

High School of American Studies at Lehman College

Common Sense

Debaters make us Proud

By Elizabeth Adams

On March 23, HSAS's debate team competed in round two of the JP Morgan Lincoln Douglass debates. They argued the positive and negative of the resolution: "Establishing a restrictive ocean policy is justified in order to protect marine natural resources."

Unfortunately, freshmen debaters, Gloria Medina, Rachel Nyitray and Brent Siegel did not make it to the final round. Last year, HSAS debaters Elizabeth Adams, Paul Bufano and Stephanie Gonzalez competed in the beginners tier and won. This year, the school was moved up to the more advanced level, competing against stiffer competition.

Brent, Gloria and Rachel all worked hard preparing for this competition, staying after school frequently and for long hours, practicing their arguments. They even came in on weekends. The debaters believed this hard work was well worth it, however. "I liked the opportunity to do a lot of work and actually be able to show off everything that we learned," said Rachel Nyitray.

Their final round opponents were very impressed with these arguments. They "actually asked for our note cards after we presented," exclaimed Rachel. All three of the debaters presented themselves with eloquence and poise,

countering the opposing positions with concise and effective justifications.

While they may have lost, the school's debate team feels they have a good base for competing next year. "We'll come back stronger and win the entire debate," asserted cross-examiner Brent Siegel.

"I liked that people were actually listening to high school students," stated Rachel. "I also liked that it was a way to introduce teamwork into an academic event, showing that teamwork doesn't only apply to sports." ■

Make More Sense

Come join the *Common Sense* staff. Our next meeting will be Friday, April 16 (after break) to finalize the contents for the next issue, and to plan future issues.

Writers are needed in many departments (inside of school stuff, outside of school stuff, special events, sports, music/tv/movie reviews). Anyone volunteering to edit copy will be immediately accorded hero status. Layout people are needed as well.

This is our largest issue yet. There are eight big pages, with news, sports, school events, classroom happenings, reviews, photos, letters, and the calendar and Principal's Corner.

Common Sense once a month is great, but more frequent would be better. Come help us make more Sense. ■

News

Mayor's Plan Aims at Ending Social Promotion

By Elizabeth Adams

Mayor Bloomberg's recently proposed ban on social promotion of third-grade students was passed March 15. Instead of being allowed to advance to the fourth grade, those who score in the lowest ranking on next month's English and math tests will have to repeat third grade, unless they can show improved scores after summer school or their teachers can make a case for an exception. Bloomberg argues that ending social promotion will change the current state of struggling students who are pushed into fourth grade, but may not be able to catch up to their classmates.

Bloomberg's plan to end social promotion in the public schools was approved by an 8 to 5 vote. However, it passed only after he fired three members of his education panel who refused to support the plan and replaced them before the vote. This replacement created much controversy, as opponents argued his actions were more fitting in an episode of "The Sopranos." A United Federation of Teachers leader argued the Mayor "rigged the vote." Bloomberg responded by saying, "A few of the members didn't agree or were afraid they would be pressured by outsiders, politicized, so I replaced them with people who agreed with my views. This is what mayoral control is all about."

Supporters of Bloomberg's ban argue that students who are advanced without proper learning end up with a high-school diploma without the reading and math skills needed to survive in today's work force. They cite research that shows that 74 percent of children who are poor

readers in third grade remain poor readers in ninth grade. Those in favor of ending social promotion think it means that mediocrity in school will no longer be accepted.

Critics of the social promotion ban contend that basing advancement to the fourth grade upon one test is unfair, and that keeping behind a child labels them as unruly and disobedient, thus increasing the chances that they will later drop out altogether. Under the Mayor's ban, as many as one in five third-graders will be held back.

Moreover, opponents argue that keeping students back does not necessarily ensure better learning the next year. Joan McKeever-Thomas, one of the panelists fired, said she could not support the ban, because retaining students has not been shown to successfully improve learning.

Jill Chaifetz, executive director of Advocates for Children, stated that retaining children is not beneficial for students. Boys who are held back in school are known to be rougher and tougher than others in class are, and older girls become more sexually promiscuous. If a student is left back in third grade, and again in eighth grade, he will be a sixteen-year old still in middle school and far alienated from his classmates. ■

International Night: Friday May 21.
Save the Date!

If you haven't read The Principal's Corner,
you might have missed the news about:
swimming
Read *Common Sense*, cover to cover.
Stay Informed!

Sports Girls, Boys Tennis Teams Get Swinging

By Angela Fabunan

The High School of American Studies recently formed girls and boys tennis teams. Tryouts were March 18 and 23. Congratulations to all who made it.

The girls team includes Shawn Axelbank, Julia Dimitrova, Debra Fricano, Stephanie Gonzalez, Gina Mazlina, Danielle Narov, Jenny Ng, Angelique Petropouleas, Stefanie Robles, Irina Vinnitskaya, Natalie Wykowski, and Sharon Zhang. The girls opened with a 3 - 2 loss in a good effort against Bronx Science, Tuesday March 30.

The boys team features Randy Abreu, Philip Choy, Adam Diker, Paul Fiore, Sonike Hendricks, Ian Katz, Samuel Kim, Kenneth Loh, Mark Lyubovitsky, Jonathan Narine, Evan Okin, and Rafael Vidal. The boys swing into action against Stevenson, Thursday, April 1. ▪

Track Club Starting

Mr. Elinson has announced the formation of HSAS's track club. It will meet Tuesdays 3:30 - 4:30 and Thursdays 2:30 - 4:30. ▪

Elsewhere in the Bronx...

Congratulations to Coach Schulman on leading the Lehman Lightning Men's Basketball team to the CUNY AC Championship and their first ever NCAA D3 tournament appearance.

The Bronx's own Manhattan College Jaspers made it into the second round of March Madness by beating Florida before losing to Wake Forest.

The mighty Yankees' home opener is April 8. They host the White Sox. ▪

...and in Queens

In Flushing, Queens, the lovable Mets start at home against Atlanta, April 12. ▪

Found

By Howard Pollard

Many have lost objects in the school. Some of said objects have appeared inside the lost & found box outside of Mrs. Fiore's office:

- black & gray sweatpants
- black belt w/ gold buckle
- black binder (Michelle Cipollaro)
- black hat
- black hat with red writing
- black headband
- black jacket
- black marble notebook (Wuta Onda)
- black notebook (Joshua Hernandez)
- black scarf
- black shorts
- black shorts with white stripe
- blue & gray hat
- blue, black, & gray scarf
- chemistry reference table (Wuta Onda)
- chemistry workbook #58
- dark blue suit jacket with gold buttons
- dark green gloves
- dolphin & moon folder (Lillian Rodriguez)
- gray hat
- H.S.A.S. Class of '06 T-shirt
- H.S.A.S. Class of '07 T-shirt
- Hawaii T-shirt
- large piece of blue fabric
- orange Reese's Peanut Butter T-shirt
- purple binder (Alec Joseph)
- rainbow scarf
- red, white & web patterned baseball cap
- single black glove
- single black leather glove
- single blue glove
- Spanish workbook (Lee conmigo #9)
- Tain summary & outline
- white & blue Converse sneakers with socks
- white socks
- white tank top
- white T-shirts (2)
- yellow spiral homework notebook

May all you who have lost your possessions somewhere in your school find them. Those of you fortunate enough to have found your property on this list, please retrieve it And on a hygienic note, please remember to wash any lost/found clothing thoroughly. ▪

Sbarro's on Fordham: Food, Fun

By Tiarra Tosca

There is a new locale for the young and the hungry on East Fordham Road called Sbarro. Sbarro is not just a spacious eatery, it is also home to great Italian food, plus Taco Bell. Although the fare may pack a lot of calories, it is easy to burn them off upstairs in the arcade.

To understand more about this hangout, I spoke to the experts: freshmen Allyson Rodriguez, Fahmida Ahmed, An Vo and Juani Feliz. This foursome claims to go to Sbarro an average of two to three times a week. Upstairs in the comfort of games, music, and food, they hang out, chat and meet new people. "You have to see the games. There are a lot of them," says a laughing Juani. And it is not the kind of 'kiddie' games no one likes either- these are games such as pool, DDR, racing, basket ball, air hockey, bowling, and many more.

Even without the food, the atmosphere is incredible. "It's a great place to hang out," states Allyson, while Fahmida points out, "That place has a lot of space!" Unlike more common fast-food places such as McDonalds, Sbarro has no time limit for costumers and "no one is going to bother you". Whether you order a chulupa, a regular slice (with a free soda), lasagna, tacos, a nacho dish, a Sicilian, or anything else, the "food is always good."

There are plenty of people around our age who enjoy Sbarro as well, so meeting new people is no problem. All four interviewees recommend a visit Sbarro to grab a bite and play a game. An sums it up, "Sbarro has a laid back and fun atmosphere so we can just relax after school." ■

Antigone: A Tragedy

by Stefanie Robles

On Friday, March 12, the school went to see the play Antigone held in the Lovinger Theatre at Lehman College. The introduction was interesting, capturing most of the crowd. The rest of the play, however, did not hold them.

The reviews of last summer's Oedipus Rex made it sound memorable, but Antigone did not reach that level. The costumes were fair, given the fact that people barely wore clothes in Greece (some of the outfits were supposed to be skin tones). The acting did not catch the audience and the cast was neither enthralling, nor sufficiently emotional.

On the plus side, the use of the whole theater was "cool". Some said that the dancing in between scenes was the most interesting part of the play.

Those who previously read Antigone, still loved it, but wanted more from the production. ■

Who Wants a Leg?

Julia Dimitrova

This week in Biology, many ninth graders were surprised to learn that they would have to dissect a chicken wing. Dissecting something you normally eat, while wearing plastic aprons and huge green goggles (safety first!) turned out to be a funny, yet educating experience.

Robert Billena seemed to enjoy stretching the wing and watching the muscles flex. Tiarra Tosca and Victor Roberts may have completely butchered their chicken wing, or at least the remnants of their chicken wing. After this experience, some of us may never eat wings again. ■



Adonis, Shawn, Sherean, and Angela: posing at the start of a fun day



Roselyn, Talina, and Akilah sunning themselves on the upper deck.

Freshman Trip to Ellis Island (photos by E. Kim)



Vanessa, Ian, and Evan on the dock. Photographer on the ferry. Catch up guys!



Allyson watches as Julia fills in immigration forms. All that paperwork!



Brent took two, count them, two, boat rides

Other Happenings

The Debate/UN Seminar participated in a model UN. It took place all weekend, March 5 - 7, in Westchester. There will be a second Model UN in May.

The entire school attended a Black History Month event in the Lovinger Theater last month. Prominent among the speakers was former Mayor David Dinkins.

Biology Professor Joseph Rachlin gave a presentation on the Bronx River in the Art Gallery March 23. Mr. Halabi's sophomore research class attended.

All of HSAS attended talk by famed historian Michael Beschloss at the Lovinger Theater March 30. Beschloss delivered the Herbert H Lehman Memorial Lecture.

The Spanish Honor Society has been running a series of successful and tasty bake sales. They plan to sell more treats in April. ■

Around the World in One Period

By Tierra Tosca

Two weeks ago in Biology we presented biome projects. This sounds like a simple task, but nothing with poster-boards and slide shows is ordinary.

There were many outstanding Power Point presentations including by Juani, Scott, Jared, Jana, Allyson, Julia, An, Melissa, Evan, just from one class. You can imagine how many presentations there were in the entire school.

Among the more amusing experiences were the repeated requests for an "emu." There were, however, no emus. We had fun watching and presenting. What an entertaining way to learn! ■

Movies

There's No More Room In Hell

By Zorlexie Volquez

Directed by Zack Snyder, *Dawn of the Dead* is a remake of the classic 1978 Sci-Fi horror film. Although it has the same plot, it stars a new cast of actors, including Mekhi Phifer, Sarah Polley, Ving Rhames, Michael Barry, and Lindy Booth.

The movie begins one quiet morning, when a woman discovers that an epidemic of cannibalistic zombies are terrorizing earth. Upon encountering a group of lucky survivors, the group decides to seek refuge and protection in a local shopping mall. Throughout the movie, the group tries to escape the zombies, and eventually discovers that they might have a chance of survival if they can get to an uninhabited island a few miles away. However, they must first get past the thousands of flesh-eating corpses waiting for them outside the center's walls.

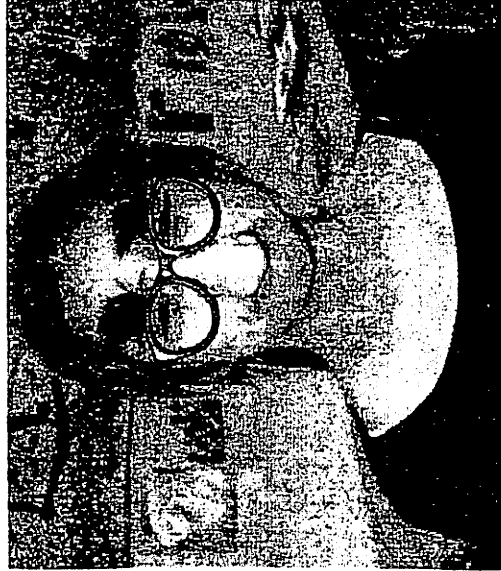
This film is similar to *28 Days Later*, except with special effects worthy of *Final Destination 2*. The suspense is satisfactory for anyone who wants somewhat of a thrill, but does not want to see too much blood and gore. Despite the corny and clichéd ending, I give *Dawn of the Dead* thumbs up for providing a classic with a new and interesting twist. ■

Interesting projects, presentations or speakers in any of your classes? Write it up! The best "Inside School Stuff" will be published each issue.



Nick and Jared "debate" ownership of a stuffed visitor.

Contribute to the Pennies for Patients drive!

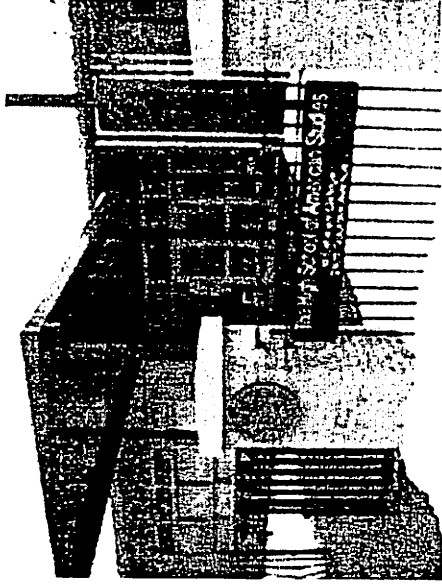


No, Angela, we don't recognize you



It pays to be fashionable in English

Common Sense needs a sports editor. Do you like sports? Do you like Ed? Think about it.



Remember to visit *The Patriot*, our WEB newspaper at www.hsas.ik.org.

Letters

Dear Common Sense,

I think you should enter a lost and found column since the lost and found is full of all types of various stuff and many people probably want their things.

One more thing, why aren't the pictures in color?

Howard Pollard

Dear Howard,

Great idea about the lost and found! Create the inventory and we will publish it.

As far as the color photographs, that is a nice idea. At this time, though, we are publishing a very simple paper, no fancy software, no fancy paper, and reproducing on a black and white Xerox machine. We will most likely stay with this approach for the rest of this year. At some point in the future, however, we may update our technology, including adding color. Thank you for your suggestion.

The editors

Letters to the editor should be brief and include the author's name. Common Sense reserves the right to edit or shorten those letters it chooses to publish. Submit letters to the Common Sense box in Room 100 (the Main Office)

Principal's Corner

Debra Fricano

I sat down with Ms. Luftman late last week and asked her if she had any thoughts so share with the student body. Here is part of her message - Debra

The first marking period of our Spring semester has been another success. Report card averages show that our school is yet again full of outstanding achievement, as expected. Congratulations to all of the honor and high honor students for your dedication and hard work. Please look at the honor roll posted on the bulletin boards. Keep up the good work!

Further commendation goes to our fabulous trio who did such an outstanding job at the Lincoln Douglas Debate. (see article, front page - ed) Brent Siegel, Rachel Nyitray, and Gina Medina, we are extremely proud of you!

Great News! Swimming will be added to our physical education program this year! Continuing in the athletic world: we look forward to seeing our newly formed tennis team in action. Good luck to everyone on it.

We will be starting a one hour per week PSAT prep course. If you would like to register, please contact Mr. Stewart, or see the main office.

April 22 is the Spanish Honors Society Induction Ceremony, and Friday, May 21 is our night of International Festivities. Join us for evenings full of culture, and fun.

HSAS may be small, new, and lacking in the more highly developed systems of older high schools. Yet we are slowly gaining a reputation, developing our courses, and as you can see, expanding our extracurricular activities. Thank you all for your support and dedication.

The next three weeks at the High School of American Studies at Lehman College

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3/29	3/30 M Beschloss, Lovinger Theater 11 AM All classes will attend Girls Tennis vs Science (at the Oval, 4PM)	3/31 Dr. Libby O'Connell from the History Channel is our Principal for a Day	4/1 Track Club meets 2:30 Boys Tennis vs Stevenson (home, 4PM)	4/2 Last Day Before Spring Break
4/5 Vacation First night of Passover	4/6 Vacation	4/7 Vacation Girls Tennis vs Clinton (home)	4/8 Vacation	4/9 Vacation Good Friday
4/12 Vacation Easter Monday	4/13 Vacation	4/14 First day back to school	4/15 Income Tax Day Girls Tennis vs Science (home, 4PM) Track Club	4/16 <i>Common Sense</i> Staff Planning meeting Boys Tennis vs Stevenson (away, 4PM)
4/19	4/20 Track Club	4/21 Boys Tennis vs Eleanor Roosevelt (home, 4PM)	4/22 Thursday is the only day with an "H" in it, not counting holidays	4/23 <i>Common Sense</i> #5 target publication date

Coming up: International Night, Friday May 21. Trips to DC and Boston May 13 - 14

Are we missing something that should be on the calendar? Drop a note in the Common Sense box in the Main Office (Room 100)

<p>Editorial Board: E Adams, D Fricano, T Tosca In this issue: E Adams, J Dimitrova, A Fabunan, D Fricano, H Pollard, S Robles, T Tosca, Z Volquez Advisor: J Halabi</p>
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