The storm also brought our community together. The only restaurant open in my neighborhood was giving out free pizza to everyone," said Laura O'Shea, senior.

"Hurricanes don't exactly come to New York City often and I don't think any amount of preparation or warning could have made this easier. I want to believe that Bloomberg is doing the best he can," said Anaya Farro, sophomore

Other students were left feeling like more should have been done.

"I wish the mayor or the city would've sent more ConEd people to the neighborhoods that needed it the most, like Howard Beach and Rockaway because I know many of my friends were without power until a few days ago and that was crazy considering [when] the hurricane hit," said Karan Chachlani, junior.

Upon returning to school, students spent a great deal of their time sharing stories. "I lost power for a week. It was freezing and dark, but compared to what other people had to go through, it was an inconvenience. The devastation is unbelievable, so it's good to see so many people reaching out and donating to the relief efforts," said Jillian Burke, senior.

Marco Gallagher, senior, said, "Well during the week off I was basically pumping six feet of water out of my basement and then gutting it and throwing out everything that was down there."

Samantha Prevot, junior, who had to transfer schools due to the distance between THHS and where she's living now, said, "It's so sad to see the place that I love more than anywhere else, my home, so devastated. It really looks like a warzone. I don't know when I'm gonna be able to go home but I know that the people of Rockaway are strong and we can get through this. I look forward to coming back to Townsend for my senior year."

Sarah Kim, senior, said, "I know that there are a lot of victims of the hurricane who lost their homes in the aftermath, some of which are in Fitzgerald gym over at Queens College. I went over to volunteer for an hour, and it's sad to see how many have lost their homes and properties and maybe even family, but it's good that they still have their lives. It's amazing to see the volunteers that give up their time overnight or early in the morning to serve."

Kelly Zheng, junior, said, "I was out of power for about a week, and it was fairly annoying to deal with. My family and I had to finish pretty much everything before 5:00 PM since that's around when the sun set, and once it set, our main source of light was gone."

"My family and I were fortunate enough not to have any damage to our house, but the family across the street from us had a huge tree crash through the

front of their house," said Alessandra Tabaoda, junior. "Weeks went by until the tree was removed, and the woman living there later told us that it cost her thousands of dollars to repair the house."

A sense of compassion ran throughout the Townsend Harris community after the storm hit.

Asmaaul Choudhury, sophomore, said, "It was pretty sad, even if I wasn't affected at all. Lots of people lost their homes and former lives. It did bring a lot of New Yorkers together. It showed that even if we don't seem to care about each other, we do."

"Nothing happened to me, but I feel bad for people who lost so much. I hope they are all okay," said Victoria Lau, senior.

Some, however, felt that unaffected students enjoyed the time off too much.

Freshman Coryn Nahum said, "I found it rude how a lot of THHS students weren't compassionate – they were happy that it happened and that they had off."

Others, wanting to support the volunteer efforts, found it difficult to do so.

Junior Katelyn Schob said, "I was planning on volunteering in the Rockaways, but some of the people we were planning on going with went first and found out that since there was still so much damage, they were only letting certain people through on buses and they had to be over eighteen years old."

Seeing the bright side, Sofia Milonas, junior, said, "It made me realize how fortunate I am that I normally have power and water and how valuable hot water is."

And for some, the storm offered a chance for neighbors to truly come together. Sarah Rader, senior, said, "I was the only house in my neighborhood with power, so all of my neighbors came to my house, it was like a little party."

Abandoned bunny becomes official Harrisite

by Ella Leviyeva

It's not everyday an albino rabbit laps you on the track.

During their after school practice, the girls varsity track team came across Fifa, a rabbit that was abandoned by a family and left near the

the bunny prior to asking Principal Anthony Barbetta for permission to keep it.

"Mr. Barbetta and Ms. Fee let us keep the bunny, so we took it to the vet and had it checked out. There are a variety of names going around the school, such as Velvet and Dash, but the students officially named it Fifa."

Fifa is an albino New Zealand White rabbit. These rabbits are usually bred for their meat and fur, but are very intelligent and have often been used as research animals.

Ms. Oberlander didn't think it right to let Fifa remain a permanent resident of Townsend Harris's halls. "Fifa is about half a year to a year old. He's really mannered and well tempered, but I couldn't bear to leave

him in school alone overnight. Fifa lives with me; he loves to run around my house and he jumps really high."

Although Fifa now resides in Ms. Oberlander's home, he is an official member of the Townsend Harris community.

"I'll try to bring him to school more often, because the kids really love him and have grown affection for him," said Ms. Oberlander.



photo courtesy of Sarah Oberlander

Fifa sits in Ms. Oberlander's apartment.

Queens College track.

The track team immediately brought the bunny to school and found science teacher Sarah Oberlander, who was advising Senior/Sophomore SING at the time. "The girls really wanted to keep the bunny, so we immediately brought the bunny to Ms. Fee," said Ms. Oberlander.

Ellen Fee, Assistant Principal of Organization, Health, and Physical Education, helped shelter and feed

CLUB spotlight

Ping Pong Club serves up new enrichment opportunities

by Stephanie Geier

Amnesty...Key Club...Red Cross...and...Ping Pong?

Yes, you read that correctly. For the first time, ping pong is part of the enrichment schedule.

Although ping pong seems like an odd activity compared to the more traditional activities THHS has to offer, it is actually very popular.

The ping pong club, which has about forty members, was founded by sophomore Michael Berchansky. He came up with the idea during the second half of his freshman year.

"I heard about other people starting clubs and I enjoyed playing ping pong, so I thought this was a great interest I could bring to the school," Michael said.

During meetings, paired members play alternating five-to-ten minute ping pong matches based on skill. In

between matches, they watch and socialize among themselves. However, one doesn't need ping pong expertise to join.

"The purpose of the club is to have fun and improve your ping pong skills. It is also said that ping pong is a good way to relieve stress," said Michael.

Vice president, sophomore Christina Marshall, agrees: "It allows students who may not exactly be athletically inclined to partake in a fun sport in which they get to relax and hang out with friends."

"You don't need to be good at ping pong to make new friends," adds member Christopher E, also a sophomore.

Despite its popularity, the club faces obstacles.

"As I came up with the idea for this club, I thought: ping pong is pretty popular. I wonder why we didn't al-

ready have this club? I later found out that the answer to this question was because of money," Michael said.

The club would like at least three ping pong tables for its many members. However, new clubs don't get funding until their second year and each table can cost between 200 to 1000 dollars.

Fundraising effectively solved this issue. During last month's parent-teacher conferences, the club held two bake sales that raised about 100 dollars each, allowing them to buy their first table. They have one other table donated from a ping pong organization called SPiN Galactic, and plan to hold more fundraisers throughout the year.

Although in the past a student once tried to start a ping pong club without result, this time, the club is having greater success.

"I'm really happy I'm getting so

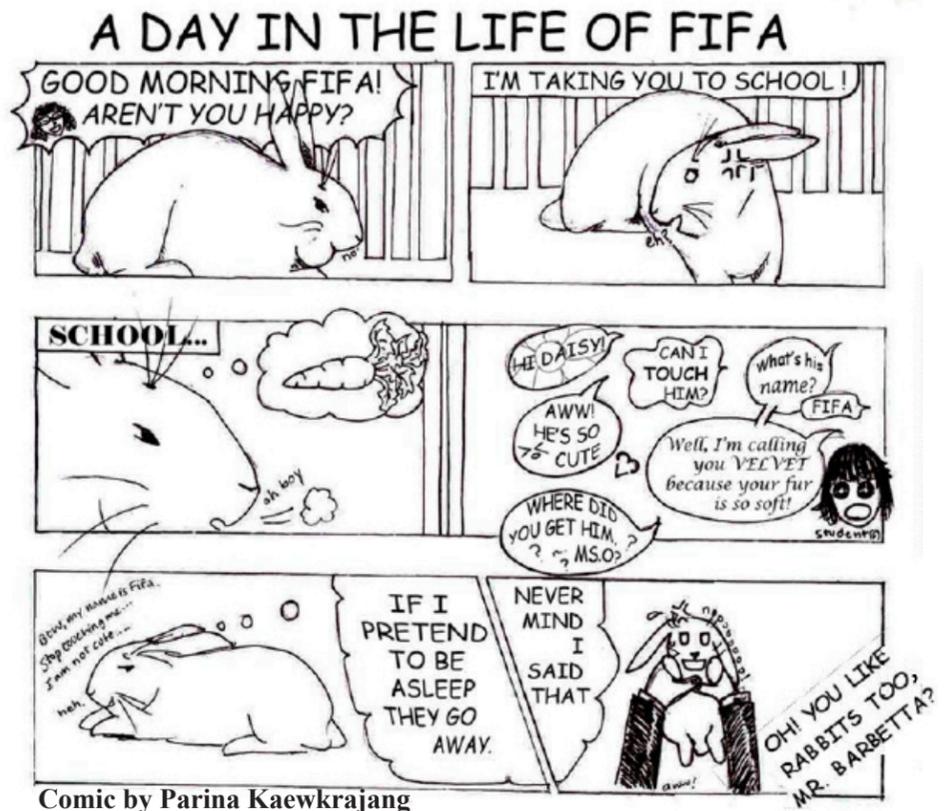
much support from everyone," said Michael.

"It's a lot of fun," said sophomore Russell Katz. "I look forward to versing other people and helping them get better and having a good time overall."

"I recommend the club because you meet new people and make new friends, sharpen up ping pong skills, and just have a good time," said Christopher.

The ping pong club has bigger (albeit tentative) plans for the future. Although the Public Schools Athletic League (PSAL) does not include ping pong as a sport, the two club leaders hope to eventually face other high schools unofficially.

The ping pong club, supervised by Spanish teacher Christian Castillo, meets on Thursdays in room 136.



Comic by Parina Kaewkrajang

Moskos wins at "Newsies"

by Genna Mastellone



Moskos poses with advisor after winning.

At the third annual Newsies Awards for High School Journalism, senior Catherine Moskos won the first place prize for In-Depth reporting 2011-2012. In their online edition, *The New York Daily News* subsequently published her article, "Affirmative Action Sparks Debate During College Season."

The judges said about her piece, "A sparkling piece of in-depth reporting, Reporter Moskos...enriches her piece with a broad chorus of voices from students, making her reporting even more compelling. The end result is a smart piece that is both thorough and relevant."

The contest is hosted by Baruch College and is the only high school newspaper competition for New York City journalists.

photo courtesy of Newsies

The latest and greatest that Broadway has to offer

by Amy Hao

The fall season brings quite a few new shows to Broadway, plays and musicals alike. Given the often exorbitant ticket prices and the busy schedules of Townsend Harris students, many may be tempted to forget it and go to the local movie theater. But with one of the perks of living in New York City being access to first rate theater productions, it might be more worth it to give one of the latest shows to hit “The Great White Way” a try.

Three New Shows Worth Seeing

Annie (Palace Theatre: opened Nov. 8th)

It's been 35 years since Annie first sang and danced her way into peoples' hearts in the original Broadway production. Now, after countless revivals all over the world, she's back in New York! Follow Annie (Lilla Crawford) as she evolves from a next-to-nothing orphan living in the evil Miss Hannigan's orphanage to the well-loved daughter of Daddy Warbucks (Anthony Warlow). Rounded out by a cast of eight little girls and even a puppy, the show already has critics raving and audiences “aww”ing.

The Mystery of Edwin Drood (Studio 54: opened Nov. 13th)

What does one get when a Victorian classic, a cross-dressing leading lady, a “play within a play” and a choose-your-own-ending mystery are combined? It would be *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Charles Dickens's novel of the same name remains unfinished to this day (he died in the midst of its writing), so any production of this story needs to be a little creative. Who killed Edwin Drood, if he even is dead at all? Every night the audience votes on who they think the murderer is out of several characters, and the remainder of the show shapes up according to the chosen culprit. This allows for many winning combinations and great fun, especially for mystery buffs. So grab your magnifying glasses and deerstalkers, and pay close attention: *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is not to be missed.



photo courtesy of Broadway.com

‘Tis the season for a musical!

The Heiress (Walter Kerr Theatre: limited engagement from Nov 1st to Feb. 10, 2013)

Here's one for period-piece fans (*Downton Abbey*, anyone?). Set around 1880, Catherine Sloper (Academy Award nominee Jessica Chastain) has lived in the sheltered and protected environment of a wealthy family for her entire life. Along comes Morris Townsend, a charming young man whom she falls for but one that her father suspects is only after her inheritance. As you can imagine, nothing but drama ensues. Actually, fans of *Downton Abbey* will have more than the time period as a reason to enjoy this; the leading man is played by none other than Matthew Crawley himself: Dan Stevens.

The Holidays on the Stage

A Christmas Story: The Musical (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre: limited engagement from Nov. 19th to Dec. 30th)

Ralphie Parker only really wanted one thing for Christmas: an Official Red Ryder Carbine-Action 200-shot Range Model Air Rifle. Of course, he's willing to do whatever it takes to ensure it ends up under his tree. Based on the 1983 movie of the same name, this new musical takes audiences on a crazy journey through the most magical time of year.

Elf the Musical (Al Hirschfeld Theatre: limited engagement from Nov. 9th to Jan. 6, 2013)

What happens when an orphaned baby accidentally crawls into Santa Claus's bag on his Christmas run? Well, in Buddy's case, he is raised at the North Pole until he realizes that he's not an elf. So what's next? The perfect comedy holiday musical based on another hit film!

A Peek at What the Future Holds

Matilda: The Musical (Shubert Theatre: previews start Mar. 4, 2013)

Roald Dahl's precocious and lovable genius, Matilda Wormwood, is coming to New York City! Based upon Dahl's novel of the same name, the London production has earned critical acclaim as well as seven prestigious Olivier Awards (the West End equivalent to the Tonys). Bertie Carvel, who played Miss Trunchbull in the London production, will be reprising his role in the New York version. Sure to please all ages, expect great things from this musical transplant.

Breakfast at Tiffany's (Theatre TBD: previews begin Feb. 2013)

Holly Golightly is headed to the stage. The iconic 1961 film starring Audrey Hepburn will soon become a newly scripted play, bringing to life the stylish society of Holly. Emilia Clarke of HBO's *Game of Thrones* will be playing the role first made famous by Hepburn.

Review: Wreck-it Ralph brings its 'A' Game

by Joanna Wong

In most Disney movies, the villain isn't someone you root for, especially if they're anything like the Evil Queen from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, Jafar from *Aladdin*, or Cruella De Vil from *101 Dalmatians*. However, in the latest brainchild from the House of Mouse, we meet a villain whom you can't help but cheer for.

The titular protagonist from an 80's arcade game, Wreck-It Ralph (voiced by John C. Reilly) may look like the human version of Donkey Kong, but he wants nothing more than to be the hero for a change. Unfortunately, being a hero doesn't seem like an option where Ralph comes from, so he decides to set out on a journey to prove to everyone that there's more to him than wrecking buildings. Along

the way, Ralph encounters Venelope von Schwetz (Sarah Silverman) of Sugar Rush, a game similar to Mario Kart. Soon after, Ralph realizes he has to save his entire arcade from a terrible situation he might have caused.

With cameos from nearly every video game character you can think of (including Bowser, Sonic, Q*bert, Chun-Li, Ryu, Frogger, and Pacman) and allusions to modern favorites like *Halo*, *Wreck-It Ralph* is entertaining enough for little kids, provides nostalgia for gaming teenagers, and is anchored by a heartfelt core reminiscent of *Toy Story*. As far as animated films go, this is a homerun worthy of multiple viewings.



photo courtesy of RottenTomatoes.com

Now showing at a theater near you!

Max Brenner caters to more than chocoholics

by Andrew Mitchel

The Max Brenner “chocolate shop” right in the heart of Greenwich Village in lower Manhattan is a popular spot amongst tourists and locals alike. Its New York location is one of four in America, in addition to locations in Australia, Singapore, the Philippines and Israel.

When you walk in, it's like entering a secret back-room that wasn't featured in either of the *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* movies, with pipes overhead claiming to contain chocolate, as well as oversized chocolate bars larger than your torso.

For food and drink options, I highly recommend their hot chocolate if it's cold outside, or a milkshake if it's warm. Though a bit overpriced, you'll know that it was completely worth getting the moment it hits your taste buds.

Max Brenner is known for its legendary desserts, but I was surprised to receive great entrees on more than one occasion. More importantly, these entrees came at fairly low prices (considering that I was in Manhattan). Both the spicy

chicken 3-cheese pizza I had my first time, and the Brenner Burger I had during my second visit far exceeded my expectations. However, definitely be sure to save room for dessert, as they have a wide variety of choices including crêpes, waffles, cakes and more.

The service is above average, bearing in mind that it is an incredibly busy place. It also isn't the best place to try to get into a serious conversation, as it is very loud. Overall, I would definitely recommend Max Brenner to anyone interested in having a reasonably priced meal with some delicious dessert.

Address: 841 Broadway, New York, NY (just a half-block from Union Square)

RATING
Food: A-
Décor: B
Service: C+
Overall: B

New Assassins Creed misses the mark

by Dimitri Theofanis

Don't expect more than disappointment when investing in the latest edition of the Assassin's Creed franchise.

Yes, the advertising is great. We see colonial America during the American Revolution as the backdrop, we see our Founding Fathers as characters in the game, and we see a slick assassin holding a killer tomahawk and shoving bayonets into the red-coated masses. Spoiler alert: don't expect the game to revolve around this theme, for it does the opposite.

The main storyline of the latest *Assassin's Creed* title barely includes anything related to the American Revolution, aside from a few short-lived battles and forgettable encounters with George Washington and the gang. The main character, a half Native American half European makeshift assassin named Connor, is as bland as he is confused as to which side he is fighting for. He has no desire to free the colonies from the British; he is just doing whatever seems best for the survival of his own tribe. Very few of his missions require any degree of stealth, which makes me question whether Ubisoft remembers what it means to be an assassin. Connor lacks the charisma of Ezio and the intimidation of Altair; as an assassin with motives to kill, he even lacks a fitting name.

Storming into a group of enemies and pressing the same two buttons to kill them all gets repetitive and dull after the first few hours of gameplay, but the gruesome cut scenes are impressive. The same techniques and weapons used to kill in the very first mission are basically the exact same as the ones used in the last mission. This degree of uniformity is unprecedented in this series, and I was personally expecting more.

For the first time in the *Assassin's Creed* trilogy, I found myself bored. The creators of this game have shifted away from the justified killings of Templars to missions where Connor delivers mail throughout the city and eavesdrops on conversations. What happened to being an assassin? What happened to stealthily sneaking up on the enemy with a hidden blade and doing away with him, or jumping out of the haystack onto the soon-to-be-dead enemy?

There are missions in which Connor has to chase some poor soul through the city of Boston or New York, but because there is only one button used for free-running, Connor ends up climbing everything and anything, often causing him to desynchronize and restart the mission.

Speaking of disappointments, Boston and New York are big ones. Yet, that is not entirely Ubisoft's fault; they have to be historically and architecturally correct in their design, so they can't allow for the tall buildings that we saw in the previous *Assassin's Creed* titles. Boston and New York look too similar to even tell them apart in the game, and all of the irrelevant side missions throughout the cities don't have much appeal. In essence, the side missions give Connor money to buy boats to make more money, and before you know it, you're a colonial millionaire. Too bad there's nothing to do with your money, aside from buying weapons that are completely unnecessary.

Followers of this franchise, however, will most likely feel compelled to buy the latest (and hopefully last) edition, but there's not much here worth paying for.

Halo series remains hallowed as it begins the new Reclaimer trilogy

by Michael Sanchez

Spartans never die; they just go missing in action. True to its iconic saying, the *Halo* franchise returns under the helm of 343 Industries, and after reawakening Master Chief, opens the *Halo* Universe to an entire new trilogy.

After inheriting the mantle from Bungie Studios, 343 Industries faced the challenge of expanding on a riveting and well-known gaming franchise. Their work has culminated in the best *Halo* game to date.

The completely redesigned structure of game play, graphics, audio and story create an experience like no other. The starting menu's epic music alone was enough to have me on the edge of my seat. With the game's emotional story, weekly cooperative missions, and competitive multiplayer option, there's more than enough for fans to invest in.

Halo 4's campaign is unlike any other. This time, throughout the progression of the story, our faceless, robot-like super soldier is made relatively more human. The campaign has an underlying focus on Master Chief and Cortana's relationship that meets an emotional climax at the end. The new antagonist and his sect of cronies are some of the toughest opponents of the *Halo* series, armed with advanced weaponry and near impossible powers. The Covenant also make a return, but in comparison to the Prometheans, are but a minor threat. Cut scenes are amazing with breathtaking atmosphere, subtle and well-rounded audio, and

beautiful motion capture.

The story however tends to get confusing toward the end. Only those well versed in the *Halo* lore would have a better understanding. The story itself is relatively short, composed only of 8 missions.

Overall though, the campaign is fun to play and is sprinkled with those little secrets *Halo* fans love so much.

Halo 4 adds a new edition to its gaming experience: the weekly cooperative Spartan Ops. Taking the helm of a customizable Spartan super soldier, players can participate in periodic "episodes" as they delve deeper into the *Halo* lore. Spartan Ops actually takes place after the *Halo 4* story line, and is said to shed some light on the mysterious Prometheans. There is no scoring system or competitiveness to the "episodes" which starts to take away from replay value. Also, *Halo 4's* host system can be terrible at times; with players, enemies, and vehicles teleporting all over the map.

Multiplayer is an addictive and entertaining feature in *Halo 4*, one that I could proudly say is keeping me from finishing my college applications. It introduces a number of new features such as class customization, allowing players to formulate a class on their play style, using weapons, armor abilities and a system of perks and bonuses. The game also introduces the specialization class, in which players who have achieved level 50 can advance into a special sect of the Spartans, each sect adding substantial benefits to game play.

In all aspects, *Halo 4* is an amazing game. Although having minor connection problems and a somewhat shifty storyline, the game play and emotional investment undoubtedly make up for it. This is a must have for *Halo* fans, and for the new fans, a great introduction into a new trilogy.



photo courtesy of Wikipedia.org

The best game in the series?

Students react to Simulation results

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Khalid Abdin, the senior who played Barack Obama, noted that "Sandy didn't allow us to have that final week of campaigning which means the candidates weren't able to have their debates, rallies, commercials, etc. However, both candidates were affected equally, so it's hard to say that one candidate received an edge."

For some students, the lack of debates may have had a significant impact upon their final decision.

"We didn't see how they could argue, and we didn't get to learn about them as individuals," said Samiha.

"Sandy made people think about what Romney and Obama did to help the regions," said Yuriy Markovetsky, freshman, referring to places devastated by the hurricane.

Ameer Kazmi, the senior who portrayed Republican Joseph Concannon, said, "Voters had opinions on candidates from the very beginning and they already knew who they would vote for. A week of campaigns doing the same things they have been doing throughout the election wouldn't have swayed too many committed people."

Joy Nieh, a senior who campaigned for the Republican Party, said, "The fact that we didn't have the debates took away from the simulation, since we've had it every year."

Candidates and students were able to reflect on the overall effect of the campaigns. Yuriy said, "I didn't know much about the election or politics at all. It made me realize that I actually have somewhat of a passion for politics."

"I think we ran a really solid campaign. I owe a lot to everyone on the team for putting so much work into this simulation. The only thing that ran our campaign off track was the hurricane, but we couldn't do anything about that," said Marco.

Diego Cotte, the senior who played Tony Avella, said, "I feel the demographics within our school are biased based on topics very irrelevant to the election, which I feel played a large role in my loss. As for the week we lost due to the storm, I had a lot planned in terms of media appearances and classroom visits, which I believe would have gotten my name out more."

Alexis Martinez, the senior who portrayed Nydia Velasquez, said, "It's no doubt that Hurricane Sandy ruined our plans. It would have been interesting to see how the Election Simulation turnout would be if we had that week." She continued, "I would have liked to do more radio interviews. I'd like to praise the Democratic Party; maybe it's because I worked mainly with them, but I was able to see all the dedication put into the Election Simulation, and it was a really wonderful thing to see."

Ameer, in response to being the only Republican that won in the simulation, said, "I established great connections with many other campaigns who really got my name out there," noting that he used the media to his advantage.

Khalid said, "I can't stress enough what a good job all the candidates did in the election. Mitt Romney really pushed me to my limit and both of us collectively made the Election Simulation a success."

Sophomore Yash Sharma leaves competition in the dust

by Constantine Bournias

Forrest Gump isn't the only one who broke records for running cross country.

Sophomore track star Yashavi (Yash) Sharma is November's "Male Student Athlete of the Month" for his hard work and perseverance in Cross Country Track (XC). Yash has made the sport look easy, earning numerous accolades, awards, and medals along the way.

Although Yash also participates in Indoor Track and Outdoor Track, his talents in Cross Country earn him this title. He won first place in two consecutive citywide Cross Country meets this year, making him the first person from Townsend Harris to do so since 2001. This was achieved at Van Cortlandt park, which is known for being the most difficult Cross Country course on the East Coast.

"Getting first place felt amazing. Since I only started running as a freshman, I never thought I'd be able to get to this level. During the races, I kept thinking about my team and my coach. The first time I got first place, I had no clue until around the end," said Yash.

Running in both the Sophomore and Varsity division, Yash has also won a medal in every meet other than City Champs and the Mayor's Cup. He earned second place at the Queens Frosh/Soph borough-wide Championship meet at Cunningham Park on October 23, and he has been in the top 10 for every other track meet at Cunningham Park.

Yash stands out from the crowd in the two most important Cross Country events: the 5 K and the 2.5-mile race. This month, he achieved his own personal record of 18 minutes and 10 seconds for the 5K. He also has the fastest 2.5 mile time on the team, finishing the run in just 14 minutes and 50 seconds.

Of course, none of this comes easy. Yash trained over the summer and re-

sumed conditioning with his coach during the fall to reach his current level of ability. "Over the summer, I trained with Nike. I would take the hour and a half train ride with a girl from the girl's team, Tahsin Akanda, to go up to Van Cortlandt Park to get a workout from Nike. I also took part in Big Apple Cross Country Camp held by PSAL in Cunningham Park."

Working this hard over the summer required serious motivation, determination, and tenacity, but Yash doesn't attribute all of his success to his summer routine. "I also give a lot of my credit to my coach and my friends and family. Without my coach's training and the immense support I received from my friends and family, I don't think I'd be at the level I am."

Breaking records since the start, Yash achieved the freshman record for the 2000 meter steeple race. A year later, he continues to excel and is training to break 5 minutes for the mile in Indoor Track. When asked about his future plans for running, Yash replied, "Who knows? I don't think I want to make running my main career, but a running scholarship would definitely be nice."



photo by Karen Su

Sophomore Yash Sharma

Senior Bashe Miller saves her way to victory as goalie

by Andrew Eichenholz

A striker approaches the penalty box with mere blades of grass denying her kick from piercing the boundary of the net. Senior goalie Bashe Miller lunges into the picture denying the soccer ball from putting the Hawks behind on the scoreboard. Usually it is said that the third time is the charm, but Bashe has proven otherwise in her second year as a member of the Girls Varsity Soccer Team.

As a returning member of the team, Bashe's senior athletic experience has helped her become arguably one of the most improved and valuable members on the team, also earning her captaincy. Transitioning from a part-time goalie to a full-time position guarding the net, Bashe has dramatically improved her performance. By increasing her save percentage by a massive ten percent, she has helped keep the team performing at a high level, balancing out the loss of key seniors from last year's team.

Aiding in her preparation for this season's games, Bashe utilized some ironically sweet methods. "I try to find strawberry shortcake ice cream before a game. I don't even remember how that ritual even started, I've just been doing it." She added, "Before a game I usually listen to music and try to relax. I always tape up my ankle before a game just to be extra safe."

Looking forward to the future of the soccer team, Bashe was extremely optimistic for the squad's direction. "As the season progressed, we've grown closer as a team making my senior year that much more enjoyable. I consider these girls like family and

I can't believe I won't be a part of it next year. But I'm sure the team will remain successful because of Coach Sioukas and the motivated underclassmen and returning players who make up a big part of the team."



photo by Paula Fraczek

Senior Bashe Miller collecting a shot.

As a leading senior of the team, Bashe had the support of not only the underclassmen, but the only other senior as well. Derya Rodoplu had high praise, saying, "She is great! [She is] very experienced, so I never worry about her in goal. She is a good friend too."

Contributing to the overall Hawks athletic community, Miller is moving right into a key role on the

Varsity Basketball team. Gearing up for a push to back up last year's outstanding undefeated season, Bashe looks to improve just as she has on the soccer team.

Senior Samantha Koloniaris, a member of the Varsity Basketball team, said, "Not only [is she] an academically incredible student, but also an amazing athlete and person. She does not only excel in one sport, but she is a remarkable athlete in all the sports she participates in. You can always count on her!"

Balancing three seasons of varsity sports in one academic year is a challenge, yet Miller has done it to perfection.

Girls Tennis Coach Shari Basis had nothing but praise for the senior. "Bashe is a very skilled tennis player who stays cool, calm, and collected on the court as she takes on her opponents in the number one singles position."

This calmness is of great use for the workload which THHS students encounter daily.

Bashe said, "It's pretty hard to balance the workload of Townsend with all the teams

I participate in, but practices usually tire me out so much. When I get home I do my work as quick as I can so I can go to bed. But, because I've been doing this since sophomore year, I've gotten used to the whole routine."

For an incoming sophomore having grown into a premiere female athlete at Townsend Harris, Bashe Miller is Female Student Athlete of the month.

GAMES TO WATCH

12/4 4:30PM Boys Varsity Basketball vs. HS for Law Enforcement @Townsend Harris

12/5 4:00PM Boys Varsity Wrestling vs. Forest Hills @Townsend Harris

12/6 4:30PM Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Renaissance @ Townsend Harris

12/7 5:00PM Boys Varsity Wrestling vs. New Dorp @Townsend Harris

12/12 4:30PM Girls Varsity Basketball vs. John Bowne @Townsend Harris

12/18 4:30PM Boys Varsity Basketball vs. Robert H. Goddard HS @Townsend Harris