



BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

FEBRUARY 2024



Conneely's Corner

Happy Black History Month!

The Valentine's Day candy grams are back once again, sponsored by the class of 2025. They are \$5 each. The candy grams will be distributed on Valentine's Day during B block.

February Break will begin on Friday, February 16 and ends Sunday, February 25.

Half day on Wednesday February 28. Keep an eye on your YOG Google classroom for the half day schedule!

Hillie Drivers: All parking lots are officially full. Moving forward, all new parking spaces will be assigned to the hockey rink.

Congratulations to **Brent Nicolosi** breaking the Hillie wrestling record with his 178th win!

Boys Basketball will be having their senior night February 13 at the HHS gym.

Cheers to the **Boys Swim Team** beating Central Catholic on senior night and becoming #1 in the MVC.

Congratulations to the **2024 JROTC Marksmanship** team who came in 2nd place at the Shoulder to Shoulder Marksmanship Competition hosted at Revere High School.

Trivia Night, hosted by Student Council, will be held Wednesday, February 28 from 6-8 in the Library. \$5 at the door. \$4 for early sign-up. Use the QR code on the posters.

The Massachusetts statewide **Presidential Primary** is March 5. Get out and vote Hillies!

Students, HC Media collaborate on PSA campaign

AP Gov. class writes, stars in commercials aimed at increasing voter registration

By Emily Miller

HAVERHILL-The high school's AP Government class is turning to students to spur voter registration among young voters.

"When a message comes to a kid from another kid, it is going to be more powerful than from an adult to a kid," said longtime AP Government teacher Shaun Ashworth, whose class is behind the initiative.

In fact, junior David Martinez, one of the "kids," single-handedly wrote the script for all

but one of the commercials. Once asked to do it, Martinez took his job very seriously.

"When Mr. Ashworth approached me about writing the PSA scripts, I gladly accepted the responsibility. My aim was to craft scripts with broad applicability, ensuring that they could be used for years to come," noted Martinez. "Mr. Ashworth has provided us with numerous extracurricular civics opportunities, and I was enthusiastic about contrib-

uting to the scriptwriting process," he added.

Once the scripts were completed, Ashworth's AP Government class collaborated with Haverhill's HC Media to generate a Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign that will begin to air on Haverhill's local platform, HC Media, or local channel 9. The clips are currently available to view on HC Media's Facebook and YouTube pages.

The PSAs are essentially brief commercials

that feature useful information about voting. In total, five different PSAs were produced, though each one strives to inform viewers of how, where, and why it is important to vote.

In one commercial, for example, several of Ashworth's students appear one after another in front of a white background, each contributing to an eloquent statement about the importance of local voting. The commercial then segues into several American flag-laden scenes,

including a classroom and a voting booth, while in the background voting is described as "a declaration" that "rings in the halls of democracy."

Another PSA features shots that shift between students and Mayor Melinda Barrett, all of whom are speaking to the variety of policies affected by voting.

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Fruitful Lessons



Orchards, hydroponics, Garden Club: HHS is fertile ground for green-thumbs

By Taylor Lewis

HAVERHILL-In 2012, Nancy Burke, a longtime special education teacher at the high school, attended a farm-to-school workshop that dared her to ask her students a simple question: where does your food come from?

There was of course no single answer she expected but she certainly did not expect what she received:

"My mother buys everything at Market Basket," said one student.

At first this seemed rational enough, but then it dawned on her that beyond the store from which stu-

dents' parents purchased groceries, many of her students didn't have the slightest clue as to how food is actually produced.

Rather than despair in the face of this revelation, Burke, as she tells it, "started on her quest" to inspire her students to better understand the origins of their favorite foods and how to source healthier options.

Just over ten years later her quest has certainly borne fruit, and vegetables, and even award-winning decorative plants. Her current students are also cer-

tainly aware of where their food comes from because they grow it, and grow it well.

In the last five years, for example, Burke and her Haverhill High School students have accumulated more accolades for their produce and decorative pieces than any other competitor at the annual agricultural contests at the Topsfield Fair.

"Every year since 2019," Burke proudly pointed out, "Haverhill High School has won the most first-place ribbons at the Topsfield Fair for all of the fruits and veg-

etables that we enter." According to Burke, the bounty of her student garden is a true cornucopia.

"There are a number of vegetables, perennial flowers, and fruits grown in these gardens, such as potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, peppers, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, and rhubarb, and everything they grow gets harvested and used in one or more of the different programs at HHS," Burke explained.

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Unified in need of partners

Haverhill's Unified Basketball and Track and Field programs seeking volunteers

By Mikayla DeFrank

HAVERHILL-Unified Athletics is ready to kick off its spring season and they are hoping to score some more help from the student body.

Unified Athletics is a program where students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities team up with neurotypical peers, called partners, to compete against other cities and towns in the Merrimack Valley Conference. Haverhill currently has a Unified Basketball and Unified Track and Field, whose season starts in March, hopefully with a more robust cohort of partners, or student volunteers.

A partner in the pro-

gram is a neurotypical student that can act alongside the neurodivergent students as a role model to show social norms, how to be a good teammate, and how to represent sportsmanship.

Jason Burns, head coach of Unified Athletics as well as a special education teacher here at the high school told, Brown & Gold that partnering with the program, although the Unified teams truly compete, goes far beyond competition and sports.

"Ideally, the biggest and most important thing about being a partner is expanding the social group of students with disabilities to not just be students with

disabilities, but also make relationships with typical students," Burns said. "What happens when you are in a special ed classroom sometimes, particularly our substantially separate programs, a lot of the students with disabilities only kind of interact with other students with disabilities. This is a way for us to expand that peer group to be more integrated. And yes, we do compete. Yes, we participate in sports and athletics and competitions, but it's mostly about social relationships."

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Hillie state champions Kailyn Aquino (left) and Molly Jordan (right)

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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.

GARDENING:

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Unbeknownst to many, the high school is also home to two "orchards," little oases that contain apple, peach, cherry, and plum trees as well as a variety of berries. These orchards originated in the spring of 2019 from a \$5,000 grant Burke received with the help of Grace McIntyre, Dean of the Science Department.

Burke describes how the community at HHS worked to make these orchards possible.

"[In the spring of 2019] with the help of so many students and staff, we put in an orchard. At any given time there were more than 50 students and staff cleaning, digging holes, putting in fence posts, guide wires, and more," she explained.

The orchards are located

in the outdoor courtyards adjacent to the L-Wing and also consist of raised garden beds that are accessible to those with disabilities, which makes it possible for any student to visit, learn about, and participate in the nurturing of the plants and vegetables.

Burke takes particular pride in the fact that the orchards make usually inaccessible activities that abled people enjoy accessible to those with disabilities.

"For many students who might sit in a wheelchair, they may have never been apple picking, so bringing an orchard to them, right at their school, provides them with experiences that disabled students don't normally get," she said.

The project has continued over the last decade and

now includes picnic tables where gardeners can take a minute to sit back and enjoy the peace and sustenance they've worked so hard to achieve.

Beyond this wondrous world lodged amid the otherwise unassuming Haverhill High school building there is also a kind of verdant ladder to the future: the vertical garden.

The vertical garden is a hydroponic apparatus approximately five feet tall, consisting of three tubes. Within these soil-less tubes, seeds are germinated by water, which provides an extremely effective avenue for sustainable food production in the winter months.

This new addition to the special education program is the first hydroponic garden in Haverhill High School's history.

Hydroponic gardening takes a step towards sustainable agriculture becoming

an all-year activity, in which students in both programs can harvest culinary plants, herbs, and decorative flowers, which Burke personally finds to be the most exciting. Like the gardens, this system allows students from many different backgrounds to contribute to their community and learn how to source their lunch sustainably.

The new vertical gardening system and outdoor classrooms are not exclusive to the special education program, they are also used in the Garden Club, which harvests fruits, vegetables, and flowers all year long as well as participates in fun indoor activities during the winter months.

Isaac Cortes, a sophomore in Garden Club, explained why he joined the program in his freshman year.

"I was in an IEP meeting, and one of them said that I should join, because it's fun. I said I would give it a shot, and



Garden Club students tending to the beds out front HHS. I think it's pretty fun!" Cortes said.

Dominick Rogers, a senior member of the Garden Club, explained that creating decorative items each year is one of the most memorable parts of his experience.

"The most fun of all is when we create [projects] out of anything we can think of whether it's inspiration or pure curiosity and creativity," Rogers said.

Overall, Garden

Club and the efforts of the Special Education program bring interactive activities to Haverhill High School, and are enjoyed by many students.

If you're interested in participating in Garden Club and getting involved in student projects, reach out to either Ms. Nancy Burke at nburke@haverhill-ps.org or take a trip to A10 after school on Wednesdays!

UNIFIED:

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Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

Unified has been running since the 2017-2018 school year. The core group typically consists of 15-20 students but finding enough students willing to volunteer their time and commitment to partnering with the program has always been a challenge.

"We don't typically get a lot of partners," Burns said. "The goal is 50/50 neurodivergent and neurotypical students, about half and half. In the great majority of the seasons we run, we have a lot of

interest with our special education students, but not as much with our neurotypical students. And I'm not sure how many people even really know it's out there."

Without partners, the athletes in the program lack consistency and it creates struggles for them socially. Finding new partners is a big challenge as partners are a core part of what makes the program so successful.

Both partners and athletes are able to earn var-

sity letters for joining the team. During their athletic season, they go on the road as well as play home games against schools like Methuen, Dracut, Billerica, and Tewksbury. It is similar to all the other varsity sports but requires less of a time commitment, with less rigorous and fewer practices and games than typical varsity sports.

The MVC is one of the first conferences in the state of Massachusetts to have a full Unified

conference meaning each school in the MVC has a Unified sports program.

When asked what he finds so rewarding about the program, Burns has trouble narrowing it down to just one particularly gratifying aspect.

"There are so many things, it's hard to narrow it down," Burns said. "Seeing the captains of our unified teams when they participate in things like the pep rally or they participate in staff-student basketball games and watch how it's just really fully integrated and connected in the school community, that's really what's the most rewarding part."

Currently, there are two unified sports teams. Unified Basketball, which runs in the fall, and Unified Track and Field, which runs in the spring.

Unified Track & Field begins in March along with all the other Spring sports. To join, simply register via Haverhill Athletics just like any other sport. Interested partners can reach out to the Athletic Office with any questions around registration.

As the spring season quickly approaches, don't hesitate to contact Jason Burns who is located in A10 with any questions if you are interested in becoming a partner!

VOTE DRIVE:

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With another important election approaching, Ashworth believes increasing voter turnout locally is essential. The class is also putting up information tables during lunches and passing time in hopes to spread awareness to young voters face to face.

"We have a voter turnout issue, especially at the local level," Ashworth stressed. "At the national level and state level the turnout has improved over the last decade because access has improved, so we're hoping we can achieve similar growth within the community."

Ashworth believes that many new voters don't vote in elections simply because they are not registered. His goal is to change that through student-to-student discussion.

"Out of all the demographics, the young people, aged 16-18, are the worst at registering," Ashworth acknowledged.

Ashworth and his students hope that the PSA's and registration tables will encourage young people to participate in the political process and inform them that they have the power to make change.

David Martinez, an AP Government student

and freelance photographer, believes that the work generated by the students and HC Media will inspire young voters to go out and take part in the elections.

"HC Media did a really wonderful job of putting the clips together. We are really happy with the product and believe it will be successful in reaching the targeted audience," Martinez said.

Lucien Pothier, another AP Government student and aspiring political scientist, hopes that these clips will educate the public on the importance of registering to vote and how to do it.

"Many people don't know how many different, easy ways there are to pre-register. Online ways like registering through the Haverhill website and calling city hall make it easier than in person ways such as going down to the DMV," shared Pothier.

As of right now, you can register through the City of Haverhill website or by stopping by the local DMV.

The deadline to register for the Massachusetts Presidential Primary is February 24, 2024. Voter registration deadline for the Presidential Election is October 26, 2024.

School Committee seriously considering later start time?

Comments during fall forum suggest high school start time could be considered

By Jake Axford

HAVERHILL-The future may be getting a little brighter for Hillies, at least as the mornings go.

Based on the recent shake up of the School Committee as a result of the ward-based elections and comments offered by the new committee members, a later start time for high schoolers may be in the cards.

At the pre-election School Committee forum hosted at the high school by Mr. Shaun Ashworth's AP Government class last fall, student representative Emmerson Cerasuolo asked the candidates: "What is your position on a later start time in the high school? If you support it, what would you do to make it a reality here? If you do not support a later start time, please explain why."

To many young people's surprise, many of the responses were quite favorable for those who could use additional time to their mornings.

Yonnie Collins, Ward 6 elect, voiced her support by pointing out the possibilities that a delayed start time might offer to students who need extra support.

"I think that we can come together as a community and support our

students. Also it's shown that athletics before school leads to greater access for students who need to work after school and improved mental health, including for depression, anxiety and students with ADHD, for students who need the work out to help them focus in class."

Collins added, conclusively, "We should start later so we can have more strength and energy."

Mikaela Lalumiere, Ward 4 elect and longtime special educator in Lawrence, conveyed support for a later start based on the success of her earlier experiences.

"I can tell you anecdotally, I worked and taught in a high school, and the first period is always very difficult. Kids would come in halfway through the period, I'd start the class with two-thirds of my kids there, and I'd end the class with most of them there. It is difficult for an early start time to get kids going in the morning and getting their brain working. I do think it's important that we look at the logistics of it. I know that Lawrence Public Schools has had success delaying their high school time, but again the majority of their district is walking to and from school and the ma-

jority of ours is buses."

Gail Sullivan, Ward 2 elect and the only incumbent School Committee member, also appeared to be in favor but shared Lalumiere's concerns regarding logistics.

"All the research shows that a later start time for high school students would be a good idea," Sullivan said, adding, "however, then you run into athletic problems in the winter when it gets darker earlier and...the transportation is complicated too because we use our buses for all schools."

Jill Story, Ward 5 elect and Assistant Principal at Walter S. Parker Middle School in Reading, presented an experienced outlook on what a staggered start time would look like and its implications.

"I think all the brain science does support a later start time for adolescents without a doubt. It leads to improved attendance, decreased tardiness, and actually improved student achievement as well, so the science is there. The implications, however, are potentially significant for transportation, for what it does for the schedule with elementary school start times, for families and their schedules, for employee contracts, as well as athletes and whether or not the other schools in your conference also have late start times so there's a lot to consider."

In terms of support from the high school's teachers, Marc Harvey, who has taught History at the high school for over 20 years, is a big proponent of backing up school start time for adolescents.

In short, Mr. Harvey believes that the elementary start times and high school start times could be switched, which, according to Harvey, would result in reduced absenteeism, increased student achievement, reduced dropout rates, higher MCAS scores, and fewer opportunities for high schoolers to get into trouble after school ends.

"In an ideal world, I would like to see the later start times happen in all 351 towns and cities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," Harvey said.

In response to the logistical complications frequently mentioned by School Committee members, Harvey offered what he views to be a simple solution if leaders have the strength to institute it.

"As for the busing problem, you solve this by simply switching the start times for high schoolers and elementary schoolers. As for sports issues, if all schools are under the same requirements, that is a level playing field."

Mrs. Erica Sullivan, a longtime guidance counselor at Haverhill High also shared her support for delaying the start time.

"Later start times for schools have been shown to improve physical and emotional health of teenagers who require 8-10 hours of sleep."

Students, such as senior Natanael Vigo Catala, by and large voice support for a later start time.

"I think a shift might increase motivation and people would be more inclined to get here on time because they can get up later and feel better."

CTE: Computer Science Skills for the digital age

By Damien O'Neil

HAVERHILL-Haverhill High School offers its students a vast array of opportunities for their personal enrichment and to prepare students for college, but there are also a variety of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that give students hands-on experience to prepare them to step into the workforce or to give them a leg up in higher education.

One of the more popular and increasingly relevant parts of these programs is the Computer Science pathway. Computer Science is built upon programming and web development.

Programming can help students launch careers in engineering, software development, application and video game development and many other tech-centric fields.

Aspiring programmers learn the basics of both Python and Java, which are the two most popular programming languages used for developing software for things such as video games and apps.

Students can also learn languages such as HTML5 and CSS3, which are used for making and styling websites.

HHS Senior and former Early College student Ryan Seitz is a big fan of the program and encourages students who are interested in computer science to apply.

"I applied for computer science because it gives me more opportunities to get a good paying job right after college, and gives me more options for college, and because I'm interested

in programming. I highly recommend any student who's interested in programming to apply for the program," Ryan said.

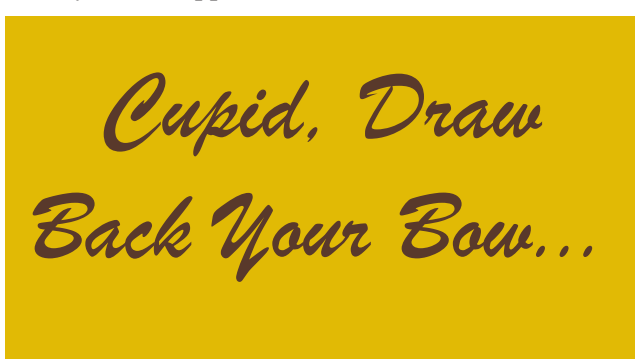
The program also offers paid fall and summer internship opportunities. For the computer science side of the internships, students can be paid to teach computer science to middle and elementary school students, primarily things like 3D printing, game design, and web development.

The company HydraCor, known for having the most advanced technology for patient experience and operational improvement on the market, utilizing augmented intelligence to help patients get what they need, when they need it, has partnered with HHS in the past to offer students internships to work at their company.

Lawrence General Hospital has also given students opportunities to obtain an internship to work for the hospital.

HHS Senior and Early College student Elijah Fabian had this to say about his experience with the Lawrence General internship:

"I did the internship because I have the IT skills to gain more experience in the field and as a way to obtain money while being unemployed and looking for a job," Elijah said. "I helped remotely with computer errors and replaced and fixed computer components. I would heavily recommend other students in the field to give this internship a try."



Teacher Tales: Ms. Foster on beauty and a bazillion paper flowers

‘When I see something that is so incredibly beautiful it makes my eyes sing’

Interviewed by Sara Tucker

This is the second installment of the 2023-2024 school year of a series dedicated to getting to know the illustrious educators of HHS beyond the classroom.

Sara Tucker: For this edition your word is: beauty! I think it's fitting for the A-Wing and all the beautiful art that happens down here.

Erin Foster: You would like my thoughts on the word beauty?

Sara: You can say your thoughts, or a story! Wherever your brain takes you!

Ms. Foster: So when you say the word beauty to me as an artist, I sort of immediately translate that to aesthetics. I think sometimes artists are those that are sort of like visual artists walking around through life, really, really in tune with what they're seeing visually and are drawn to beauty sort of naturally and also have sort of a hyper appreciation for it. For example, I have a friend of mine that is a musician, and we were standing in a museum and we were standing in front of a painting, and she said, "I can't imagine what it would be like to be you experiencing art." Just in the same way that she has full appreciation for music. It is a powerful experience for her, through her ears. She was under the impression that we were sort of experiencing the painting differently. *(Laughs)* And it is true. In a way, when I see something that is so incredibly beautiful, it makes my eyes sing. It's the only way I can really describe it. We all sort of appreciate life through different means and different sensory modes, and I think that artists have an ability to create beauty, to appreciate beauty and to enhance this world in that they bring beauty into it to society, to culture, to mankind. The story of man and history all involve art. So, art has been around for as long as man has been around. We have this innate desire to create and to make beautiful ob-

jects or to use art to express ourselves or be spiritual. And so there is something to just baseline beauty that I think all of that is tied into.

Sara: Yeah, I remember when we went to Paris with the school and one kid brought this camera everywhere, like this little film camera that I think was like the Pentax ones from down the hall in A1. He brought it everywhere, every place, everywhere. And going back to the thing you're talking about, about the painting, he would sit in the galleries for hours when we would go these magnificent museums

Ms. Foster: You went to the Louvre? Wait where were you?

Sara: Yes! We were in London then Paris!

Ms. Foster: Oh, Okay!

Sara: A boy who went on the trip would sit in these rooms for hours and just take photos of the paintings. Going back to the original point, it was so beautiful to watch him experience the art in such a profound way

Ms. Foster: For some reason, there is a really strong urge to document all of the beauty. Film is really interesting because it is a really high form of art because it brings all the aspects of art together. It is a composition that is in motion, set to sound and has to compose something from every angle, in a setting that makes sense and to tell that story with a mood. Film blows my mind sometimes when I think about all of the types of arts that are involved in it. In that sense, I have a lot of respect for directors and how they create a visual story through all those means—*(Loud door sirens go off.)* Oh, the joys of the security system in our school—Plays are amazing in that way as well because it's a constant visual that is in motion all of the time. You have the blocking of people on the stage, in relation to the



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

sets and the props, it's a lot to keep track of.

Sara: Speaking of the plays, I love that all the art teachers work together to compose them, like you help with the banners and those little tiny things that all work together. I remember when you made the Oz head backstage, and the way you had worked on it for hours. Thinking back on it, I think it was the first time I had met you.

Ms. Foster: Oh, really? That was a crazy head to make. That was really hard to make it work.

Sara: I remember taking it down and everyone being so upset because it had taken you so long and it was beautiful on stage. Then, we got to use those noodles in another sense, which is always cool.

Ms. Foster: It's good to re-purpose because we can't hold onto those large set pieces forever. But I had gotten really excited because we were talking, Mrs. Allen and I were talking about the Suessical Musical coming up, and I was saying how excited I was to make the truffle trees. Then we looked at each other and went: "It's

gonna be just like Oz when we were making the munchkin flowers." And I loved having a bazillion tissue paper flowers hanging out in my room.

Sara: I also love that classes like yours help other students get involved with Drama Club, when they normally wouldn't have.

Ms. Foster: Yeah! They get to have their little piece in it. I had students that would've been completely and totally otherwise uninvolved, super excited. A couple of them wound up being in the auditorium, seeing the set kind of build up and start to happen. And they were like, "That's my flower. That's the one I made." It's really nice to be a part of something like that. I really love musicals. You guys put so much time and so much effort, and your whole soul and heart goes into everything you do.

Sara: Even though at times it can be tiring, it's so much fun. When I go home and have nothing to do I'd rather be here.

Ms. Foster: It's literally the creation of magic.

Sara: And it's so much fun.

Ms. Foster: Yeah, she is a taskmaster in the most respectful way.

Sara: Last year when she left, it kind of left me with this deep appreciation for all that she does for us, in every sense of the word.

Ms. Foster: She has high expectations and she's not messing around with what she wants, she wants it done and done well. But there is so much respect in that because she knows that you are all capable and can do it.

Sara: You know, I think part of why so many people love the arts so much is that it brings so many people together. Like, looking into a classroom of yours, seeing people sitting together, doing the same thing, all while enjoying each other's company.

Ms. Foster: It should be enjoyable. We should be able to have a time in our day where we get to connect to other people and just be sort of human together. That should be a major part of our day, just interacting with each other and sort of appreciating each other on a human level. And that is what the arts are. It is an innate human thing. It's appreciating each other's personalities and having a moment of humor in your day and a moment where you're sitting down and solving problems but with different methods and in different ways. It's really supportive. Especially with my Basic Foundations of Arts classes, I try to sell them on the concept of theater because they don't know how amazing it is, having to rely on each other as a crew and be completely interdependent. It's so disciplined and dedicated. I have a much deeper understanding and appreciation for theater and all the moving parts within it. What could be more life changing than the opportunity to create art in such a beautiful and impactful way?

Ms. Foster: And there's so many necessary parts and pieces and people to fulfill such strange and interesting roles. You have a person that's just off stage creating the sound of rain with this random thing. I guess maybe we love it because it is a constant...it's like when I give my students an assignment, I think of it sort of like a visual puzzle. So it's like a design challenge or it's like a visual puzzle problem. And then, within a class of 27 people, there are 27 potential correct responses. So, a theater piece is so fun because you don't even know yet the challenges that you're going to have to figure out.

Sara: If none of us can figure something out or believe something can't be done, Mrs. Allen comes in with 20 different ways to do it. There is always more than one way to do things and that really inspires me at times. There is no giving up with Mrs. Allen, if she wants something done.

Ms. Foster: It will get done well and efficiently.

Sara: And she always manages to do it with such a kind and warm presence.

OPINION: 'Dare to know the other side' Attending a Republican rally as a diehard Leftist

By Sean Wynn



The author with Vermin Supreme

SALEM, NH—When I heard that Nikki Haley was holding a rally at Tuscan Village in Salem, New Hampshire, I was ecstatic. So ecstatic, in fact, that I reserved about 100 tickets under the pseudonym Xi Jinping. I had no real interest in Haley herself—I was mostly going for extra credit for my AP Government class—but it's always interesting to hear what the other side has to say. I myself am as left as they come, and have become very disillusioned with the Democratic party in recent years, despite the fact that they are supposedly America's 'left-wing' party. Being so far removed from even the Democrats, I went into Haley's rally expecting very little.

I assumed I'd be among soulless evangelists and mouth-breathing rednecks whose IQs were equal to the number of teeth they had—the typical Republican base, so says TikTok at least. I had worn my camo shirt to blend in with the imagined crowd, but suddenly it was I who seemed out of place. I began to worry about what might happen if I was discovered to be a fraud. A man had been dragged from the rally for yelling that he'd vote for Trump, so I figured they'd execute me point-blank for being anywhere left of the center. Fortunately I escaped unscathed, and in fact I was even greeted by

fairly normal folks: mothers and fathers, teens my age, veterans.

Although most of my assumptions about the rally were wrong, in many ways my expectations for Haley were proven right. I found myself disagreeing with much of her rhetoric.

For instance, she wants to increase the power of the states by leaving matters of education, welfare, and "mental health" for them to decide (no wonder she thought the Civil War started over states' rights). Haley postured herself as a champion of the people, while supporting a trade war with China, which would only increase inflation further. And, like almost every presidential candidate from both sides of the aisle, I find her border policies draconian.

But surprisingly, I also found myself agreeing with a lot of her policies, at least on the surface. Nikki Haley is in favor of tax cuts on the middle class, and is critical of Trump's corporate tax cuts; she supports literacy programs and vocational classes; and she promises to provide for veterans and their mental health.

All these policies, even to someone who is ideologically opposed to Haley, are appealing. Then came the policies whose ends I agreed with, but means-wise were lacking. For America to become energy indepen-

dent, she proposed an "all of the above approach to energy," supporting green energy while simultaneously appeasing the oil-baron donors. And on those aforementioned corporate tax cuts, she planned to remediate their effect on the deficit by cutting welfare for the poor—a modest proposal to say the least.

It occurred to me that the goals of each party are fairly similar, and most differences depend on how those policies are implemented. Keeping this in mind should—*should*—make it easier for politicians to reach across the aisle. But the media would have us believe that Republicans and Democrats are like cats and dogs, that politics is an epic struggle between good and evil. Modern politics has become a battle between straw-men, between perceived images and illusions. Just as I thought Haley's rally would look like a scene from Deliverance, the Republicans probably think I'm a communist hippie who wants to supplant everything sacred with Critical Race Theory and gender ideology.

I'm not a Nikki Haley convert. I wasn't convinced of any position of hers, in fact, the rally only cemented the views—but this is still a good thing. Encountering opposing ideas can either convince us of those ideas, or reveal the fallacies in our own opinions. However, this is only possible if we are willing to seek out those contrasting views and not be blinded by our biases and preconceived notions.

I urge my fellow progressives to engage with conservatives and really understand where they're coming from. Likewise, conservatives, don't be afraid to talk to progressives. As I myself have found out, there are kind, level-headed people on both sides of the political spectrum. It may make us angry, it may make us uncomfortable, but the only way for our divided country to become whole is to dare to know the other side.

Mother a day to keep the babies away Experiencing parenting with the Real Care Baby

By Ava Vasquez

HAVERHILL—Picture this! I am sitting with my baby on Santa's lap in the Rockingham Mall, smiling from ear to ear with the newborn cradled in my arms. Oh! No, I'm not a teen mom. Confused? So was that faux Santa! It was a faux baby sharing that ironic TJ Maxx-styled photo-shoot with me.

For my Child Psychology class, I was charged with taking care of a robot baby simulator, called the Real Care Baby, that tracks how well one can parent. The baby came with an extra set of clothes, diapers, a bottle, a blanket and a carrier. I had to wear a special scanner on my wrist, which was my way of "interacting" with the "baby," using the scanner, for example, to let it know I was "there."

The 24 hours of being a teen mom was definitely stressful. Going in, I had the expectations that I would be fine. From helping out with my younger siblings, I could not imagine it would be that hard for 24 hours. I mean it was a robot, right? Robots don't poop that much! Turns out I was wrong.

For starters, nevermind the baby, carrying the baby carrier was a physical challenge by itself. It literally felt as if I was carrying around a 30-pound boulder. My arms were definitely sore after walking through the hallways all day.

The struggles weren't contained to carrying the baby carrier through the hallways. That day, while trying to take my English test, the baby began crying. It cried... and cried... and cried. Finally, my teacher had enough and ended up "feeding" the baby for me. (Thanks, Ms. Churinske!) After receiving the help, I scanned my bracelet on the baby's sensor so she knew I was "there" and then quickly handed her off to anyone, and I mean anyone, who would help. Of course, I aced both the test and the baby simulator project! Well, "ace" is a strong word.

Going into it, I expected the baby to cry and hoped shoving a bottle into its robot mouth would be enough. Of course, my baby didn't feed for just ten minutes; it felt like it took for hours! Every-



time I would take the bottle away thinking it was done, it cried louder. And apparently, constantly swearing under your breath doesn't soothe a hungry robot baby either.

One of the worst moments when the baby began to scream was when everyone was exiting the HHS building during a fire drill. I could not change the baby as I was walking out the door, so I had to desperately find a surface to change her on. (By the way, Mr. Kucker, I changed my robot baby on the hood of your truck, if you are wondering about the dent on the hood. Long story.)

Trying to do schoolwork while having a needy baby is definitely a hard part of the experience. But showering while having a robot baby was a struggle I was unprepared for. As someone that likes to listen to music loudly in the shower, I simply could not. I needed to bring the baby in the bathroom with me so I could hear if she began to cry. Of course, the baby began to cry as soon as I was in the shower. The wristband is waterproof, but the baby is not. I had to dry my hands off every three minutes to adjust the baby's bottle. (How dare it deny me the joy of cranking up AC/DC in the shower! For those about to rock...the cradle, that is.)

However, the best part of having the Real Care Baby was seeing looks from people in the hallways and in public. As I was leaving HHS, someone's grandma came up to me and asked:

"You go to school and have a baby?!" To which I answered "Yup!" and laughed. She gave me a confused look as I walked away saying, "Just kidding!" (Punking grandmas might now be my new favorite hobby.)

Of course, another highlight was the photo with the mall Santa. I went to the Rockingham Mall with my friend and we went shopping with the baby. We thought it would be funny to get pictures with Santa. I walked up to the photographer and asked if I could take one for free with my own digital camera. Hesitant, at first, she finally realized my baby was fake and laughed it off. I ended up being let in and I went to sit next to Santa, and Old St. Nick, albeit a bit perplexed, played along. After hours of shopping, I went home and introduced the baby to my family. They all thought it was funny and wanted to see how I parented for the day. It was a mix of wonder, shock and dismay!

From what I read, the Real Care Baby was originally called Baby Think It Over. Thinking it over, I guess the challenges of this robot baby could be enough to swear me off motherhood. (Thanks, HHS!) Still, seeing the love so many parents have for their kids, I realized that you can replicate the frustrations of parenting, but you can't replicate the love you feel for someone in your care, making all the frustrations worth it. Anyhow, I am off to crank up the tunes and shower in peace!

WINTER SPORTS ROUNDUP



Alejandro Delgado

Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

Boys Basketball

The boys basketball team is 5-10 as of Feb. 5, and looking for more consistency as the season heads into the stretch run.

"I think we are on the same page, and when we play the way we are supposed to play, we can beat most teams, if we play at our level and not down to theirs," said Alejandro Delgado, a co-captain on the team.

Alejandro said the team has made progress on this front as the season has progressed.

"From the beginning of the season to now, we have been improving our chemistry, taking it more seriously and wanting to win more," he said. "We want to win the rest of these games, make it into the tournament and make it far in the tournament."

Girls Basketball

The girls basketball team has a new head coach for this season, Doug Ryan.

Mr. Ryan is a seventh-grade instructor at Caleb Dustin Hunking School in Haverhill and has a lot of past background being the boys varsity basketball assistant coach at Methuen High School.

Mr. Ryan is very excited about his first run through the Merrimack Valley Conference as a girls coach. He has been on the boys side for many years with Methuen but knows the girls division is just as tough as the boys

she said. "So we are competing against a ton of talented teams. Every single meet we always make sure to keep a positive mindset and worry about the things that we can control such as individual scores. That's the key to our success this season."

The Girls Gymnastics team dynamic has definitely helped with all of their success as a team.

"Everyone supports everyone, which makes meets super fun," Olivia said. "There is no competitiveness against each other as one may suspect, we are all rooting for each other."

Boys Hockey

The boys varsity hockey team is celebrating their 50th anniversary as a program, a big milestone for the program.

The boys varsity head coach, Joe Roberts, said that his goals for the season are always "to make the State Tournament with aspirations of winning the league," but his own true goal as a coach revolves around skill development.

"I want to help any stu-

Boys and Girls Ski Team
The Girls Ski Team's record is 5-3, and the Boys Ski Team is 0-7 so far this season.

The Girls Ski Team captain, Emily Miller, is excited by the team's performance so far.

"The girls are having one of the most successful seasons the team has seen," Emily said. "[We have beaten teams] like Andover and North Andover, that in past years was out of the question."

Emily Miller said both ski teams' dynamic has been very positive and supportive.

"Since the team is coed and a co-op team, introductions can be hard," she said. "But this year we worked on team bonding, which has been proven successful with the amount of support from both the boys and girls."

Emily said the environment is "always positive," which keeps the athletes motivated.

"At the bottom after their run, you can always hear cheering from teammates, and if someone falls, there's always someone to lift them



Shannon Gallagher

Photo courtesy of Sergio Pernilla

Indoor Track

The boys and girls indoor track team, led by Coach Michael Maguire, had a good opening meet at the MSTCA Winter Festival on Saturday, Dec. 9.

Nata Vigo Catala won the 300-meter race; Brenna Corcoran won the 600-meter race; and Madeline Goncalves won the shot put and broke a 27-year-old school record. The boys and girls indoor track team has been doing pretty outstanding since then.

"We hope we can get as many of our athletes to achieve personal bests, qualify for the Merrimack Valley Conference and All-State meets," Mr. Maguire said. "We should have some individuals and relays qualify for the New Balance Indoor Championship."

In the past few weeks the athletes have done just that, and there have been many athletes that have achieved personal bests and qualified for MVC, All States and the New Balance Indoor Championships.

The girls Speed Medley Relay team consisting of Brenna Corcoran, Gianna Spero, Lauren Downer, and Sophia Riley not only qualified for Nationals but they also broke the school record for the indoor relay, with a time of 4:18:39 minutes, beating the original time of 4:24:69 minutes.

The boys Speed Medley Relay and the boys 4x4 team also qualified for the New

Balance Indoor Nationals and Nike Nationals.

The boys Speed Medley Relay consists of Keith Korir, Nata Vigo Catala, Stephane Fevry, and Sebastien Guillaume, and they achieved a time of 3:41.10 at the D1 State Relay meet, earning them a spot at New Balance Nationals. The boys 4x4 team consists of Hanon Wipff, Stephane Fevry, Nata Vigo Catala, and Joel Ishiimwe. They ran a time of 3:26.57, earning them the top seed in the state and qualifying for the championship section for New Balance Nationals.

Wrestling

The wrestling team is led by Head Coach Tim Lawler. His hopes and goals for this season are to continue to build the Haverhill wrestling program - with the roster size the highest it has ever been - and also compete for a state championship.

The wrestling team has had much success throughout the season so far, and they are only half way through.

Their record is 13-1 this season as of January 8, with their only loss being to Central Catholic. Mr. Lawler says that he is interested to see Matthew Harrold and Brent Nicolosi hunt for their New England titles, as they are both returning New England Runners-Up.

--Ava Votto

Thanks for the Memories! The true value of sports memorabilia

By Raymond Bartimus

Haverhill-While often thought about in terms of cash value, sports memorabilia has a different value to me. While it's true that it can also make you a lot of money if you hang onto things, I value them because of the stories behind many of the items in my collection.

When you walk into my grandpa's room, where I keep the memorabilia, the first thing you would notice is a lot of boxes. It's kind of a mess. It is just a normal bedroom that you wouldn't expect to hold things of value. But inside the boxes are some of the memorabilia that both he and I have collected over the years, and the memories they represent. (He actually has a photo of Bobby Orr that was signed personally to him!)

Kyler Murray Jersey

Kyler Murray's jersey means a lot to me considering he is my uncle's favorite player.

My uncle got this jersey for me because he wants me to be a Kyler fan too! Before my uncle roped me into this whole Kyler Murray thing, I didn't really think Kyler was going to do anything.

To be fully honest I thought that being a 5-foot, 8-inch quarterback and being successful was near to impossible because I didn't think you'd be able to see over the line. My uncle became a Kyler Murray fan because he watched him in college at Oklahoma. Despite my skepticism about it, I decided to be a Kyler fan just to quiet my uncle down.



Looking at it now it's kind of fun being a Kyler Murray fan with him.

Kyler is actually kind of exciting to watch. He is fast, and he is short, but yet makes

insane throws. He is also dangerous on the ground. He is also facing doubters despite this. For example, when he tore his ACL last year in December, the Cardinals were looking to trade him. They may trade him in the off season, and it would be interesting to see where he goes.

No matter what, I am a Kyler Murray fan with my Uncle Michael. This helped strengthen my bond with my uncle because we watch Cardinals games together, and Kyler Murray is often the topic of conversation when we are out.

So, let the doubters doubt, Kyler will prove them wrong! (At least that's what my uncle thinks.)

Football Card Collection

My football card collection means a lot to me. Every card has a meaning behind it, and like all the color combinations they come in.

There are also other boxes and styles they come in as well. My personal favorites are Mosaic, Select and Optic. (The football card nerds know what I am talking about.) I like all of

their designs and colors. It also helps that the cards are relatively good quality and do not bend.

The only thing I often oddly get are Zach Wilson cards when I get a pack. I don't understand what the football gods have against me to the point they have to throw in a Zach Wilson card practically every time!

The only thing that I don't like about cards is sometimes I will buy an expensive box and get nothing out of it. Although maybe I should be more careful when it comes to spending money on something.

I started collecting football cards when my grandpa introduced me to his collection back a couple years ago. I really like the Josh Allen "Thunder Lane card." (It has Josh Allen on the run, ready to throw, with lightning bolt graphics.) I also have a Travis Kelce "Yellow Parallel" card. (It has a ton of reflective gold juxtaposed with Travis Kelce running with the ball.) I am hoping to get a Lamar Jackson "Downtown" card. (It has Lamar Jackson running with the ball, with a cartoon background depicting a scene from Edgar Allan Poe's poem "The Raven.") It looks so cool and has a really high value, if only I could just get my hands on it!

Jayson Tatum-Signed Photo

Last Christmas I got a special gift from my grandparents: a Jayson Tatum-signed photo of him dunking on LeBron. I absolutely love this, and it is pretty much my favorite thing I have. I would never



want to sell it, and it will stay with me forever.

I am a huge fan of the Celtics, especially of Jayson Tatum. We are top contenders this year, and if we win the finals I will be sick with joy, especially since we've been so close over the years. Plus I don't really like LeBron or LA teams, so this just makes it so much better. I was very excited when I got this gift to the point I was going bonkers, jumping up and down in my head.

I love Jayson Tatum and the fact that it's signed by

him just makes me the happiest dude alive! I don't think anyone could've been happier than me that day.

Patrick Mahomes-Signed Jersey

Back when it was an exciting time to be a Patriots fan, the 2018 AFC Championship game had me and my grandpa so hyped up, for sure.

My grandpa, who went to the game in Kansas City, had brought a Patrick Mahomes jersey just in case he saw him.

As luck would have it, he did see him, and he got his autograph before the game. To make it sweeter, the Patriots beat the Chiefs in that same game to go to the Super Bowl. It was the best of both worlds, especially with the great career Patrick Mahomes has had so far.

We got pretty blessed with another gift as the Pats went on to beat the Rams that year in that Super Bowl. I couldn't get a picture of the jersey due to my grandpa being out of town unfortunately, which does stink because I did want to show it off. But as long as we have it, that's all that matters.

Maybe the Patriots post-Brady slump and the deluge of Zack Wilson cards is just the universe balancing itself out after that blessed time.



Journalism starts with heart.

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