

THE LIVING ROOM TIMES

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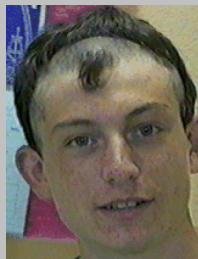
ISSUE 1 OF SEASON 5 ISSUE 336 SINCE DEC. 27, 1993



Above: Marel Nasinnyk (left) and Jenn May (right) cheer at the Newington football home opener on September 19. Fans have had little to cheer about, however, as the Indians have started their season 0-4. On Friday, they let a 14-0 lead slip away. See football info, p. 6. See "NHS Life" pics, p. 9-12.

INSIDE THE LRT

- **Turbulent start:** Scandals, rumors, and shaved heads mark the first half of boys soccer season — and that's not all, p. 3
- **Complete Fall Sports Update:** Pictures and info for every NHS fall sport, p. 4-6
- **NHS Life:** Pictures of everyday life at Newington High from the first month of the schoolyear, p. 9-12



Matt Kagan, "hazed" varsity soccer player

Standoff in town ends peacefully

A six-hour standoff between Newington police and a 45-year-old Vietnam veteran ended without incident when the man, James Stone, came out of his Church Street apartment and was taken into custody Friday night

(Continued on page 2)

Junior class officers begin their work

McBride and company focus on prom, class participation

After an election which focused on change and departure from established norms, it was a sobering return to reality.

The junior prom committee meeting on September 24, the first public meeting run by the Class of 1999's new McBride Administration, was strikingly normal.

At the beginning of the meeting, Class Advisor Andrea Yukna explained what the committees would have to do. At one point she stated, "We have gotten, from people in the past who have done proms, certain deadlines— things that need to be done."

So much for ripping up scripts.



Above: Junior Class President Ryan McBride, left, stands in front of former class president Tim Stevens, right, at the September 24 meeting.

(Continued on page 7)

Newington man taken into custody after 6-hour standoff in Church St. apartment

News of incident spread during Friday night football game

(Continued from page 1)
at around 9:00 PM.



James Stone is taken away in a police car.

The standoff began at approximately 3:00 PM after a neighbor called Newington police to report that Stone had fired gunshots into the air in a field behind the farmhouse which includes the apartment where he was living. Upon the arrival of police, Stone went inside and refused to come out, *The Hartford Courant* reported.

The New Britain *Herald* reported that “Stone was nowhere to be seen” when police arrived.

Residents of some nearby homes—reportedly about ten—were told to evacuate, and others were told to stay away from their windows, the *Courant* stated.

According to the *Herald*, police established a perimeter from John Paterson Elementary School on Halleran Road to the intersection of Church Street and Richard Street. Traffic was blocked in this area.

Official sources were not the only means through which news about the standoff was passed. At Friday night’s football game at Alumni Field, rumors ran wild about the incident, which was happening a few miles away even as the game was being played.

Sara Colpitts stated that the man was “holding himself hostage” inside his home. “And there were gunshots. That’s why there’s so many cops.”

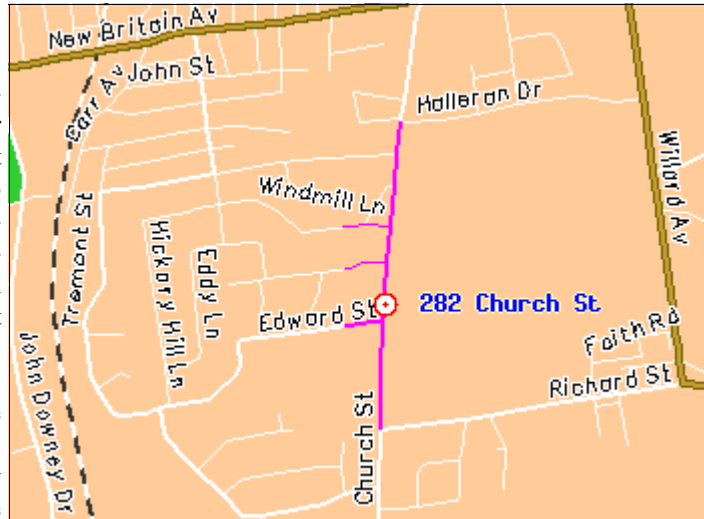
“It’s right by my house,” said Corrie Pelczar, who noted that it took her a long time to get home because she had to drive around the blocked area. “I heard he had a gun to his head and he was planning on killing himself. And then, he, like, shot out in the air at the police.”

“There’s cops everywhere,” Pelczar added. “It’s really kinda neat.”

“I heard that the man brandished a rifle in front of his house and ran down the street,” stated Jeff Brunetti. “Or something like that.”

“There was a previous incident where some kid shot at him, I think,” Brunetti added. “That’s a rumor that I heard. But I think it might be a true rumor.”

“He’s a farmer,” stated Joey Serfass, referring to the identity of the man at the center of the standoff. “It’s right next to my house.”



Above: A map of the area around Friday night’s standoff. The red dot shows the location of 282 Church Street, the address of the farmhouse where the standoff occurred. Pink shading indicates the area of blocked-off streets, according to *The Herald*. Map and red dot courtesy of www.vicinity.com.

Ryan McBride, president of the junior class, said of the standoff, “It’s in my neighborhood and I have to drive around it.”

All of the students who live near the affected area said that they do not personally know the man who has now been identified as James Stone.

While rumors continued to fly as the football game went on, the standoff—which was near John Wallace Middle School and John Paterson Elementary School, but several miles from NHS—was winding down. Police reportedly spoke to Stone by telephone shortly before he came out of the apartment. He “popped” out onto his back porch at about 8:40 PM, at which time he was apprehended without incident and taken away by police.

By late Friday night, it was confirmed that Stone had had a gun, but whether he actually fired it was in doubt. WVIT, Channel 30 reported that he had never fired the weapon or threatened anyone with it.

Police planned to search Stone’s apartment once they had obtained a warrant.

Newington Police Chief Richard Klett was quoted in the *Herald* as saying “I don’t necessarily know why Stone did this. There have been some reports of him having personal problems.”

“I think he was despondent,” Klett added, “and there were reports that he may have been drinking.”

A turbulent start for boys soccer

First half of season has its ups and downs and shaved heads

The Newington High boys' soccer team is in the midst of a season which has been bathed in controversy from the very first day.

These Indians have gone through far more ups and downs than your typical 6-1-1 team. All season long—or during two significant stretches of the season, anyway—they have been contending not just with their opponents on the field, but with rumors and scandals off it.

And it all began with five crazy haircuts.

It started on opening day—or more accurately, on the night before opening day. The Indians, ready for their Alumni Field opener against Rham of Hebron, had one more preparation left to do before they could start the season: In keeping with tradition, they planned to shave strange patterns into the haircuts of the new varsity players.

Either not knowing or not caring that their actions were in violation of a newly-added clause in the NHS Athletic Department's code of conduct which prohibits "any conduct or method of initiation" which harms a student athlete physically, mentally, or emotionally, the students went ahead with the yearly ritual.

All the players gained permission from their parents, they later claimed. The one player who could not initially gain parental permission, junior goalie Jeff Brunetti, did not get a team haircut. The other players agreed without protest not to give him a haircut, Brunetti said.

Apparently, Brunetti's parents eventually gave grudging approval for Brunetti to get a haircut, and Brunetti was ready and willing to participate in the ritual. But his father, John Brunetti, wanted to talk to Athletic Director Gerry McGrath to find out—in Jeff's words—"what he thought about it." So on the night before the first game of the season, when all the new varsity players except Brunetti had already gotten their haircuts, John Brunetti spoke to Mr. McGrath.

"I went up to him and asked him if he knew what goes on with the soccer team; how he felt about the tradition of the soccer team. And he said that there's supposed to be a stop put to that."

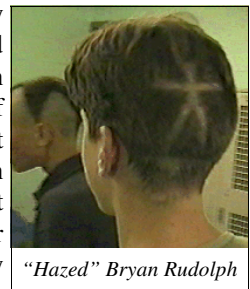
"According to what Mr. Grath told me personally, the

"The following behaviors are considered to be in serious violation of Newington High School's rules. These rules apply to violations on and off school premises while the student athlete is an eligible member of an athletic team representing Newington High School. ... Hazing - any conduct or method of initiation, whether in school or off of school grounds, which willfully or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health of any student, or humiliates or harasses any student."

—from the Newington Interscholastic Athletic Department handbook of Regulations and Guidelines for High School Athletic Participation

coaches were told in advance that this is not going to be allowed and there would be repercussions if things did happen," Mr. Brunetti stated. "If students came in with weird hairdos, Mr. McGrath felt it would be a distraction, and also—his word was strong—he said it's a form of hazing."

Hearing this, Jeff Brunetti never got his ritual haircut. But for the other five new varsity players—David Downes, Bryan Rudolph, Jeff Santos, Matt Kagan, and Ryan Cichowski—it was too late; their hair was already cut. So when they



"Hazed" Bryan Rudolph

arrived at school the next day with lines, circles, and stick figures carved into their hair, the school administration was not happy.

During the day, Mr. McGrath met with team captains Todd Stigliano and Justin Wengell. There were rumors of forcing players to sit out the opening game later that afternoon, or even of forfeiting the game altogether.

In the end, an agreement was reached which allowed everyone to play, under certain circumstances. The four seniors responsible for "hazing" their teammates would not be allowed to start the game; they sat out for about nine minutes. As for the five "hazed" players, they could play, too—but first they would have to shave their heads completely, eliminating all traces of the hazing ritual.

This outraged the "hazed" players, all of whom claimed that they had voluntarily agreed to the "hazing" haircuts, and would rather have kept them instead of shaving their heads completely.

"I don't think it's hazing," said David Downes. "We're



"Nothing was forced," said David Downes, one of the players who was "hazed."

(Continued on page 13)

Girls Soccer: 6-0-1



Left: Coach Mallia and several players on the bench look on during the Platt game. Above: Kristin Donlin, chased by a Platt defender, heads downfield. Below: Players celebrate their 7-1 win over Platt.

Conference record, place: 6-0-0; first place

Current state ranking: 18th

So far: "I'm pleasantly surprised." —Coach Mallia, who said the team has bonded well after the loss of key seniors

Key game of season to date: 4-1 comeback win over Bristol Central on Sept. 26, taking conference lead

Key upcoming games: at home vs. Bristol Eastern, Oct. 14, 3:30; at Bristol Central, Oct. 21, 3:30; at home vs. Southington, Oct. 28, 7:00; at Berlin, Oct. 30, 3:00

Looking ahead: "I'm optimistic.... We'll focus on the [regular] season first, and see what happens after that."



Girls Swimming: 6-2

Conference record, place: 3-0; tied for first

Team goal for the season: To win the conference title, which means they must defeat rival Southington

So far: "The girls are swimming well.... Corrie [Pelczar] and Liz Janelle have been winning all their races, and we have a whole core of people who are right behind them swimming great."

—Coach Haylon

Key upcoming meet: at home vs. Southington, Oct. 28, 4:00

Coach Haylon's outlook on that meet: "We're going to win! It's going to be a tough meet, but we're going to win."



Above left: Co-captain Corrie Pelczar (left) gets a behind-the-back high-five from Liz Janelle (right). Left: Alicia Montinieri swims in Wednesday's meet against Platt. Above: Cassie Stearns does the breaststroke on Wednesday.

Cross Country: Girls 6-1; Boys 5-2



Above left: Eventual winner Danielle O'Hara of Newington closes on Bristol Central's top runner during Monday's meet at Newington High.

Above right: Shaun Sullivan runs

moments after start of his race Monday. Right: Veronique Fort (right) and Natalie Chavez (far left) cheer on runners from the other two teams.



Conference records: Girls 4-0; Boys 3-1

So far: "At both ends, [the season has gone] better than I expected."
—Coach Pilz

Boys' key meet to date: One-point win over New Britain on Sept. 22

Girls' key meet to date: "Gosh, there's been so many. They're running so well."

Key upcoming meets: Girls vs. Southington at home, *Oct. 14, 3:30*;
Boys vs. Maloney and Bristol Eastern (away), *Oct. 6, 3:30*

Field Hockey: 3-4-1

Conference record, place: 2-3; fourth place

So far: "I think it's basically going as I expected. We're just scoring *more* against weaker teams, which is good, which I didn't expect would happen. So far, we haven't had any real big surprises. I'd like to see some big surprises in our favor....I'd like to beat a team that we're not [expected] to beat." —Coach McComb

Upcoming key games: 3 must-win games against "weaker" teams: at home vs. Conard, *today, 3:30*; at Windsor, *Friday, 3:30*; at Wethersfield, *Oct. 14, 3:30*; Then, games against tougher teams: at home vs. Hall, *Oct. 17, 7:00*; at home vs. Glastonbury, *Oct. 21, 3:30*

Right: Pictures from the Indians' September 19 win over Wethersfield.
Below: The players gather together before the game for a team meeting.





Girls Volleyball: 3-6

Conference record, place: 1-5; seventh place
So far: "It's gone okay. It could be better, but it could be worse." —Coach Poulin

Key match of season to date: Hard-fought 3-1 loss to Southington, which included a game won by NHS, 15-2
Looking ahead: "We're looking forward to finishing the second half of our season...and qualifying for states."



Above left: The hallway becomes a massage parlor before the Indians' match with New Britain. Left: Jessica Porazinski serves an ace at match point against Bulkeley. Above: Newington's Sue Sytko and New Britain's Kenitra Johnson go after the ball. Sytko won the battle.

Football: 0-4

Conference record, place: 0-1; last place
So far: Indians have lost 3 close games and 1 blowout.
Key upcoming games: "All of them....Every game that



Cheerleaders at a football game.

we face right now is a big game for us."
 —Coach Vida

Looking ahead: "If we play up to our potential, then there's going to be some teams out there that we'll surprise."



Above: The bench looks on during an offensive drive. Left: QB Travis Meyer passes. Right: Chris Machol set a school record with this 91-yard touchdown.



McBride Administration gets started

New officers focus on junior prom, class participation

(Continued from page 1)

In last June's election speeches, then-president Tim Stevens started things off with a dramatic pledge to stop following the "script" which, he said, binds freshman and sophomore class officers to follow a certain path. To drive his point home, Stevens took out a piece of paper labeled "The Script" and ripped it in two. Countering Stevens's theatrics, challenger Ryan McBride ripped up the entire script of his prepared speech and spoke "from the heart." The move drew laughter and cheers, and McBride went on to win the election. Soon, the buzz word regarding the new McBride Administration was "change."

"It's time for a change at Newington High School," proclaimed an elated Kevin Hauschulz, one of McBride's supporters, minutes after the result was announced.

Asked whether that message of change has faded now that the work has begun, McBride said Wednesday, "Well, right now, it's still the beginning of the year. We're getting things rolling. We're getting the junior prom thing off. Right now, that's our main goal, to get the junior prom rolling. Once we get that done, we'll be able to have extra dances" and other class activities. "So I'm really not concerned about that at this moment. But maybe later this month, once the meetings start going, people start making decisions, that's really when things start to happen."

McBride said he has "a couple of plans" which he has yet to discuss with the other officers. He added that he and the four other officers—Vice President Lauren Correll, Treasurer Jaimie Kwassman, Secretary Brynna Johnson, and Social Chairperson Ali Lucey—are "always open for comments and suggestions" from the student body.



Above: The class officers of the McBride Administration draw names to determine which junior prom committee each will be on. The officers are, from left, Social Chair Ali Lucey, President Ryan McBride, Treasurer Jaimie Kwassman, Vice President Lauren Correll, and Secretary Brynna Johnson.

That desire for widespread class involvement resurfaced in the first class newsletter of this year. Secretary Brynna Johnson, who was re-elected in an unopposed race last year, wrote "I hope that this year people will become more involved in planning for events. Please show some school spirit: we all know that our school lacks this so let's put spirit back into NHS."

(Continued on page 8)

President injured; right arm in sling

Junior Class President Ryan McBride broke his right collarbone Thursday during a game of pick-up football. His right arm was in a sling Friday, and he said he will "be out for six weeks."

McBride was playing football with a group of people including Peter Salonia, Mike Duensing, Brian Newbold, Matt Thomsen, Mike DelGaudio, Eric Urciuoli, John Brunetti, and former political opponent Jeff Brunetti when, McBride says, "I fell on my shoulder wrong, and I broke my right cervical, which is the collarbone."

When asked jokingly about a conspiracy theory involving the possibility that Jeff Brunetti, who lost to McBride in last year's presidential election, injured him purposely for political purposes, McBride replied, "Well, I don't know. That's—I couldn't tell you."

Asked if he thinks this experience will "appeal to the handicapped voters," McBride responded, "I hope so. I really can relate now. I never knew how hard it was. I never broke a bone before. But, you know, it's hard."

While discussing his injury, several girls, including Lisa Williams and Michelle Bowman, walked by and expressed their sympathy. This begged the question: "Is the pain of the injury worth it for all the sympathy that you're getting from all the girls?"

"Oh, definitely," McBride responded.



The work begins for junior class officers

Focus is preparing for prom, getting class involved

(Continued from page 7)

At the September 24 meeting, that mission seemed to be accomplished. Miss Yukna's classroom was packed—indeed, overflowing—with juniors who came to participate in the planning of their prom.

McBride said he was impressed with the turnout. "I'm glad to see everybody came to the meeting. I don't know how other junior prom committee meetings have been, but I think this is pretty good."

Former President Tim Stevens agreed about the turnout. "Oh, it's large. I don't know what's typical, but it was good. That's a good thing. It's good to see so many people turning out. I hope they stay."

"I think it's a big step in the direction of 'good for the school'," stated Brian Newbold, who voted for Jeff Brunetti last year but is also friends with McBride.

The students who came to that initial prom meeting were split up into four committees: Music/Pictures, Dinners/Ticket/Table, Invitation/Booklet, and Decorations/Colors/Theme/Favors. President McBride is on the Dinners/ Ticket/Table committee, as is former President Stevens.



Above left: President Ryan McBride speaks to members of the Dinner/Ticket/Table committee.



Above right: Former President Tim Stevens, a committee member, sits and listens to McBride.

Stevens, who said after last year's election that he will not run in June 1998 "if Ryan does a great job...but otherwise, yes, I'll be there," stated Sunday that "It's too early to tell" how well McBride and the other officers are doing. "We've only had one meeting where I've seen them in action—they've only had the prom committee meeting—and that wasn't very long or very complicated, so I really

can't tell you."

"That's very basic," Stevens said of the procedure for the first prom committee meeting. "I mean, that's stuff every class has to do, regardless."

Although they've only had one public meeting, the McBride Administration has held two officers' meetings, one over the summer and one a week before the public prom meeting.

Over the summer, they met at McBride's house and "talked about plans for the upcoming year, any ideas we had, the way we wanted to bring the class together as a whole," the president explained.

"One of the ideas we had was going to be a Walk-A-Thon" to benefit the class, with some of the money going to charity, McBride said. "But then, you know—it seems like, we come up with this idea, and then everyone's having Walk-A-Thons the same month. So maybe we'll have one this spring when the weather starts to get nicer. We were going to have one this month, but it just wasn't going to work out."

In their second meeting, on September 17, the officers decided that they would hold the first junior prom committee meeting the following Wednesday. In addition, they decided what they'll be selling for the class fundraiser—Munson's chocolate and candles, the same as last year. "And we're going to try to plan a dance sometime after homecoming," McBride added.

Asked then how things have gone so far, McBride responded, "It's been interesting. I've learned a lot of new things....I'm looking forward to the rest of school."

NHS Life

September 3, 1997
to
October 3, 1997

IN WORDS AND PICTURES



Above: Melinda Lukman writes out the schedule on the first day of school.



Above: Chris Banach (right) and Andy Daigle (left) carry Corrie Pelczar (center) down the hallway.

Grads return

Throughout the first month of school, many of last year's graduates have come back to say hello to their old teachers and friends from NHS.

Clockwise from top left: Graduate Danny Seguro looks in on Mr. Treggor's concert choir; Danny gets a hug from senior Ashley Meyer after class; Graduate Susan Burdelski visits senior Alexandria Pena; Senior Barbara Byrnes gives graduate Martha Kedzior a big hug in concert choir.



NHS Life

IN WORDS AND PICTURES

9/3/97
to
10/3/97



Above: Rollerblading afterschool outside Newington High are, from left, Ricardo Ramos, Greg Lawrence, and Todd Kean.



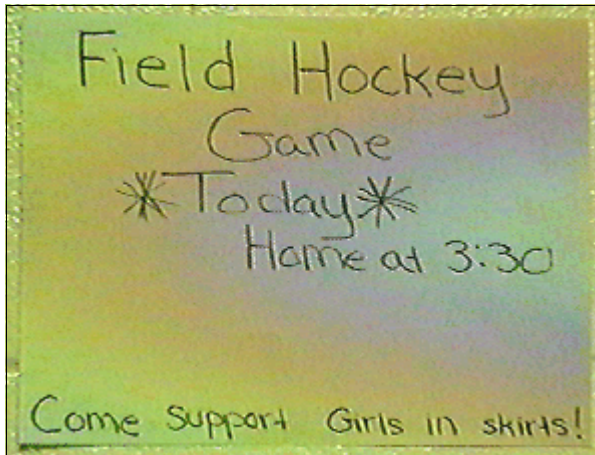
Above: On opening day of the fall sports season, the boys soccer team takes on Rham while cross country runners practice on the track in the background.



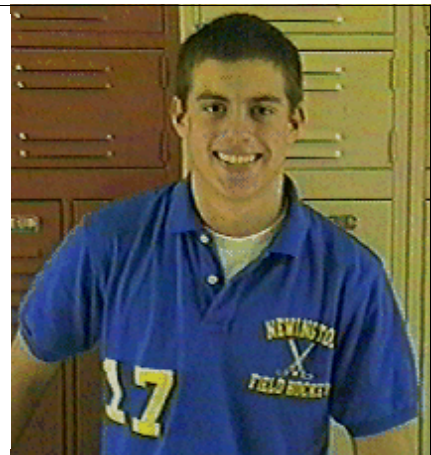
Above: Newington Athletic Director Gerry McGrath congratulates Matt Thomsen after a 3-0 win over Rham.



Above: Before her soccer game with Platt, Vicki Luiz passes a football to Travis Meyer. Behind her is Emily Bartkoski.



*Left: This sign advertising the field hockey team's home opener tried to appeal to male fans with the slogan, "Come support Girls in skirts!"
Right: Although he didn't wear a skirt, Junior Class President Ryan McBride did wear a field hockey jersey on gameday to show his support for the team.*



NHS Life

IN WORDS AND PICTURES

9/25/97:
Open
House



Above left: Working with soap and water in Dr. Pilotte's Chemistry lab, Corrie Pelczar blows a bubble using just her hands. *Above right:* After several failed attempts at bubble-blowing, Tim Stevens finally succeeds as well, but Bryan Rudolph is poised to burst his bubble.



Above: Technology students work on their display in the library.

Above: Mr. Treggor speaks to the parents of his concert choir students.



Left: Todd Stigliano, working in Dr. Pilotte's Chemistry lab, shows off the "Super Ball" which he made with Sodium Silicate solution and Ethyl Alcohol to Claudio Gualtieri, who was outside in the courtyard looking in.



Right: A close up of the "Super Ball."

"Oh, boy. Yes, it will bounce."

NHS Life

IN WORDS AND PICTURES

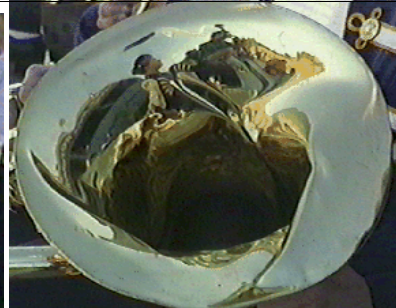
9/3/97
to
10/3/97



Above: Performing a mount at last Saturday's football game are, from left, cheerleaders Serena Butler, Carly Apicella, and Stephanie Lehmann.



Above: Bob Aniello, who claims to be the most pierced member of the Class of 1999, finds a new use for his toungue ring, using it to carry this chain.



Far left: A band member's horn lies on the ground after falling from the bleachers. Left: Other band members look on. Above: The warped horn after being retrieved.



Above: Junior David Downes (right) poses with his supposed look-alike, freshman Neil Sullivan (left). "He really doesn't look like me," Downes said later. "Or if he does, I'm the better-looking one."



Above: Liz Rubasky carries Dan Costa around the cafeteria for a few seconds while others leave after sixth-period lunch last week.

Controversy fills boys soccer season

On and off the field, turbulence prevails in first half of year

(Continued from page 3)

free to do it. The people who didn't want it done, didn't have it done, and that's all."

The next day, Mr. McGrath defended the decision to crack down on the traditional ritual, saying the haircuts were in clear violation of the new addition to the code of conduct. "This... 'hazing,' under Code of Behavior, this was added to our handbook this year as a result of sports teams doing various things as initiation for coming onto a varsity team. And we had concerns from parents of our student athletes, also faculty members, and also a concern of the school administration as to what our student athletes look like. And with the haircuts [and] hairstyles I witnessed in my first year here as the athletic director, soccer as a start, they were demeaning, not the best interests of the self-esteem of the student athlete, and not in the best interests of what we expect all of our students to look [like], and especially in athletics when you're out there wearing something that says 'Newington' and you're representing the school."

"I would be quite confident to say that these people that had their hair cut, if they had their own preference, they wouldn't have had it done. But they were subjected to the pressure of their peers, and had their hair shaved," McGrath stated.

"This is something that has become quite serious around the country, where this leads on to other types of harassment, endangerment," McGrath said. "In the state of California, there have been incidents where football players were physically banged around by members of their team, which resulted in some serious health and physical repercussions afterwards."

In the weeks since the haircut controversy at NHS, 'hazing' has become a media buzz-word around the state as various incidents have been exposed in several different Connecticut high schools. Among these are an annual gathering in Berlin where freshmen are thrown into a manure pit, an incident involving a freshman being tied to a staircase with duct tape, and a soccer initiation ritual known as "butt-burning."