

FOCUS ON 14

The monthly newsletter of Region 14 Schools
April 2025



TWO MAKE NHS HISTORY WITH YALE UNIVERSITY ACCEPTANCES

The Nonnewaug High School Class of 2025 has some exceptional characteristics. For starters, three sets of twins are in the top 10% of the class. But perhaps the most exceptional thing about the Class of 2025 might be that not one, but two students have been accepted to Yale University this year.

Valedictorian Gavin Sandor and Andrew Grivner received the news of their acceptances in March. Sandor has already accepted his spot. He plans to study mechanical engineering and economics. Grivner was accepted into Yale's ROTC program and has not yet decided as he weighs his other significant acceptances from the Air Force Academy, the US Coast Guard, and a full ROTC scholarship to RIT.

Over the years, several Nonnewaug High School students have gone on to the Ivy League for higher education, including Cornell, Brown, and Columbia. Yale University has not accepted any Nonnewaug High School students, at least in the past several decades, until now. Two acceptances in the same year make this a monumental accomplishment for both the students and the school district.

"It's great recognition of how tremendous these students are," said Chris Maclean, Director of School Counseling at Nonnewaug. "It's not typical for us to have two students from the same class be accepted at an elite institution. One acceptance to Yale is amazing. Two is just double amazing. Maclean added that it's significant that Yale recognizes the quality of these two students as well as the quality of the education they received here at Nonnewaug. "It's a feel-good for Gavin and Andrew. But it also corroborates that we are doing a lot of good things here, seeing our curriculum and program offerings as being preparatory for an elite college like Yale."

For Sandor, there was a level of "why not" when he decided to apply to Yale. "My stats were around their averages, I was confident in my extracurriculars, and I said to myself if I have a chance, why not take it," he said. "I would rather live with a decision than wonder what if I had applied to Yale. I figured I had about a 1% chance of getting accepted." Opening the email decision while sitting in the parking lot after work, Sandor recalls, "felt like one final victory in high school that opened up a lot of opportunities for me. I am happy to have this opportunity and excited for what the future holds."

Grivner spent the past two years pursuing different opportunities to serve in the United States military and applied to Yale at the suggestion of a local detachment commander. "When I applied, I thought that I did not have any chance of getting into Yale, and I was very surprised when I opened the portal to see a congratulations," Grivner said.



Grivner said that he realized after his acceptance that Yale not only wants 'perfect scholars,' but is building a class of people who have unique abilities and talents that can improve the class overall in multiple ways besides solely academically. In my case, I might not have been the average Yale student in terms of academics, but I believe the admissions committee may have looked at my service to the community and country as something that they wanted to include in the Class of 2029."

Both Sandor and Grivner are humbled by their acceptance and feel honored to be the first NHS acceptances, knowing that their paths, like the paths of their fellow students, are not necessarily dictated by the school they attend.

"What is important is that the school matches who they are, and getting into an Ivy League doesn't guarantee anyone future success," Grivner said.

It's a fun fact, and it's cool to leave a mark behind in the school," Sandor said. "I am honestly surprised that nobody else has gotten in before because there have been so many intelligent and talented individuals who have graduated from Nonnewaug. Nevertheless, although it is a well-known school, it doesn't make me different from any of my classmates. Everyone has a path in life, a path where they create their own first, and college is just one part of that path."

Region 14 Budget Referendum Tuesday, May 6, 2025

6 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Bethlehem Town Hall 36 Main Street South

Woodbury Senior Community Center 265 Main Street South

WHERE IS THE NONNEWAUG CLASS OF 2025 HEADED?

The nationwide "Decision Day" is May 1st when students make their choices. But so far, in addition to the two Yale University acceptances, the NHS Class of 2025 has a formidable list of acceptances from highly competitive schools like Boston College, Middlebury College, Colgate University, RIT, the United States Military Academies, the Culinary Institute of America, Villanova University, competitive Pre-Law and STEM programs at UCONN and the University of Vermont, and a full-ride scholarship to the prestigious University of Rhode Island Alfred J. Verrecchia Scholars Award. Chris Maclean, Director of School Counseling at Nonnewaug, said that holistically, Nonnewaug is trending towards students being accepted at more competitive universities with habitually low acceptance rates. "We've always had a smattering of students at more competitive universities, but it's been a strong year for the Class of 2025 pursuing pre-law, medical, nursing, STEM, and other academic paths that take them to ultra-selective universities," Maclean said.

NONNEWAUG HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2025 COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES

US Air Force Academy	University of Massachusetts Boston	Delaware Valley University
US Coast Guard Academy	University of Massachusetts Lowell	University of Valley Forge
Yale University	Endicott College	Lehigh University
University of Connecticut	Suffolk University	Drexel University
UConn Special Program in Law	Emerson College	Marywood University
Trinity College	Massachusetts Maritime Academy	University of Montana
Quinnipiac University	Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences	Montana State University
Fairfield University	Merrimack College	Towson University
Connecticut College	Brandeis University	University of Maryland
Southern Connecticut State University	Western New England University	North Carolina Central University
Eastern Connecticut State University	Lasell University	High Point University
Western Connecticut State University	Curry College	Western Carolina University
Central Connecticut State University	Bridgewater State University	University of Miami
University of St. Joseph	Westfield State University	Florida Atlantic University
CT State Community Colleges	Binghamton University	Ave Maria University
NVCC and NWCC	University at Albany	Southeastern University
University of Rhode Island	SUNY Cobleskill	Keiser University
Alfred J. Verrecchia Business Scholars Award	Stonybrook University	James Madison University
Rhode Island School of Design	SUNY Morrisville	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Bryant University	Colgate University	University of Maine Orono
Roger Williams University	Union College	University of Maine Farmington
Salve Regina University	Fordham University	University of New England
University of Vermont	Ithaca College	The University of Alabama
UVM STEM Scholars Program	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	West Virginia University
Middlebury College	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Delaware
Norwich University	Marist University	University of Colorado Boulder
University of New Hampshire	Siena College	Central Michigan University
Keene State College	Mercy University	Seton Hall University
Colby-Sawyer College	The Culinary Institute of America	East Tennessee State University
Boston College	Villanova University	College of Charleston
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Pennsylvania State University	Evangel University
		Trinity Bible College

WMS STUDENTS HONORED FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



State Representative Karen Reddington-Hughes (R-66) visited Woodbury Middle School in April to congratulate the winning students in the Women's History Essay Contest.

Calla Trimarki won first place for her essay on Helen Keller. Lila Coehlo was the runner-up for her essay on Kristen Greist.

Several sixth-graders in Todd Fontaine's social studies classes participated in this essay contest and were also recognized by Reddington-Hughes and received special legislative pins.

MES 5TH GRADER WINS REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY BEE



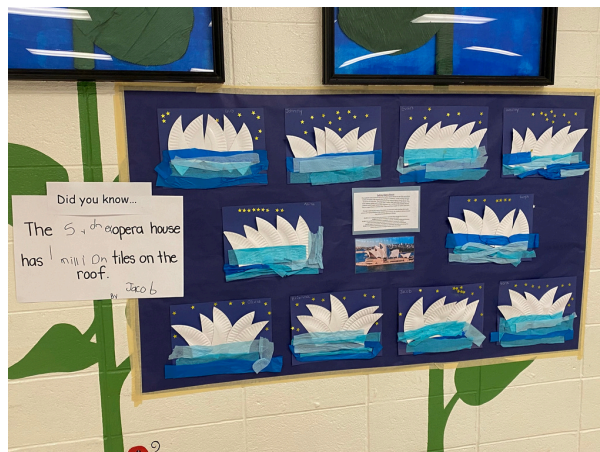
Mitchell Elementary School fifth grader Benjamin Harrison won the fifth-grade division in the National Geography Bee Regional Finals in Waterbury on April 5. Ben will head to the National competition in May.

Ben won the fifth-grade division after completing three challenging qualifying rounds. The buzzer-based questions were incredibly difficult and focused on little-known facts about countries, cities, and industries. Ben is a member of the MES Talented and Gifted program that meets weekly. He completed the online qualifying exam during one of the after-school sessions. Ben's family then registered him to compete at the Regional competition that was held at Wallace Middle School in Waterbury.

Ben's performance at Regionals guaranteed him entrance to Nationals. The top 50% of students in each age division at each Regional competition qualify for the 2025 National Geography Bee National Championships on Memorial Day weekend in Orlando.

BES PRE K4 SHOWCASES AUSTRALIA AT LEARNING EXPO

Pre-K 4 students at Bethlehem Elementary School showcased their hard work on all things Australia during their "Down Under" unit. From diving into animals like koalas, echidnas, platypuses, and more to landmarks like the iconic Sydney Opera House, Sydney Harbor Bridge, and the Great Barrier Reef, students became experts to share all their knowledge on this hands-on topic. At this Pre K Learning Expo, students got their "passports" stamped, jumped like kangaroos, created their own didgeridoo, and compared the height of a life-sized Emu and a 13-foot Coastal Carpet Python.



ANNUAL CULINARY COLLABORATION BRINGS NHS AND WMS STUDENTS INTO THE KITCHEN

Culinary students from Nonnewaug High School and Woodbury Middle School joined forces for a day of learning and working together with their peers in the kitchen for the second annual collaborative soup-making event for local senior citizens.

Students worked together to make 100 batches of Minestrone soup for the senior citizens in both Woodbury and Bethlehem. This was a terrific multi-school learning opportunity, mentor experience, and collaboration that also directly benefits some of our local senior citizens. The soup was distributed to seniors before a special performance of the NHS Drama Club's "Godspell" on Wednesday, April 2. Representatives from local senior centers took any remaining soup to distribute to some of their towns' senior citizens who could not attend the play.

Culinary teachers John Dominello at NHS and Mike Hadoulis at WMS bring students together several times a year for collaborative cooking events.



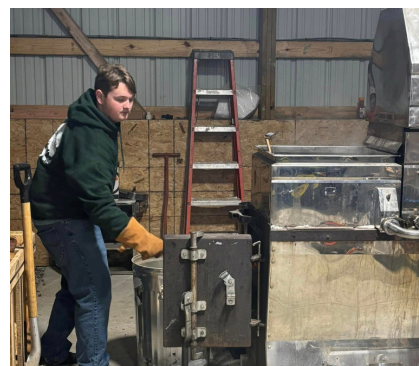
AG STUDENTS AT SCHOOL: DIAGNOSE, REPAIR, MAINTAIN, CULTIVATE

Students in the Agriscience program at Nonnewaug High School gain practical skills and knowledge through hands-on training and instruction that prepares them for careers in agriculture and related fields.

In Ag Mechanics, students learn how to drive the various tractors and work the equipment. But to gain a true understanding of how things work, these students also get under the hood. Here, they learn about tractor parts and systems to troubleshoot and repair, as well as the importance of safety and maintenance.

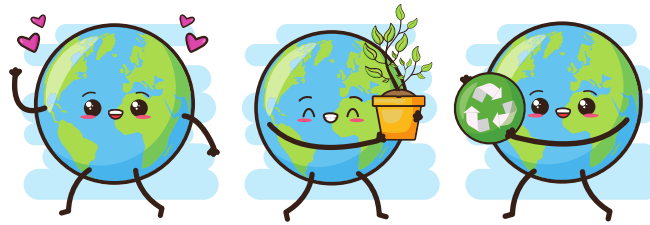
Before Spring Break, students in the Ag Mechanics class worked together to ensure the equipment is ready to be used and working properly - from refueling, greasing, and checking fluid levels, they went through it all.

Students in Natural Resources classes had a busy, but short maple season in the brand new Sugar Shack. Students collected roughly 325 gallons of sap and made a little more than 8 gallons of syrup.



EARTH DAY HAPPENINGS

To mark Earth Day, students at Mitchell Elementary School took part in the 1st Annual Earth Day Book Swap. The MES families donated books that they no longer read, and MES Library Media Specialist Allison Loiseau created a little swap shop in the library. The PreK to grade 2 students visited the shop and selected a pre-loved book to enjoy. This was a terrific experience for the young students to learn about giving a new life to items we no longer use in efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle



Nonnewaug High School Agriscience teacher Jesse Hungerford visited Bethlehem Elementary School with some of her students for an Earth Day project. Agriscience students worked with the elementary school students on concepts like soil testing, window gardens, and seed sprouting. They also helped with some of the plantings around the school and those that will be part of the BES Garden beds.



WMS 8TH GRADE TRIP TO BOSTON

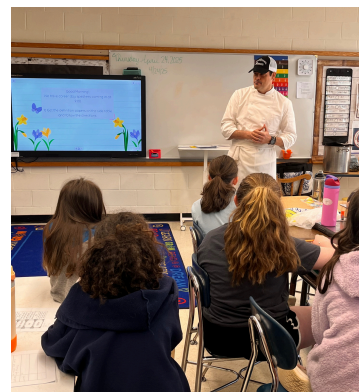
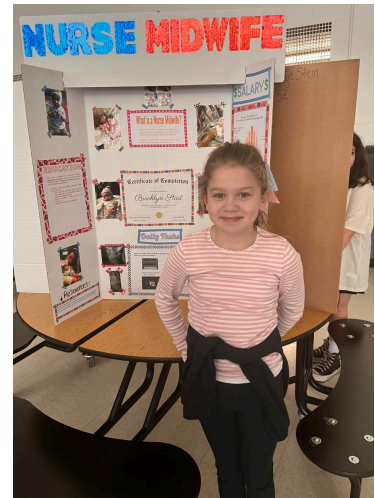
The Woodbury Middle School 8th graders headed to Boston before Spring Break for a day of exploring history. 84 students and nine chaperones visited many historic sites, including the Lexington Battle Green, the Freedom Trail to the Old State House, the site of the Boston Massacre, the Old South Meeting House, the first Public School site, King's Chapel, the State House, and the Boston Common. They also visited Quincy Market and the Faneuil Hall Marketplace for lunch and then went to the Museum of Science for an IMAX presentation. This exciting day trip to Boston allowed our 8th graders to see firsthand some of the historic sites they have been learning about in the American History unit in Social Studies.



3RD ANNUAL ELEMENTARY COLLEGE AND CAREER WEEKS

The third annual Elementary College and Career Weeks were a big hit at Mitchell and Bethlehem Elementary Schools in April. Each school hosted a Careers on Wheels Day event where students learned about the careers from the drivers of emergency vehicles, town and work trucks, animal transports, big rigs, construction trucks, and more.

The schools held Career Speakers Day and invited local professionals in various jobs who came to share about their careers. To wrap up the event, the fifth graders presented their own Career Research Projects. Students were eager to share about careers that ignited their interests and to research the type of education, special training, and licensing needed for each career. Thank you to School Counselors Lisa Sizer at BES and Danielle Hutchins at MES, and MES Library Media Specialist Allison Loiseau for organizing these special events for students.



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