



BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

February 2023



Croft's Corner

The Drama Club's spring musical this year is "Anastasia!" Auditions were held on January 23rd-25th after school in the auditorium. The performances will be on March 31st and April 1st. Our beloved thespians will also be heading, once again, to Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Fest in March.

BIPOC Union is presenting Hillie Heritage Night. This event will showcase the different cultures represented in the HHS community. The show is on March 1st, and the dress rehearsal is on February 27th. Everyone is invited to attend!

The Valentine's Day candy grams are back once again, and this year students got input. There was a Google Form posted on every class's Google Classroom that asked what type of candy and what type of message system they would prefer. The last day to order these was 2/8 via another Google Form, and they are \$5 each. The candy grams will be distributed on Valentine's Day during B block.

February Break is from the 18th-26th.

Term 3 progress reports will be issued on March 1st.

AP English mock exams, held on January 28th at 8am, were underwhelming for all students involved.

The Haverhill Scholarship portal is still open! Make sure you get all applications in by March 26th. There are additional scholarships listed on the Class of 2023 that you cannot access through the scholarship portal.

Cheers to the Boys Swim team who not only beat Andover for the first time in over 15 years but went on to win the MVC for the first time since 1980.

The Hillie Model United Nations team is headed to their international conference in New York City in March from the 15th-18th. Good luck Hillie MUN!

Quarter of high school students not in by bell

Administration tasked with looking for answers to chronic absenteeism

By Maya Bennett and Jaylene Viera

HAVERHILL— The issue of student absenteeism can't metaphorically hide in the bathroom stalls any longer.

Last month, families of Haverhill High School students received a unique message from the Haverhill High School administration sharing troubling school data about attendance, while also asking for families' help.

The email sent out by HHS administrators read as follows:

"Starting this Thursday, January 19th, we will begin suspending students who refuse to attend class. Students will be detained and processed for suspension. Parents will be contacted and students will be transported home via a bus that will be made available to us throughout the school day."

Beneath that was a table showing the attendance log for Tuesday, Jan. 17, which revealed that more than 10 percent

of the student body was absent, and an even larger number were not in the building by the start of first period. In all, 245 students were absent on that given Tuesday and 320 were tardy. Those numbers combined comprise more than 25 percent of the student population.

Digging through a sample of the daily attendance bulletins, Brown & Gold also found that January 17 is not an anomaly, but a snapshot of a trou-

bling trend.

On January 25, for example, the total number of absences was 217 and tardies 313, and on January 10 289 students were absent and another 210 were tardy.

Based on samples from seven randomly selected daily attendance bulletins, on average, 246 students are absent, and that number climbed as high as 313 on days such as December 16. The average tardies per day is

247, but on January 26, the number climbed to as much as 333. Overall, nearly 25 percent of the student body is not in the building before the second bell on a daily basis.

Further research has shown that the younger grades, specifically the freshman class, regularly has the highest number of absences within the high school.

Continued on page 2

Balancing Act



Courtesy Photos/Marilyn Caradonna

Junior Olivia Melo sets standard in MVC gymnastics and the classroom

By Meg Gardner

HAVERHILL— Junior Olivia Melo has been a committed and accomplished member of the HHS gymnastics team since her freshman year, when she was voted "Rookie of the Year." She also just recently placed fourth out of 20 competitors in the most recent MVCs. As if being an exceptionally talented gymnast isn't hard enough, she is also a straight-A, high honors student, a tough balancing act, but that's kind of her thing.

In addition to her accolades as a member of the

Hillie squad, Melo qualified for the Massachusetts High School Gymnastics State Individual Championships last year, a statewide competition to which only 40 young gymnasts are invited. She also competes annually in the state competition with her club team, Reading Gymnastics, where she took home the gold for beam as a level 8 in 2022.

On top of being a vaunted gymnast, Melo also has a 3.83 grade point average. With taking all Honors classes and balancing two gymnastics

teams, one can't but wonder how she does it.

When asked that question, Melo described a meticulous and grueling regimen: she wakes each day at 6, is out the door by 7, at school till 2:05, and then heads straight to practice at the Y from 2:30-4:30. She then heads directly to a club practice in Reading, which luckily doesn't start until 5:30, giving her a half an hour to get a head start on homework at the gym. At 9:30 p.m. when she finally arrives back home, she hits the books again

for another hour while having dinner and then tries to get to bed about 11 before starting it all again.

When asked where she gets the drive to do this day in and day out, Melo said she is motivated to be more than just a good athlete.

"I feel education has always been important to me, and my family always had a rule that school comes first," she said.

Continued on page 4

Senior streamer fosters online community

User malwar3_92 a.k.a. HHS senior Trish Pham talks about her success with streaming

By Jaylene Viera



HAVERHILL— For many high school students, academic success is the ultimate sign of accomplishment, but what if we reach outside the limitations of scholarly endeavors and take a look at the achievements of our students outside of the classroom?

Here we find students like Trish Pham, a HHS senior who spends her days after the final bell streaming to thousands of friends and followers.

In September 2021 Pham started an account on the app Reality, her goal simply to open herself up and maybe make a few new friends. However, over the past two years her stream has amassed nearly 9,500 followers.

Live streaming is a form of media where an individual is recorded and broadcasted all at once, similar to live television. These streams are

presented on apps like Twitch, YouTube, and Instagram. It is real time entertainment, and can cover a wide array of topics. While some streamers cover gaming and media, others simply talk about their everyday lives and activities.

Pham's streams consist mainly of her talking about her day, as well as having general conversation with the people viewing. In her latest stream, Pham updated her followers on her classes and her experiences at the high school, as well as asking her audience how they've been doing over the past month. The theme behind most of Pham's livestreams is just events that have happened in her everyday life that she's comfortable enough to share.

Continued on page 2

INSIDE

STRAIN OF TEACHER ABSENCES PAGE 2

PRINCIPAL SEARCH BEGINS ANEW PAGE 2

HHS CERTIFICATION OPPORTUNITIES PAGE 2

LET US PEE IN PEACE! PAGE 3

PISS POOR BATHROOM BEHAVIOR PAGE 3

iREADY CELEBRATION UNDERWHELMS PAGE 3

STORYTIME W/ MS. SABELLA PAGE 3

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.

HHS provides many certification opportunities

By Noelle Gregoire

Mental Health

Haverhill High provides hundreds of students the opportunity to gain professional certifications in a variety of areas, including lifeguarding, first aid, and web development, just to name a few. Since it started in 2016, the CTE program has granted 383 certifications, across all fields, to ambitious Hillies.

Recently, another certification has been added: Mental Health First Aid certification, which is available to any interested student over the age of 18 for free.

Taught by Ms. Anna Sabella the class will run on Friday, April 7. Students will be able to get certified for Mental Health First Aid in a single six-hour training course. This certification can help students that hope to get into social work, education, or other communication related fields.

Health Care Program

As part of the Health Care program, students can receive the following certifications: EMT training, Nurse Aide Certification (CNA), First Aid, CPR/BLS, and Alzheimer Association Approved Dementia Training 10-hour Certification.

Students have to be a senior to receive the EMT certification but do not need to be in the Career Technical Education program to obtain it. All other Health Care certifications are usually obtained during a student's sophomore and junior year through the CTE program. For more information and inquiries contact Victoria Kelley, head of the CTE program at Haverhill High.

Technology-Based

Other CTE-exclusive certifications are technology related: ISSN Information Support Services and Networking -Chapter 74 Programs Completion Certificate, P&WD Programming and Web Development Chapter 74 Program Completion Certificate, CISCO IT Essentials Course Completion, and CISCO Intro to Networking Course Completion.

These programs help aid the process of gaining work experience and open opportunities to work in the student's desired field at a younger age. The OSHA 10-Hour Workplace Safety Certification provides the requirement for many manual labor jobs as well which can also be gained through the CTE program.

Non-CTE

There are three other certifications that are available to students outside the CTE program as well. The ServSafe Food Handler Certification, CareerSafe Cyber Safety Awareness Certificate, and a lifeguarding certification.

The lifeguarding certification is provided via a single semester gym class and costs \$50 to receive. Outside of the high school, lifeguarding classes can cost anywhere from \$300-\$500. George Nigro teaches and runs the lifeguarding program each year. Students just need to be recommended by a teacher, be proficient in swimming, and be 16 years or older by the time of the testing.

Every semester, 10 to 15 students receive their lifeguard certification with a majority pass rate.

ATTENDANCE:

Continued from page 1

This issue has been persistent in the city for some time. Based on data from the Massachusetts Department of Education, Haverhill perennially falls in the bottom 30 schools statewide when it comes to absenteeism, which has made the issue a top priority for the district in its configuring of the upcoming school budget. According to School Committee Member Gail Sullivan, attendance, as complicated of an issue as it is, is a top priority.

Prior to the email being sent out to parents, Associate Principal Victoria Lu addressed the high school's attendance issues

and how the administration has been working to combat it.

"I think that we try to address it on an individual basis," Lu said. "A lot of times attendance is symptomatic of other issues that students are dealing with that prevent them from coming to school. We've tried to do different types of interventions, bring kids in with their parents, have re-entry meetings. Usually, if the student has been out for a few days, we'll have guidance reach out to home first. If guidance doesn't make contact, it goes to our attendance officers."

As attendance issues

have grown increasingly worse over the last couple years, staff members are beginning to worry due to the same students repeatedly missing class. Veteran English teacher Anna Sabella worries that instead of a coordinated response, teachers are often shouldering the responsibility of responding to chronic absenteeism.

"Attendance is a huge problem, and there doesn't seem to be consistent follow through if a kid is chronically absent," she stated. "It's kind of fallen on the teachers, a lot of stuff has."

Through the midst of the chaos, admin is try-

ing to sort out what issues are happening behind the scenes.

"There's only so much we can do," Lu said. "We're trying to understand where students are at, and we understand different family structures and priorities. We're just trying our best to work with students."

During the February faculty meeting, administrators did present initiatives to address absenteeism. This included putting together grade-level teams, led by the assistant principals, to look at individual students in that grade and gain insight into the unique reasons for their absences.

When a teacher is out, many others must step up

High school students, colleagues feel impact of teacher absences

By Avery Becker

HAVERHILL— Student attendance has risen to the forefront of the district's concerns in recent months, but teacher attendance has also been an issue this school year.

According to Haverhill High School's Operations Specialist, Roland Boucher, an average of 10 teachers are absent each day. There have also been some days when up to 125 coverages are necessary, meaning as many as 25 teachers are absent.

When teachers at the high school are out, each of their five classes need to be covered by another teacher. Therefore, on any given day, 50-60 other teachers are asked to cover a period for their colleagues.

At the beginning of the school year, three full-time subs were coming in every day to cover classes, but the demand was too high. Therefore teachers, and sometimes administrators, are being pulled away from prep time and meetings to supervise someone else's class, often in a discipline outside their area of exper-

tise.

According to Boucher, teachers having to cover classes takes them away from other important work, such as team meetings, which revolve around finding ways to help at-risk students and modify curriculum.

"We're pulling [teachers] from something that would be contributing to the education of kids, for the purposes of a coverage. It's not an equitable exchange by any means," said Boucher.

Not only is it detrimental to other teachers, but issues with teacher attendance negatively affect the classes and their students.

"[Teacher absences] definitely negatively impacts the quality of instruction in the class that's being covered," Boucher said. "If I have an art teacher standing in front of a math class, the instruction is not what we'd like it to be."

Whether you're a student, teacher, or administrator, it is clear that teacher absences take a toll. As Mr. Boucher succinctly sums

up: "We know that [teacher absences] have a negative impact on the school."

It is no mystery that many of the absences are related to the effects of the pandemic and other strains of illness that have surged this year. A lot of times teachers have to stay home with their sick kids, stay away for five days after they test positive for covid, or are struggling with their own health.

Mr. Boucher admits that attendance has been less than ideal but suggested the primary cause has to do with a particularly rough season in terms of the spread of various illnesses.

"There have been a large number of absences," Mr. Boucher said. "A lot of teacher absences still have to do with illness: new illness, family illness, sick kids, etc."

Sometimes teachers also have other professional obligations that preclude them from doing coverages and otherwise chipping in to cover for absent colleagues. CTE teacher Lori Porazinski, for

example, recently started her master's practicum and isn't able to cover classes as much as she used to.

"Teachers are supposed to be flexible, empathetic, kind and understanding," she said. "I have no problem doing coverages and I've done many in the past. I just recently started my master's practicum so I need time for that but after it's done, I'll go right back to helping out."

Peter Morse, a photography teacher, also agrees that coverages are part of a teacher's responsibility but acknowledges that sometimes they can be difficult to balance.

"Last year was my first year teaching at Haverhill High and I had a lot of coverages. Coverages can be tough because it's sometimes hard to get to your next class in time when you're running around the building," Morse explained. "However, I think coverages and the way they're assigned have gotten a lot smoother this year."

STREAMER:

Continued from page 1



Hillie senior streamer Irish Pham's avatar

When asked about how her popular stream started, Pham is still shocked that it ever took off.

"I might have seen the app just on an advertisement on TikTok, but I thought it looked interesting," Pham stated. "It kind of blew up a few days after I started, I don't know how it happened or why. I kid you not, I tried it one night, and then the more I kept doing it the more people kept joining."

Pham went on to explain that her primary purpose for starting the account and broadcasting to the vast world of the internet was because she needed to vent.

"[My stream] was just meant to be a good stress reliever, especially for that particular year. But it ended up teaching me a lot about myself and helped me grow, especially my self-esteem. A lot of positive self-growth happened that year."

Although Pham has garnered a great follow-

ing, she has never actually shown her face on the app. An avatar, which is a filter that can be placed over the streamer for privacy reasons, has been the main mascot for all of Pham's streams. Pham explained that the avatar itself is sort of like a game character. She customizes the avatar to look the way she wants, and it functions as a sort of mask during her streams.

Pham also shared that she withholds most of her own personal information, such as her contact information and location, and that it's mostly just pleasant conversation and banter between her and her viewers. Still, Pham has been able to create a personal connection between herself and the audience.

"It's just me kind of talking about my experiences in my life," Pham said. "I've met a lot of good friends online because of the streaming. I'm super grateful for that."

HHS principal search begins for third straight year

'We need that clear philosophy of education and leadership'

By Allisondra Phipps

HAVERHILL— The search for a new principal will begin anew for the third straight year, as Kevin Soraghan and Roland Boucher return to retirement next year.

Job postings for this position were made public on multiple job sites geared towards educators just after Winter Break and will close no fewer than 10 days after the posting date.

The posting descriptions request a candidate that has prior administrative experience, is licensed as a principal or assistant principal from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and preferably, is bilingual.

Associate Principal Victoria Lu said that "Dr. Marotta's office would be coordinating all of the different panels and then the

school committee would have the final say." She said a committee will be screening interviewees on February 5 and the first round of interviews will be conducted the week of February 8.

The interview process will also include a panel made up of teachers, students, and parents whose input will be considered in the selection process.

Lu discussed the value of having this committee made up of community members.

"Including students and teachers is an important piece of this process as this person is going to be a leader," Lu said.

"Even though Mr. Soraghan and Mr. Boucher have done a great job, the new administrator needs to have a clear vision for what Haverhill High is going to be in the future.

Students, parents, and teachers all need to buy into that vision if that person is going to be successful in this role," she added.

With Mr. Soraghan temporarily resuming his retirement until May, Mr. Boucher is sharing the head principal duties with Lu.

"We need that clear philosophy of education and leadership," Lu said, emphasizing the importance of having an administrator that will lead the school with a clear vision.

Lu also pointed out the important contributions Soraghan and Boucher have made this school year.

"I really think that Mr. Soraghan and Mr. Boucher have done a great job making this school feel like a safe learning environment again, and I think they've done a great job

of reminding us what the basics are that we need to be doing all the time to be successful," she said. "Between the leadership turnover and the pandemic, we've lost a lot of crucial systems."

While Lu recognizes the excellent work of the current interim principals, she acknowledges the value of having long-term administration, as it helps the school move forward and make progress.

"I also don't think that [not having a permanent administration] has hurt us, but we're treading water a bit," she said.

"We haven't taken steps forward in terms of looking at the quality of our instructions, quality of our assessments, or doing the big work that I think we were doing with former Principal [Glenn] Burns," Lu said. "It kind of stopped for a minute

B&G survey: Reading in decline, screentime on the rise

Survey confirms most cynical assumptions: scholars are lost in their phones

By Kai'ri Bohanan

HAVERHILL— According to the survey, which was conducted by Brown & Gold and received 148 responses from across all four grades, 80 percent of respondents claimed to spend less than 3 hours reading unassigned materials a week, while 85 percent of respondents reported spending more than 3 hours a day on their cell phones.

Of the students who reported spending fewer than 3 hours a week reading unassigned materials, 50 percent of them claimed to spend less than an hour doing so.

Additionally, of the 85 percent of students that reported using phones for more than 3 hours, 43 percent reported spending more than 5 hours on their

phones per day.

Upon further observation, it was discovered that out of 83 females that completed the survey, 55 (66 percent) of them reported reading in their free time. On the other hand, of the 58 males that completed the survey, 23 (40 percent) reported reading in their free time.

On the opposing side, a majority of females (51 percent) reported that they spend 3-5 hours on their phone, whereas half of the male respondents reported spending more than 5 hours on their phones.

It was found that 62 percent of students in College Prep classes reported not reading in their freetime and also 52 percent reported using their phones for more than 5

hours each day.

Overall, it was reported that between all class levels, 44 percent of respondents reported not reading in their free time and 42 percent of students across all class levels reported using their phones for over 5 hours every day.

When asked about reading habits, senior and wrestler Noah Levesque said that he didn't consider himself a reader, and when asked why, he remarked, "The challenge is sitting still for too long, I need to be active. I like being active."

Noah told Brown & Gold that he spends 3-4 hours a day on his phone, mostly on social media. Also, when asked why he was more likely to be on his phone than reading he

explained, "It's like just quick information that I can easily take in and then with a book I really have to examine it all and look deep into it."

About 50 percent of respondents take mostly Honors classes, the other 50 percent being divided between AP classes (16.8 percent), college prep classes (28.2 percent), and a small percentage of Early College (6.7 percent).

Additionally, the survey asked what types of reading students engage in, with 50 percent of respondents reading purely off of technology (30 percent on social media posts and 20 percent on stuff from the internet.)



OPINION: The Real Super Spreaders

Bathroom dwellers are infringing upon students' rights to pee in peace

By Sasha Orr

HAVERHILL—No one I know uses the school bathrooms. Mind you, plenty of people do, just no one I know who goes to school to learn. All the people I know, the kids who are, like, in class when they're in school, they all have personal reasons for not making use of the lavatory but they fall along the same lines: the bathrooms here are basically unusable. Whether it's people crowding in front of the sinks to talk or skipping class by sitting in the stalls, people who actually need to handle their bathroom business simply cannot.

It's really an epidemic of behavior that's reaching every wing of the school. A few years ago, there were only one or two bathrooms open but at least you were able to pee. They were havens where you could go and relieve yourself without interruption, and then wash your hands after. Those days are gone. Even if you're lucky enough to find a free stall, it's likely that you won't be able to wash your hands afterwards because eight people are standing in front of the sinks gabbing.

I think the severe lack of bathroom etiquette at Haverhill High actually warrants a mandatory class on restroom propriety, but I fear all the students who really need to take it would skip—in the bathroom. The real issue with this behavior is that it's truly pervasive and uncomfortable. It's not behavior without victims, it disrupts people's day. These issues may seem fickle, but if you can't wash your hands or you have to hold the stall door up while you go because someone broke it off its hinges, there



A couple girls just hanging out in the 200's handicap stall

is an actual problem within the school that needs to be fixed, and it's not just an inconvenience—it's a bona-fide health hazard.

Whether it's no soap, not being able to wash your hands, or not having any toilet paper, an unstoppable spread of germs is beginning to fester at the school and one can't help but wonder how much these skippers contribute to this rampant spread of illness. Think of the next time you pick up a stapler or touch a door-knob: how many unwashed hands have touched it? then think about those students who ask to use the bathroom and don't come back for 30 minutes and you'll know who to blame. Talk about super spreaders!

Lots of these skippers sit in the handicap stall, shoving in five people at a time to sit on the floor. But skippers who hold up the handicap stall are not only annoying, they take away vital spaces from disabled

people or those with medical conditions that need the space and access that designated stalls provides.

To save the bathrooms and the dignity expected when using a bathroom, the school must work on stopping skipping, which it at least seems they are working hard to do. Per Mr. Boucher's latest email to families, skippers will be immediately suspended, a policy which I, and many other students, understand, and even applaud. I'm glad to know that the administration is catching onto the fact that skipping doesn't just mean that those students aren't learning, but it's affecting students who just want to use the bathroom so they can focus on learning rather than trying to speculate how much liquid their bladders can actually hold. Some students simply refuse to use the bathroom because other students make it such a bad experience, so they'll hold in their pee, deprive them-

selves of drinking water to prevent going to the school bathrooms.

Our society has an idea of people's sacred right to the bathroom—which should exist and should be respected. People deserve the dignity of being allowed to go to the bathroom whenever they need to go. But do we really deserve that luxury, because in school it is a luxury, when people abuse it so greatly? I understand why teachers or subs won't let people go to the bathroom, because they just want to prevent someone from potentially leaving for 20 minutes who will sit in the bathroom and mindlessly scroll on their phone.

I don't know what exactly the administration, teachers, or other students can do to stop these people, even though they're hazards to the people around them. Considering all the collateral damage these skippers cause to other students, like viral super spreading, potential UTI's, abusing the needed space of the handicap stall, something should be done.

I think the only solution left is for these skippers to somehow become aware of their own dereliction. I mean, what sort of life do you lead where the only place you aspire to go is the A Wing bathroom? I think these skippers should look in the mirror and evaluate their caged existences. The drab blue tiled walls, the broken stalls are what fill their days, all the while ignoring the actual use of the bathroom. What peace should you have in your life if you can't even let others pee?

Stories from the Stall

HHS lavs are incubators of genius

By Joysmer Minaya Heredia

HAVERHILL—Haverhill High School is a place known for fostering scholarly youth that go on to become the leaders of tomorrow. Some believe that these scholars can be located in the depths of the Classical Academy, or in the library preparing for their next National Honors Society meeting. I, however, know the secret. The real go-getters are found in the stalls of the Haverhill High bathrooms.

The bathrooms are an incubator for rogue genius and valuable intel. Like in the salons of Paris, future entrepreneurs, influencers, SoundCloud rappers, and shoddy journalists (the latter of which I am), convene in the stalls to discuss revolutionary ideas such as Andrew Tate's arrest.

They also wheel and deal in these laboratories. For example, I personally met an entrepreneur selling hits on a vape for \$5 a hit. Now, personally, I thought he was a tad bit overzealous. Five dollars is a bit expensive for my taste, but I saw a stroke of genius on his part. To the next customer that walked in, he offered half the price on a "discounted trial." I was able to bear witness to a self-made capitalist before my very eyes.

Thankfully, I got to experience the seeds of true entrepreneurship myself with that story. However, I am not alone in seeing scholars sipping from the fountain of knowledge in the HHS bathrooms. Take my classmate in my Accounting class, ROTC

member and fellow accountant Travis Hubbard. He told me about people practicing the art of business by playing their favorite game: Monopolio. As he walked to the john, they began to fight to settle a barter gone wrong: two railroads for Boardwalk.

Hehehehehe. Apologies, the laughing gas was kicking in. Yes, laughing gas in the bathrooms. The more intelligent amongst us will call it nitrous but the point remains. Another associate of mine told me about how when he walked in the bathroom someone offered him laughing gas for the low price of 'Free.99.' He told me, "I don't believe the kid even had it to be honest." I would be inclined to believe him but ever since then he returns from the restrooms with a giggle.

Seeing all of my classmates leave for the bathroom one by one lets me know how ubiquitous the golden thrones of Haverhill High really are. Fellow scholars running through the halls and scampering into the stalls to congregate fills my soul with faith for the world. When I'm the only student in class left and my teacher goes to use the loo, I feel reassured knowing that lessons are being imbued with the power of the enchanted whiz palaces. And when I'm alone in my classroom, with no one to teach me, I can at least remain confident that the stalls can raise the next president of the student council.

Teacher Tales: Ms. Sabella, tell us about love...

"Ms. Sabella! You heartbreaker," or "The Bob Smith memorial flowers"

Interview by Jaylene Viera

Viera: Your word today is gonna be love!

Sabella: Love! Oh, who doesn't love love?

Viera: [laughter] That is perfect!

Sabella: So I think it is always a fun time of year. I think of all the love that I'm so fortunate to have in my life. My fiancé passed away, his birthday is February 16th.

Viera: Mhm

Sabella: So that was always like a fun time for us, Valentine's Day and his birthday. Um, the year I was pregnant was the year we got eighty inches of snow, in 2015. And he grew up in Indiana but spent the last few years of his life in Florida. So he was not equipped for this winter!

Viera: [laughter]

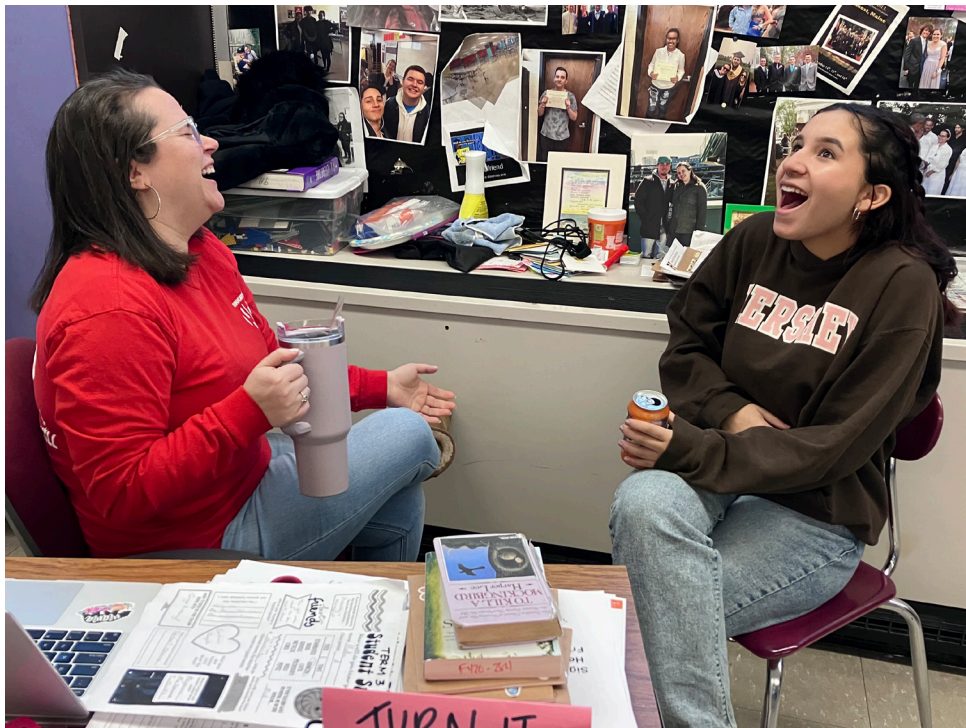
Sabella: And so to surprise him we flew him to Florida for his birthday, so that was really nice. Um, and yeah I think of just-2015 was a big year, that was the year I became a mom. Just having this little person that you can't believe you love so much.

And I have always been 'a-heart-on-my-sleeve' person. I am an open book. **Viera:** I'm kind of like that as well, I'm very bad at hiding my emotions. And it's not only when I'm affectionate, but when I'm angry, annoyed, or even happy you can immediately tell-

Sabella: Right, that's totally me! Like my face will get red, sometimes I start laughing. There's only three people that make me laugh when I'm angry and that's my dad, my brother, and one of my cousins. And I'll start laughing and they say, 'Oh look you're laughing!'

Viera: Yes! And then you have to be like, 'It's not funny!' all angry and upset.

Sabella: Exactly, but yeah when I think of love I think about all the wonderful memories and friends I have here. Y'know planning fun trips and reflecting on the friendships I've had since kindergarten.



Here's a different take on Valentines Day-

Viera: [laughter] oh?

Sabella: I once dumped someone the day before Valentine's Day-

Viera: [gasps] No—you didn't!

Sabella: [laughter] I know, I know.

Viera: Ms. Sabella you heartbreaker!

Sabella: It was awful, I had tried to break up with him like a month before and he was like a stage five clinger-

Viera: [laughter]

Sabella: I could not get rid of him. And at the time I worked at a Hallmark store, so I worked Valentine's Day anyways. He had planned like a bunch of stuff for us to do on the 15th since I had to work. It was just one of those moments where I had to go with my gut and my gut was telling me I couldn't force this anymore. It wasn't fair to him.

Viera: Yeah, I get that.

Sabella: He was so upset, he was like, 'well, I can't cancel the flowers now!'

Viera: [laughter]

Sabella: So the flowers were still delivered and everything, it was really awful. But it was also a good lesson for me to trust my gut.

Viera: How old were you?

Sabella: Twenty-three I think.

Viera: Wow.

Sabella: And obviously I felt terrible, but I learned so much about myself even in the last five years about not settling. Y'know listening to my gut-

Viera: Yeah

Sabella: I think this generation now is so much better with discussion about relationships and stuff like boundaries and self care. Like just not settling anymore. So it was a tough lesson, and I felt awful, but feeling bad wasn't enough to stick around.

Viera: Yeah, I think I definitely still have that issue. I see things as simple as someone doing something sweet for me, and I think I owe them all of a sudden. I feel like I can't set boundaries or react in certain ways to things they do because in my head, who else will do nice things for me? Is there anyone else in the world who will do nice things for me?

Sabella: Exactly.

Viera: It's a tough mindset to break.

Sabella: Well, there's always that 'you-owe-me' mindset some people have. But that is not love!

Viera: Sometimes they don't even say it but you can just feel it, y'know?

Sabella: Yeah, that was definitely a tough one, and my mom saw his name on the flowers. So she called me when she got them at the house, let's say his name is Bob Smith. She goes, 'It's the Bob Smith memorial flowers!'

Viera: [laughter] Oh my God!

Sabella: Yeah she was a little dramatic about it. I've recovered from it all now, and I'm very set in my ways now as a widow and a single mom. I like that it's just me and my son against the world. We have a really great bond, and when I go on a date now I really think about if it's worth it. My standards are entirely different today.

Viera: As they should be! I think that so many people see Valentine's Day as a romantic holiday, but I think Valentine's Day is appreciating the relationships around you. Appreciating people that you love!

Sabella: Yes! I love that this generation has so much understanding and appreciation of their worth!

Viera: [laughter] Well thank you for this wonderful interview Ms. Sabella.

Sabella: You are very welcome.

Mor chikin, less pizza

Notes from the iReady celebration

by Adam Zujewski

HAVERHILL—By far one of my proudest achievements as a Haverhill High scholar is being invited to the January 11 iReady celebration.

I could hardly contain my excitement as the clock moved closer and closer to 1 p.m. As the announcement was made I quickly hopped up from my seat and made my way down to the gym. I realized how lucky I was to be one of the chosen few given the privilege to experience such an event. I imagined the usually unimpressive gym decorated with banners and streamers reading "Way to Go Hillies!"; students lounging around and picking from their chicken sandwiches, wondering how they were so very lucky to be part of such a celebration; and grand speeches by highly salaried individuals who were proud of our achievements.

When I arrived at the stairs leading to the gymnasium, students waited patiently to enter the gym in an organized mob. I was surprised to see such a large crowd had gathered for such a prestigious award. As the stairway filled with students eager to enter the gym for their reward, I began to sweat under my sweatshirt. Whether it was caused by the amount of scholars within the stairway or my uncontainable excitement, I was not sure, but for a second I could feel the air getting warmer.

As I made it into the final hallway leading to the gym, security was as tight as going through TSA at the airport. For some reason, it seemed like everyone was preparing for a fight. I was wondering: Why was security needed at an event celebrating academic achievements?

Wanting to dally no longer in distasteful inquiry, I quickly flashed by and walked through the gym, where behind a line that wrapped through one door and out the other the fruits of all my labors awaited, and they weren't fruits, but beyond even such sweet-

ness: Chic. Fil. A.

However, as I made my way through the food line, I was treated with a far greater delicacy, the legendary Haverhill High school pizza, with its twisted crust and all. It's truly a worthy reward for such dedicated denizens as the 800 of us who mullered around, basking in our genius, tainted only by the rampant profanity.

Like a moth to a flame, students began to gather at the already growing food service line. It turns out trying to shove 800 kids through a double door was not the brightest idea.

Every student had their choice of chips, candy, smaller water, and, of course, what everyone was looking forward to: the school pizza. We were faced with unhappy looking administrators who had been sentenced to the food line. However, they kept the line moving so that me, and all of the students behind me were quickly sent back to the double door that the remaining 200 students out in the hallway were still attempting to force themselves through.

Avoiding the highly dangerous obstacle of scholars strewn across the gym floor and carefully making my way over the forgotten pizza laying on the floor like mine, I found my way to the back gym. Although it wouldn't be enticing in normal circumstances, these were no normal circumstances. The rolled-up wrestling mats (the only available seating) were like looking upon a golden throne, and they were right in front of me to take.

Just as the party was getting started, our life as the top 1 percent had quickly come to an end. There was no rousing speech to encourage further intellectual development. The only things that remained were whispers of the mythical Chick-Fil-A, which had come and gone like tumbleweeds in the wind, as well as pizza crusts littered across the hardwood floors.

MELO: Continued from page 1



Courtesy Photos/Marilyn Caradonna

"I want to have a good balance in my life, and not just be good at sports. I also want to be smart, I want to be caring, I want to be nice, I want to be a well-rounded person."

She also credited the strong bond and support she finds with the girls she competes with and how they help to motivate one

another. "All of my club teammates, they all do high school gymnastics and school as well, so they all know exactly what I'm feeling, and what I'm going through, so talking with them really helps out a lot. None of us would ever say, 'oh, take a break.' We just can't do that."

Although a passion for the sport was immediately ignited in Melo when she started gymnastics at 5, Melo admits that it took some convincing to get her parents on board.

"My parents were originally against me doing [gymnastics]," she said. "Gymnastics is very demanding on your body and mind, so [my parents] wanted to make sure I could handle that...and that I still had a childhood," she said.

After some coaxing and some little girl charm, Melo took her first steps into the gymnastics world at Legends Gymnastics

in North Andover, and it didn't take long for Melo to reveal a natural aptitude for the sport. After two short years, she took it to a new level and began competing in gymnastics at the tender age of 7.

After years of competing with Legends Gymnastics, Olivia moved over to Reading Gymnastics in 2021. There, Melo advanced to becoming a level 9 gymnast. Level 9 is the second highest level in competitive gymnastics. Level 10 gymnasts are typically gearing up to join the national team or preparing to compete at the collegiate level.

Like many great athletes, Melo has also faced many challenges throughout her career, including both injury and grief. Early in her sophomore season, Melo landed short during her vault event but never thought much of it. While still trying to push through the season, Melo eventu-

ally discovered she had sprained her anterior tibialis and had anterior tibial syndrome. The injury was emotionally taxing on Melo. While she was in pain, Melo couldn't bring herself to take a break. "I just couldn't do it," Melo said.

In the midst of recovery, when it finally seemed like the worst was over and she was making progress toward optimal health, Melo's father unexpectedly passed away due to a heart-attack.

"It really hit me hard," Melo said, adding that she is now not only working hard for herself but also for her dad. "I would say that he's one of my biggest motivators, especially now after his passing. I have to make him proud."

Without a doubt, Melo certainly is following through with that task. As a junior, Melo is currently talking to college coaches and is hoping to step up to the challenge

of NCAA gymnastics. Medium-sized colleges and schools in the New England/ New York area seem to pique Melo's interest, such as Rhode Island College and SUNY Cortland. In terms of studies, Melo expressed interest in studying Kinesiology to stay connected with the sport of gymnastics throughout her adult years.

As the season kicks off, Melo has already achieved first in every event, except bars at the first high school meet of the season. The second meet, Melo won first place all around.

With her accomplishments so far, Melo emphasized the roles both parents played in getting her there.

"They definitely motivate me," she said. "If your parents don't support you in a sport, you can't continue because you need that support. They definitely dedicated their life to me."

Hillies Hockey Aims High!

HHS Boys Hockey On Track for Return Trip to Postseason

By Abigail Brown

HAVERHILL—Hillie hockey has skated into the winter sports season with a bang.

At the time of publication, the boys' varsity team was 7-3-1, with major wins against Pentucket and Bedford. Other big wins include clinching the Hillies Christmas Tournament against Sanborn.

The Hillies are striving to qualify for the MIAA State Tournament for a second straight year, after breaking a several-season drought last season.

Head coach Joe Roberts, who led the team to states last year, said the growth the team made was inspiring but just, what he hopes is, the first step. The boys are hoping to achieve some big goals for the upcoming season.

"The goal is always to make the State Tournament," Roberts said. "This season we have an extra goal. I would like to win our league".

Roberts has been

a part of the coaching staff since 2007, being named head coach in 2012. When asked what the best part of his extended and continuing tenure with the Haverhill team is, he expressed gratitude for the team building and the growth of his players.

"Everyone likes to say the victories, but for me it's just seeing a kid improve from start to finish," Roberts said.

Captains for the 2023 season are goalie Calvin Pruett and left wing Johnny Bishop. Pruett has been part of the varsity team since freshman year, and Bishop transferred to HHS his sophomore year from Whittier Tech after playing varsity as a freshman for the Wildcats.

Brimming with confidence, Pruett is looking forward to the playoffs.

"I know we are going to make it, I know it for a fact," he said. "We're too good this year".

After being a part of

a successful season last year, the boys are hoping to come back even better and stronger.

The boys got a taste of the State Tournament last season and are using that for a drive to get back to that position again. Unfortunately, they were put up against the second Division I seed while the HHS team was the 31st. They are hoping they do not get put into that kind of situation again.

"We want to make it to the State Tournament again," Bishop said. "We have to win 10 games and win more games than lose".

Team chemistry plays a big part for this team. Having the support of teammates on the ice and outside of the Vet is what keeps these boys together.

Sophomore Jack Baker has been a part of the varsity team since his freshman year. When asked about his feelings on the captains he said they have



Hillie varsity hockey team.

been pivotal in building camaraderie.

"The captains have done a good job bringing the team together and the boys together by doing dinners and team bonding," Baker said.

Captain Bishop said having a strong locker room as a key to success.

"I really just wanted to build chemistry with the team, I feel like chemistry is the biggest part," Bishop said. "We're all like best

friends with each other."

Both of these boys have the most goals of the season as of right now. They are both at 5 goals each and are hoping to bring some more to get their team a win at the State Tournament.

The Haverhill boys' hockey team's biggest rivals this season are Methuen and Shawsheen Tech. Last season, the boys defeated both Methuen and Shawsheen, so they

are hoping for more of the same this year.

One thing that gets the boys hyped up and play their best is the fan section, urging Hillie Nation to come show their support as they make their drive to the State Tournament.

"It's awesome when Hillie Nation is at the games," Bishop said. "It gives us so much more to play for."

For The Ones Who Came Before Us

The following essay is the third installment in a series paying tribute to the legacy of influential family members.

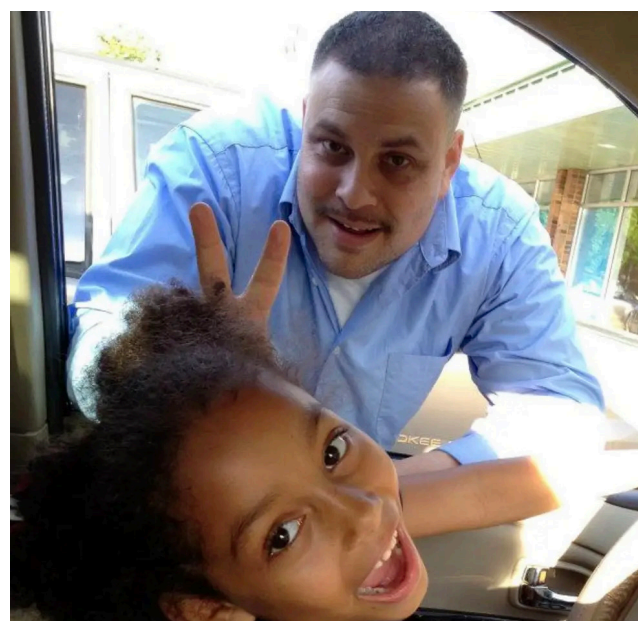
"Right Place, Wrong Time"

My father almost got bit by a camel in Jerusalem, missed my sister's birth because he got stuck in London during riot's, and was in Israel in the comeback of the war against Palestine.

My father loves traveling and traveled to so many different places, with so many stories to come with them, England, Malaysia, Germany, Egypt, and more. As I hear these stories I slowly start to realize that with these travels he also has the bad habit of being in the wrong place at the wrong time, constantly. My personal favorite experience he told me about besides the camel was probably when he traveled to Israel in 2000's and while in the midst of his trip he woke up one day and heard on the news that

the war between Israel and Palestine had started again. He had gone there because he thought it was safe as they were working out peace when he first got there but when he looked on the news and saw that the war was starting again, he called his family to let them know he was ok and headed home out of the fact that he didn't feel safe anymore.

One time, In May of 2011 my dad went on a grad school internship to London and it was set to go from May to August but with his impeccable luck the London Riot happened on August 6-11th, right before he had to leave. The London Riot was people rioting because a black man was shot and killed by a white cab driver. This had caused looting, arson, the deployment of police and death in London. When looking out of his flat he



saw the burning trash fires, the people breaking into businesses and many people being injured. Not just having to hear about it in the news but having to witness it outside his home. When it was over he left to go home to see

his new born baby girl and his angry wife for missing his baby girl's birth.

When he went and traveled to Nigeria for work he never would have thought that right as he got there the Ebola outbreak would happen and in the

worst place out of all places. I remember when he said he was going to Nigeria for work and remember being so excited because he said he would bring me back a special gift but instead he got the gift of having to be temperature checked going into and out in the airport. I did in fact still get a special gift, it was a beautiful necklace but for me to be able to get this gift he had to go through multiple check ups beforehand.

My father has been traveling since he was young, starting with his family trips to Indonesia. He took countless trips as a child with his family. The first trip he ever took by himself was right after high school when he traveled to Amsterdam to visit his family in 1995, also might be the only time he was in the right place at the right time. When he was there he got to visit

the scenery as an adult, finally got to appreciate the beauty of Amsterdam and really connect with his family and the place. This trip really set off the feeling of wanting to travel around the world because he chose this trip and chose to explore the place of his choice. Nothing could go wrong in this beautiful once in a lifetime feeling and experience of that moment.

My father has traveled to many different places and has many different stories and I thrive to have that many experiences and stories to tell my future children. Maybe I'll try to have them with good timing instead of bad but still have them nonetheless.

My father has seen life in ways many people can't ever say they have seen, he has learned many lessons and holds many memories to show them and one day I would love to say that I can do the same.

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