
CRYSTAL ♦ 99

Malden Catholic – A Xaverian Brothers Sponsored School – 99 Crystal St., Malden, MA 02148

Changes at the Top: New Administration

By: Cas Parker
Staff Writer

With the start of the new school year, there are many changes to the Malden Catholic community: hundreds of freshmen, several new teachers, and completely new schedules. Additionally, two new people joined the ranks of those within the Malden Catholic administration. One new administrator is Ms. Erga Pierrette. Ms. Pierrette, who holds a Master's Degree in Social Work from Simmons University, joins the Malden Catholic community as the new Dean of Community, Culture, and Equity. In this position, she will help improve areas supporting Malden Catholic's equity-centered community efforts and facilitate student voices around diversity, equity, and inclusion. According to Ms. Pierrette, "There is a need for the position/role that I am filling, and due to the changes in the demographics of the school population, this role is there to support that change." She continued to say, "I love to bring people together, so that is what I am going to be doing here."

When asked about her goals, she states they center around "building relationships with the students, with the faculty, and staff." She continues that she hopes to learn and understand "where our strengths are as a community... what areas we need to work on, where some of the gaps [are], the makeup of our community, and what opportunities we can create to celebrate the diversity that is around us, both culturally and ethnically." She further tells the wider Malden Catholic community that she will also be "popping into classrooms," and that she hopes that it will provide her with the opportunity "to learn about what really goes on behind closed doors, behind the scenes, and to be seen as a resource." She further reminds the community that she is "here to help the entire community and to have an open mind and an open heart as we lean into discomfort, learn about each other, and learn about what brings us together. Race sep-

arates people, but culture brings folks together."

Along with her role as the Dean of Community, Culture, and Equity, Ms. Pierrette has many talents, including the ability to juggle, and participates in many activities around Malden Catholic. She is a moderator of several clubs, one of which is the Black Student Forum, which will be meeting on Wednesdays in Campus Ministry. Another club that she moderates is the Diversity and Inclusion Student Council, which she states "allow[s] the student group leaders to be able to communicate with each other, update us on what they are doing, express concerns, and figure out ways that we can actually build community and support each other."

She is also very active within the wider Malden community and is involved in many organizations, such as Malden Reads, which hosts an Indigenous People's Day event that the whole Malden Catholic community was encouraged to attend. The event includes a blessing of the land and water, the building of a model fishweir (a type of fish trap that Indigenous people use), and a park clean-up. This event, which took place on Saturday, October 14 from 9:30 to 12:00 at 356 Commercial Street, provides an excellent opportunity for the community to come together and learn more about Indigenous people and the issues they face in society today.

The other new addition to the administration is Mr. Robert Gregory. Mr. Gregory, who has been a member of the Malden Catholic community since 2013, is taking over the position of Boy's Division Leader from Mr. Bucchino, who held the role for many years previously. Mr. Gregory hopes that as Boy's Division Leader, he can build on the "historic legacy and the tradition of excellence in the boy's division" and help to "institute [and] hopefully bring about some cultural shifts with respect to improving peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher re-

lationships, cultivating an awareness of the importance of role modeling, especially among upperclassmen to the freshman." Additionally, he hopes to be able to help students "into solid routines, not only academic routines, but also routines for self-care, sleep, spiritual growth, and all of the things that support their learning."

When asked about any issues he has faced so far in the position, he responded by saying that "the overarching issue is that as we grow, [we make] sure we are still able to serve all of our students, to understand their needs, and to support them in the ways that they deserve and in the way that our faith calls us to." He also addresses his interest in "helping the boy's division reconnect ... [and] maybe reconsider and reframe what it means to cultivate healthy young men, strong young men." He further states that, as a whole, he is interested in rethinking and reconsidering traditional standards of manhood and masculinity that have "pigeonholed boys into the stereotypes of being angry, closed off, non-expressive, [and] non-emotional." He continues to say that he is "looking forward to interrogating some of those stereotypes and helping boys build strategies to cultivate things like resilience, respect, sensitivity, empathy, and the characteristics of what [he] would consider a healthier masculinity."

Along with being the Boy's Division Leader, Mr. Gregory is one of the coaches of the Malden Catholic Mock Trial Team, which was state champion in 2022. He was raised in New Jersey, meaning he is a Giants fan, and attended public school his whole life; he never attended Malden Catholic. Mr. Gregory is also a teacher in the Theology department. He continues to teach AP Research, the second part of the AP Capstone course, in both the Boy's and Girl's divisions. He highlights that he continues to teach in the girl's division because it is important for him to have a presence on the girl's side to show unity.



Photo Courtesy of Malden Catholic

(Left) Mr. Robert Gregory, Boys Division Leader and (right) Ms. Erga Pierrette pose for a photo. Both assumed new administrative positions this September.

OPINIONS

Cost of Private Schools

CRYSTAL 99

Student Newspaper

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THESE OPINIONS DO NOT REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF MALDEN CATHOLIC AS AN INSTITUTION

Reporting on current events and publishing student opinion, we at the *Crystal 99* hope to inform, challenge, and entertain our readers, and allow students an outlet to communicate with their peers.

If you would like to contribute to the paper, submit an article, or offer your suggestions, contact any editor or Mr. Cleary.

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By: Devyn DiMarco
Staff Writer

To reach your goals in life, you need to make the right set of decisions. However, as a minor, most decisions are made or heavily influenced by your parents. Low income families are more likely to send their child to the most affordable academic option available. Most of the time, the only option is public school. From providing books at no additional cost to sometimes providing free transportation, public schools have become the most economically suitable option for 91% of families, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. While, "Among the 4.7 million K-12 students who were enrolled in private schools in fall 2019, about 66 percent were White, 12 percent were Hispanic, 9 percent were Black, 7 percent were Asian, and 5 percent were students of Two or more races."

Marginalized groups do not just have less of a chance of applying to private institutions, but a less of a shot at getting in. Most private schools focus on how much financial aid a family will need to have their child attend. When they need to lower the acceptances due to overcrowding, those with the highest need for financial aid often go first. As a private institution, Malden Catholic has a part to play in this issue. We pride ourselves on being a diverse school that prepares students for the world. However, to do this we need to talk about difficult topics, especially those that make us uncomfortable. Even with personal hardships, as students who attend a private school, we are privileged. We get to attend a school that looks and truly feels like a community.

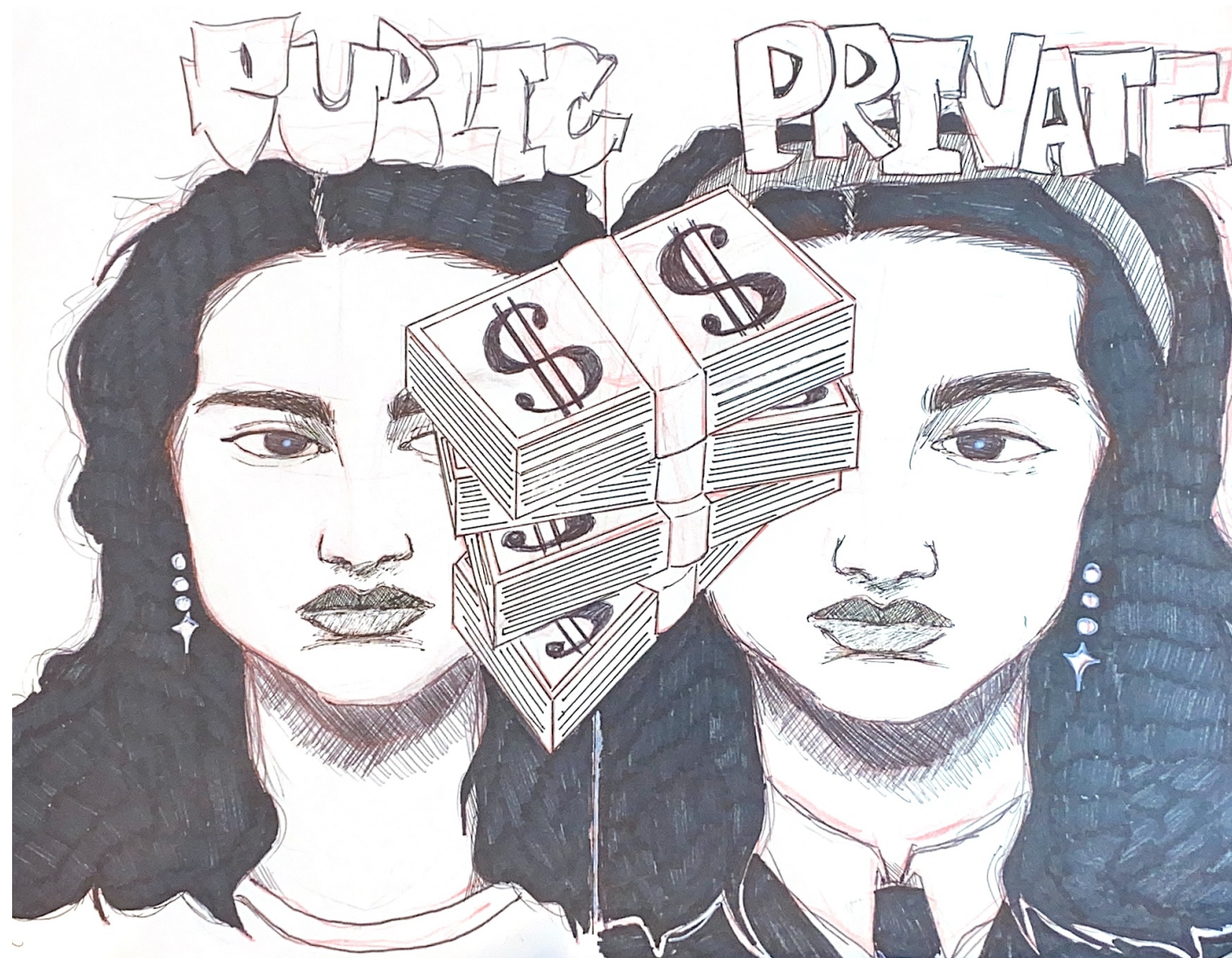
As a public middle school alumni, I can say that most public school students feel like a number and with so many kids in one class, one on one help with teachers was not an option.

Here at MC we have teachers who are not only willing to help, but have the time to help. At public school, I heard many students saying they wanted to go to a private school, but it was simply not a viable option for their families.

Even with the ability to pay tuition, parents still have to factor in the hundreds of dollars spent on school books, transportation, uniforms, and even school food for the duration of their child's four years at the high school of their choice. Much of which would have initially been provided in public schools.

This is not to say private schools offer no form of monetary support. The issue presents itself when the school starts to believe that just because some students have financial support, the problem is fixed.

We need a better system that makes public schools better suited for the student and private schools more accessible to the average family. School should focus on the child, not money or statistics.



Art by Elicia Perez

Toxic Productivity

By: **Jacqueline Smiles Rodriguez**
Editor

Recently, it has become abundantly clear to me that throughout history, people have taken the idea of being productive and used it wrong. The most common definition of productivity that most of us can agree on is how efficient one is at completing tasks. Productivity is now being marketed as something that is essential for a successful life and it is apparent in nearly all the media we consume that selling this idea of a productive life is very popular.

The marketing of this idea has been hugely effective. Simply searching for “productivity” on a web browser will lead to thousands of videos that show different systems, apps, and routines guaranteed to increase your productivity. While all of these sound very helpful, they encourage people to take on more than they can handle by influencing them to take on even more tasks. I am not against the concept of productivity at all. However, no videos that have been pushed into my algorithm to help me be productive have helped me whatsoever. The bigger problem is because of this relentless emphasis on producing, many people

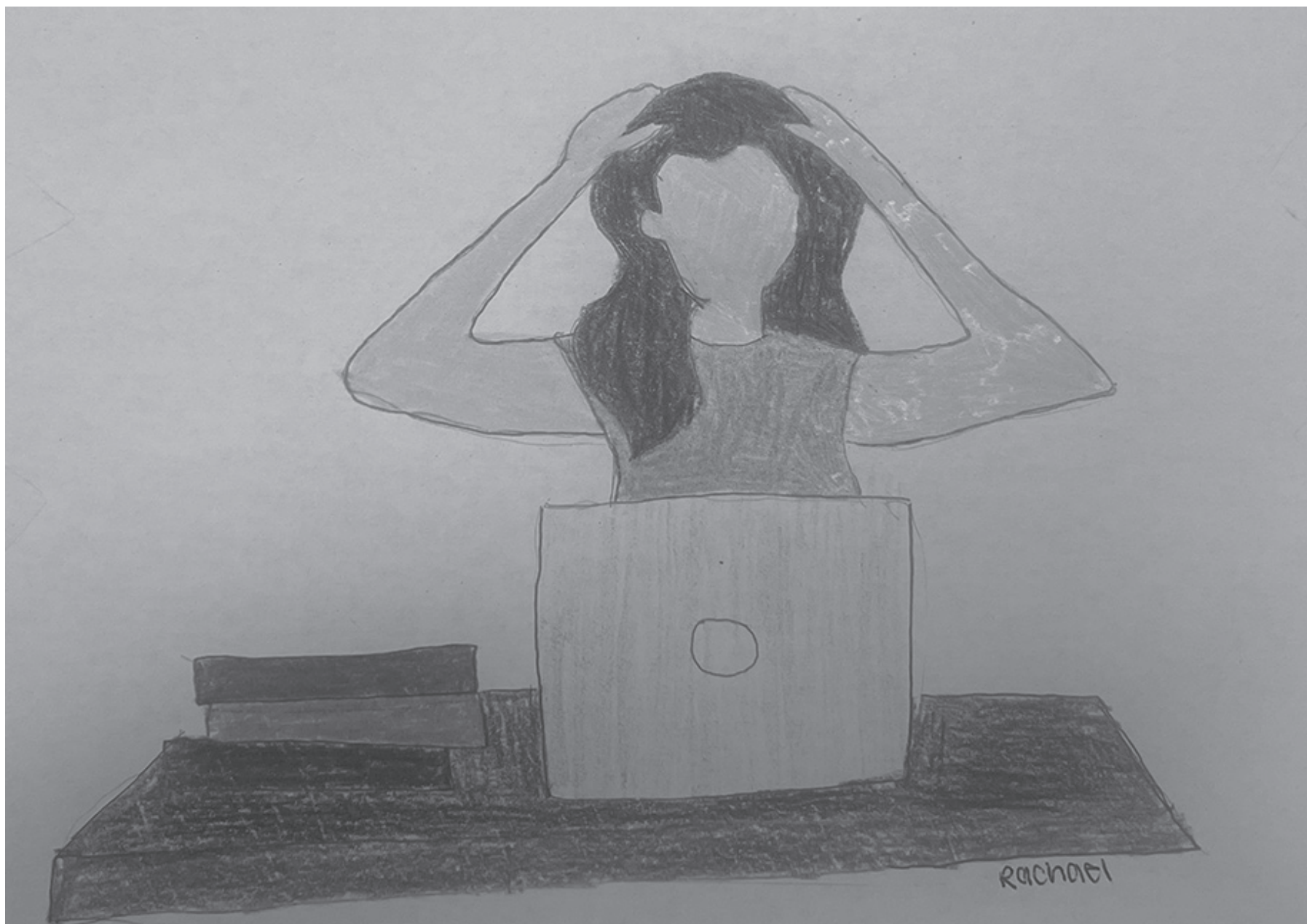
are prone to burnout from obsessive focus on being productive, and instead of offering solutions, it is only publicized more.

Achieving objectives faster because of productivity may seem like something one may want to aim towards, but taking on too much can lead to the inverse effect of burnout. According to the World Health Organization, burnout is described as “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” It is then followed as being characterized by “feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one’s job; and reduced professional efficacy.” Burnout has a strong impact on people’s lives, which is very apparent through various studies on the subject. A study from the American Psychological Association showed that burned-out employees are 63% more likely to take a sick day and 2.6 times more likely to be looking for a new job. The result of a focus on excessive productivity is burnout, which does not increase workplace efficiency as it may seem to.

Being productive is not a bad thing at all; it’s just hard to find the right balance of handling

work, education, and other large responsibilities in your personal life, especially when your responsibilities are hard to complete and draining. According to an EDWAY study done in 2022 of a million people, most Americans, Australians, and British people have ranked productivity over happiness and physical health. Prioritizing a good work-life balance is so important for this reason. Constantly choosing to be productive can cause one to be stressed out during idle times. Toxic productivity should not be encouraged nor prioritized over all else.

It is important not to determine your self-worth by productivity, because you’ll end up ignoring other aspects of life. Instead of learning to be more productive, you should minimize the amount of tasks you have to take on. Burnout is usually a result of prioritizing tasks over one’s health. To prioritize your health, you should enforce a healthy work-life balance. Burnout is not inevitable, and while it may be very easy to let work take over your life, it’s important to take care of yourself first. It’s normal for motivation to come and go, so forcing yourself to the brink of exhaustion is not worth the repercussions.



Goodbye 50 Crystal: Demolition Begins

By **Katelyn Mangan**
Staff Writer

Recently, it was announced that the building across the street from Malden Catholic, 50 Crystal, is set to be demolished. The demolition, along with the construction of two temporary classrooms, has led to events like Homecoming being postponed and Lancer-Palooza seemingly being canceled for this year.

On September 18th, the demolition of 50 Crystal officially began. Many events were shifted around as a result of this; for example, the Homecoming game and party were pushed back to a later date, and Lancer-Palooza was canceled entirely. Even parking has needed to be adjusted due to the temporary classrooms being built, but the demolition of 50 Crystal hasn't made matters easier. Between the temporary classrooms and the demolition, Lancer Palooza was canceled as the space needed for the event was simply not there.

50 Crystal started out as a fish factory. Around five years ago, Malden Catholic bought the building, but hadn't done anything with it until now. Since the purchase, however, the student body has grown exponentially; as a result, an expansion was needed.

At first, the hope was to simply repurpose the building; however, given its age, it was more efficient to just tear it down. Come spring, construction should begin. The building is still going to be used by both boys and girls, and students will likely still end up mixing in the hallways due to the logistics of class schedules.

The first floor will likely be mainly for athlet-



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic
President John Thornburg, Mr. Sean Hurley, Principal Jeff Smith and other prominent community members pose in front of 50 Crystal in preparation for the construction of a new building

ics, while classrooms will begin on the second floor, and should enough money be raised, there could even be a third floor. As a result of even more classrooms, there is a possibility that new classes will be added; some potential additions are entrepreneurship and financial literacy classes. There could also potentially be a STEM lab and a maker space.

The new building will be smaller than Malden Catholic. The maximum student number will be slightly less in the new building, but the new 50 Crystal will likely allow for more students to attend Malden Catholic. However, even if it doesn't, the new building will allow for more space, and any time spent in the halls between classes clearly shows that space is needed!

Valerie Umipig Attends Botball GCER 2023

By **Grace MacDonald**
Staff Writer

The Global Conference on Educational Robotics, or GCER, is a professional conference for elementary to high school students, teachers, mentor professors, and robot enthusiasts. At this conference, students are encouraged to learn and meet other students and there are guest speakers, breakout sessions, and a robotics showcase. The conference also features the KIPR Autonomous Aerial Robot Tournament, the KIPR Autonomous Aerial Challenge, and the Junior Botball Challenge.

This summer, MC junior Valerie Umipig attended the 2023 GCER in St. Augustine, Florida. Valerie is the robotics team captain and the club president. While there, she won both the BotGal Award and the KISS Award. She spent seven weeks preparing for the conference, coming to school almost every day since summer started. Last year, she attended GCER with a group of other Malden Catholic students. Because there is a lot of work to be done, usually when a school competes they have a full team of students. However this year, after receiving help from other robotics team members, Val went on her own.

Val had two robots that she was planning to compete with: the Create and the Wombat. Create is a vacuum that was provided by iRobot, the official sponsor of Botball. This robot has built-in bump and distance sensors, with adjustments made by attaching Legos and metal pieces. The Wombat is like a controller; the robotics team uses this to connect to their robots to send programs to their bots, like a brain. With this, they can connect several monitor wires, servos, cameras,

and sensors that are made to complete the code made by the team. Because these robots are autonomous, the team needs something to transfer and run the photos.

When asked about the challenges she faced, Val mentioned some difficulties she had with her created bot. "My Create bot, my one other bot, stopped working because of the sudden update they gave us at the conference so I was reduced from two robots to

one."

Even when faced with challenges like this Val still received two awards with only one bot competing. Val shared her favorite part of the conference, saying that it was "meeting the people there and seeing my friends again from participating at last year's GCER". Congratulations and keep up the great work Val!

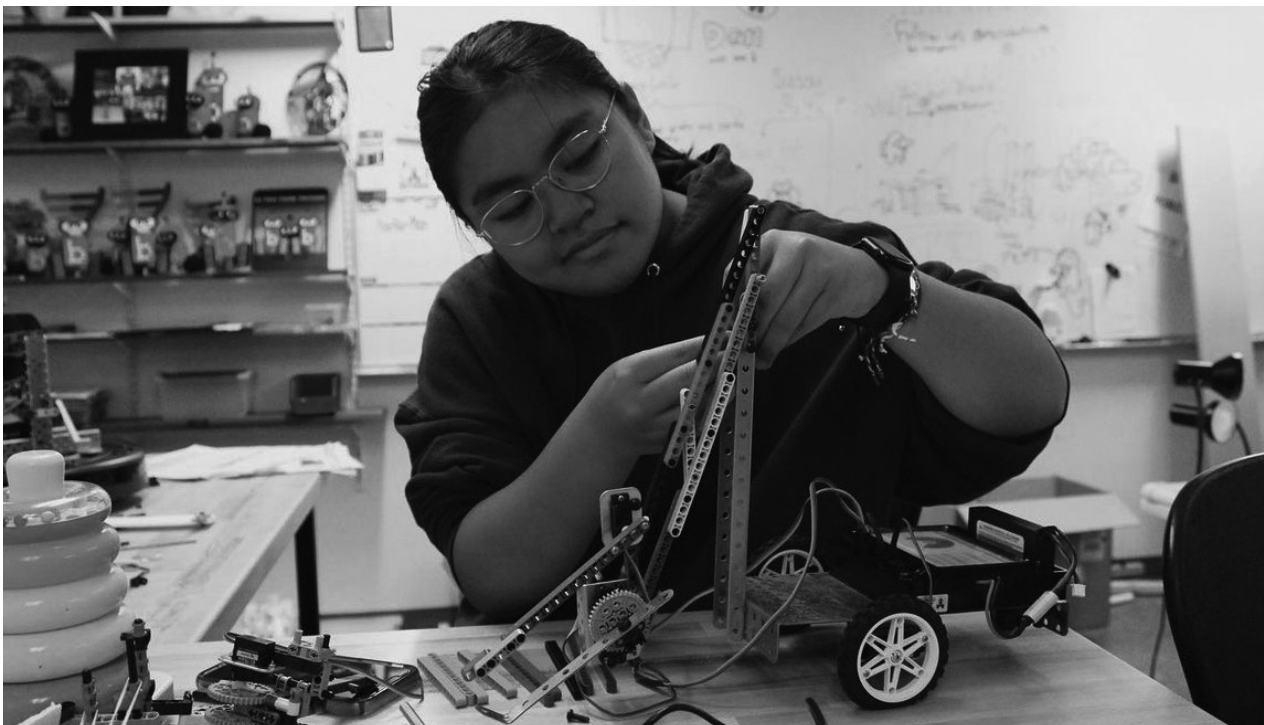


Photo by Haley Talbot

Valerie Umipig '25 constructs her bot to compete with at the Global Conference on Educational Robotics.

Freshmen Build Community on Retreats

By **Kristen Marchant**
Staff Writer

On September 6th and 7th, the Girls and Boys Freshmen classes had their respective retreats, organized by Mr. Casey. He, along with the school counseling department, administration, teachers, and senior volunteers helped the experience run seamlessly. The retreats served to enrich the new Malden Catholic students in the school's community and faith. The day included a multitude of activities, all conducted around a normal Malden Catholic school day. It was the first in-school retreat of the 2023-2024 school year. According to Mr. Casey, "[The retreats] serve as a time to take a break from typical school life to take time and get to know one another a little better, as well as get to know the school and think a little about their relationship with God. Part of what we try and do at MC is allow students to grow academically, emotionally, but also spiritually – to grow in knowledge of their role as leaders in the school in the future, to try and understand why knowing God matters to a Malden Catholic student today, as well as to see their classmates as an extension of that growth." Thanks to his and all of the other participants' efforts, the retreat was able to achieve its goal- connecting new students through community and spirituality.

Both the boys and girls retreats followed the same itinerary. They officially began with prayer in the auditorium and a discussion with students about the reasoning behind holding a retreat and what it actually would entail. Following that, the freshmen were split into small groups with senior advisors to get to know each other a little better. The groups were brought back to the auditorium, where they learned about the Xaverian Brothers and how their history still shapes Malden Catholic today. A group of seniors then gave speeches about their time at MC, what has made it special, and some advice on how the freshman should act in their upcoming high school careers. After some basketball, they returned to small groups and discussed what the



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

During the retreat, students of the girls' freshman class attended a short introduction by Mr. Casey in the McDonough Performing Arts Center.

Xaverian values mean to them in their own terms, and communicated that on posters. There was a lunch of pizza and a Club Fair in the gym. Mr. Casey then gave a talk in the auditorium on his history of faith and commitment to MC. Small groups concluded with finishing posters and writing letters to God, with the entire day concluding with a final prayer in the auditorium. The freshmen appeared to have enjoyed the experience. Freshman Anna White says, "I loved my experience. I

think each and everyone of the speakers connected with me. The pizza during lunch was fun, another win for MC." It's great that the retreat has achieved one of its overarching goals of impacting the lives of these new Malden Catholic students. While high school can be a new and scary experience for incoming students, the retreats eased the freshman into life at MC and have made it a better place with a more developed sense of belonging.

In Memory of Coach Mathew G. Jones

By **Madeline Shipman**
Staff Writer

Death is the only inevitability in life, but still, living the rest of your life without a person you loved dearly remains the most tragic concept imaginable.

On Sunday August 20th, 2023, the Malden Catholic community lost a beloved, benevolent, and loyal man. Coach Matthew G. Jones tragically passed away at Lahey Clinic in Burlington at the young age of 53. He was highly regarded and esteemed by his loved ones, and regarded as a kind, sincere, and genuine person.

Jones was a Malden Catholic graduate of 1988, then he attended Norwich University, graduating in 1992. He later became a junior varsity softball coach for the girls division. He was also a football coach at both MC and Danvers high school.

He was held in high regard by those who knew him, and he looked highly upon others as well. "Coach Jones was one of the most humble, caring, and genuine individuals I've known and is one that made you feel welcome at Malden Catholic," said Mr. William Ray-

craft, the school's athletic director. "He was not one to be in front or take credit for things he did, but he would be the one behind the scenes working to make things better for a player, team or program on a regular basis." It is clear that Jones had a kind heart and a gracious soul, always looking out for his community and doing it all with humbleness.

Jones was a driven man who was so fond of the Malden Catholic community, students, and teachers. He felt that every student had the opportunity to become something great. In the words of Mr. Raycraft, "the points on the scoreboard were secondary to improving and development of skills and this made him a great coach. That being said, he was as competitive as they come—although he didn't brag about it, he finished his JV Softball season undefeated."

Upon being asked about the bond Jones had with his teams, Raycraft responded with a resounding, "He really did." Then continued with, "he wanted so much for the Lancers to succeed that he really felt close to his athletes and wanted the best for each of them and treated them as family."

Coach Jones' heart will always beat, and his image will always be alive within the walls of Malden Catholic in addition to the memory of his loved ones. We shall mourn his passing and respect the name of a man who demonstrated all 5 Xaverian values: simplicity, humility, compassion, trust, and zeal.



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

Coach Jones speaking to his players before a game.

Yesterdays Juniors, Today's Leaders

By: Kayla McAuliffe
Staff Writer

For generations, the Malden Catholic Leadership Institute has been a highly anticipated event amongst the rising senior class. Dating back to the mid 1980s, MCLI has been a tradition surrounding faith, friendships, and service. Students wait all summer to find out what activities await at MCLI, but what is to occur at this event remains unrevealed. Throughout the years, keeping the details of MCLI a secret became a tradition within the Malden Catholic community, allowing more build-up of anticipation leading up to the event in early August. This four day retreat had a packed schedule full of team and class bonding activities, games, and service projects. The class of 2024 got a chance to live in dorms, dine, and undertake activities with each other at Endicott College. Endicott College stands in Beverly, MA, and MCLI has been held there for years.

Not only is this a great service opportunity and bonding experience, however, it is also good preparation for what college life will be like for the seniors next year. Transitioning from high school to college can be a challenging and stressful time for 12th grade students, and MCLI gives students

an inside look into how they will be living the following year.

The seniors had a lot of amusement in their nightly activities. Jessica Berlus '24 recounts what she considers the highlight of MCLI. "I'm a little biased, but my favorite night at MCLI had to be the trivia night. Not only because I won... but because I really got to connect with my teammates and get out of my comfort zone with them." The whole group held a trivia contest at night and competed to win the trivia trophy. Specifically, Mr. Hurley's team, the Harley-Davidsons, ended up dominating the other teams and taking home a big win. However, Berlus did express her concerns regarding trivia night. "I didn't love the infamous open toe shoe incident during trivia night that I experienced. I will not elaborate any further." In order to understand what Berlus means by this, you have to go to MCLI to experience it for yourself!

The events of MCLI are meant to be kept a secret in order to remain unrevealed upon arrival, but it is surely something that no senior wishes to miss.

Although tiring at times, the extremely fun atmosphere made up for it. However, students did express concern about wishing to have more free time with friends. Ally Marino '24 expresses her

concerns by saying, "I would have liked to have more time to hang out with people outside of the activities." However, in the end, students believed that they were able to make the most out of the four days that they were there. Both Berlus and Marino said they recommended the experience, Berlus even stated that she, "1000% recommend." MCLI is a great opportunity for students to bond with those they wouldn't be able to at school and participate in activities with friends and teachers.

Mr. Casey, the administrator of the event states, "My favorite part of the experience is seeing the students at the end, seeing how they've grown and changed, and been affected by the experience. I love seeing them at the end of it all, because I typically see students who have grown closer to one another and are more connected and joyful about their place in the MC community. I often notice a big change in them, and it feels me with hope, joy, and pride." It truly is a great experience that all students should attend. Building those bonds before the start of senior year brings the class closer together as a whole, and gives the seniors something to look forward to as they enter the school year.



Photos courtesy of Malden Catholic

(Top) The senior class poses for a group photo at Endicott College.
(Bottom) Keira Rice, Sachelle Sterlin, Jaelyn Walsh, Bo Moody, and Jackson Norales pose for a photo during their service project.



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

(Top) Malden Catholic boys division seniors pose for a photo during a small group meeting.
(Bottom) Malden Catholic girls division seniors pose for a group photo on the final day of their MCLI.



Any current juniors
looking to participate in MCLI
'24 over the summer, look out
for information about it in early
spring!

Gunn's New DCU: Next Big Thing or Dead on Arrival?

By: Michael Casey
Staff Writer

At the end of January, 2023, James Gunn announced the slate of movies for phase one of his DC cinematic universe; but with the release of *Blue Beetle*, the semi-first movie of the new DCU, we are left wondering will it work, or will it suffer the same fate of the current DCEU? The DCEU is the universe of interconnected DC movies that Warner Brothers tried to create with Zack Snyder at the helm. Overall, the universe failed, as they created bad movies and there was a lack of understanding of the characters from the people behind the scenes, but recently James Gunn was put in charge of rebooting it as the DCU with new movies and new takes on the characters. Before he does that though, there are a few movies left that are still technically under the banner of the DCEU. *Blue Beetle* was not listed as part of James Gunn's slate, which begins with *Creature Commandos* and *Superman: Legacy*, but was confirmed by James Gunn during promotion for the movie that it was part of the universe. *Blue Beetle* did terribly commercially despite the fact that it was well received by critics and audiences. Most movie fans (including myself) will tell you that while it was certainly no masterpiece, it was a fun movie with a lot of heart and a great love for the comic character of Jaime Reyes' Blue Beetle. This movie, as well as *Shazam: Fury Of the Gods*, *Black Adam*, and *Aquaman and The Lost Kingdom* exist in a sort of fugue state between the old DC movie universe and this new one. I think that is certainly hurting the chances for James Gunn's DCU. Essentially everything DC has released since after *The Batman* has been met with middling reviews and complete flops at the box office, and so I am deeply concerned that the new Universe may be dead on arrival.

I think that putting Gunn at the helm is the best decision DC could have made because if anyone knows how to make a superhero movie, it is him. Having watched all of his Marvel and DC releases, I can safely say that every movie he makes is better than the last. With the quality of the Guardians of the Galaxy movies increasing with each one and *The Suicide Squad* being absolutely fantastic, I am 1000% certain that every project we get in the next few years from DC will be spectacular. But that quality may not matter if no one goes to see the movies. With the disappointments that have been very common

recently with DC, as well as the Superhero fatigue that has been plaguing the entire industry and the already stuffed release schedule, even great superhero movies may not draw in enough crowds to kickstart an entire DC universe on the big screen. Since many of DC's movies recently have ranged from pretty good like *Blue Beetle*, to mediocre-at-best like *Black Adam* and *The Flash*, people may just not be interested enough in seeing new DC movies to start watching them when *Superman: Legacy* releases on July 11th, 2025.

Part of the reason for box office disappointments coming blow after blow for both DC and Marvel is because, due to the amount of superhero movies coming out recently, people are losing interest in seeing each project in theaters. DC has a packed release schedule of movies and TV shows, so there may not be a large enough audience dedicated enough to watching everything they release.

There is one more issue that may hurt the DCU's chances. The franchise is starting out using a lot of their more obscure characters, and while I, as a DC megafan, find myself incredibly excited by that, they may not be using enough of their bigger-named heroes to capture public attention. For example, when I heard they were making a live action TV show about Booster Gold, I was incredibly excited, as I collected the entire Booster Gold & Blue Beetle miniseries, and got the Funko Pop figures of them, and ordered custom LEGO figures of them, but the problem is that I am betting that most of you reading this article have never heard of Booster Gold. Now I may very well be wrong in this, as before the MCU, Iron Man and Thor were relatively obscure characters, but the DCU is definitely taking a risk in headlining their

new universe. This is all without mentioning how the Writers Guild of America and SAG-AFTRA strikes are affecting the movies. Though, while I can only speculate based on very little information, I do not think the strikes will do terrible damage to the movies since negotiations reached a positive conclusion. According to James Gunn, *Superman: Legacy* is to begin shooting in January, which should leave them with plenty of time to perfect the movie. The script for *Superman: Legacy* was finished just before the strike began and so with the strike ending after a few months, I think that there is a very good chance the *Superman Legacy* will be able to release on time without any corners being cut.

The current slate for James Gunn's DCU goes as follows: *Creature Commandos* (TV show), *Superman: Legacy* (Movie), *Waller* (TV show), *The Authority* (Movie), *Lanterns* (TV show), *Paradise Lost* (TV show), *Batman: The Brave and The Bold* (Movie), *Booster Gold* (TV show), *Supergirl: Woman of Tomorrow* (Movie), and *Swamp Thing* (Movie). This is the first phase of the DCU, going under the heading of Gods and Monsters. As a DC comics fan, this is just about the most amazing thing that I have ever heard, and I am ridiculously excited. *Batman: The Brave and The Bold* is certainly what has me the most excited as it is set to introduce most of the Bat-Family, and I have waited for so long to see the full Bat-Family on the silver screen. (Personally I hope we get a lot of the Wayne Family Adventures dynamic in how they interact) *Supergirl* also has me very excited as it is based directly on the award winning *Supergirl* miniseries of the same name, and that was a fantastic comic miniseries written by my favorite comic writer, Tom King, who also wrote my all-time favorite run on Batman. *Swamp*

Thing is also a movie to certainly look forward to as it is being written by James Mangold, who many know for writing and directing the seminal Superhero film *Logan*, about the last days of Wolverine. Also the *Swamp Thing* movie will take on a gothic horror tone, which is what many of the best ever *Swamp Thing* comic runs have used, including the all-time classic run by Alan Moore. So overall, there is so much to look forward to in what is sure to be a run of incredible movies and shows. But only if audiences give it a chance and go to see the movies and shows, so the DCU can reach its full-potential.



Art Courtesy of Rachael Burke

New Additions to the Community

By: Sabrina Salgado and Janeale Smith
Staff Writers



Mr. John Stone
Theology

Mr. Stone, an MC Alum, enjoys being a teacher here just as much as he enjoyed being a student. He graduated from MC in 2018 and is a new member of the theology department.

When asked why he likes teaching theology, he said:

"I love teaching theology! The study of theology is interesting because it's highly personal and it's different for everyone depending on one's own approach to God, religion, faith, and spirituality. It's important in the sense that it allows one to enter more deeply into some of the biggest mysteries in life, such as one's purpose or how we should interact with others."

He was also asked what he likes most about the MC community, in which he said:

"The sense of care that permeates the MC community is probably what I value most in it. There's an attitude here that every individual, student, faculty, and staff, is important and has worth; that's not something that most other schools have." He added, "It's a very close-knit and supportive school."

Ms. Shadi Lopez:
Spanish



Mr. Lucas Coffey
Theology

When asked what he likes about teaching theology, he said:

"Teaching freshmen theology has been a good experience for me. Learning more about my students through our discussions is easily my favorite part of the day." He added, "Theology classes are a good opportunity for students to learn about their faith or the faith of others. Whether you are a religious person or not, there is still value in learning about belief systems. We get to talk about happiness and what makes a good life in addition to Christian tradition and scripture."

When asked what he liked about the MC community he said:

"Malden Catholic feels like a very vibrant community," He expressed. "The community has been very friendly to me. Teachers, students, administrators, and staff have all made the time to welcome new community members and make them feel at home here."



Mr. Joe Gerhardt
Computer Science

Mr. Gerhardt finds teaching here at MC enjoyable. He says he enjoys coming to school and teaching and working with his colleagues.

"It's really different since it's so far from home. I enjoy how much it feels like a family here...It's very similar to how it was back home."

Regarding computer science, he said, "It's important to know about the things you use everyday. Being taught about computers and how they work is the same thing as being taught about light bulbs and Thomas Edison. The biggest thing I'm interested in is the physical makeup of technology. I'm more interested in that side of it than the math side."



Ms. Carla Maniscalco-Giovinco
Chior/Italian

Ms. Maniscalco-Giovinco says, "If I'm not having fun, I doubt my students are."

When asked why she thinks chior and Italian are important, she said:

"It's about communication. I think that music can unite people across the world and create lasting friendships. It is possible to not speak the same language and still understand each other through music. As for Italian, learning another language increases your ability to communicate and have meaningful exchanges with other people in other places who have exciting things to share with you."

She says the MC community is caring, supportive, and encouraging.

Ms. Lopez not only teaches Spanish at MC, but she also runs the Spanish Club.

When asked about her time at MC, she said:

"I have truly enjoyed my time at MC so far. This community is nothing but supportive and a great environment to be a part of."

When asked why she thinks people should learn Spanish, she said:

"By learning another language like Spanish, students get the opportunity to be able to communicate to another group of people. Not only are they able to communicate with Spanish speakers, but they are also able to learn about different cultures and ways of life."

The Last of Us Review

By: **Jacqueline Smiles Rodriguez**
Editor

Imagine current-day Boston with buildings collapsed on each other, streets crumbling, car collisions, swan boats broken down, and no signs of life besides the ivy draped over buildings, grass, and the thing making that clicking sound, in one of many abandoned buildings... In June of 2013, the hit post-apocalyptic game *The Last of Us* was released; today there is still a large and committed fanbase. Over 37 million copies have been sold worldwide as of December 2022. HBO's *The Last of Us*, which came out in January of 2023, is the second most nominated show. HBO had the opportunity to adapt this incredible game into a show. A touching story of a man named Joel who is tasked with taking care of 14-year-old Ellie in a post-apocalyptic United States who is infected with "cordyceps", a fungus that infects people turning them into zombie-like creatures. I do think I have experienced both forms of this story strangely, as I watched the episode of the show after I completed a chapter of *The Last of Us Part 1*. I didn't have access to a PlayStation so I only had previous experience with *The Last of Us* before simultaneously playing the game and watching the show, by watching walkthroughs. Games and shows are my two favorite ways to obtain media, and I believe that both were done very well in their respective ways. Like many people, I have had high expectations for the show, after all the game won the Best Animated Video Award in 2014, and both the actors of Ellie and Joel, Ashley Johnson and Troy Baker, had won Best Performer from the BAFTA (British Academy Games Academy of Film and Television Arts) Game Awards. It is not fair to completely compare the two versions of this story because the game was made a decade ago, the pacing is different, and the show was able to make changes already based on years of feedback from the game.

The biggest surprise I have with the show is how well the characters are portrayed. I would even argue that they are better portrayed in the show, where the viewer gets to connect with the characters more personally since they get a constant cinematic experience. A player gets shorter dialogue and fewer cinematic scenes where the characters are acting naturally. A very important component of the show is how faithful the story is to the source material, which I believe can be thanks to the game's creative director, Neil Druckman, who had the opportunity to direct the show. I do not think the show would have the same impact that it had if it had not been created by someone who loved this story. Because Neil Druckman has had over a decade's worth of feedback from *The Last of Us*, as one of the main writers he portrayed this story that honors the original game source.

What connects the player to the game is not the beautiful gameplay, the interactive maps, beautiful scenes, but the relationships. While in the game the player's perspective is mostly on Ellie and Joel, the show allows for other characters to be more deeply explored. A controversial topic when the show first came out was how the actor for Ellie,

Bella Ramsey, was not cast well because she does not look like Ellie. I do not think Ellie's appearance is relevant to the story considering her face model was reflected based on Ashley Johnson's personality, according to Niel Druckman. I do think that the casting was very well done. Especially considering they were tasked with recreating the feeling that was already created by the game characters. Both Ellie and Joel were presented a bit differently, and Ellie's personality did change in the show. However, I do think that these changes have made it more entertaining than it could've been if she had been taken directly from the game. The acting made me experience the same emotions I felt the first time I played *The Last of Us Part 1*. Considering that HBO's *The Last of Us* has received 24 Emmy nominations, they have added a special element to this story that surpasses many failed game-to-show adaptations.

Instead of scaring the player with various creatures, the show shows how terrified each person is and how approaching danger is a complete last resort for them. Clearly, unlike in the game where you can repeat a level until you pass it, the characters don't get multiple lives. A direct translation of the game into a show would be an alright show because of how wonderful the game is, but it wouldn't take advantage of the amazing opportunity one would have to create a show out of the game. The changes made for the show were in the show's best interests and that will help the viewer connect with the characters. This is important since the viewer can't play as the character, they are not able to stand in their shoes as one who plays the game can. Even simple things such as showing how even the sound of reloading a gun is dangerous, are really. So, minimizing danger in the show makes this story seem much more realistic since it's common to see video game characters complete the impossible unscathed. However, watching two people go through a series of high-risk events would come off as very unbelievable.

The positive feedback of the show is very exciting for fans of the game because it can introduce people who do not play games to the franchise and vice versa. The possibility of introducing the franchise

to those who do not play video games and vice versa makes this particularly interesting for *The Last of Us* fans coming from either media and currently this franchise is in a great place. The show, ending the same as the game, leaves the viewer craving more content, and experiencing both mediums gives the viewer a new perspective on the story. Especially since there's going to be a difference between playing through an interactive game compared to being presented with a cinematic show. Almost ten years later *The Last of Us Part 1* PC version was released to Steam. This allows for many more people without access to a PlayStation console to enjoy the game. *The Last of Us Part 1* is a remake of *The Last of Us*, introducing better lighting, enhanced combat, and beautiful visuals. There is even a Halloween Horror's night attraction in Orlando, and while I'm sure this was in the works for a while I can't help but feel that interest has now been at its peak because of the show.

Overall, considering the high expectations of the show from the game, HBO's *The Last of Us* stays true to the story and has made great creative changes to make the story flow better in its cinematic format. It is amazing how well this story has been presented in both forms of media, I do think that one would prefer whatever form of media they prefer better. I think both execute the story well and I do not have a preference as they both gave me unique and entertaining experiences with the character's interactions, storyline, and setting. I am looking forward to how the second season will play out. Especially because the second game is quite controversial...



Art by Kendall Bolloise & Marjory Lever

Guardians of the Galaxy Review

By: Michael Casey
Staff Writer

"We were gone for quite a while. But no matter what happens next, the galaxy still needs its Guardians." -Star-Lord

The Guardians Of The Galaxy are back for one last ride! After an exactly six year wait since the release of Vol. 2, the long-awaited trilogy's end is finally here, and it may just be the best one yet! (Which is a very high bar to clear.) And so without further adieu, this is the completely spoiler-free review of James Gunn's Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3. What needs to be said first off is that the special effects for this movie are incredible, even with there being so much of it. Marvel's CGI of recent years has certainly been rough, but it is clear that just about all of the special effects budget for Marvel phases 4 and 5 all went into this movie. All the characters, environments and action look incredible. With a fan score of 94% this movie is near-universally agreed on as a spectacle to watch, it even beats out the previous two installments respectable scores of 92%(Guardians Of The Galaxy) and 87% (Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 2.) This movie is a farewell to this era of the Guardians and sends them off with so much love in a great story that develops the characters and shows them all at their best. Even with the large cast of main characters, the movie has enough time to highlight and develop each one of them. No one feels left out. This movie

has one of Marvel's best villains ever in the High-Evolutionary. Now unlike some of Marvel's other best villains such as Vulture, Killmonger, and Thanos, the High-Evolutionary does not go the route of a more sympathetic villain who challenges the ideals of the heroes. The High-Evolutionary, as played by Chuckwudi Iwuji, is pure evil, a monster through and through. It is not because of his origin that makes him a special villain. It is entirely

this movie is not a fun romp coming at you with 100 jokes a minute, but some of what happens has very morose underlying tones. The past of a certain character is revealed to be deeply tragic, and that graveness continues to many points throughout the movie. Though despite that, the movie is able to balance out that darkness with the comedy incredibly well. Every joke lands and fits the tone. Even when the tone seems exceedingly grim,

Drax's misunderstandings and Star-Lord's 80s references never feel out of place. And in terms of comedy, get excited because Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3 contains the Marvel Cinematic Universe's first f-bomb. So you'll be laughing your ass off no matter what. Many people may be worried about the fact that this movie is trying to balance very melancholy tones with so much comedy, as Thor: Love and Thunder attempted to do the same and fell flat, but Guardians does it perfectly. The movie goes at a mile a minute, but it does not feel rushed at all. Every event moves fast and yet still leaves ample time for amazing action, stunning visuals, hilarious jokes, and



Art by Elicia Perez

because of how he is played. Iwuji plays him with a charisma and manic energy that makes him by far the Guardians best villain. I do not say the sentence lightly when I say that many parallels can be drawn between the High-Evolutionary here and Heath Ledger's Joker. I consider Heath Ledger's Joker to be the best acted role of all time in the best movie ever made, so it is incredibly high praise that I say there are similarities between them, and not just in the manic and seemingly random at times energy. This movie is assuredly the darkest movie of the Guardians trilogy. Now that is not to say

meaningful character development. The best action scene of the movie is undoubtedly the hallway fight, which I won't say too much about to avoid spoilers, but it gives Daredevil a run for his money. Overall this is one of the best movies that I have ever seen. In fact, I would say Guardians Of The Galaxy Vol. 3 is the best movie in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, beating out Captain America: The Winter Soldier. It is a joy to watch and I highly recommend it. 5 stars.

Heartstopper Review

By: Devyn DiMarco
Staff Writer

The sheer importance of representation in this day and age is the main reason why *Heartstopper* is a must-watch show. The reviews on this show have been filled with gratitude aimed at the creators for amazing and age-appropriate portrayals of not just Nick and Charlie's relatable love story, but also for the representation of queer people of color, asexual and aromantic fellows, questioning and nonquestioning bisexuals, and so many more.

But, the best thing about this show is that it's not just about the queer community. As the show goes on, it reveals a lot about mental health

issues, unsupportive or neglectful parents, and even reflects how this can affect others in the family unit without taking focus off of the sick child. It's also significant that the characters working through these issues are children. Even with their focus on serious topics, they still maintain a level of secondhand embarrassment that only teens can pull off.

The best thing about this show and the main reason why it is so popular is that the young characters were actually played by actors young enough to understand them, and they connected close enough to understand these issues and to make the story relatable. These are queer actors playing queer teens and even though it is the least we ask of queer shows, this desire for representa-

tion is rarely met. But they don't just do the bare minimum, they go above and beyond to make this a story that even those outside of the LGBTQ+ community can enjoy, and for those picky about shows not being close enough to the books... you don't have to worry because half of these scenes are pulled directly from the graphic novels.

All this and more is why *Heartstopper* is an amazing show. Everything the queer community has wanted for a show is here. The romance, the experiences, the friendships, and the idea that everyone is valid and that nothing going on in the world should invalidate that fact. Overall, I give *Heartstopper* a 10/10, for breaking my heart and truly speaking to the phrase "we are here, we are queer, and we are not going anywhere."

New Music Recap: Olivia Rodrigo and Mitski

By: Sabrina Salgado
Staff Writer

Every Friday, loads of new music is released. Since the start of school, we've had new music from the likes of Doja Cat, Olivia Rodrigo, and many others. Let's look back on some recent fan-favorite releases.

In 2021, Olivia Rodrigo released one of the most streamed albums of the 2020's, and she's done it again. On June 26th, 2023, Rodrigo announced she was releasing her second studio album, *GUTS*. The main single, "Vampire", released shortly afterwards on June 30th. A little over two months later, the album dropped on September 8th. The album debuted at #1 on the Billboard 200, selling more than three-hundred-thousand units in its first week. *GUTS* has twelve tracks, the most popular ones being "get him back!" and "bad idea, right?." By just September 15th, the forty-minute album had already amassed over seven-hundred-million streams on Spotify.

Rodrigo already has a world tour planned for the album, scheduled to start in February of 2023. She has more than 70 shows for the tour, and guests like PinkPantheSS and The Breeders will be joining her as opening acts.

Whether you like *GUTS* or not, it's undeniable that this album is a milestone for both Rodrigo and the music industry as a whole.

On July 23, 2023, Mitski announced the title of her latest album *The Land Is Inhospitable and So Are We*. Then, on July 26, she released the lead single "Bug Like an Angel", which was fol-

lowed by ten other songs in the following months. The eleventh song in the album, "I Love Me After You", was released on September 15. Her previous album, *Laurel Hell*, had been released in 2022, so a new album, barely a year later, was a surprise, but

a celebration among fans- especially considering how she had just been considering retiring from the singing industry. *The Land Is Inhospitable and So Are We* landed as high as #2 on the US Top Alternative Albums list.



Art by Helen Nguyen

Have a Great Christmas Break and a
Happy Holiday!

Want to write, draw,
or take photographs
for the Crystal 99?
See Editors-in-Chief Emerson
Tully and Katelyn Cirame
or moderator Mr. Cleary in
Rm. 102 to get involved.

Season Recap: Spring Flingin'

By: Emerson Tully
Editor-In-Chief

The spring sports season wrapped up agreeably in early June, with many good games and good efforts from the Lancers. Although not all games can end with a win, it's the attitude and the dedication of the team that truly makes the season a memorable one.

The Malden Catholic girls' lacrosse team had a fair season, ending with an overall record of 6-12. The girls put up a good fight the whole season with strong efforts in their games against Dracut and Ursuline. Tess Ahern '24 expresses her excitement for the upcoming season with the progress that has been made, from last year. "The Lancers have made strong efforts during the preseason and I am excited to see the improvements from both the defensive and offensive lines." Alongside the girls, the Boys Lacrosse had an equitable season, holding a record of 2-14. Vigorous attempts were made by the Lancers, putting their all into each and every game.

The Girl's Tennis team dominated the season with excellent efforts in their performances, despite having a record of 5-10 overall. Jessica Damerjan '24 highlights the Lancers' tough, well-fought match against Fontbonne. "The environment of the match was truly exhilarating. It was a really close win that resulted in a three-hour set, but it was worth it in the end because the Lancers got the dub!" It is also important to highlight the Boys Varsity Tennis Team. Although having a record of 1-16, they had fair efforts at striking back in every match they faced. Some honorable highlights are Andrew Webb '23 and Rylan Scaglione '23, both dedicated players who contributed to the team's success.

Varsity Girls and Boys Outdoor Track and Field condition themselves consistently to be in the best shape possible to run their races and compete in their events. Although only participating in four meetings in the 2023 season, the Girls Track team evened out the playing field, holding a record of 2-2. Patricia Stevens, '24 expresses her excitement for this spring season: "The environment of the team is like no other. My favorite memory from last season was the long bus rides filled with good conversation and good people. That's what really makes it fun. I'm looking forward to that environment this year as well."

Varsity softball is definitely a sport to highlight. The top performances of that team were unmatched last spring, with the squad amassing a record of 10-11. Starting off the season strong with an exceptional home win against NDA, it was clear that the Lancers were in for a season of success.

Boys Varsity Baseball had another strong showing with an ending record of 4-16. Although the Varsity Baseball team's record has been better in previous years, the boys have been working hard in preparation for what has to come this season. Senior Charlie Lemeuix emphasizes the hard work of the boys throughout the previous season, as well as the expectation that has been set for this year. "The boys have been working hard in order to have the skills to play to the best of our ability this season. With this being my senior season, I'm hoping to win as many games as possible and have a clean



Boys Varsity Rugby playing against Blue Hills High School during a spring season game.

Photo Courtesy of Malden Catholic

sweep to make it to the playoffs."

Malden Catholic Girls Varsity Golf has really made a name for themselves these past few years. Starting up in 2022, there wasn't too much interest. However, now the girls are proving that this is a team to beat. MK Zablocki expresses the environment of the team in a positive manner. "I have high hopes this season for us to make the playoffs, especially with the new additional experienced first-year students joining the team!" With an ending record of 4-7 for the 2023 season, the girls are eager to get back on the course to prove their meant to

be there.

The Varsity Rugby team is working progress, building back the program from the destruction of Covid. However, there are clear efforts in the team's progress from previous seasons. Last spring, the Lancers had a tough schedule against some of the top teams in the state. However, they put their best efforts forth and made themselves well known. There were a lot of accomplishments for this team last season, resulting in most of the senior members committing to college for rugby.



Girls Cross-Country seniors (L-R) Mariana Hincapie, Luna Murray, Grace Ryan, and Ava Visconti pose with their coaches on senior night.

Photo Courtesy of Malden Catholic

Congratulations to our Girls Cross Country Team for placing second at CCLM with a score of 66. Leading the way was Sophomore Mia Waldrof taking 1st with a time of 20:22. Senior Captain Luna Murray placed in the second scoring position for MC followed by Senior Grace Ryan, Sophomore Bayley Koehn, and Senior Captain Ava Visconti. MC had three All Stars: Mia Waldron, Luna Murray, and Grace Ryan!

Boys Golf Swings into Season

By: Haley Talbot
Editor

The Malden Catholic boys' golf team has taken quite a swing into the season. The golfers had a great opening to the season with a win against St. Mary's, with a score of 179-187. Captains Jaxon Pace '24 and Drew Herbert '24 have done an excellent job leading the team. The boys have maintained high energy even after a few losses. Over the course of the season, the Lancers worked hard toward their season goals of keeping the scores low enough to make it to the playoffs. "Being with the guys and having fun on the course is what keeps our motivation going," says Pace when asked about the Lancers strategy for the season. The team as a whole showed solid effort out on the course, and they always strived for improvement.

The boys had very strong matches against Catholic Memorial and BC High; the scores were very close. Sophomore Jack Sweeny in particular made a strong start to the season. His performance has seen significant improvement since last year.



Boys Varsity Golf seniors pose for a photo.

The boys are looking forward to having close scores for the rest of the season. Senior Daniel Shea says that the season's been going reasonably well, but he thinks that with all the dedication and com-

mitment, the boys will continue to improve as a team. "I am hoping to have a strong senior year by achieving some low scores to help the team win," says Shea. Major improvements have been made this year, which is great for the golfers. "The scores

have been much lower this year compared to last year," according to Drew Herbert '24. As the seniors were completing their last year at MC, one of the captains has left behind some important and meaningful advice. "Just

keep the team rolling; we have something special that the older guys and myself have started. This program has great potential to be something great in the near future. Keep playing this game because it will always be with you. Most importantly, keep the wrench legacy going," says Pace. Each member of the team seems to have a great bond with each other, which is what's keeping them all going.

Their hard work and sportsmanship reflect how great they work as a team. As the end of the season is near, Pace says,

"We are all buckled down for the ride, and we are ready to do well." All of the high energy from the boys shows they're ready to carry their improvements into the future.

Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

Lancers Volleyball Spikes Out

By: Katelyn Cirame
Editor-In-Chief

The 2023-2024 fall season got Malden Catholic sports off to an amazing start. One particular team displayed tremendous amounts of zeal for their sport. The Malden Catholic girls varsity volleyball team this season learned to "bend, not break". The saying "bend, not break" shows that the girls choose to persevere through tough challenges, and instead of giving up when they encountered setbacks, they continued to try. With this motive, the team has shown an amazing sense of community and compassion for their sport. The varsity volleyball squad has made significant progress and is continuing to become a better team.

In the summer, the girls worked on the foundations of the team and worked to improve their skills so that, in the fall, they could focus on working as a team and fitting together. The girls clearly demonstrated their saying "bend, not break" in their game against St. Mary's High School. The game at St. Mary's on 9/28 was a tough game for the Lancers. At the start of the game, they were down by two sets, close to their breaking point. However, the girls came back and won the last three sets against the Spartans. This reverse sweep gave the team confidence for the rest of the season.

The Lancers also had some amazing games against Notre Dame Academy of Hingham and Ursuline Academy. NDA is widely known to be incredibly competitive in nearly every varsity

sport. In previous years of Cougars versus Lancers volleyball matches, the Cougars usually not only won the match, but often beat MC in three sets. Last year, when the girls played NDA, they fought hard to almost almost beat them for one set, bringing it into extra time. This year, when the team played NDA, they managed to take down the Cougars in the second set of the game. This was the first time in program history that the Lancers have ever taken a set from NDA. This is truly displaying the team's progress and their tenacity and fight.

Senior captain Annie Harrington says, "We work amazingly as a team and are really coming together this year." The girls also took a set from Ursuline Academy, which was also the first time in program history. The team also kicked off the season with an amazing game against Fontbonne Academy. They won the game 3-1, bringing the team to their first victory of the season. Senior captain Jaelyn Walsh said, "Everyone played great that game, and it was an amazing start to the season."

Despite losing some seniors last season, the Malden Catholic girls varsity volleyball team continued their good work. "We definitely miss last year's seniors, but we have had key players set up." Coach Bailey Chiccuarelli "Bella Gillis has taken over as libero and has done a great job; Eva Perhanidis and Jaelyn Walsh have both stepped up as outside hitters." Like Coach Chiccuarelli says, Walsh has definitely stepped up this year and is there for her team. This year, Walsh

hit the milestone of 100 aces in her high school career. "Jaelyn is the leader of the team and has a lot of power at the net. She gets a lot of aces and is an amazing server." Harrington states.

A player both Coach and Harrington state as an outstanding player is senior Ava Green. Green is a transfer from Mystic Valley and is playing her first season this year. "Ava Green has had a standout season, being a presence at the net. She is constantly hitting and getting blocks every game," expresses Coach Chiccuarelli. Second-year varsity player Molly Warner has also had an amazing season so far. Coach says, "Molly is a presence at the net every game and is getting constant blocks." Eva Perhanidis is also acknowledged as a leader on the team, despite not having the official captain position. "Eva is very good at picking shots and finding open spots on the court. She is an amazing outsider," exclaimed Harrington. Finally, captain Annie Harrington herself has been the rock of the team, according to Coach Chiccuarelli. Chiccuarelli says, "She has yet to come out of the game, providing the team with great sets and solid defense, always being able to read the other teams' hitters." This year, Harrington has officially passed graduate player Jillian Perry for most digs in program history. With the team's strong record, it is clear that the girls embodied their theme of the year: "bend, not break" All Malden Catholic teams should consider following in the girls varsity volleyball team's footsteps.

Diving into the 2023 Swim Season

By: **Aurora Paige**
Staff Writer

This year, the Malden Catholic girl's swim team was definitely the team to beat! For the first time in Malden Catholic girl's swim history, the team started the season with two incredible wins. The Lancers swam against some very challenging teams including Notre Dame Academy and Ursuline Academy. Every member of the squad worked their hardest to have a fantastic 23-24 season. In the girl's first meet against NDA, the Lancers won 90-80. Freshman Anna White placed first in the 500 free, gaining six points for Malden Catholic. Freshman Julia Lembo also gained six points for the girls for her win in the 100-meter butterfly. The team's 200 medley and 400 free also placed first, gaining more points for the lancers. All the points scored brought the girls to their win against NDA and gave them a huge sense of confidence for the rest of the season.

After the meet against NDA, the girls went up against Ursuline Academy. Ursuline is a school that has never lost to the Malden Catholic girl's swim team. That statement was changed when the girls defeated the undefeated Ursuline. The Lancers beat the Bears 89-81.

Eight different team members qualified for states and sectionals. Out of these, many qualified for the 200 medley, the 200 free relay, and the 400 free relay. Senior Amira Aboudou placed in the 200 medley, which consists of 200 meters of each stroke, and the 400 free relay. Senior Alyia Aboudou also has made the cut for the 200 free relay along with Junior Leyna Nguyen and Sophomore Paige Kelley. Impressively, Lembo made state and sectional cuts for all of her races including her 100 fly, 200 IM, 200 medley, and 400 free. Taking into account that Lembo is only a freshman in high school it is clear to say that she will accomplish a lot in her career. Senior captain Thea Sanzone also had many state and sectional qualifiers including

the 100 breaststroke, 200 free, and the 200 medley.

The girls should all be very proud of their performances, having amazing victories under their belt this season. "We have all been working so hard this year and have made so much progress, both the new swimmers and the veteran members," says Sanzone in relation to the progress the team has made this year. The effort the team has been putting in has clearly paid off and there is much anticipation for the future.

The team's record was just a prelude to an outstanding performance at states. Julia Lembo and Thea Sanzone placed 4th in the 200 IM and 100 breaststroke, respectively, with Sanzone also placing a second in the 100m breaststroke. The Lancer medley was also impressive, with Nguyen, Aboudou, Lembo, and Sanzone placing second in the 200 medley. The most impressive achievement among all of these excellent swimmers belongs to Lembo however, who, as a freshman, was the state champion in the 100m butterfly.

The Inside "Scoop" on Field Hockey

By: **Madeline Shipman**
Staff Writer

Crowds of murmuring students, encouraging teachers, and proud parents take their seats, a stick noisily collides with a hockey ball, signaling to the audience that the game had finally begun. This season of girl's field hockey has been an accomplished one, and there is overtly great potential in these talented and driven girls.

Rob Viola, the girl's field hockey coach here at Malden Catholic, is a very experienced man who has been coaching field hockey for 16 years—his daughter Christine assists him in his coaching duties. The duo has been working together for eight years now. In addition, the JV team also has hardworking coaches Ms. Sarah Buckley and Ashiley Dunn who are very well appreciated by not only the girls, but Rob as well. As stated by him, "without them, we would have not had so much success this season!"

Upon being asked midway through the season who had stood out most so far, Coach Viola responded with, "We have a great collection of

players. We have lots of players from the ice Hockey team. It is hard to pick out 1 or 2 stand outs as we have so many talented players," then followed with a list of girls who truly impressed him in the past seasons. "We have Juniors Alyssa Jankowski, Avi Panacopoulos and Madison Perry who have over 20 goals combined between them so far this

season in them and their well honed abilities.

Tryouts, they went fairly well. 44 players attended, with 22 ending up in varsity and the other half in JV. They held sessions for a duration of four days to be sure that the lineup of the teams was perfectly balanced and well-chosen, so that no girl would end up on the team that wasn't right for her.

Asked about his hopes for the future of Malden Catholic's field hockey teams, Coach Viola responded with a positive, "our hope for next year is to attract more and more players and create a Freshmen team. This would allow us to have a feeder system as many of the public High schools have. I believe once kids try field hockey, they quickly fall in love with it!" I'm sure the majority would agree with him on that notion, as it is always a nice thing for young people to discover something new that they could potentially find passion in. Malden Catholic's



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

Above is pictured junior Madison Perry attacking the ball during the Varsity Field Hockey game against Bishop Fenwick.

season alone! We have 9 seniors, 7 Juniors, 3 sophomores and 3 Freshmen on the Varsity team." It is safe to gather from the words of Coach Viola that he is quite proud of his girls and sees great poten-

community hopes that the girl's field hockey teams will retain their success in the seasons to come and serve to strengthen even more the pride of this wonderful school.

Girls Soccer Kick Into the Season

By: **Ashlyn Stillman**
Staff Writer

As the new school year began and fall arrived, the soccer ball dropped onto the field and the girls team came together. This season, the team dealt with many early injuries but as Coach Colombo said, this allowed for players to step into new roles. Scorewise, in their first game against Fontbonne Academy on September 5, the soccer team had a tie score of 1-1 with a goal from freshman Ari Cieri. Additionally, they had a 3-2 win against Mystic Valley on September 12, with goals from Cieri, senior Mackenzie Brady, and junior Grace Frontiero, as well as an assist from freshman Shannon Hounsell! Coach Colombo states that this was one of the most memorable games for the team this season, as all three goals came from different players to show the different ways there are to score in a game.

Despite some challenges, Coach Colombo also says that one of the standout players this season were sophomore goalkeeper Gabi Bethlenny, as he praised her shot-stopping and ability to stop breakaways. Frontiero, senior Tricia Stevens, sophomore Mia Armit, and junior Grace Lawlor were crucial on defense. In the midfield, junior McKenzi Manchester and senior Vicki Charry worked together distribute the ball.

Coach Colombo stated that junior Sofia Dowd became the most prominent goal-scoring threat, and credits this to her physicality and pace. Cieri also contributed greatly and was one of their leading goal scorers.

Overall, Coach Colombo says that everything this season was a team effort, as everyone on the roster made significant contributions. The team worked hard ever since the summer, having had many conditioning sessions and preseason matches. Captains

Charry, Frontiero, and Stevens stepped up as leaders and established a culture with the qualities of hard work, collaboration, and responsibility. The team bonded over things such as Tie Dye Night. Coach Colombo says that this helped the team to be cohesive and resilient through all the early injuries. The resiliency of this season led to Coach Colombo describing the team as “emergent”

Another highlight for the team was a great team performance in their 0-0 Blackout Match draw against Ursuline Academy. Coach Colombo says that this game was especially important, as the team approached the game together and were in control during the entirety of the game. One chant that the team used to motivate each other this season was “STEP TO”. This phrase encourages the team to be aggressive and active and be

in control of the match. As the Girl’s Soccer team faced challenges this season with early season injuries, all the players on the roster had stepped up into new roles, and come together as a cohesive group. Coach Colombo hopes that this growth continues into the future and that each player continues to grow as a teammate and on the field. With their emergent mindset and prominent growth, the team will continue to grow in many qualities in future seasons. Coach Colombo hopes that for the Girl’s Soccer Team, their playing identity can be more so established, and the team can continue to grow. The team hopes to keep progressing and working together to win matches. Their emergent season has helped them establish a culture of cohesion and personal responsibility, which will allow them to continue toward future success!



Photo courtesy of Malden Catholic

Grace Lawlor '25 competing against Notre Dame Academy in a match.

Boys Soccer: Ready to Rumble

By: **Shelby Connors**
Staff Writer

The Malden Catholic boys’ varsity soccer team started their fall season on a good note with two fantastic wins against Greater Lawrence Tech and Bishop Fenwick. Despite losing to Catholic Conference powerhouses such as St. John’s Prep, Boston College High School, and Xaverian High School, the boys still gave it their all and gave these teams a run for their money. The determination of each player to contribute whatever they can to the team remained consistent, regardless of whether they were playing a more challenging team or one they felt confident they can beat.

Even though the team dynamic necessarily shifted due to the loss of many talented seniors and players, the overall ability of the team remained intact, with the Lancers being more determined than ever. The loss of these players did not

deter the Lancers from putting in extra effort during practice and games in order to maintain a similar level of skill as last season’s team. The team’s attitude and mentality when facing opponents remain steady with senior Nain Escobar stating that they go into each game with a mindset of, “Just do your best, give your all, and see what happens during the game. Sure you might make mistakes, but just try to recover and do your job.”

Even with some injuries setting the Lancers back, the team remained strong with an outstanding performance against Greater Lawrence Tech, beating the team with an impressive score of 4-2 on September 28. As the top goal scorer for the team, senior captain Esteban Arbelaez had an exceptional performance this season, with the Greater Lawrence Tech game adding to his total number of goals. The Lancers’ 3-0 win against Bishop Fenwick also displayed the skill level and talent of the team, with two goals from Esteban Arbelaez and

an additional goal from junior Oisin Casey. These swift victories solidified the team’s confidence and brought them one step closer to obtaining a play-off spot.

As the season progressed, they pulled out impressive wins in their second time facing familiar opponents. They defeated Bishop Fenwick once again, this time by a score of 2-1. They also picked up a second victory against Greater Lawrence Tech, this time a decisive 6-2 blowout. Though they did suffer defeats against Catholic Conference powerhouses St. John’s Shrewsbury and Boston College High School, they managed to pull out crucial ties against conference rivals Catholic Memorial and Xaverian, both with scores of 1-1. Add in a 3-1 defeat of Mystic Valley Regional, and the team has many moments to be proud of this season.

Lancer Football Notches Big Wins

By: Katelyn Cirame
Editor-In-Chief

Despite a rough patch last season, the Malden Catholic boys varsity football team is flooded with great talent this season. The team has played many amazing games, including a home game against North Quincy High School and an away game against Concord Carlisle High School.

The boys started their season with a great game against Windman High School in New Hampshire. Windman is not a part of the MIAA roster, but the game was great practice for the Lancers. The game against the Panthers was a well played game for MC, with the final score being 19-20 in Whitman's favor. Although the boys lost the game, they played well. Windman is a Division I school, which displays how hard the Lancers are working against their competition.

The first win of the season for the Lancers was during the annual Blackout game for childhood cancer against North Quincy High School. This came despite North Quincy ranking 16th in Division II, while Malden Catholic was ranked 9th in Division IV. This win was a clear display of the hard work that the players contribute at practices and during games. Junior Ben Howard had a defensive touchdown and junior Jaiden Williams added two rushing touchdowns. After this game, Howard and Williams made the *Boston Herald's* Stars of the Week, an honor both had received previously. The boys didn't even give North Quincy a chance, beating them 20-0.

The second win of the season came immediately after with a win against Concord Carlisle High School. Concord Carlisle ranks 12th in Division II, which means that this was another great "underdog" win for the Lancers. During the away game against Concord Carlisle, the team displayed the initials "MJ" on their helmets in honor of Coach Jones. The final score of the Concord Carlisle game was 28-7.

Though they lost some tough games against Catholic Conference juggernauts like Saint John's Prep, BC High, Xaverian, and Catholic Memorial, the Lancers did notch two more impressive wins. They defeated Bishop Fenwick's Crusaders by one score in a 21-14 win on November 9. Even more impressively, they beat Reading Memorial by a blowout score of 42-14. With these wins under their belt, this Lancer team can be proud to have one of their strongest showings in recent years and hold great hopes for the program's future.

In the Next Issue:

- Winter Sports
- New Teachers, Pt. 2
- Introducing Father Dave Campo
- Christmas Concert

Pick up a copy soon after Christmas Break!



Photos courtesy of Malden Catholic

(Top to Bottom) In the first photo, the Lancers huddle with Coach Joe Gaff after the game. In the second, junior RB Jaiden Williams overpowers multiple defenders to gain extra yardage on a run play. In the third, junior Ben Howard signals the thumbs up to the sideline. In the fourth, junior captain George Rogers throws a pass.