



# BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

December 2022



## Croft's Corner

A much belated congratulations to the **Tennis Team**, who won their Merrimack Valley Championship last spring after a dominant season.

The first **Coffee House** of the year is set to take place on Wednesday, December 7, from 7pm-9pm.

**Drama Club** will put on two one-act plays, "Men on Boats," and "Completely, Absolutely, Normal," on January 13 at 7pm and January 14 at 2pm & 7 pm in the high school auditorium. Admission is \$5 for students and seniors, \$10 general admission.

The **HHS Coat Drive** is accepting donations until December 9. Make sure to bring any coats, jackets, mittens, gloves, and scarves that are in good, wearable condition.

The **Haverhill High BIPOC Union** is putting on a presentation called "Stuck in the Streets: A Tale of Race and Wealth" on December 8 from 2:15pm-3:45pm in the Haverhill High Library pit.

**Hillie Student Council** announced our holiday spirit week for this year, the week of December 19-23. The themes include: pajama day on Monday, red for St. Jude on Tuesday, wacky/ mismatched Wednesday, ugly sweater Thursday, and winter white out on Friday

**AP Lit. and AP Lang. Mock Exams** will take place on Saturday, January 28 at 8 am. The location is still TBD.

**Advanced Placement Exam fees** were once again waived for all students.

A **Student Forum** will be held in the library on December 23 to discuss the climate at HHS.

The second of three **iReady Diagnostics** will take place this month. The English diagnostic will be administered December 12 & 13. The Math diagnostic will take place on December 15 & 16.

**Winter break** will run from December 23, 2022 to January 3, 2023.

The **Winter Sports** seasons are starting up. Good luck to all the athletes.

## Hillie AP scores outpace state

Despite lackluster MCAS, HHS students achieve high AP exam passing rate

By Grace Grauwiler and Kai-ri Bohanan

HAVERHILL— While some standardized testing suggests that Haverhill High School students are not making the grade, Advanced Placement exams are telling a different story.

Last year's MCAS, iReady, and AP scores are now out, with disappointing results in both the MCAS and iReady exams. More than 15 percent of students at Haverhill High School were not

meeting expectations on the English, Mathematics, or Science MCAS exams last year. iReady scores were even worse, with 60 percent of HHS students scoring at least one grade below their expected reading level.

However, there is a silver lining for the high school's AP students, a vast majority of whom passed with rates that exceeded the state, national, and global passing averages.

The AP Biology exam, for example, had a 92-percent passing rate last year at HHS, which was the second highest exam passing rate in the school and significantly higher than the state average of 74 percent and the national average of 68 percent.

When asked about the success on the AP Biology exam, Mary Johnston, who has been a teacher for 25 years and has been

teaching AP Bio for about eight years, emphasized the importance of building community within her AP classes.

"I believe my AP class has been successful because over the course of the year we become a united family sharing in our triumphs and failures," said Johnston. "Effort is everything. You have to put in the work, and when you do, you reap the benefits."

Johnston also pointed out that smaller classes allow her to spend more individual time with students and for students to create positive collaborative relationships with each other.

Haverhill High School students also outpaced both the state and nation on the AP Language and Composition exam.

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## Rowin'. Rowin'. Rowin' down the river.



The boys varsity 8-boat in spring 2022

## HHS Crew makes strides, novice team medals in recent regatta

By Avery Becker

HAVERHILL— With a commitment to team-building, Haverhill High School's Crew team is leaving some of the sport's more-established schools in its wake.

Unbeknownst to many, the high school has a crew team that rows each fall and spring on the Merrimack and participates in numerous regattas throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

And not only do they row, they medal.

For the first time in a couple years, Hillie Crew's novice boys

medaled in the fall season's final regatta in Lowell, taking the bronze ahead of formidable and far more established rowers from Boston Latin and Hingham. The boys varsity four boat took 4th, only 9 seconds off of 3rd, a likewise impressive feat.

The crew team has won a couple of medals in previous years, but their upward growth was seriously curbed by the outbreak of Covid-19. However, the past spring and fall 2022 seasons have been far more competitive, and far more prom-

ising, with seniors having been able to row together for a couple years and freshmen showing talent.

Senior Jesse Looney, on the boys varsity four boat, noted the cohesiveness that comes from rowing together for such a long time.

"They [the novices] will have the chance to row together all four years of high school [uninterrupted by Covid] and come together as a really strong boat if they keep working hard," he said.

Winning bronze is commendable in and of

itself, but the accomplishment becomes all the more remarkable when considering the upriver battle Haverhill Crew has had to fight since its first boats started racing in 2016.

For one, the sport itself requires a great deal in terms of logistics and resources, which any rower will tell you is entirely worth it, but rowers can be hard to come by in working-class old mill towns like Haverhill.

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## Season of giving alive and well at HHS

Students, staff donate time, food to host families for 5th annual Thanksgiving meal

By Maya Bennett



Student volunteers serve up a Thanksgiving feast.

HAVERHILL— The HHS cafeteria once again hosted the 2022 Thanksgiving Meal as many hungry students, their families, and other members of the community gathered to enjoy a festive, delicious dinner.

About 150 people attended the gathering this year, which consisted not only of an impressive Thanksgiving spread but also games, face painting, and the opportunity to make new friends and connect with old ones.

Former history and current health and wellness teacher Dawnmarie Paradis helped organize the event to provide a sense of tradition to a community that Paradis believes that most teachers have "an inner drive to try to make the world a better place" and that this celebration is just one step in the right direction.

"During Covid, we weren't able to have it in the cafeteria. So everybody was doing a lot of home deliveries which was a tremendous amount of work; a lot of logistics that had to go into it," she said.

Paradis went on to explain that the main-course dinner was donated by hardworking Haverhill High teachers and staff, who brought in turkeys, side dishes, desserts, drinks, and donated their time.

Tables were adorned with Thanksgiving-themed table cloths, plates, and napkins, coloring supplies for children, and even the walls held the fixings for "pin the hat on the turkey."

The food, of course, was the main event. Prepared by the high school's

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**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.

# THANKSGIVING:

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kitchen staff. Delectable options included turkey breasts and legs, mashed potatoes, squash, stuffing, cranberry sauce, gravy, pies, cookies, and hot chocolate, among other tasty treats. The food was served by student volunteers from the National Honors Society, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC), and the girls basketball team. William Lee, the president of National Honors Society, described the experience as "heartwarming," and said that he was overjoyed to be there to further ensure that "everyone has a good time." Another National Honors Society Member, Grace

Grauwiler, said "It was great to see the community gather together during this very festive time of year."

Many other students reported that the meal emitted "good vibes" as they volunteered their time and were allowed to join in the celebration by digging in the feast.

Paradis concluded by saying that, in the future, she hopes to organize even more fun activities, include more student leaders and volunteers, and to get the word out sooner in order to make certain that everyone is able to gobble up a hearty, wholesome meal.

# AP SCORES:

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More than 70 percent of AP Language and Composition students passed the exam last year, while the state and nation only had a 64-percent and 56-percent passing rate, respectively. Thessalea Churinske, the English Department Dean and the AP Language and Composition teacher, commented on the benefits of the AP program. "The AP classes here at Haverhill High School do a good job at preparing students for college," said Churinske, who also stated that she believes AP classes are an "intro to what a good college workload would be."

Similarly, the AP European History exam had a 66-percent passing rate last year, with a state average of 62 percent and a national average of 59

percent. HHS's AP Euro classes, which enrolled approximately 70 students this year, are almost completely taken by sophomores, as opposed to the school's other AP classes, which are mainly taken by juniors and seniors. For these reasons, the AP Euro exam is considered nationally to be one of the most challenging AP classes.

Marc Harvey, who has been teaching AP Euro for 24 years, said "[it] has been very rewarding when kids come to better understand the world in which we live from their study of history," although at times it's been challenging.

Harvey added: "The success of the AP course over the years is the students'."

# Making a Better Connection

Hillie Connectors rebooted, looking for candidates

By Abby Brown

Haverhill— For most students, coming to high school is a pretty steep learning curve. All of a sudden you have to find your classes on your own, hope you have the same lunch period as your friends, and make sure you are on track for getting all your credits.

After a brief hiatus, the Hillie Connectors are now back in the business of making that learning curve a little less steep.

The Hillie Connectors was started in 2019 by alumni Gabby Vargas and Rebecca Hamel. Their goal was to make sure freshmen are paired with upperclassmen who could serve as mentors during the nerve-wracking start of their high school careers.

"Every single freshman received a Hillie Connector, at least to the best of our abilities," Hamel said, explaining how she and Vargas operated the program. "It was one of those things where almost everyone got in [who applied to be a mentor], but you had to be passionate about Haverhill High."

There was also an emphasis on making the program available to as many students as possible, including multilingual students.

"One of the questions we had in the application when Hillie Connectors would first apply was if they were multilingual," Hamel said, noting they were given a list of students who were multilingual over the summer.

During the height of the Covid pandemic, the Hillie Connectors program was put on the back burner for a while given the uncertainty of remote and hybrid learning. Mrs. Samantha Aiello, an advisor to the club, said the club just had a hard time getting traction.

"I really just think it's because of Covid," she said. "It was hard to get the mentorship going when everyone

was hybrid and remote."

Now that society is getting back to normal, this club is hoping for another chance. Mrs. Aiello and Mr. Thomas Morris are the advisors for this club, while Sheeba Nabiryo, a senior, is the president, and Kyle Tarpay, also a senior, is the vice president of Hillie Connectors.

As the program currently operates, freshmen who are having a hard time adjusting to high school life are assigned to a Hillie Connector. These Hillie Connectors are able to have one-on-one meetings with them, give them tips, help them with their schedule, tutoring them in classes and more.

As they look to bring in more mentors, Hillie Connectors are simply looking for students who are ready to step outside of their comfort zone to help a fellow Hillie out, according to Mrs. Aiello.

"I think as long as you're outgoing and open to making a connection with the freshman," she said.

Since it is important for these underclassmen to feel comfortable around their mentors, being an enthusiastic person is an important part of this job.

Jaylene Viera, a senior at Haverhill High School, is a Hillie Connector and said she definitely feels like she fits the job description.

"I think I've already been the type of person that really tries to encourage freshmen to get out of their shells and join any club or group," she said. "So I think I'm already excited to help out more in ways that are more useful."

If you are a freshman and are feeling a bit anxious about the transition into high school, feel free to reach out to Mrs. Aiello, whose classroom is Room 205. She will help you to get set up with an upperclassman that will be perfect for you.



# CREW:

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Rowers on the boys novice 8-boat who won bronze in the Lowell regatta to end the fall season.

As Connor Hayden, veteran Latin and Classical teacher at HHS, pointed out, one of the hardest parts is getting people on board.

"Rowing is a hard sport, so it's easy not to do it if you've never done it before," Hayden said.

And with nearly every new member never having rowed before, that makes participation extremely limited.

While equipment and resources make a huge difference between the schools that win regattas and those that don't, Hayden explained that it is also cultural. "Some com-

munities just know what rowing is and rowing has always been there. Kids who would normally otherwise be decent football players and basketball players join the crew team and become very good rowers," Hayden said. "We have a huge population we're not accessing."

Schools that are traditionally associated with rowing, and pour their money and resources into it, such as Boston Latin and Wayland-Weston, have community understanding and community value associated with rowing. If Haverhill Crew wants to continue to im-

prove, they need to tap into a greater percentage of the community for support, participation, and awareness, not only within the larger population, but within their own.

"Throughout the season, we were able to build a great interpersonal relationship between everyone in the boat, which is often even more important than physical strength," said Lucien Pothier, a junior on the novice boat that took bronze.

While inter-boat competition and vying for seats is an essential part of the sport, the community that the crew team has

built directly contributes to their success and will lead to more participation if it continues.

Haverhill has the potential to put themselves on the map and to prove themselves in a sport dominated by primarily white and wealthy individuals. In order to do so, a community has to be formed and participation increased, which will help to foster a positive, ground-breaking tradition.

When asked how to increase interest in crew, Hayden asked: "How do we get people involved, motivated, and willing to take a risk and try something that's new?"

# iReady's value: targeting weaknesses, advancing students

Some HHS educators say diagnostic tool a great resource for identifying student needs

By Adam Zujewski

Haverhill— Despite reservations on the part of many students and some teachers, several educators say iReady is providing important information to support students.

Last month Brown & Gold published an editorial criticizing iReady, questioning the validity of the student data and its value as a learning tool. Student Council also recently voiced concerns in two meetings with representatives of the iReady team.

According to Student Council Secretary Keegan Wipff, many members of the student council were curious as to the purpose of iReady and why students had to take it.

"We really just wanted to meet with the person in charge of iReady and ask what the point is, and to find out what it's [iReady] doing and why it matters," Wipff said.

The person they spoke with was veteran educator Victoria Hernandez-Bailey, who recently assumed the role of Student Support Coordinator and iReady specialist. Bailey said she understands the students' perspective but suggested they may be overlooking the value of the diagnostic tool, along with useful data that pertains specifically to them.

"At the high school level I think there's a mindset that it just doesn't work, and my goal, especially this year and mov-

ing forward, is to change that mindset."

"One of the things I found out is that students at the high school don't know their data, they don't know their own results," Bailey said.

Bailey also highlighted that iReady is particularly useful for struggling students.

"It helps teachers place their students into small groups for intervention so they can really target their areas of weakness," said Bailey.

"When it comes to the high school it really helps to inform 9th and 10th grade teachers which students are multiple grade levels below so that they can be put into an intervention block," she added. "The freshman and sophomore teachers use the diagnostic results for those students, and they place them in the intervention groups so they can help them with their areas of need."

Although not without value, Bailey did point out that iReady has a much more indirect impact when it comes to its use in the 11th and 12th grades.

"At the 11th and 12th grade level it really just gives teachers information as to what their students strengths are so they can build on those and what they need to work on with the weaker skills or how they can challenge their students," she said.

According to Dan Tan-

guay, the Math Department Dean, the iReady data has been a useful tool for identifying students who have the potential to enroll in more advanced math courses.

"Using iReady data as one of the data points allowed us to nominate 22 students to be promoted from CP to Honors in Algebra 1 and Geometry," Tanguay said.

The Math Department is also using iReady as another resource to gauge whether or not a student should have the option to be placed on an accelerated pathway.

"Using iReady data as a data point, the teachers in the Math Department also chose 32 students to accelerate immediately from Geometry to Algebra 2 this year," said Tanguay. "And over a dozen have opted in after the decision was offered to the students and their families."

Despite the data offering some promising results, there are still some drawbacks to using iReady data. For example, not all students put in equal effort into the test, compromising the reliability of the data. This is one of the reasons why the Math Department is adamant about using multiple data points to look at student performance.

"It's hard to know how much of the data is accurate and reflective of true student performance," Tanguay explained.

"Some students take it seriously and some do not. That is why we use multiple data points to offer students a chance to be promoted or accelerated."

The iReady diagnostic tool was implemented in all schools in 2018, but Consentino Middle School had piloted iReady for two years prior before it was instituted district wide.

Established to be a research-based platform that can help teachers target student's weaknesses, iReady works in middle schools by creating a benchmark for class placement and providing teachers with data that they can use to target their student's weaknesses.

iReady is designed for grades K-8. This has led to some discrepancy as to how the test should actually be valued, but, according to Bailey, the major factor still interfering with iReady's full potential is earnest student participation.

"Having as many people as possible understand what iReady can do for them, I think that will change people's perspectives, students and teachers alike, and that's my goal," she said.

To further encourage student engagement in the learning tool, the iReady team plans to host a celebration before the winter break for students who demonstrate growth on the upcoming diagnostic.

# Not-So-Holiday Holiday Movies

As the holidays approach, consider venturing beyond the classics for your Christmas fix

By Meg Gardner

In today's society, movies and television are a huge part of our holiday traditions. However, a huge majority of these movies weren't intended to be a part of our holiday spirit. From the fight over whether or not "Die Hard" is a holiday movie to movies with arguably the most iconic holiday scenes, here is a must-watch list for the best unconventional holiday movies for this holiday season.

**Daddy's Home 2 (2017)**  
Starring Boston native, Mark Wahlberg and holiday movie icon, Will Ferrell, the story of the iconic co-parenting duo continues. This story follows the blended family's trip to celebrate the winter holidays. This sequel follows Mark Wahlberg's character, Rusty, in his journey of becoming a step-father this time. In addition, the movie focuses on the contrast between the father-son relationships between Rusty

and his dad, played by Mel Gibson and the one between Brad, played by Will Ferrell, and his father played by John Lithgow. The movie is a typical family-comedy with a holiday twist that features Band Aid's "Do They Know It's Christmas?"

**Little Women (2019)**  
Adapted from L.M. Alcott's classic novel, "Little Women" follows the life of the four March sisters in New England during the time of the Civil War. The sisters rely on each other throughout their journeys into womanhood. Greta Gerwig captures the beautiful cinematography of New England during the holiday season in this heartwarming movie starring Saoirse Ronan, Florence Pugh, and Timothy Chalamet.

**Karate Kid (1984)**  
This classic 80s film focuses around Danny LaRusso, played by Ralph Macchio

and his move to California, where he meets Mr. Miyagi, played by Pat Morita. Danny is convinced to enter the All-Valley tournament in December. The scenes leading up to the tournament are set during the holiday time where multiple scenes include classic holiday decorations. Also with the heartwarming ending of Danny LaRusso winning the tournament and defeating his bully, played by William Zabka, who could deny that this isn't a fantastic feel-good movie to watch during the holiday season?

**When Harry Met Sally (1989)**  
Nothing screams holiday time like Meg Ryan starring in a Nora Ephron film. This feel good film focuses around Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) and Harry Burns (Billy Crystal), frenemies, who travel to New York City together after college. The pair reunites multiple times throughout their adult

lives, but eventually become friends when they bond over going through break-ups. While the film is a comfort movie in general and focuses on the holidays in New York, the most important scene in the movie takes place on New Years Eve.

**Dead Poets Society (1989)**  
At a boarding school in the 1950s, "Dead Poets Society" tells the story of a group of young boys influenced by their teacher, Mr. Keats (Robin Williams) and his unusual teaching style. The boys create a renaissance for the school's secret Dead Poets Society to pursue a passion that wasn't celebrated by the parents or school administration. The story follows young men rebelling against the social standards and banding together throughout the rough times of high school, a truly emotional story that focuses on a late fall/early winter aesthetic.

# Getting to know the team

With a significant administrative shake up following a hectic year, Brown & Gold's Allisondra Phipps caught up with the "new" administration to share some insight into their goals, challenges, and backgrounds.



**Principal**  
Kevin Soraghan

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

"Interacting with the students in a positive manner, I know we've done a few good things over the year, we did the CTE field trip and we have the National Honor Society Induction tomorrow night... watching the Junior ROTC and the band and the chorus, just the positive interactions. Also being interviewed by students from the Brown & Gold."

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

"Probably the biggest

challenge so far is getting all students to appreciate the fact that they really need to be in class, they need to be here on time, and it comes with benefits, the face to face with their teachers, if they value their education. You know, I think they missed it with the pandemic. You know how much you missed being face to face with the teachers and just trying to get every student to appreciate that."

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

"As you know, I'm retired, I came out of retirement, so my goal, when I do leave, which won't be too far away, is to leave Haverhill High School in a spot where anyone coming in will be able to step in and make some continuity of programs or just the overall demeanor of the school that are put in place."



**Operations Consultant**  
Roland Boucher

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

"Although I've been retired for several years, I truly missed the daily contact with students and staff. Joining the HHS administrative team has allowed me to build new relationships and connect with some familiar faces from my previous work in the Haverhill Public Schools. I feel very fortunate to have been afforded this opportunity."

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

"The biggest challenge has been to quickly familiarize myself with how the school operates. A school this size has a variety of systems and protocols that keep things running smoothly each day. The learning curve has been

steep. But I am confident that our team will keep things running well and make improvements when needed."

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

"I am a lifelong Haverhill resident and a graduate of Haverhill High School, class of 1970. I was a classroom teacher for seven years. I've enjoyed a variety of leadership positions over the past 30-plus years—Curriculum Coordinator, School Committee Member, Elementary Principal, Middle School Principal, and Assistant Superintendent. I also enjoyed some time in educational publishing as an Executive Editor and a National Marketing Manager."

Although I've had many different experiences, working as a Principal was far and away my favorite job. Education is a people business. That's why I am so pleased to join the team at HHS and help make our school a safe and enjoyable place for students and staff."

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

"My personal, biggest challenge has been finding a way to own my time and not let the job control me, but me be in control of the job. I'm trying to have a hand in all of these different projects, whether they are the academic projects of leading the teachers and trying to talk about common assessments, student failure rates, and attendance rates and how do we help students find success. But also help to manage the personnel of the building, work with Human Resources and payroll, manage the budget of the building, and also managing the facility in general."

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

"My honest goal is to be here long term, to try and build an administrative team that has Haverhill's best interest in mind and that is going to be a strong team. For two years in a row I have been the only returning administrator. I think that in order for our school to be successful, having a consistent administration is the next step."



**Associate Principal**  
Victoria Lu

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

"I definitely feel like there two sides of this, as I was an assistant principal last year and I will honestly say that I felt like my interactions with students definitely was the best part of my job, learning their stories and helping support them and helping them find programming and things that will help the achieve their goals was just a really rewarding part of what I did. This year my role looks really different being the associate principal. A lot of what I do is lead teachers either through grade 9 and 10 teacher teams. I lead all of the deans in their meetings and conversations and directives, and that's been a new challenge, but it's been really interesting too. We're trying to create more systems that are equitable and trying to think about what are the barriers that exist in the systems we currently have and how do we remove those so more kids have access



**Grade 9**  
Assistant Principal  
Jonathan Mangion

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

In my years as an educator and most recently an Assistant Principal, I have to say the most rewarding aspect of the position is the ability to help students and staff resolve issues that interfere with their overall success. I feel that we, as staff and students, have the unique ability to create an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect. It has always been my goal as a teacher, then counselor and lastly as an Assistant Principal to never give up on helping a student or staff member maximize their own strengths. The most rewarding aspect of this position is to witness growth and success on all levels.

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

I believe that the biggest challenge is time constraints. In working with staff and students, as well as parents, it seems there is never enough time to bring closure to a situation. By that I mean to adequately address issues and concerns without ap-



**Grade 10**  
Assistant Principal  
Frank Kowalski

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

"I enjoy the daily interaction with the students. I enjoy getting to know them and building connections. I also love getting into classrooms and seeing all of the wonderful things the teachers are doing to enhance learning."

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

"My biggest challenge has been fitting in and

pearing to rush through a meeting or conversation. It is particularly bothersome when I feel I have to rush off to another issue or meeting. Thankfully I do have outstanding support staff that will follow through, but it is troubling when I feel pulled in too many directions.

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

I would like the community to know that my family, parents, as well as myself, my brother, as well as my children, all attended Haverhill High School. I am particularly proud of my father, who was a World War 2 veteran who received his diploma from Mr. Soraghan some 60 years after leaving high school to serve in World War 2. I have always had a strong commitment to the community and the high school and feel blessed for all that teachers and administrators have done to help me over the years in support of my family, both in and out of the school setting. Lastly, the opportunity to serve as an administrator once again has been an honor and experience I treasure. My family, a generation of immigrants, valued education and to be able to help students once again has been the fulfillment of my career that has spanned 50 years as an educator in Haverhill.

learning. This is a big school and learning on the go has been a challenge for me."

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

"I have been an administrator for over 20 years and my goals haven't changed much. I am student centered and have always believed all kids can learn. Haverhill has had lots of changes the last few years, and I really want to become a foundation and someone that will be committed to the students and help bring stability to Haverhill. I am an avid sports fan who played baseball until I was 45. I am married with 2 children and I live in North Andover."



**Grade 11**  
Assistant Principal  
Dinorah Peralta

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

Well, one of the things I enjoy the most in my job as a Haverhill High School Administrator is helping staff students and families by helping them problem solve and by encouraging them. I enjoy the different situations that come up, because I get to help in creative ways, and I get to interact with a lot of people.

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**



**Grade 12**  
Assistant Principal  
Nelly Garcia-Santana

**What do you enjoy most in your job as a Haverhill High School Administrator?**

"There's two parts of this job that I love the most, one is dealing with the students, not just a particular grade. Right now I'm mostly dealing with 12th grade seniors but if any student that I've had before in my previous math classes, or if I'm seeing somebody in the hallways that just needs help or has a question, I'm able to assist all grades if need be. As an administrator, I get to support the teachers in the building as an educational leader. One of the things that you want is to help the teachers be better in their craft. There's so many talented professionals in the building. Whether you have ESPs, in-class supports, teachers, you just want to support them and [make sure] that they are improving in their growth and in their profession."

**What have been the biggest challenges thus far?**

"One of the challenges thus far is I was an administrator before, in a different state, and each building and each district has their set of rules. You have to learn a whole new set of rules that work for that particular district and for that particular building. There have been changes. I was an administrator in 2018, and here we are in 2022. So a lot of things have happened in the course of four years and you have to catch up, look at your clientele, your student body, and see what they need now. You know, people change and the circumstances change."

The biggest challenges are balancing work and family, learning the job, and getting students to see the greatness in themselves that I see in them. Another challenge is having enough time to dedicate to all the parts of the job that require time, and attention to detail.

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

I would like you to know that I am committed to the HHS community. I want to see Hillie Nation thrive in every way possible, regardless of challenges and setbacks. There is a lot of good that happens here, and we need to work together to ensure that the positive aspects of this school are highlighted. There many programs and pathways for students to find success, and I want students to reach their full potential.

**Is there anything you would like the Haverhill High School community to know about you, Haverhill High School, or your goals as an administrator?**

"I did come from New Jersey. My career in North Bergen, N.J., was a diverse, urban community, a school that was about 2,300 students. All the different changes that happened with demographics, curriculum, teachers, administrators, I went through those changes throughout the course of those 26 years. So as Haverhill is coming back to basics, which is our theme this year, for the school district, I can apply a lot of what I learned there [in New Jersey], and see and have that flexibility to help better guide people and just understand everybody better. I have been a teacher in New Jersey since 1990, and I had been an administrator there since 2000. I first started off as a Summer School Coordinator, a principal if you will, then I became a math department supervisor in 2005. I then became a director of mathematics for the same school district in 2013 until I made the decision to retire from New Jersey with many years of service. I relocated to Massachusetts because I remarried, I've always been passionate about my craft. I've been a teacher, you're always a student, and in being an admin, you're a student and a teacher as well. In addition to this I am the first generation in this country. I was born here, but my parents came from Cuba in 1966. I was the first college graduate from my family, so I am very proud of that. Because of my background, I get to understand the changes in the demographics of Haverhill as it's increasing in becoming more multicultural. I hope that I can help the community understand the rising cultures that are in the community. I am a Hillie now, a proud Hillie. Every day is a learning experience, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to be a leader in this district."

## HHS holds second annual Turkey Toss

By Rowan Kelly

HAVERHILL—Nothing says Thanksgiving like chucking a frozen turkey up in the air for both accuracy and distance.

Haverhill High School let the frozen poultry fly as it hosted its second annual Turkey Toss on Wednesday morning, November 23, at Haverhill High School's home track.

The tradition is fashioned after the statewide Turkey Toss hosted annually by Kiss 108 and became a homegrown event, initially due to the pandemic. Unlike the

"official" Turkey Toss, the competition was open to any seniors who wanted to compete. Students were able to sign up with a partner through Google Classroom.

A total of 20 teams competed, withstanding the chilly temps, as the breath of each contestant hung in the air with each shout. Students braved the cold while enjoying some hot chocolate, to warm up, along with munching on some donuts.

The final round came

down to Jaylene Viera and Sasha Orr, Brendan Rosenthal and Jimmy Mamakos, Angelo Dimopoulos and Kyle Tarcy, and Michael Hicks and Noah Wormstead. Hicks and Wormstead came out victorious by tossing and catching a 20-pound frozen turkey 20 feet.

"It was an exhilarating victory," Hicks said, who dedicated his victory to a longtime Haverhill favorite, Mrs. Ray.

"Mrs. Ray, she bought the turkey," he

said with glee. Prior to the event, participants boarded a bus at the school and took a field trip to Duffy's Diner, feasting on pancakes, sausage and eggs and other breakfast staples, before being brought back for the Turkey Toss.

"It was a great bonding experience for us," said Senior Katrina Savvas. "It was nice to have an event like this with all my classmates as we probably won't see each other much after this year."

# OPINION: Time to speak up against toxic behavior

## Recent football hazing part of a larger cultural problem

By Jaylene Viera

HAVERHILL— Back in the simpler time of early November, I was assigned a story on the tradition of the Massachusetts Thanksgiving football game. My role was simple: address the long standing holiday rivalry, go into detail about its importance, and get the perspective of the fans who love the game most. This mission was interrupted, however, the night of Wednesday, November 16, when Boston 25 reported on the hazing occurring on the Haverhill High football team.

Graphic depictions of violence, assault, and misconduct against a Haverhill High freshman were reported, and it was announced that the season would be canceled, and Haverhill High would not participate in another foot-

ball game until the fall of 2023.

Although the heinous incident has only recently come to light, rumors regarding the situation were spreading weeks before. We know that suspensions were also doled out for football players prior to the release of the video, meaning there was some knowledge of an incident or incidents before the football season was forfeited and the annual Turkey Toss canceled. But what we don't know is why the severest consequences only came after there was a video. If there was no video evidence, would this situation have been brought to light in the same way it was, or even at all?

Despite there still being many unsettling ques-

tions without answers, at least in this particular case (with the help of video evidence and the exposure from Boston 25), justice appears to be being served. However, what about the kids who have been bullied off screen?

Considering the graphic and prolonged video, along with all the laughter that can be heard in the background, it is hard to believe this is the first time hazing has occurred within the locker rooms and halls of HHS. In fact, there are many underclassmen who claim to have fallen victim to teasing and harassment by their junior and senior counterparts, something that, unfortunately, has always been taken for granted as being part of the "culture" of the sport at the school.

It is important to hold the perpetrators of this crime accountable, but it is also important to call out the ones who participate in more subtle acts of abuse that lay the groundwork for what we saw in the video. We cannot sit here and justify the acts of young men simply by amplifying the fact that they are young. Doing so is lazy and pointless. However, it is also necessary to go beyond the punishments levied on those most directly involved and ask hard questions of the bystanders and those in charge of creating a safe environment.

It is not unfair to say that there should be blame for the staff and student body that let this behavior slide. It is clear that somewhere along the line, there

was an intense loss of leadership among our staff and students. It is impossible to say that during this case that not one person could have stood up and reported this behavior, or that no one noticed the shift from teasing to abuse. It is difficult to confront these situations, but it must be done.

It is also important to confront any players who knew about the situation and did not report it. Not directly participating does not equate with innocence. As a unit and a team, it is a shared responsibility to protect one another. We hope that the future players of our football team use their humanity to challenge the toxic behavior that was presented in that video. We ask that you confront your mistakes and reflect on the

treatment that you allowed others to face. We ask you to please do better.

This behavior needs to end, this "culture" needs to end. We can no longer allow these acts of violence to unfold, and pass it off as something normal. We cannot be surprised by this behavior when we all turned our heads to it until the evidence came out. We, as a city, all need to take a step back and really look at the behavior of our youth today and hold bullies and more violent assailants accountable for their actions. We need to modify what we view as normal, and what kind of conduct we excuse. Our football team was supposed to represent us as a school, and as a city. It's up to us to decide, whether or not that representation was false.

## OPINION: Activity Fair shows hazing has no place in our school

By Sheeba Nabiryo

HAVERHILL— While the recent hazing incident with the Haverhill High football team has raised concerns about student safety, it's important to acknowledge the different groups we have in our school that strive every day to create safe environments for their members.

On Tuesday, November 22, an activity fair was held in the mall during all four lunches, where various clubs and sports teams had tables with information and opportunities for prospective members to sign up. I took the time to speak to several representatives from these organizations to highlight how they're working to make sure everyone who participates in their activity feels

welcomed.

First up, I spoke with sophomore Gabrielle Striker, president of the Pride Club (formerly known as GSA). She said, "There's never been a moment where I've felt unwelcome. On our first meeting, we introduced slides that explained personal boundaries, and what everybody's OK and comfortable with, and those stay up on our Google Classroom all year round. Even if you aren't gay or a part of the [LGBT+] community, you should join. It's a very nice group of people and everybody's so supportive."

The BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) Union is another group focused on foster-

ing an inclusive environment at Haverhill High. Safa Walid, a senior and the secretary of the club, believes that they are doing great work, stating, "So, pretty much our club highlights the issues of BIPOC students within the school, outside of school, and pretty much brings a broader grasp on how that influences us in society."

On the issue of hazing, Walid said, "I've never felt uncomfortable in this club or seen anything resembling hazing. I think it's truly disappointing that we have that in our school, and it makes me uncomfortable."

When asked how BIPOC Union has prevented it, she explained, "I believe that it doesn't happen

in our club because of how welcoming it is and how we all express our individuality. Advice that I would give to other clubs would be to highlight everyone's unique personalities and really emphasize how everyone works together."

On the sports side of things, the gymnastics team seems to feel the same way. Junior Madison Defino said, "We want our team not to be a clique. No matter what you do, you'll always have a special position. We're just a big group of friends. We've of course had cliques before, but a big thing this year has been not having those within the group, and everyone's been so nice so far."

If sports aren't your

thing, the arts are also fostering a safe space for students. The Drama Club, for example, has always been known for being a positive, welcoming environment. Indigo Wilcox has been a part of the troupe for all of his three years of high school so far. "Drama Club is 100-percent a welcoming environment. We all can come together, and there's so many things to do. I think it's unacceptable what's happened recently. I feel pain in my heart for those people, because we all deserve to feel safe in a school environment, but in Drama Club I've always been with my kind of people."

President Maya Bennett echoed the same sen-

timent, saying, "Joining Drama Club for me was a no-brainer. Whether you're on or off-stage, everyone's so welcoming, and it's always been like that. I'm lucky because I get to do the thing that I love so much with the most amazing people in the world, who I know love and support me, and I couldn't ask for a better club."

By the end of the activity fair, almost every sign-up sheet was filled up, a testament to the fact that the Haverhill High student body won't let the deplorable behavior of a few students keep the rest of us from doing what we love, with the people we love to do it with.

# For The Ones Who Came Before Us

The following essay is the first installment in a series, "For The Ones That Came Before Us," paying tribute to the legacy of influential family members.

### "Better Than Brave"

My grandfather is a machete-wielding, insect-eating Mexican who took a prop plane to Honduras with a baseball glove and may or may not be a CIA agent depending on who you ask.

On my eighth birthday, two of my younger brothers stepped on a yellow jacket nest hidden in a dead log. Unlike honey bees, yellow jackets don't die after they sting, so they swarmed the house for hours, zipping around the yard like pebbles thrown into the sky.

My grandparents braved the journey through the yard, arms over their heads to check on my siblings. My four-year-old brother, who got the worst of it, ended up with one eye swollen shut and more than twenty welts on his back. To make him smile, my grandfather swallowed a dead yellow jacket, stinger and all.



Alongside eating dead bees to avenge his grandchildren, my grandfather was also journeying the 2,075 miles into Honduras with a machete and a baseball glove in his backpack, which he did

dozens of times. With a smile in his eyes he tells me how some people from the villages used to think he was a CIA agent, and how he'd let them believe that despite the danger that put him due to the



shadier figures who might take action concerning that knowledge. "Why would they think that?" I would ask. "Because I told them I was," he'd reply, gesturing to his Walmart sunglasses that

could potentially mimic a CIA agent's in a blockbuster. "Why not?"

Why not indeed. Why not join the Navy Jazz Band? Why not quit smoking to marry a Philosophy major and take

her to Japan where you're stationed? Why not eat a spider to make your AP students laugh? Why not work at a cranberry bog at age 70 while almost single-handedly taking care of your mother-in-law suffering from dementia? Why not, if someone is struggling, give them your car and set them up with a job at said cranberry bog where they can also sleep in a tent?

My grandfather is not being careless or rash, but instead seeing how amazing a life full of adventure and people to love and bravery would be, and making it his reality. He cries in front of me, he writes poetry and reads it aloud, he eats lemons like an apple, and gives away his belongings.

My grandfather seeks to grow and learn, to become a healthier person. He admits when he is wrong, and sometimes that is the bravest thing a person can do.

— Avery Becker



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