

the CLASSIC

Townsend Harris High School at Queens College

Anthony Barbetta assumes position of principal

By Ella Leviyeva

Anthony Barbetta has replaced Kenneth Bonamo as principal of Townsend Harris High School. Formerly the principal of Thomas Edison Career and Technical Education High School, Mr. Barbetta arrives with years of experience in the New York City Department of Education.

Though the change in leadership occurred quickly, Mr. Barbetta describes the process in positive terms: "The transition has been remarkably smooth. My prior experience as Principal at Edison, as an Assistant Principal of Social Studies at Edison, and as an Assistant Principal of Administration at Forest Hills High School really prepared me for this; I know what the expectations are and I'm prepared to work hard."

Born and raised in Bayside, Queens, Mr. Barbetta's District 26 upbringing strongly influenced him. "My neighbor to my left was an Assistant Principal at Bayside, and my neighbor to my right was a teacher at Cardozo. I spoke with them often and I'd say they influenced me a lot, but I knew I wanted to pursue a career in education since the fourth grade," said Mr. Barbetta.

His interest in the humanities has also been key to his development. "I've loved theatre and English since I was a little boy. Then in elementary and middle schools I really learned to love history. In college I was a theatre major and then an English major. But, I wanted to eat. If I pursued theatre I wouldn't be

here today," he continued.

Mr. Barbetta found his first teaching job straight out of college. He taught at Brooklyn's Grand Street



Principal Barbetta at work in his office.

Campus, the Old Eastern District High School. It was a school "plagued by violence and low achievement," with only a 60% graduation rate. "I grew affection for those kids: the ones that came, [and] the ones that tried. They were really bright. I learned how to teach in that school. There's a saying, 'if you can teach in a tough school, you can teach anywhere,'" said Mr. Barbetta.

After that position, Mr. Barbetta spent nearly a

year at Brooklyn Technical High School, and seven years at Forest Hills High School. He then became Assistant Principal of Social Studies and Foreign Language at Thomas Edison High School, and then principal for the next five years.

Throughout his 20 years in the school system, Mr. Barbetta has spent 14 years as a history teacher and has held numerous administrative positions.

Mr. Barbetta stated, "My supervisors and fellow teachers encouraged me to take on administrative positions. They thought I had the necessary leadership skills, which I think really came with my position as captain of the baseball team in high school. I learned how to be a leader there."

But after taking on administrative roles, Mr. Barbetta found that he couldn't stay away from teaching. "Whenever I'm in the classroom, it brings a desire in me to teach. Unfortunately my schedule doesn't allow it, but I do mentor for the Department of Education and teach seminar classes."

Regarding his introduction to the school community, Mr. Barbetta said, "The staff, students, and alumni [at THHS] have been very welcoming. Everyone has been very receptive and kind."

During his first year at Townsend Harris, Mr. Barbetta hopes to observe the dynamics of the school and learn how it functions. "I'm not looking to make any drastic changes. It's too soon to say if there will be any changes. There will definitely be more

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Kick-Off Rally begins Election Simulation season

by Catherine Moskos and Juliet Monclova

During the next few weeks, don't be surprised to see President Barack Obama or Governor Mitt Romney walking down the fifth floor or campaigning in history classes.

The Kick-Off Rally, which took place on September 21 during seventh band in the Courtyard, marked the beginning of the Election Simulation. It gave the presidential campaigns, local New York candidates, special interest groups, and supporters the chance to promote themselves to the senior class.

The annual Election Simulation began in 1996 by the Humanities Department in collaboration with Dr. Michael Krasner of the Taft Institute for Government at Queens College. Growing in popularity every year, the Simulation is a distinguished feature of life at Townsend Harris. It gives seniors the opportunity to adopt the personalities of presidential candidates, senatorial candidates, and other representative candidates, as well as their spouses and running mates. Moreover, it helps the Townsend Harris students get more involved in the political process and yearly elections.

The 2012 Kick-Off Rally was a clear indicator of the effort and energy that the seniors will put forth to not only keep the 16-year tradition alive, but also make it a memorable, important Election Simulation for the school.

Both the energy from the candidates and the crowd impressed Principal Anthony Barbetta, who enthusiastically declared, "Let the [Election] Season begin!"

Dr. Steinmann, veteran to the Election Simulation, said, "I'm very proud of everyone. It was a great start for this important election. There was a good combination of appeal to the THHS community as well as their representations of the candidates in the real world." The only inadequate part of the Rally was the short 45-minute time slot. "It was disappointing that there wasn't enough time for the Special Interest Groups. However, it happens every year."

The Presidential Candidates who had to impress the 300-person crowd with their short two-minute speeches reacted to their performances. Marco Gallagher,

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Homeless seniors

Senior year is supposed to be filled with privileges and fun (after you get past the college applications and humanities journals). We are free more than half of the day to do as we please, catch up on work, and enjoy the freedom. However, a perk that was awarded to the senior classes before us included a space where we could do work, hang out during frees, and enjoy the warmth and comfort of the Townsend Harris building.

The senior lounge is now primarily empty most days of the day, unless some Election Simulation campaign is using the space for poster making. The open room taunts us band after band, as we are forced to walk past it on our way to class or to the lobby.

We were told that we were allowed to hang out in the lobby now instead - as if this is such a consolation. The lobby is cold and impersonal and is available to the entire school (as opposed to a room made for us only). We are also told to go to the science building and to explore the Queens College Campus. That's fine for now, when the campus is inviting and bright, but when it is raining and snow-covered, nobody will want to even set a toe outside the building for fear of becoming an icicle.

The senior lounge was revoked due to last year's graduating class abusing the room. They would talk on their phones, cause a ruckus, and spill their lunch. We understand that the lounge is a privilege, not a necessity.

But it seems a little presumptuous to take away the room without seeing if we can handle the responsibility first. If our behavior is reprehensible, then we should not be allowed the room. But judging our behavior on the indiscretions of former senior classes shows a lack of trust in us. When we are sitting in the science building, the looks that Queens College students give us are palpable - they don't understand why these high school students are taking over their campus. We are not welcome anywhere, even in our own school.

A note to our readers: because the college admissions statistics have been catalogued online, we are no longer able to publish the aggregate information (the so-called "High/Lows") regarding college admissions. Information regarding admissions to individual colleges can now be found on Naviance.

The real point of the Simulation

A beginning to the Townsend Harris school year can never be complete without the annual Election Simulation. A time of excitement and interest for the underclassmen, the Simulation has become an old-fashioned Townsend tradition. It just isn't the same if underclassmen can't harass the sharply dressed senior candidates about twenty different obscure policies and expect them to know each and every detail. It's easy to see why many seniors question the legitimacy of an Election Simulation. With college applications and college classes slowly crushing the senior class, the Election Simulation just throws a wrench into an already stressful situation. However, the Election Simulation's focus has always been to get the students actively involved in politics. With this year's dramatic presidential election, Harris is once again buzzing with political fever.

Freshmen don't realize how much power they hold at the beginning of the school year. They're basically the senior class's lifeline: they have the money, the vote, and the power. In most other schools, freshmen are intimidated by the seniors and their infamous freshmen Fridays. Here at Townsend, seniors are scared of freshman ripping apart their campaigns, stopping them in the halls for questions about their policies, or leaving any campaign utterly bankrupt. The freshmen can really get a feel for political power. In the rest of the United States, prices are up and everything costs an arm and a leg more. Here, underclassmen can get a full meal for ten simbucks. Four years ago, a freshman could only get a cookie for twenty five simbucks. Besides letting the students get a taste of political life with business deals and campaign questioning, the Election Simulation actually helps in establishing a strong Townsend community.

The Simulation ends up allowing the freshmen to ease into Townsend social life. Usually, the seniors have always been the intimidating students: leading the teams, setting the grades, and strutting the hallways they know so well. But here, underclassmen get a chance to connect with the seniors right from the beginning of the school year. It's hard to get intimidated by Paul Ryan after he hands you water on the track or Dan Halloran after he's said "people power" for the seventh time in a row.

However, with this senior humanization the original intent of the Election Simulation gets a little obscured. The freshmen start voting for the seniors that helped them out the most, gave the most food, were the friendliest, and sometimes were just more attractive. Little by little they can stop caring about the politics and care more about the seniors they connect with. Although they may stop paying attention to the politics, the freshmen start shedding their social inhibitions and become more comfortable in the Townsend family. A little sacrifice of knowledge for social experiences seems like a fair trade. Don't worry though, when it's their turn to be seniors they'll have to know politics inside and out.

The Simulation can be rough. It's time-consuming, straining, and a major responsibility. The students that can play the part of a candidate and deal with applications and take college classes deserve our utmost respect. It's still worth it though to help establish the Townsend social family we all know so well. The class of 2013 can handle it. After all, as Dr. Steinmann would say, it's not like this is Stuyvesant right?

Letters to the editors are always welcome.

If you have an idea for an article, an issue you want addressed, or a response to a piece we've written in *The Classic*, email us at the thhsclassic@gmail.com

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Polls show THHS Romney in lead despite opinions about real election

The Classic polled 360 students on their election season opinions. We asked who the students were planning to vote for in the Election Simulation. We also asked students who they would vote for if they could do so in the real election. Students were polled through Facebook from October 2nd through October 10th using a Google form that automatically compiled the results.

The results showed that the THHS Romney is in the lead, earning 40% of the overall vote. If students could vote in the actual election, the real President Obama would earn 74% of the vote. There are large discrepancies between who students would vote for in the Simulation and who they would vote for in the real election.

Of course, we need to emphasize that this poll is entirely unscientific and comes with clear limitations. Since all responses came through Facebook, this poll is more reflective of the opinions of students who frequent the popular social media website. There is also no way to control whether or not a particular campaign encouraged supporters to take part in the poll, though there is no evidence to suggest that this occurred.

English teacher named Assistant Principal

by Ashley Ahn

English teacher Rafal Olechowski has been appointed the new assistant principal of the humanities department in place of the retired Susan Getting.

Mr. Olechowski discussed the major responsibilities of his new role, explaining his desire to meet the needs of both the teachers in the department and the entire student body. "As an assistant principal, my job is to primarily support my teachers. I need to make sure that

responsibilities, he now teaches one English 3 class and one Senior Seminar Humanities course. "I'm very torn about it, honestly. I would like to teach more classes, but it's not easy. It's as if I'm the actor and director at the same time. If a magical fairy came, I would ask for more teaching and fewer paperwork responsibilities," he said. He will still, despite any reservations, handle the workload "with great gusto and lots of energy."

Mr. Olechowski believes he's been well-prepared for the responsi-



Humanities AP Rafal Olechowski.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

they have all the resources they need. I also have to make [the department] appealing to students so that if they take a class in the humanities, it will be their best experience."

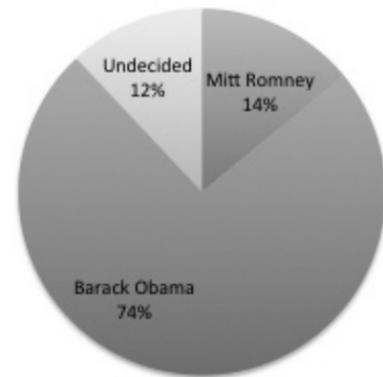
He added, "The teachers and I will have to look at the vision of the department. We know what it looked like in the 20th century, but what will it look like in the 21st century and on?"

In the past, Mr. Olechowski taught English, Linguistics and Writing Process. However, because of his new re-

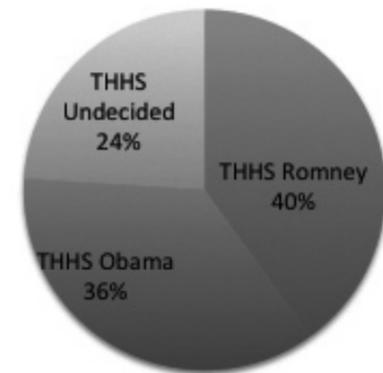
responsibilities ahead by a much younger student than he's used to. "I guess my son Nico prepared me for this a little bit. I was taking care of him over the summer and I also have good energy levels there."

Whether it's parenting, teaching or administering his department, Mr. Olechowski has one overall goal: "I want to be the best I can be for whatever I do," he said.

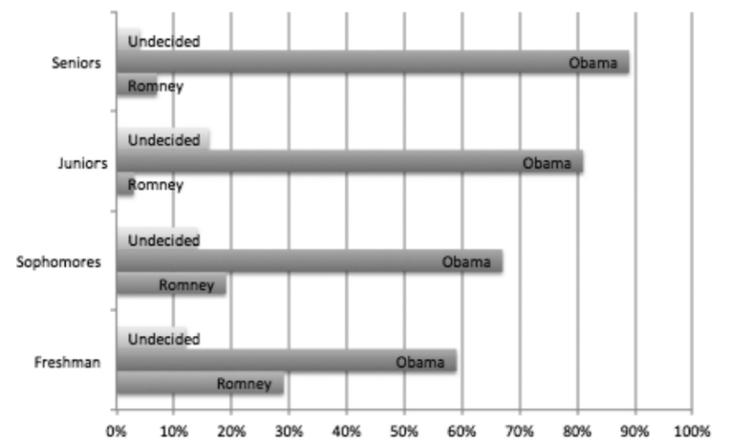
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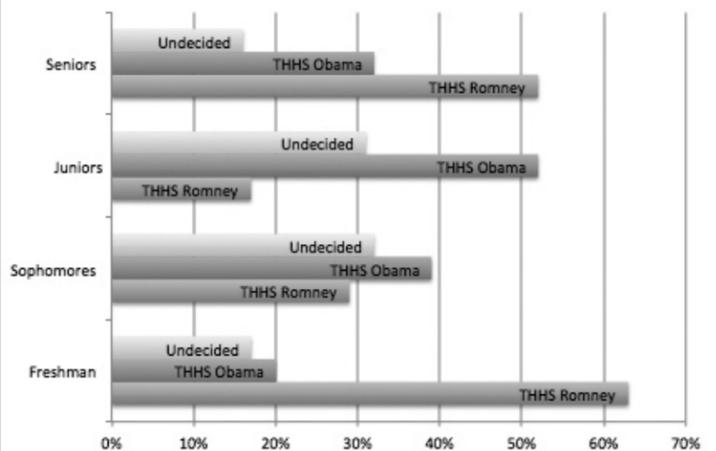
Overall Results -- Election Simulation



Grade by Grade Results - Real Election



Grade by Grade Results - Simulation



Students question Election Simulation gender traditions

By Catherine Moskos

Members of the Townsend Harris community are questioning rules that restrict ‘gender bending’—dressing and behaving like a member of the opposite sex—during the Election Simulation.

Though the Election Simulation Teacher’s Manual does not explicitly state that gender roles must unflinchingly replicate reality, it does state: “the fundamental rule of the election simulation game is ‘keep it real!’ The simulation game works as a teaching tool only if all players play their roles seriously and participating teachers insist that all players mirror, as closely as possible, actual campaign roles. In fact, we tell our students that it’s like other games—it only works, and it’s only fun if you take it seriously.”

This fundamental rule would leave no room for debate if it didn’t so happen that this Election Simulation takes place in a school predominately filled with girls. Now a number of students are questioning whether or not it’s time to bend the rules themselves.

Key members of the Humanities Department appeared to be split on the issue.

Rafal Olechowski, Assistant Principal of Humanities, supported students who feel that it’s time for the Simulation to allow for gender bending: “I am pro the idea to allow a woman to represent male candidates. There is a huge representation of girls in this school and the Election Simulation limits them. This is the new generation and I believe that the new generation can erase gender prejudice. I mean, what’s wrong with Barack Obama? I don’t see what’s wrong with that.”

Dr. Linda Steinmann, Social Studies teacher and veteran of the Election Simulation, said, “You know, I started working in THHS before the Election Simulation began. I had a Participatory Democracy class that had girls that wanted to be candidates but were denied that opportunity. It’s always been this way because the Election Simulation was designed to be gender specific. I guess it’s a tradition, and sometimes it’s not a good idea to mess with tradition.”

“My gut feeling is that I largely agree with [the no gender bending policy] because I think if we start to cross gender lines it can be distracting. We have done it in the past,” said Franco Scardino, Social Studies teacher. “We had a female candidate play a male role, and she did a great job but in the end to the students she was still a female. [The female candidate did not win the election]. I also think if we do that, then do we now allow boys to play female roles?”

Students calling for a change in the rules feel that the demographic makeup of Townsend Harris’s student body, as well as the issues of this particular

campaign, make gender-bending a necessity.

Victoria Lau, senior, said, “This whole issue is just stupid. There are a lot of girls in Townsend Harris and they should be able to play whatever part in the election simulation they want to play. I mean, it’s a simulation, just a simulation after all.”

Bashe Miller, senior, said, “While we do want to give an accurate representation of each candidate, I don’t see why a woman couldn’t play Obama, for example. His campaign doesn’t have any characteristics that define it strictly as male, so technically a female could play his role.”

“Gender-bending should be allowed because its not about walking around pretending to be the candidates, but rather representing them and what they stand for as best as possible. And if it’s a woman who can do that, despite the candidate being male, then so be it,” said sophomore Alondra Lerebours.

“I wish there were stronger female roles in the Election Simulation,” says Alexis Martinez, senior, “because our females are very outspoken, strong, confident, and could complete the job without any complications whatsoever.”

“I feel that its unfair and it sort of represents how in reality there aren’t a lot of women politicians,” said Radhika Patel, sophomore.

There are students, however, who oppose the idea of gender bending in the Election Simulation. “I believe that the way it is done right now is a proper portrayal of current politics,” said Oleksandr Boychuk, senior. “The point of the election simulation is to be as closely related to the real one, gender bending would disrupt that.”

Junior Dillon Mahabir comments, “It’s not that I am supporting gender inequality, but I understand that using male students can make the simulation far more realistic and believable to my fellow Harrisites.”

“I don’t believe it is right that they aren’t allowed to ‘gender-bend,’ especially in this day and age. However, I don’t completely disagree because they need to give the most accurate portrayal of the candidate as possible,” expresses Daniel Wuest, junior.

“If we were to gender bend,” wonders Ronald Seemangal, senior, “I can’t help but to think that the seriousness would also diminish.”

Mr. Scardino, responding to the controversy, described how the school finds a middle ground between those who want more female involvement and those who believe that realism must be preserved: “in the handbook it has rules about keeping it gender appropriate. It’s more of an issue at Townsend Harris. That’s why we’re running so many local campaigns.”

Kick-Off Rally marks the start of the Election Simulation

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the senior portraying Republican candidate Mitt Romney said, “It was nerve-wracking up there, but I got my point and ideas across.”

Khalid Abdin, the senior portraying President Barack Obama, was also made nervous by the spectacle. At one point, Khalid characterized the president’s views as “pro-abortion.” He says, “I apologize and really did mean to say pro-choice. Everyone makes mistakes, and we’re still in our best interest to win.”

Seniors, active members of the crowd, had mixed reviews of the Kick-Off Rally.

Romney’s communications team manager, Damaris Sierra, senior, said, “The Kick-Off Rally was really exciting and it was fun getting into the spirit of the election. I thought that the Republican candidates did very well and wish them success in the elections.”

Walid Rahman, senior, said, “There was a clear divi-

sion between those who were prepared and those who were not, between those who knew their information, and those who didn’t.”

Laura O’Shea, senior and Joseph Concannon’s wife, said, “It was nice that the smaller campaigns got to introduce themselves to everyone since no one really knew anything about them yet.”

“I feel the Kick-Off Rally went well for myself and all the other candidates. The crowd was lively and spirited and the motivation from all the supporters definitely helped everyone get through their speeches. I for one had a great time at the kick off rally, and am looking forward to making more public appearances throughout the election,” said Diego Cotte, senior, portraying Tony Avella.

“In my opinion, the Kick-Off Rally was a huge success for both parties. I feel that the overall vibe of the rally was perfect: the sun shining, peo-

ple cheering, and posters everywhere. There was just a lot of positive energy surrounding the event, and that is what made it successful,” said Denis Poretsky, representing Eric Ulrich.

Terell Drayton, senior and Radio Host, said, “Some people prepared their speech better than others. Nevertheless, it was entertaining.

I’m still undecided though so there is a lot of time for [the candidates] to gain voters.”

“The energy of the Kick-Off Rally was really exciting, and I thought all the candidates who gave their speeches did an amazing job. The rally set off a great start to the campaign season,” said Stephanie Chen, senior, representing Grace Meng.

Ameer Kazmi, the senior portraying Joseph Concannon said, “I thought I made a great connection with the crowd. Even though I’m a downticket candidate, every election is important to the people.”



“Paul and Janna Ryan” appear at the Kick-Off Rally.

photo by Vanesa Martinez



Students in the crowd rally behind their candidates.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

Ms. Assante takes Senior Advisor position

by Michael Sanchez

Physical Education teacher Maria Assante recently took the helm as the new Senior Advisor for the class of 2013.

As Senior Advisor, Ms. Assante is now in charge of the Senior Committee and the activities of the graduating class. This includes collecting senior dues, overseeing student run dances, fundraisers, the senior trip and the prom celebration. "I'm basically trying to organize big events with the seniors," said Ms. Assante. "My goal is not just to make them big events but memorable events. A student's last year at Townsend Harris should be as memorable as possible."

As this is Ms. Assante's first year as Senior Advisor, she has more responsibilities than her usual health and physical education classes. "I'm loving it. This job is keeping me busy, but in a fun sort of way. It feels great to be help-

ing out. Honestly I'm still learning on the job."

Ms. Assante hopes to broaden the experience for the seniors this year and give them an opportunity to have a say in school activities. "I really want to stress student input," she said. "I want to do what [the seniors] want as much as possible. They're a great bunch of kids and are really interested in having their say. For the first committee meeting, over 70 kids showed up. For 70 kids to already be taking a stance on things is really impressive."

The Senior Advisor job is awarded with both experience and luck. "The position changes every 3 years," she said. "So I said why not? Let me throw my hat in the ring."

With the school year just starting and college applications the number one priority of most seniors at the moment, Ms. Assante is still proud of the 2013 class's recent participation in school events. "The Mixer this year was fantastic and made a decent amount of money. We also have another dance on the schedule for spring, and with enough student input, it should turn out wonderfully."



Ms. Assante works at her desk.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

Ms. Sierra enters foreign language department

by Stephanie Geier

First time teacher Paola Sierra says "Bonjour!" to Townsend Harris and the French department.

Ms. Sierra teaches French 1, 3, and 5, as well as the new French Cinema class. Ms. Sierra, who also fluently speaks Spanish, first learned French at the age of twelve in junior high school. It became apparent to her that she should pursue this subject. "I was able to relate to and grasp French easily. It was always my best subject," she said.

After studying French throughout high school, Ms. Sierra went to Paris as part of a study abroad program in college. She went to school and worked there for a full semester. "Being and living in Paris, being surrounded by their culture--it definitely made my French better," said Ms. Sierra.

In France, Ms. Sierra worked at a gift shop where she often interacted with French tourists. "I felt excited and liked the feeling of telling them 'I can speak French too.'" Around this time, she finally put her longtime desire to teach and her passion for French together. She continued to study French in college, and is currently pursuing her master's degree in the subject.

In addition to regular French classes, Ms. Sierra teaches "French

Cinema," a brand new course where students watch, discuss, and write about classical French films in order to explore French culture.

Ms. Sierra shared her opinions on the Harris community. "I love it. The kids are great with good work ethics, which makes it a good learning environment," she said. "I already had a general idea of what teaching would be like. It's basically what I thought it would be, but now, every minute is a learning experience."



Ms. Sierra instructs her students.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

Former middle school teacher joins English Department

by Yelena Dzhanova



Newspaper Advisor Brian Sweeney rummages through old Classics.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

"I heard about Townsend Harris primarily through the middle school that I taught at," he said. "This was the school that a lot of my best English students went to. It seemed like a great place based on the type of students it attracted alone."

Mr. Sweeney currently teaches sophomore English classes, the journalism elective, and is now the advisor for the school newspaper, *The Classic*. "Right now, there's nothing I'd rather be teaching," Mr. Sweeney explained. "Of course, I'm interested in learning all about the other courses here and seeing what else I can teach, but for now, E3 and Journalism give me a

lot to think about."

"Teaching here is like being given a top of the line classroom and student body. You can do everything you've ever wanted to try. You can do all the things that some people say are overly idealistic and impossible in teaching these days."

Regarding future goals, Mr. Sweeney is looking forward to teaching Shakespeare to his students in the spring. "Teaching a text like *Twelfth Night* is something we couldn't do [in middle school]. It will be nice to have that opportunity. It's refreshing for me to teach great literature."

That's not to say that he wouldn't change a thing about the curriculum: "One thing I would say is that the curriculum seems male-centric. If I had the option, I would choose to look at some women writers who've written on the theme that unites E3 and E4," he said.

Mr. Sweeney shared his thoughts on his new teaching career. "I always wanted to teach English literature. I always liked that in high school." Before he started teaching, Mr. Sweeney was uncertain of where he would begin his career. "I didn't know if I wanted to teach high school or college. I felt like I'd rather teach at a high school level because of the student-teacher interaction. Now, I'm finally getting to experience that."

Although Mr. Sweeney has become familiar with the school and its many quirks, he still has a couple of challenges ahead of him. With a newborn baby at home, Mr. Sweeney has more than just school responsibilities on his shoulders. "Starting at a new place with a new baby is exciting, but if I ever look tired, that may have something to do with it."

English Teacher Brian Sweeney may have joined the Townsend Harris community a little over a month ago, but he has already grown accustomed to the fast-paced life of a Harrisite.

Mr. Sweeney is not an inexperienced instructor. He earned a Masters Degree in literature from the University of Chicago and then taught English at Louis Pasteur Middle School 67 in Little Neck.

Jason Mills undertakes presidential duties

by John Indergaard

Senior Jason Mills is President of the Student Union this school year.

“The title of SU president means a lot to me, and I try very seriously to execute the job with the utmost care and dedication,” said Jason Mills. “The SU president has the responsibility to make Townsend feel like more than just a school in Queens, with smart kids. My main goal is to re-vamp school spirit and morale by pushing in-school and after-school events, among other things.”

The Student Union, made up of the SU Board and Senate, plans most of the events in Townsend Harris and allocates funds to different clubs. In addition, it holds monthly consultative council meetings. These meetings are an opportunity to report policy concerns and new ideas to the principal and administrative staff. Jason is most passionate about this aspect of the presidency.

“This year, I want to make the Student Union come back to the forefront. We are working on a Student Union website, which will be orchestrated by the brilliant Nabil Khatri. I also want to reinvent the SU store, so that it can be more profitable. In response to suggestions from past years, I will try to move the Festival of Nations to Colden auditorium or make it a two night event. There are also smaller ideas I’d like to implement, such as Student Teach

Days, in which seniors get to teach underclassmen classes for a day. I also want to re-design our talent show this year. I want a show where the whole school participates and the students can see all the talent that is here in Townsend. We are planning to partner with Feed the Children to sponsor the show this year.”

Jason plans to address all of the concerns of the student body. “I’ve heard complaints about the lack of a senior lounge and I’ve heard people ask for a more lenient dress code. There’s a plethora of things people want me to do, and I’ll do my best to work on them.”

He continued, “I really want to make the student voice heard, and I want people to feel the workings of the SU. A good president is someone who is visible, respected, generally competent, and most importantly, a listener.”



President Jason Mills and Vice President Mohd Sakib.

Photo by Vanesa Martinez

Mohd Sakib takes up V.P. responsibilities

by Ella Leviyeva

Senior Mohd Sakib takes on the position of Student Union Vice President following his election last spring.

“It is my duty to help the SU Board in organizing school events and activities for this school year as well as ensuring

a cohesive and joyful atmosphere for both students and faculty.”

Mohd continued, “It is my responsibility to conduct Senate meetings with the SU President and serve as the SU liaison to the mentoring program. In the event of the SU President being absent, I will act as the interim President and preside over any SU event or task. With the rest of the SU Board, I also create agendas for Leadership Class activities and discuss new innovative ideas with which we can improve our school.”

Following Mohd’s previous po-

sition as junior BSAC, this is his second year on the SU board.

With this new title as vice president, Mohd has high hopes for the school year. “For this upcoming school year, I plan to help create fundraisers, revamp the SU Store, and address any student concerns and issues that may arise. I want to act as one of the many voices that students have in this school so that their opinions can be accounted for when the SU Board has its discussions. My primary goal is to manage organized activities throughout the school year that would interest students and help them enjoy their time here at Townsend Harris.”

Mohd said, “This great position functions as a chance for me to become a link between the student population and the SU Board and to help enhance this already wonderful community. Cultivating my interests and the enriching experiences that I had while being on the board last year as the Junior Student Representative of the SLT, I can now be even more involved in student affairs. This position is a very special opportunity for me because I like to engage with my peers. I like to hear their thoughts and concerns about school-related occasions and regulations. Discussing school matters with friends and staff makes this position an enjoyable part of in my high school career and makes me realize that I must also be a role model in our affairs.”

Secretary Dewan Ahmed describes his position

By Constantine Bournias

Dewan Ahmed, senior, will be busy putting his note-taking skills to good use throughout this school year. As the new Student Union Secretary, Dewan is now the SU’s official record keeper.

The SU Secretary position entails a great deal of leadership, organization, timeliness, and commitment. Dewan is responsible for taking notes at all meetings and making sure the information is organized and accessible. He must also be capable of answering any questions about past meetings and discussions. As such, Dewan is expected to attend every meeting.

Explaining his role in the SU, Dewan emphasizes how important organization and thoroughness are to completing his tasks. “Being secretary is like going to work,” he said. “I have to go to all the meetings, be on time, and finish all my tasks. My main focus is taking notes on the important information discussed.” Still, it’s not all business: “I enjoy getting to see all the staff members in a

new environment, and I like seeing how we all interact with each other.”

Dewan feels that his past experiences qualify him for the SU Board. “I’ve always been a good listener, and find it easy to focus in on something or someone,” he said. “I want to help the school as much as possible and am ready to face all the challenges. If any changes need to be made to the school or SU board, we’ll make them as one group.”



Treasurer Dewan Ahmed.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

Harry Petsios manages as new SU treasurer

by Magdalena Grabos



Secretary Harry Petsios.

photo by Vanesa Martinez

Harry Petsios, sophomore, holds the position of Treasurer on the 2012-2013 Executive Board.

Harry originally sought the position of Freshman- Sophomore Class President, but when he lost the primary elections he decided to seek the position of Treasurer instead.

He explained, “I decided to run for a position because I think that the voice of the students is one of the most important parts of any school community and I want to help channel that voice to the leadership of the school.”

The responsibilities of the Treasurer include running the budget meetings and coordinating with clubs, as well as helping to organize the

winter carnival, a fundraiser for school clubs and teams.

Harry said, “Personally, I enjoy the position and I enjoy working with the rest of the SU Board. Overall, I look forward to serving the school and the SU Board as Treasurer this year.”

Watch or Avoid? A Guide to the TV shows of Fall 2012

by Joanna Wong

With so many new television programs, it's hard to know which shows are worth giving a chance. If you find yourself wondering "Does that show deserve the time I normally set aside for homework and sleep?" then this Fall Television Guide should do the trick.

Five New Fall Shows You Need To Start Watching

Elementary (Thursdays, 10-11 PM, CBS)

After the incredible success of BBC's *Sherlock*, it's America's turn to have a go with the Baker Street detective and his trusty sidekick. This modern remake of the classic story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle follows a new Sherlock Holmes (Jonny Lee Miller) as he heads back into the workforce of New York City following a stint in rehab. In this version, the former consultant for Scotland Yard is accompanied by a female Watson (Lucy Liu), who has been hired by Holmes's father to keep him sober. With the critics raving, don't miss out on what's likely to be one of the most watched television programs this fall.

Revolution (Mondays, 10-11 PM, ABC)

In a post-apocalyptic future where an unknown catastrophe has disabled all forms of technology, Charlie Matheson (Tracey Spiridakos) is struggling to survive in a world without social order. But after militia boss Tom Neville (Giancarlo Esposito) kidnaps Charlie's brother and kills her father (who might have known how to return energy to the world), Charlie searches for help through her Uncle Miles (Billy Burke). Accompanied by her own group of fighters, Charlie sets off to find her brother and learn more about the possibility of rejuvenating a crumbling society. Described as a twist on the hit show *Game of Thrones* and produced by science-fiction television guru J.J. Abrams, the show definitely promises to pack a punch.

Go On (Tuesdays, 9-9:30 PM, NBC)

When Ryan King (Matthew Perry) is forced to

attend a support group to cope with the death of his late wife, he's hardly expecting to find solace from the oddly dysfunctional attendees of his therapy sessions. After taking part in a game of "Who's Got The Best Sob Story?" and realizing that he does need help moving on, Ryan heads down a road of recovery paved with interesting results and misadventures. Filled with an excellent cast (including *Everybody Hates Chris* alum Tyler James Williams), this fresh comedy brings its own unique sense of dark humor to the table. And if that doesn't get you to watch it... come on! This guy was Chandler Bing from *Friends*!

Arrow (Wednesdays, 8-9 PM, The CW)

Superhero stories always seem to follow a certain recipe: take one billionaire playboy, add a life-altering event that leaves him an orphan, simmer with a few years of training, and at the end of it all you have yourself a crime-fighting vigilante. Oliver Queen (Stephen Amell), otherwise known as Arrow, is no exception. After he is shipwrecked on a deserted island in an accident that kills his father, the presumed-dead Oliver / Arrow returns to Starling City equipped with archery skills and a hunger for justice in his crime-ridden town. With advanced praise from Comic Con pre-screens stacking up, this *Smallville* spinoff just might be here to stay. Since this is the only superhero show on television, fans of the genre should have plenty of reasons to watch.

Last Resort (Thursdays, 8-9 PM, ABC)

If you were ordered to do something that just didn't seem right, would you follow through? That's the question Captain Marcus Chaplin (Andre Braugher) is forced to answer when his submarine is ordered to fire nuclear weapons at Pakistan. Suspicious of these "special orders," Chaplin and his executive officer (Scott Speedman) refuse to follow them, leading to an attack on their submarine. Now declared enemies of their home country and stranded on a foreign island, the submarine's crew decides to retaliate and

declare themselves the smallest nuclear nation in the world. The series is set to be told through different points of view simultaneously. We see the perspectives on the strange island the crew calls home, learn about the possibly corrupt White House, and meet the crew's family members who struggle to find the truth. The show, said to be the next *Lost*, definitely has potential, but could those shoes be too big to fill? Only time – and critical reviews – will tell.

Three New Shows Worth Giving a Try

Nashville (Wednesdays, 10-11 PM, ABC)

An aging country music icon (Connie Britton) is assigned to tour the country with a fresh pop starlet in an attempt to jumpstart her career. However, the backstabbing up-and-comer (Hayden Penettiere) has her own agenda: she plans on only one of the singers coming out on top.

The Mindy Project (Tuesdays, 9:30-10 PM, Fox)

A quirky OB/GYN physician (Mindy Kaling) tries to find a balance between her successful work life and her awkward personal life.

666 Park Avenue (Sundays, 10-11 PM, ABC)

A young couple (Dave Annable and Rachel Taylor) takes over a creepy Manhattan apartment building called The Drake, and they slowly begin discovering why residents seem to always move in but never move out.

One Show To Avoid Completely

The Mob Doctor

A surgeon from Chicago owes something to the Mob, so to pay her debt, she must moonlight as a Mob Doctor! The reviews of this show have been scathing. Though I'd also have recommended you avoid the show *Made in Jersey*, it was canceled before this article could go to print! Expect a similar fate for *Mob Doctor*.

New principal arrives for new school year

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collaboration with the teaching staff. I just want to make sure Townsend Harris remains the best school in New York City. I want to make sure the school survives any budget cuts that may impact our school," he said.

Mr. Barbetta has a few goals for the school year, mainly to focus on technology and to reinforce the new Common Core Standards. "The Common Core Standards are a new set of national standards involving writing, listening, reading, and speaking. We already comply with the standards; we just want to prepare for the potential changes in Regents exams coming in the next two years. The AP's will be working with the teachers and students, so there will be some different activities but not a dramatic change from what we do already here at Townsend Harris."

"I'm just very excited to be here, and grateful for the opportunity to be with such wonderful students and staff," said Mr. Barbetta.

He added, "You only get one high school experience. I want to make sure it's the best experience possible [for the students]."

SING production kicks off

by Fran Horowitz

Every school year begins with excitement over a new SING production.

SING gives each grade the opportunity to compete against each other and display the many talents of Townsend Harris students.

Keeping with last year's change, SING 2012 will be freshmen and juniors (Freshiors) against sophomores and seniors (Semores).

The junior and senior directors receive a first and last line to work with and must create a script around them, incorporating dancing, singing and acting. This year's first line is: "How did your eye appointment go?" The last line is: "That's not what your brother said."

Senior and co-director Ella Leviyeva said, "Just prepare yourselves for an unusual journey through the world of Costco."

Junior and co-director Nathaniel Chang said to expect "a lot of scene changes, some Justin Bieber, a capella, and a very funny show."

Senior co-director Catherine Moskos said, "Be prepared to see SING raised to a higher level; wander through Costco and be amazed."

"It's exciting to get new people to work with," said junior co-director, Anna St. Clair, "Our grade has never directed before and it's a

new challenge to all of us, let alone to Niel and me. The Semores are going to be tough competition but we're confident in our ability to put on a great show.

Nathaniel said, "Being a director is definitely different compared to my last two years participating in SING. There are a lot more responsibilities and the relationship with my friends is different this year because of the leadership role."

Catherine said, "It's my second year being a director and I really wanted to work with our talented cast. The juniors and freshmen are really good but we're much more organized. We really just want two great performances."

"It's my first year as director and my third year in SING," said Ella. "I'm really excited to work with Catherine and Gaby, no matter what the outcome is."

Third senior co-director Gabriella Niyazov said, "This is my first time as director and I'm really excited about it. It's a new experience for me but I think that Catherine, Ella, and I make a good team and can take on the challenge. We have a lot of great talent this year in the cast and we are looking forward to putting on a remarkable show."

Junior Olivia McFadden tops PSAL charts in Queens

by Andrew Eichenholz

One Townsend Harris star striker takes great joy in playing the game of soccer with her Lady Hawks, dominating her division with her skill and leadership along the way.

Junior Olivia McFadden has blown away the Queens-V division of the PSAL, earning a place on top of both the goals scored and total points lists. Olivia currently ranks within the top five citywide in goals scored and ranks as the most deadly junior striker in the city.

Also a member of the soccer club, Olivia plays non-school related soccer for Blau Weiss Gottschee, in what she says is a different atmosphere. Discussing the differences, Olivia said, “[In] school soccer you see your teammates every single day of the week and you get really close to them off the field.” On creating relationships with both teammates and classmates, Olivia said, “I think that translates on the field when we play, and makes it a lot more fun. I’d say the biggest difference between the two [teams] is the competition and style of play.”

Noticing the more relaxed atmosphere of the Townsend Harris Girls Varsity Team, the striker said, “My club team is very competitive and tends to constrict players based on the position they play, whereas with high

school soccer there’s more freedom to change my position or style of play and just have fun. It’s still competitive, but just a lot less serious, which makes it more enjoyable.”

“Not only are sports time consuming but they

physically tire you as well. It can be a struggle managing the workload at times, but I also find it eliminates time that I might find myself procrastinating, so that’s a plus. It definitely can be extremely stressful some nights, but I just learn to manage my time to the

best of my ability.” When asked if being on the Townsend Harris squad in addition to Gottschee is worth the time crunch, Olivia responded, “In the end, the few stressful nights are a small price to pay for the enjoyment I get out of soccer.”

Olivia leaves a mark not only in the back of the opponent’s net, but also on her fellow Hawks. Senior captain Bashe Miller said, “Olivia is a very talented player, and a great addition to the team both on and off the field. Her passion, energy, commitment, and dedication are great qualities that any athlete should behold. We love having her on the team not only for leading our team to victory, but also as an example for upcoming athletes to follow. She is a great friend as well as a great captain.”

For her contributions both on the field and on the bench, Olivia McFadden is female Student Athlete of the Month.



Junior Olivia McFadden taking on a Bryant defender.

photo by Paula Fraczek

Senior Oleksandr Boychuk scores his way to the top

by Dimitri Theofanis

Senior Oleksandr (Alex) Boychuk may be a rookie to the Boys’ Varsity Soccer team, but his hustle throughout the season has made him one of the most valuable players on the Hawks.

“The first game of the season was the first time I played organized soccer,” said Alex. Though he had no experience with organized soccer when he joined the team during the summer, he had played the sport with friends and family recreationally.

On September 14, the Hawks faced the High School for Arts and Business at Kissena Corridor Park. The Hawks conceded the first goal and were down for almost the entire game. With the game coming down to the wire, Alex dribbled down the right side of the field and shot it from outside of the box. The goalkeeper back-stepped and tried to get back on his line, but the ball soared over him and the game finished as a 1-1 tie.

“When I scored the equalizer against Arts and Business in the last five minutes of the game, it felt like a buzzer-beater,” said Alex.

Alex switches between the positions of center-midfield and winger.

On September 23, the Hawks found themselves in a similar situation. This time they played Grover Cleveland at Francis Lewis High School, and a miscommunication in the backfield gave the Hawks another one goal deficit right after the half. The team fought back for the remaining thirty minutes of the game, but they struggled to find a goal. On the last play of the game, junior Daniel Yacar headed the ball to Alex right outside the 18-yard box, and after letting the ball bounce once, the senior volleyed it into the upper right corner of the net, once again giving Townsend Harris the tie in the last seconds of the match. “[The goal] just happened. The ball bounced from Daniel’s head right in front of me and I just kicked it. It just had a good feel to it.” The team celebrated ecstatically but still only left the match with one point.

“I never had a passion for soccer, but I was influenced by fellow classmates to join and I followed through,” said Alex on why he joined the soccer team in his senior year. When asked if he wished he had joined the team last year, he said yes,

Think you have what it takes to be Athlete of the Month? Contact us at thhsclassic@gmail.com

adding, “With the current progress, it makes me feel as if I could have helped the team out much more.”

The Hawks have had a rough first half of the season, finishing seven games with a record of 1-4-2. “We weren’t familiar with each other and we didn’t know what we were capable of. The first win against Richmond Hill felt like something that should have come much earlier in the season,” said Alex.

On September 19, the Hawks played Franklin K. Lane at Lane, and after a long eighty minutes of regular time and ten minutes of extra time with the golden goal rule in effect, the team lost in the last minutes of overtime. “After putting in all that effort the whole game and being up 2-1 at one point, it was devastating to watch the ball go in our net,” said Alex.

Alex also scored a goal in the 3-2 loss against Franklin K. Lane on October 11.

For his performance on the pitch, Alex Boychuk is male Student Athlete of the Month.



Senior Alex Boychuk before his last home game.

photo by Dimitri Theofanis