The Classic
Townsend Harris High School at Queens College
149-11 Melbourne Avenue, Flushing, NY 11367

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New leaders take SU helm
by Andrew Goldberg

Culminating three weeks of campaigning, in which pens, fortune cookies, and a slew of sugary treats touting campaign slogans were offered by candidates to solicit votes, the first Student Union elections held since the January ratification of the revised SU constitution took place on May 27.

The winners, included junior Allison Park, who was elected SU President, junior Hari Kondabolu, who will serve as Vice President, sophomore Eric Trager, who will be the new Junior Vice President, and sophomore Rio May del Rosario, next year's Freshman/Vice President.

Sophomore Karolina Borawska will be the new Consultative Council Representative. In the junior-class race for Senior Council President, Andrew Falzon fought off Tashia Raymond, and will head next year's Senior Council composed of Vice President Karolyn Cabrera, Consultant Council Treasurer Nupur Misra, and Secretary Patricia Cramer. Stephanie Mitchell, secretary, and sophomore Karolina Borawska will be the new Consultative Council Representative.

Defective neutralizing tank to be replaced this summer

by Lauren Paley

A chemical neutralizing tank will be replaced over the summer after it sprang a foul-smelling leak on May 13. Water was shut off in the photography and chemistry labs for two weeks, forcing science classes to neutralize their chemicals with baking soda, and photography classes to abandon developing altogether. The tank had been re-sealed a number of times by custodians before the damage worsened.

Temporary repairs were made until a contractor can replace the entire tank. A new hydrochloric acid neutralizing tank will be installed this August.

Excess spillage ran into the student cafeteria, closing it for a day until a private contractor approved by the Environmental Protection Agency confirmed that all liquid was non-hazardous and air quality was safe. For the day, students were asked to eat lunch in the gymnasium.

Custodial engineer Joseph DiGiacomo described the root of the problem as numerous "pin-hole" punctures in the base of the tank. "We got a defective product," he explained. "The tank should have lasted at least 25 years."
Taking aim at guns - time to get with the program

by Andrew Goldberg

As NBC interrupted its regularly scheduled programming to inform American viewers of a school massacre more morbid than most seen in violent mov­ies, I must admit, if not for the dramatic chords which quickly reached crescendo, and the moderator's quavering voice, which could be heard between bomb blasts in the background, I may have been [in] the wrong channel. The credits to the scene crashed or, even if OJ Simpson had fi­nally found the "real killer," life would go on (and so, I was convinced, would my TV show). But, I braced myself, it would only be a matter of minutes. That, after all, is the wonder of television!

I've been told that when President Kennedy was killed cars stopped, and the honking of horns, which today typi­cally serves as a motorist's means of expressing approval over a sports score, combined on city streets with shrieks of shock and anger from anguished Ameri­cans. How could it have happened?

How could it have happened here? The circumstances were different years later when Robert Kennedy was shot in Los Angeles, and Martin Luther King Jr., too, was assassinated, but the general sentiment has always been the same. Just as our rubber necks stretch out of curiosity, every time we pass a crash and drive onward, so too do our eyes main stock the tube like jelly.

Michael E. Summer, a lawyer who chairs the Coweta County school board and has taken on such drastic ac­tions, stating, "We've got to let the kids know who's in charge of the schools. And if that means we're in­fringing on somebody's individual freedom of expression, then so be it" (The New York Times, 5/24/99). Therein lies the faulty logic behind re­stricting students' rights. What Mr. Summer and all adults should be thinking and say­ing is, "It's okay, because we have done this. "Like this: "We've got to let the kids know that we're here for them, and that there are al­ways alternatives to violence. We have to identify and help alleviate the kids' problems so that they don't have to resort to violence for ex­ample, in reaction to the recent school shootings, New Mexico Attorney General Jeff Bingaman began advo­cating a $10 million bill to install security sys­tems in public schools that would in­clude "security guards, a perimeter fence, tamper-resistant surveillance cameras, a motion-detector alarm sys­tem, hand-held metal detectors, hair­analysis drug test kits and portable breathalyzers" (ABC News, 4/29/99).

But as long as schools continue to take the safety of students but eliminate all their privacy and signifies a complete lack of trust in them. More importantly, such measures do not solve youth vio­lence. Fences and metal detectors may protect students' physical health, but do nothing to ensure their mental and emo­tion­tal welfare, the true sources of youth vio­lence.

In effect, communities must address school safety and youth violence, with­out restricting students' rights and pri­vacy. And they should look to Town­send Harris High School as a pro­posal method for working both issues. In reaction to the Littleton and Conyers incidents, Harris administrators and students have, in­deed, addressed youth violence through the formation of a tolerance committee, which seeks to identify and solve social problems among students and to stimu­late communication between students and faculty. (See related article on p. 7.) Meanwhile, the school's safety com­mittee, which has always existed, has taken a more outstanding role recently by reviewing and refreshing Harris' safety procedures and remaining staff and students of them. Seeing the alarm­ist and radical reactions of other school administra­tions, we should take comfort in knowing that ours has found a better way to respond to the school shootings, working cooperatively with students and not oppressing them.

Reacting to the recent rash of school shootings across America, communities everywhere know that it behooves to be initial steps toward creating safer schools and preventing other vio­lent tragedies. These steps include en­forcing strict dress codes, installing random searches of lockers and book­bags, restricting speech over the Internet, and even requiring students to address faculty members by "sir" and "ma'am." In other words, school offi­cials and political leaders have begun trampling on students' constitutional rights and invading their privacy in a well-mean­end but misguided attempt to calm anxieties induced by the school shootings.

In order to ensure school safety, com­munities must first solve the core prob­lem of youth violence. Infringing on students' rights and privacy is ineffec­tive and inappropriate, for doing so would work toward neither school safety nor a solution to youth violence.

According to The New York Times (5/24/99), in the shooting that occurred in Littleton, Colorado, and Conyers, Georgia, a high school student in Wilmington, North Carolina, spent three days in jail after writing "the end is near" on his computer's wallpaper. Eleven high school students in Birming­ham, Ohio, were suspended for posting material related to Gothic culture on the Internet. Other schools around the nation have made it illegal to wear trenchcoats or even black clothing.

In translating from one crash or murder to an­other, there's nothing Americans can do but turn on the TV or tuning in to Littleton can teach us anything, it should be that turning off the TV, or tuning out the world around us to "investigate the matter," to have a "hearing," or to "form a committee" and then clicking the tele­vision back on, won't help. "It's all in the media," but, as already stated, newspapers and television stations have been used as a vehicle for the sickening story.

The carnage in Colorado has not been forgotten by students of them. Seeing the alarm­ist and radical reactions of other school administra­tions, we should take comfort in knowing that ours has found a better way to respond to the school shootings, working cooperatively with students and not oppressing them.

In order for students to be able to concentrate on their studies, school shootings have become a major distraction. The media has not been able to stop covering the story, even when the shooting has ended and the news is no longer newsworthy. The media's coverage of the shootings has been criticized for its focus on the killers and their motives, rather than on the impact of the shootings on the students and the community.

In a time of crisis, it is important for schools to provide a safe and supportive environment for students. This can be achieved through measures such as increasing the presence of police officers, providing counseling services, and implementing stricter security policies. It is also important for the media to be responsible in their coverage of school shootings, and to avoid focusing on the shooters and their motives.

In conclusion, school shootings are a serious problem that requires a multi-faceted approach for their prevention and response. This should include measures to address the underlying issues that contribute to violence and to provide support and resources to students and schools affected by these events.

The Classic

 responds to fears of school violence
To the Editor:

I very much enjoyed your article explaining the frequency of usage and purposes for the use of Cliffs Notes into "Note books lure reluctant readers" in the...issue of the...newspaper.

When I first came to Townsend Harris, I saw many students spending their mornings reading those aids we all know as Cliffs Notes. Personally, I don't see why some of the English teachers mentioned are anti-Cliffs Notes. No one is perfect. We don’t all have Masters degrees in literature. Until students get into the habit of identifying key concepts in literature, why can't we have some sort of help?

Townsend Harris teachers stress their openness to any type of question. But, at midnight on a Tuesday night, we are not equipped with a Ms. Cowen or Ms. Biemiller to answer a question about Bronte's role in Judith Clutter.

Diana Jose, 904

To the Editor:

I really enjoyed the latest issue of The Classic. I especially enjoyed your article on cheating and the article points out a different spin on Townsend Harris. Your article tells the rest of the world that Townsend Harris students are not perfect. Just because Townsend Harris students are not perfect, does not make them any worse than the average kid, that doesn't mean that we are not human.

Melanie Sanders, 907

To the Editor:

I know that the last thing everyone wants to read is another article about the drug incident that occurred on the Senior Trip, but I really feel that I have something unexpected to say. It is something that I have been holding back for the past few months, and I believe I am ready to share my feelings with the entire school.

Leave it to me to find some selfish gain out of someone else's misfortune, but I must admit that the drug incident was the best thing that could have happened to me. Being a relatively new teacher, I understand that naive human behavior was always living each day of life with one thing in mind myself. I wanted to be a better teacher. I wanted students to learn in my classes. I wanted to win teacher of the year. I wanted to win a "best-dressed" award. Who would have guessed that the one incident on a Senior Trip would change my life forever?

That is exactly the reason this recent school shooting, as well as all of the other school shootings that have occurred during the past year and a half, should be sending a clear message, which unfortunately is being ignored. The message is that when a person is pushed far enough, that person is going to push back one day.

Turn on CNN, or MSNBC, or Fox News Channel, or practically any other news program for that matter. If they’re covering the Littleton shooting, expect to see a common pattern. All the shows will portray the shooters, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, as either, take your pick: a monster or sub-human or a mentally insane. In addition, all the shows will portray the victims of the shooting (with the exceptions of Harris and Klebold, of course) as being saints.

Unfortunately; they fail to recognize the obvious and correct answer to that question. The answer isn’t the Internet. It isn’t the media. It also isn’t Hollywood. Or video games. Or access to guns. The answer is painfully simple: high school cliques and the rigid caste system they produce. That is exactly the reason this recent school shooting, as well as all of the other school shootings that have occurred during the past year and a half, should be sending a clear message, which unfortunately is being ignored. The message is that when a person is pushed far enough, that person is going to push back one day.

My proposed solution is the restoration of enrichment bands. For those who do not know, years ago at Townsend Harris, there were classes called enrichment bands that met during the school day in which students with similar interests (e.g. photography) got together and had a class about that interest. Due to budget reasons, they were discontinued. What I am proposing is a return of enrichment bands, but in a different form. The new enrichments would be a gathering of students, a teacher, and guidance counselors. Instead of focusing on student interests, they would aim to "enrich" communication between classmates. Each official class would become an enrichment class as well. The reasoning behind this is that the people in an official class will usually stay together from freshmen to senior year. The students in the enrichment will therefore be able to get to know each other much better and form a closer relationship with their classmates. The class would be run in seminar format, with students leading the discussions on issues such as school safety, emotions, cliques, friendship, and the like. The official class teacher as well as members of the guidance department would take part in these discussions and thus open dialogue would start between all three groups.

Enrichment bands could combat cliques, provide more independence, and help students realize the power they have, and use it. The boys have been portrayed in The Classic as being a little bit of everything from victims to villains. I would like to provide a new title for them, and all the seniors who have heard my preceding lesson: You are all heroes. Thank you.

Michael Carbon, English teacher

Letters to the Editor

Reflections on Cheating, Senior Trip

Opinion

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June 1999

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by Anthony Cioilli

The recent shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, have sent shockwaves throughout the nation. Many people, particularly students, parents, teachers, and administrators, are asking the obvious question: "Why?" Unfortunately, they fail to recognize the obvious and correct answer to that question. The answer isn’t the Internet. It isn’t the media. It also isn’t Hollywood. Or video games. Or access to guns. The answer is painfully simple: high school cliques and the rigid caste system they produce.

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It is with these in mind that I have written this article. In high school, there are two different groups that can be defined as anti-cliques. No one is equipped with a Ms. Cowen or Ms. Biemiller to answer a question about Bronte’s role in Judith Clutter.

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Art Olympics tests creativity
by Bosed Adeneak

For the first time in this school's history, students, escorted by art teachers, participated in the Olympics of the Visual Arts. Sponsored by the New York State Alliance for Education (NYSATA), this competition provided participants with the opportunity to explore various genres, ranging from performing arts to industrial design, and solve a problem through creating works of art.

On April 28, 1971 students from 43 school districts throughout the state presented their original entries at the New York State Museum in Albany. The two Harritson entries, a drawing by Yunhee Jeong and an evening gown designed by sophomores Frank DeBellis, Noman Nawaz and Jenny Duris, received certificates of achievement and participation.

The Olympics focused on originality and brain-storming. In each category, such as painting or drawing, students were presented with a problem which they had to solve by creating artwork. In the drawing category, the problem was first to investigate and interpret how various objects used in negative space were drawn, and then create an original drawing that was inspired by the human form.

"I researched portraits by other artists like Edward Hopper and Chuck Close," said Yunhee. "I drew faces with charcoal and colored pencils and used facial expressions and contrasting colors to show life."

Yunhee's drawing is displayed in the main lobby. It features three women, one young, one middle-aged, and another old.

In some categories, there was also a spontaneous problem. "I was given a problem on the spot: 'They took me to see fire equipment,'" she said. Based on the signs, she had to draw something dealing with human physiology. Yunhee created an object composed of bones, flesh, and hands. Earning 33 points out of 40, Yunhee came in fifth among 17 high school students.

The fashion design category differed from the drawing one. Students were required to research flying critters and then create an original wearable garment inspired by the research. The fashion was to be constructed from paper products.

"We made a navy-blue evening gown, the color of the peacock. We decided to use the peacock because the statues in China, Japan and India have used the peacock in fashion," said Frank.

The outfit, made from crepe paper, had a neckline covered with feathers, like those of a peacock, and a detachable train, adorned with glitter and elliptical patterns that represent the eyes of India. The peacock watches over India; it is the country's national bird. The students also created a hat made of felt. Their creations can be viewed in room 563.

"I had to write three essays and give a one-minute speech explaining the research," Frank said. The speech was read while Jenny modeled the dress.

"It was fun," said Jenny. The group of sophomores competed against 18 others, earning a total of 22 points.

"It was a learning experience," said Noman. Since this was the first time Townsend Harris has participated in the event, the students, as well as Mr. Morales, did not know what to expect.

"It was impressive. There was exceptional performance by the students in a very short time. They began work only a month before the competition while others had two to three months," explained Mr. Morales.

The students learned what the judges were looking for: creativity, innovation, and originality.

The students participated in the Olympics after seeing advertisements on the school walk. "I like to draw because I am interested in architecture. It requires freehand drawing," said Yunhee. Similarly, Frank is interested in the category fashion, as a career choice.

"The students were self-motivated. I wasn't allowed to instruct them. It was exciting to see the most creative minds challenging one another to produce the most striking and effective design," said Mr. Morales.

Some participants are willing to enter the contest again next year. Since Ms. Morales is now a member of NYSATA, the school will receive the letter of invitation on time, rather than months later. In addition, the students will now have an idea of what the judges like.

"I am very ambitious. Next time, I want to get first place," said Yunhee.

"It's exciting to see the most creative minds challenging one another to produce the most striking and effective design."

Polansky explores power, gender issues
by Alice Lee

Using little more than handmade paper, paint, and crocheted doilies from her grandmother, Lois Polansky, Project ARTS Coordinator and photography teacher, created the artwork. "An entitled pattern, Survivco with Insignia Badges." This mixed-media piece, which currently hangs in the library, explores the idea of power through its depiction of an ancient Chinese officer and his insignia badge, which reveals his rank.

Originally displayed in the library to greet an anticipated visit from Chinese teachers, which has yet to take place, the square-shaped artwork focuses on a black coat, which takes up much of the canvas. In the center of the coat are several pink and white doilies. Text is also a component of the artwork: a gold strip on the top and another toward the bottom highlight the title and other phrases. Underneath the coat, there is more writing, which Ms. Polansky calls her "personal comments on life."

"The rest of the background is light pink. The original colors (gray and pink) of Ms. Polansky's coat also disclosed another theme of her art: gender equality. In ancient China, all government officials and those who wore these coats were men, said Ms. Polansky. Therefore, as a believer in equality of the sexes, she decided to create an original "herco.""

The golden bands in the artwork read: "Ranks and Titles are external badges which reflect faces of the wearer. Dear-err-2be torn off, looked through & assumed when the suture/finish/repair worn." Ms. Polansky explained that this means that some may dress, or were distinguished to themselves, without attaching any meaning to the attire.
TOWNSEND HARRIS

elective session

Thotic as well as the technical part of photography. “Taking pictures is a good skill to have and by viewing the work that is displayed in the halls, I can really tell that it requires great perfection,” said freshman Aehaka Kalla.

Ms. Polansky confirmed that photography is difficult, but maintains that anyone can do it. She is always willing to help her students. “She finds time to meet with everyone individually,” said junior Annie Nandial.

Polansky has been studying art for many years. She said that she was an artist since the day she was born and she feels that art enhances learning. “All art forms are very important to the study of human development because art is the legacy and civilizing force of every society,” she said. Ms. Polansky pointed out that, through photography, students can document their lives. “It’s an important medium for an artist to know because it expands your vision, allows for another dimension in your work, and is a fast instrument of expression. Teaching this course has revived my personal interest in photography,” she said.

Ms. Polansky encourages students to take her photography elective because they get the opportunity to learn a lot about the ordinary discourse of art that they will use in their everyday lives. Sophomore Anjali Gupta said, “Photography is a very personal art. Through it we are able to capture the precious moments in life. It is one of the greatest gifts of art.”

Selected works in China through ‘Surcoat’

This work of art was part of a series which Ms. Polansky worked on in the 1980s while she was researching garments and cultural costumes. “I was always an art

lar exhibit and talk with small groups of people about them.”

Sometimes it feels very good to get through to everyone because they don’t find art relevant to their lives, but others get what you’re saying and it feels very good,” said Eva. Members also get to meet famous artists. This year’s Youth Insights group met contemporary American artist Glenn Ligon, who is known for using text in his work. Yaneh said that it was a “tremendously good experience because the conversation gets very personal. You can basically ask him about anything.”

After spending six hours a week in the museum throughout the year, members of Youth Insights were recently “graduated,” or transferred from part-time work during the school year to full-time work during the summer.

‘Speakings’ mural depicts ‘many voices of language’

by Rachel Noble

Anyone who has ever puzzled over the translation of ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics in linguists or struggled to recall the cognate of a vocabulary word in Latin can empathize with the challenge of uncovering the origins of language. This coming fall, new light may be shed on the mystery of communication with the unveiling of a student-constructed mural, to reside in the second-floor lobby, entitled Speaking: The Many Voices of Language.

Constructed by a group of 20 students under the advisement of artist Elizabeth Crawford and Richard Lewis of the Touchstone Center, a non-profit educational projects in city schools, the mural is made up of 64 clay tiles, each bearing the image or phrase of an individual student’s interpretation of language and its origins.

“It’s a mystery how we’re connected to the scientific world that developed into language,” says sophomore Negm Elreda, whose tiles include intricate illustrations of words that fall into categories like ‘water’ and ‘space.’ “You have to trace back to the very first sound man made.”

For the students involved in the project, tracing back to man’s first sounds meant engaging in weeks of discussion and workshopping ideas, students finally settled on four themes that inspired them and spent weeks carving and painting tiles. Themes ranged from the simple image of a coffee cup that reads “Words are Food: Feed Your Soul” to elaborations on the gradual evolution of language. For junior Tristan Vizcon, whose mural depicts four tiles, “art is love, and I poured all my love into this project.”

Creating art about language was “a theme [the Touchstone Center] wanted to initiate in a variety of settings,” says Mr. Lewis, who founded the Center in 1909. “We use language all the time. The mural is another way of looking at it so we don’t take it for granted, so we see it as something remarkable and amazing. I hope it will stimulate people to think...about language and its role in our lives, and the role the imagination plays in conceiving language.”

Townsend Harris is one of three schools participating in the Speakings project, which began three years ago when the Touchstone Center began holding regular workshops for students to pursue the mystery of the life of the imagination. Second- and grader P. S. 20 on the Lower East Side and second graders at Louis Armstrong Middle School in Jackson Heights are involved in creating similar murals, theirs focusing on the language of nature.

Ms. Crawford, who last year taught the elective course “Science phenomena through art,” hopes that the mural will give people pause to reflect. “I hope that it will help viewers ask similar questions about language,” she says.

Sophomore Kendra Thompson, whose tiles paint language as a “bridge that spans dreams and reality,” says, “I feel proud to be part of a project where I can come back in 20 years and know that I’ve contributed to Townsend Harris.”

by Carolina Pruss

Leading tours in the corridors of the Whitney Museum of American Art, five students participated in the second year of the Youth Insights Program, a paid internship for high school students. Juniors Yaneh Jeong, Jinhlee Chu, Lucy Hong and senior Tanika Williams learned about the program through a notice Projects Arts teacher Lois Polansky received from the Board of Education’s Projects Arts Initiative.

According to Eva, the main purpose of Youth Insights is getting different people involved in art through interaction. “We want people to come closer to American art,” she said.

Youth Insights participants try to achieve this goal by giving tours of exhibitions. They study up on any paintings they like in a particular
Pippin, audience find happiness at performance

by Allison Barz

"I want my life to be something other than long." With these words sung by Pippin, played by senior Brian Graber, the scene is set for the main character's search for self-fulfillment. Pippin, a play based on the "life and times of Pippin [son of Charlemagne, supreme ruler of the Holy Roman Empire]." was performed at an open dress rehearsal on Thursday, May 20 and two additional performances on Friday and Saturday, May 21 and 22.

Directed by drama teacher Harriette Bleschon, with the help of Assistant Director Judy Biener, English teacher, and student director Dorecas Davis, senior, and produced by Assistant Principal of Humanities Lynne Greenfield, the play documents the humorous search for self-fulfillment by the son of the rich and powerful king of the Holy Roman Empire. Captured brilliantly by Brian Graber, Pippin realizes that he lacks something and vows to find it, and he decides to find it.

Initially attempting to seek glory in war, he comes to the understanding that glory is not what he desires. He soon comes to the same conclusion when he attempts to become interested in life in the company of women.

Then he murders his father and takes his place, believing that such a path will lead him to happiness; unsurprisingly, it does not. Finally, after the reintegration of his father, Pippin falls into deep despair and is taken in by the widow Catherine, played by junior Jessica Byrnes.

The son of Catherine, Theo, played by sophomore Dawg Wing, finally draws Pippin out of his depression and Friday performance. Dialogue ran smoothly, and there were no obvious glitches in any of the scene changes or cues, thanks to the work of the stage crew, headed by seniors Lauren O'Connor and Lisa Tschernkowsitch.

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The scenic design of Gordon Browne and costumes coordinated by Patricia Rosa and Susan Getting created the feeling of each scene. During "Glory," sung by senior Leslie Rosa as the Leading Player, the lighting was effectively changed for each phrase in the song: red represented war and blood; blue represented steel; and white portrayed a "butter winter."

The comical aspect of Pippin was captured with enthusiasm. The actors teased and bantered with each other easily and with kedt humors that elicited hearty chuckles from the audience, including comments such as, "I wonder if the mm-mm 'I'm paying' by Charlemagne," played by senior Michael Inwald, and, "Sometimes I think men raise flags when nothing else works." From Fadistra, played by sophomore Bettina Blanchard. Leslie offered many comedic interludes. She sang beautifully and easily conveyed each emotion and joke with a nearly flawless performance. Each actor stepped into his or her character easily, creating hilarious scenes and conflicts.

Pippin, although slow to start, quickly became entirely engaging. The enthusiasm of the cast, along with the excellent musical accompaniment provided by the triumphant Henry Henry and seniors Jamie Kern, Nick Calabro and Helen Jan on piano and senior Terrell Lovell on drums, made the production a satisfying performance, as did the work of choreographer Karen Castellano; senior, and her team of dancers, from Lauren DeVita and Rio May del Rosario, junior Kenny Rubinov and senior Anthony Quintana.

Pippin's final realization—that he has truly found his own private happiness—leaves the audience happy as well.

Ethnic dances delight at annual International Night

by Christina Leslc and Emmy Favilla

Mystery celebrity guests, French tongue twisters, Martial Arts, the Chinese Ribbon Dance, and other cultural performances were featured at the annual Festival of Nations on April 29. The festival, which allows different cultures to share ethnic dances, songs, skits, and poems, combined both new performances and ones previously presented at the festival.

New performances included Irish step dancing in the style of Riverdance, a comical Chinese song about two mice in the middle of a love crisis, and the Filipino dance "Tinkling," which imitated the movements of a bird in a rice field as performers jumped across sticks.

Other new acts included the Austrian dance "Hochzeitsmarch" or wedding march, and a series of French poems and tongue twisters, Martial Arts, the Chinese Ribbon Dance, and other cultural dances.

"Gaudemus Igitur," a Latin drinking song, were also included, as well as a variety of Greek, Israeli, and Indian dances.

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Tolerance committee tackles youth violence

by Rebecca Munoz

"Baby steps" describe recent efforts made by the newly formed tolerance committee to identify social problems plaguing Harrisites and find solutions, according to Stephanie Epstein, the advisor of SPARK, an organization promoting healthy teenage lifestyles. The committee, comprised of five faculty members and 11 students, has met once a week for four weeks to discuss recent tragedies among teenagers across the nation and their relevance to students at Townsend Harris.

The committee's main goal is to ease communication between students and faculty and was formed in response to tragedies among teenagers across the nation. The death of 15 people in Littleton, Colorado, after two teenage boys shot one teacher, 11 classmates and then themselves on April 25. The fear and concern that this type of violence could also happen within the walls of Townsend Harris was the prime motivation for creating this discussion group. Janine Anne Zapagon hopes that the committee's efforts will "unite the student body."

At a recent meeting on Thursday, June 3, stress was identified as a major problem among Harrisites and the source of much negativity among students. Michelle Nudleman, junior, said, "When people are stressed, as many people in this school often are, they tend to snap." Ideas to alleviate stress and other problems were also discussed.

History teacher Myron Moskowitz suggested that students who are interested in both relieving stress and meeting people could do so through community service and reminded the group that seniors have the opportunity to work with the autistic students in this school building for PD credit.

Students learned of the formation of this committee through the peer negotiation club and a consecutive council meeting. It is currently under the administration of Thoa Cohen, social worker. Ms. Epstein, Mr. Moskowitz, Wanda Nix, advisor of peer negotiation, and Sheila Orner, Assistant Principal of Personnel Services, membership has grown since the first meeting, and students seem to be interested in the group's activities.

Upon hearing of the committee, junior Paul Bruno said, "I think that the formation of this kind of organization is really worthwhile. Just because it doesn't seem like much violence can happen here doesn't mean it won't." Junior Alejandro Fernandez, a committee member, said, "It is the first step towards a solution since you have to address problems before they can be solved. However, I really don't think it's doing anything at the moment."

Yet, the group has discussed some solutions to the threat of violence in Townsend Harris. The most popular idea so far has been to allot time during the school day for a discussion in different classes in the school. This would hopefully encourage interaction between different groups of friends and allow students to express their feelings.

Participants would then be able to identify any student who seems particularly unhappy. Ms. Orner suggested inviting a graduate of Townsend Harris who is a member of the Anti-Defamation League, a group that tries to ease tension among different groups by promoting tolerance, to speak and help train teachers in leading these types of discussions. Ms. Orner said, "Whatever we decide, we are at least beginning to investigate some avenues for safety."

For the remainder of the school year, the group hopes to simplify familiarize itself with the problems Harrisites face today and to brainstorm ideas on how to make the school a safer place, so the focus of the school community can be on learning rather than safety.

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**Boys’ Varsity Baseball team finished season at .500**

*by Brian Griffin*

The Boys’ Varsity Baseball team ended a long season of ups and downs on a high note May 16, holding off Queens Vocational by a score of 10-7. Despite a slow start, the Hawks kept the game close with good defense and another solid start by senior pitcher Greg Lew. The Hawks broke a 6-6 tie in the bottom of the sixth inning when junior Anthony McCoy scored from third base after an attempted throwback to third sailed into leftfield. A solo homerun by sophomore John Vourderis followed by a two-run shot by senior Anis Mustac put the Hawks ahead for good.

The Hawks, who had been eliminated from playoff contention since a loss to Flushing on May 4, kept their competitive spirit alive for the remainder of the season. And once again, in their last meeting with Forest Hills, for what it’s worth, they proved that they could compete with the division’s best team. They took one run lead in this game when junior Greg Engerman hit an RBI double to left, but Forest Hills countered with two runs in the bottom of the sixth to give them the series sweep.

Tuesday’s win over Queens Vocational ended a tough stretch of five games in seven days for the Hawks, who finished the season with a record of 6-6. And although their goal was to make the playoffs, a .500 record and third place in the B Division is an impressive feat for a team in its first season. “Even though we didn’t make the playoffs, we had a real productive year for our inaugural season,” said Engerman, who led the team with a .410 batting average.

With its first season under its belt, the 1999-2000 Hawks will have a lot to prove over the long off-season. Since two starting pitchers, Anis Mustac and Greg Lew, are graduating, the following year, the Hawks will need to fill those roles for next season. The two remaining pitchers on this year’s staff will play a big role in the future. Anthony McCoy only made one appearance, but he pitched a very good game in his start against Forest Hills, allowing just four runs over the first five innings. Freshman Richard Culpino, who was efficient in two relief appearances against Queens Vocational and Forest Hills, will also be important. Sophomores Larry Manis and Michael Yirill have expressed interest in pitching and are also candidates for next year’s staff.

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**Girls’ softball playoff run ended**

*by Eric Trager*

With two runners in scoring position, trailing 2-0 with nobody out and the top of the batting order coming up, the Girls’ Softball team appeared to be in an excellent position to advance past the quarterfinals for the first time in four years. However, after Mary DeCicco grounded out to the pitcher, Arielle Frost struck out on a 3-2 count, and Kristina Casper grounded out to the second baseman, who made an impressive backhanded stab, the Hawks packed their equipment and left the field silently. “We totally lacked intensity,” remarked a very disgruntled coach Larry Ceraulo. “Dina (Parise) out-pitched them, but they totally out-fielded us,” he added.

The Hawks were unable to hit in the clutch to prevent the loss from the playoffs, and did not convert any of their four at-bats with runners in scoring position. In Dina Parise’s final high school game, she lasted the full seven innings, yielding three hits and striking out nine batters. The two runs she surrendered were unearned, coming on errors by herself and catcher Lillian Bloch.

Despite their fourth consecutive quarterfinals loss, the Hawks gave Tuesday’s Game of the Week season to remember. After finishing with an undefeated 14-0 divisional record and a 22-2 record overall, the girls finished first in their division for the eighth consecutive year. Mary DeCicco led the team in hitting (.472), runs scored (41), and collected 29 RBIs as she solidified herself as the lead-off hitter. All three — Parise, Casper, and DeCicco — were nominated to Newday’s All-City All-Star Team.

Overall, Ceraulo was extremely pleased with the team’s regular season play. Right-fielder Arielle Frost provided a strong and reliable bat early in the lineup. Kristy Von Oblen once again was solid in centerfield, and Ceraulo was very pleased with his leftfield platoon of Pinchover, Sharoff, and Maram Temiz. Catcher Lillian Bloch once again was impressive at the plate, batting 310 with 3 doubles, and 12 RBIs.

In the playoffs, the Hawks had made a very impressive run before their defeat in the quarterfinals. In the first round versus Wingate, Parise tossed a no-hitter and struck out 13 batters in five innings as Harris won 14-0. The Hawks defeated John Adams High School in the second round by a score of 13-1, as Parise threw another gem and struck out 10 batters. However, as the offense started to dry up, the team ended their season in the quarterfinals, the Hawks fell.

The Girls’ Softball team now looks ahead to a future with new faces. Among the seniors is ace pitcher, who has received a $25,000 scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania. In four years on the Girls’ Varsity Softball team, Parise won over 60 games, struck out over 1,000 batters, threw four perfect games and 25 no-hitters. Debbie Gopstein, who pitched very briefly for the Hawks this season, appears to be the frontrunner to replace Parise next season. If she can dominate in similar fashion, Ceraulo will have a team which will once again be potential champions.

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**Boys’ Varsity Tennis team lost to 3rd place**

*by Brian Griffin*

For the Boys’ Varsity Tennis team, it was another successful season of competition in the Queens Super A Division. Although the team failed to make the playoffs for the third straight season, they finished an impressive two games over .500 with a record of 6-4.

The only losses came against division winners Cardozo and second place finisher St. John’s. The boys on the court.

The team was led by seniors Robert Prinz, who had an 8-2 record in singles matches, and Elliot Einhorn. Their accomplishments have extra significance because they competed against all of the top players this year.

Junior Divya Narendran was also a big contributor this year, one of his accomplishments being averting an earlier singles loss to Forest Hills by winning the same player in a later match against Forest Hills. Doubles partners sophomores Josh Kourler and junior Andrew Franklin, and juniors Ian Kaz and Jared Melzer, helped the team by winning a lot of close matches.

For next year, the team will have to cope with the losses of its graduating seniors. “We have a relatively young team,” said coach James Murray. By next year, the team will have hopefully benefited from a year’s experience. Among the prime beneficiaries is Narendran, who will finally get to face seniors as a senior, after spending his entire high school career playing against seniors as an underclassman.

Even with the losses of Prinz and Einhorn come next spring, Murray still feels his team can win with the rest of his players intact. “We’re still a pretty balanced team,” Murray said. “The key player just needs to keep playing during the offseason and get a little bit better,” he added.

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**‘Sweet surprise’: Girls slam their way to tennis quarterfinals**

*by Mark Von Oblen*

The Girls’ Varsity Tennis team lost to Midwood in their quarterfinal match, making it one round farther than last year. With a final record of 7-2, the team’s only losses came from top-ranked Cardozo in the regular season and second-ranked Midwood.

This year’s squad was led by five senior starters: Jodi Horton, Eden Cruz, Sandra Chang, Sara Yun, and Erika Streichman. The team will remain strong next year, though, because there are many talented underclassmen, including sophomore Maya Fayman, all of whom started this season.

Though the girls’ team was expected to win every match except the one with Cardozo, making it to the quarters was a sweet surprise. After last year’s loss to Tottenville in the second round, this season gave the girls a chance to bounce back.

Strochlic says the team practiced hard all year and had overwhelming support from their coach, Rachel Ruvi. “She was always cheerful, always coaching, always motivating,” she added. Ruvi even took off her work shoes and changed into her sneakers to play with the girls on the court.

Next year will see the graduation of five seniors and a new class of freshmen coming in, it is uncertain what the team will look like, but you can be certain they will be ready come next spring.