

# Trumansburg Troubadour

## Is College Worth It?

By Noah Back, Senior

With student debt now surpassing one trillion dollars and the job market remaining sparse, it becomes easy to question the value of furthering one's education past high school. Student debt and the cost of college have started crippling many college students. Newly graduated college students in 2012 left school with an average of \$29,400 in student loans. An all-time high, the average was up \$2,800 from the year before. To go along with this potentially off-putting information, it turns out, approximately a quarter of these undergraduate educations have not been paid off. They are earning what they would be if they did not attend further schooling beyond the 12th grade. That said, the other three-quarters could potentially be making far more than high school diploma holders. Based on this fact, many people in the field are

claiming that college is still a sound investment, if you graduate. When community colleges are included, only 53% of students who matriculate at a four-year college graduate within six years. If you feel like your school is where you belong, the likelihood that you will graduate clearly increases. Sadly, colleges often pay more attention to attracting students than to retaining them, and the lack of support services and financial aid are both cited as reasons for not returning after freshman year.

One's experience at a given school must be accounted for when questioning the benefits of college. It is easy to approach the question with a wide lens, and for some people that is sufficient. For some, college is just one more stepping stone on the path to making money, or for them, being happy. Why allow your happiness to be put off indefinitely though? There are approximately 3,026 four-year colleges in the U.S. and each one is different. There are liberal arts colleges and universities, conservative schools and liberal

ones, small schools and large schools, and everything in between. Getting caught up in the reputation of a school or the monetary aspects of attending one can cause you to neglect considering the colleges themselves in the decision. If college is an investment you would like to make, be sure you make it for the right reasons, and consider carefully once you know what those reasons are.

Maybe the investment is not right for you now and maybe it won't ever be. However, there are many opportunities that could help clear that up: internships and gap year programs can often help give people an idea about who and how they want to be in the world. If students have a developed idea of themselves, their preferences, their character, their hopes and intentions, perhaps it becomes easier to choose the path that will provide growth and education. For the majority of high school graduates, college is a wise choice that continues to give dividends for their whole life. However, you may not be in the majority. You might choose another path that will provide different, but nonetheless, lifelong benefits. ♦



STUDENT DESIGNS BY:  
HANNA HERTZLER

### Special points of interest:

- ♦ Common Core
- ♦ Renovations Completed
- ♦ Robot Raiders
- ♦ Junior Reporters
- ♦ School Plays

### Inside this issue:

Is College Worth It?	1.
Sherlock Holmes in Trumansburg	1
Common Core	2
Robot Raiders	3
Capitol Project Completed	3
Junior Reporters	4

## Sherlock Holmes in Trumansburg

By Zack Martin, Senior



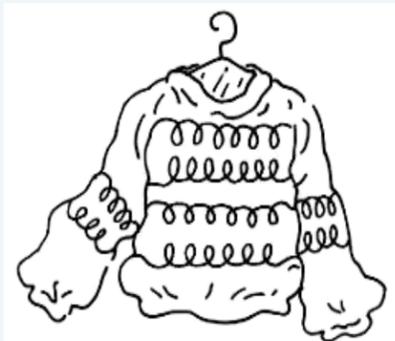
This fall, many traveled to Charles O. Dickerson High School in Trumansburg where they saw the Trumansburg Drama Club's fall production of *The*

*Secret Case of Sherlock Holmes*. The play was performed on Friday, November 14th and Saturday, November 15th. Some were lucky enough to see it on

Friday: opening night. The admission was a pretty penny of \$10 for adults and \$5 for students and senior citizens.

Sherlock Holmes and John Watson were played by comedy duo Lucas Puleo and Ryan Mitchell. The two brought laughter and cheer to the audience, making the audience want even more. Victor Sundstedt, a senior transfer student from Sweden, also brought immense laughter by playing the role of Henry Lee and using his Swedish accent to really embrace his character, a "vampire." This in turn brought out a lot of laughter among the audience within

(continued on page 2)



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## Common Core or Common Snore?

By Jack Honig, Junior

When one thinks of Common Core, what comes to mind? Some might say it isn't the best use of time or it's a questionable method for teaching, or in my case, the reason I have so many empty Red Bull cans littered around my room. Common Core, to me, is one of the most stressful things I have ever endured during my three-year high school career. But why is that?



The definition of Common Core is as follows: a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English. These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade (<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/>). Common Core was developed by the NGA (National Governors Association) in 2009 to establish consistent educational standards as well as to ensure that students were properly prepared for life after graduating high school. Forty-six of fifty states have taken the CCSS (Common Core State Standards) under their belts, which makes me wonder, why didn't the other four states follow suit? This past year, Common Core slowly but surely made its way into the curriculum at Charles O. Dickerson High School. It started first in math but this year it has begun to make its way into the English departments as well. Next year, the only English Regents offered will be the Common Core test. This year, however, the students in the grade 11 Honors English class were presented with the choice of taking the original English Regents as well as the Common Core, or just taking the original—the higher grade of the two exams being the one counted. This choice was offered last year as well for students taking Regents Algebra.

I've heard teachers' opinions from both ends of the Common Core debate. Mr. DeRaiche, a high school math teacher, notes,

"When you say Common Core they [students/parents] don't understand what it is—they automatically think it's modules. I think the modules are frustrating a lot of times. . . . It's confusing to some teachers because the language is changed, but they're expecting to get

“*But expecting the same thing of all students can also allow all students to feel academically connected instead of sinking into the background as quicker students shout out the answers.*”

it younger and be building up.”

I've heard that the English test is actually easier than the original Regents, but I've also been told the math Common Core test is harder. I actually took the math Common Core test twice and I can confirm it is no walk in the park. But with all the debate going around, it begs the question, is this really the best way to shape the test? It's no secret that the Common Core way of learning is difficult, but is it necessary? If a student has been learning a certain way with set materials for a long duration of time only to have it suddenly changed mid-way through his or her school career, it's a little intimidating and stressful, and can lead to a whole lot of purposefully undone homework. A classmate of mine told me she couldn't even help her younger sister with her math homework because it was so difficult. Is it necessary even for young children to be doing such challenging mathematics and English studies?

There are some positive outcomes of Common Core as well. Learning such trying material early on can open up more opportunities for learning later in a student's academic career, allowing students to be better prepared for life after high school. Common Core expects the

same learning from all students, but so do most state standards. As with any set of standards, if some students are slower learners than the rest of the pack then they may fall behind. But expecting the same thing of all students can also allow all students to feel academically connected instead of sinking into the background as quicker students shout out the answers.

Ultimately, it comes down to each student's capacity to learn, given the set curriculum. Students aren't all the same; we are different and we probably all learn differently, at different paces. Imposing a new way of learning into the curriculum may not seem very logical at the high school level, but perhaps preparing children using Common Core when they are first beginning school is an excellent idea.◇

### *A note from Sarah Vakkas, Director of Instruction at TCSD:*

The Common Core standards have given teachers more rigorous standards than what the 2004 NYS learning standards provided. The new standards not only tell teachers what students should know, but they also provide more information on how to get them there. The transition toward CCSS alignment started in 2011 at Trumansburg and will continue for a few more years. The students and teachers have worked hard to make this transition and we've seen our students succeed more academically than we ever expected. For more information on why we need these higher standards please visit: <http://www.corestandards.org/what-parents-should-know/>.

The district is currently completing a full audit on the quality and purpose of testing and assessments within the district, funded by the a Teaching is the Core grant. A full report on these findings will be released this spring.

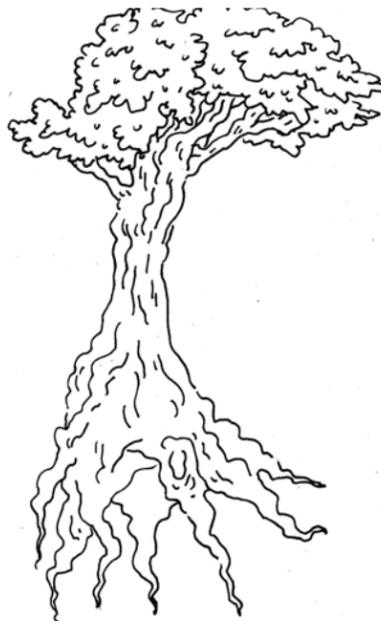
## *Sherlock Holmes in Trumansburg (continued)*

the auditorium at Charles O. Dickerson High School. Laughter was this play's middle name, with G. H. Woods once again capturing the audience with his grunts and screams while acting as the character, "George of the Jungle."

The play had a good showing within the rather large auditorium that appeared to be about half full. Jon Koeng, the principal at Charles O. Dickerson High School, made an appearance within the audience that Friday night. Michael Gorton, a senior at Charles O. Dickerson, left the auditorium that night saying, "It was actually pretty good." Gor-

ton, among many others, including Principal Jon Koeng, left the auditorium that night with approval of what they just saw.

Sadly, the evenings of November 14th and 15th provided the only showings of this play, so if you were unable to make it, you missed out on your only chance to watch the show. Hopefully you can make it to some other student performances at the high school. The spring musical presented by the Trumansburg Drama Club will be on March 13th-15th, 2015.◇



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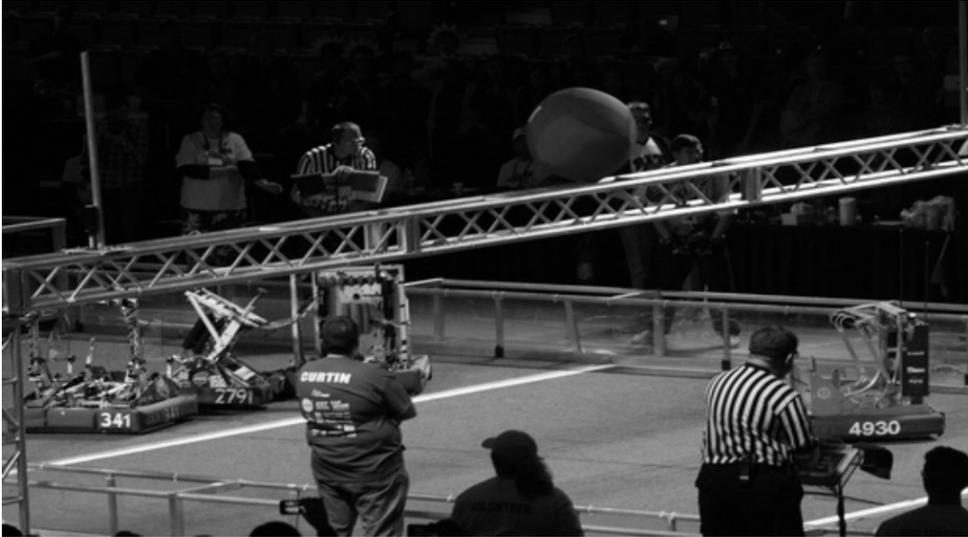
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## Robot Raiders: A Varsity Sport For the Mind

By Annie Seichepin, Junior



At Charles O. Dickerson High School, we have an exceptional science department and each and every student is encouraged to study and take interest in science. Sue Stein, the primary biology teacher for Trumansburg, is also the advisor for the Trumansburg Envirothon team, which consists of three seniors and two juniors.

When most people think about team competition in high school, sports is the first thing that comes to mind. Here in Trumansburg, there's a club that engages in competition using academic skills: The Robot Raiders - the varsity sport for the mind. Founded by a small group of Trumansburg freshmen in 2013, the club has had significant growth in the past year, and new members are always welcome.

The Robot Raiders participate in regional and national competitions sponsored by FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology), "a not-for-profit organization created to inspire young people's interest in science and technology." Since the initial competition in 1982, more than 250,000 students have been involved. Similar to athletics, participation in a FIRST Robotics Team can qualify team members for scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$20,000 or more per year at select colleges across

the country. Robot Raiders compete in several events each year regionally, against up to fifty other teams. Team registration for these events can cost up to several thousand dollars each, which is why fundraising is so important. The Robot Raiders club is entirely community funded with the Trumansburg

*"The first six weeks of the Robot Raiders' season are very intense in designing, prototyping, building, and programming a robot to meet the FIRST requirements by the 2015 deadline."*

Central School District (TCSD) Foundation being their biggest sponsor, as well as local businesses such as MCCI, Ehrhart Energy, and Millsbaugh Brothers.

The Robot Raiders are led by volunteer mentors Jim Perkins—faculty advisor, and Roy Westwater (Ithaca College Computer Science Department)—lead mentor, TCSD alumni Brandon Martin and Andrew McDonald, along with several students from Ithaca College physics and computer science departments, and the Roy H. Park School of Communications.

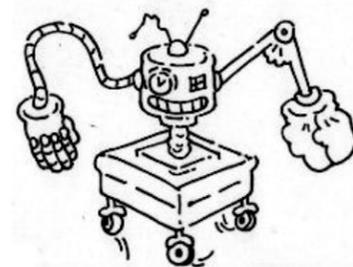
Each year, over 3,000 robotics teams across the nation are given six weeks to build a competitive robot that can complete a given task assigned by

FIRST. Last year's challenge was to build a robot that could shoot two-foot wide exercise balls into goals and toss the balls over a six-foot truss. This upcoming season begins January 3<sup>rd</sup> when a new FIRST challenge is released. The first six weeks of the Robot Raiders' season are very intense in designing, prototyping, building, and programming a robot to meet the FIRST requirements by the deadline. When preparing for a competition, the club meets after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with additional building time on Sundays. During the six-week long building season the team meets every day and one day on the weekend—just like a varsity team.

Although a lot of work is involved, club members enjoy what they are doing. All of the members interviewed like the fact that there is collaboration between teams, even at competitions. "All the teams are more than willing to help each other with anything," says Max Westwater. "Even though you are competitors you still cooperate well together," he continued. Another member, Ethan Hulle, said that his biggest challenge was realizing "the team isn't just techies. There are many other roles to play in a robotics club. There are people who do the business end of things like writing business plans and managing the finances, building the physical robot, as well as outreach to sponsors and people in the community." As lead mentor Roy Westwater noted, "It's like working for a small startup tech company. You have to build a team, develop a plan, raise funding, and then go through a complete engineering process from conception, to prototyping, to fabrication, to programming, and to testing all within strict time and financial constraints. It's as close to real-world business planning, product development, and engineering as you can get."

Robot Raiders always welcomes new members of any skill level but currently are especially searching for people to fill roles which are less mechanical, such as website development, multimedia production, graphic design, business management, fundraising, and community outreach. This goes to show that the club can fulfill a variety of interests.

Check out the team's student-built website at [www.frc5254.com](http://www.frc5254.com) for more information; their Facebook page "Trumansburg Robot Raiders" to keep up to date on their activities; and their YouTube channel for videos of the build season and competition events. New robotics clubs are starting in the middle and elementary schools. Tax deductible donations may be made directly to the Robot Raiders or to the TCSD Foundation to support these clubs. ♦



## Capital Project Completed

By Will Westlake, Senior



In mid-October, the residents of Trumansburg woke up to something that almost felt strange. There

were no orange fences, trucks, or construction disturbing the school campus. After four years, the capital project has been completed, featuring new roofing, reorganization of the elementary school, a playground, new sound equipment in the high school auditorium, and a new track and football stadium to top it all off. This project has almost entirely been funded with a grant specifically for this project by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), an organization whose mission is to rebuild

schools, with the intention to improve the efficiency of the district campus and grounds.

Already, the benefits of these improvements can be seen by the community. There have been fewer playground injuries, no leaking roofs around the district, and this fall, high school performers were heard even in the last row of the auditorium. Greater than all of this, our high school track team is going to be able to host a meet for the



first time in four years. The old track was too old and in need of repair to hold a meet, something that has been "a real disappointment to the seniors, who aren't able to be recognized at home" says long-time track coach Bryce DeSantis.

The track now features a set of bleachers holding up to 1,500 people, which Principal Jon Koeng hopes to fill up in the coming years. "A big goal I have for the track is rebuilding school spirit here at T-burg . . . It would be great to see the stands full of students and community members alike." We now have the improvements, so let's make the best of them. Let's show just how amazing Trumansburg can be. ♦

*Junior Reporters: Articles from the Elementary and Middle Schools*

**Wellness Policies**

By Josie Covell, 5<sup>th</sup> grade



Local wellness policies give everyone an opportunity to make and uphold a healthy school district. Policies play an important role in changes in culture inside some school districts.

Community Health Educator Jennifer Hillman says “Nutrition education should teach specific skills and knowledge, such as understanding caloric balance, energy expenditure, nutrition fact labels, and media awareness.” School districts should provide nutrition education as part of every student’s K-12 health educa-

tion. Children need to learn how to recognize healthy foods.

The district wellness committees draft and propose the wellness policy to the Board of Education after the policy is reviewed by the district attorney. These committees are made up of students, parents, teachers, administrators, and people with specialized knowledge and expertise, such as school nurses, P.E. teachers, and food services staff.

In 2004, President George W. Bush signed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, which requires all school districts that participated in national school meals programs to have an official wellness policy in use by July 2006. This law requires that wellness policies be developed and achieved by “local parents, teachers, administrators, school food service, school boards, and the public.”

Trumansburg’s wellness policy needs to be changed due to a new act. In 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act added to the law that was passed in 2004. Now, policies must include:

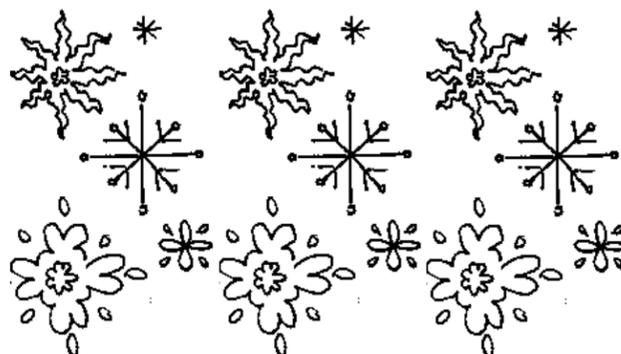
- Inclusion of goals for nutrition promotion

- Provisions for periodic assessments of the policy
- Provisions for reporting to the public about the policy’s content implementation

Trumansburg’s goal is to provide a comprehensive learning environment to affect students’ understanding, beliefs, and habits as they relate to good nutrition and regular physical activity, according to Trumansburg’s current wellness policy. People should care about wellness policies because they help to ensure that children have good eating habits and an active environment for learning.

To read our policy, go to <http://www.tburg.k12.ny.us/admin/BOE%20Stuff/Wellness%20Policy%20-%20CMAC.pdf>. ♦

**“Nutrition education should teach specific skills and knowledge, such as understanding caloric balance, energy expenditure, nutrition fact labels, and media awareness.”**



**The 3rd Grade Trip to the Johnson Art Museum**

By Jackson George, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade



The third grade classes went to the Johnson Art Museum after we studied the Dogon people. They live in Africa in Mali and Burkina Faso. We studied them for about two months. We learned a lot about their lives and culture. We went to the museum to see the Dogon artwork. They are good artists. It’s fun at the Johnson art museum. My favorite part was when we did the building puzzle because I was dancing and it copied me. It was cool too because I saw a samurai and a knight suit. You should go see the Dogon display at the Johnson Art Museum. ♦

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**Interview: Student Council President and Vice President**

By Alexis DeRaiche, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

Recently, I interviewed the President and Vice President of the Russell I. Doig Middle School (Tucker Rossi and Logan Bond). I wanted to find out what their future plans for student council and Trumansburg were. Here is what I found out:

Q: Why did you want to be President and Vice President?

A: Tucker Rossi (President): “I wanted to get involved and do something different to help the school.”

Logan Bond (Vice President): “I wanted to make the school a better, more fun place than previous years.”

Q: What do you enjoy about being President and Vice President?

A: Tucker Rossi (President): “The ability to be a role model, and to be fun and creative”

Logan Bond (Vice President): “One thing I enjoy is planning events and seeing them come together and happen.”

Q: What are your future plans for student council?

A: Logan Bond (Vice President) and Tucker Rossi (President): “To keep the middle school a place where everyone has a say, as long as it is always a safe environment. We also want to keep this school growing.” ♦

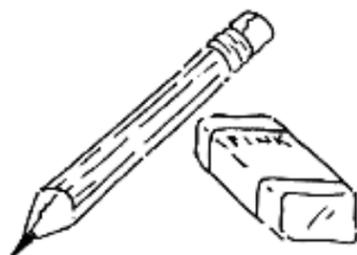
**Interview of Laura Stephens: My 7th Grade ELA Teacher**

By Brianna Deraiche, 7<sup>th</sup> grade



Laura Stephens teaches at Trumansburg Middle School, also known as “Russell I. Doig Middle School.” Laura has been teaching at Trumansburg Middle School for twenty-one years and is not planning to retire soon. Laura wanted to be a teacher be-

cause her dad is a college professor and a P.E teacher, and she also always taught her sister’s stuffed animals. minute 7th grade ELA class, and spends the rest of the day doing 8th grade ELA. Laura has fun teaching in the Trumansburg Middle School and hopes she can stay there for a long time! Then, when she is done teaching, Laura would like to be a writer who lives by the sea and goes for long walks on the beach. Laura loves what she does and hopes she can always teach. ♦



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Laura went to college for five and a half years. She went to SUNY Geneseo. Laura is the oldest of four girls. Laura was twenty-five years old when she became a teacher; she has taught 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade, and has loved every one of them. She doesn’t have a favorite subject. Laura said she is “like a weed”—she grows as she teaches.

Laura right now teaches an eighty-

**Meet Mr. Hunkele, MS Principal**

By Madeline Brainard, 5<sup>th</sup> grade



This article is about Mr. Hunkele, our new Middle School Principal. Here are some things about him:

1. He wanted to be the principal because he wanted to help the staff get proper materials and proper training.
2. In his free time he likes to study turtles.
3. The hardest part of his job: that there are only twenty-four hours in a day; the best part of his job: getting to work with people.
4. What he enjoys doing with his two sons and daughter: hiking, watching sporting events, and sitting around a campfire.
5. His favorite food: pretzels.
6. His goals for this year include learning as many names as possible, and learning what kind of school students and staff want to be proud of.
7. Last but not least, so far he likes Trumansburg because everyone is so friendly and proud of our school. ♦



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