



# BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

April 2022



## Croft's Corner

The **Creative Writing and Spoken Word Clubs** are the featured readers for the Haverhill River Bards Spring Reading Series on Friday, May 6th at the HC Media building. Admission is free.

Former history teacher and Assistant Principal Shaun Ashworth was put on paid administrative leave on March 21 due to insubordination. No further information is available to the public at this time.

**Wrestler Brent Nicolosi**, a sophomore at HHS, has been awarded the prestigious accolade of being named an All-American. He is the first Haverhill athlete to be named an All-American since two other wrestlers were in 2011.

**Coffee House** made its return on March 16, featuring wonderful spoken word and musical performances. Key acts included a song from junior Marc Ghen and an artistic public service announcement about the need for kindness toward service workers from crowd favorite Sheeba Nabiryo. All proceeds from the night went towards relief efforts for Ukrainian refugees.

HHS sophomores took the MCAS on March 22-23. All other students had a late start, with the first bell ringing at 10:40 a.m. instead of the usual 7:25 a.m. However, all advanced placement students were still required to attend their AP classes during A, B, C, D, and J blocks.

The **Drama Club** had a busy month. They performed their musical rendition of "The Wizard of Oz" to sold out crowds Thursday, April 7- Saturday, April 9. Their participation in the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Competition also went incredibly well, their strong performance advanced the troupe to the regional competition on April 2 at North Reading High School.

**Model UN** went to New York City to compete in the annual Model UN competition. Cole Simmons was named plenary speaker and Ambriel Mayhew and Hailey Prunier were honored with the third place prize in the committee.

The **student-faculty basketball game** made a triumphant return after a ten-year hiatus. There was one non-competitive, friendly game and then another no-holds-barred game for bragging rights. Students won the non-competitive game, but the faculty came out victorious in the end due to the great Mr. Souleymane Wane, who also played center for the NCAA National Champion UCONN Huskies in 1999.

The **Haverhill MC-JROTC** marched in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Boston on Saturday, March 19, and did a wonderful job representing the Hillies back home. They also went to a PT competition in New York City and placed third.

## 'Students have been taking over the school'

### School Committee holds emergency meeting to address cafeteria fight

By Elle Palumbo

HAVERHILL—The community is seeking answers after a fight in the Haverhill High School cafeteria once again made headlines on major local news outlets.

Haverhill High School Principal Jason Meland faced the School Committee at an emergency meeting on April 4. The meeting was called after a fight broke out between two girls on March 31. A knife was found at the scene of the fight and a student was arrested. Officials said the knife was not used in the

fight.

The meeting began with Haverhill High students, including senior Ruby Kimball, speaking on the conditions at the high school and their own personal experience.

"Students who are constantly doing the wrong thing are being catered to, and they have no real consequences for their actions," Kimball said at the meeting. "Our principal has been soft, and students have been taking over the school."

Many students have expressed their distaste on

students roaming the hallways and causing a disturbance while learning.

Parents and other members of the community also spoke during the meeting, including one parent, Brittany Quintana, who expressed her concern with the safety of her son, a freshman at Haverhill High.

"This school has not shown the same effort as surrounding schools, and because of the lack of effort put in by our community, our children are suffering,"

Quintana said. "There is absolutely no reason knives should be getting into our schools."

Superintendent Margaret Marotta, who has recently moved her office to Haverhill High School to help with the ongoing discipline issues there, gave a speech addressing concerns from the community, including a staff and security guard shortage, students wandering the hallways, consequences for students who break rules, and excessive phone usage during school hours.

Dr. Marotta, when asked about students wandering the halls, explained the school's policy since the most recent fight in the cafeteria.

"Students who have been wandering the building over the last few days have been sent home," she said. "We offer to walk them back to class; if they refuse to go back to class, we walk them to an area, contact their parents, and send them home."

Meland was then called to the podium, and was asked to explain con-

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## Marotta moves in



Recently relocated members from central office working hard in their new suite at the high school.

## Superintendent relocates to high school to restore order

By Shey Rodriguez

HAVERHILL—After another bout of bad press at Haverhill High School earlier this month, Dr. Margaret Marotta, the superintendent of Haverhill Public Schools, made the decision to move her office, along with nearly a dozen co-workers, into the high school.

According to Marotta, the decision wasn't the result of a single incident but more like the final straw after a long school year consisting of regular violence, ludicrous behavior, staffing shortages, and unexpected turnover in the administra-

tion. "I knew things weren't going well, but also that it was only going to get worse with the spring, so I decided there was no better time than now," Marotta explained.

When asked what other issues led to the move she stated, "I didn't know any of the issues in the school, which is why I decided to come down here. The best way to find out is by talking to teachers, students, and parents."

Marotta has been dedicating much of her time speaking to these groups

and discovering an underlying issue all stakeholders have in common: feeling unsupported.

"I have a lot of parents saying they want to feel more supportive," Marotta said, "and I have students saying that their support systems aren't working."

Marotta is currently designing a plan to reverse this trend and provide all people in the Haverhill community the support they need to succeed and feel confident in the school district.

Marotta has lofty goals with her relocation, her primary objective being

to bring Haverhill High School back to its former glory. "But first," she said, "students need more structure and new routines. When students have a routine it is easier for them to follow rules," which she plans to make happen in two ways: discipline and fun.

In terms of enforcing and cultivating discipline, Marotta laid out several key components: enforcing hallway passes, increasing staff presence in the hallways, and, if needed, send-

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## Persistence pays off

### Senior Bryce Peterson forces action on potential health hazard

By Lauren Avandi

HAVERHILL—Every year teachers stress the importance of persistence, both in the classroom and in life, and it's a good thing students like Bryce Peterson have been paying attention.

Back on January 18, Haverhill High School called a two-hour delay due to a pipe bursting and flooding the C wing. The facilities staff, along with volunteers from JROTC and other faculty, quickly set to work and repaired the pipe and addressed the initial damage, allowing students to return to school by 9:30 a.m. However, as is often the case with water damage, unforeseen complications lie in wait.

Bryce Peterson, a Na-

val Academy prospect and dedicated member of the JROTC program, noticed some issues with the tilting in the C wing, where JROTC and Special Education classes are held.

"About a week or so after the flood," Peterson explained, "I began getting concerned about the situation when I saw tiles coming up on the floor."

Considering that the high school was built nearly 60 years ago, Peterson suspected these tiles may contain a dangerous material: asbestos.

Peterson has always prided himself on being active in his community and felt an obligation to follow up on the situation.

"I felt concerned that the fellow students and colleagues were at risk," said Peterson, "and it was in my own as well as my peers' best interest to continue looking into the situation to make sure Haverhill High is a safe environment."

Before determining it was necessary to bring the issue to the administration's attention, Peterson did a lot of research on asbestos and the proper mitigation strategies should asbestos be discovered. He also dug into prior asbestos reports on the Haverhill Public Schools website, which raised some concerns.

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Senior Bryce Peterson

### Brown & Gold

The mission of the Brown & Gold is to provide the Haverhill High School community with accurate, socially significant, and thoughtful news. As an organization of dedicated, conscientious, and curious journalists, we honor and revere our responsibility to ensure that our readers are equipped with all of the necessary information to make the mature and deliberate decisions that are the foundation of rich and ethical lives.



## Spring ahead!

Summer internship class begins April 28

By Elle Palumbo

HAVERHILL— For students looking to boost their career prospects and bolster their resumes, the Haverhill High School Internship Program is here to help.

Classes for summer internships will begin on Thursday, April 28. The class meets every Thursday for six weeks from 2:15-5:00 in the Cisco Lab.

One of the many upcoming internships to pay attention to is one offered by Lawrence General Hospital for students interested in healthcare. One of the programs offered for juniors and seniors, Shadow-A-Professional, provides students the opportunity to shadow a health care professional and gain first-hand experience in a hospital.

Another opportunity available to all high school students is the Summer Student Volunteer Program at Lawrence General.

The Shadow-A-Professional Program runs from June 27 to July 1, 2022, and the Summer Student Volunteer Program is a six-week program that runs from July 11 to August 19, 2022.

Applications for this program can be found on the Lawrence General Hospital website and in the iSchool.

Applications for the Shadow-A-Professional Program are due Friday, May 13, and applications for the Summer Student Volunteer Program will be accepted until the end of April.

Haverhill High School also offers a wide variety of internship opportunities that run throughout the school year.

Senior Gray Bolduc-Nicoletti recently took part in the Stem Career Awareness Internship this year, and explained their experience in the program.

“It was great to work with a team of people

who actually wanted to be there,” Nicoletti said. “It was helpful to learn how to create lesson plans and gain more experience in what you want to do in the future.”

Lisa Hunt, who coordinates both the Internship and Career and Technical Education Programs, has worked at the high school since 2015. Hunt explained how the program helps students network and find a sense of purpose and motivation.

“The internship program really helps to make students a little more confident in the career path they are choosing. Being in a different environment, meeting new people, and stepping out of that school environment is also very beneficial” Hunt said. “It’s a great opportunity to spend time in the field and talk to professionals who can provide feedback on an education path, and see if it’s something that the student is really interested in.”

Student interns take part in hands-on learning in a professional setting and have worked at 92.5 The River, the Haverhill Mayor’s Office, the Haverhill Police Department, and Holy Family Hospital, among many other businesses and fields.

Internships are offered for students 16 and over, and run in the fall and spring semesters, as well as the summer. Internships are created based on the prospective career path of the interested student. Students who are interested in an internship may go to the Internship office at the iSchool.

Before starting their actual internships, students are required to take a six-week, 15-hour class to help them generate effective resumes and cover letters, refine their interviewing skills, and introduce workplace safety and labor laws.

## PERSISTENCE:

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“It concerned me that they were not taking some of the steps necessary to mitigate the situation,” Peterson said.

He then consulted with an Environmental Health and Safety Manager for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), who also happened to be his mother, and began to generate a plan of action.

“I sent an initial email to Mr. Meland, and I showed pictures and talked about my concerns, that I thought it was asbestos based on reports, and I didn’t think proper steps were being taken.”

Despite not receiving a response from Meland, Peterson continued his pursuit for answers. “For an entire week I got no response,” said Peterson, “so I forwarded that same email to Dr. Marotta, and she responded fairly quickly.”

In an email, from the district, Peterson was assured that the facilities staff at the school would be sweeping the floors every evening, and would be removing loose tile segments over February vacation.

Although that may have sounded like an acceptable plan, Peterson’s research paid off: he knew that wasn’t how to deal with disturbed asbestos.

“The only issue I had with that email,” Peterson

explained, “was—per the reports that I found, and after talking with professionals—if there is presumed asbestos material it is not supposed to be swept up, and it should be properly tested.”

This response furthered Peterson’s concern for his fellow students’ safety. “When asbestos is disturbed,” he explained, “it becomes airborne, so the best way to deal with it is to leave it be and have an asbestos abatement crew deal with it.”

Peterson’s goal finally came to fruition when his persistence resulted in an in-person meeting with Superintendent Marotta, Principal Meland, and a member of the facilities team. During the meeting, he showed them the destroyed tiles and the administration agreed that the problem needed to be dealt with swiftly.

When asked what he learned from this experience, Peterson said that what he took away is that if you are trying to deal with an issue, you “really need to be persistent.”

“If you really care enough and it comes down to safety, don’t doubt yourself and listen to your instincts.”

Brown & Gold reached out to the HHS administration for comment but did not receive a response.

## Mind the gap: diversifying Honors is no easy fix

Most college prep students are not prepared for jump to Honors

By Shey Rodriguez

Diversifying advanced classes at Haverhill High School should be the goal. But, it won’t just happen with the wave of a wand.

A story in a recent issue of Brown & Gold covered the initiative to diversify Honors and AP courses at the high school by increasing the number of students recommended for advanced coursework by teachers.

As a student of color and someone who took college prep (CP) classes and then moved up to Honors myself, I am quite familiar with what such a jump entails: a lot of hard work, drive, discipline, and emotional strength, which is what worries me about moving kids into advanced classes just to make those courses a more accurate reflection of our student body.

When I moved up to Honors classes, I found the expectations to be lofty and entirely foreign to me. Assignments were demanding and often confusing, and the work my peers produced seemed impossible to create myself. I had to confront and overcome the fact that I lacked prior knowledge and necessary skills, some as simple as properly formatting an essay, others as complex as analyzing canonical literature.

Although my learning curve was steep, I dedicated myself to getting

up to speed and eventually found myself on equal footing with the other kids in my classes and enjoyed the sense of pride that came with finding that I was, in fact, in the right place. But this issue of lacking not only foundational skills and prior knowledge but, most especially, productive work habits is common among CP students, even for the ones who excel at the college prep level.

In my experience, both being in college prep classes and from observing several of them recently, there is a clear gap between CP and Honors when it comes to work habits.

I was informed by every teacher I interviewed that the majority of the students were failing. This wasn’t surprising when observing students spending the class on their phones or daydreaming instead of engaging with the lesson. They actively ignore anything academic, whether it is the lesson itself, note-taking, or in-class assignments. The lack of independent work was a prominent issue among all classes, as students didn’t complete assignments on their own and often needed a teacher’s assistance to comprehend the task at hand.

But the lack of motivation was most disheartening. Only a handful of

students were motivated to pass the class, while the remaining students weren’t motivated to do a single assignment. I regularly encountered students who didn’t fear re-taking the class or repeating the grade.

An essential issue is that students don’t see the connection between the work they are doing and how it applies to their lives. The academic work they’re assigned is perceived as useless. Furthermore, many times, if they do complete the work, they often do it just to graduate or for the teacher’s approval, not connecting the work being assigned as something that will develop relevant skills for their future. This perception is self-defeating because it leads to perpetual failure, no matter the task or challenge.

Another issue the administration is ignoring is the large academic difference not just inside but especially outside the classroom. An Honors student requires skills such as time management, proper study habits, and note-taking to pass. Unfortunately, CP students often don’t have these skills for a variety of reasons, the main one being that their previous classes were too lax.

CP classes tend to have lighter workloads and unenforced deadlines, not because teachers don’t

want to impose them but because when they are imposed the failure rates are sky high. This is the complete opposite of Honors classes, which pride themselves on their heavier workloads and stricter deadlines, as that is what will be expected from most students when they head off to college.

Placing CP students in Honors classes solely for “equity” is essentially throwing students out of a plane without a parachute. It disrupts the learning of regular Honors students and has the potential to compromise many students’ well-being, GPA, and confidence.

Injecting already large and watered-down Honors classes with poorly prepared students will force teachers to do what has happened in CP classes: decrease the workload and rigor. Thus, it would remove the purpose of being in an Honors class in the first place, which is to be challenged and to engage with the material on a deeper level.

Based on my own experience, bridging the gap is possible for many CP students. The work to make this happen isn’t easy, and I don’t have the perfect proposal, including how to address the lack of motivation. However, what I do know is that it requires more than just suddenly pushing students into the deep end.

## Credit recovery efforts ramp up at HHS

By Shey Rodriguez

HAVERHILL—The upcoming April vacation will not be much of a vacation for Hillies at risk of failing, but it should still feel like quite the break.

According to Principal Jason Meland, all students who attend the “April Vacation Academy” will have 10 points added to their final grade for the year. In other words, if a student who attends the “April Vacation Academy” has a 52 at the end of term four, that grade

will be increased to a 62, which is a passing grade.

To receive the 10 points, students must be present for the entirety of the 16 hours and complete all of their work.

The “April Vacation Academy” is an intervention to address abnormally high failure rates at the high school. The program is aimed at students whose cumulative average is lower than the 60 points required to pass.

Students enrolled in

the academy are recommended by teachers and ultimately admitted by Assistant Principal Victoria Lu.

The program is aimed at students whose grades are below 60 but close enough to that threshold for them to have a chance to pass their courses and/or graduate should they have a strong fourth term.

Due to staffing shortages, space was limited for February’s academy, but, according to Superinten-

dent Margaret Marotta at a recent faculty meeting, there is space for all students who qualify for the program in April.

When the “Credit Recovery Academy” took place over February vacation, 90 students and seven teachers attended. The classes taught were English, math, history and science.

The Credit Recovery Academy will run from Tuesday, April 19-Friday, April 22, from 8:00-12:30.

## Use April vacation to start living again

Let’s really get back to normal this spring and, like, do stuff

By Alexa Gaiero

Spring is in the air, so go outside and soak up the warmer weather!

This April vacation, instead of spending the week sitting in your room on your cell phone (like most students will do) try something new! Here are some options to make the best of your break and the fine weather supposedly coming.

### Get Outside!

The weather is getting warmer, and more outdoor places are bound to be flooded with people. The Bradford Rail Trail is a great place to venture to if you want to get out of the house. Grab a few friends or family members and explore the versatile trail that allows for walking, running, biking and various benches to sit down and take in views of the Merrimack River.

If you are feeling really outdoorsy, check out the trails on Weir Hill located in North Andover. Weir Hill features two main courses you can hike, the Edgewood Farm Trail (0.75) or the Stevens Trail (0.71 miles). A couple of benches can be found near the top of one of the latest hills if you are following the Stevens Trail. Use these to set up a nice picnic with friends, or simply take in the view!

Take a drive down to the beautiful streets of downtown Newburyport and grab a bite to eat or check out the various shops. Drive even further down the road, and you

will end up at Plum Island. Plum Island is a beautiful, more secluded beach if that is something you prefer. Speaking of beaches, Hampton Beach currently offers free parking in these cooler months, so definitely take advantage!

### Start a Book (Maybe even outside)

Firstly, if you have been putting off reading that certain book for your English class, use this time wisely. If not, start a new book over your April vacation!

Check out Barnes and Nobles website, where they list their “Most Anticipated New Book Releases of April 2022.” Featured there is a wide range of books from a twist on your average coming-of-age story with “True Biz” by Sara Novic, or dive into some true crime with Paul Holes’ “Unmasked: My Life Solving America’s Cold Cases.”

If you are more into the classics, this is the perfect time to check one of those off your list. Barnes and Noble also features a section located upstairs that holds many hardcover classics. These include “Wuthering Heights,” “Les Misérables” and “Frankenstein.” Oh, and you can’t forget about all of Jane Austen’s famous works, such as “Pride and Prejudice,” “Emma,” “Mansfield Park” and “Sense and Sensibility.”

### Try a New Restaurant (with outdoor seating, perhaps?)

Downtown Haverhill is thriving with all of its recent additions of places to eat in the past few months. If you are really hungry, try a burger and gourmet milkshake from Stacks, or visit the Fat Greek and try one of their amazing gyros. Don’t forget a side of fries!

If you are in the mood for something on the healthier side, try a refreshing smoothie or a delicious acai bowl from A Sweet Affair.

If you and your friends have a sweet tooth, check out Crumbl Cookies located in Methuen at the loop. Crumbl Cookies is open late, until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays, so this is the perfect spot for late-night cravings.

Another place that should be added to the bucket list is the Tuscan Village located in Salem, N.H. Their variety of food places range from the Tuscan Market and Beach Plum to Chick Fil-A and Chipotle. There is truly something for everything.

### Take the Train!

Another fun activity to do with friends: taking the train into the city!

Check your local train station for the train schedule and the rest is pretty easy. A round trip is very cheap, ranging from \$19-\$24. If you bring your student ID, that will cut down the price even more!

When you arrive into

the city, there are plenty of things to do! Downtown Boston holds the popular hangout spot called the Boston Common. It is a great public gathering spot to picnic, sight-see, or perhaps you’ll want to take a walk down the Freedom Trail. The Freedom Trail connects 16 different historic sites, such as the U.S.S. Constitution, the Paul Revere House and the Bunker Hill Monument.

Also, don’t forget the Red Sox will have a home-stay during April break! If you type in this link (<https://www.mlb.com/redsox/tickets/specials/student9>), you could try to score some \$9 tickets for select games with your student ID (assuming you haven’t already lost your new student ID).

**If you insist on sitting in front of a screen, at least make it worthwhile:**

If you plan to spend your vacation inside and on the relaxing side, there’s absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Grab your favorite snacks and catch up on the latest television. Netflix is expecting tons of new shows in April such as “Trivia Quest,” based on the app Trivia Crack. New seasons of popular shows such as “Selling Sunset” and “Better Call Saul” are also coming out in April. If you are more interested in movies, an all-time classic, “The Blind Side,” starring Sandra Bullock is coming April 1.

*Walk With Purpose*



# There need to be consequences

By Nina Hamel, Student Editor

On March 31 at Haverhill High School, I was sitting in my calculus class when a fellow student looked at his phone and announced that someone was stabbed in the cafeteria.

At this point, it wasn't clear to me (or anyone else) what had actually happened. Rumors of different stories had spread their way throughout the school like wildfire and almost everyone was ill informed.

It's typical for situations like this to be difficult to deal with, but it's something that needs to be dealt with. It did happen, it's happened before, and now it's time to actually talk about it. What needs to be recognized is the fact that students are past being just scared about these incidents. I am angry, and I am sure many other students feel the same.

I am aggravated that the actions of a small number of students have led to the whole school being punished and mischaracterized. Whether it is the closure of bathrooms, walking through hallways with food thrown on the floor or the general feeling of being unsafe, the students who

come to school to learn and don't engage in negative behavior are ultimately being screwed over.

I am at a point where I'm relieved that I have less than two months left at the school, which is honestly a really sad thing to admit, especially since I've had a lot of great experiences here at the high school.

I can't personally explain why these things happen. Students who go to school and are respectful of the staff, their peers and the building should not have to comprehend the behavior of students who constantly engage in fights, use derogatory language towards teachers, etc.

A response that the school is likely to pursue (similar to what they have done in the past) is to have more open and honest conversations with these students in order to get to the root of the problem as well as Restorative Justice. Yes, communicating with students like this can make a difference, but this has been the strategy used all year and students keep acting out. I will say that Restorative Justice is a great

way to handle situations like this, however I do think that the school needs more training in order to be able to figure out a way to do it right in order to achieve the greatest impact

I'm not proposing that these conversations stop, but in order to handle these problems, it must go beyond that. In general, the school has done too little to deter disrespectful behavior.

From my perspective, it seems as if the school, instead of appropriately punishing negative behavior, responds by talking to the student, giving them a pat on the back, and giving no substantial punishment at all. In other cases, some behaviors, such as swearing or using inappropriate language towards staff and students, are seemingly ignored, as it's so common that no one says anything about it anymore.

Students who go to school and do the right thing have to witness a vicious cycle in which the students who do the wrong thing continuously get a pat on the back then go back to acting the way they did.

It's so incredibly im-

portant that the school put an authoritative foot down and make it clear that there are consequences for things such as fighting, purposely making the school a mess (using food from the cafeteria to throw it on the stairwell floors for instance), and using derogatory language towards teachers and to one another.

Students, teachers and other staff, such as custodians, are getting tired of suffering the consequences of others making the school an unenjoyable place to be. I will say that the school has made new efforts to bring more authority into the school. There is an increased presence of surveillance in the halls, as well as plans to bring in more security. Dr. Margaret Marotta has also moved her office into the building. These are all better ways of handling situations like this, but this should have been done earlier in the year. There are a lot of "what ifs" that can be thrown out there, but it should be recognized that the faster actions are taken, the better off we would be.

It's hard to imagine that students would be willing

to act out when they know that there is an authority figure watching at all times. No one wants school to turn into what feels like a prison, with constant surveillance, but what choice do they have when incidents like this keep happening?

The school will continue to not see change if the discipline remains toothless. I can't fully explain why the discipline is light, but I can venture to guess that it is related to keeping up the school's image. I truly believe that the school is trying to keep poor student behavior under control; however, I also believe a great deal of effort is going into finding ways to mislead the high school and Haverhill community at large about the extent of the unacceptable behavior taking place at the high school.

In addition to this, there has been a great lack of transparency about these situations between the school and the public. Communication has already proved to be a struggle during this school year. A few months ago, another

scenario occurred in which rumors spread of another weapon in the school, which was said to be a flashlight, but some remain cynical about that explanation.

Again, I understand that these situations are hard to handle, but if administrators and teachers cannot find stability in these situations with clear communication, then there is absolutely no way that students can.

In order to make clarity for both teachers and students, the administration needs to be more forward with the information they share with the school and the public to the extent the law allows.

Overall, I don't think it's impossible for the school to make better policies and decisions to turn the school around, but I am interested to see what their next steps are. On behalf of the student population, we look forward to seeing what is done to ensure a "safe and inclusive learning environment" that allows Haverhill's true potential to be realized.

## MAROTTA'S MOVE TO HIGH SCHOOL:

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ing uncooperative students home.

As for fun, Marotta intends to increase engaging school activities. "I want students to have something to look forward to," Marotta said. "One thing we're currently trying to do, as a start, is lowering the cost of prom tickets to make it something accessible to all students."

Increasing staffing is another major objective for Marotta's administration, which is one of the reasons she brought 10 employees from the central office with her.

"We had people in the central office who could help down here, so I brought them with me," she said. Among the 10 employees that made the

move with Marotta are Bonnie Antkowiak, Chief of Teaching, Learning, and Leading, and Dianne Connolly, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.

Marotta expects that her relocation will result in a more supportive and structured environment for the administration, teachers, and students and create an environment in which common problematic behaviors get resolved and become increasingly rare.

Haverhill High School has unfortunately earned a somewhat negative reputation throughout the Merrimack Valley and Massachusetts, but these regrettable incidents have only reached such a critical degree this school year. When asked what she

thinks contributed to these seemingly drastic changes in student behavior, Marotta made it very clear that no single person or policy was to blame.

"It was Covid," Marotta explained. "Students and staff were stuck at home for a school year and it changed people's behavior. Many students are also new to the environment and a lot of the administration was new too, so this also may have caused a bit of a disconnect."

The move itself has been positive for Marotta, who said, "I love it here, it is so much better than City Hall."

Marotta and her staff members moved in on April 1 and plan to stay for the rest of the school year.

## STUDENTS TAKING OVER SCHOOL:

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sequences for students causing trouble and new changes being implemented after the incident on March 31.

"I am appalled, both by the behavior of the students who were involved in the fight, and also by the behavior of many of the other students in the cafeteria, celebrating, glorifying, and cheering on this behavior," he said.

Meland plans to continue dealing with students wandering the halls throughout the rest of the school year, along with implementing consequences for students directly involved with the incident and students who were surrounding and filming the fight.

Other School Committee members, including

Paul Magliocchetti, Scott Wood, Maura Ryan-Ciar-diello and Richard Rosa, all spoke at the meeting, expressing their distaste for the fight, the behavior of the children in the cafeteria during the fight, along with the lack of consequences given by authority figures at the high school.

"I've heard from numerous students and teachers alike, and from students tonight, which is a sad day when students say that they don't feel safe at Haverhill High School, that is simply unacceptable," Wood said to Meland during the meeting.

"You stated tonight that we just started enforcing kids not roaming around the halls when they're supposed to be in class," he

added. "I don't understand why it took us until April to enforce that the kids belong in the class and not to walk around the halls."

Meland reiterated his commitment to improving the situation at the high school by emphasizing restorative practices and making sure misbehaving students face consequences.

"We do our best to ensure that the students are restoring any harm they have done to our community," he said. "Our staff do not come to work to be berated verbally, and deserve an apology from the student. To the greatest extent that we can, we are working with students and parents on consequences for misbehavior."

# Guidance's college road map needs expansion

By Sydney Keyes

For soon-to-be graduates wanting to fly the nest, most college options from Guidance are clipping their wings.

Most Haverhill High School graduates who attend college tend to go to the same ones: Endicott, Merrimack, Bridgewater, Suffolk, Umass Amherst and Lowell. Nothing is wrong with these schools. They are all great schools that have great programs and are close to home, but what if someone doesn't want that? What if someone wants more from college than just a diploma?

There was a time when students attended college not only for their education but for the experience of a different state or culture. College was more than just something on a resume that helped to get a

job. It was something that provided social experiences and networking.

Think of how movies portray the college experience. People hanging out in the quad, listening to music, meeting new people. Many find their lifetime best friends in college. Bridal parties, for example, are filled with bridesmaids and groomsmen that are all friends made in college. You should be proud to wear your college colors and logo. One's education should be their top priority in college, but there is so much more to it than just going to class and homework. However, these aspects don't appear to come into consideration with the way HHS guides our college aspirations.

At Haverhill High School, juniors meet with

their guidance counselors some time in the spring to prepare for their future plans. In my meeting, I was handed a list that consisted of Endicott, UMass-Amherst, Nichols and Western New England, along with other smaller schools within a two-hour drive. When I tried to explain that I wanted a bigger school out of New England, I felt slighted. I was not offered much information and needed to pursue my college search entirely on my own. Several of my peers who desire to relocate for college have also voiced that they successfully applied and got accepted to large schools out of New England without any help from their guidance counselor.

I understand that nearly 70 percent of students at-

tend a school within two hours from home and that the Guidance Department has to adapt to their audience. I also recognize the importance of funding college, as furthering one's education is far from cheap. However, there is a misconception that going to college close to home will save you more money.

Let's compare UMass-Amherst and the University of Louisville, for example. In-state tuition to UMass-Amherst averages out to be around \$31,000 before aid. Out-of-state tuition to the University of Louisville averages out to be around \$39,000 before aid. With aid at UMass-Amherst, I would be paying around \$24,000 a year, whereas at the University of Louisville right now, I am at \$17,000 a year.

Schools across the country want Massachusetts students, as Massachusetts has the highest math and reading test scores in the U.S. They will give Massachusetts students money if they need it. Attending a school in New England, where every other student is applying, makes you a dime a dozen.

You do have to include travel and other expenses that come with going to school out of state, but the experiences one will get is worth the slight difference in price, if there is any. Too many teenagers are dependent on their parents and they need to learn how to establish new relationships and become independent, which will help them develop their skills in the professional world.

In order to become

successful in any job, you have to be able to network. A degree is great, but it is what one does with that degree that will matter. Kids that are willing to go away for school may have more job opportunities in the long run. They aren't stuck competing with thousands of other Massachusetts college graduates for a job that will pay less than what they had to pay for one year of college.

College is all about learning who you are as a person, away from your parents. You're not just gaining an education going to school out of state, but you're learning independence, networking, new cultures and communities, and about who you are as a person.



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Learn more about the HHS Excel Club

Excel Clubs are groups of high school students dedicated to improving their schools, communities and country through volunteerism. Excel Clubs focus on Exchange's four programs of service: Americanism, youth activities, community service & the prevention of child abuse.

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## HHS Drama Club aces 'This Is A Test!' and puts on sold out weekend of 'The Wizard of Oz'

By Max Popoloski

### MA Educational Theater Guild Competition Regional Finalists

HHS proved to be one of the best at Drama Fest!

After preparing for months and diligently rehearsing, the Haverhill High Drama Club, with their show "This Is A Test," made history for HHS on March 20, being crowned one of the three winners in the Preliminary Round of the Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild Competition.

According to theater director, Mrs. Melissa Allen, who herself dedicated endless time and effort to guiding the young thespians, such an accomplishment took a lot of hard work and is worthy of praise.

"The group is very resilient," Mrs. Allen said. "I knew they would put on an amazing performance."

The cast and crew of "This Is A Test" by Stephen Gregg went to compete in the Preliminaries at Chelmsford High School, where they went against four other schools from around the state of Massachusetts.

With a cast and crew of 24 students led by Mrs. Allen and Lighting and Sound Design Coordinator Matthew Lima, these actors, actresses and techies all made the magic come to life onstage. Actors that were seen onstage included TJ Briggs, who played Alan; Lidiya Ryan, who played Lois Flan; Sophia Delle Chiaie, who played Teacher; and many more.

Students involved in the show were asked to reflect on their performance and the overall benefits of attending such a competition. Maya Bennett, who

plays Pat, said the competition was a great bonding experience.

"I feel closer with the cast mates, who were already really good friends, but having that special experience and coming out with a win was really great," she said. "I feel honored to be a part of something, because we did it together."

Mrs. Allen was also asked to reflect on her own experience at Drama Fest. She felt it was a great experience, even beyond the success in the competition.

"It was rewarding, and we loved getting to see the other shows that the other high schools performed," she said. "We know how to persevere through challenges, and this was proven successful."

The HHS Drama Club went on to attend the final Regionals Round of the competition at North Reading High School on April 2.

Although the Drama Club did not win the Regionals Round, they were satisfied with what they felt was successful performance and embraced the opportunity to meet fellow high school thespians from all around the state.

### 'The Wizard Of Oz' Wows

In addition to their success at Drama Fest, the HHS Drama Club brought the magical and whimsical world of Oz to life in their April performances of L. Frank Baum's "The Wizard of Oz".

Not only did the Scarecrow find his brain, the Tinman got his heart, the Lion obtained his courage, and Dorothy found her way home, but the cast and crew also found that they



TJ Briggs as the Cowardly Lion, Jaylene Viera as Dorothy, Max Popoloski as the Scarecrow, and Trey Lynch as the Tin Man

Photo Courtesy/ Marilyn Caradonna

had it within themselves to perform such a crowd pleasing and amazing performance for Haverhill High School and the community.

The high school students gained an amazing experience from being a part of such a thrilling show. Several of the cast and crew members shared their very unique experiences during and after the performance.

A sophomore student, Sara Tucker, who played several parts in the show such as an Apple Tree, Munchkin, Winkie, shared what she gained from being a part of the show.

Tucker said, "I gained the importance of teamwork and trust. Oz was such a teamwork-heavy show, and learning how

to navigate around that was extremely rewarding. Though they were long," Tucker added, "I'm also going to miss tech week rehearsals the most. Most of these days were long and tiring, but I still treasured every moment. Learning to value every minute with these people was really what made Oz special."

Jaylene Viera also shared reflections on her experience as the infamous Dorothy Gale.

"I gained a lot of confidence in the sense that I didn't have time to doubt my ability because it was such a large role. It really is eye opening how much influence we as entertainers have on our audience," Viera explained.

She also learned a lot

about appreciating hard work even in the process of doing it.

"I really learned to value the shows and moments with the people I love most," she said. "It truly has not hit yet that this is one of the last shows with the same cast I've known for three years, and it's daunting. I've really tried savoring this show and the moments I have with the people close to me."

One of the head stage managers for the show, junior Celia Schoenfeld, felt like it was a great experience. Schoenfeld raved, "I gained wonderful friends and strong relationships. I also got to work alongside one of my favorite people, Ms. [Sue] Blim, who taught me a lot about making costumes." Schoenfeld

took charge, becoming the most reliable person behind the scenes, preparing scene changes, set pieces, props, and several other things that make a show possible.

Directed by Mrs. Melissa Allen with Costume and Lighting Design by Matthew Lima, "The Wizard of Oz" was performed April 8-9 to sold out audiences.

Several actors and actresses that performed in the play were Jaylene Viera as Dorothy Gale, Sophia Delle Chiaie as Toto, Max Popoloski as Scarecrow, Trey Lynch as Tinman, TJ Briggs as the Cowardly Lion, Maya Bennett as Glinda, and Lidiya Ryan as the Wick-ed Witch.

## BOOK REVIEW: 'His Dark Materials Trilogy' by Philip Pullman

An engaging coming-of-age series that casts a critical lens on power structures via fantasy

By Cristopher Villaman

Philip Pullman's trilogy "His Dark Materials" is an amazing series that not only challenges both fictional and real world authorities but also explores themes of maturity and the challenges one will face when growing up.

While being open to younger audiences with the fantasy setting and quickly-maturing main characters, the intricate worldbuilding of the multiverse and subtlety of what's going on behind the plot is capable of grabbing the attention of even older readers.

Beginning with "The Golden Compass," Lyra Belacqua, along with her companion daemon Pantalaimon, listen in on a top secret meeting between the Magisterium and scholars of Oxford University. Lyra's uncle, Lord Asriel, reveals that an elementary particle called Dust is pouring out of a window in the North Pole. While unable to be passed through, what can

be seen on the other side is another universe. Upon being arrested for wishing to open this window, Lyra is given the Alethiometer, an instrument able to tell the future to find her way through the world and free Lord Asriel. The only thing in her way are the Gobblers, a mysterious group kidnapping children and supposedly separating them from their daemons in order to harness the power of Dust.

Though Lyra's world is almost the exact same as ours with a twist of fantasy, the intricate elements Pullman has implemented makes it feel like an entirely different world that is exhilarating to explore. Throughout her journey Lyra comes across the kingdom of talking bears clad in armor, clans of witches that become invisible by simply becoming less significant to notice, and also a prophecy that she must never know she is following. While the all-powerful Magisterium

will do anything to prevent this from happening, Lyra's natural ability to dodge and deceive every roadblock is an exhilarating pleasure to read. Her role as the free rebel who does what she wants is perfect when she follows Asriel, the brains behind this rebellion.

The second novel in the series, "The Subtle Knife," only raises the stakes by accelerating the plot on a multiversal level and introducing the other main character, Will Parry, a boy who will do anything to protect the ones he loves. Once his fate becomes intertwined with Lyra, they become the perfect pair that listens to absolutely no one and follows their own path. As it turns out, both of their goals will fulfill the prophecy and lead them straight back to Lord Asriel to defy the Magisterium. This universal constant of a church in question will do anything to destroy Dust and make sure Lyra

never makes The Choice that will change the world. All is the word of The Authority.

While Phillip Pullman is very vocal about his opinion on religion in interviews, the novels are very digestible and are not constantly shoving down the reader's throat that "religion is bad." Instead what Pullman does is express his views on oppressive authorities that use religion as a means to persecute others. His use of Christianity throughout the story is expertly used as a basis for blending with and modifying traditional fantasy elements, and a parallel to form the story of The Authority. Pullman says that "My novels are about killing God," which describes the destruction of an oppressive theocracy throughout the series. . . . But it may also happen in a literal sense.

With every novel, "His Dark Materials" expertly integrates more and more fantasy elements without

ever being too much to take in or losing what the series is at its core. What happens with many stories, no matter the genre, is that the sequel tries too hard to one-up the first installment. The introduction of Will, an incredibly human character that reflects on every one of his malicious actions, pairs perfectly with Lyra, the carefree girl that lies without a second thought. With the introduction of the multiverse that only focuses on three main universes, every world is presented with incredible depth without losing focus on what we already have. Though hopping through drastically different settings, they never feel too outlandish and remnants of the previous world always seep into the next. Will's pairing with Lyra is fantastic for both have their own drives and mentalities yet never clash and work amazingly together.

The final installment, "The Amber Spyglass," places all the cards on the table and the stakes could never be higher. By the end you'll come to realize that the whole series is about two children learning to mature by hopping through dimensions and destroying an oppressive theocracy by going straight to the source. As any teenager does. But Pullman's execution of this coming-of-age story is one of the most entertaining pieces of fiction I've ever read. Straying from typical fantasy settings of dragons and elemental magic, we instead get to witness angels, the underworld, and the many oddities in seemingly normal universes. Focusing on 13 year-olds makes the action and emotions much more intense rather than reading about adults who have already faced the weight of the world. Now don't forget, no crying until the end.

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