



BROWN & GOLD

Haverhill High School

November 2023



Conneely's Corner

The **Drama Club's** first production of the 2023-2024 school year is *Deadline*, a murder mystery. The performances for this thrilling fall play will be Friday, 11/17 at 7 p.m. and Saturday, 11/18 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Early Action Deadlines are 11/1 and 11/15.

Senior Portraits for the year book are due 11/26.

NHS will host its annual **Hillie Thanksgiving** dinner on Thursday, 11/16.

Thanksgiving Football Game vs. Lowell High School will kick off Thursday, 11/23 at 10 a.m. at Cawley Stadium in Lowell.

Thanksgiving Break starts with a half day Wednesday, 11/22 and runs through Monday, 11/27.

Congrats to the **Varsity Girls Volleyball** team for winning the silver bracket in the Volley Hall Classic at the American International College.

Hillies over 18: Local elections for our new mayor, school committee, and city council are being held Tuesday, 11/7.

Upcoming SAT dates: Saturdays 11/4 and 12/2. Last day to register for 12/2 is 11/21.

59th Santa Parade: Sunday before Thanksgiving, 11/19.

Huge shoutout to **Girls Volleyball** who just won their third consecutive MVC title after beating Andover in four sets.

Extra kudos to team captain and student-athlete extraordinaire **Emmerson Cerasuolo** who broke the MA state record with 44 assists in a match, also against Andover.

Big cheers for **Girls Cross Country** who won the MVC. Congratulations to Lauren Downer, Molly Tabb, Madison Howard, and Jemma Schoenfeld, who took the top four places to win the meet for the girls.

Shoutout to **Mr. Morrison** for being inducted into the Burlington High School Hall of Fame, Class of 1991, for playing on the boys basketball team that made it to states.

Girls Swim will compete in sectionals at BU on 11/5 and in states at MIT 11/1. Good luck girls!

Marching Towards Mastery

HHS implements new grading policies, grading floor to promote engagement

By Jake Axford

HAVERHILL- When it comes to a grading floor, how low can you go? Haverhill High School has an idea, and it's a major component of the new grading policies recently implemented.

HHS administration has codified a new grading policy that strives to more accurately assess students based on their academic skills and knowledge rather than on their work completion, behavior, or attendance. The

new grading policy also includes a grading floor, meaning no student can receive a grade lower than a 40 for any given term, regardless of their actual numerical average.

According to new principal Mr. Michael Downs, this progression toward what is known as "mastery grading" is intended to give students who have a bad term or two a chance to demonstrate they have the skills required to progress in their education.

"This is about giving students a chance," said Downs, who believes that if students have a 40 after term one their odds of passing for the year are higher, which gives them an incentive to engage more deeply in their learning.

In a recent email to staff Downs added, "The grading floor is something to try and make a difference in students' performance and staying engaged. This is not a cure and, as I have

said, if students do not meet minimum competency they will still fail."

The high school's current policy divides grading into only two categories of assessment: formative and summative, and must be used by all subjects and all grades, with exceptions being made for Advanced Placement classes.

Formative assessments, which will account for 30-percent of students' total grade, include things such as quizzes, home-

work, and minor in-class assignments. In other words, assignments that are intended to help students form the skills and knowledge necessary to perform on summative assessments.

Students cannot receive a grade lower than a 40 on formative assignments, even if the assignment was never completed or handed in.

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Reapers Reaping Rewards



Hillies MCJROTC Reapers hoist a few of their many trophies after a recent Raider competition.

Hillies MCJROTC Reapers ranked #1 in Region 1

By Emily Miller

HAVERHILL-Be it internship programs, Early College, Classical Academy, and the various athletic programs, Haverhill High School provides students with countless opportunities to reach their potential and set themselves up for future success. One of the most successful programs, however, is often overlooked: the MCJROTC program run by First Sergeant David Grinstead and Gunnery Sergeant Henry "Gunny" Danis.

Hillies MCJROTC currently ranks number one out of the 67 programs

that make up Region 1, which encompasses the northeast down to Delaware and west as far as Chicago.

For the fourth consecutive year, Haverhill's MCJROTC Reapers also received the honor of being named a Naval Honor School, an award that recognizes an exemplary commitment to long hours, hard work and volunteerism. Not only did they receive Naval Honor School, but they also received the Marine Corps Junior ROTC Outstanding Unit Award which is given

only to the best school in the region. But these accolades are merely a continuation and result of the 67 trophies the Hillie MCJROTC cadets pulled in from Raider competitions across the country last year.

These accomplishments of course speak volumes about the program but when you talk to the cadets, these rewards are the logical result of what brings them to the program in the first place: the sense of community they find in one another, the support they provide each

other, and the commitment to doing their best.

Summed up succinctly by senior and Company First Sergeant Luca Franceschino: MCJROTC is a family.

"This family fights like any other, but at the end of the day, we are one big family that has fun together. As time goes on we learn to become more of a family and spend lots of time with each other," Franceschino explained.

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Tackling Winters of Discontent

Superintendent Marotta talks challenge of calling snow days

By Ava Vasquez

HAVERHILL- On a last-minute half-day last winter, due to expected treacherous weather, teachers and students were surprised when a snowstorm left them shoveling out their cars in the Haverhill High parking lot. While the storm was quickly brewing, everyone was worried for students driving on slick, black ice, as the district miscalculated the earlier arrival of the storm.

There were several missed calls last year that made the Haverhill community question the protocol for calling snow days which Superintendent

Margaret Marotta noted is often a tough decision to make.

"There's always a lot of controversy," Dr. Marotta said. "The weather people get it wrong a lot...It's hard [to predict] but it gets more accurate as we get closer, but it's a balance of trying to give people [advanced] notice, especially the parents."

Under the Haverhill Public Schools' Facebook, Dr. Marotta, after the surprise early arrival of the snow last year, made an apology on Facebook, saying, "We called this one wrong, and we are so sorry!"

Under the post, there were numerous comments discussing safety.

One commenter, Angel, said: "The kids and adults were not safe. Safety is the top priority."

Another commenter, Diane, said she gives "a lot of respect to those who admit to a poor decision," in response to the superintendent's apology.

Another commenter, Paul, stated: "I'm confused as to how 15 districts around us all got it right, but we got it wrong?"

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A look out the doors of the high school on one of last year's tricky calls that made getting home treacherous.

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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.

Social probation ushers in other new policies

Principal Downs emphasizes safety behind new protocols

By Emily Fusco

HAVERTHILL-A new principal means new ideas and new policies for the student body to follow.

Michael Downs, the new principal of Haverhill High School, has informed students and advisors of new social probation rules, which have been controversial and have forced only advanced ticket sales for school events.

In past years social probation was practiced but not enforced. Mr. Downs has indicated that the rules will now be enforced on a consistent basis and, in some cases, expanded. His intention is to show kids that they can't get away with poor behavior and expect to have the same opportunities as students who follow school policy.

"Remember, every event we have, every single event we have after school, is a privilege, not a right," said Downs.

He feels that a stricter policy regarding attendance at after-school events will benefit the students and promote a more positive and safe environment.

A major piece of the new social probation policy includes not being allowed entry to school events if under at-home or in-school suspension.

"It has been made very clear in many assemblies for all grades that if suspended, entry to football games, basketball games, homecoming, prom and many more will not be permitted" said Downs. "Foul behavior performed

by students will be noted and that can determine if you still have the privilege to attend said events."

Mr. Downs believes the social probation piece is to "reward the students who do the right thing during the school day."

"Why should people who don't do anything right in school get the same privileges?" Downs asked.

Another policy requires sign ups for school events in advance. Mr. Downs said every event this year, whether a dance or other big event, students will have to sign up ahead of time.

"That way, two things: one, we know who's coming and two, we know how many are coming to better plan and to have enough people here to chaperone," he said.

One rule that Mr. Downs inherited: giving students breathalyzer tests if necessary. In the past this was limited to Prom, but according to Downs, this will now be expanded to all school events.

"We will exercise the right to breathalyze anyone, at any time, if there is reasonable suspicion," Downs said, adding it is part of the goal of keeping people safe.

Senior Sean Wynn, a Student Council member, provided a student perspective on the new rules. When asked how he felt the new protocols would be received by the student body, he said he was "not very sure how it's going to work out."

"I don't see it being

used very often," Wynn said, referring to the breathalyzer tests, feeling most students won't give the administration any reason to use them.

However, Wynn noted events might have to start earlier if the tests are being frequently used, causing longer lines.

"I don't think breathalyzers are reasonable just because of the amount of time it will take to enter," he said.

When asked if he felt this would impact students or change behaviors, Wynn feels the impact will be minimal.

"I think people will find ways to get drunk, even if we do have the breathalyzers," he said. "It's just more difficult. It's not going to stop people from going. People are going to drink at the event [if testing is done at the door], not before."

On the issue of advance ticket sales, instead of allowing purchase at the door, he had more concerns.

"It requires us to make more forms ahead of time so people can sign up," he said.

Wynn worries that it might hurt attendance at events. For example, people from the community attend Coffee House, but without ticket sales at the door, the audience may be limited.

Mr. Downs hopes the new policy will make students think about their actions. "If they want to go to those things then they'll behave, hopefully, better in school," he said. "The thing is not to punish; it's to make better choices."

HHS hopes iReady improves MCAS scores

District looking to bring scores back to pre-pandemic levels

By Sara Tucker

HAVERTHILL-While much of the world has bounced back from the Covid pandemic, MCAS scores show learning loss at Haverhill High School has not. As a result, administrators are hoping iReady could better prepare students for the test.

"We have to acknowledge that the pandemic clearly had an impact because we are not where we were," Associate Principal Victoria Lu said.

In English Language Arts, Grade 10 students in Haverhill who were partially or not meeting expectations were at 62 percent in 2023 versus 54 percent in 2019. In math, 70 percent of Grade 10 students were partially or not meeting expectations in 2023 compared to 59 percent in 2019. This raw data does show that something happened between these years that caused student averages to drop.

At a recent School Committee meeting Superintendent Margaret Marotta tended to agree.

"We know that our kids are not where they were pre-pandemic and we're still doing a lot of catch-up just as everyone is across the state," she said at the meeting.

The state MCAS results are showing this same trend. In Massachusetts, 39 percent of students in 2019 were partially or not meeting expectations in English Language Arts, versus 41 percent in 2023. In math, the drop is more noticeable, with 42 percent of students in 2019 partially or not meeting expectations, compared to 51 percent in 2023.

The pandemic made it hard for students to prepare for such a big exam because of the lack of face-to-face learning. Being at home, while also being online, made it difficult for students to focus on their classes.

In Haverhill, Lu feels iReady is the best tool for improving these MCAS scores.

"By implementing the iReady diagnostic in grades 9 and 10, we give teachers information about where the skill gaps are so the teachers can provide intervention to try to bring kids where they need to be to pass the MCAS," Lu said.

Thessalea Churinske, the Dean of English Language Arts at Haverhill High School, believes iReady can be useful tool.

"iReady gives teachers information about their students reading abilities that allows them to tailor their instruction to help students make gains. So, it's not necessarily iReady, but what teachers do with the data made available to them," she said.

For English Language Arts, iReady is used for grades 9 and 10, the grades preparing for MCAS, while the CommonLit assessment, which is focused on mastery of state standards, is used for grades 11 and 12.

"We're excited about integrating CommonLit into our curriculum because it gives us really specific data on where students are in terms of mastering state standards, and we are able to integrate this knowledge right into our own units of

study," Churinske said.

Buy-in is an important aspect of this as the administration had an iReady celebration last year for those who improved their iReady scores. While the move had mixed results, it shows the importance the school placed on the platform.

iReady has been at the high school since the 2019-2020 school year. However, perhaps due to a lack of buy-in, along with the effects of the pandemic, the MCAS scores have gone down after the implementation of iReady.

"I wouldn't say iReady brought MCAS scores down," Churinske said, with the expectation that iReady will improve scores in time. "I think it was a global pandemic."

The students at Haverhill High have mixed opinions about iReady.

Abby Burrill, a senior, agrees with Lu, particularly with the logic for giving the iReady to grades 9 and 10 but not the older grades.

"I think it's important for underclassmen to assess their skills, but it is unnecessary for upperclassmen, especially those in AP classes," she said.

However, many students disagree with this. Mikayla DeFrank, a senior, questions the ability of iReady to truly prepare students for the MCAS.

"iReadys is not the most effective way to test students because no one puts in any effort and it doesn't count for anything," she said. "It also feels like a waste of time because it doesn't affect our class work and the test itself is so boring and long."

Adjustment counselors see adjustments

Changes made to improve efficacy and student access

By Sean Wynn

HAVERTHILL-The adjustment counselor department at Haverhill High School has seen new changes this year in an effort to increase accessibility for students and to build better relationships and trust between counselors and students.

As opposed to prior years when there were eight adjustment counselors available to anyone, adjustment counselors are now assigned to a particular class that they will stick with until graduation, just as is the case with assistant principals.

This year there are seven total adjustment counselors available at the high school and they are located in the administrative office of their assigned class.

Ms. Naomi Gabovitch is the adjustment counselor for the Class of 2027, Ms. Armani Fiato is the adjustment counselor for the Class of 2026, Mr. Michael Culp for the Class of 2025, and Ms. Kim MacDonald for the Class of 2024. Ms. Juliana Garcia is the adjustment counselor or specifically for students seeking credit recovery, and Ms. Julia Sementelli and Ms. Maura Callahan are adjustment counselors for special education programs.

Adjustment counselors are meant to support students' mental health and social and emotional well-being at school. Students can talk to their guidance counselor, assistant principals, or to the guidance counselor clerks as a way to contact their adjustment counselors, or they can walk into their counselor's office directly.

According to Class of 2026 adjustment counselor Ms. Fiato, they create supportive spaces for stu-

dents at Haverhill High.

"School Adjustment Counselors provide a safe space at school where our goal is for you to feel seen, heard, and accepted," Fiato said.

Ms. Gabovitch, the adjustment counselor for the Class of 2027, says this change is beneficial because it increases ease of access for students by creating a central area where students can have their needs met.

"I think it's a positive change for the school community because it creates a one-stop-shop for students that come to their grade-level office wing and have their assistant principal, their student support coordinator, and now their adjustment counselor, who's just that added support for all students," Gabovitch said.

Ms. MacDonald, Class of 2024 counselor, says she's excited for the change because she will now be able to interact with and help more students now that the adjustment counselors are more accessible.

"I am being exposed to more students I probably wouldn't have seen being separate in the guidance wing, so I'm getting to meet new students which is awesome, and I'm becoming available to more students who probably wouldn't have otherwise known that this support is open to them," MacDonald said.

Students as well share good feelings about the new change. Senior Lucien Pothier finds the change reasonable, so long as students are not restricted in who they can meet with.

"I think that as long as students are ultimately able to meet with whatev-

er adjustment counselor they are most comfortable with, the change is fine," Pothier commented.

David Martinez, a junior, also thinks the change is a good idea.

"It sounds like a good idea—at the very least, it doesn't seem like there are any drawbacks," he said.

Schools in the United States have had guidance counselors since the early 1900's. Initially, these counselors dealt with the career-related needs of students. About 30 years later, student mental health was added to these counselors' workload. However, the distinct position of student adjustment counselor is a relatively new invention. As the mental health crisis among teenagers has worsened over the years, the need for adjustment counselors has increased. Haverhill High School has had adjustment counselors for over a decade, starting with two and slowly increasing to seven.

According to the American School Counselor Association, schools should strive to have a 250:1 student to counselor or ratio. With Haverhill High's 1,931 students and 7 adjustment counselors, it has a ratio of about 275:1. But other schools in the area have operated with a less equal ratio than Haverhill High School. North Andover High School, for example, has only two adjustment counselors per 1,462 students and Central Catholic has one per 1,330 students. Some schools, such as Tewksbury Memorial High, don't have specific counselors that deal with mental health, rather their guidance counselors share the caseload.

Paper passes are a thing of the past

Haverhill High School modernizes its pass system

By Damien O'Neil and Amanda Jones

HAVERTHILL-Of the many changes that marked the new school year, the one that is the most evident to students is the new digital pass system.

At the behest of the district, new principal Mr. Michael Downs has implemented the SmartPass program in an effort to curtail truancy and tardiness, enhance safety throughout the school, and to better equip administrators and security with the ability to track where students are at all times.

"One reason we're using SmartPass is that the district pays for it, and it's my job to make sure that it's being used. One thing about the SmartPass that's great is that sometimes teachers are busy and don't actually write a pass, but now I can just ask what's your name and look it up myself. It's made it easier for myself and security," Downs said.

"Another thing is how we can now monitor how much people are using these passes. It's getting to the point that we want the program to achieve, everything's in a process. But overall there are less kids in the halls," he added.

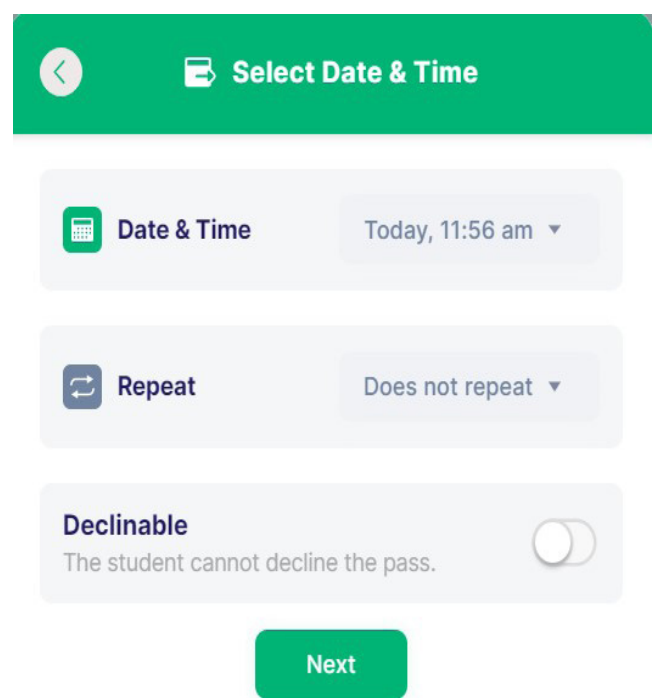
This is not the high school's first experience with the SmartPass program. Upon returning from Covid, when social distancing was still being enforced, the school used the SmartPass software to adhere to state regulations.

SmartPasses are part of a software program that teachers use to assign passes. When a student needs to leave his or her classroom, the teacher generates a digital pass documenting where the student is leaving from, where they are going, and then a time limit is automatically initiated.

Once the pass is generated, security guards and administrators are able to see exactly who and how many students are in the hallway at any given time and stop students who do not have an active pass in the software.

The program also limits the number of passes a student can request a day to four and tracks and informs teachers and administrators of all the passes the student has received, when, and to where.

According to Scott Brouillette, Supervisor of Security for Haverhill Pub-



lic Schools, the SmartPass program has led to many improvements in security's ability to keep tabs on students and improved their interactions with students in general.

"[The SmartPass has] made interactions less confrontational. It's made it much easier for us to track students, especially students who have a history of missing class. There are fewer excuses, because they can't just say they lost the pass, since it's now digital. Once I got used to the new system it's just been so much easier. I'm one hundred percent digital now," Brouillette said.

Some teachers are happy that students are able to be located more easily but also point out that the digital passes can cause interruptions and may not be achieving all they were intended to.

Biology and Anatomy & Physiology teacher Katie Pugliares-Bonner said the shift to SmartPass hasn't made much of a difference to her.

"I feel neutral about it because it's not saving teachers any time if all we do is create a pass in another format, it doesn't minimize interruptions. The benefit I can see is that it helps security with wandering students and solves skipping class, but I don't feel like it's really helping me personally," Pugliares-Bonner said.

Longtime business and

CTE teacher Mr. Michael Maguire pointed out that he understands the logic of the switch but that it is much more time consuming.

"I understand why we're implementing it, but it seems to just take a lot longer than the old method of pen and paper, and that's what's frustrating. It's good for tracking but it seems to take too long," Maguire said.

Some students don't mind the new digital system, but, like senior Logan DeLeon, dislike how they are being limited to how many passes they can have per day.

"I don't mind the fact that passes are digital now, but I don't like how we're being limited to four passes a day. I don't see the need for that," DeLeon said.

Senior student Brandon Sasso also takes issue with the -five-minute time limit.

"I don't like how we only have five minutes to go to the bathroom. I don't think that's enough time," Sasso said.

Senior and Early College student Jovian Beato Castillo is somewhat indifferent to the change but voiced his concern about the reach of technology.

"At first, when I found out about the SmartPasses I was mad because it seems like schools are doing too much with technology nowadays," Castillo said, adding: "I find it ridiculous but at the same time I get why teachers need it, times are advancing."

Get Out and Vote!!

Mr. Downs: 'No better job in the world'

New HHS principal reflects on education career, his many hobbies

By Ava Votto

HAVERHILL-Michael Downs is used to sticky situations, making him perfect for a high school principal.

Mr. Downs, who likes to make his own maple syrup in his free time, is the new principal here at Haverhill High School, bringing his many years of experience in the field of education to his "dream job."

"I love working at the high school level and having opportunities to help kids make lifelong choices," Mr. Downs said.

Mr. Downs attended Plymouth State College to get his bachelor's degree in education and then his master's in education administration from Rivier College. Mr. Downs earned his certificate of advanced graduate study from Salem State University. He also has an associate's degree in Air Transportation Management.

Mr. Downs said he always knew that he wanted to be in education and it was his dream job.

When he was in 8th grade, his history teacher asked his class what they wanted to be when they grew up and he said history teacher and coach. His history teacher laughed at him. But he has proven him wrong and not only did he become a history teacher but eventually the "boss" of the school, the principal.

"If you connect with kids, there is no better job in the world," Mr. Downs said.

Mr. Downs began his career as a social stud-



New HHS principal, Mr. Michael Downs

ies teacher and has been named Teacher of the Year at two high schools. He was later appointed chair of the Social Studies Department at Methuen High School before advancing to the position of Associate Principal. He has been an Assistant Principal at North Reading High School and most recently served as Principal of the Andrews Middle School in Medford.

Mr. Downs doesn't distinguish between good kids and bad kids, he just likes working with kids. He emphasizes that he doesn't punish kids, he punishes actions.

"A super majority of the kids here are great," he said, believing a key part of his role is implementing structure and that kids need structure in order to succeed.

Mr. Downs loves working at the high school

level, especially since he gets to help kids make long life choices.

"[The kids at Haverhill High] are so great and everybody wants this place to be a good place," he said.

Mr. Downs hopes to help Haverhill High in every possible way he can and clearly expresses that he has a lot of devotion to the school.

As for family, Mr. Downs has two adult sons, who now work full-time jobs of their own, whom he describes as his "pride and joy." He is also a proud dog-owner.

In terms of what has allowed him to live his dream, Mr. Downs said he credits his 21-year military career. He served as a Captain in the United States Air Force and Air Force Reserves. During his time with the Air Force, he acted as commissioned and

noncommissioned Air Transportation Officer and is a veteran of Desert Storm, Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Enduring Freedom.

"I wouldn't be here right now if I didn't go into the military," he said, noting the things that helped him out the most were the "structure, the discipline, and the GI Bill."

The GI Bill helped him go to college and get his degree. He said he would've never even gone to college if he didn't go into the military.

But Mr. Downs is more than just an educator. He is a man of many other talents, including working with a friend making maple syrup just north of Concord, N.H..

"They just put up 7,000 feet of sap lines and this year we are going to up our production up to about 200 gallons of syrup," Downs said, with enthusiasm.

Mr. Downs has a few other hobbies and ways that he likes to spend his time outside of work. He likes to go on day trips during football season, try new restaurants, and given his background in history, he also likes visiting historical places. Mr. Downs said his favorite historic place to visit is the Arlington National Cemetery, where he says "the true heroes lie."

As noted, Mr. Downs is also down with football, his favorite sport, following the Tennessee Volunteers in the NCAA and then the Patriots, Raiders, and Titans in the NFL.

SNOW CALLS:

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HPS Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Margaret Marotta

This came after a snow day was called earlier in the year on a day on which there was little snow.

"It's frankly embarrassing when you call a snow day and there's not a flake of snow, even if every news media in the state said it was going to be a blizzard," Dr. Marotta said. "I feel terrible."

Regarding the protocol for snow days, Dr. Marotta said they spend several days keeping an eye on "specialized weather outlets" that directly report the forecast to determine the best course of action.

"So, we're spending a lot of time trying to determine what's going to happen, which is actually impossible," Dr. Marotta said. "I'm on the phone with a group of superintendents deciding around 2:30 in the morning, trying to determine whether or not we are going to cancel school for that day."

Parents often receive the call around 8 p.m. the day before a snow day, and if not the night before, the call is made around 5:30

a.m. on the day of the expected snow.

When questioned about the controversy that comes with some calls, Marotta accepts it as part of her job.

"That's what it is," she said. "Make the best decision that you can in the moment and sometimes it's wrong."

"We try to be cautious," she added. "We only have five days."

Last year, with the Haverhill Educators on strike, students were obligated to make up the days at the end of the school year, already taking up four of the five snow days built into the calendar.

Massachusetts does not count virtual learning as a school day, so that is out of the question. With that in mind, there are few other options. Methuen floated the idea of making up days on Saturdays. Not surprisingly, students and staff do not want to make up school days on their days off and the idea was rejected. Haverhill has not been in favor of this idea either.

Dr. Marotta sympathizes with parents, students, and staff. However, she recognizes calling snow days has high stakes. She notes that not all parents have the flexibility to wait for a call on a snow day until the last minute, feeling sympathy for those for whom the call is an added stress at their jobs.

"Everybody loves a snow day, until it costs them their job," she said.

GRADING FLOOR:

Continued from page 1

Teachers have the option to not calculate low or missing formative assignments into students' final grade or else give no grade lower than a 40-percent.

Summative assessments which will account for 70-percent of a student's grade, are the major assignments for each course: tests, essays, labs, presentations etc.

Beyond increasing the value of major assignments, students are also now entitled to one revision on any summative assessment. The caveat is that students who wish to revise need to meet with their teachers before revising and maybe even complete their revision in front of a faculty member.

Despite the optimism on behalf of the administration, teachers have mixed feelings about the change.

Mr. Timothy Angerhofer, who has been teaching Algebra at HHS for two years, believes the changes have their merits.

"I like the grading policy. It's logical when you're assessed later on about content that was assessed previously," he said. "If you perform better later on we're going to acknowledge what you know now instead of what you used to not know."

Mr. Angerhofer also noted: "If you focus on the positive numbers, you have eleven ways to get an A, ten ways to get a B, ten ways to get a C, ten ways to get a D, but you have 60 ways to get an F. If you want to balance the probabilities, the grading floor should be 50, now you have a roughly equal probability of the five grades."

Ms. Erica Sullivan, who has been at the high school for nearly twenty years as both a teacher and guidance counselor, noted potential benefits from her perspective.

"I don't have to grade any students, so I haven't paid close attention to the policy, but I'm aware of the floor, and I do think there's some

benefit that can give students a fighting chance who are struggling at times," she said, while acknowledging unintended consequences. "The floor also could be misleading to students and families that somebody is doing better than they actually are."

Conversely, English teacher Ms. Dorian Oberstein believes the changes send the wrong message to students and will further diminish the education students receive at HHS.

"I do not believe the new grading policy as it currently exists will benefit students in the long term," Ms. Oberstein said.

"By creating a system in which students are quite literally given credit for missing work, we communicate to them that the work we do in school on a day-to-day basis has very little value," she said. "Many aspects of a quality and complete education cannot be measured by a summative assessment. Rather than handing out free points to push students to graduation, we need to be confronting the much more difficult task of nurturing a culture of learning at HHS... and that includes holding students accountable when they miss work."

Other significant changes were also made to late work policies.

Starting this year, all missed formative assignments can be made-up and handed in until the unit they were part of has come to an end. Summative assignments, on the other hand, can be submitted for two weeks after the due date, incurring a two-percent penalty for each day an assignment is late.

With marks closing the first week of November, administrators, teachers, and students will soon be able to assess the efficacy of the new grading policies and their impact on the student body and school culture.

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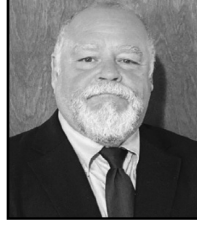

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WARD 1

City Council (Vote for one)

RALPH T. BASILIERE

School Committee (Vote for one)

NO CANDIDATE

WARD 2

City Council (Vote for one)

TONI A. SAPIENZA-DONAIS
KATRINA HOBBS-EVERETT




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School Committee (Vote for one)

GAIL M. SULLIVAN
TONI A. SAPIENZA-DONAIS

WARD 3

City Council (Vote for one)

DEVAN FERREIRA




devan4haverhill@gmail.com
FB: Devan Ferreira for Haverhill City Council
IG: devan4haverhill

School Committee (Vote for one)

LILIANA DILONEX
CHERYL A. FERGUSON

WARD 4

City Council (Vote for one)

KEN QUIMBY Jr.




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School Committee (Vote for one)

MIKAELA LALUMIERE




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FRED SIMMONS




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WARD 5

City Council (Vote for one)

SHAUN P. TOOHEY
MICHAEL MORALES




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Mike@Mike4Haverhill.com

School Committee (Vote for one)

JILL TAYLOR STORY




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LYNETTE HICKEY



WARD 6

City Council (Vote for one)

MICHAEL S. MCGONAGLE
OLIVER AGUILO



School Committee (Vote for one)

CHAD PFEIL

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YONNIE COLLINS

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WARD 7

City Council (Vote for one)

CATHERINE ROGERS

School Committee (Vote for one)

TOM GRANNEMANN




TomGrannemannForHaverhill.com
Tom@TomGrannemannForHaverhill.com

HUNTER PRICE ROGERS



RICH ROSA
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Thank you HHS students and staff for publishing an edition of **Brown & Gold** about the election.

All candidates for office in the November 7th municipal election in Haverhill are listed in ballot order. Every candidate was contacted in regards to doing an enhanced listing on this page. The ones with photos and other information chose to participate. All enhanced listings paid for through candidate donations made to the Haverhill Education Foundation.

EDITORIAL: Dear School Committee, A couple things for your consideration...

By Meg Gardner

Haverhill-With elections just around the corner, we—the students of Haverhill High School—think it's beneficial for you to hear firsthand what students need. It's no secret that Haverhill High School has been dragged through the mud over the past few years. So now, maybe more than ever, it is crucial that our School Committee is dedicated to our schools and its students and not trendy initiatives that continue to deprive Haverhill's students of a necessary and useful education. In addition, the students of Haverhill High School are more than ready to be a part of the change and work with the School Committee to make Haverhill Schools better.

First and foremost, the iReady program and the obsession with its data needs to be retired, especially at the high school level. Originally our school district implemented iReady to, according to the Haverhill Public Schools website, "provide each student with an individual Pathway that addresses their specific learning needs." However, these individual pathways, or the interventions that iReady provides, are intended for grades 1-8. So, with that in mind, how is iReady addressing learning needs for high school students if the interventions are

not tailored to our age group? Is the sole purpose of iReady just to identify students whose skills are below grade level, without offering any ways to address those deficiencies? This conclusion could be derived from just looking at the work being produced, or sometimes not produced, in the classroom.

The original purpose of introducing this program to Haverhill Public Schools is not being fulfilled at the high school. We are now forced to suffer through three testing sessions a year, sitting in a classroom for nearly two hours each time, watching childish animations and simply trying to get it over with. And, yes, most students improve over the course of the year, no matter how minimally, but does this have anything to do with iReady? We think not. Simply being in the classroom would reap these results, no matter what expensive testing system is used.

iReady is proving to be not only a waste of time but also a waste of school funding and a morale killer. Students are losing a minimum of nine hours a year to iReady testing. The i-Ready testing takes away class time that is already constantly interrupted by fire drills, ALICE drills, pictures, assemblies, half-days etc.

This time, all of that wasted time, could be used instead for actually educating students holistically, which will better prepare them for more tests such as Advanced Placement exams, SATs, and a Massachusetts public school favorite, MCAS, along with fulfilling the primary purpose of school: learning.

Interestingly, since iReady testing was introduced to our school system, our MCAS scores have significantly decreased. While the pandemic is likely the biggest reason for that drop, the implementation of iReady has not slowed the regression. It is also notable how hard the school has to incentivize students to take iReady seriously, such as last year's iReady Celebrations. If so much work needs to be put into getting students to put effort into iReady, perhaps that's a sign that the whole initiative is flawed. It certainly isn't providing the student the engagement that is frequently preached at the school.

Another issue that needs immediate consideration is the Early College program. Early College students are granted the opportunity to take semester long courses at Northern Essex Community College in hopes to gain college credit. The program was original-

ly designed to introduce and acclimate prospective first-generation college students to the rigor and learning-style of a college class to lessen the struggles many first-generation college students face upon entering higher education.

In theory, this program is a great opportunity for many students in Haverhill High School, and it is also a great look for the district, which is continually highlighting the robustness of its Early College program. However, the program is so robust because it is being inundated by students looking to take advantage of what is perceived as a less demanding schedule, with the early release, and less rigorous courses, a point we will expand on a bit later. This has gutted the high school's Honors and AP classes and has diminished the school culture as a whole.

A profile of students in student government in the program bears this out. Did you know a vast majority of the high school's student government is out of the building everyday by noon? Where do students rising up the ranks and taking the chance to take more challenging classes learn how to succeed if their more studious peers aren't around them modeling the habits of academic initiative? Currently, for example,

there are only three English III Honors classes at the high school (a total of 40 Honors students out of over 400 students in the Junior class).

More than 400 members of our student body leave at 11:47 am each day. This group includes about one-third of our Student Council and almost all of the Senior class government. Clearly, the program is being taken advantage of and requires a deep look into how we can restore the program to what it once was and, in so doing, improve the culture of the school as a whole.

This has certainly moved away from the program's intended purpose: serving first-generation, low-income students. Additionally, as the school looks to boost numbers in the program, the program has gotten so full in some cases that students are forced to take their classes remotely in the Haverhill High School library—which takes away part of the college experience that these students were supposed to experience.

In addition, the students who are Early College participants are utilizing the program for easy college credit—compared to taking AP courses which require, most of the time, a 4 or 5 on the exam to receive college credit.

The other thing is:

What exactly is going on in the program in terms of expectations and rigor? Do Early College classes deserve to be weighted the same as AP courses? How did Early College students so quickly cruise up the class rank list? And for the Early College students and parents who were depending on the burden of college costs to be reduced, which schools are actually accepting these credits? And furthermore, are these classes actually a fitting substitute for the courses that would prepare students for more advanced classes at UMass Lowell or Amherst? While classes at the high school, especially AP-level courses, have various means of oversight and accountability, how is the rigor of the Early College program being measured? This is not to undermine the hard work of students, staff, and teachers who have built the Early College program and help it to thrive, it is just to say that it is having unintended consequences that need to be addressed.

Haverhill High has been limited from thriving for a long time. It is now crucial that the future members of the school committee are prepared to step-up and help the students of Haverhill High School experience a richer and more authentic and productive academic experience.

EDITORIAL: Dear Mayoral Candidates, Listen to the diverse voices that call this city home

By Sean Wynn

Haverhill-This upcoming election is a historic one: for the first time in two decades, the people of Haverhill will greet a new mayor. Haverhill is a diverse and dynamic community of varying cultures, classes and creeds, and it is important that the interests of all these peoples are represented by their mayor. Since students from across the city attend Haverhill High School, their concerns paint an accurate picture of the concerns of Haverhill's youth.

Haverhill is a flourishing city. New housing developments seem to crop up every day on every street corner. This open space, in tandem with Haverhill's low property taxes, draws in new Hillies, but these full bedrooms don't

equate to full businesses, full restaurants, or full stores. Haverhill is where people come to roost, while commuting to and working in other large cities like Boston. The apparent reason for this is the lack of commercial opportunities in Haverhill. Downtown is the one of the only economic centers in the city, and even Downtown is relatively small for its importance. To tourniquet this loss of revenue, the new mayor of Haverhill should work to develop new businesses and support existing ones. Recently, a fee was instituted for residential condo developers. This policy is a step in the right direction to diversify construction in Haverhill. Similar carrot-and-stick methods ought to be employed to prop up or bolster commercial

developments. The industrial park on Ward Hill is another exemplary source of jobs and tax revenue for Haverhill. The return on the investment into Haverhill businesses will provide the city with the funds for other projects, such as our infrastructure.

As newly liberated drivers, many students at Haverhill High deal with the roads of Haverhill daily. While there has been work done on these roads, such as on the ones around the high school, many streets in Haverhill remain cratered, grooved or weathered. These roads prove difficult to drive on, add wear and tear to all of our vehicles, and, as is the case with me personally, occasions lead to my head slamming suddenly into the roof of my car due to an

unexpected pothole. One infrastructure project I do commend is the renovation to the Basiliere Bridge. This century-old monument was in desperate need of repair, and I laud the care with which the project has been undertaken. Work on the bridge has been managed while only mildly affecting traffic, an applaudable feat. This project will keep Bradford connected to Haverhill, and will prepare the city for its growing population.

For this last point, I have interviewed Alexis Namulinda, a founder of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenious, People of Color) Club here at Haverhill High, to gain insight into what BIPOC students feel are the pressing issues they would like to see their mayor tackle. Despite the large BIPOC

population of Haverhill, the majority of the city's elected officials are white. This lack of representation makes it difficult for the local government to address the specific issues that pertain to its BIPOC constituents. Alexis proposes that the city government listen to and work with community organizations (like the high school's BIPOC Club or the local NAACP chapter) to educate themselves and develop solutions to community problems. Alexis has found in her career of activism that the city government has not always listened to her concerns or the concerns of other BIPOC individuals, or their questions are met with bureaucratic platitudes and swept under the rug. She hopes that collaboration with community or-

ganizations will amplify the voices of Haverhill's BIPOC citizens. I too echo the point that working with groups around Haverhill that represent a variety of perspectives is paramount for the city's new mayor. As stated, Haverhill is incredibly diverse, and the only way to accurately speak for its people is to hear their thoughts straight from their mouths.

The position of mayor is no doubt one of extreme tenderness and care. Judging from both mayoral candidates, the future of Haverhill is in safe hands no matter the outcome of Nov. 7. We congratulate the new mayor, and kindly hope you listen to the voices of students and engage with us and our ideas.

OPINION: Enshrine Bergie in bronze, character matters

By Thomas Bergeron

Haverhill-With the Boston Bruins 2023-24 centennial season underway, the absence of retired Bruins captain Patrice Bergeron hasn't gone unnoticed, despite the B's starting the season with a six-game win streak, which hasn't happened since 1938. The captain didn't go out without making a case to be embedded in the history of Boston sports. The six-time Selke winner has done just about everything he could have in a 20-year career to get a statue built. He has also done so much off the ice as well participating in many fundraising and charity events around the world.

For my entire life we have been able to depend on 37 to win clutch faceoffs, make game-saving defensive plays, or score the game-winning goal. He has played an entire hockey game with a broken rib puncturing his lung for crying out loud!

Beyond the visceral grit and the self-sacrifice, which also includes four concussions, the 6-foot, 1-inch right-handed center retired a legend with a long list of vaunted ac-

colades: 6 Frank J Selke awards, which is the most out of any NHL player; 427 goals and 613 assists amounting to 1040 career points, which ranks 3rd among Boston Bruins players all time behind only Ray Bourque and Johnny Bucyk. But that's not the end of credentials for the future hall of famer. Patrice Bergeron has also won the Stanley Cup in 2011, the King Clancy Memorial Trophy in 2013, the Mark Messier NHL Leadership Award in 2021 and last but not least the NHL Foundation Player Award in 2014.

All of these awards beckon the question as to whether Patrice Bergeron deserves a statue, which is a common Boston pastime following the retirement of the many greats our city has been blessed with. We did it with Papi and Pedro, are still doing it with Brady, and some unwavering green-teamers have even gone so far as to call for the bronze to be cast for Paul Pierce—are you kidding me? Before Bird?

Of the statues that do adorn the city, the only Boston Bruin to have a statue is Bobby Orr, en-

shrined out front the TD Garden forever caught in his iconic leap after scoring the overtime winner against the St. Louis Blues in game 4 of the 1970 Stanley Cup Finals to secure the fifth Stanley Cup for the Bruins franchise.

Orr ultimately scored 270 career goals which ranks 11th in Boston Bruins history compared to Bergeron's 427 career goals which ranks 3rd in Bruins history. Bobby Orr, however, did accumulate more assists than Bergy. But those are just regular season stats, of course.

In Patrice Bergeron's playoff career he has put up 50 career playoff goals and 78 playoff assists for a total of 128 career points in 170 career games played in the playoffs compared to Bobby Orr's 26 career playoff goals and 66 career playoff assists for 92 career points in 74 career playoff games. However Patrice Bergeron didn't play most of these games at 100 percent. During the Bruins 2013 playoff run where they ultimately lost the Stanley Cup Finals to the Blackhawks, Bergeron

went through that play-off run with a punctured lung, cracked rib, torn rib cartilage and a separated shoulder. This isn't even the end of the road for injuries in the playoffs. During the 2023 playoffs, Patrice Bergeron played through three games with a herniated disc in his back, prior to missing the first 4 games of the first round playoff series against the Florida Panthers. Patrice Bergeron always showed up for the team even if he had a separated shoulder or a punctured lung.

Despite my obvious support for enshrining Bergie outside the Garden, another Bruins icon adamantly disagrees. At a recent meet and greet in Billerica with Bruins General Manager Don Sweeney, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to ask the B's veteran if Bergie deserves a statue, and Sweeney's answer actually surprised me: a flat out no.

"If you think about Bill Russel, Bobby Orr. You know it's hard. Maybe if we had two other Stanley Cups while he was playing we can start

to talk about that. But again think about Tom Brady, the GOATS in our sports, Bill Russel, Bobby Orr in Boston. Bergeron's a Hall of Fame player. He basically redefined the sport, the position itself and every one of those guys is deserving, but my answer is no."

My great respect for Sweeney aside, I beg to differ, if only because Bergie was about more than hockey. He was devoted to the Boston community and that should matter.

Bergeron has participated in many fundraisers and charity events in his 20 year tenure in the city. In March of 2023 Bergeron competed in the Pucks And Paddles ping pong tournament which is a fundraiser for charity. That's not the end of fundraisers the Bruins legend participated in. In August of 2023, shortly after Bergeron retired he played in a pro-am in his home city of Quebec to raise money for sick children in Quebec hospitals. During the holiday season Patrice Bergeron and the Bruins go out shopping and get presents for

kids in Boston Children's Hospital. Sure this might be true of many Boston athletes, but other Boston athletes didn't win six Frank J. Selke awards, and they didn't get 1,000 points in the NHL.

At the end of the day, Patrice Bergeron wasn't just a leader on the ice, he was a leader in every aspect of life. On or off the ice he always contributed something positive to the city of Boston. Patrice Bergeron deserves to have a statue not just because of his on ice performance, but how much of a leader he was on and off the ice. There will truly never be a Bruin like Patrice Bergeron again. Trophies should be about more than just stats. They should be about an athlete's commitment to the team, their contributions to the community, in a new generation of selfish athletes, selfless athletes should be praised for what they do. Through the dedication and commitment you have to the team and community you deserve to be embraced and put in the history books forever.

Exploring Haunted Haverhill

Brown and Gold tours the haunted haunt of the over-150-year-old Hilldale Cemetery

By Emma Serverius

Haverhill-The Hilldale cemetery seems to be hiding a ghostly secret.

As the leaves turn a burnt orange and jack o'lanterns are placed on porch decks, one may start to wonder if there are any spooky experiences available in the town of Haverhill.

As a Halloween enthusiast, I began asking myself this question at the dawn of September, to which the staff and volunteers at Hilldale Cemetery responded with a resounding "Yes!" Haverhill is haunted!

So, while Haverhill may seem mundane and unassuming at this spooky time of year, I strongly encourage you to pay a visit to Hilldale Cemetery and converse with its passionate volunteers about the spirits that haunt this place we call home. Or join a cemetery tour, like I did!

I started my journey in the middle of this September, visiting this mountainous cemetery in the daylight for a good look at the land to preface what was to come.

Anonymous graveyard-goers have reported many ghostly experiences, one being the feeling of being watched. This notion is absolutely true. Based on my own experiences, as well as other visitors, the eeriness of the location is apparent.

Perhaps the hill-filled land and gigantic trees circling the property are the perpetrator, but others would opt for a more paranormal explanation. As my mother and I walked around the various sections of the cemetery, the familial graves, fallen soldiers, and peace offerings, we ran into a group of volunteers who were happy to share their experience with us.

From what they lacked in paranormal sightings, they made up for in the sheer information about the cemetery's deceased inhabitants. They told stories about the Hoyt brothers, who both passed in the battles of the Civil War, a black general who, later in life, became a professor, and, most notably, Lucinda Worthen, a woman who pretended to be a man in order to fight in the Civil War, later in-



jured, discovered, and sent back home.

Although these individuals are long dead, some say their spirits still walk the grounds, among other ghosts from the beyond.

This ghostly tale extends to one late Friday night in September, where my friend and I attended a cemetery ghost tour at Hilldale. We watched as the sun set behind the monstrous trees and Tom Spitalere, our tour guide, started our journey through the cemetery grounds.

"Are there ghosts? Of course there are!" Tom tells us.

The hissing of passing cars, crunching of fallen leaves, and whispers among the trees seemed to follow us along the footpath. Stopped at a holding facility for the deceased, Spitalere commenced the first ghost-calling of the night, handing me and various other cemetery goers pendulums, and prompting us to ask questions to any spirits that may be among us.

Pendulums swung and answered a few questions of ours, swinging in circles to indicate a "yes." We then moved onto a spirit box, which is designed to flip through radio signals to give ghosts a pathway into our world and say something to us.

Many indiscernible things were muttered throughout the session, and at one point, the group unanimously heard the name "Jake", repeated a few times.

The next location gave us a bit more, as it was the location at which one man parked his car and passed from carbon monoxide poisoning. Or,



at least, that's what most people think.

From our supernatural investigation, we were led to the conclusion that the Irish mafia was behind his death. Although there is no certain evidence to this claim, it just may be true, given that he had died in the 1980s, a time when there was a lot of mafia activity

in and around Boston.

Diving deeper into the cemetery, we began to hear many strange noises such as unidentified buzzing, rustling close behind us, and the low chirping of an unidentifiable animal.

As we stopped before one of many graves, Spitalere began to use an EMF reader to sense any paranormal activity. This tool is commonly used in ghost hunting, as it can identify electro-magnetic fields.

With slight flickers every so often, Spitalere determined that the ghosts had been a bit shy that night, but certainly there. Amongst the scanning and picture taking, my mother managed to take a photo in which a bright red light can be seen peeking from underneath the hill just in front of us.

Keep in mind, at this point, we were in total darkness, deep enough in the cemetery to lose sight of the adjacent street behind the trees. Nevertheless, we, once again, progressed through the cemetery.

Trudging up Soldier's Hill, a section dedicated to Haverhill's fallen soldiers, we came upon an illuminated American flag with graves in the surrounding area. Then, Spitalere suggested that, with

consent, we would hold hands and form a circle around the flagpole, then we would send our energy to him to conduct the voices of any spirits that may be with us.

About one minute in, he began humming and growling under his breath. "What are you doing here?" An angry voice snapped from Tom, a voice completely unheard of from him until this moment. Afterwards, Spitalere reportedly does not remember saying anything.

Moving through the rest of the graveyard, we began to feel more and more secluded by the minute. Although it wasn't cold, we could clearly see our breaths in the little light we had. At one point, we saw a shadowy figure move across the path in front of us. It was most likely one of the many animals that inhabit this graveyard at night. But, then again, maybe it wasn't.

As the tour came to a close, I pondered the many stories he told us. For someone so interested in the paranormal, Spitalere has no secrecy about his ghostly experiences. He told us about a shadowy figure that knocked on his car door to wake him up when he was working late one night, a photo of a head burst out of the ground taken by a visiting photographer.

Spitalere told us historical stories about people hanged on these very trees and a woman in a white dress wandering the grounds late at night. Most importantly, however, he showed us an otherworldly experience.

Although we did not spot any ghosts with our own eyes or hear any evil chants, there was still an incredibly ghostly feeling that accompanied us that night. Ghosts or no ghosts, this experience was not only incredibly informative but also incredibly raw and uncut, as Spitalere shared with us his past paranormal endeavors as well as this new one, it became clear to me that Spitalere had created a hidden ghostly gem inside of our town.

I encourage you to find out for yourself the extent of which Haverhill can haunt you.

Back in black: auditorium gets chic facelift

District gives performance space needed renovation

By Mikayla DeFrank

Haverhill-Generations of Hillies and Haverhill families are familiar with the high school auditorium: Its cracked seats, dirty floors, old yellow paint on the walls, spotty lighting, and a rickety stage. However, when drama enthusiasts enter for one of the many performances happening this school year they will get a surprising treat.

Over the summer, the auditorium underwent a \$150,000 make-over. This included removing all the seats for reupholstering and re-foaming, as well as updating the fabric to a modern and neat black. The walls, ceilings, floors, and stage also received a fresh coat of sleek black paint, each of the old light fixtures were relamped and new light fixtures were added including new lighting in the stage wings. Other smaller but necessary repairs were also performed and carpeting was laid near the control box.

According to the Director of Facilities of Haverhill Public Schools,

Mr. Steve Dorrance, work began as soon as school let out last June and continued through August.

Ms. Melissa Allen, director of the Drama Club and longtime fine arts teacher, was quite impressed with the new look.

"I've worked here since 2017, and I think it's the best it's ever looked. I love everything about it," she said. "I think the new look elevates whatever performance is on the stage. Whether it's drama, chorus, band, or presentations, it just looks very professional now."

Lincoln Bohanan, an officer of the Drama Club, also enjoyed the renovations.

"I think the black color of the walls makes it easier for scenes to happen so that the audience is more immersed in the experience," he said.

Another member of the Drama Club, Emma Serverius, thought the renovations were much needed.

"It helps a lot more with focus for both peo-

ple onstage and offstage with what's going on," she said. "It's also just a better environment to be in rather than what it used to be because it gives us more confidence onstage and the recognition we deserve."

The renovations will greatly enhance the experience of the high school's thespians. With an upgraded aesthetic, performers can feel more confident on stage and audience members can enjoy the productions more comfortably.

Drama Club members, however, will not be the only ones who benefit from the updated auditorium. The high school makes frequent use of the venue for assemblies, faculty meetings, presentations, and community outreach.

To see the new look for yourself, the Drama Club's fall play is just around the corner. Come see the murder mystery "Deadline" on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. and Nov. 18 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Drama Club ready to meet its 'Deadline'

This year's fall play to feature two separate and distinct casts

By Isabella Budd

Haverhill-Haverhill High School is taking "Deadline" to its literal extreme.

To clarify, "Deadline" by Don Zolidis is this year's fall play by the HHS Drama Club, and, yes, it's a murder mystery. Not only that, there will be two separate casts performing the play.

"I think that it's something unlike anything we really ever did before in my high school experience," said Emma Serverius, who is playing Deborah Hastings, an author who is part of a literary power couple.

"Deadline" is about a group of writers competing in a writing contest in a spine-chilling mansion an hour away from civilization, needing to craft a new murder mystery in less than 24 hours in order to secure a book deal of the century. Of course, there's a twist!

Melissa Allen, the faculty advisor for the HHS Drama Club, also had a few words to say about what inspired her to choose Deadline as the fall play and the rationale behind the double casting. "I have never directed

a full on murder mystery comedy, so I thought it would be a fun way to expand my own directing portfolio, while also giving the drama club participants a chance to try a new genre," Ms. Allen said.

For the play, the Drama Club will field two casts, who will take turns putting on the shows. When asked about the decision to have separate casts, Ms. Allen said it was about providing opportunities.

"I always want to give as many opportunities as I can, and not every show is the perfect fit for a double cast," Ms. Allen said.

She also noted that having two casts gives the production more flexibility.

"One of the advantages of having a double cast is kind of like a built-in understudy," Ms. Allen said. "So, if there ever was someone who is missing or gets sick or can't come to rehearsal or sadly couldn't go on, there's somebody else who can step in for them pretty easily."

Serverius said she is on board with the idea.

"I think it's better, so it allows a lot more people to be involved, which is what we want in theater," she said.

Perhaps, patrons of the HHS Drama Club would also be intrigued to see both casts in their respective productions. Ms. Allen noted that both casts bring something different to the table.

"I think it gives even more time for the show in different ways as the cast has their own unique flavor that they bring to their role," she said.

Lastly when asked why people should come and see "Deadline":

"People should come to see 'Deadline' because it is going to be so funny! At every rehearsal I just laugh. I think all of the characters are funny in their own way and who doesn't love a good murder mystery" Ms. Allen said.

"Deadline" will be on the stage on November 17 at 7 p.m. and November 18 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Cast A will perform on November 17, and Cast B will perform on November 18.

Success of girls volleyball goes beyond the court

Influx of freshmen players bodes well for extending team's dominance

By Taylor Lewis

HAVERHILL—Success breeds success, or so it does for the Hillies girls volleyball program.

The Hillie varsity girls have proven to be the most successful athletic program at the high school in recent years, going undefeated in 2020, making it to the D1 final four in 2021, winning Merrimack Valley Conference in 2022, and starting the 2023 season off 11-1.

Beyond the statewide recognition that comes with consistent success is also the piquing interest throughout the city that has finally reached the high school level, paving the way for the biggest turnout of freshman talent in years.

This August, over 70 total girls competed for 48 spots in the girls volleyball program. In past years, about 25-30 freshmen tried out. This year, the girls volleyball team saw about 45 freshmen appear at tryouts, and 19 of them earned spots, including one, Lucy Martinez, on varsity.

Varsity Captain Emme Cerasuolo said she is excited to see the ballooning interest in the sport but also acknowledged some of the drawbacks that come with increased popularity.

"I am very excited that we had so many freshman tryout, we are a very senior-heavy group on the varsity side of things and were really worried about the team once we all left," Cerasuolo said, adding, "but I am slightly disappointed because there are so many freshmen that we did have to cut a significant number of former players which we haven't had to do in previous years."

Many attribute this influx of freshmen to the growth of middle school programs within the past five years. Another includes the new abundance of successful club programs in the greater Haverhill area, which has made it possible for the successes the varsity program has produced.

Middle school coach Jeff Harris accounts the recent influx for many

reasons, one of which being luck.

"One, you kind of just get lucky every few years with a group that really enjoys the sport--- some of them were playing club, and were going to camps before coming to us," Harris said.

Another reason for this influx is the resurgence of middle school sports programs post-Covid.

"Getting back to the middle school sports programs post-Covid is helpful because there are former Whittier Poets that weren't necessarily interested in volleyball before getting to try it in the eighth grade," Harris explained.

Head Coach Vincent Pettis attributes the increased interest to advertising but agrees that Covid played a big part in the lull in participation over the last few years.

"At first, I thought it was that we got permission to go around and talk to every middle school before school got out, but I



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

also think now it's covid. These kids played volleyball all through middle school rather than one or two years, and we are seeing it at every school," Pettis said.

In relation to the rest of the United States, New England has trailed behind in the world of high-level volleyball. Since the first NCAA Division 1 Volleyball Tournament in 1981, a New England college or university has never placed in the top two.

But, with a 15-percent increase in high school involvement in girls volleyball, according to the *Wall Street Journal*, New England is finally beginning to catch up in skill level. This can be attributed to the accessibility of middle school programs in the world of high-level volleyball. In Haverhill, five out of six middle schools have both boys and girls volleyball programs. These programs build interest among young students in

the sport, and encourage them to better their volleyball education by getting involved in club programs.

Women's volleyball has also grown as a whole in the United States over the last decade. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, there has been a 15-percent increase in Girls' High School Volleyball since 2002, now in second place for the most popular high school sport.

Fall Sports Roundup



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

By Raymond Bartimus

The crisp air and brightly colored trees means it's not just football season, but that high school cross country, field hockey, soccer and girls' volleyball are in season as well. So, with the Haverhill fall sports underway, here is the round up of how the teams are doing so far, at least as of Monday, Oct. 16.

CHEER

The Cheer team has been supporting the football team all season with enthusiasm and outstanding effort on the sidelines.

The competition team has been working extremely hard since August to prepare for their upcoming competition season. The first competition was on Oct. 21 at the Billerica Invitational.

After that, they will compete in the Merrimack Valley Conference Championship, MSAA Regionals and hope to once again qualify for the MSAA State Championship to defend last year's state championship.

CREW

The Crew team has a great day at the New Hampshire Championships in Pembroke, N.H. on Saturday, Oct. 15.

Ninety-five percent of eligible rowers competed, from novice to varsity.

The boys and girls novice 8s showed grit and determination in their first

competitive events; the boys varsity 8 overcame the injury of one of their boatmates and put together a strong race; the girls varsity 4 had their best race of the season and was within striking distance of the top 20; and the boys varsity 4 came in 13th, our best performance at the NH Champs to date.

CROSS COUNTRY

The Girls Cross Country team won its first Merrimack Valley Conference regular season championship since 2011.

Both Cross Country teams had an up-and-down start to the season. The girls were 5-5, and the boys were 3-7 as of Thursday, Oct. 19, but the teams bounced back with strong performances towards the end. The boys team ended their regular season by defeating Tewksbury on senior night.

Coach Michael Maguire noted that every boy and girl that has returned are ahead of where they were a year ago.

"The goal every year is for both teams to be running at their best in the championship meets: the MVC Championship and the MIAA Division 1 State Championship," Mr. Maguire said.

The girls won the MVC Division 2 regular season championship. It is their first MVC championship since 2011.

Junior Lauren Downer, Junior Molly Tabb, Sophomore Madison Howard and Junior Jemma Schoenfeld took

the top four places to win the meet for the girls.

The MVC post-season meet for both teams was on Oct. 28, while the state championships take place on November 11.

FIELD HOCKEY

The Field Hockey team has bounced back after a tough season last year. They are off to a 4-3 start.

"I feel really good about the team's season so far," said Emma Lavolette, the team's head coach. "I think we are growing and improving really well."

FOOTBALL

As of Friday, Oct. 13, the Football team is 1-4, in its first year under the leadership of Coach Robert Pike.

Although the struggle so far this year, the football team has great chemistry and a great team that can bring them back, according to Tom O'Brien, the athletic director at Haverhill High School.

The players agree that the vibes around the team have been positive despite the record.

"I think it's a big improvement from last year for sure," Nick Wilson, a senior on the team.

His fellow senior teammates, Sebastien Guillaume and Gabe Grzyboski, agree.

"We have a new coach, new offense, a very good coaching staff, it really has improved this year," Guillaume said.

"Defense is always on point, defense is our best

so far this year," Grzyboski added

GOLF

The Golf team wrapped up the fall season on the last week in October, when they competed in the Merrimack Valley Conference Golf Championship at Mt. Pleasant Golf Club.

Two individuals, sophomore Tommy Murphy and junior Jack Baker, qualified for the MIAA Individual Championship.

GIRLS SOCCER

The Girls Soccer team is off to a solid start with a 6-4-2 record.

Ava Votto, a co-captain on the Girls Soccer team, credited great

team chemistry between the veterans and the new members for the team's solid season so far.

"We have really good freshmen that came in this year, and that's why we have so much success," Votto said. "There are also eight seniors on the team this year. We have a lot of positive vibes on this team, working as a whole is what makes us successful and what makes us come back big."

BOYS SOCCER

The Boys Soccer team is currently 4-5-4 and is in 4th place in the Merrimack Valley Conference. They beat Andover for the first time since 2018 about a week ago.

"The chemistry this year has led us to great success," said Eric Perkins, the team's head coach. "We are excited for the rest of our games. I think we have a great shot at a title this year."

cited to host the Merrimack Valley Conference Swim Championships this school year at the Charles C. White Pool.

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL

The Girls Volleyball team is having another spectacular season. At time of publication the girls are 18-1 with a record 12 consecutive wins to close out the season. They also took home the MVC title for the third year in a row after beating Andover in four sets.

"The season is going well," said Coach Vincent Pettis "We are hoping to win the remaining games so that we can have a rematch with Andover at the end of the season for a chance at the title. Our goal was to be in the race for an MVC [Merrimack Valley Conference] title and we are."

UNIFIED BASKETBALL

The Unified Basketball team is having another successful and fun season. Head coach Christina Lynch has returned to the sidelines to coach and create an enjoyable environment for all.

The Hillies wrap up the year at the Merrimack Valley Conference jamboree the week of Nov. 7.

The Hillies are ex-



Photo courtesy of Marilyn Caradonna

IN FATIGUES BUT NOT FATIGUED

Continued from Page 1

Senior and four-year cadet Samuel Harrison echoed Franceschino's sentiments.

"We (himself and Franceschino) have spent the last five years together building the family bond that makes this team like siblings," added Harrison. Principal Michael Downs, a military veteran himself, credits this family environment as well.

"What makes JROTC so important is that it provides the many students in this program structure and a sense of belonging. Not every kid wants to do athletics, not every kid is a great writer, not every kid is a member of a school club, so this program is another opportunity for students to be involved in our school and connected in our school community," shared Downs.

Beyond the intangible virtues of JROTC being a family away from family, a home away from home, there are also the very tangible values and characteristics that the program seeks to cultivate in its members.

As First Sergeant Grinstead points out, the members are close and enjoy competing with one another but he also sets out to prepare cadets for the future and teach them to be respectful teammates and a member of the community,

"When our cadets have finished their race we want them to come back for their teammates and cheer them on to the finish," said Grinstead.

Skills and decision-making are reinforced throughout the program, with the goal of preparing these students for their next step after graduation. Many of the different teams have leaders who prepare their groups, helping students



MCJROTC Reapers working together to dominate the competition at a recent Raider competition.



that they didn't have before," said Danis. "This program gives our cadets the opportunity to be diverse in their activities, such as trying out for different athletic teams and participating in clubs, while also learning key skills learned in this program that pushes these cadets towards making their own decisions on solutions," he added.

Grinstead shared in Danis' enthusiasm and the pride he takes in opening the eyes of his cadets and the positive response he receives from them.

"Giving them experiences, the opportunity to climb Mount Washington, lets them see the sights and face problems they wouldn't have seen otherwise here in Haverhill."

Some of the diverse activities provided by the Haverhill JROTC program include leadership camps in Newport, R.I., and Quantico, Va.; team hikes on Mount Washington, and the honor of doing the color guard for the Red Sox Game at Fenway Park. These trips continue to provide cadets with a unique experience that comes with being a member of the Haverhill High School JROTC program. Not only do these activities and experiences offer students unique opportunities, it also gives Haverhill High School positive publicity,

"The presenting of the colors at Fenway Park gave the school positive PR and this program is part of the positive things that go on here at the high school everyday," added Principal Downs.

This program not only prepares these cadets for their chosen futures, but leaves the high school with positive and successful stories that leave their community proud.

"We want these students to find opportunities

to learn the responsibilities that go hand in hand with leadership.

Senior Samuel Harrison, a member of the program since 8th grade and recently appointed Company Commanding Officer, believes that this program has helped him gain many skills to ready him for the future.

"This program shows you leadership and how to build yourself as a person

and develop your character. Teaching you to be prepared for the future of your choice whether it's military, workforce or college," Harrison shared.

But this growth doesn't come without hard work. The rigorous training in the early hours of the morning and after school make this a full time commitment, but cadet leaders and the program's instructors also prioritize physical and mental health by making sure there is time for recovery. The programs and competitions take place over the weekends and holiday breaks and often take students to places like Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, where cadets take on different leadership positions and train various physical skills needed to be a member of this rigorous program.

Senior Yocel Infante, a member of Haverhill's JROTC program since sophomore year, believes that this program has prepared him for his next steps as an airplane mechanic in the United States Air Force,

"In the past two years that I have been dedicated to this program, I have participated in three programs that have taught me leadership traits, how to

survive in the wild, and how to become a better version of myself," added Infante.

Henry "Gunny" Danis, who has been an instructor of the JROTC program at the high school for over a decade, served in the Marine Corps prior to coming to the high school. His 23 years of service earned him the title of Gunnery Sergeant. After his service he changed his focus to the JROTC programs, to which he has been a part of for 17 years now. 12 of these years have been spent here as part of the Haverhill High School program, but he has also spent time working as an instructor at programs in Wichita Kansas, and Salem, Massachusetts.

First Sergeant Grinstead, who came to Haverhill High School in YEAR, served in the military for 23 years, finishing his service in July of 2009. After serving his time in the military and earning his respective title of First Sergeant, he directed his focus towards JROTC programs in Delaware and then overseas in Japan. He shared that his interest in the JROTC program was initially sparked by his son's involvement,

"Since my son was enlisted in the Naval JROTC



MCJROTC cadets Luca Franceschino and Samuel Harrison.



First Sergeant David Grinstead (left) and Gunnery Sergeant Henry Danis (right).



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