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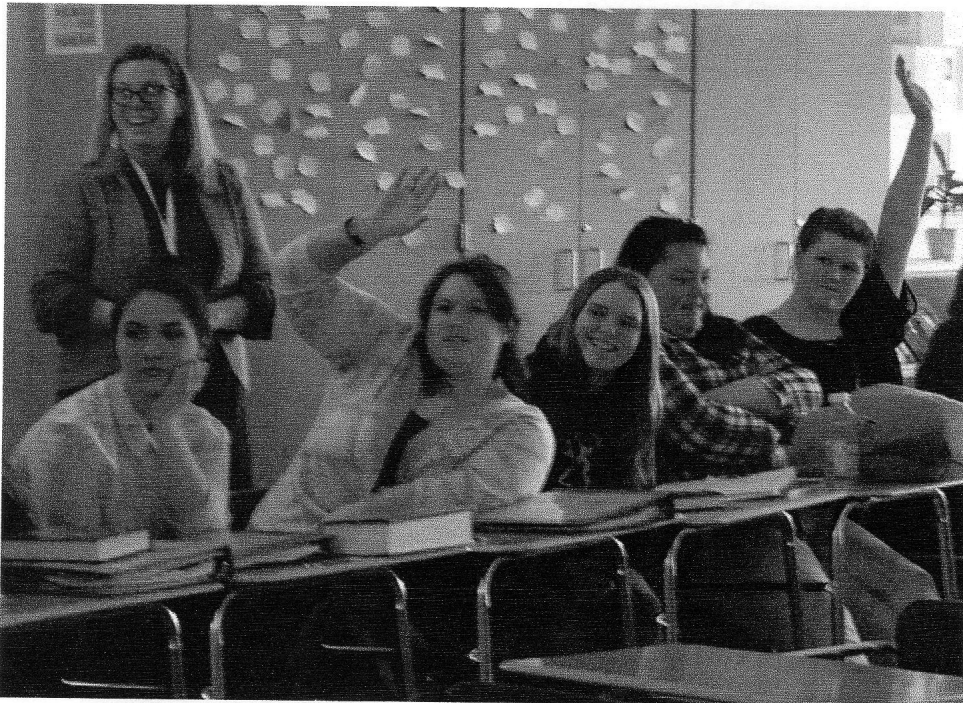
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IHS students begin 'American Nightmares' unit with visit from professional horror writers

The English students at Ionia High School are in the midst of their "American Nightmares" unit, and had the opportunity to speak to professional writers who know a thing or two about ghastly publications on Thursday.



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Students in Jennifer Ward's English class had the opportunity to ask questions and take notes during a workshop by members of the Great Lakes Association of Horror Writers. The students are taking part in an "American Nightmares" unit and will be writing stories of their own to be published.



By Stan Sulewski
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The English students at Ionia High School are in the midst of their "American Nightmares" unit, and had the opportunity to speak to professional writers who know a thing or two about ghastly publications on Thursday.

The students have been reading works by authors like Edgar Allan Poe and T.S. Eliot to get them



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in the haunting spirit to write their own stories, and the group was visited by two members of the Great Lakes Association of Horror Writers (GLAHW) for a little inspiration.

According to Jennifer Ward, English teacher for Ionia High School, their newest unit of study is much darker than their last.

"We are in a unit that we call 'American Nightmares,'" Ward said. "Previous to this we did 'American Dreams,' so now we're on the flip-side."

The students have been learning about dark romanticism and gothic writers, and are currently working on stories of their own. Ward said her students are in the drafting stages right now, and the overall goal is to compile them once they are completed to be published.

Ward said she is using Amazon's CreateSpace to get them published, which is the same outlet used by GLAHW, and hopes to work with an editor once the stories are written.

Ward reached out to GLAHW to see if someone could speak to the class, and the duo in attendance have been the topic of discussion among students Thursday afternoon.

"They're the talk of the school right now," Ward said. "It's been awesome because it's sparked a lot of conversation about writing."

The GLAHW is an organization formed in 2007 which is focused on a love of horror, dark fantasy, science fiction, true crime and more. The group puts out a members-only anthology every year and holds workshops to help others in the writing process.

According to member Peggy Christie, Ionia High School is the first classroom in which they've been invited to host a workshop.

"The second class we did went so fast because they are all so engaging," Christie said.

Christie was joined by MontiLee Stormer, who stated the two would be speaking on their own writing experiences and processes, as well as world-building, character development and anything else the students were interested in.

According to Christie, the GLAHW helps raise money for the Siena Literacy Center as well as the Dominican Literacy Center in Detroit. Anybody is welcomed to join the group, which can be done by visiting www.glahw.com.

When asked about the group's membership, Stormer's answer was as chilling as some of the topics the authors focus on.

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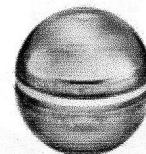


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