



HALF FARE IS NO FAIR AT HSAS By Cole Hawkins('09)

If you have ever lived within the same zip code as your school, then you know that you get cheated out of the regular Metrocard that works on the train and the bus. Instead you receive the half-fare Metrocard which only gets you on the bus and you still have to pay \$1.00 in exact change. This makes life incredibly difficult for students to travel to areas outside of their zip code on school days and hang out with friends.

The half-fare Metrocard is perhaps pointless in this sense: just because you live within the same zip code as your school, that doesn't mean you live near it.

Frances Thom ('09) stated that she "once had a half-fare Metrocard in middle school." She added that she felt she "should not have to pay to take the bus to school because I'm a kid and I don't have a job to pay for the bus."

Samantha Marrero('08), fears that her Metrocard will be taken away after sharing with Common Sense that, "I live on the other side of the Reservoir and I have a full-fare Metrocard." Valerie Gonzalez ('09), who lives in the



Photo taken by C. Hawkins('09)

Half fare metrocards require a student to contribute \$360 of their own a year same building as Samantha has a half-fare Metrocard.

Students who live east of the Grand Concourse in the 10458 zip code (which is 3 blocks away from our school) have full fare Metrocards whereas those who live on the opposite side of the two mile long Reservoir in the 10468 zip code generally receive half-fare Metrocards.

In a *Common Sense* survey conducted among sophomores,

juniors and seniors, a large majority who had full-fare Metrocards felt that all students should be given full-fares. Many students just didn't see the point in anyone having a half-fare Metrocard when the cards are purchased by the D.O.E., which may have enough money to buy full-fare Metrocards for everyone. Students shouldn't have to pay extra with half-fare Metrocards.

One senior went as far as to say that by giving some students half-fare *(Continued on page 2)*

WILL THE FUTURE SAVE OUR BACKS?

By David Moretti('08)

In my four years at American Studies I have seen some very large book bags. They have been full of textbooks, notebooks, and tons of hand-outs. I wonder if anyone's back had bothered them as it has my own at times. So, I asked.

A recent *Common Sense* survey asked students about their book bags and the amount of paper they used at school. The survey concluded that 78% of the students believed they had heavy book bags.

Around 85% of the students surveyed agreed that their backs have bothered them due to a heavy book bag.

Finally, when asked how much paper they thought they and the school used per year, 96% of students agreed that very large amounts of paper have been used by them and our school.

"The school uses a whole %\$#@-ing forest" and "1000 sheets x 700" was among the comments left on the survey. Could it be possible to be provided with a small book-like *(Continued on page 2)*

THE SUB WAY

By Jose Gonzalez('08)

Who are our substitute teachers?

Every once in a while one of our teachers is absent. But whom do we call to take the place of a teachers when they aren't there to assign us work? The answer is a Substitute Teacher.

How much do we really know about them?

Sergey Varlashkin('08) believes that, "they are very strange people; one of them wears this Christmas sweater, every time I have him."

Isaac Salander('08) had some info on Mr. Cass, saying that his son is a psychologist, and that most of the ones he talked to used to be regular teachers.

Cole Hawkins('09) said "some of them are really cool, like 'Rocky', but some are really strict."

Mathew Berdeguez('11) agreed with this, saying that "substitutes are really strict."

Jacob Karpin('10) believes that substitutes, "are alright, but the fun ones sometimes mean no work" for the students.

The comments are mixed.

(Continued on page 2)

NOW HEAR THIS

By Stephanie Brooks('09)

Its third period and Mr./Ms. 'So-and-So' is droning on and on about something that it's way too early to be discussing, like vectors, binomials, the War of 1812, or why Hamlet's father died.

No matter what the subject matter is, you're dying here; you need a break from this class and you need it quickly. Then, as if your desperate pleas have been miraculously answered, in pops an office monitor with a blue folder with a piece of colored paper sticking out. In walked the announcements.

However, much to your dismay, you wait and wait and the teacher still has not read the hand delivered announcements. It's 5 minutes before the bell, and finally the teacher nonchalantly picks up the sheet and scans over it, reading aloud the ones that apply to you.

Whether one considers them friend or foe, the announcements are necessary. For the most part this is something that everyone can agree upon. They tell us when Amherst College is visiting in room 117, or when the Environmental Club is making pesto. However, it's when talking about the method in which



P. Cipriano('08) & Mr. Olivieri often duelled over making announcements

these announcements should be distributed that opinions begin to differ.

Consider the old method: Either Mr. Olivieri, Aaron Greenwald('07), or Peter Cipriano('08) would get on to the PA system and talk for about 2 minutes, giving both general and grade specific announcements, as well as the occasional "inside joke," which, for the most part the majority of people was puzzled about.

This system did have its flaws, thinks Mr. Rodriguez, telling *Common Sense* that, "sometimes when they make the

announcements over the loud speaker students don't hear them." He points out that "they are changing classes," as the announcements are made, concluding that, "perhaps this is why it is no longer in use."

The new system, which came with Mr. Weiss in 2006, is paper based. Mr. Weiss says that he "can't remember how it started."

The announcements are typed up at 3:00PM the previous day and distributed twice to every teacher that teaches a third period class.

With this method, grade-specific announcements can be read to that *(Continued on page 3)*