

Major bell schedule change ahead

by Suswana Chowdhury, John Indergaard, Ella Leviyeva, Katherine Maradiaga, Genna Mastellone, Catherine Moskos, Michael Sanchez, and Dimitri Theofanis

Following a divisive debate between faculty members over next year's bell schedule, Townsend Harris will have all bands meet every day starting this fall.

On April 24, teachers voted on a proposal for a new bell schedule. The proposed schedule removed after school enrichment as a requirement for teachers, but retained Townsend Harris's traditional schedule, allowing at least one band to drop out each day. With 28 teachers voting for the proposed schedule and 27 voting against it, the proposal failed to achieve the required level of support (55% of voters) and was turned down. As the UFT did not hold a vote on another option, the school has reverted to the more traditional DOE schedule: all bands meet.

"The reality is there's going to be no more enrichment built into the schedule. It's going to be all bands meet, and to meet the accommodations of Queens College, it does force us to start later, at 8:20. Instead of ending at 2:40, we will end at 3," explained Anthony Barbetta, principal. "If we didn't do that, senior classes would block out three periods instead of two. We also hope that all labs will continue to meet zero band."

United Federation of Teachers (UFT) chapter leader and English teacher Peter Wamsteker, who is responsible for bringing bell schedule options to a vote, said that the decision to propose a new schedule originated "mainly from teachers who

were seeking to restore balance in the academic lives of their students and equity in the teaching schedule."

This desire for a new schedule has much to do with school politics dating back before the current student body were members of the Townsend Harris community.

In 2009, former principal Kenneth Bonamo indicated that major budget cuts would impact student activities. The schedule currently in place at THHS came about at this time to deal with these budgetary threats and did so by making clubs and extracurriculars a mandatory part of teachers' schedules.

Teachers held an "SBO" vote on that schedule, and it passed.

SBOs, school-based option votes, occur when teachers vote to modify anything specific to their school, including scheduling changes. Annually, teachers can choose to propose and vote on a bell schedule that differs from the standard DOE model.

Some teachers voted for the 'mandatory after school enrichment' schedule in 2009, expecting that it would be a temporary schedule in response to an emergency situation.

"What started out as a one year good faith became a new norm, but for many people it wasn't supposed to be the new paradigm," said Social Studies teacher Franco Scardino.

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REGULAR BELL SCHEDULE 2013-2014

- 0. 7:30 - 8:15
- 1. 8:20 - 9:01
- 2. 9:05 - 9:47
- 3. 9:51 - 10:32
- 4. 10:36 - 11:17
- 5. 11:21 - 12:02
- 6. 12:06 - 12:47
- 7. 12:51 - 1:32
- 8. 1:35 - 2:16
- 9. 2:19 - 3:00

THE NEW SCHEDULE

Principal Anthony Barbetta e-mailed the final version of the 2013-2014 bell schedule to students, families and staff after school on Friday, May 17. For students, Mondays will no longer end after eighth band. For teachers, there will no longer be two mandatory enrichment bands a week. The later start is necessary to accommodate Queens College classes.

Student Union elections usher in new faces, ideas

by Catherine Moskos

On May 2, juniors Judy Kwon and Joshua Merai were elected to lead the 2013-2014 Student Union as President and Vice President, respectively. Chosen to lead each grade were junior Dillon Mahabir as Senior Class President, sophomore Nina Leeds as Junior Class President, and freshman Sherin Shibu as Freshman-Sophomore Class President. The other positions will be filled by junior Angel Song as Secretary, sophomore Harry Petsios as Treasurer, sophomore Yash Sharma as Public Relations, and sophomore Karen Su as Club Liaison.

Judy Kwon, currently serving as Junior Class President, is known for her active participation in Townsend Harris politics.

"Ever since I joined Grade Leaders freshman

year, I had an urge to be on the Student Union."

Judy plans on instituting a Janitor Appreciation Day, a schoolwide Peace Day, and a Battle of the Grades competition.

Joshua Merai will be serving on the SU Board for the first time.

He said, "I was the definite underdog in this election. I believe I was elected simply because I worked hard, showed dedication, and presented myself effectively."

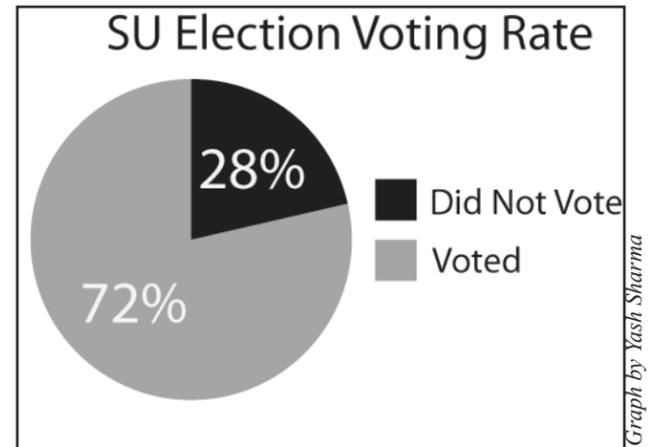
Dillon Mahabir said that he decided to run because of his genuine care for Harrisites.

"Seeing my fellow Harrisites everyday keeps a smile on my face!" said Dillon.

Although Harry Petsios ran unopposed, he thinks his "ability to function as an active member of the board" helped him achieve his mandatory 50% vote.

Harry plans on revamping the SU store by September. He also plans on establishing a "Speaker of the Senate" position, a suggestion box, and a Senator voting system. This year, Harry carried out an SU Candidate Luncheon where all the candidates could relieve their stress on Voting Day at a final meal together.

In addition to implementing peer tutoring to reduce stress, Nina Leeds hopes to increase communication about upcoming events because "this will be immensely important during junior year when there are multiple dates and dead-



lines to remember."

The newly elected representatives offered thoughts on their victories.

Judy credits victory to her prior involvement with the SU and her Archon presidency.

Joshua said that he and his campaign manager recruited a team of students from all grades to advertise his campaign, and also made classroom visits during lunch bands.

"The strongest part of my campaign was definitely interpersonal communication," Dillon said. He also acknowledges that he and his opponent, Mary Choi, "knew no matter who won, the head of the Senior Council would be someone who truly wants to shape the best experience for the class of 2014."

Nina said, "I think I was elected because I really did put all my heart into this campaign and into everything I did on the SU Board this year. I promise I will do all in my power not to let anyone down."



New SU President Judy Kwon

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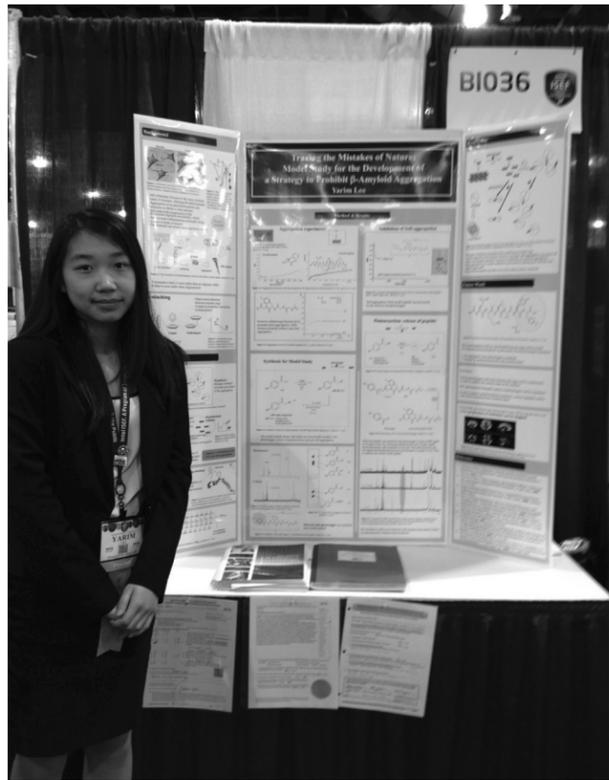
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Harrisites compete at Intel Fair, place in Biochemistry

by Nijah Phills



Yarim Lee with her work.

From May 15-17, sophomore Yarim Lee and senior Sahi Thapi competed with over 1,500 high school students from more than 70 countries for prizes and scholarships at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Phoenix, Arizona. Yarim, who was also the youngest student in the history of Townsend Harris to qualify for the ISEF, earned the "Second Award" in the Biochemistry category.

The ISEF, which Sahi described as "the Olympics of the science world," is the world's largest international pre-college science competi-

tion, where students are judged on their independent science research.

Yarim's project focused on using organic synthesis, a process in which complex carbon-containing compounds are made from simpler substances. It shows how a mediator protein could prevent the accumulation of beta amyloid, a protein associated with Alzheimer's disease.

"This means that I can eventually stop the formation of plaques and thus stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease," Yarim said of her project.

Yarim won \$1,500 that she plans to use towards her research.

"I just hope everyone knows that they are all winners," she said. "Many

of my teammates were able to win some awards as well, and I'm very proud of them."

Sahi entered with a different project in the field of Medicine and Health Sciences.

"My research identified a group of proteins known as galectins that play a vital role in the progression of ovarian cancer. In their absence we as scientists have the ability to cure ovarian cancer."

Sahi started her research back in 2010 at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, continuing her project until December 2012.

"To prepare for the competition, I've been constantly coached by Ms. Cooper, Ms. Brustein, and Mr. Porzio in presenting and writing."

She says, "The connections I made at ISEF will probably stay with me through my professional career. I just feel blessed to have had the experience."

Yarim's journey began with her unrequited love for science, which she credits to both of her parents being organic chemists.

"Ever since I was in the 4th grade, I spent all my summers and after school in the lab," she recalled.

Yarim began her current project in the summer of 2012. After getting to the finals in the New York Science and Engineering Fair (NYCSEF), which qualified her for ISEF, Yarim knew her project was something special.

She said, "I felt like I should just give it a try but after that, my motivation [for entering] was to show the world that I might actually be able to stop the progression of Alzheimer's disease."

Both Yarim and Sahi dedicated a lot of time to their projects, especially after the NYCSEF.

"For the final round I practiced at least 500 times and everyday after school," said Yarim. "I had to work for hours on my poster and presentation."

Yarim and Sahi agree that the ISEF was the experience of a lifetime.

"Every project presented a novel concept in its field and it was quite incredible to see the contributions that mere high school students can make to the scientific world!" said Sahi.

Yarim added, "Anyone can be a scientist. It all sprouts from curiosity and from there, your passion takes over and you can be successful!"

New safety agent joins THHS, shares her thoughts

by Mehr Kaur

On April 8, Paulette Ramsey, whom students may often see checking for IDs and greeting incomers in the morning, became an established Level Three school safety agent at Townsend Harris.

After twelve years of being employed in the operation unit and reporting incidents on school premises, Agent Ramsey moved on to working for the community outreach program. The job consisted of traveling to different schools and communicating with students about peer pressure, bullying, and fellowship.

Four years later, Agent Ramsey began her position at THHS. Originally, she wasn't aware of this job opening, but her command officer already had this position lined up for her.

As far as work duties go, Agent Ramsey is responsible for supervising the first floor. She also helps keep the building safe from intruders, signs paperwork, and generally maintains order in the school. "The students only have to show their IDs, there's not much to worry about here. The students know what they have to do," she said.

Reflecting on the Harris community, she said "Not only is it a peaceful and enjoyable job, but it's amazing to see our future doctors, lawyers, musicians, and scientists enter this building everyday."

Before Agent Ramsey assumed the position, it was held by Sergeant Alice Gatling, who retired in 2011. Though Sergeant Gatling was notorious for giving out referrals and lecturing about the importance of IDs, she was still a favorite among many upperclassmen.

Despite Sergeant Gatling's noted strictness, Agent Ramsey expressed contentment with the school environment.

"The students are respectful and I like the way they carry themselves," she said. "I brag about working at this school all the time."

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Club raises Sikh awareness

by Suswana Chowdhury

On May 1, the newly formed Sikh Student Association (SSA) held Sikhism Awareness Day in room 512. In order to establish a sense of unity amongst the Townsend Harris community and bring more

“My brothers [Sikh club members] welcomed me with open arms and warm arms. I love their culture.”

One of the many pillars of Sikhism is seva, the belief that one can serve God by

helping others on a daily basis. By devoting their time to service, Sikhs rid themselves of egotism and pride.

A goal of SSA is to highlight the value of selfless service by holding community service events and working hand in hand with the SEVA NYC organization.

The nonprofit recently held their annual Sikh Day parade on April 27, where SSA members volunteered. Parade volunteers helped by setting up chairs, picking up garbage from the ground, and collecting cans from people to recycle.

Dilpreet Singh, freshman, commented that while it was tiring to wake up in the morning, the parade taught him that “helping society in the smallest possible ways is amazing.”

Talwinder Singh and Arminder Singh, juniors, agreed, adding that “being immersed in [their] culture really made their service worthwhile.”

The club hopes to host more events and attract more members next year, but is content with their progress so far.

“Starting the Sikh Student Association and being a part of the Sikh Day Parade was a step towards educating people about the Sikh religion and building awareness,” said Gurprit.



SSA members tying turban on Khalil Smith, senior.

awareness to the religion, club members tied turbans (a head covering worn to preserve the Sikh identity) and viewed a brief presentation about the religion itself. Sikh and non-Sikh students alike participated in the turban tying.

Sikhism, a monotheistic religion founded in Punjab, India over 500 years ago, has more than 27 million followers today. However, according to Gurprit Kaur, senior and founder of the SSA, “many people are still misinformed or completely unaware of this religion.”

SSA seeks to raise awareness and dismiss any misconceptions about Sikhs, who make up a greater part of the student body in Townsend Harris than in most other high schools.

“I’ve done research on Sikhism as a religion and I loved that the values shared by the Sikhs are very similar to mine,” said Khalil Smith, a senior who participated in the turban tying.

New policy for grading Regents exams to go into effect

by Stephanie Geier

Starting this June, teachers will no longer grade their own school’s Regents exams. Instead, teachers will grade other schools’ exams at off-site regional facilities or on computers, in an effort to prevent cheating.

In September 2011, the Board of Regents investigated a 62-page database of cheating allegations. It found that schools often gave more lenient Regents grades than groups of expert scorers, allowing several students to pass with the minimum grade. Since standardized test scores have become detrimental to a school’s survival, some teachers have inflated students’ grades to improve their school’s reputation.

Science teacher Phillip Porzio sees the ban as a sign of distrust from the Department of Education.

“We all have a moral obligation to grade correctly and maintain the integrity of our job,” he said.

However, he also thinks that it will be effective because teachers “won’t remotely know who they’re grading.”

Although science teacher Katherine Cooper says she can’t have a final opinion on the policy until the results are seen, she feels that teachers who abide by the rules are being unfairly punished.

“To call into question everyone’s profession is disheartening,” she said.

Junior Shabina Abdin supports the new policy, as it eliminates bias and ensures that “teachers will give us that right number.”

While junior Mahwish Waseem agrees with the policy, she thinks that scorers shouldn’t know the school each student comes from, since that might influence their standards.

“If teachers see ‘Townsend Harris,’ they’ll grade lower because they have higher expectations,” she speculated.

However, junior Veronica Nguyen believes that teachers from other schools might grade less harshly because they automatically have lower expectations than the teachers of academically rigorous schools.

JSA debate victories

by Simrankaur Wahan

Recently, six delegates from the Townsend Junior State of America Club (JSA) attended the annual JSA Northeast Spring State Convention 2013, which included debates, mock trials, thought talks, and speeches given by keynote speakers. Sophomore Frank Nicolazzi won his debate regarding the Vatican’s influence and Chapter President

Karen Su won the Best Moderator award for the Organizational Block.

Discussing the conference, sophomore Igor Portnoi said, “In Spring State, we debated about various topics, such as North Korea, the Arab Spring, Taiwan

and many more. It was a fun experience and I learned some great debate skills. I hope in the future to attend more conferences and become a better public speaker.”

Townsend Harris’s JSA was recently started by sophomore Karen Su, who hopes to provide young statesmen an open, friendly forum where they can freely express their opinions on a given topic or resolution.

The themes and objectives of the meetings change weekly, but a majority of the debate resolutions are based on current affairs and important policies.

About the club, Karen said, “I encourage both experienced and inexperienced young statesmen to join because JSA is a place where we teach to strengthen our debate skills in order to fight for what we believe in. Although we are still relatively new, we are still finding ways to become active within our community, whether if it’s in the school, neighborhood or city.”

Reflecting on the club’s work, Social Studies teacher and JSA Advisor Mr. Franco Scardino said, “I am so proud of Karen Su and the entire JSA club for resurrecting the school chapter. JSA has always been a club that has drawn some of the most talented, passionate and civic-minded students from our school. I am confident that under Karen’s leadership the club will grow in membership and flourish.”



The team readies itself for debate.

photo by Sarah Oberlander

The Classic
May 2013

Faculty drama yields big schedule changes

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Though many teachers grew to favor this schedule, a number of teachers consider it to be unfair.

A segment of the faculty believes that the current schedule is more favorable to some groups of teachers than to others.

According to English teacher Robert Babstock, "Some teachers stay very late and some have a more flexible schedule."

Others maintain that the current schedule is unfair to teachers mainly because it ensures that they do not receive just compensation for clubs and extracurriculars. A number of students report hearing from teachers that they are not compensated for their time at enrichment.

According to Mr. Barbetta, this is a "misconception."

He said that under the current schedule, "The enrichment band is part of [teachers'] work day. It would be illegal to pay them because you can't double dip. You can't get paid for doing something during your school day."

A teacher is contractually obligated to work a set amount of time. In the current schedule, time spent in clubs and extracurriculars (two tenth band classes a week) is counted as part of the work day.

English teacher Joseph Canzoneri said, "There are teachers that [believe] even if it's the same number of hours, it's still another task, another activity. So it is more work."

In other words, teachers who oppose the current schedule maintain that the burden of preparing for the enrichment bands unfairly adds to the overall workload of people who believe they are paid to spend their time teaching and preparing for regular lessons. In their opinion, anything outside of regular teaching is extra and deserves pay.

"There's nothing in the contract that says that teachers have to run clubs," said Mr. Babstock.

Aliza Sherman, teacher of Social Studies, believes that the instructional day should be devoted purely to academics: "I think we have the responsibility to provide sufficient instructional time to achieve our objectives of covering the curriculum."

Since the current schedule is a special program that needs to be voted on and reauthorized every year through an SBO, Mr. Wamsteker, as the UFT representative, has the right to deem it unfit to be voted upon. Therefore, given that many teachers supported removing the current schedule because of its perceived unfairness and unsuitability, Mr. Wamsteker ensured that it would not be reconsidered this year when negotiating a new schedule with Principal Barbetta.

Much of the controversy and division in the faculty stems from this decision to eliminate the possibility of voting on the current schedule.

Many of those in favor of retaining the current schedule thought that Mr. Wamsteker didn't survey his members' opinions well enough. They claim that they were not adequately consulted about whether or not they preferred the current schedule or a new schedule.

Robin Figelman, Dean and Physical Education teacher, said, "I think the original schedule was taken off as an option unfairly. It was taken off by one person. There was no democratic process in how our schedule was removed as an option."

Music teacher Peter Lustig described the meeting where teachers were consulted about getting rid of the current schedule, saying that it should have involved a more formal poll of the faculty's opinion before the decision to vote on a new schedule was made final.

"They didn't count up how many people were against the schedule," he said, "so I think it was a little unfair. With 75 teachers, maybe 30-40 voted, and it was just people put up their hands and said 'Alright, I'm against it.' They didn't count up how many votes for and how many against. They didn't have an actual written ballot. They made no attempt to get the teachers who weren't at that particular meeting to vote for it."

The vote Mr. Lustig is referring to is not an official vote, but a survey of teacher interest before a proper SBO vote.

According to the UFT rules for SBO votes, a show of hands is an adequate form of surveying interest from faculty before proposing changes--though a formal paper survey is "preferable."

"I've heard people who I don't agree with, but I see they have a point. They have a legitimate reason why they don't like the current schedule, and we are divided. I wouldn't say these people are wrong or anything like that, I just would have liked to

see a better process," added Mr. Lustig.

Many members of the faculty, who our reporting indicates were also critical of this process, declined to comment on the record for this article.

Ultimately, Mr. Wamsteker worked with Principal Barbetta to propose a schedule similar to the current one, but without mandatory after school enrichment. This proposal lost, leading to the adoption of the DOE's default: an all bands meet schedule. But few teachers have expressed their support for this schedule, which raises questions as to why so many would vote against the proposal and effectively 'for' all bands to meet.

Some teachers believe that those who voted against the proposed schedule did so in the hopes that the current schedule or other possibilities might be reconsidered.

"I think teachers voted no to this schedule because they thought that if the proposal got rejected, they could bring a dialogue back up again," said Mr. Canzoneri. "But Mr. Wamsteker was very clear and he said that if you vote no, we're going back to this default; the schedule we have right now is out."

Ms. Figelman said, "I think that this [vote against the proposed schedule] was done out of spite...and I think that's wrong. I think these teachers definitely need to look at Townsend Harris as the whole picture because Townsend Harris is different from other high schools and I think making it a 1 to 9 schedule makes Townsend Harris just like any other high school. I do not think all bands should meet next year."

Details about the voting results spilled into classrooms the day after the vote, with numerous teachers sharing behind-the-scenes information with students during class time.

Misinformation spread quickly. Prior to the official statement sent out by Mr. Barbetta numerous students had various misconceptions on the situation.

Before the email, Olivia Krakowski, freshman, said "I heard that we're going to have school until 3:30 and no enrichment, which upset me because I know colleges look at that."

Brenda Zhang, sophomore, also heard school will be extended to 3:30, and said she was told that "there will be cuts to the enrichment because teachers aren't getting paid. Looks like we're going to suffer for this."

These different versions of events were already being discussed by students by the morning after the vote.

As for students fearing that clubs would be canceled, Mr. Barbetta was confident: "there will be clubs." Other teachers pointed out there were clubs long before the current schedule was in place.

In addition to these misconceptions, in multiple class sessions, Mr. Wamsteker's name came up as the sole source of these changes. He quickly became the focus of many frustrated students, who believed him to be the main teacher in favor of major changes to the current schedule.

This, however, is another example of misinformation spread to students. While our reporting shows that Mr. Wamsteker is essential to the current events, he clearly has the help and support of a number of faculty members.

The frenzy of speculation resulted in a series of actions by the student body. Some took to Facebook to urge patience, while others made petitions.

Kellie Zestanakis, freshman, started a written petition. "We want to keep what we have now. We have around 300 signatures and support from some teachers."

Freshmen Sherin Shibu and Nina Shimunov protested through the use of posters. "The level of reaction was really strong in our grade, so we wanted to show teachers what we thought about this," said Sherin. "So, we put up posters. Nina came up with the all the slogans and printed about a quarter of them. They had to be taken down though."

Facebook exploded following the official release of the new schedule after school on Friday, May 17. The majority of opinions expressed anger and frustration, though some maintained that people were overreacting.

Sophomore Othria Ahmed's mixture of resignation and displeasure summed up the student reaction: "I've come to terms with the fact that the decision for the new schedule is completely out of our hands. With that said, I still feel very upset about the loss of our early Monday dismissal. It was one of Townsend's features that made us stand out."

THHS Voices

Community members share opinions on the bell schedule change.



"I don't really feel there's anything wrong with our current bell schedule, so I don't understand why it's being changed."

--Stephanie Yeh, sophomore



"A longer bell schedule isn't that bad since we have more time to spend in certain classes like math. You could do more problems. But I fear that extracurriculars will be cut shorter."

--Chris Castro, junior



"The whole process could have been done better. I think students were put in the middle of the debate and discussion among staff members. I thought that was wrong."

--Principal Barbetta



"The rumors about the after school clubs being cut upset me, but since they aren't I have no complaints. The new schedule doesn't seem that bad."

--Selina Feng, junior



"I like the break from classes we have now, and we won't get that next year."

--Toni Alexander, freshman

Photography by Yash Sharma. Quotations collected by Vincent Chu, Evan Mancini, and Zach Ooi

FROM THE EDITORS: Teachers, you have let us down

by John Indergaard, Ella Leviyeva, Genna Mastellone, Catherine Moskos and Michael Sanchez

Townsend Harris students are taught to become informed and concerned citizens throughout their tenure here. We are supposed to leave this school with the tools and knowledge to make great change in our community and in the world. We are supposed to think broadly and learn how to ask questions and to question authority. All of these ideals seemed to be quickly forgotten in recent weeks when news of potential changes to our bell schedule and a rift in the faculty was leaked to the student body.

Class time became time for teachers to explain to students their side of the story, the injustices brought upon them, and the ways in which the Townsend Harris lifestyle was being threatened. We, as the inquiring student body we are encouraged to be, began to ask around. We talked and rumors began to form, with word spreading that we would have no more clubs or that we'd be in school until 3:30 every single day. After the biased, jumbled, and often inaccurate stories were circulated, students got angry. People tried to start petitions and impact the decisions that were being made.

This school teaches that it is not merely our right to take an active role in the shaping of our community, but our responsibility to do so.

We were told to be quiet.

We were told it was not our place to attempt to affect change in the community that affects us most.

We were told to tear our protest posters down.

True, we couldn't directly affect UFT decisions, but don't citizens of cities and states and countries have the right to affect the votes and processes of elected officials? Aren't we supposed to refuse to accept "no" for an answer when those in power tell us to stay away and shut up? The UFT may have the right to do whatever it wants with SBO votes, but knowing how sincerely students would have wanted to be involved in this process, it could have consulted the SU Board in an official capacity. Now members of the SU Board and their constituents rightly feel that the SU is little more than a game of make believe in which students are given the illusion of power and influence.

Why wouldn't the UFT consult the students if teachers truly believed in teaching us to take part in such processes? Why are teachers probably laughing at the very idea of consulting us?

Some teachers claimed that our brief tenure at Townsend Harris, compared to the years many teachers spend at the school, nullifies our right to join in the process. If anything, the brief time we spend here should give us more of a voice: these are the only four years we spend as high school students, and many of us came here because of the unique schedule and what enrichment had to offer. We deserve a voice, and teachers should be proud rather than angry or offended that we demand one: it is their teaching of the Ephebic philosophy that has inspired us to be so desirous to join in the process of shaping our community. But that pride would be meaningless unless it were backed by actual opportunities for students to voice their concerns.

Many students feel angry and betrayed by this hypocrisy.

What angers us more, however, is that we have been given biased and partial information from teachers. Though many teachers did not devote class time to the schedule drama, we surveyed students during lunch bands and compiled a list

of those teachers that did. The list is long and features teachers across departments.

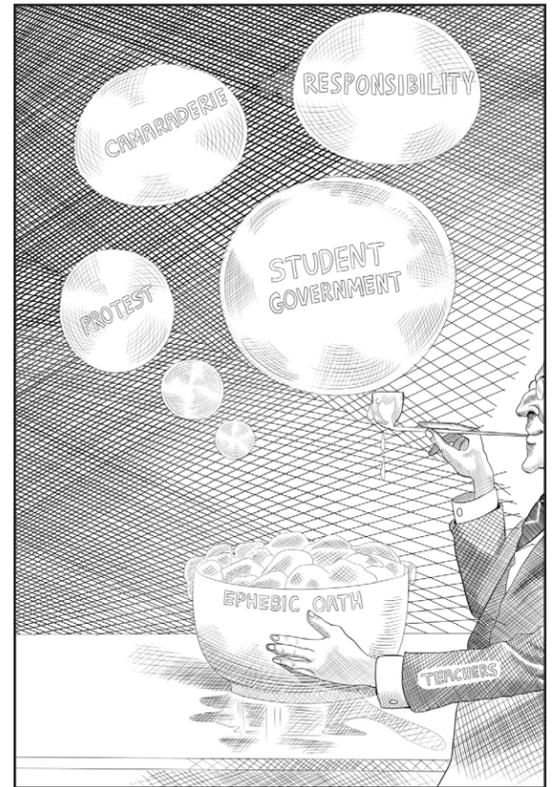
We have to wonder why teachers would choose to confide in us if the dispute was supposed to be kept under lock and key--if it truly was none of our business.

In the wake of these class discussions, many students became defensive and protective of the teachers that they care about. Certain teachers were vilified and singled out as "for" or "against" enrichment. Teachers did not seem to realize that for many students such vitriol between departments does more than rile us up about scheduling issues: it's hurtful. With the magnitude of inter-departmental tension resulting from this conflict, Townsend Harris ceases to be the inviting and harmonious community it once was.

As the Classic editorial staff, we experienced particular difficulty in trying to accurately report on this issue. When we learned about it, we became eager to roll up our journalistic sleeves, find out the truth and impart it to our fellow students. Many of the same teachers we knew devoted class time to their anger suddenly clammed up when we asked them to go on the record with their opinions. Some turned and fled from us when word spread that we were planning to publish a story on the schedule. Others became incensed that we were daring to write a story before the decision was made final, completely undermining (or willfully ignoring) the job of a newspaper. Is the *New York Times* only allowed to publish an election article after a president is elected?

Looking over this whole affair, we see one glaring contradiction: teachers made this story our business and then told us it was none of our business. "Don't worry," everyone condescended, "It will be fine. Townsend Harris is great no matter what"--as if a name is all that is required to earn greatness.

But if the argument is that we shouldn't have had a say in this matter because we 'children' had to let the 'adults' do this important work privately, then perhaps the adults in this situation should have acted less like children. If the input of students would have only made things worse, we have to ask: how could it be worse? The results of the teachers' efforts are clear: a divided faculty, a crest-fallen student body and a schedule that few people in the community believe will make this school "greater than anyone found it."



Cartoon by Amanda Yan and Christina Wang

The real problem in education

by Frank Nicolazzi

A 2012 study conducted by Pearson ranked the U.S. 17th in overall education. In 2009, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) placed us 25th in math and 17th in science—out of 34 countries. As many have already concluded, something is rotten in our education system. Over the years, a handful of scapegoats have appeared as possible culprits for the current state of things, but let's get to the heart of the matter.

The first problem with the United States education system is fairly simple: respect. Our teachers get no respect when compared to those in countries like Finland, which ranked 1st overall on the PISA exams. In the U.S., teachers do not get paid nearly as much as they should, and the job itself is socially perceived as low-level work. If teachers were to receive the same level of pay that other professionals do, then there would be far more competition for jobs at all levels and more respect given to the profession.

The next major problem with our education system is funding. Our school, one of the best in New York City, is currently dealing with a scheduling crisis that ultimately stems from budget cuts. If we were to allocate the same amount of money to education as Finland does, we would be at the top of the field. Finland spends about 6.8% of their GDP on education while the United States spends only 5.4%. While this may not seem like a big deal, 1.4% of \$15.66 trillion is quite a bit of spare change. How about pumping some money into education to pay teachers what they deserve, and perhaps lending me a copy of *A Tale of Two Cities* that wasn't made before I was.

It seems that somehow the education system in this country ended up being one of the main institutions to pay for the evils of Wall Street that crashed the country's economy. The Stock Market may be booming once again, but education still seems to be taking the heat in the wake of the fiscal emergency. If the children of the wealthy people responsible for this mess actually went to public school, rather than private prep schools, then we wouldn't have such issues.

We may not like what's happened in this school as a result of this whole bell schedule drama. Some students (and teachers) have called teachers greedy for not wanting to do after school enrichment. Many legitimately fear that extra-curriculars won't be what they should be anymore. But before we turn on one another fully, we members of the public school community should remember that none of this would be an issue if we as a country valued public education enough to make sure that every school had the money it needs to offer students the type of education that the best country in the world should be capable of offering.

Harvard editorial win



Genna and Catherine with their awards.

The Classic recently attended a journalism conference and awards ceremony hosted by the *Harvard Crimson*. Seniors Genna Mastellone and Catherine Moskos won the award for "Best Editorial Writing" for their recent op-ed piece, "Legitimate questions on media priorities in rape case."

Those unforgettable pro

PROM PRICES REACH RECORD HIGHS

by Brianne Futerman and Fariha Nizam

While many idealize the prom as an event of fairy tale romance and high class living, it's easy to forget that not everyone can turn a pumpkin into a stage-coach for little to no cost. Students may complain about the cost of AP tests, but for many it's this magical night in senior year that threatens to break the bank. So forget the romance, forget the dancing, forget the poignant memories of a class preparing to say goodbye forever, and let's get right down to it: how much are we talking about here?

overall cost

In 2012, families spent an average of \$1,078 on prom, according to a Visa survey based on 1,000 telephone interviews. This was an increase from the previous total of \$807 the year before. At \$2000, families in the Northeast spent the most, while families in the West and Midwest spent a significantly smaller amount, between \$600 and \$800.

the girls

Prom is indeed an expensive endeavor for girls. Between the dress, shoes, manicure, hair, makeup, and accessories, there is always a reason for money to be spent. The average prom dress costs between \$200-\$300, but prices for designer dresses can top \$600. Shoes to match the dress, depending on the brand, fall between \$50 and \$100. The total cost of hair, makeup, and a manicure is about \$150, which varies based on the salon. The price can range from \$30 to \$275. Girls may choose to do all of these things themselves to save money.

the guys

For men, tuxedo rentals range anywhere from \$60-\$150, depending on the quality and the brand of the tuxedo. Buying tuxedos can cost one between \$300-\$700 on average, with designer tuxes exceeding \$1,000. Dress shoes for men average \$80, with prices varying based on the store and brand. Accompanying boutonnieres are \$10, and corsages are around \$20. When boys bring dates from outside the senior class, it is customary for them to pay for their dates' tickets and limo rides, which can total an extra \$200.

getting there

When prom night arrives, attendees often choose to have limousines take them to their destinations. A 6-hour rental of a simple limousine that holds 12 passengers (or 6 couples) costs about \$60 per person. The price rises to about \$75 per person for a party bus or SUV limousine rental. A 6-hour car rental for one couple is usually \$600 dollars (\$300 per passenger). The best way to save is to gather a large group and split the limousine cost.

the event & the after event

Tickets for these events can range from \$20 to \$250, depending on the location of the prom. A prom held in the school gymnasium will be less pricey than one held in a hotel, ballroom, or nightclub. Prom tickets usually include the cost of food and beverages. Professional photography is commonplace at prom. Portraits of couples are between \$30 and \$125. Most students also hold an after-prom, which might involve going to a nightclub, attending another party, or renting a house with friends. This is an additional cost, which can easily come out to \$200 per person. With prom season approaching, preparations are already in order. However, some may find their pockets empty when entering the limousine on prom night.



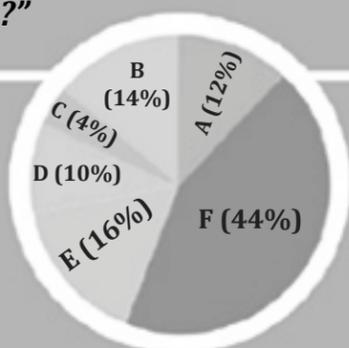
All images, art, photography, and design choices in this spread are the original work of sophomores Christina Wang and Amanda Yan. Additional work on this spread was completed by Andy Hua, Abinash Kaur, and Erin Robinson

PROM PRICES POLL

Conducted by Shelley Mitchell and Nijah Phills

Poll Question: "How much would you spend on your dress/tuxedo?"

- A Less than \$100
- B \$500+
- C \$400 - \$500
- D \$300 - \$400
- E \$200-300
- F \$100-200



Over 90 seniors were polled on their prom fashion plans.

14% of people polled said they paid up to \$500 or more!

44% of people polled said they paid between \$100 to \$200.

Prom memories cost money

Save or Splurge?

by Brianne Futerman and Nijah Phills

OPINION: IS THE PROM ITSELF WORTH THE MONEY?

BY BIANCA DILAN, ANDZELIKA WARCHOL, AND BEATA WARCHOL

Let's face it: no one looks forward to prom. They look forward to getting ready for prom and leaving prom, but no one seems to actually care about the two or three hours spent with their graduating class at what is just a glorified senior mixer.

If it's true that the 'after prom' is what people look forward to most, then much of the money spent on prom is actually spent on the photo-ops preceding the event.

There's nothing wrong with spending a little extra to look good, but prom budgets have risen throughout the years, averaging well over \$1,000.

Obviously, it's not the guys that are pushing the budget towards the \$1,000 mark. Makeup, nails, hair, accessories, and, of course, the ever-coveted prom dress all add up to some of the fattest price tags in existence. Some girls are willing to spend hundreds on the dress alone. To spend upwards of \$500 on a designer dress, one would expect it to come with its own butler and a full-course meal. More likely than not, this pricey article will rot in the corner of a closet, never to be worn again. At least tuxedos can be rented, and can find use beyond one extravagant night. However, such dresses are usually bought to be worn once. Girls often try to sell their dress to younger friends, but usually don't want to repeat a dress their friend wore.

Limousines push the prices further up. Arriving in style is one thing, but prom is far from a wedding. A limo isn't needed when one could always carpool, which would be far easier on the wallet.

Generally, it's not even the teenager's money being spent. The parents are the ones who will suffer financially, and there's rarely any consequence for the teen. It's easy to agree to a large price when you aren't responsible for the cost.

Some argue that it's worth splurging when it's for a

once-in-a-lifetime event like prom. That's fair, but the question remains: what exactly do you plan to enjoy so much about it? Dancing and mediocre food from a catering hall? There's nothing about the party itself that actually makes it as distinct and memorable as it seems. The idea itself, the fact that it's prom and allegedly the peak of adolescent life, is what seems to make it compelling. Is that enough?

Prom is the official goodbye, the final get-together for a group of kids who have been with each other for 4 years. The money spent would perhaps make more sense if there was something more to it than posing for pictures, since we know what we'd rather do: go far from prom for the weekend.

get fancy



Add a pearl necklace to your dress to enhance your look!

DRESS TO IMPRESS

Splurge!
A fancy tuxedo for the guy is an essential for his date. Any boy can look sharp in a bowtie



ACCESSORIZE

Save!
For accessories, use purses and jewelry you already have or borrow from friends and family.



"PROMPOSALS" TAKE OVER AT THIS

BY MEHR KAUR AND ROXANNE LEWIS

In recent years an extra cost has found its way into prom planning: the cost of an elaborate "promposal."

Most seniors wrack their brains when trying to find the perfect way to ask their date, while others ponder: is it worth asking someone to prom in a unique way?

Proposals to prom have come to include three standard elements: baked goods, flowers, and a crowd. This year's seniors have attempted to think outside the box, incorporating daily senior activities, such as senior meeting, use of the "senior study hall," and humanities seminars. Senior Carl Deleon "promposed" to his date with an impromptu dance in AP Statistics. Senior Derek Li proposed through song in the Queens College Science Building as his date exited class.

Senior Terell Drayton asked his date in front of the Eiffel Tower while on the Spring Break Europe trip, with the belief that asking in a thoughtful way is the most important thing about the event.

Last year, one person extended their creativity to blowing up an inflatable pool on the 3rd floor. After witnessing her prospective date pretending to drown in the filled pool, a girl, also occupied as a lifeguard, was asked to prom.

Senior Shaniza Nizam said that the most interesting "promposal" that she's seen was a video posted online of a boy ripping his dress pants off, revealing yellow, sequined shorts that read "PROM?" He then began to dance in front of the girl he wished to accompany, with a large audience watching.

Science and Health teacher, Sarah Oberlander, who is also a Harris alumna, spoke of her prom experience.

"I was one of the few people in my year who was asked to prom in an original way." After leaving the building with a friend, she was brought back to the library with more people there than usual. "I remember thinking, why is everyone staring at me? Is there something on my face?"

As she looked up, the curtains were drawn to reveal "I <3 U S." She walked outside to find her boyfriend with a bouquet of flowers, and she ecstatically said yes to him.

Traditionally, guys are the ones to do the asking, while girls are left to decide upon an answer. But what about turning the tables and having the girls ask the guys?

Senior Mark Rangasamy said, "It'd be okay if a girl asked a guy to prom. It's the 21st century, and she should ask him with the same amount of energy that a guy would use."

Commenting on the mad rush to find dates, Terell said "It's nice to have a date, but you'll also be with friends. You shouldn't force it or do it for the pictures. It will all be uncomfortable."

One statistic weighs heavy on the fate of prom dates in Townsend: the 7-3 girl to guy ratio.

The fact of the matter is, there just aren't enough prom dates to go around, leaving some asking underclassmen, bringing outside dates, or going alone. Finding a prom date used to be the fun part, but for some, the process has evolved into yet another high school burden.

“It'd be okay if a girl asked a guy to prom. It's the twenty first century.”

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Shoes are the perfect accessory to pair with the gown, and are definitely worth spending on.



The Classic
May 2013

Students of P.S. 255 take the stage at THHS

by Roxanne Lewis

On April 25, the students of P.S. 255 at Townsend Harris sang and danced to musical selections in the auditorium for parents and the school community.

P.S. 255, a District 75 school located at eight different sites in Queens, teaches autistic children from Pre-K to 11th grade. Its goal is for students to achieve maximum independence in several areas of skill.

Kenneth Henderson, paraprofessional (known as Mr. Kenny to his students), challenged these students by having them put on a show in custom-made costumes.

Mr. Kenny was involved in after-school programs with both schools for approximately thirteen years. After taking inspiration from a glee club, he taught performance arts to the students of P.S. 255 for seven years.

Michelle Arenas and Alyssa D'Amato confidently opened the show by singing "Stop in the Name of Love," by the Supremes.

Sophomore Drushanie Sayroo said, "I personally liked the girls' singing and their attitudes were very upbeat. I wanted to get up and sing along with them. They created a very vibrant sense of feeling."

Dressed in suits, Kenny DeJesus, Darwin Gonzalez, Giancarlo Recine, Patrick Julien, Vito Celano, and Rodrigo Martinez sang and clapped to a rendition of a Jackson 5 song.

The spotlight then shone on one of the boys as they all made choreo-



photo by Kathy Hardy

The students performing.

graphed hand gestures.

Nicholas Cheng, sophomore, said, "Their outfits were definitely an eye catcher, which was perfect for the act. As the Jackson 5, they were able to shine as stars just as the five did!"

A slideshow of the students played, portraying a bus strike and their interaction with the Townsend Harris community. It was accompanied by John Mayer's "Waiting on the World to Change."

This program led to the final act, in which Michelle and Alyssa once again sang together to Tina Turner's "Proud Mary," accompanied by Patrick's guitar. At the end of the show, all students bowed and the girls were presented with bouquets of flowers.

Mr. Kenny believes that the students felt great about the results of their hard work, stating, "I felt like I was on top of the world because they reached the pinnacle that I believed they were able to reach. They learned that they can achieve a lot with the right amount of support, and to embrace how to entertain through song and dance."

Gatsby hits the big screen

by Michael Sanchez

Like those famous mansion parties in West Egg, Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* offers a whirlwind of flashy spectacles and loud music. It wasn't until Jay Gatsby took the stage that the film enveloped me in its beautiful story of a man's struggle and tragedy. Once I made it past all the pomp and rapidity of the first scenes, *The Great Gatsby* instantly tugged on my heartstrings and became a film worth adding to my collection.

Based on F. Scott Fitzgerald's famous novel of the same name, Luhrmann's film adaptation is faithful to the book, with some minor yet interesting differences. Taking place in New York City during the 1920s, the film focuses on Nick Carraway (Toby Maguire) and his experience with the ridiculously wealthy and mysterious Jay Gatsby (Leonardo DiCaprio). Nick gets involved with Gatsby's life mission to rekindle the lost love of Daisy Buchanan (Carey Mulligan) and effectively live out his dream.

The film's cast was magnificent, the visuals were breathtaking, and the emotional scenes were so realistic that I found myself warning Gatsby to stay away from Tom Buchanan (Joel Edgerton).

DiCaprio's performance was top notch. He made Gatsby seem noble, cultured, and even pathetically hopeful at times. DiCaprio performed Gatsby's emotional moments fantastically, and even added a hint of subtlety in his debut scenes that only veterans of the book could catch. Maguire did an excellent job as Nick Carraway. Sure, he mostly ponders, feels out of place, and winds up as an awkward third wheel most of the time, but he's faithful to the book's character.

Joel Edgerton's character was a little weak. Tom seemed too much like the stereotypical bad guy, right down to the creepy mustache and the fancy cigar. Only briefly does he show emotion, but despite this, he did a great job of making

me hate him. Mulligan, playing the role of the illustrious Daisy Buchanan, wasn't stellar either. She didn't do much to make her performance stand out, but was just the ignorant rich girl who manipulated Gatsby.

Despite the talented cast, the opening scenes were noticeably weak. The first 30 minutes or so moved way too quickly. Key parts in the beginning of the book were reduced to mere sound bites as Nick jumped from dinner with the Buchanans to parties with Gatsby. It was hard to keep up with the story and the pace became almost nauseating. The effects and visuals were exaggerated as well, seeming unnecessary and almost cartoonish at times.

When Nick first sees Gatsby smile, it's complimented with fireworks, dramatic music, and a slow motion camera. When Tom takes his mistress to his classy New York Hotel room, there just happens to be a trumpet player across the street setting the mood the entire night.

The music was downright strange. It wasn't the mix of pop and jazz that bothered me, but the placement of the music. When Nick and Gatsby are having their first conversation while speeding down through the Valley of Ashes, I didn't need to hear Jay-Z rapping.

Overall, the beginning seemed too over-the-top and explosive. I literally felt like Nick walking through one of Gatsby's crazy parties.

Besides the absurdity of the opening scenes, *The Great Gatsby* really ties together as a great movie. Just like the book, the film doesn't really capture you until you notice that silhouette reaching out to the green light in the distance.

Luhrmann may have gotten a little ahead of himself with the beginning, but he couldn't have chosen better actors to portray such timeless characters. Now I'm just waiting to see if their performances are deemed Oscar-worthy.

Iron Man faces the Mandarin in Marvel's latest movie

by Jennifer Walsh

Before the much-hyped release of *Iron Man 3*, many fans were sure the film would face one of two fates: it would either live up to the wild success of *The Avengers* or be as pathetic as *Spider-Man 3*. *Iron Man 3* isn't as good as its predecessors, but it isn't abominably bad either; it is merely a tepid new installment in a popular franchise.

Tony Stark is back after saving the world in *The Avengers*, but is suffering from post-traumatic stress. He copes by building upgraded versions of his classic Iron Man suit.

At the same time, the Mandarin, a terrorist who has detonated explosives across the country, has threatened the U.S. president by hacking into television networks. The Mandarin's life-long project involves mutating humans so that they can heal from any injury, but are also turned into living bombs. Tony declares it his mission to take him down.

Tony, played by Robert Downey Jr., loses steam as the movie progresses. He starts off with his signature swagger, but by the end, he's a watered-down shell of a character, sacrificed for commercial appeal. After traveling to Rosewood, Tennessee to investigate The Mandarin's bombings, Tony

befriends a young boy named Harley, who has as many daddy issues as Stark himself. Scenes with the kid, coupled with the anxiety attacks and toned-down one-liners seem out of character.

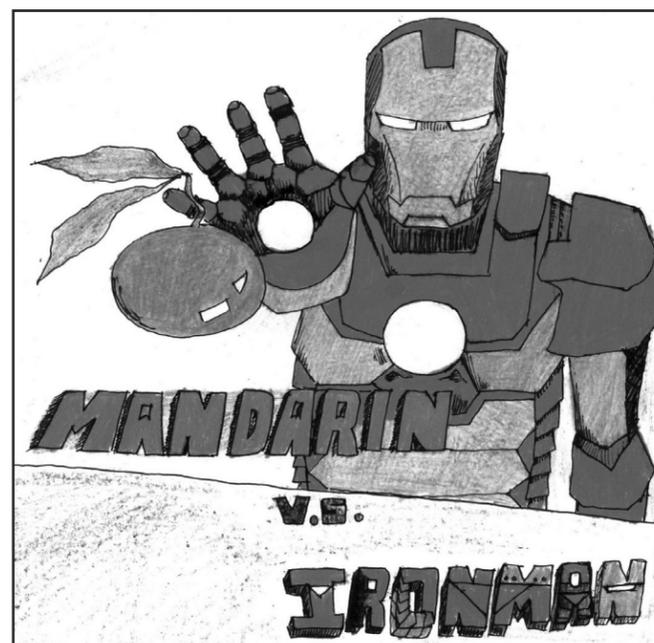
Stark's hubris puts longtime girlfriend Pepper Potts in danger, but there is nothing new or authentic about their relationship. While Pepper has the potential to be a great character, she's used by director Shane Black as a prop in Tony's adventures. The only thing that seems to define her personality is, of course, Tony. She fills the classic damsel-in-distress role well, but doesn't add much to the film. Gwyneth Paltrow does her best as Pepper, but she and Downey have little on-screen chemistry. Although Pepper's life is routinely threatened, this major plotline is bland and predictable.

Jon Favreau, who directed the last two films, returned only in a minor role as Happy Hogan, head of security for Stark Industries. Current director Black doesn't reach the bar set by Favreau in the previous movies, nor the one set by Joss Whedon in last year's *Avengers*. The screenplay, written by Black and Drew Pearce, is so-so, but the film moves from explosion to explosion of ten enough that it doesn't matter much.

The story follows the same structure as the last two movies—Tony saves the world and Pepper from a terrorist—but it's worn-out and lacks suspense. Despite a lackluster plot, *Iron Man 3*'s digital effects are fantastically gripping, though the film could make better use of the 3-D.

Iron Man 3 is not completely awful, however. Downey is a convincing lead, and Don Cheadle's return as Colonel James Rhodes, now suited up as "Iron Patriot," is a pleasure to watch. Ben Kingsley also provides plenty of comic relief in his role. Killian, played by Guy Pearce, sure knows how to hold a grudge, though his interest in Tony is less personal than it first seems. The fights between Iron Man and Killian's crew are entertaining and lively.

Iron Man 3 has a clear cause-and-



Art by Parina Kaewkrajang

effect plotline with a predictable ending, but it's still worth seeing for fans of the franchise, who will appreciate that *Iron Man* is, once again, back in action. Those less attached to the series won't be as thrilled, as the movie isn't what audiences have come to expect from the films. Save a few bucks and see the regular version instead of the 3-D. *Iron Man* may not be the best he's ever been, but he still knows how to save the country in super style.

E-readers or books?

by Erin Robinson

In 2007, Amazon released its first e-reader device—the Kindle—and since then, the world of reading hasn't been the same. Amazon quickly faced competition in the e-book market, as Barnes and Noble released the Nook and Sony came out with the Reader. There are also Kobos, iPads, and smartphones, all of which have apps for reading books on the go. In fact, e-books are now outselling paper books.



Photo by Yash Sharma

I happen to love e-readers. My sister and I have Kindles, and my mother has a Kindle Fire. My friends and family all have different variants of an e-reader.

It's easy to appreciate e-readers for the instant gratification and convenience that they offer. Once I finish a book, I don't have to go the library or the store to get a new one. I don't even have to get up from my comfortable position on the floor. I can instantly go to my home screen and pick one of the many titles awaiting me. Or, if I have finished all those books, I can just go to the Kindle Store on my device and buy a new one.

I'm not the only fan. Raina Salvatore, sophomore and Nook user, said that the only thing she would trade her Nook for was a lifetime supply of chocolate ice cream.

Another great thing about e-readers is that a book is often much cheaper when purchased electronically. Not having to kill all those trees makes e-readers more eco-friendly than books. In addition, the works of many classic authors like Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, and Edgar Allen Poe are offered for free.

Despite all this, not everyone appreciates the convenience of an e-reader.

"I think they're alright, but I like the paper version better," said Asmaul Chowdhury, sophomore. "It's more fulfilling to have something substantial in your hands as opposed to reading off an e-reader. Plus, I just grew up that way."

I understand where that opinion comes from. I used to think the same, and resisted buying my first Kindle for months. I thought I would miss the cover, the texture, the turning of pages and the book's weight in my hands. However, since I bit the proverbial bullet and bought my Kindle, I haven't had a single regret.

At the heart of the matter is nostalgia. People like the idea of reading as they did in the "good old days," and books are a constant in mankind's history. Now, even that has changed, and change is scary. However, I believe people need to focus on the positives. It's great that e-readers are making reading more accessible, easy, and convenient. We are now in a digital age, and we need to embrace the e-book.

Grill Point receives A rating

by Andrew Mitchel

Serving "Glatt Kosher Israeli and Middle Eastern food" since 2003, Grill Point, located on Main Street and Jewel Avenue in Flushing, is just seven short blocks away from Townsend Harris. This eatery is a great option as a place to get lunch or dinner within our school's locale.

When I walked in, I noted the rotisseries of shawarma (sliced grill meat, similar to Greek gyro meat) in the storefront, displayed with great pride. The interior was a bit dull, but this didn't draw away from the food much, since I was ordering out.

The salads and sauces were distinctly fresh. The meats were from the shawarma broiler or placed directly onto a large griddle to cook while you waited. The staff was very helpful and friendly: they clearly explained my options for toppings and ingredients to go with what I ordered, and didn't withhold advice about the best components of an enjoyable sandwich.

I ordered the Kofta kabob on pita bread along with water, but I was also able to get a sizable helping from a varied salad bar at the restaurant's front. I opted for some cole slaw and a few hot peppers, neither of which disappointed. After I served myself salad, the pita bread for my sandwich was sliced open and filled with hummus, parsley, onions, tomato-cucumber salad, and the meat, with the kabob fully cooked on the grill and ready to eat.

Though pricey (since labeled as certified-Kosher), I was impressed by the sheer quality of my whole meal. The bursts of flavor in the kabob and sandwich made for a great lunch. I can assure you that I truly enjoyed the food that I ordered from this establishment, and I highly recommend that everyone try it at least once.

Food: A
Décor: B
Service: A-
Overall: A



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Girls and Boys track teams trump Queens competition

by Isaac Pulatov

The Girl's Varsity Track team dominated Queens once again, adding yet another gold medal to Townsend Harris. The key event for them, as usual, was the 1500 meter race-walk. With eleven girls in the race, Townsend Harris took 1st through 6th place, a clean sweep. Sophia Mahin led the way, finishing first.

In Track and Field, there are 20 events for the boys, and an additional 1500 meter race-walk for the girls. Regardless of how many compete in an event, the top 6 finishers score. First place scores 10 points, second scores 8, and third scores 6, fourth: 4, fifth: 2, and sixth: 1. The girls team scored 31 of their 108 points just in that event.

Sophia Mahin wasn't surprised by the success at all, commenting, "I think our success was attributed to all of the hard work that the girls put in. Also, all of the girls are so supportive of each other, and help to encourage each other, which lead to better performances."

Another key athlete was sophomore Nina Leeds, who finished third in the High Jump, third in the Pentathlon, and fourth with the 4x400 meter relay team. Nina's teammate on the 4x4 team, senior Maria Gonzalez, was also instrumental. In addition to the relay, she came fourth in both the 800 meter run and the 400 meter intermediate hurdles. She commented, "It was really great to just see our whole team compete so hard and not give up. There was amazing support

and comfort all around."

In the Pole Vault Townsend Harris scored well too. Finishing first and second were senior Klaudia Garnarcz and freshman Kellie Zestanakis.

Senior Captain Judith Suzuki double medaled, coming in 5th in the 3000 meter run and 6th in the 1500 meter. Judith said, "I'm proud and thankful that my teammates stuck through all the practices and meets. I can't thank them enough." Fellow Senior and Captain Katie Kang triple medaled in the race-walk behind Sophia, in the 2000 meter steeple chase, and the 4x800 relay, and is very proud of her team. "People may call us cults, mobs, but they are all my little sisters and everyone got closer this season through the freezing weather and pouring rain. We may be a big team, but we're a close knit family. We have a great group of hard working girls on the team this year and they are all so dedicated. We all worked hard to score for our team and the results showed."

Meanwhile, the boys team ended its season in a third place, bronze medal finish, pulling off a huge upset over larger schools such as Newtown and Bay-side.

The team earned many of its points from throwing events. Senior TJ Mulligan and Sophomore Minhaj Rahman scored 2nd and 5th in the Javelin, respectively. TJ Mulligan also won first in the High Jump, and sixth in the 4x400 meter relay. Minhaj followed up his performance by scoring 2nd in the Dis-

cus throw, along with Stan Choi who scored 5th, and Ross Cimagala who scored 6th. Minhaj said, "The throwers changed their whole diet and were pushed by me, their throwing captain, everyday to work hard. Even when they had 3 tests the next day or a collateral due the next day they still came to practice. I'm very proud of my teammates."

Sophomore Evan Mancini provided a major boost to his team with a second place finish in the Pole Vault. He said, "Self-motivated athletes can achieve much more than talented athletes."

Many of Townsend Harris's points came in the long and middle distance races. In the 3000 meter steeple chase, Sophomore Yash Sharma finished second, and junior Thomas Sullivan finished fifth.

Yash commented, "Although I'm just a sophomore, I think that this is the strongest mid/distance team we've ever had. We have phenomenal runners in events such as the 800, 1600, 3200, and 3000 Steeplechase."

Later, in the 800 meter run, Junior Kyle Su and Sophomore Zach Ooi finished third and fifth, respectively. In the mile, Townsend Harris athletes finished third through sixth, among them junior Christian Castro, and once again Yash Sharma and Kyle Su.

In the final middle distance race of the day, the 4x800 meter relay, Townsend Harris capitalized once again, running with two teams and scoring first and fifth.

Girls fencing ends undefeated

by John O'Neill and Daniel Restifo

There's no foiling this team's plans.

The Girls Varsity Fencing team has finished its season with an undefeated record of 10-0, a feat that hasn't been accomplished since their 2010-11 season, in which they ended 8-0.

Coached by English teacher Katherine Yan, the Hawks have felt in control all season, being challenged by only Francis Lewis and Cardozo; but even those matches were won by over ten touches combined between foil and epee.

As senior captain Fariha Hussain said, "the team is definitely stronger this year because we have a lot of returning fencers."

This experience has served to not only help the team throughout the regular season but will likely help the Hawks go deep in the playoffs. To have this success the team has had "intense workouts, but still manages to have fun and continues to make improvements over the course of the season," Hussain added.

Senior captain Alanna Leung shared Fariha's sentiments. "This year, the team is much more seasoned. Last year there were no seniors, so all the starters were either juniors or freshmen. We've become more used to fencing competitively, and know how to handle the pressure better."

The second to last match of the season against Information Technology HS took place on May 1, where the foil squad won by a score of 45 touches to 21 touches and the epee squad won by a score of 45 touches to 21 touches. The epee squad was missing one of its starters but despite this fact they were able to rally together and still pull off the victory.

In Townsend's last match with Cardozo on April 19th, the foil squad won 45 to 35 and the epee squad won 45 to 36. They won all but three of the eighteen total bouts. In epee, before heading to the

last bout, the score was tied at 35-35. Fariha scored 10 points in the last bout and only allowed Cardozo to score once on her, sealing the victory.

Townsend also has quite a few fencers at the top of the PSAL leaderboards in touches for: Fariha Hussain (138), Alondra Lerebours (120), Alanna Leung (111) and Margaret Jia (93). They also have three fencers in the top ten in wins: Fariha Hussain (23), Alondra Lerebours (21) and Alanna Leung (19).

Although the Hawks were undefeated in 2011, both epee and foil were not undefeated and so senior captain Margaret Jia was "looking forward to an undefeated season in both epee and foil."

Both squads being undefeated as well as the team being undefeated overall has been a goal of the team.

In fencing, an epee is a sharp-pointed dueling sword designed for thrusting, whereas a foil is a light fencing sword without cutting edges but with a button on its point.

In foil, the target areas are the torso and back, and anything besides that is considered off-target. In epee, everything is on target, so it tends to move at a slower pace due to the patience and carefulness that the sport demands.

Margaret has also been "proud of the team's unity and I couldn't have asked for a more dedicated, gifted and lovable team."

Alanna described a similar sense of team effort. "Fencing matches are essentially relay races; one person can fall behind in points made, but teammates are always there to pick up the slack. I think we're successful because we work hard, and because we work well as a team together."

Additional reporting by Dimitri Theofanis



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Senior Isaac Pulatov races to the top of PSAL charts

by Dimitri Theofanis

Senior track captain Isaac Pulatov has broken both individual and team records in this year's spring track season.

At the Queens Championships on May 13 at Bay-side High School, Isaac ran in the 4x8 relay race, two-mile race, and mile race, finishing in first, second, and third place, respectively.

Queens Championships is a track meet that is comprised of both overall team events and individual events. Each athlete can only compete in a maximum of three races, and the Townsend Harris boys finished third place overall at the championships.

In every 4x8 relay race, four team members run 800 meters each in a collaborative effort. At the Queens Championships, Isaac anchored for the team, running last of the four and finishing with a personal time of 2:16. The team finished with a time of 8:53.

"The highlight of my season was winning the 4x8 relay with my teammates because that will allow us to compete at the City Championships, and qualifying for the championships has been my main goal since freshman year," said Isaac.

Isaac's two-mile time at the Queens Championships was 10:33, only two seconds longer than his personal record of 10:31.

Finishing the two-mile race with a time of 10:31 allowed him to provisionally qualify for city championships. His mile time at the championships was 5:02, ten seconds longer than his personal best, 4:52. Isaac currently has the fastest



photo by Yash Sharma

Isaac at the Howard Richter Invitational.

two-mile time and the second fastest mile time on the team.

"Throughout the season a lot of athletes were qualifying in events such as the pole-vault, the discus, and the steeple-chase, and I felt like I needed to legitimize myself and never felt complacent with my performance," said Isaac.

Isaac was also invited to compete in the two-mile race at the Mayor's Cup, which is a prestigious invitational meet for private, parochial, and public schools in New York City. There, he ran a two-mile with a time of 10:54. In addition, he was invited to the New York relays, one of the biggest invitational meets in the city, where he ran a 10:58 two-mile.

The 4x8 team ran 8:48 at the relays, the fastest time for this event in the past four years at Harris.

"I knew time was running out and I wanted to make the most out of my high school experience with the track team. I also had a lot of teammates who were also distance runners who are doing just as well or better than me, so just by performing so well they motivated me to do better. Halfway through the season I learned how to enjoy racing. Before, I always had this mentality that I had to mentally and physically exhaust myself each time, and that was very scary, but this season I learned to just relax and not let the pain bother me," said Isaac.

Isaac is graduating from the team with high hopes of its future.

"I'm going to miss training with this current team, especially since next year Townsend Harris will probably have the best group of distance runners in Queens."

Boys Varsity Baseball swings its way to second place

by Daniel Restifo

At the end of their season, the Hawks baseball team's record now stands at 13 wins and 3 losses. The team had a nine-game winning streak, which began with a 7-2 win on April 15 against the High School for Arts and Business. This hot streak came after a difficult two-game series that saw the team defeated by division rival East New York Transit Tech H.S.

On April 22, the Hawks scored 31 unanswered points against Jamaica High School before the game ended in the fifth inning. Junior Harry Quinn led the team in runs, scoring 5 that game, and five other players scored 3 runs each.

During their streak, the Hawks had both lopsided victories as well as a few good tests of how long the streak would last. Over its course, the Hawks defeated Arts and Business twice, Hillcrest twice, August Martin, Jamaica, Martin Van Buren, Information Technology H.S. (coached by Townsend Harris Alum Josh Sipkin), and Renaissance.

Coach Morales noted that the streak "has the team showing up to games confident about winning."

The first of the Hawks' tests came against Martin Van Buren. It was a pitcher's duel throughout, with the first run being scored in the sixth inning by Van Buren. Entering the bottom of the seventh inning down by one, the Hawks were down to their final out. In stepped Johnny O'Neill, junior, who hit an RBI triple to tie the game at one, leading to extra-innings. In the bottom of the 9th with the bases loaded, Van Buren allowed a walk, giving Harris the walk-off win.

The second of the Hawks' tests came while playing against Arts and Business for the second time. After Arts and Business tied the game by scoring three runs in the top of the 7th, Townsend came right back in the bottom half of the inning and scored on Freshman Mason Rivero's RBI groundout to shortstop, giving them their second walk-off victory in as many days.

The Hawks defeated Robert F. Kennedy on May 10 in a 12-0 shutout, but lost to Robert F. Wagner on May 13, which ended at 7-3. The Hawks faced Wagner again on May 15, where senior TJ Ritter helped the team take the lead in the seventh inning to win the game. The Hawks ended their season in second place, only behind East New York Transit Tech.

Additional reporting by Dimitri Theofanis



photo courtesy of Ameer Kazmi

The Townsend Harris Boys Varsity Baseball team before their last game.

Teachers victorious against students in basketball game

by Vickie Savvides

The Student vs. Teacher basketball game took place on May 13 after school in the gymnasium to raise money for the Girls Track team. The teachers emerged victorious, winning the game 53-49.

The event, coordinated by Social Studies teacher and assistant Girls Track coach Adam Stonehill, featured about 25 members on the students' team and eight teachers on the opposing team.

Each quarter of the game was respectively played by freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and an advanced team of Townsend Harris basketball players. After half-time, the line-up restarted in the same order. The teachers remained ahead for all eight five-minute periods.

Sophomore and track team member Natalia Ramirez was impressed by the teachers' skills.

"The game goes to show you that teachers are capable of so much beyond the classroom," she said.

Freshman Julian Delarosa agreed, and was glad

that the "staff could take a break from the serious matters and just have fun."

He was sincerely impressed with "Mr. Babstock's killer jump shot" and Mr. Mark's "nothing but net three-pointers."

Acting as referees, Physical Education teacher Keith Hanson and Math teacher Timothy Connor, who is also the girls track coach, could not help but smile when calling fouls and travels throughout the game.

"It's just all really great," said Mr. Hanson. "Throw a ball in front of a bunch of kids—they'll have a good time. Same for the teachers."

Mr. Connor agreed, saying, "It's all about having a good time and supporting Townsend in any way possible."

While others wished the game would never end, some preferred the traditional Student vs. Teacher dodgeball games.

Spectator and junior Anita Suvasia felt that "dodgeball was more popular and drew more attention."

Mr. Stonehill agreed this was an issue when planning the event, and also wished he had publicized it more.

"The game was close, so people enjoyed it," he said. "Since this is the first time we did basketball instead of dodgeball, we expect next year it'll be full capacity since people saw how fun it was."

Some were also disappointed by the fact that certain faculty who had promised to participate did not.

Although the teachers won, freshman Eriselda Cuni is still hopeful.

"The students are going to come back next year better than ever and so the teachers better watch out. It isn't over!"

The games will continue with an inter-grade basketball tournament on June 3 after school.