

THE BUZZER

Primus Inter Pares

Vol. 64 No. 1

September 2013

ONGOING REYNOLDS DEBATE



Photo courtesy of Sophia May

By Sophia May & Rachel Chang
Senior Staff Writer & Managing Editor

For student athletes like Gabriella Wan and Devin Nunez, the outcome of an \$8.3 million bond proposal, which, among other things, would pay to renovate Reynolds Field, should be obvious to anyone who has played there.

As the vote draws closer, the Hastings community has been torn over their competing visions of what would happen if this proposal passed; signs in support of preserving Reynolds Field have popped up on lawns throughout town, and at least two Facebook pages have been created that are dedicated to fighting the proposition. Opponents of the bond argue that the new turf would change the character of an important Hastings landmark. They have also expressed concern regarding the heat generated by artificial turf, and the potential drainage and runoff issues resulting from rain.

Meanwhile, those in support of the proposal have not exactly been quiet. The Yellow Jackets Booster Club has created a committee, specifically designed to persuade voters to support the proposition. Many of the proposal's supporters are student athletes, most of whom cannot vote. "I think it would be extremely beneficial for our school's athletic program," said Gabriella Wan, a junior who plays on the lacrosse and soccer teams at Hastings. "I hope that by getting a turf field, our sports teams will be able to compete on a higher level." She added that the artificial turf would also likely result in fewer injuries, given that the current field is filled with "ruts all over the field."

At a recent Back to School Night at Hillside Elementary School, the Board of Education had an information table set up, providing parents with a chance not only to view the plans, but to dip their fingers in a plastic baggie filled with the GeoTurf material that will serve as the base for the artificial turf.

The company's website, geoturfusa.org, states that GeoTurf is heat-resistant and

environmentally friendly. The turf is made out of coconut husks, cork, and sand. The company also says that it is the only synthetic turf backed by the National Green Energy Council, and that the turf is 100% recyclable. "Synthetic fields do have higher heat profiles than natural grass," said Eileen Baecher, the president of the Board of Education. "But this particular turf, because of the infill material, absorbs moisture, which has a cooling effect."

The proposed changes include the installation of a regulation 400-meter track, a GeoTurf synthetic field, and a sidewalk on Chauncey Lane. The bleachers would also be replaced, 15-foot pole lighting would be implemented around the track, the tennis courts would be refinished, and the playground will be relocated to the grassy area south of the tennis courts. A GeoTurf field has recently been installed at the Riverdale Country School in the Bronx. As part of the Board of Education's research, several members of the Board, along with the superintendent and

> *Continued on page three*

Griff The Magnificent

By Lyra Fuchs & Thomas Gelfars
Senior Staff Writer & Senior Editor

For most students, the latter two years of high school are a time of great stress. Upperclassmen who strive to move on to higher education must juggle the ever-increasing workload of junior and senior year, as well as the stressful college application process. But for one student here at Hastings High School, there is no need to worry. She is 16-year-old junior Sofia Griff, who after tenth grade was committed to Yale University.

If you are a junior or senior worried about your own college prospects, you are probably imagining how easy your life would be right now if you'd been committed to an Ivy since sophomore year. But there is a reason that young Griff has entered her junior year devoid of worry about the vicious college process, while her classmates may be questioning the direction of their futures. It is because Griff was blessed at birth with impeccable skill in the game of soccer. Griff recently helped steer her team, Rush Patriots 97 of the National Premier League, to the nationwide championship in Colorado. Griff herself scored nine goals in five games, making her the highest scoring player in the tournament. Griff's team came out as the winners the tournament. To continue her streak of victory, Griff will play for Yale's Division I soccer team in two years.

But it was no easy road to success, as Griff confided in a series of interviews conducted in our very own Lloyd Library, where she is no stranger. Griff's sense of personal responsibility is obvious, and it extends from soccer to schoolwork.

The recruitment process for girls' soccer begins very early, perhaps too early; during the summer going into 9th grade, Griff visited camps at different colleges, sending emails to those who interested her. While her peers were overcoming the psychological trauma of middle school and

> *Continued on page four*

Buzzer on the Inside:

Hastings' Style

And by that, we really just mean Ms. Rudd. Sorry, kids.
> *page three*

Standards under the Common Core

What, in fact, is so common about it? And why is Hastings part of it? We're not common! We're special. > *page four*

Must See Games of the Season

Show some school spirit! Go and cheer for some of the upcoming big rival games!
> *page four*

YOU CAN JOIN
THE BUZZER!

EDITORS' PAGE

PARENT PORTAL



This year, the Hastings school district is rolling out a parent portal—a website linked with the teachers' online gradebook that allows users with login codes (namely, students and their parents) to access grades at all times.

Though the system being instituted will have numerous benefits, students have expressed concern regarding its various possible drawbacks.

The problems with the parent portal seem to reflect the bigger problems with American education today. Not only does it highlight potentially debilitating differences between families, but it further takes away focus from learning and turns it onto grades.

However, that's not to say that the software has been created with bad intentions, or that this editorial is a tirade against the administration. As Mr. Adipietro, Hastings High School principal, explained, "what the parent portal will do is allow parents—see, I like to call it more of a student portal than a parent portal—to allow students to go in and continuously check their progress in varied classes and give parents that same ability."

It's a valid point, but not all parents have this ability. Even in Hastings, there are different types of students, different types of parents. Whether or not the system is successful depends entirely on the parent-student relationship. Some parents will completely disregard the system. Some parents simply won't find the time. Some parents will check it to have conversations with their children. Some will obsess, deepening an unhealthy situation. And others, perhaps after a long day of work, will come home enraged at a mediocre homework grade.

The portal furthers the notion that grades belong to parents, not students. Students often get completely overwhelmed trying to please their parents. Now, if the parents choose to, they can check the grades before the students even find out.

The over-involved parent is a well-known American stereotype. Meika van Gerneran, an exchange student from the Netherlands, says that she sees a complete contrast between American and Dutch parents. Americans, she said, are much more intense. Grades are much more important to them. Although this is just a sample of one, she said that her parents never ask about her grades, and especially wouldn't check them on the computer.

But not all students even have regular access to computers or Internet. Grade systems dependent on technology will only further that gap. In fact, this is reminiscent of one of the problems in American education. There's a huge gap, between states and cities and even in schools, of what students can afford, and their family situations. Some people attend SAT class after class, or their parents may monitor and bolster their grades. Others may be without outside classes, grade-boosting parents, or even the technology that's now necessary to do their schoolwork. This creates uneven opportunities for all.

The parent portal is emblematic of these American problems. It shows the disparities between students. Some don't have access to such technology, which will then hurt them, while others have hyper-involved parents that will see the grades, try to boost them, and create an uneven balance.

-The Editors

The staff of The Buzzer would like to make it clear that this publication is a newspaper written for and made open to everyone in the Hastings High School community. We would like to encourage every student to feel able to contribute to the paper, whether that be by writing, taking photographs, or discussing the issues presented in the content. The Buzzer is an interdisciplinary resource, and everyone is encouraged to take advantage of it.

The Buzzer Staff

EMILY BROUDE
Editor-in-Chief

ARIADNE BAZIGOS
RACHEL CHANG
LENA RUBIN
Managing Editors

ALEX BAZIGOS
Senior Layout Editor

RICHARD BERMAN
TOMMY GELFARS
JULIA MORRISS
Senior Editors

MOIRA PETERSON
Photo Editor

LAUREN WEINER
Art Editor

LARA FEDER
LYRA FUCHS
SOPHIA MAY
Senior Staff Writers

ROSS ABRAMS
Faculty Advisor

WANT TO WRITE FOR THE BUZZER?

Our first meeting is **Thursday, October 3** after school in room **326!**

Can't make it? Come see one of our staff members or chat with our advisor **Mr. Abrams!**

OPINION

Buzzer Perspectives

What did you think of The Fault in our Stars?

Violetta Spinazzola
Freshman



"I thought it was good. I didn't like some of the parts that were too depressing, but overall I liked it."

Katie Ross
Sophomore



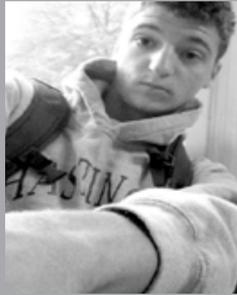
"To be honest, I thought it was too girly."

Matt Hays
Junior



"Terrible. Hated it."

Ben Torda
Senior



"It deserves a Nobel Prize in Literature."

ONGOING REYNOLDS DEBATE continued

the director of facilities, visited this turf field, and determined that the field would be beneficial to the town.

Some of the people opposed to the artificial turf say they base their opinions on their experiences with artificial turf in other communities. One example of such is Heidi Frieze, a Hastings resident who lives in close proximity to the field. "We're going to vote no on the bond, primarily because [my son] Oliver fell on a synthetic field and burned his knee," she said. Frieze added, "We use [Reynolds field] as a family, but I'm pretty sure we won't if it's artificial turf. We think it's important to have a good track for kids playing sports to be

safe, but we just object to the synthetic turf."

A Facebook page entitled Friends of Reynolds Field has been created in an attempt to convince residents to vote no on the proposal. "A "no" vote will compel the School Board to scale back its plans," it reads, "finding a solution that benefits our student athletes and the greater community."

The Board of Education has posted a Q-and-A page about the proposal, which states that should the proposal be voted down, the Board of Education will begin a new bond proposal. Baecher, echoing the Q-and-A page, stated that voters will fill out an exit survey, and the Board of Education

will use this feedback to generate the new proposal, which, according to the page, would likely not be presented to the public until at least three months later.

For athletes such as Devin Nunez, a senior on the football team, three months might seem too long to wait. "The current field is uneven and most of it is dead brown grass," he said. "For me, as a football player who is there every day, it has to be changed."

Kateryna Korol is an exchange student from a small town in the Ukraine attending school in Hastings. The Buzzer asked her three questions to get to know her better.

What is the weirdest thing about Hastings?

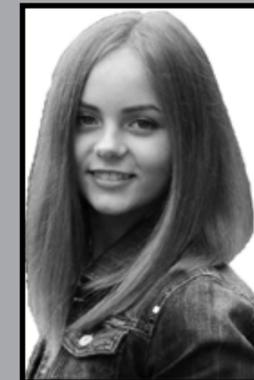
It think it is really pretty surprising that everyone is pretty nice to me, that everybody is very friendly. It is a little bit different from my home.

What is the biggest difference between Hastings and your home?

The attitude of people and the relationships between people. And for me it's also the school system, and, if I can say so, appearance. There're a lot of different things, but it is difficult to remember them now.

What is your favorite food?

I don't have something that I really like or I really don't like, so it's really anything.



Fashion Icon, Beth Rudd, Takes the Stage

by Ariadne Bazigos & Julia Morriss
Managing Editor & Senior Editor

"Ms. Rudd is stylin," said Jon Berger, a junior, when asked to comment on the English teacher's fashion sense.

Dressed in black pants, and a big white linen shirt with fun black heels, a neon yellow handbag, a silver necklace, and unforgettable red lips, Ms. Rudd is the picture of a stylish and professional woman. The Buzzer spoke to this style icon to get to know the woman behind the clothes.

Her definition of style is, "not that you have one, but that you have a notion of style and you play with it... It is not just what you wear, but your whole attitude about it."

Another staple in her repertoire is bright red lipstick, which she has worn every day since she was in high school.

Her carefully put together outfits do not go unnoticed. "Her lips and her shoes and her bag always match. It makes me feel inadequate," said Miranda Mitchell, a senior, and former student of Ms. Rudd.

"I've never had her as a teacher, but she is fabulous," added Tessa Schneider, another senior.

According to Ms. Rudd, her fashion-sense was inherited from her mother, who was and still is very stylish. Despite not having much money, she always wore good clothes, something she passed along to her daughter.

Ms. Rudd also learned how to sew from her mother the summer after third grade. For much of her life after that point, she sewed all her own clothes, learning how to alter patterns along the way. She even sewed her own wedding dress and all the bridesmaids' dresses with her mother.

Although she no longer has time to sew her clothes, she still wears some of the pieces she sewed in the past. Among them is a simple ivory linen coat with dramatic lapels and cuffs and a Chinese silk lining that she sewed when she was fifteen years old.

"Style," Ms. Rudd said, "is a frame of mind. It's playful. It's not who you are, but who you feel like that day."



BUZZER IN BACK

Griff The Magnificent ... continued

preparing for further agony as you entered high school, Griff was way ahead of them, scoping out schools that might have the privilege of having her play soccer for them.

Next, Griff was to be watched by scouts while she played the game she knows so well.

"You can kinda see them on the sidelines," she says of the clandestine scouts. "They'll come with their clipboards and everything. But for the most part you try to block out the sidelines."

While weighing her college options, Griff kept playing soccer and being observed by scouts. Griff decided on Yale as her first choice school, and headed on an overnight visit. There she stayed and talked at length with a player, as well as some coaches. As a result, Griff was offered a spot on the team.

Now she simply needs to apply to Yale, where she will get in, as long she keeps doing well in school. This will be a task of minimal difficulty to Griff, a regular straight A student.

"It's rare that it doesn't happen, that you don't get in," Griff explained. "They just say keep up your grades, don't get any Cs, and don't get arrested. Keep up the grades, keep up the soccer." Fellow teammate and junior Hannah Stein doesn't think this will be a problem for Griff. "She's always given her all," Stein said. "She's one of the best, not only because of natural talent, but because she worked for it."



^ Sofia Griff commits to Yale as a rockstar on the soccer field.

Classic Pick-Up Lines

A perfect diddly-darn way to catch a member of the opposite sex's eye!

For the creative types:
Are you an interior decorator? 'Cause when I saw you, the room became beautiful.

For the religious types:
Are you religious? 'Cause you're the answer to all my prayers.

Or, for the drivers out there:
Are you a parking ticket? 'Cause you've got fine written all over you.

Hastings Boys Varsity Soccer vs. Dobbs Ferry [9/27]

Senior captain Jack Berritt urges fans to come to this game because "lots of guys on both these teams have known and played each other for years, and we're all going to be hyped up from pep rally. It should be a fun one"

Hastings Varsity Field Hockey vs. Hendrick Hudson High [9/28]

Coming off two wins in their last 5 games, the girl's varsity field hockey team is excited for their homecoming game this, Saturday before the football game. Senior player Elaina Epstein says that the team is "poised to win and is going to bring lots of intensity."

Hastings Varsity Football vs. Putnam Valley [10/5]

This is an intriguing matchup. "they are a class B school and we match up well both offensively and defensively," said senior fullback AJ Tarricone. This game played under the lights is a must see.

Hastings Varsity Cross Country meet at Six Flags on [9/28]

Senior runner Ben Torda spoke on behalf of the cross country team when he said they were "psyched" for this meet. He added that "the course is incredibly fast and plus we get to go on rides after!"

GO YELLOW JACKETS!

Show some community spirit and attend a game!
Remember, wear green and yellow!

Some extra games to attend if you want to show extra spirit...

Monday, October 7 - 4:15 Volleyball vs. Dobbs Ferry in the Cochran Gym

Thursday, October 10 - 4:30 Girls Soccer vs. Irvington at Upper Burke

Friday, October 11 - 4:45 Field Hockey vs. Sleepy Hollow at Lower Burke

Saturday, October 12 - 1:30 Football vs. Dobbs Ferry at Reynolds Field

Tuesday, October 15 - 4:30 Boys Soccer vs. Irvington at Upper Burke

TLE STANDARDS UNDER COMMON CORE

by Lena Rubin & Lara Feder
Managing Editor & Senior Staff Writer

The Common Core, a brand-new teacher assessment initiative, will come into effect this year. A subject of buzz over the last few months, the Common Core Standards Initiative is a series of educational tools and reforms that are now being used in 45 states as well as Washington, D.C. The program's heavy emphasis on standardized testing has raised concern about students' well being.

Students aren't the only ones being evaluated far more closely than before. So are teachers, using the Teacher Leader Effectiveness System (TLE) under the Common Core. In schools that have implemented this tool - Hastings included - each teacher will receive a grade at the end of the school year. This grade will determine his or her status as employee and tenure candidate. Dr. Mahoney, HHS director of curriculum, explained that the TLE is closely tied to the math and English standardized tests that come with the Common Core. In fact, students' standardized test scores comprise about 40% of their respective teachers' grades, said Mahoney.

The other component of the assessment is an evaluation of a teacher's performance by Dr. Mahoney, Principal Adipietro, and other administrative staff. Principals will also be evaluated. Although the Common Core

is mandated by the state, and our school has not voluntarily chosen to implement it, Principal Adipietro sees it as "an excellent curriculum" and "something for us to strive for." He acknowledged that the program has received a bit of backlash because it seems to have been implemented quickly and without much warning. Adipietro stated that the assessment of teachers in particular will provide a unified way for the school to self-assess and find areas to improve.

English teacher Peter Scotch brought up some qualms about the TLE. He said that trying to grade all the teachers in one school under the TLE system poses problems for the teachers in the subjects for which standardized tests are not given. Some examples include foreign language, art, music, and phys-ed teachers, as well as guidance counselors.

The TLE deals with these outliers by grading them based on their students' performance on English standardized tests. Dr. Mahoney explained the Common Core's reasoning as this: arts classes should "increase students' general literacy" and thus placing them under the English-test umbrella makes sense.

Scotch maintained questions about the true effectiveness of grading teachers under such standards.

He reflected on common beliefs by saying that teachers should be held responsible not for their students' scores on one large test, but for their students' engagement throughout the year. This relates to the longstanding debate over whether abolishing standardized tests altogether would put the focus back into the classroom.

Scotch mentioned a recent New York Times article entitled "The Worst 8th Grade Math Teacher in New York City, Victim of Her Own Success." Carolyn Abott, the subject of the article, was given the lowest possible rating on the Teacher Data Report, similar to the new TLE. While the students in Abott's class, many of them gifted in mathematics, excelled beyond their grade level, the mandated math test that came at the end of the year did not cohere with the advanced teaching style as a class. She explained that to her, "mathematics is about deep understanding, and enjoying the process:" something completely unrelated to any standardized multiple-choice test, and she said that this should not compromise her standing as a teacher.

