

## HAVING A FINAL SAY By Joshua Gardner('09)

The life of a student at the High School of American Studies can be very stressful at times. During the year we have an intense work load that includes a tremendous amount of homework followed by an endless amount of tests.

Students bust their chops the whole year trying to get good grades. However, at the end of each semester, it all boils down to the final exams. Finals are the most heavily weighted exams taken at our school. For each final, we are given approximately two hours to complete. Each final can weigh up to 25% of our total semester grade. Given the impact finals can have on our grades, there really isn't any room to fail them.

Nikita Yakimov's(?) opinion on HSAS finals is that he is, "OK with finals having such an impact on my grade; one test can increase your grade by a whole lot. The only thing I don't like about finals is that they're too long. Two hours for one exam is too much."

Eric Berman('08) adds, "In a lot of other schools it's usually a cumulative test of the material you've learned through the year,



Ruben Moreland('11) & N. Berkowitz('08)/K. Danowski('08) won the talent show but in our school teachers usually test you on the recent material which is a major plus."

However not all of our student body seems to be as satisfied with the school policy on finals. Matt Joseph('10) has a totally different view on finals, sharing with Common Sense that, "Teachers expect us to remember things from the whole semester, some even from the whole entire year." He concludes that "two finals in one day is

horrible. We don't get nowhere near enough time to study."

Julian Watts('10) believes that "finals are really too intense because they test us non-stop all semester and then they give us a bigger test, as if we didn't have enough stress already." Julian feels that "we really don't have time to rest between our tests and our final exam."

Eric Berman agreed with Julian's feeling, sharing that "the only *(Continued on page 2)*

## WHEN IT IS SUPPOSED TO BE COLD OUTSIDE... ...I'VE GOT THE MONTH OF MAY... By Eric Berman('08)

Could New York City be the next Atlantis? According to National Geographic's website, "Average temperatures have climbed 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit around the world since 1880, much of this in recent decades."

Sea levels on the Atlantic seaboard of the United States are already rising about one foot every century, as stated by a recent EPA report. All this and more can be attributed to a phenomenon known as global warming.

Recently, a lot of interest has been shown in the issue of global warming. Politicians have debated, and people have rallied, all because of global warming, but how do American Studies students feel about this *hot* topic?

"B\*\*\*\*\*," exclaimed self-proclaimed tough guy Jonathan Silva('10), without further explanation. However, not all students were as skeptical as Silva. *(Continued on page 2)*

## A NEW YEAR MEANS A NEW YOU?

By Mark Menendez('08)

5-4-3-2-1-0, HAPPY NEW YEAR! The clock strikes 12AM, and a new year is ushered in. The crowd at Times Square goes crazy, families all over the world celebrate and kiss their loved ones, and friends party it up all night long. Hours later, on New Year's Day as people are calming down, its time to think: a new year and a new resolution?

Many Americans pledge on January 1<sup>st</sup> to start fresh and pursue their annual goals. However, this may not be true at the High School of American Studies.

A recent *Common Sense* survey revealed that among our fellow students, 56% said they actually make a New Year's resolution after the ball drops. Unfortunately, only 23% of those surveyed actually kept their resolution, and the vast majority agreed that resolutions really have no significance at all. Of the students questioned, most attempted similar resolutions, including getting better grades *(Continued on page 2)*

## COMMON READING

By Stephanie Brooks('09)

It's Friday afternoon and you just left the blue benches in front of school. Winter's here and the fallen leaves crunch under your feet as you happily walk towards the bus stop. But wait – you look down in horror and realize that those crunchy leaves are really copies of the latest issue of *Common Sense*!

At least 30 people can vouch that *Common Sense* is indeed being handed out -- it's handed out at functions, its handed out at the end of the day, it's handed out in between the changing periods, and the list goes on. But is anyone reading it? Countless times, these situations occur.

Valerie Gonzalez('09) feels that this is "terrible." If they don't want to read it then they shouldn't take it cause that's really disrespectful to the people that work really hard on it."

Mr. Elinson, who is head of the *Common Sense* staff, felt that the newspaper absorption at the assembly on the 21<sup>st</sup> of December was decent. "We handed out 300 and I only found eight. People are taking it and not leaving it on the floor. If they're taking it and intentionally throwing it in a wastebasket, I don't know."



Picture Taken By S. Brooks('09)

Is *Common Sense* being read or simply discarded at HSAS?

When asked if she felt that the paper was being read, *Common Sense* staffer Bosslady Thom('09), stated, with much hesitation and a shrug, "by some people."

Daniel Karaban('09), also of *Common Sense* fame, had this to say about the topic: "Yes, I do feel people are reading the paper. This year the paper comes out more frequent. Nick Berkowitz asked me the other day when the next paper would be coming out. Though that may have been cause he's in it. Last year you would always find them shoved in a desk. This year I don't really see that. People take them home and read them. They could be throwing

them out in the lunchroom."

Nick Berkowitz('08) was able to confirm this comment and had this to say in regard to what he does with the paper. "They end up in a pile with all my school stuff."

John Pedone('11) had views completely different from Berkowitz. He says of the paper that he, "just throws it out" once he's done reading it and states that he wouldn't even hold on to it longer even if he was featured in it. "It'd be the same."

One solution to wasting papers would be to perhaps charge a small fee for them. When Ogheneruona Ughwanogho('10), an avid reader *(Continued on page 2)*