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Black Parents Union hosts second annual Multicultural Night



Courtesy of Jasmin Ortiz

SHARING OUR CULTURES Faculty and students share their respective cultures at the Black Parents Union's Multicultural Night.

RICARDO PINNOCK
Staff Writer

On Friday Feb. 24, the Black Parents' Union (BPU) hosted its second annual Multicultural Night, which featured music performances by faculty members, dances by HM Stomp and groups outside the school, and a fashion show, among other performances.

Assistant Security Manager Pete Clancy, Security Manager Bill O'Sullivan, and Security Specialist Thomas Nolan started the night off with a collection of songs played on the bagpipes and the drums. Clancy, O'Sullivan, and Nolan of the Emerald Society of the New York Police Department once performed in the St. Patrick's Day Parade; their performance was a testament to Scottish

and Irish heritage.

Akida Joseph (10) and Cara Hernandez (12) co-choreographed a dance to "Do Like That," a song by Korede Bello, a Nigerian pop star. The choreography was inspired by African and Afro-Caribbean traditional dances.

Music teacher Alan Bates showcased his talent for the West Indies instrument by playing three songs on a gold single tenor steel pan. The steel pan is a common music instrument in the West Indies, but Bates was specifically representing Trinidad & Tobago, co-Chair of the BPU Jennifer Hippolyte-Thomas P'20 P'22 P'26 said.

Following a dinner highlighting Asian, Greek, Italian, African, and American cultures, the audience

enjoyed a hip-hop dance workshop, a fashion show, and another round of performances, Hippolyte-Thomas said.

Deena Clemente, an adjunct professor at Hunter College and a hip-hop historian, gave a small demonstration and taught the audience hip-hop dance. Clemente, known by her dance crew as Snapshot, is well connected to the Bronx Music Heritage Center, Hippolyte-Thomas said.

"I thought the woman who gave the talk on hip-hop was really cool because I had never gotten a history lesson like that before. She seems very in touch with what she was talking about and in tune with her craft," Tishya Carey (12) said.

As Bollywood music played in the background, sixth graders modeled

traditional Indian lehengas and shararas that incorporate modern fashion trends.

"I especially enjoyed the fashion show because I never knew there was such a wide range of garments for different Indian events," Akida Joseph (10) said.

Students wore dashikis and caftans to honor African cultures. Dashikis used to be the choice of dress for royalty, but they have recently become more widespread. Additionally, students modeled garments from the Dominican Republic and South Korea.

After the fashion show, the audience enjoyed the second portion of performances. A group of sixth graders put on a Bollywood performance set to the tune of "Radha on the Dance Floor," and Eshan Mehere (6) played the tabla,

an Indian percussion instrument.

"The night was a joyous night of community building because the parents' incredible work in pulling in different members of our school community and the greater Bronx community," Diversity Associate John Gentile said.

To close out the night, four students from the Deirdre O'Mara School of Irish Dance performed the Irish Hornpipes and a dance called the "The Vanishing Lake."

"The community needs to recognize culture past the international food festival; there are so many aspects of culture, like dance, clothing, and even musical instruments and style. I think Multicultural Night got it right," Jahmire Cassanova (11) said.

School's Robotics Teams participates in FTC tournament

ABBY KANTER
Staff Writer

Two of the school's Robotics Teams competed in the FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC) NYC Regional State Championships last Sunday. Team 4326, also known as the FTC Basement Lions, placed 12th, while Team 9681, the Parallel Lions, finished 19th out of 30 participating teams.

In the FTC tournament, teams from seventh grade to 12th grade design, build, program, and operate robots in order to perform tasks in a game and earn points. The five teams with the highest number of points move on to the FTC Super-Regional Championships.

Tasks ranged from shooting whiffle balls into a center vortex to pushing them up a ramp to lifting and depositing a 20-pound exercise ball, FTC Captain Audrey Yu (10), who worked on hardware for Team 4326, said.

"Team 4326 won three out of five of our matches, but we had a lot of technical issues with our robot, which were just a lot of bad luck," Yu said.

Although neither team placed high enough to move on to the FTC Super-Regional Championships, Team 4326 won the Motivate Award, given for outstanding outreach and inspiring STEM and robotics in the school or local community, Silvia Wang (10), Head of Public Relations for Team 4326, said.



ROARBOTICS The Parallel Lions team poses with its trophy.

As Head of Public Relations, Wang manages business connections and partnerships with other teams, works on team branding and design, and organizes outreach events, in addition to helping out with the actual building of the robot.

"For 4326, our judging interview went really well because we were able to cover all the outreach we've done, and this was probably one of the key components that put us up for the Motivate Award," Wang said.

Although no more competitions for Teams 4362 and 9681 are scheduled for the rest of the year, an outreach event is scheduled in April with Techno Chix, a Girls Scouts team from Westchester, Yu said.

To prepare for future competitions, the teams will focus on doing even more outreach during post-season. They are currently in the process of planning "Roarbotics Day" for the Lower and Middle Divisions, Wang said.

Feminist Students Association visits Sanctuary for Families, looks to host discussion on transgender rights

MAYANKA DHINGRA
Contributing Writer

This past Saturday, four students from the school's Feminist Students Association (FSA) visited Sanctuary for Families, a nonprofit organization located in the East Bronx that provides shelter for victims of gender inequality and domestic violence.

During their monthly visits, students get the chance to connect with women and their children seeking shelter at the organization by providing support and enrichment activities for families, such as craft making with children and their parents. During this trip, the FSA helped the kids make paper ladybugs.

Gabi Sheybani (12), a frequent participant in trips to Sanctuary, decided to get involved after working with a similar organization for women with serious mental and physical disabilities in Iran.

"The hour we spend at Sanctuary is incomprehensibly impactful because we have the opportunity to make a positive memory; giving the children an opportunity to be kids," she said.

Sanctuary Coordinator Sofia Gonzalez (11) said this time she left feeling rewarded after reconnecting with families

returning to the organization. "There are definitely moms who come almost every month so it's really nice to continue to connect with them," she said.

FSA co-president Azure Gao (12) said that she is a firm believer in the positive effects the presence of students can have on people seeking shelter at the organization.

"The experience of attending Sanctuary is not only powerful for the people who go, but it's also really powerful for those who are there to find support in people from the school," Gao said.

Gao and Gonzalez both have a broad vision for the club's future and hope to expand FSA's outreach to include all matters of intersectionality in feminism. People experience feminism in distinct ways depending on their various different social identifiers, Gonzalez said.

By bringing other social

injustices into the scope of gender-related issues, the club hopes to attain various new perspectives that will enrich their discussions, Gao said. So far this year, FSA plans to host a discussion on intersectionality and has already held a discussion regarding statements made by President Donald Trump circulating in last year's presidential election campaign.

Due to President Trump's recent weakening of civil rights protections for transgender individuals, the FSA is hosting a joint meeting with the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) on Monday to provide a forum for open dialogue.

Because "A Day Without Women," a one-day strike orchestrated by women, is coming up, the joint meeting is an excellent opportunity to discuss common issues, GSA faculty adviser Jonathan Nye said.

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Alexis Bolner '18 wins gold at the US skating national championships

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

An argument to be present on “A Day Without A Woman”

Dear Editor,

After what was undeniably a powerful worldwide celebration of women's rights, many marchers returned home on January 21st thinking about their next steps. How do we keep the needs, concerns and inequalities that preoccupy women at the forefront of social discourse?

As March is Women's History Month and March 8th is International Women's Day, many women and their allies anyone who is passionate about women's rights as human rights have decided, under the leadership of the organizers of the Women's March on Washington, to spread the seeds of support and solidarity further. We join in "making March 8th A Day Without A Woman, recognizing the enormous value that women of all backgrounds add to our socioeconomic system while receiving lower wages and experiencing greater inequities, vulnerability to discrimination, sexual harassment, and job insecurity."

Many women will elect to stay home on March 8th in order to demonstrate the effects of their absence. However, we, as teachers at HM, believe that by coming to work, we can also be effective in highlighting the important roles of women. We will not stay home, but will come to HM and affirm

our solidarity with the cause in a variety of ways. We may wear red, or sport buttons or stickers. We may stay silent for all or part of the day. We may lead silent activities in class or teach lessons focusing on the contributions of women.

Our goal is not to admonish but to urge a dialogue with the HM community to consider the consequences of overlooking or minimizing the contributions of women throughout history and in the present day.

With that in mind, we are choosing to be present while "[acting] together for equity, justice and the human rights of women and all genderoppressed people, through a oneday demonstration of economic solidarity." Please support us by honoring our silence. We welcome you to join us by wearing red, choosing to remain silent for all or part of the day, or sporting a button or sticker.

Sincerely,

Alexis Dahl, Morgan Yarosh, Eva Abbamonte, Molly Johnsen, Emily Salitan, Caitlin Hickerson, Avram Schlesinger, Denise DiRenzo, Rachael Ricker, and Alison Kolinski

“Our goal is not to admonish but to urge a dialogue with the HM community to consider the consequences of overlooking or minimizing the contributions of women throughout history and in the present day.”

Addressing gender inequality in Physical Education

Abigail Kraus

As an athlete, I often think about the issue of gender inequality in the sports world, but somehow I've always been blind to its presence at the school.

Drawing from my recent experiences as well as the experiences of other students, it seems clear to me that the Athletic Department perpetuates sexist practices to greater degree than the rest of the school, which is most likely a result of its isolation from the rest of the school community.

Of course, sexism is not unique to the gym, as it is definitely a widespread issue at our school, but I think it is important to explore the reasons behind why the Athletic Department seems to stand out from the others in this respect.

There are definitely many explanations for how this divide formed, and they are not necessarily the fault of the department itself. For many years up until a few weeks ago, athletic coaches missed school-wide C period assemblies, which occur during their weekly department meetings. Missing these gatherings means they were

often excluded from conversations about diversity that occur during assemblies.

I think this separation was quite a loss for the Athletic Department, as it means the gym faculty aren't learning about gender issues along with the rest of the school. It sadly isn't such a surprise that so many girls are having problems during gym class.

For example, sometimes gym teachers offer students the choice of playing a sports game or walking the track. Ashley

Dai (9) said her coach assumes that the girls will want to opt out of the planned activity.

The stereotype that girls can't play sports has been reinforced many times in my experiences by my male compatriots who refuse to pass to me and who don't treat me equally as a teammate. Therefore, it's problematic that the coaches themselves sometimes perpetuate this discouragement instead of working against it.



Kat Snoddy/Art Director

I've witnessed first-hand how a coach's comments can make it that much harder for a girl to choose the sport over the track, which is already an intimidating decision to begin with. Often, I am the only girl playing. Recently, my coach asked me to "stay with [him]" while the guys played rock-paper-scissors with their partners to determine the teams. I had already gotten a partner, but I was singled out and made "other."

After the teams were set up, my coach turned to me and told me I could "pick any team [I] want." I was taken aback because it was clear that the only reason why I had been separated from the rest of the students was because I was the only girl.

This was not the first time something like this had happened, and I am angry that I've become so accustomed to this treatment.

James Gluck (10) told me that his coach resisted letting the class play dodgeball because he was afraid "the boys would throw too hard" and that "some people" would not want to be as involved, subtly gesturing to the girls sitting in front of him.

This is a harmful assumption to make because it undermines the athleticism of the young women in the class and implies that female students are still bound by a severely outdated stereotype. We must acknowledge and react to this incorrect assumption about so many women in this community because not only is it

degrading to female students, but it is also reinforcing and teaching sexism.

When splitting up the teams for another game of soccer, my gym teacher chose two male captains per team and asked that they choose fairly. He then pointed at me and asked that the boys not pick me last. I felt demeaned. It was not only an insult to me but also a fundamentally sexist comment in and of itself, even though it was made with the opposite intention.

This problem is deeply rooted in the culture at the school, so solutions are difficult to find. I strongly believe that speaking about your experiences as members of this community is vital to change. Whether you are the victim or a witness, tell your stories to others and spread awareness.

Additionally, male students in gym classes are automatically in a position of privilege. It is important to notice when these things happen and to inquire about why they do. Stand up with your female classmates - chances are you will be better heard than they, as terrible a reality as it is.

I also think it would be beneficial, if I were in the position of an administrator, to directly intervene with the department and engage in constructive discussion about how the coaches can teach all students in a more equal and effective manner. It is not about disregarding the fact that we are women, but rather acknowledging that we are women and can still be the best athletes in the room.

EDITORIAL

School schedules: the importance of creating a curricular balance

When students return from spring break, we will peruse the course catalog and choose classes for next year. As seniors who no longer have the opportunity to select courses, the Editorial Board would like to recommend that juniors and seniors, who have a lot of leeway in their schedules, try to find a balance between academic rigor and personal interest

Some classes are deemed "harder" in the collective opinion of the student body because of their more demanding workload or greater number of requirements to enroll. Over the years, we have felt pressure to choose to take these harder classes even if they are not necessarily the ones that pique our interest.

The pressure of college admissions also looms over students years before they even begin the application process. Freshmen overhear conversations between older students

about the importance of choosing the "right" classes to craft the perfect application. Students compete to have the best schedule, the one with the heaviest workload, the one that leaves you up late at night struggling to finish the homework. Ultimately this can lead to burnout, boredom, and resentment, since students dread studying for assessments and completing projects in subjects that do not interest them.

The school's core curriculum allows students to get a liberal arts education. Although having graduation requirements can be frustrating at times, the board believes that on balance, taking only classes in which one has a preexisting interest produces narrow-minded students. While the external pressures of our core and of college expectations render us uncomfortable in certain class settings, ultimately they force us to develop

learning strategies that will come in handy in the future regardless of the subject matter and leave us more well-rounded.

To this end, we caution against romanticizing the idea of the "impossible schedule." While studying subjects that intrigue you is conducive to learning, exploring ones that you may not already be interested in will lead to rewarding experiences. We should remember that what we truly value in our education is not what we learn, but how and why. Great education promotes self-discovery and empathy. It shows us what it means to be human in today's world, how to remember the past while looking to the future, how to interact with others and still remain true to ourselves. We can easily lose sight of these essential skills when we are bogged down in the details of the material we are learning.

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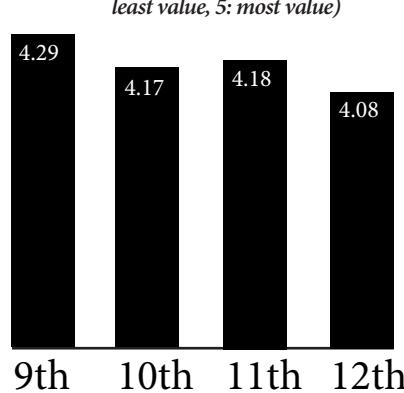
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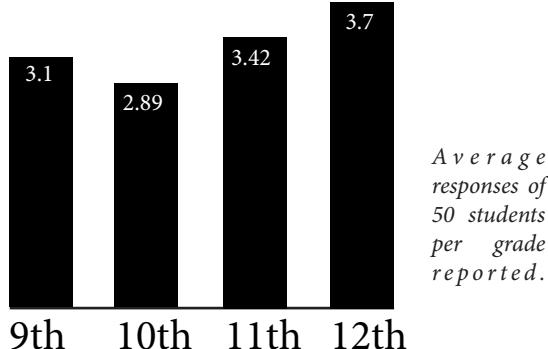
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Students identify discrepancy between valuing academics and enjoying classes, poll finds

How much value do you place on academics? (1: least value, 5: most value)



How important do you think having a four-year English requirement is? (1: least important, 5: most important)



TIFFANY LIU
Staff Writer

Most students at the school highly value academics, but when it comes down to individual classes, students reported their enjoyment, or lack thereof, as a reflection of teaching styles, individual interest, and course curriculum. A clear relationship between students' valuing academics and enjoying their classes does not seem to exist.

Highly valuing academics

According to a poll conducted by The Record of 50 randomly chosen students per grade, students valued academics at an average of 4.18 on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the least value and 5 being the most.

Honor McCarthy (11) thinks of herself as more humanities-oriented, she said. "I used to feel frustrated with the quantity of the STEM classes at HM, but I've come to appreciate the importance of using different skills – math makes me more organized, science more inquisitive," she said.

James Gluck (10), who considers himself math- and science-oriented, does not value chemistry above other subjects even though it is his favorite, he said. "I just think people have their preferences, but the importance of each subject is pretty much equal."

At times, McCarthy finds herself dismissing certain subjects because she does not think she is good at them, leading her to value them less and become even worse at those subjects. "It's a vicious cycle," she said.

"That's why what intrigues me about a subject like science, which I'm less confident about, is its intersectional elements. Discussions about how science intersects with public policy, with ethics, with religion piques my interest," McCarthy said.

The school's rigor adds to Arjun Khorana's (11) placing a high value on education, he said. "I would not be enjoying what I'm doing if it were easy. Rigor is very important because it allows me to expand my knowledge and really think about problems and equations and

why they mean what they do."

In the end, getting good grades is going to be a byproduct of dedication to the learning, Khorana said.

McCarthy also stresses the importance of valuing academics. "I come to school to be intellectually challenged by my teachers and my peers," she said. "The concept of a rigorous education isn't just about how many hours of work I have but a challenging and stimulating classroom experience."

Not valuing academics

Although students across the whole Upper Division placed the highest average value on academics – 4.29, 4.17, 4.18, and 4.09, in ascending grade order – individuals' ranking of academics ranged from 1 to 5.

Esther Fleischer (12), who places academics behind both her extracurriculars and social life, has not prioritized grades throughout high school, she said. Fleischer only takes classes that she is more interested in rather than classes that look like they're more difficult, or have higher prestige, or look better to colleges, she said, as she does not value taking certain classes for the purpose of the future and would rather enjoy her present interests.

In general, Fleischer only enjoys classes that she is interested in, she said. "I don't see the direct real world application or how it's going to benefit me in my life." For example, she thinks science as a subject is important, but she personally does not want to study it because she knows that she will not pursue a scientific career in the future.

However, Fleischer did enjoy Ethics in School and Society and Topics in Political Philosophy, both of which she took last year. She took these courses because she decided that the skills they would give her were important and interesting, she said. "I would rather improve my ability to come up with an argument and articulate it well on paper and in a debate, than to simply memorize a lot of information," she said.

Alex Karpf (12) thinks school functions primarily as a way to meet other people and socialize oneself, he said. "It sounds ridiculous, but if we didn't go to school we

would sit in our houses and maybe we'd play on the street, but it would be more difficult to meet people."

In French teacher Micheal Dale's experience, it is not that some students do not value a certain academic subject, but rather it's very difficult for them and they end up "just trying to get through the course and be finished," rather than trying to enjoy it, he said.

One way he tries to keep his French class relevant is by transferring material from the textbook and teaching how to use it in everyday life and conversation, Dale said. For those that need more help, he holds extra help sessions and encourages the students to participate in class, he said.

Discrepancy between valuing academics and enjoying classes

According to the poll, many people identified a discrepancy between how much they value academics and how much they enjoy the courses they take.

Ananya Kumar-Banerjee (12) does not think that valuing academics and enjoying classes have to be mutually exclusive, she said. There's a common misconception that classes are either going to be academically rigorous or thoroughly enjoyable, she said.

"We need to be a little bit more open-minded about our academics just generally, and I do think at this age academic rigor is 'more important,' but I'm not sure that it takes away from enjoying classes," Kumar-Banerjee said.

Overall, "you have to be willing to learn in order to value your academics," Ankit Gupta (12) said. However, having a fun class that you enjoy would make that a lot easier, he said.

Teachers are a factor as well, according to some respondents. "I think that you can appreciate a lot of what you're learning and you can enjoy the process of seeing yourself improve in a certain area, but you aren't necessarily enjoying the experience of your class due to the way the teacher is teaching the information," Lauren Smith (11) said.

Sanford Kim (11), who values academics highly, thinks that more interactive classes would be better, he

see ACADEMICS on pg. 7

Debate team sends 54-person delegation to Harvard for last regular conference of season

DANIEL LEE
Contributing Writer

The school's Varsity and JV Debate teams went to Harvard over President's Day weekend to compete in the 43rd annual Harvard National Forensics Public Forum Tournament. Of 12 teams in JV and 14 in Varsity, four teams broke in each division, having a good enough record in preliminary rounds to qualify for the next set of rounds.

The team's co-Presidents, Asher Spector (12), Alexander Karpf (12), and Krystian Loestcher (12), were pleasantly surprised by the results of the tournament, Spector said.

Spector and Karpf made it to double octa finals in their run, making them in the top 32 teams, while Loestcher and

his partner, Henry Hunt (12), went 4-2 in preliminary rounds.

The presidents helped the Varsity team differently than they had in the past. In tournaments prior to Harvard, the co-Presidents assisted with writing cases, and gave more general help. However, Spector said, "they've been benefitting from our research, but they haven't really learned to contribute yet, and we wanted to make sure they knew how to do that, so we cut them off. But then two or three days before the tournament, we gave them the research that they didn't have."

They did something similar for the Novice and JV teams. Teams came to them with questions on their cases, and the co-Presidents would give them criticism on the areas that needed improvement.

Siddharth Tripathi (11) and Honor McCarthy (11) went 5-1 in preliminaries. They went on to get a bye and two wins in out rounds. Advancing to quarterfinals, they went the furthest any varsity team has ever gone at a Harvard debate tournament.

The two spent an ample amount of time preparing for the tournament. However, the prior week's school workload was extremely heavy. "Our success at the tournament stemmed from our focus while we were actually at Harvard because in between rounds and at the hotel at night we would work really hard, so we compensated for the busy week by prepping while we were up in Boston," McCarthy said.

Tripathi's and McCarthy's main focus and ideology when preparing

Community Council restructures initiative system with five-point plan

LUTIE BROWN
Staff Writer

proactive, as we would be able to ask the student body directly what changes they would like to see and have a broader reach," Wei said.

The Community Service Department aims to spread the idea of service learning to the student body by hosting various drives for local public schools, Sheybani said. "The Service Learning Team is a big commitment, and not many students have the opportunity to engage in it, so having small things like drives allows for more members of our school community to engage," she said.

The Sustainability Department is continuing with last year's CC installation of solar panels on the roof of Pforzheimer, and is speaking with Director of Facilities Management Gordon Jensen about adding more panels. The department is also working on the schoolwide water bottle embargo with photography teacher and member of the faculty Sustainability Committee Karen Johnson through finding low-cost, high-quality reusable bottles for the student body.

The Diversity and Social Justice Department is reviving last year's SBP's I Period Speaker Series for the third trimester, hoping to focus on issues of social justice. "Building

off last year, we thought we'd try something similar and accumulate a diverse array of speakers from a variety of sectors," Siddharth Tripathi (11) said.

The Miscellaneous Department is overseeing the CC's printer in Pforzheimer, and is working on small, short term initiatives, such as member Amir Moazami (11)'s March Madness survey. Further, Moazami and Sheybani are working with the College Counseling Office to allow seniors to be a resource for juniors to prepare for college interviews.

"They're difficult to prepare for unless you've been in one, and I think that's one thing that blind-sided people," Sheybani said. "So I think it would be helpful to have seniors contribute common questions they were asked, or to record a video of a mock interview."

"I think the main benefit of the five-point plan is that it makes the CC a more focused and concentrated organization. Our problem before was that we tended to have a lot of ideas, but not a cohesive vision of what we wanted to get done each week," Tripathi said. "Designating initiatives and partners to students gives them goals and ways to get actual policies passed, making the CC more efficient and exciting."



BANTER Siddharth Tripathi (11) speaks in a debate round at Harvard University over Presidents' Day weekend.

for the tournament was "if you really understand the literature and background knowledge, then regardless of what your opponents argue, you can always use your fundamental understanding of the topic to point out holes in their argument," McCarthy said.

Elizabeth Raab (11) and Ella Feiner (11) also advanced to double octa finals. The team did a lot of preparation for themselves, and helped underclassmen and JV debaters with their cases. The novices each had point people, who are upperclassmen that helped them

African-American history through academic classes

SEIJI MURAKAMI
Staff Writer

In around 2005, the History Department shifted the ninth grade curriculum from World History to Atlantic World to "enable us to think more broadly about African American History comparatively and systematically," Atlantic World History teacher Dr. Elisa Milkes said.

In the past World History course, Caribbean American and African histories were not fully covered, but now the course concentrates on them with "greater detail and sophistication," Milkes said. "It is not sufficient, but certainly a change."

The goal of the pre-1500s African history curriculum in Atlantic World classes is to help students "understand that [slavery] wasn't just something that affects the Americas, but also has a substantial impact on Africa because the system is so complex and nuanced," Atlantic World history teacher Dr. Ellen Bales said. "It is impossible to make sense of something without ever knowing about its foundations," she said.

While the ninth grade Atlantic World History course covers African history and the foundations of slavery in America in Atlantic World History, the mandatory 10th grade U.S. History course covers the development of the U.S. slave system and post-Civil War race relations.

African history in the context of America "cannot be extricated because it is involved in the building of wealth, the Civil War, and even American colonization," Bales said.

"You can't learn about U.S. History correctly without learning about race relations," Bales said. "It is always there," she said.

In the future, the History Department hopes to also incorporate decolonization and South African history into the Atlantic World curriculum, but currently, the department is restricted by the

amount of class time in the year.

Bales also teaches AP World History, which covers the relationship between Africa, Europe, and Eurasia, she said. "What's nice about [the AP World History curriculum] is that it adds other dimensions to the history taught in the ninth and tenth grades," she said.

History elective Comparative Race and Ethnicity (CRAE) is in its second year of being offered at the school.

In preparation for the visit from Bob Moses, a leader of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and former math teacher at the school, the class watched clips from "Eyes on the Prize" to provide students with a better understanding of Moses and his work, history teacher Bienstock said.

During the 1980s, Bienstock taught a course on African-American history, which has evolved into CRAE today, Bienstock said. Over his years of teaching the course, Bienstock found that conversations in the classroom "ebbed and flowed" at the school. In the past two years that Bienstock has taught CRAE, there has been a "far greater attention to contemporary issues" surrounding race relations in America, he said.

"We are accepting and cognizant of all cultures. I think different opinions about the ways we can resolve current race relations in America is about as controversial as it gets in class," CRAE student Mehr Suri (12) said.

The CRAE course was created to talk about all ethnicities in America and to expand the breadth of courses offered at our school, Milkes said. The course teaches students about "global citizenship and cultural competency," she said.

Suri finds that the coverage of African American history at the school can be "a bit lacking." "Once you talk about slavery, I feel like all of the eras are jumbled together and we don't appreciate the singular contributions from black figures who have transformed our country."

"The inclusion of these figures is not

just to say that a particular culture has contributed to American culture, but it is simply because they have had a positive impact and integral role in our society today," Suri said.

In Deborah Stanford's Cultural Perspectives 12th grade English elective as well as some of her yearlong classes, Stanford introduces literature written by African-American authors. In her ninth and tenth grade classes she teaches "Things Fall Apart" by Chinua Achebe, "Their Eyes Were Watching God" by Zora Neale Hurston, and "Passing" by Nella Larsen. In her 12th grade English elective, she teaches "The Bluest Eye" and "Beloved" by Toni Morrison.

"The Bluest Eye" concentrates on whether a community nurtures and supports its own, "when we look in the mirror, the extent to which we affirm self worth is directly related to the extent that our community judges us," Stanford said.

The texts that Stanford teaches highlight that everyone should, "be more in touch with who we are and create an inclusive society regardless of skin color, shape of eyes, religion, or sexual orientation," because these are ways that societies create exclusivity, she said. "How do we break that down? How do we begin to see the commonality between us?" she said.

"It always makes me nervous when we talk about black novels as something extraordinary because we don't talk about the white novel as something extraordinary or about an author's whiteness," Stanford said.

"If it is a good novel, it immerses us in the human experience that we don't normally think of and it expands our consciousness," she said. "In teaching Morrison, I work hard to present a human condition that affects all of us and transcends ethnicity because if something affects one group of people, it will affect all groups of people," she said.

C.C. Hears Suggestions For Civil Rights Action

By MARK DIAMOND

On Thursday, April 11, the Community Council met in Alfred Gross Hall to discuss the question of civil rights. In front of a large gallery of students and teachers, the members, speaking in turn from the podium, made their proposals as to what should and what can be done to improve relations between the races.

Bob Geller, first to speak, felt that Horace Mann students must be encouraged to participate in outside activities — political, social, and economic.

Ozzie Taube proposed that a committee should be formed with the project of going down to Harlem, broom in hand, to clean up the place.

The next to speak was Jim Lohman, a fifth form alternate and class VP. Lohman felt that the School should take the initiative and organize meaningful protest rather than the cleaning of streets. He warned that Harlem could be dangerous, and that the next few weeks would speak for themselves. "The people of Harlem might resent 'middle class whites' in neat attire trying to help them," he said. After relating the fact that certain stores in Harlem raise their prices on the day welfare checks are issued, Lohman proposed that H. M. students take complaints of these malpractices and report them to the proper authorities.

Lohman also urged that the student body organize rent strikes and plan at least two more sacrifice to violence to attain their rightful

(Continued on Page 2, Col. 2)

SERVICE CONDUCTED FOR REVEREND KING

A chapel service was held in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King on Wednesday, April 10.

The first speaker, Mr. Lin, quoted from Deuteronomy comparing Moses' reaction of viewing the promised land, from Mount Pisgah to a line from one of Martin Luther King's famous speeches, "I've been to the mountaintop . . ." said the late Negro leader, but like Moses, he never reached the promised land. Mr. Lin then read from Isaiah, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him..."

Sam Felder read from Matthew Arnold's "Rugby Chapel." This poem is about Arnold's father, a leader who had died 15 years before the poem was written. Following Felder, Roger Warcham spoke on his personal reactions to Dr. King's tragic death.

Thompson concluded the ceremony stating that it was not enough just to give money to the various Civil Right groups working to reach the goal Dr. King aspired to, and urging H. M.'ers to give time, thought, and effort also.

A LOOK INTO THE SCHOOL'S ROLE IN BLACK HISTORY

On April 19 1968, The Record published student responses to the assassination of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., which had occurred 15 days earlier. On April 10, 1968, the school hosted a chapel service for King.

FEBRUARY: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The Union: examining the evolution of the club

NATASHA POSTER
Staff Writer

The Union, a club open to all students as a platform to have conversations regarding social issues in today's society, has been growing and evolving for decades.

The club was previously known as the Joint Minorities Coalition, but the name was changed before Director of Admissions Jason Caldwell '97 became involved in 1993, he said. The name was changed in an effort to be more inclusive of everyone, Caldwell said.

Caldwell was the co-president of the Union as a senior, and his goal for the organization was to be a safe place for students of color to talk about issues that were important to them, but being a person of color was not a prerequisite to joining, he said.

In the 90's, there were white students that were prominent members of the group, but the majority of the members were African-American and Hispanic, Caldwell said.

"At that moment in time the school was not as diverse as it is

now," Caldwell said. The organization would sponsor two or three major assemblies every year with guest speakers, major trips to plays and movies, high-profile discussions, and a large trip to the John Dorr Nature Laboratory with workshops open to all students, he said.

"The Union has constantly been changing in terms of the society around us," co-President of the Union Zarina Iman (11) said. "I don't think there is one big change, the Union just sort of molds to what it needs to be."

"One of the purposes of the Union is to make sure that there is an affinity space for all students of color to discuss how they experience the school and the world around them at large," Union Faculty Advisor Nicholas Perry said. However, there is also a purpose for the wider school community to start a dialogue about issues of diversity as well, he said.

There is a set topic for discussion at most meetings, but there are also meetings that are to catch up with each other and provide a space to vent, Iman said.

Many of the discussions are multi-faceted, which in the past has led the

Union to collaborate with other clubs such as East Wind West Wind and the Gay Straight Alliance, so that all of their members can come together and have a larger discussion, Yasmin McLamb (10) said. "We do our best to overcome the issue, and if we feel that the school community needs to hear about it we will bring it to the deans or the Diversity Office, and sometimes assemblies and workshops are made about it."

"I have seen kids who have had more diversity conversations become better, more empathetic people," Perry said.

When Caldwell was a student, Union meetings were once a week with 25 to 50 people participating each time, he said. Meetings now take place when there is a pertinent issue that members feel needs to be discussed. Topics in the past have included Colin Kaepernick, the election, and Trump's immigration policies, Iman said.

Lately, many of the discussions taking place have been about politics, though members try to gear the conversations towards the effects of the policies on the community rather

than the politicians and legislation behind them, Iman said.

"I think there is something really powerful about appreciating that we don't all go through life the same way, and if I can see some of those different ways it actually makes me a better, more experienced, deeper human," Perry said.

"Opening dialogue and discussing things is all about getting different perspectives. We have tried to make it more open and less about it being a club for students of color, which is why we send out emails and have school-wide initiatives to get everyone involved," Iman said.

Similar to the Union, the Black Parents Union (BPU) also strives to make students of color (and their parents) feel included, Co-Chair of the BPU Jennifer Hypolite-Thomas P'20, P'22, P'26 said.

"I want it to include everyone, but the basis is for everyone to also understand the culture behind black people," she said. Because of this, Thomas does not celebrate Black History Month, she said. "There are so many things behind black history that people don't get to know unless

we give it a month, but black history should just be American history, period."

Caldwell's mother was one of the founders of the Black Parents Union, which she became involved in to provide a resource for families who might have questions or want to get together, he said.

In addition to Multicultural Night, the Black Parents Union facilitates mentoring to students of color and holds events throughout the year such as panel discussions, gallery showings, and an annual screening of a movie with black historical significance along with a speaker, Thomas said. This year, they saw the movie Hidden Figures and heard from NASA engineer Aprille Ericsson.

"When people hear that something is being sponsored by the Black Parents Union, people of Caucasian descent feel like that doesn't include them," Thomas said. However, Thomas wants everyone to be included and involved and be able to learn from everything that the organization does, she said.

Dr. Nichols works with Summer on the Hill to promote mindfulness

MAHIKA HARI
Staff Writer

Counseling and Guidance Psychologist Dr. Christina Nichols is currently working with Summer on the Hill to spearhead a study on mindfulness, specifically the impact of progressive muscle relaxation on students.

"We are taking a look at mindfulness in all areas and focusing on trying to see the correlation between progressive muscle relaxation and happiness, attention, and focus levels, which seem to be sensitive to the impact of meditation," Nichols said.

"Overall, we estimate- and this is backed up by a lot of research- that teaching mindfulness to our students will lead to better grades, improved testing scores and most importantly cooler, more well-adjusted kids and people," Associate Director of Admissions Markell Parker said.

While working with Jojo Levy (12) on her independent study project, Nichols realized that there was a paucity of research that actually goes into the before and after results of introducing this type of mindfulness. This opened up the opportunity for both of them to delve deeper in this, Nichols said.



Spyri Potamopoulou/Staff Artist

Just before school started, the group, consisting of Levy, a grant writer, and Parker, worked frantically to apply for a nonprofit organization's grant, Nichols said. They won the grant and started to make a plan to execute their idea, after receiving permission from Head of School Tom Kelly, she said.

"The idea isn't just about the delivery of mindfulness, but we really want to take a look at the impact of the interventions," Nichols said. They will take measurements

of emotions and focus through surveys before and after the actual mindfulness program.

"The potential benefits of teaching mindfulness techniques are limitless," Parker said. "We are talking about increased focus and attention span, a calmer, clearer state of mind, less stress and learning techniques to control your stress levels, increased resilience, and better interpersonal and intrapersonal skills."

"Everyone in the program was excited about it," Nichols said. They

sent out permission forms home with the kids prior to the start of the study, which was just the gathering of information stage.

According to the school website, Summer on the Hill is a year-round program that places around 250 students in summer classes and Saturday programs during the academic year, as well as providing guidance in both high school and college admissions. Nichols plans to begin her pilot meditation program with the 7th and 8th grade classes during the Saturday activities, she said.

History teacher Caitlin Hickerson and a teacher from Riverdale will be going into these classes for the next six to eight weeks to teach specific mindfulness skills for about ten minutes, Nichols said.

"For me, it is not sacrificing teaching time at all. It is using class time more wisely," Parker said.

"Teaching the whole child" is now built into our curriculum and is so much more than a PR catch phrase at SOH."

The type of mindfulness the team is studying, progressive muscle relaxation, is essentially when you focus on all the different joints in your body, draw attention to places like your wrist, calves, and thighs for

tension, and then gently release that tension, Nichols said.

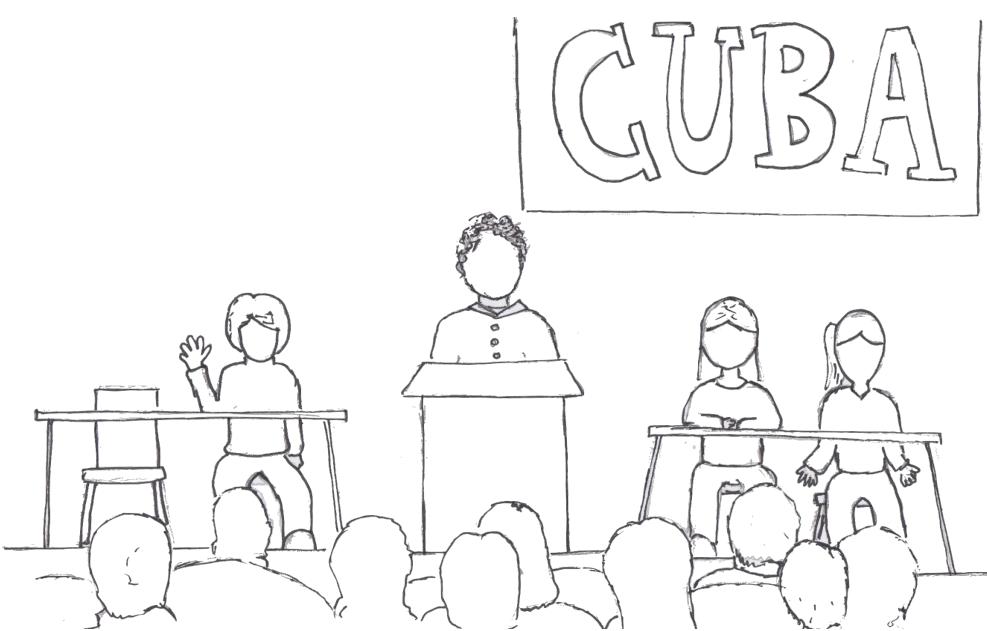
"The hope is that we will train kids how to do it in class, and then they will practice doing it outside of school," Nichols said. "If they are practicing outside of school, that is great. That in itself will be something."

They chose progressive muscle relaxation because it is something kids really connect with and is available on an app, Nichols said. The app would be helpful by giving guidance on outside of school practicing and measuring how many minutes the kids are practicing for, she said.

So far, the study has been going well, Nichols said. "What has been amazing is how quickly the teachers at the program have applied simple mindfulness techniques. It's been great to watch!" she said.

"We are just happy we won the grant and that we are able to teach the kids mindfulness skills because we know they are very useful," Nichols said. "We are going to see if this little pilot program gives us the idea that we should do further research and if so, then maybe we will consider doing something on a larger scale."

Students showcase debate skills at assembly



YEEQIN NEW
Staff Writer

Last Thursday, the Debate Team held an assembly showcasing a mock debate round between two pairs of eighth grade debaters.

Sasha Snyder (8) and Leyli Granmayeh (8) debated against Gabrielle Fischberg (8) and Will Freedman (8) on the topic of the United States' embargo on Cuba.

Because the two teams had debated this topic earlier this year in in-house debates, as well as in a debate tournament hosted by the New York City Urban Debate League, the teams were already very familiar with the subject, faculty advisor of the Debate Team Katharine Rudbeck said.

The pairs shortened the length of the speeches and simplified their arguments in order to make the topic more accessible to the rest of the middle school students, Rudbeck said.

In between the speaking times of the debate, Upper Division debaters explained the purpose and structure of each element of public forum debate.

"Debaters spend a lot of time working on this thing that no one really knows about, so this assembly allowed them to show their classmates and teachers what they have been doing," Rudbeck said.

For example, some teachers who did

not understand the purpose of debate and what it entails questioned why Middle Division students were leaving school to participate, Debate Team co-President Asher Spector (12) said.

"We really wanted others to see that Middle Division-aged students are capable of handling very sophisticated ideas and vocabulary," Rudbeck said.

The second purpose of holding this display was for recruitment, Spector said.

There is already a high level of participation from Middle Division students in debate, Rudbeck said. However, students tend to drop out after realizing the amount of work necessary to debating, Rudbeck said.

"If you start by showing them the end result, then they are more willing to put in the work for debate," Spector said.

Even though the topic was not something most middle schoolers are familiar with, the questions the audience asked during the assembly were "really appropriate" and demonstrated that they were understanding the topic, Rudbeck said.

The teams debated really well, especially because the audience was engaged, Spector said. The several questions showed us that they were listening really closely," he said.

"We had definitely some new members that afternoon, and a lot of

people also mentioned how impressed they were, and that's what we were going for," Debate Team mentor Natalie Wiegand said.

Snyder "thought it would be fun to show my classmates what I do," she said. "It was different because I've never been able to show them."

Participating in the debate demo was "a good experience" and her classmates were very supportive afterwards, Snyder said.

Even though he is not interested in joining debate, the assembly made debate more interesting to watch, Evan Rowe (7) said.

"I thought that the way the assembly and debate was constructed was interesting because it looked like it was on the spot and professional," Chandler Reyes (7) said. "It made me more interested in joining debate clubs," he said.

Debate is one of the few clubs that begin in the Middle Division.

"It gives Middle Division students who are ready to join an academic club a chance to work on their public speaking skills," Head of Middle Division Robin Ingram said.

"I would love it if we could showcase more clubs," Ingram said. "There are a lot of students who love seeing their classmates up on stage, and the feeling was very positive."

Abbamonte and Donnelly lead pilot to increase happiness

SANDHYA SHYAM
Staff Writer

A few weeks ago, history teacher Eva Abbamonte and French teacher MaryBeth Donnelly implemented various methods to increase happiness and mindfulness into their seventh grade advisories as a pilot experiment observing happiness in middle school students.

The experiment will run for 21 days during which the students will engage in daily activities that focus on relaxation and mindfulness to generally increase positivity and happiness.

A week into the pilot, the experiment has yielded positive results, and the students still seem interested, Donnelly said. The students were given a short questionnaire asking them to what degree they felt before they started the 21-day trial, and they will answer the same questions after the experiment is finished, she said.

According to Donnelly, the students have three choices of daily activities they are supposed to do on their own: a couple minutes of journaling about a positive thing that happened in the last 24 hours, some form of athletic activity, or meditation.

Additionally, during daily advisory sessions, students do group activities together. Some activities they have done so far include creating mandalas and doing yoga, Donnelly said. On days they do not meet, Abbamonte and Donnelly try to remind them to do their individual activities, she said.

The idea for the pilot originally came from a TED Talk by Shawn Achor titled "The Happy Secret to Better Work."

Abbamonte initially saw the TED Talk when fellow history teacher John McNally showed it to her, Abbamonte said. She was already familiar with most of the content, which discussed becoming better at work – as well as becoming happier - by approaching it with a positive outlook, she said.

"Although the video was more targeted towards working adult

professionals, I thought a lot of the concepts could be applied to a younger age group," Abbamonte said. "I was curious to see how it manifested in adolescents."

Abbamonte and Donnelly then decided to show the video to their advisories, which share a room, right before Thanksgiving as something interesting and fun for the students to reflect on during the break, Abbamonte said. The students were very enthusiastic and attentive while watching the video, Donnelly said.

"I was very surprised to see how interested they were," Donnelly said. "Actually, the original idea to perform the experiment at school came from them." The students were very curious to see what it would be like to perform the methodology themselves, she said.

Abbamonte began working with the assistance of Guidance Counselor Christina Nichols to adapt the video's teachings for middle school students, she said. The original idea was to have students of the entire seventh grade perform the experiment in their advisories.

However, by the time the idea was fully conceptualized, a lot of advisories had already seen the TED Talk, she said, presenting too many variables for the experiment to work grade wide. Therefore, Abbamonte decided to just run the experiment as a pilot in her and Ms. Donnelly's advisories, she said.

Depending on the results of the experiment, Abbamonte might expand it using the incoming sixth grade next year.

"I hope that my students become more aware of their mindset," Donnelly said. "And realize that it doesn't have to be fixed, that it can be changed."

After the pilot finished, the students said they enjoyed it and thought it did make a difference in their level of happiness, Abbamonte said. Abbamonte has not had a chance to analyze the results yet, but will do so sometime in the following week, she said.

Student artwork on campus and beyond

Memory Project: visual arts classes create portraits for underprivileged youth

AMELIA FEINER
Contributing Writer

Her striking blue eyes peer out beneath heavy lids as the girl looks wistfully into the distance. She wears a white hijab that fades gently into the pale pastel strokes of paint in the background.

Ariella Greenberg (11) created this portrait of a Syrian refugee as part of her Drawing and Painting III class's collaboration with the Memory Project.

The year marked the 10th consecutive year the advanced art classes worked with the Memory Project, a non-profit organization that sends teachers photographs of neglected, impoverished, abandoned, and abused children and teens from around the world to serve as the basis for artistic portraits. The youth then receive the portraits as presents.

This project was especially poignant this year because for the first time the classes drew portraits of Syrian refugees rather than orphans. "We felt like this was something that was very strong in our conscience this year," Visual Arts Department Chair Kim Do said.

The students used their extensive knowledge of portraiture to draw the refugees in a variety of mediums. They carried over techniques they learned in class, paying attention to light, shadows, and proportions.

Students were allowed to choose which medium they wanted to work with. Zoe Vogelsang (11) chose oil

pastels because she does not use them frequently, and the project presented an opportunity for her to go out of her comfort zone.

Students applied themselves differently to the project than their typical schoolwork because they knew their final product would be given as a present.

"They are making this artwork for somebody. It's not for an assignment or class," Do said.

Do wanted students to be proud of their work and feel accomplished when they finished this meaningful project, he said.

The personal nature of this assignment led students to feel a connection with their subjects.

"When I started the project, I didn't think it would really mean anything more than just a painting, albeit for a really amazing cause," Stephanie Li (11) said. Over several weeks, she "ended up staring into his eyes for a long time" as she referenced the photo of the boy whom she was painting.

"I think that made me care about the boy on a more personal level because I felt like I had kind of gotten to know him, even though I've never talked to him or actually met him," Li said.

Vogelsang also began to feel a deeper connection with her child. "By spending a lot of time with someone's photo, trying to re-draw it, they become so familiar and you start to feel like you know them."

The Photography III students approached the project in a slightly different way by incorporating the

photographs themselves into their portraits.

"The Memory Project sends us digital snapshots of the children. We work with these to imagine new possibilities for the children. Sometimes the new portrait includes new activities, new locations or new clothing," photography teacher Karen Johnson said. This year, the class created portraits for children from Ukraine.

"Students used Adobe Photoshop to create the image, which is essentially a photomontage," Johnson said. "By Photo III, students have a level of sophistication and skill that enables them to do the work beautifully."

Lisa Shi's (11) photo project features a young boy photoshopped into a soccer game, his cheerful eyes staring right at the viewer. He is in midair, gleefully shoving a player from the opposing team away.

Students enjoyed both the technical and emotional aspects of the project. "It was a cool opportunity because it felt like we were doing something even if it's a small thing and it's only reaching one kid," Vogelsang said.

"It's a small way to do something helpful. It's a little ray of sunshine being sent into those kids' lives," Do said.

Do expects to continue working with the Memory Project to help struggling kids from around the world in any way, no matter how small.



Courtesy of Kim Do and Karen Johnson



FRAMING OUR STORIES From left to right, portraits created by Ariella Greenberg (11), Seiji Murakami (11), and Jake Sanders (11).

Celebrating icons of the Civil Rights Movement

MAHIKA HARI
Staff Writer

Visual Arts Department Chair Kim Do displayed inspiring artwork honoring Civil Rights Movement's leaders in Olshan Lobby for students to be reminded of their contributions during Black History Month, Do said.

The display, hanging from the stairs above Olshan, consists of five different portraits painted with acrylic paint:

Robert Moses, Dr. Martin Luther King

and Coretta Scott King, Angela Davis,

Malcolm X, and Fannie Lou Hamer,

from left to right. All the paintings

were done by Do, except for the Angela

Davis piece, which was "completely

student-made," Do said.

The Malcolm X portrait was the first piece in the series, Do said. "No one asked me to do it. I just thought we should have something up for Black History Month," he said.

Made on plastic impregnated paper, a special type of paper, Do's painting of Malcolm X was based off a famous photograph of him. In the photograph, Malcolm X is depicted with his pointer finger at his temple, as if in deep thought. Do's piece, similar to the black and white photograph, is mostly comprised of black, white, and brown shades.

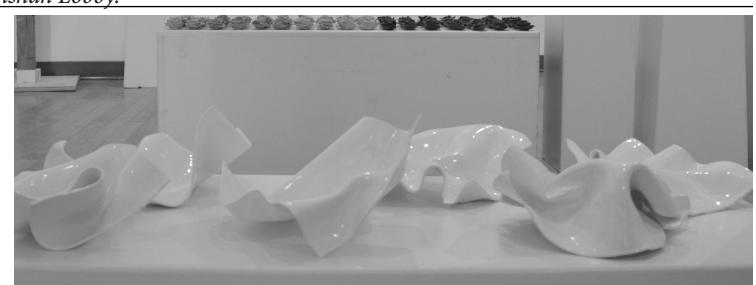
Draped at the right side of the Malcolm X painting is an orange kente cloth, a trademark African textile with geometric shapes woven in bright colors along the length of the strip of cloth. "It's a recognized symbol that people can identify with," Do said.

The next portrait he created was of Fannie Lou Hamer. She was an important Civil Rights activist, known for organizing voter registration in the South, Do said. Hamer was mentioned by Bob Moses in his talk at the assembly earlier this month. The painting of Hamer, also from a photograph, shows her profile in all neutral tones.

When Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK Jr.) and his wife, Coretta Scott King, found out that MLK Jr. had won the Nobel Peace Prize, the moment was commemorated with a photograph, which served as the basis of Do's painting, Do said. The Kings are shown



PAINTING THE PAST Left to right: portraits of Bob Moses, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Malcolm X hang in Olshan Lobby.



**THREE-DIMENSIONAL:
AN EXHIBITION OF 3-D ARTWORK
BY VISUAL ARTS STUDENTS
ON VIEW NOW
UNTIL MARCH 15TH**



Amrita Acharya/Staff Photographer

in black and white, joyfully embracing in the foreground.

One of Do's Drawing and Painting I classes worked on the famous poster of Angela Davis a few years ago, Do said. Davis was another significant Civil Rights activist, and Do's students came up with their own black and white copy of a photograph of Davis, in which she is in the midst of speaking.

Three years ago, another one of his Drawing and Painting I classes created a portrait of Nelson Mandela, which can be found on the second floor of Tillinghast, Do said.

Do has tried to make a new portrait every year, but due to time constraints, it is not always possible, he said. "I knew Robert Moses was coming to school for the assembly, and I wanted to put one of him up before that," Do said. His students had created a large banner of Moses, a former Horace Mann teacher and renowned Civil Rights leader,

for a group project. Since it had been misplaced, Do whipped up the portrait of Bob Moses during his free periods and after school, he said.

The portrait of Moses, the most recent painting in the set of five, is the only one featuring bright colors and is on a vinyl canvas. Also a painting of a photograph, it is a headshot of Moses looking off to the side with reddish and purple shadows in the dark background.

The set of artwork goes up every year, either in Olshan Lobby or the Fisher Rotunda, Do said. "It's been my hope to add to this group, year by year, whether created by me or our students," he said.

Do wishes to do a portrait of former Horace Mann student Allard Lowenstein, an instrumental part of the freedom fighter movement and all sorts of civil rights issues, and more social justice and civil rights leaders in the future, he said.

"I think it's good that we commemorate Black History Month in different ways," Do said. "We do it through assemblies, workshops, and classes. Visual art is another medium to remind people of the importance of the African American contributions to our nation's history."

Sarafina Oh/Photography Editor



Courtesy of Alexis Bolner

Alexis Bolner wins gold at the U.S. Synchronized Skating National Championships

KATIE GOLDENBERG

Staff Writer

Alexis Bolner (11) and her synchronized skating team, the Skyliners, glided to another win last week at the U.S. Synchronized Skating National Championships. The team's first place finish marks the end of Bolner's domestic travels before she and her team embark on the Worlds competition in Mississauga, Canada.

"Winning was really exciting, because it's the first Nationals I've won personally, and the first time the team has won in the past three years," Bolner said.

Bolner and her team had high hopes when entering the Nationals competition, although they faced big competition from two other teams, she said. Her division, one out of five total major divisions, was composed

of 10 teams.

"We were standing next to the rink when we heard the scores and found out we had won," she said. "We all just broke out cheering; we were so excited."

Bolner's team, the Skyliners, is an organization of around 150 skaters that compete on 11 different teams, she said. Bolner competes in the junior division with 19 other skaters; during competition, her team represents the Skating Club of New York.

Prior to Nationals, Bolner and her team received the Team U.S.A. top spot at the World Qualifiers in Simsbury, Connecticut.

"All the junior teams in the United States usually go to the Worlds Qualifiers so they have the opportunity to qualify for the Worlds competition," Bolner said.

The team's success in the qualifiers

makes the girls eligible to compete in the Worlds competition. With a fourth place result in last year's competition, Bolner and her team are excited for their upcoming skate in Canada, she said. Each trip lasts five to seven days, with the competition itself spanning two days.

Bolner and her team began practice for the season last spring. Currently, they hit the ice three days a week for six hours per day on Wednesday nights and weekends. In addition to her team practices, Bolner learns ice dance with a private coach and completes off-ice training.

"Our training schedule is actually pretty limited compared to what international teams do, so we really try to make the most of all the time we have," Bolner said.

Bolner began skating when she was three years old, but did not

begin synchronized skating until she was nine years old, when her private coach began a team. Eventually, she switched teams to join the Skyliners, a more competitive organization.

Bolner has been skating with the Skyliners for six years, and has participated on the junior team for two years.

"I think my favorite part is the team aspect," Bolner said. "We definitely have a lot of fun together at practices and at competitions, and I love that."

"Alexis is a really strong and talented skater, and she is all the more impressive considering she excels in so many facets of her life," Neha Reddy, Bolner's teammate, said. "I feel lucky not only to be representing Team USA overseas, but also to experience it all alongside her."

GIRLS

SAM HELLER

Staff Writer

The Girls Junior Varsity Basketball team finished its season on Feb. 8 with a 21-59 loss against Fieldston. In the two previous games against Hackley and Riverdale, the team lost 13-37 and 25-41, respectively. The team ended their season with a record of 1-11.

While these losses were nothing new to the team, these games represented a large improvement from the first half of the season. In the team's first match against Fieldston, the Lions lost 11-58, scoring more than 10 points less than the team did in their final game.

Although the score may not reflect it, the team played much better in their final games, Charlotte Konopko (9) said.

"The last couple games we were definitely able to take more control of the ball and get it past the half court line. I think we definitely did better on defense and we weren't as flustered with the plays," she said.

The plays have been a struggle for the team as well. Even though Coach Ray Barile and Coach Jozann Jackson taught the team numerous plays to perform in the games, the team tends to forget or neglect them, Konopko said. The team only used three or so plays during the game itself, even though they were taught many more, Shay Soodak (9) said.

"We didn't run plays. It was a problem. We had plays, we just never used them," co-Captain Ashna Jain (10) said. In the last few games, though, the team was able to execute many more plays, leading them to perform better.

"We were doing a lot better and getting the ball in the basket more and knowing our plays," Konopko said. For next season, the team's main goal is to get all of its plays down and use them in real scenarios, Soodak said.

The team had to reinvent due to the loss of three key starters to injuries in their game against Riverdale: Jain, co-Captain Noah Goldberg (10), and Sarah Acocelli (9). Jain and Goldberg were not only the team's captains, but also the team's only sophomores. From that point onward, the team became an all-freshman team.

The three injured players were the team's strongest shooters, so they had to rearrange the team dynamic quickly, Soodak said. The freshmen needed to step up, even the ones who

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hardly played basketball beforehand.

"Kids who you wouldn't expect to step up did, and the kids you wouldn't expect to start started, but everyone gave it their 100% and it was really interesting to watch," Jain said. When the team lost Jain as a point guard, Soodak was able to take her place and become a great ball handler too, Goldberg said.

"We learned a lot more when [Goldberg and Jain] were helping us off the court than when they were on the court because we had to try a lot harder without depending on them," Soodak said. Goldberg and Jain continued to show up to the games and practices and act as team captains by helping coach the players.

As the Lions continued to adjust, the team got its 'second' win of the season against Poly Prep. While the match did not officially count as a win since the team lost 17-36, Barile and Jackson saw it as a win because of the improvement shown by the players.

In this game, everyone worked with one another and the players were able to execute more than just the three basic plays, Konopko said. Throughout this game, the team was also able to execute many more plays than in a usual game, Vani Prasad (9) said.

In their final game against Fieldston, Goldberg was able to return from her injury and play.

"I think the team was more excited and we tried to get the ball to her as much as possible," Gaby Moussazadeh (9) said.

Looking forward, Soodak wants more games to be like that one and hopes next season the team will know "how to use the plays in real game situations," she said.



Courtesy of the Mannikin

NISHTHA SHARMA

Contributing Writer

This past winter, the JV Boys Basketball team showed a significant improvement in its games, especially towards the end of the season. Although the team had a 3-11 record and started off the season slow, the Lions made a powerful comeback towards the end with two back-to-back wins against Hackley and Riverdale.

In the team's first game against Riverdale back in January, the team suffered a 21-59 defeat. The team did not have much experience at that point and went into the game "only thinking about ourselves individually, not each other or the team as a whole," Nick Potash (9) said.

However, the team made a pivotal comeback against Riverdale one month later, going into overtime, and winning with a final score of 43-42.

"It was like a win for the underdogs; no one expected us to do it," Matthew Kaufman (10) said. "It was definitely the highlight of the season."

"We were definitely motivated after our loss. We wanted to win and knew we should have. We realized that we had nothing to lose. That really pushed us to throw in all our effort," Mark Fernandez (9) said.

Many players, such as Jack Blackman (9) and Kamau Hubbard (9), also helped make crucial shots throughout the season's games, while others, such as Griffin Smith (9) and Jeffrey Chen (9) helped keep the team strong on defense through their strategic moves and ability to think fast.

Kaufman and Adam Fife (10) took charge in motivating the team through a variety of pep talks before each game and enthusiastic empowerment after each play; however, "everyone played an important role in our wins, no matter how much or little playing time they may have got," Potash said. "I think the credit goes to all of us working together."

Earlier in the season, the initial consecutive losses gave the team opportunities to find new ways to change up its drills and shooting methods. As the season progressed, the Lions found themselves focusing more on rebounding, shooting, and driving, allowing them to pick up their wins by the end.



Courtesy of Marjorie Kaufman

BOYS

"Because we had a small team, we had to focus on shooting a lot more, and most of our losses were probably because we were simply outnumbered," Kaufman said.

Additionally, Coach Thomas Morales contributed a large amount of insight and support to the team. "I think the credit goes to Coach. He never let us take breaks, and we never stopped running. He came to this school wanting to make us better, and I think he did exactly that," Fernandez said.

With a team consisting of mostly freshmen, "it was hard to find a team chemistry for a while. We just didn't know each other long enough to figure out how to play," Fernandez said.

The players found it challenging to figure out each other's styles and accordingly adjust their own methods of playing on the court, an issue which affected the team's performance in the start of the season.

"Everyone was playing for themselves, and they all wanted to hold onto the ball," Kaufman said. "We had to teach each other to drive up and pass rather than attempt singlehanded shots, but we soon found it to help us more when only one guy was doing that."

Another major source of improvement came from the team bond that developed specifically towards the end of the season. "If we kept on playing we could have definitely had more wins, but I feel that because most of us were still adjusting, we weren't able to reach our full potential," Fernandez said.

After the team did not pick up any wins last season, the players were skeptical of how this year would play out. The team's three wins proved the players' low expectations false as their victories left them all impressed.

However, "The record and losses we have do not reflect who we are. We do play well, and we do work well together. Most of the games we lost were simply because we were not playing up to our usual standard," Potash said.

Nonetheless, the players are optimistic to see what next year's season holds for them. They are hoping to spend more time on the court together, even during off-season, to improve their cooperation and techniques together.

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said. "I try hard in class but it's not 'fun,'" he said. "I'm just learning things that don't interest me."

Most courses' focus on assessments puts a cap on learning, Charlie Hayman (11) said. "In humanities classes, our grades are just a reflection of how well we do on some random essays that aren't that connected to what we do in class. They don't reflect if we actually learn anything," he said.

Instead, the school could make classes emphasize actually learning rather than just memorizing information and doing

well on the assessments, Hayman said.

Why there is a 4-year English requirement

The results of the poll showed that students placed a relatively low value on having a four-year English requirement; on average, ninth graders valued the requirement at 3.11, 10th graders at 2.89, 11th graders at 3.42, and 12th graders at 3.70.

"I think it's important to have the basics, but it shouldn't be required for four years," Gluck, who thinks English should be a

three-year requirement, said. A shorter English requirement would be sufficient to learn basic grammar and the skills to become a better writer, he said.

English Department Chair Vernon Wilson understands why students might undervalue a long requirement. "Language – and for the majority of us here, that's English – is the air that we breathe, and because of that, some students may not feel the need to 'study' English for all four years of high school," he said.

However, "the English Department and the school more broadly have determined

that an engagement with literature of all kinds shapes our humanity, and how that humanity exists in our evolving, often chaotic world, in ways that cannot be quantified," Wilson said.

Training critical thinkers takes time, but the results are evident, Wilson said. Throughout the years, the four-year requirement has been producing students who can think critically not only about works of literature, but also about themselves and their place in the world, he said.

Students continue to develop these skills in college and even in graduate

school, so high school is just laying the foundation, Wilson said. "How to use rhetoric for your own purposes is a skill I think that will really carry students through for the rest of their lives, not something you master by the age of 18," he said.

Kumar-Banerjee, who loves English, strongly favors a four-year requirement, she said. "My personal opinion is that, first of all, we are very young and this is not the time to be specializing. "We don't have enough background and information about any given subject to make a decision about what we want," she said.



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GIRLS BASKETBALL DEFEATS RIVERDALE 41-32, BOYS BASKETBALL FALLS 47-57 IN BUZZELL GAMES

REBECCA SALZHAUER

Staff Writer

The Girls and Boys Varsity Basketball teams won 41-32 and lost 47-57, respectively, against Riverdale at the annual Buzzell Games.

The Buzzell Games marked the end of the season for the boys, while their loss against Poly Prep at the NYSAIS Quarterfinals was the last game for the girls.

"Looking back on the game there were definitely moments of weakness, but overall we played a good game. Even in times where we were making mistakes, our strong desire to win the game helped us persevere and get our heads back in," Jane Frankel (11) said.

On the other hand, the boys "dug [themselves] into a pretty deep hole in the first half and had to play catch up the rest of the game," Kelvin Smith (9) said.

The boys improved their game in the second half when they were able to cut Riverdale's lead, which had been as great as 20 points, to six points.

"That momentum carried over to our offense, leading to some fast breaks and jumpers falling," Smith said.

The boys team's Buzzell loss and 8-12 record for the season can be partially attributed to its short bench and number of injured players; at some points in the season, two out of 10 players were unable to play.

During the Buzzell Game, two key players, Robert Mantz (9) and Smith were recovering from injuries.

The girls team had a strong team effort; eight out of nine players scored, Girls Varsity Basketball Coach Ray Barile said.

Players attributed the differences between the Buzzell Game and a typical game to the change of environment.

Since the Manhattan College court is 10 feet larger and much wider than the school's court, all of the players had to adjust to a different



The Boys and Girls Basketball teams competed against Riverdale at the Buzzell games.

In "Dylan Rem (9) wins GeoBee," Rem was incorrectly stated to be on the Blue Team. Rem is on the Black Team.

In the "A Midsummer Night's Dream" production spread, the article was mistakenly credited to Caroline Goldenberg. The writer is Contributing Writer Madison Li.

In the Fencing profile on Alexia Gilioi (10), the quote, "She is definitely one of the most committed people on the team, always sending out emails for the team. She is the peppiest, always doing team spirit even when some people don't," attributed to Edward Ahn (10), is in reference to Girls Fencing Captain Emma Jones (11).

"We won our first four games, but they were against weaker competition. Then, we struggled. I knew that with younger players we would struggle because they hadn't been in those kinds of situations before. It took a bad loss against Trinity to turn us around," Barile said.

Co-Captains Rosen and Jojo Levy (12) both facilitated the team's bonding, which helped them have such a successful season, she said.

"The strength of the bonds that we all shared definitely contributed to our successes as a team, but also allowed us to bounce back from tough losses because we wanted to be better for each other," Frankel said.

"The underclassmen have so much skill, but it's hard coming into varsity as a freshman and playing against 11th and 12th graders. We had to quickly adapt to each other's playing style, which is tough, but being such a close team vastly helped with that," Frankel said.

Levy and Rosen were able to use their high energy off the court to help the group socially and had a unique yet effective style of leadership, Barile said.

When the last second of the clock ran out at the end of the girls' game, Rosen and Levy, who have both been on the team for their entire high school careers, ran and hugged each other before accepting the trophy from Head of Athletics Robert Annunziata.

Looking back on the boys' season, Smith hopes that they can continue the bonding that occurred this season, as it will help the team play off of each other, he said.

Both teams look forward to the talented, younger players stepping up next year and hope that they can continue to improve, Barile said.

"The team this year was one of the most special teams I've been apart of over the course of the past three years," Frankel said, "From day one, something clicked amongst the group, and we immediately became not only great friends, but a family."

INDOOR TRACK ENDS SEASON WITH STRONG INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCES

Girls Track

CONNOR MORRIS

Staff Writer

In its final meet of the season, the Girls Varsity Indoor Track team came in fourth place overall last Thursday with many strong individual performances.

"We ran well in the events we participated in. Unfortunately, we did not compete in all the events in the Ivy League Championships," Coach RJ Harmon said. However, "some of the girls performed their best times of the season," he said.

Co-Captains Blythe Logan (12) and Sophia Friedman (12) led the team and performed characteristically well this season. Logan, who usually competes in the 1600 meter, was unable to race in Thursday's meet due to injury, but Friedman competed in the 55 and 300 meter dashes.

Other runners who have shown promise include freshman Kiara Royer (9) in the 1600 meter and Dana Jacoby (10) in the 55-meter, Harmon said.

"This season Dana Jacoby has been the one to step up and she medaled in both of her events at Ivies and wins the 55 hurdles every time she races it," Logan said. Jacoby won the 55 meter hurdles in Thursday's meet, and in doing so qualified for the Federation Championships in early March on Staten Island. Logan also qualified with a time of 5:36 in the mile, but will be unable to attend due to injury.

Other than the Federations, Indoor Track does not have playoffs. Thursday's meet was the final chance to perform, and the girls took advantage of it. Jacoby ran the hurdles in 9:19, Freya Lindvall (11) had a personal best time of 6:06 in the 1600 meter

run, Brigitte Kon (9) scored a personal best of 12' 2.5" in the long jump event, and Ashley Codner (12) had her best score of the season in the shot put event with 27' 2.25. In addition, last year's team captain Nicole Kaiser '16 surprised the team by showing up to lend support.

Throughout the season, the team practiced at the Armory indoor track on Tuesdays and Thursdays, where long jump, shot-put, high jump, and hurdle practices all take place. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, the team practiced at the indoor track or Four Acres field.

"We usually do a combination of short and long distances to build up speed and endurance," Dana Jacoby (10) said.

The Lions had difficulty with depth throughout the season.

"We have strength in the mile and 55m dash and have a dearth of runners for events like the 600m race and 3200m race," Logan said. "We need to be able to have athletes compete in all events to have a chance at placing higher in the championships," Harmon said.

However, overall, the team was very happy with the season.

"It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to coach this group of polite and delightful young ladies. They all got along, worked well together and had great team chemistry," Harmon said.

"Looking back on the season, I think that we all grew as people and as runners which for me is most important- not the times people got. I felt really connected to my teammates this season and I know that they will all make great leaders for the team next year," Friedman said.

Boys Track

CHARLIE SILBERSTEIN

Staff Writer

Last Thursday, most members of the Boys Varsity Indoor Track team capped off their season with the NYSAIS qualifiers, a competition for those who are trying to qualify for the NY State Federation Meet.

In the qualifying meet, those who placed first and second qualified for the State Federation meet.

"We had some great performances that came up tenths of seconds short of qualifying," Boys Varsity Indoor Track Coach Jon Eshoo said. Among these was the performance of Chidi Nwankpa (11), who placed third in the 55 meter dash and just missed qualifying.

However, the Lions do have one runner whose season is not over just yet. Jephtha Prempeh (12) won the long jump with a jump of over twenty feet, which makes him eligible to compete this Saturday in Staten Island at the State Federation Meet.

"Overall it was a positive season," Eshoo said. "We had some young runners who improved and even contributed in some of the events."

Melchior Lee (10), one of the underclassmen who stood out, proved to be a very valuable member of the team, Nwankpa said. His role in the 4x200 relay team was vital in its third place finish at the Ivy League Championships, which

took place on February 16th. Lee was also a strong high jumper and came second at the Ivy League Championships.

"Certainly the biggest surprise of the season was Melchior Lee's exciting second place finish in the high jump," Eshoo said.

Charles Simmons (9) also played a crucial role in the 4x200 team, Eshoo said. As for the upperclassmen who stood out, Nwankpa and Prempeh placed in the top three in the 55m and 55m hurdles respectively and were important to the team, he said.

"The team's strength were our work ethic and good team chemistry," Nwankpa said. However, its biggest weakness was the lack of depth on the roster, he said.

"We don't score as many points as teams like Trinity or Hackley because our team isn't as large as theirs," Nwankpa said.

"Coach Eshoo is always important to the team, as he's our coach and motivator," he said. "He always checks on the sprinters at practice even though he primarily coaches the distance runners."

"Next year, I hope for the team to continue to grow and to improve and to place higher at Ivy Championships than we did this year," Nwankpa said.

"I hope our underclassmen enjoyed themselves and are motivated to train and prepare for next year so that we can be competitive at the 2018 Ivy Championship," Eshoo said.