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Patricia Puglisi takes principal position at Lynnfield

Students, teachers reflect on her impact, experiences

By Phileine de Widt
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After 10 years as principal at the high school, Patricia Puglisi has accepted the position as principal at Lynnfield High School for the upcoming school year.

Though she will be spending occasional days in the spring working in Lynnfield with their current principal, who plans to retire, her official last day is June 30, she said.

Her decision, which came as a surprise to many, was also a surprise to herself, Puglisi said.

"I had no intention of applying anywhere, [but] once I got to see the work that needed to be done in Lynnfield, it was intriguing to me, so I decided to move forward," she said.

Her work over the past years has impacted the teachers.

"I always appreciated that she

trusted teachers. We had autonomy in the classroom to ... take risks, and we felt comfortable trying new things," said Lauren DuBois, social studies department chair.

Through her confidence in the teachers, Puglisi was able to initiate programs like the senior English electives.

Deborah Isensee, English department chair, said she is grateful for the respect Puglisi gave to teachers and for allowing them to teach what needs to be taught while understanding there are many different ways to do that, especially for seniors who struggle to stay engaged.

Puglisi also left an impact on the student body.

Senior class president Juliana Saunders, who often engages with Puglisi, said she is sad that she is leaving.

"Every time I have come to her for a personal or a class experience, she has been so helpful and understanding ... I don't think people realize the impact that she actually does have on our school



PHILEINE DE WIDT PHOTO

Principal Patricia Puglisi will be joining Lynnfield High School after her last day on June 30. The search for a new candidate continues, and the new principal will be announced before April break.

community," she said.

Understanding students' needs through the process of social-emotional learning, has been a priority during her administration, Puglisi said. Suiing stu-

dents' needs, she changed the bell schedule to add U-block, made curricular changes, and introduced new programs, such as the ADL, to better the school environment, she said.

"We have done a lot ... that predated the pandemic, [showing] we were way ahead of that curve in terms of understanding student needs. There is still more PUGLISI LEAVING, page 3

Week of Gratitude brings love to community

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Held the week of Feb. 13-17, the Week of Gratitude is an opportunity for the community to thank anyone who has gone above and beyond for students and the school, director of school counseling Beverly Low said.

"It always has been an opportunity to hit the pause button [and] reflect ... to show gratitude and catch people doing something good that has had a positive impact on someone," Low said.

The Week of Gratitude, coordinated by the peer mentor program, has been running for the past nine years, she said.

Peer mentors met in the dining hall to write letters of gratitude during the week. Sophomore peer mentor Ella Arntsen said she likes that the week brings people together.

"I feel that often times we can take for granted all the things teachers do for us, so getting to sit down and handwrite cards for them made it very special," Arn-



ISABELLE DONNELLAN VALADE PHOTO

The Week of Gratitude, organized by the peer mentor program, was an opportunity to thank a member in the school community.

tsen said.

Arntsen's favorite part of this week was writing letters for her teachers.

"I got to reflect and realize the impact our teachers have on us and be grateful for all the effort and support they offer us," she said.

One of the goal's for this year's Week of Gratitude was to get more people involved, peer mentor coordinator Sophie Zalosh said.

"We had announcements every day and tried to spread the word around the school," Zalosh said.

They had more momentum this year because the team of coordinators were motivated to get the

word out, Low said.

"The nice thing about this team is that they each bring unique strengths and talents to the table," she said.

Low estimated that around 200 letters were written and delivered.

She said the community rallied this year in terms of donating thank-you cards.

"By letting family and community members know that it's happening, sometimes they can nudge their students to do a thank-you card," Low said.

Low and Zalosh both said it is important that everyone who works in the school receives let-
GRATITUDE WEEK, page 3

School will host first annual STEAM showcase, display student, local work

Participants will include classes, clubs, businesses

By Gwendolyn Berger
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Since last year, the school has been planning its first annual science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) showcase that will take place on March 30.

Kristin Umile, the science and mathematics department chair, said she was inspired by the STEAM showcase she saw in Ipswich last year and has since been organizing and coordinating with students and businesses to host this school's first showcase.

She said the showcase is March 30 from 5 to 7 p.m. in the gymnasium. Around 40 STEAM-related booths will be set-up by local businesses, clubs, and students.

"The community can see the incredible work the students are doing in school ... and hope-

fully see the connection between what's happening in the school and what's happening in the real world," Umile said.

Companies including New England Biolabs, Peabody Essex Museum, Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team, and more will each have their own booths representing the work they do, she said.

Umile said there will also be a booth for Applied Materials, run by two graduates of the school, and a booth from Massachusetts General Hospital about summer internships and careers in STEM.

She said she is coordinating with band director and music teacher Joe Janack about recruiting student volunteers to play or sing live music at the event.

Students from grades 6-12 will host their own booths and present STEAM-related projects. The Math Team, Science Team, Robotics Team, Middle School Green Team, and Health Occupa-
STEAM SHOWCASE, page 3

'The community can see the incredible work the students are doing in school.'

- KRISTIN UMILE

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Students compete at annual DECA state competition in Boston

Eight students qualified to compete at Internationals

By Alessia Omari
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Eight students qualified for the International Career Development Conference at the annual DECA state competition from March 10 to March 12 in Boston.

The international competition will take place in Orlando, Florida, from April 22-25.

Junior and DECA state officer Gabriella D'Andrea said

the turnout this year was successful, with 16 students making it into the top 10 of their respective events.

DECA adviser Barrett Alston said that students who had originally qualified for States had spent their time preparing for the competition mostly outside of class.

"Students would come in for extra help prepping role-plays, learning how to study for the test, and going over the logistics of what was prepared. We even had a day where we did a practice session for the test," he said.

D'Andrea said that preparing for the competition was a month-long process.

"After Districts, people who qualified had about two months to prepare for States

where they would do two role-plays and also take an exam a few weeks prior. Each were worth 100 points, and would add up to 300,"

she said.

Alston said there was a "buzz of excitement in the air" during the two days of the state competition, and that most students felt satisfied with their performances.

There were many roles that the state officers had to fulfill, D'Andrea said.

"Our main role was planning our mock competition which we held in December, as well as answering questions. After that our role was voting for the upcoming state officers," she said.

Sophomore Colin Conway said there was a very specific manner in which the competition had played out.

"Everybody from our school did a role-play where we were given a scenario that you analyze. Next you have to go up in front of a judge to present a solution to the problem," he said.

Alston said that although he had begun teaching DECA late last year, this was his first time at the state competition.

"It is exhausting, but so worth

'It is exhausting, but so worth it. Now having gone through it once, it'll become easier, and I could not have done it without the officers' help.'

-BARRETT ALSTON



COURTESY OF BARRETT ALSTON

Sophomore Gwen Berger placed first in Principles of Business Management at the DECA state competition. She and seven others qualified for the International Career Development Conference.

it. Now having gone through it once, it'll become easier, and I could not have done it without the officers' help," he said.

New Python class incorporates machine learning, prepares students for artificial intelligence careers

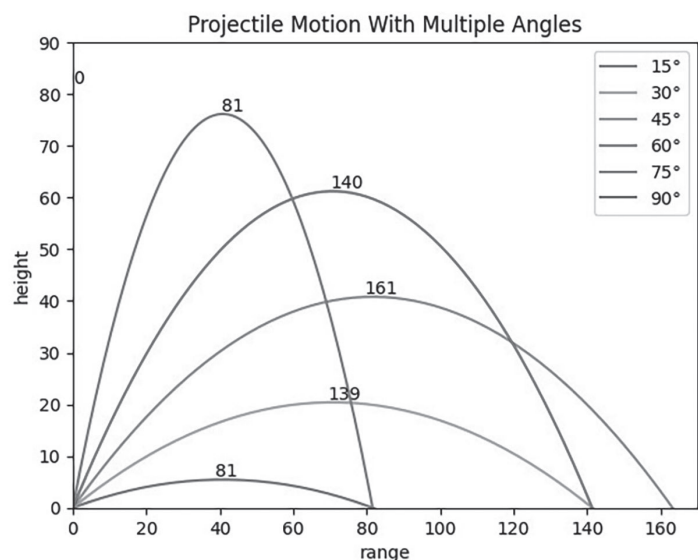
Students learn about Python language, focus on data science

By Whitney Turner
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Beginning this year, computer science teacher Steven Cogger launched a new class that centers around Python, a computer programming language.

Cogger said he began to consider developing the course in 2021, inspired by his work using MicroPython at the Tufts Center for Engineering and Outreach.

"I thought that it would be really good to have a Python class because Python seemed to be the language that was getting traction in college and in the artificial intelligence, machine learning



COURTESY OF STEVEN COGGER

Students completed a parabolic lab where they linked physics and coding. They wrote parabolic motion equations in Python.

world," he said.

The class allows for more exploration and learning without

the constraints of an AP class, such as AP Computer Science, Cogger added.

"I can teach an important language to students without having to meet deadlines and test dates, so it's much more flexible in terms of what students can do and what students can learn," he said.

The first half of the semester is spent learning Python itself and computational thinking, Cogger said.

The second half is focused on machine learning: teaching the machine to think and how artificial intelligence works.

He said students last semester worked to combine the language with machine learning, in instances such as creating programs to interpret data sets and predict new data points.

"A lot of what I'm going to do is also based on student feedback," Cogger said. "It's always going to change."

Senior Jack Newton said he enjoyed learning Python and focusing more on data science when he took the course last semester.

"AP Comp Sci only really goes over Java; ... [Python is] just a

whole other language to have as an asset, so it's helpful," he said.

The course also allowed students to think computationally and problem solve, sophomore Ian Campbell said.

"It's pretty flexible, which is fun, because we can adapt to different things," he said.

Cogger said the class will teach skills of growing importance, as more careers in AI appear.

"That's really why I wanted to teach Python and AI together, to show that there was a real world connection," he said.

'That's really why I wanted to teach Python and AI together, to show that there was a real world connection.'

-STEVEN COGGER

Sophomore displays design at local gallery

By Jordie Cornfield
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Sophomore Aubrey Fritsch had her first gallery opening at the Newburyport Art Association's Young and Budding Artists Exhibition on March 1 where she displayed a beaded dress that was previously in school.

Fritsch said she submitted a picture of her dress, and the gallery chose to display it from there.

Fritsch has been interested in art since she was a child.

"When I was 6, I visited New York with my family. I remember passing a window of Parsons

School of Design and seeing all the cool pieces. I was instantly obsessed with fashion and that school," she said.

After seeing the designs of the Parsons fashion students, Fritsch immediately began designing her own work.

"I would draw a lot and do those sticker books with paper dresses as a kindergartener. I was obsessed with fashion, and I still am," she said.

Once Fritsch entered middle school, she started to bring her designs to life.

"I started really making pieces when I was in middle school, like 12 or 13," she said.

Today, Fritsch continues to design and make different pieces, from going-out tops to runway-ready dresses.

Fritsch said her favorite piece she has designed so far is the

maxi dress that was displayed at the Newburyport Art Association.

The black dress, which features beaded detailing around the hem, takes inspiration from the fashion trends of the 1940s.

"I was inspired by Audrey Hepburn. That was also for our first NAHS project this year."

Fritsch plans to pursue fashion in the future.

"My goal is to go to Parsons School of Design for college with a major in fashion design and a minor in business. I hopefully will stay in New York after graduation. I want to work at a company but also build my own. Eventually, I hope to be a creative director. I plan on focusing on fashion design because I believe that is my true passion, but I also love to create other types of art," she said.



COURTESY OF AUBREY FRITSCH

Sophomore Aubrey Fritsch poses with her 1940s Audrey Hepburn-inspired beaded black dress at the Newburyport Art Association's Young and Budding Artists Exhibition on March 1.

Spanish Costa Rica trip planned for February break 2024

Itinerary includes cultural immersion activities, adventure

By Stella Straub
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Over February vacation of 2024, students learning Spanish will have the opportunity to travel on a linguistic and cultural immersion trip to Costa Rica, said Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury.

Trips are done every other year and organized through Education First Tours, he said.

The itinerary will include activities such as zip lining, kayaking, hiking, going to the beach, surfing and swimming.

"We go to an active volcano ... there are hot springs you can swim in ... you kayak on this lake where there's a volcano ...

there's a cloud forest more up in the mountains ... there's lots of sloths and really cool animals to see," Bilsbury said.

He said he hopes students will use this opportunity to improve their Spanish by speaking it often during the day.

"For us as language teachers, to see the kids interact with people at a restaurant ... they're

'This is exciting for me because I get to practice [my Spanish] again. I'm really excited to travel with Ms. Krause; we're excellent travel buddies.'

-MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON

laughing and having a fun connection with these people that you never would have been able to communicate with, it's magical; it's a beautiful thing," Bilsbury said.

Seniors will have two days of exclusive sign-up, then juniors have two days of exclusive sign-up, and so on until the 36 available spots have been filled, he said.

Payment is \$3,500 and spread out over a year, Bilsbury said.



COURTESY OF ROBERT BILSBURY

Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury traveled to Costa Rica previously with students. The 2024 trip will include kayaking, hiking, zip lining, swimming, and interaction with locals.

Chaperones will include English teacher Allison Krause, English teacher Mary Buckley-Harmon, and others depending on size, he said.

Krause said her own experience with a cultural immersion to Spain and Morocco with Bilsbury was inspirational for her.

"My trip was hugely impactful on not only my skills speaking Spanish, but also broadening my perspective and seeing a differ-

ent part of the world ... it really did inspire in me a love of travel and an appreciation for other cultures," she said.

Buckley-Harmon, who has traveled to Costa Rica with her family, said she loves leading student trips and that being interested in the country's culture and immersing themselves in the experience will all be important factors to making the trip successful for students.

Buckley-Harmon, who studied in Spain in college, was fluent in Spanish, and was first hired to teach both Spanish and English at a previous school, she said. She and Krause have chaperoned two past school trips to England, she said.

"This is exciting for me because I get to practice [my Spanish] again. I'm really excited to travel with Ms. Krause; we're excellent travel buddies," she said.

SCORE helps students network more

Students want additional internship resources available

By Libby Mulry
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Many seniors have obtained SCORE internships through community connections, Spanish teacher and SCORE coordinator Margaret Kane said.

Senior Amy Vytopil said she will work for her trainer Emily McCavanagh's fitness center FIT House in Manchester as a psychology and marketing specialist.

Vytopil said she is lucky to have the community connections



AMY VYTOPIL PHOTO

Senior Amy Vytopil will intern for the FIT fitness center, where she trained for student athletics, as part of her SCORE project.

she does.

"A lot of students don't have the connections or social ability to go and ask for an internship, so if the school gave us more internship ideas or phone numbers, I feel like a lot more could be taken out of SCORE," she said.

The school provides a list of places where people have done

SCORE in the past, but making connections is an integral part of SCORE that prepares students for the real world, Kane said.

"It's not a matter of just writing an email to a company, saying I'd like to work for you. It's a matter of networking," she said.

Many students also rely on their relationships with teachers

in getting an internship, Kane said.

She said students have secured internships at wellness teacher James Weed's Grind Factory, which is an indoor baseball and softball facility in Salem, Massachusetts.

The COVID pandemic hampered student's ability to build connections with their community and to find a place where they could work in person, so the school began accepting projects, Kane said, but this year the school is returning to the original purpose of SCORE as an internship quarter, she said.

"We're trying to go back to an internship model more than a project model because it's more aligned with the original intent of the program and that would be

'We're trying to go back to an internship model more than a project model ... to get kids out of the school environment and working with adults in professional fields.'

-MARGARET KANE

to get kids out of the school environment and working with adults in professional fields," Kane said.

Seniors Matt Russo and James Colbert, who will be interning for the Molisse Realty Group, hope to get real estate and marketing experience, Colbert said.

"Even real estate and business aside, getting real-world skills will be helpful in the future," Russo said.

CONTINUATIONS

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to do here, but the school, I think, is in a really great place for the next person to bring it forward," Puglisi said.

With Puglisi leaving, there will be a new administration in the fall.

"As a teacher, you get used to a principal after so many years, and you know what to expect, and you know how to work with that person, so [now we have] to move on to getting to know a new person and figuring out how to work with them," foreign language department chair, Michelle Magaña said.

The trust and confidence Puglisi had in the faculty was something nice to work with, and Magaña said she hopes to see that in the new principal as well.

Puglisi said Superintendent Pamela Beaudoin will conduct a search and have an interview committee that will consist of students, parents, faculty, and staff.

"We have started the search and hope to have the next principal identified before April vacation, [and] I will be holding a student focus group to hear what students are looking for in the next principal," Beaudoin said.

Though Puglisi is not involved in hiring the new principal, she will be spending time informing them on the school goals to keep things moving forward seamlessly, she said.

As advice to the new principal, Puglisi said to go slow and take all community perspectives into consideration.

"Trust the teachers; they do a fantastic job in the classroom, and know that you are blessed

with a student community that is very welcoming," Puglisi said.

GRATITUDE WEEK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ters, not just teachers. "My hope is that teachers receive a lot of them for going the extra mile for students, but we also like to see when the dining hall staff, the maintenance staff, and the support staff receive letters. It's nice to spread the gratitude," Low said.

English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton received letters from students, and she said she loves the week and wishes there were more days like it.

"It was really nice, and I was very excited to see the students come in with the envelopes in their hands. It was a great day," Edgerton said.

STEAM SHOWCASE CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tions Students of America (HOSA) will attend the event, Umile said.

Junior Joanna Shan, the vice president of the Science Team and captain of the Math Team said each team has been planning their own table. The Science Team will be showcasing labs that they've done and are planning a demonstration, she said.

The Math Team plans to do a fundraiser, where people can pay \$1 to guess how much candy is in a jar, Shan said.

The event is important because it will allow students to showcase their work and connect with the community, she said.

"For the people who have tables, it can give them good publicity ... you're showing people what you know and do ... and I think in general it's a good community event to encourage people

to do STEAM-related activities," Shan said.

Kia Petrie, the eighth-grade science teacher and Middle School Green Team coordinator, said that she will be handling greetings and running a table showcasing eco-bricks (people will make their own eco-bricks and learn about landfills) and a table for the Green Team.

"I love doing showcases ... and there was no pressure involved, which was nice," she said.

Petrie said the showcase is important because it will help express the amount of work a student puts into school each year.

"There's an inherent gap between family life and student life ... I think when we have opportunities like this ... it really does help bring a bigger light to students' life here at school," she said.

Artificial intelligence causes concern, impacts integrity

New AI ChatGPT may lead to paper-based assignments

By Avabella Mitrano
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Due to a surge in popularity in artificial intelligence (AI) tools, ChatGPT has a controversial impact on schools' curriculum nationwide.

According to a CNET 2023 article titled "Why We're Obsessed With the Mind-Blowing ChatGPT AI Bot," ChatGPT, developed by AI research company OpenAI, was released in November.

The chatbot can help with research, but it can be misused in relation to students cheating on exams or assignments.

English department chair Debra Isensee said that while teachers were afraid at first, they realized that students would be losing out on the thinking behind writing if they chose to cheat with ChatGPT.

"I think the key is to have faith that students enjoy learning and

know there are shortcuts in life for almost everything. It really just ends up hurting them," Isensee said.

She said she can foresee the school becoming more paper-based, which can help with Advanced Placement (AP) classes that are already paper-based. If students can't write on paper because they can't think critically, that is a problem, Isensee said.

English teacher Allison Krause said she is concerned with how ChatGPT will affect the English department's weekly journaling program.

Krause said the English department has already informally met to brainstorm ways to maintain the integrity behind journaling.

She said schools need to embrace the fact that AI exists while still encouraging original thought and authentic skills in writing.

"Again, this isn't something we can just avoid or eliminate; it's there. I think we have to figure out ways to still provide opportunities where students are

A Write me a paragraph about something unique about naturalism, use 3 sources

Naturalism is a literary and artistic movement that emerged in the late 19th century, characterized by an objective and scientific approach to the depiction of reality. One unique aspect of naturalism is its emphasis on the role of heredity and environment in shaping human behavior and destiny. According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, naturalism "claims that human beings are a part of nature and are subject to the same laws of causation as everything else in the natural world." This view is reflected in the works of naturalist writers such as Emile Zola, who believed that human behavior was determined by biological and environmental factors. Additionally, naturalism often portrays characters from marginalized or working-class backgrounds, emphasizing their struggles against social and economic forces beyond their control. As Literary Theory and Criticism notes, naturalist works "often depict characters who are trapped by their circumstances and unable to escape the deterministic forces that govern their lives." This combination of scientific objectivity and social consciousness makes naturalism a unique and influential movement in the history of literature and art.

CHATGPT

When asked to write a paragraph about naturalism, ChatGPT pulled information from the internet to create a response. AI takes away originality and creative skills from students' work.

not tempted to use it ... but also understand ways we can use it in the classroom," Krause said.

Foreign language department chair Michelle Magaña said she can see teachers potentially using ChatGPT as a helpful tool to generate example essays or templates for students.

Since the foreign language department had issues with Google Translate in the past, they had already been mainly paper-based with major writing assignments, Magaña said.

She said that there are many benefits to paper writing and teachers will have to be more

vigilant in recognizing a student's work.

"[We need] to make sure we are matching it with the student we know ... you lose that personal touch that we are looking for each student if [it's] being generated by the computer," Magaña said.

ADL visits freshman classes, creates inclusive community

By Whitney Turner
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After their first three sessions, the Anti-Defamation League is now almost finished with their in-classroom workshops with the freshmen class, ADL co-adviser Jessica Tran said.

She said the goal of the workshops is to create an understanding, welcoming, and inclusive community for the school.

"We've chosen with ADL to start with the ninth-graders, so these ideas can trickle all the way through senior year," Tran said.

In the classroom, ADL peer leaders have some freedom in the activities they implement, she said.

ADL co-adviser Lauren DuBois said the plan is always to ease into the beginning sessions,

in hopes that students will feel comfortable talking about more difficult topics later.

"We're just kind of talking about all different parts of our identity, and some stuff we can tell, some stuff we can't tell ... and how to make it so that we feel safe sharing all of ourselves," she said.

This year, ADL leaders are more experienced and know more about how to interact with students, senior Lila Carpenter said.

"People have figured out what works and doesn't work," she said.

Though it can be difficult to

achieve full participation at times, Carpenter said the students have been doing well.

"It's definitely difficult to talk about these kinds of topics with underclassmen, but I have been pleasantly surprised at how well they've been handling it," she said.

Looking to the future, Tran said the ADL would like to expand their work to even younger students.

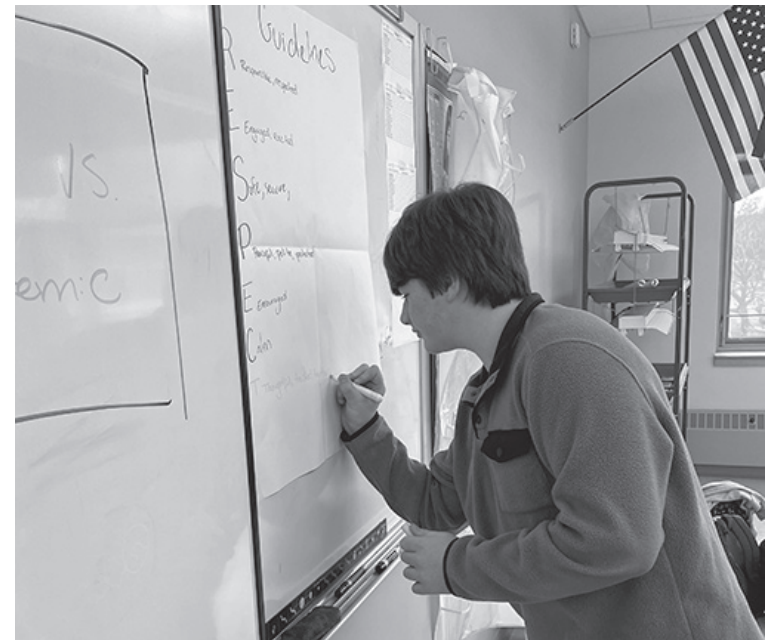
"We've talked about some changes, namely trying to work with the middle-schoolers a little more so that we can plant these seeds earlier, even before

ninth grade," she said.

One of Carpenter's goals includes recruiting more students to join ADL themselves. The

'We've talked about some changes, namely trying to work with the middle-schoolers a little more.'

-JESSICA TRAN



WHITNEY TURNER PHOTO

Sophomore Harper Jay leads an activity in a freshman classroom. The ADL teaches freshmen about important topics such as respect.

program is beneficial for this school, where people often assume racism can't be found, due to a lack of diversity, she said.

"I think it's especially impor-

tant to talk about here because there's not that kind of representation, so I think the more people we can get talking about these issues, the better," Carpenter said.

SCAR prepares for Connections Conference

By Summer Demeo
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

The Student Coalition Against Racism worked with the organization Root for Books to organize a book drive in honor of Black History Month. The club will attend the Connections Conference at Sutton High School in March.

The books collected in the book drive will go to underprivileged children in Africa, and the organization is asking for books that feature Black characters or are written by Black authors, said SCAR leader junior Caro-



COURTESY OF CAROLINE DOUCETTE

The Student Coalition Against Racism joins together for a club photo. The club focuses on promoting diversity and awareness.

line Doucette.

She said the club put up flyers around the school with QR codes that lead to the organization's Amazon wish list, and people can buy books on Amazon and send them directly to Root for

Books.

Looking ahead, SCAR will be attending the Connections Conference on March 17. This will be the club's third year attending and their second in person.

The conference, hosted by Sut-

ton High School's Connections Club, brings together students from different schools to learn and promote diversity, SCAR adviser Alison Krause said.

The conference allows students to meet many new people

and is an excellent opportunity for students to get educated through first hand experience and gain new perspectives, SCAR leader sophomore Jenelle Ford said.

"We all want to make our community better, but it's kind of hard when we don't have much experience and much knowledge on how certain issues affect people outside of our small bubble," she said.

Krause said last year she learned about a variety of resources and materials to help incorporate more diverse stories into her curriculum, and she hopes to learn more about different perspectives and new

resources this year.

Later in the spring the club usually does a community read among members. This year Krause said they want it to be available to the high school

community for people to further educate themselves, but the club has yet to choose a book.

Doucette said for Women's History Month, SCAR is also thinking of collecting feminine products for women's shelters.

'We all want to make our community better.'

-JENELLE FORD

Junior sings National Anthem at sports events

By Mechi O'Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Junior Quinn Brady was inspired by his teammates and the Powderpuff game to sing the National Anthem at his hockey games, he said.

After hearing him sing at the girls' Powderpuff game, Brady's marketing teacher Barrett Alston nominated him to sing the National Anthem at the DECA state competition, Brady said.

"I thought I might as well practice at my hockey games, so I sang at our Senior Night game, and many people complimented me on it," he said.

Although Brady will not be singing at States, Alston said he thought it was incredible how Brady went from not being a singer at all to it being something that he takes really seriously.

"I would have been psyched and proud to have him [sing] at DECA. I just think it's cool. He's really gotten into it and I love it," Alston said.

Brady said he doesn't have any singing experience and has never taken a singing class.

"I did band in middle school and played



COURTESY OF @HORNETSINTHEHIVE

Junior Quinn Brady performed the National Anthem at hockey and basketball games after singing at the girls' Powderpuff game.

the piano when I was in second grade. I just kind of went out there and sang," he said.

Despite his lack of experience, many were impressed by Brady's voice. Senior hockey captain Dougie Pratt said he enjoyed when Brady sang at their Senior Night game.

"I thought he was fantastic and had an amazing voice. Our team was definitely fired up after hearing

him sing, and I think it impacted our play positively," Pratt said.

Brady said he sang at both the girls' and boys' basketball games on March 3.

"I was very excited and on board with singing for both the girls and boys," he said.

The back-to-back games were the first round of playoffs in the MIAA State Tournament.

"The boys' game was USA themed, so it was a really fun environment with me singing the anthem and with the whole student section," he said.

'I thought he was fantastic and had an amazing voice.'

-DOUGIE PRATT

Recruiting tips for aspiring student athletes

By Amy Vytopilova
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students do not need to play a club sport or pay for a recruiter to play at the collegiate level. A few simple tips can help you play at the next level.

One of the most important things to do if you are interested in playing at the collegiate level is to always keep your options open.

Senior Patrick Cronin, who committed to Wentworth Institute of Technology for basketball, started out by getting in contact with multiple schools and sending them film to find the right choice for him.

"Starting out with a really big list of schools is important ... I sent [my film] out to 100 schools the first time... Then, check who replies and slowly narrow it down," Cronin said.

Having many schools on your list will help you find the perfect fit both athletically and academically.

According to the Next College Student Athlete (NCSA), DIII schools are often overlooked and should be noticed in the recruiting process as they can have much better opportunities than DI schools.

"Evaluate a wide range of schools, and understand that bigger is not always better. Division I schools do not always offer better playing time, opportunities,



COURTESY OF WP GRAPHICS

Senior Patrick Cronin will be playing college basketball at Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts.

or education than Division III or NAIA schools," the NCSA said.

High schoolers should know that DII and DIII schools offer more flexibility in academics and allow one to focus more on themselves rather than revolving their life around a sport at the DI level.

Athletic director Cameron Molinare said one of the most crucial things to do if a student wants to play in college is to make a highlight reel to send out to coaches.

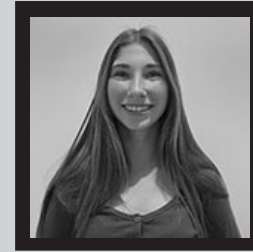
"Try to compile a two to three minute film of you in high school playing your sport. We have a lot of Hudl film on a lot of our teams at this point. Once you have your film and your list of coaches, send

them a nice introductory email, and go from there," Molinare said.

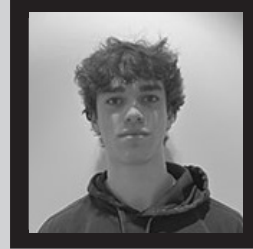
Film is a perfect way to show your talent without having to travel to showcases or have a coach see you live.

Molinare, a former college athlete who played field hockey at Endicott College, said starting early is one of the tips she knew when she was getting recruited.

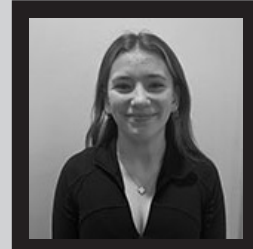
"I wish I started earlier ... if you can, start your sophomore or junior year ... make sure coaches know you are interested in playing a sport at their school so that they might watch a game in high school," she said.



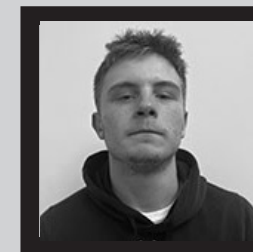
Freshman Izzy Zagrobski:
"My lucky charm is my blue Hydro Flask."



Freshman Andrew Cahill:
"My lucky charm is my gray Columbia T-shirt."



Sophomore Sylvie McCavanaugh:
"My Jordan 1's with a red swoosh give me luck when I wear them."



Sophomore Robert Silverstein:
"My lucky charm is my souvenir travel coffee mug from The Maine State Prison in Thomastown, Maine."



What is your lucky charm?

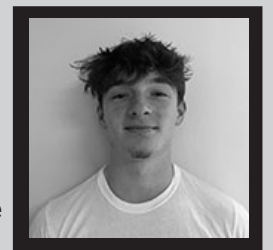
Junior Torrin Kirk:

"My lucky charm is a specific pair of Hoc Socks I wear for every game in field hockey. They are purple with pizza slices on them. The right one has no toes. I got them in 8th grade."



Junior Kevin Mckenna:

"Before every game, I wrap my gloves an extra time. I've been feeling lucky ever since I started doing it."



Senior Ceece Carvalho:

"My lucky charm is my pink magic dust at dance. As leader of the group, I have a bottle of pink sprinkles and water called magic dust. We spray it on each other before we dance; it's a tradition."



Senior Lucas Rodi:

"I have a lucky pair of socks. They're long Nike socks I wear at most of my meets for track."



Science Team continues competing, looks to expand membership

Guest speakers, STEAM night encourage students to join program

By Charles Lations
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a series of speakers, labs, and competitions on the horizon, the Science Team is looking to continue growing its membership and carry it into next year, team vice-president Diego Sanson said. Team president and senior Charlotte Lawrence said recent competitions have been enjoyable, with the activities presented being challenging but rewarding. “One of my favorites we had

this year was a chemistry escape room, where we had logic puzzles, and you had to do chemistry to figure it out – I really liked that one,” she said.

Science department head and team adviser Kristin Umile said after the most recent competition on Feb. 14, the team is ranked 6th in the state.

She said one of the team’s goals this year is to challenge Hamilton-Wenham, who recently joined their league.

‘It’s a super fun club with a great group of people ... Anyone can do it, and we can always use more people for the competitions.’

-DIEGO SANSON

“They’re the newest addition to the league, so we’ve been trying to compete with them ... that’s our goal there,” Umile said.

Umile said she’s excited for the upcoming speakers in the team’s Sci-Talk series, in which people from around the community come in to speak about topics relating to science.



COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE

Junior Charlie Virden makes bacterial art during a Science Team meeting. All high school students can be a Science Team member and participate in activities against other schools in the area.

She said one of the upcoming talks will be two former students who now work for Applied Materials in Gloucester, Nellie Boling and Maura McCormick. Boling and McCormick came to the school earlier this year to speak to science teacher Steven Cogger’s classes about their experiences in college as well as while working at Applied Materi-

als. Sanson said another event in the near future for the team will be the STEAM night on March 30, where the Science Team will be setting up a booth in hopes of attracting new students to the team. Sanson said the team is very accessible to people who don’t necessarily know a great deal

about science, and anyone interested in joining should come to a meeting and see if they like it. “It’s a super fun club with a great group of people ... we have people from various different age levels. Anyone can do it, and we can always use more people for the competitions ... don’t be nervous, just come try it out,” he said.

AP Environmental Science students showcase aquascapes in STEAM fair

By Ella Chafe
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students in Keith Hartan’s AP Environmental Science class will be showcasing their aquascape projects at the STEAM fair on March 30. According to a paper from the class detailing the parameters of the assignment, the aquascapes will be judged based on four different standards by the fair’s attendees. The aquascapes must look like an actual scene from nature and demonstrate proficiency in tank maintenance and condition. Students will also be evaluated on certain elements of their aquascape’s composition such

as balance and use of space and color. An informational brochure must be included, documenting the aquascape’s components and inspiration for the design. Hartan said the group coming first place will receive a prize such as award points and a gift certificate to a pet store. He said the competition is a great way for students to see what is going on in the community and communicate with highly educated representatives from the participating biotech and engineering companies. Hartan said the process of constructing the aquascapes is valuable, as students are using information they have learned in

class. “The benefit is applying what you know about ecosystems to build an aquascape that is capable of maintaining itself over the long term,” he said. Junior Liv Cahill said her group decided to attend the fair so they can expand their aquascape outside of the classroom and participate in a community activity that is bigger than just testing the aquascapes in class. Her group changed the substrate and plans to add new plants and snails to their aquascape to make it more visually appealing, she said. “This activity benefits students because it gives them the opportunity to show their work to a larger audience, and it gives them the incentive to work towards something that is so important to the environment,” Cahill said. Senior Caroline MacKinnon said she enjoys Hartan’s



ELLA CHAFE PHOTO

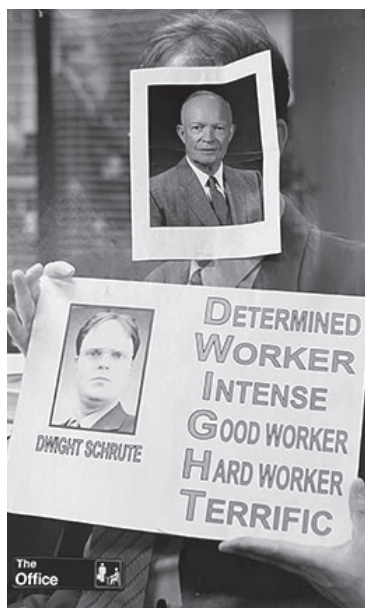
Junior Liv Cahill removes the fish from her tank to do maintenance on her aquascape project. She will present her aquascape March 30.

Environmental Science class and is happy the STEAM fair gives her the opportunity to get more creative with her aquascape. She changed the water, added more plants, cleaned the tank, changed the rocks, and removed some of the snails in her tank, she said.

MacKinnon also has two fish and a shrimp in her tank. “It’s nice to actually do labs and experiment with things that I like such as the aquascapes,” she said. Students, parents, teachers [and] the administration often,” she said.

Where in school is this?

By Caroline MacKinnon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



Writing

Should cursive still be taught in schools?

Pro

Avabella Mitrano

Although cursive writing is considered outdated, it still serves as a beneficial writing skill to students and should be taught consistently throughout schools.

According to a National Museum of American History 2022 article entitled “Don’t Write Off Cursive Yet,” the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) created in 2010 did not require students to learn handwriting instruction. This led to many schools eliminating cursive writing instruction altogether due to the prevalence of technology.

However, cursive writing as well as print writing are essential tools as they develop motor skills and reinforce learning in a way that typewriting cannot.

A 2020 National Library of Medicine study titled “The Importance of Cursive Handwriting Over Typewriting for Learning in the Classroom: A High-Density EEG Study of 12-Year-Old Children and Young Adults,” found that cursive involves a variety of sensorimotor brain systems and integration of perceptual skills.

It involves coordination of hand movements with each shape of a letter, an important kinesthetic skill that typewriting cannot replicate. The study also viewed cursive as a precursor to academic success due to these benefits.

An academic advantage with cursive was observed in a New York Times 2013 article titled “The Benefits of Cursive Go Beyond Writing,” where cursive was seen to help students master written expression and critical thinking, skills that extend beyond the classroom.

According to a MyCursive 2019 blog titled “Who Invented Cursive Writing?” cursive was originally used for writing speed and efficiency, as the pen would not be lifted from the paper. Therefore, it facilitates mastery of written expression.

Many argue against cursive because they believe that teaching typing should be prioritized due to an increasingly digital world. However, with a potential paradigm shift to more paper-based writing because of concerns about overuse of artificial intelligence tools, cursive would still be extremely useful due to its speed and efficiency.

Students’ inability to read cursive may result in a loss of history itself and the cognitive benefits behind it. A 2022 The Atlantic article entitled “Gen Z Never Learned To Read Cursive,” found that students could not decipher handwritten teacher feedback on tests, notes from old family members, and important historical documents, often having to ask adults to “translate” it for them to understand.

A focus on digitalization will continue to overshadow cursive, resulting in more students being unable to read it. History should not be discarded over one communication form that lacks many benefits.

Typing instruction should not be put aside, but cursive should be taught along with it to ensure that students retain the benefits from printing and have a faster way to write without their computers.

Con

Stella Straub

Cursive handwriting should not be taught in schools because it is an outdated skill that is taking up limited time in the school day.

At Manchester Memorial Elementary School, third grade classes spend around 15-20 minutes of instructional time per week learning cursive, said third grade teacher Kristen Morgese.

The goal is for students to be able to read cursive to understand our country’s primary documents and notes from family members, she said.

However, cursive already has a greatly reduced relevance in today’s society than it had and has fallen out of use because of its time consuming and unnecessary nature.

Instructional time in the school day used for cursive should be allotted to learning skills and subjects that are more relevant to modern education.

For example, this time could be spent learning proper typing skills and techniques that are used in everyday life. Typing is a far more efficient and useful way to communicate information.

As Gabriel Robare wrote in a 2021 article titled “On Handwriting” for The Daily Princetonian, “Typing is far faster than handwriting: the average American can type 40 words per minute, but can only handwrite 13 words per minute.”

Even historical documents are often translated online into print; students do not need to read cursive to comprehend them.

Older relatives were likely to learn cursive because it was used more frequently in the past, but as cursive becomes less and less popular, notes from relatives likely won’t be written in cursive anymore, and it will fade out of use in society.

With rare opportunities to practice cursive writing, it is likely that students will forget cursive beyond their own signature quickly after learning it.

Sophomore Madeline O’Grady said she doesn’t use cursive in everyday life.

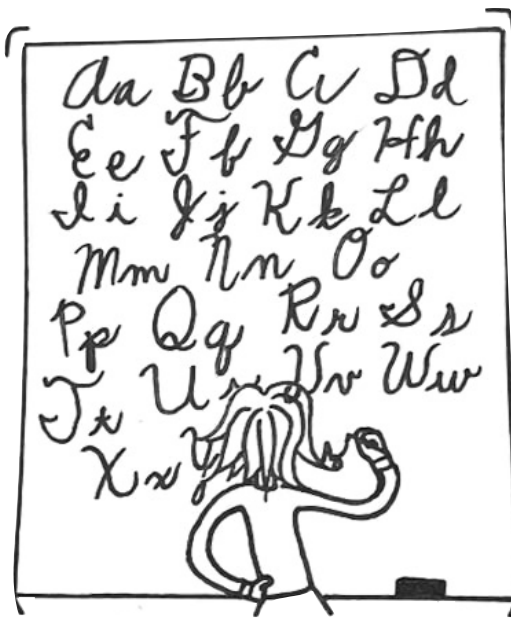
“You don’t really need cursive because half of the time that you’re doing assignments that need writing, you’re doing it online,” she said.

In fact, many of the benefits of cursive writing can also be achieved by learning print. There are undeniable benefits of “pencil-to-paper” such as better memory retention, improved focus, and a stronger emotional connection to the writing, wrote Mariette Jansen in a 2022 article for Brainz titled “The Amazing Benefits of Writing With Pen On Paper.”

Computer science teacher Steven Cogger said there is a value in pencil-to-paper for students, particularly regarding preparation for AP exams.

“I would come down on the side that we don’t need to learn cursive, but we do need to learn how to print,” he said.

Printing skills and typing skills are vastly more important to be dedicating time to over cursive writing, which is growing less and less relevant in today’s society.



ALESSIA OMARI ILLUSTRATION

Library needs greater community attention, financial aid to function

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Lacking a librarian has led to problems within the school that should be a greater focus in the community in order to address the limits on students’ abilities to research, explore, and further their education independently.

Without a librarian students cannot access sites to check out books or view digital databases without a school librarian to oversee the programs, principal Patricia Puglisi said.

This loss extends even out of the library itself, preventing English and history classes from using the helpful research tools offered by the databases that come with the hiring of a librarian.

Senior Luca Capotosto said the library is a depressing, unhelpful place to be.

“Since I work on my indepen-

dent study [in the library], I try to look around for books that might help, but since it’s usually a mess, and there’s nothing to help guide me, it’s rarely a very fun or productive search,” Capotosto said.

Learning commons assistant Nicholas Valle, who oversees the learning commons space, has tried to find ways to give life back to the space through trust and community engagement.

“[The library] is pretty desolate now, all of these books just lying around. I made a system to check out books with more of an honor code system and tracking it myself, but it’s a lot of work, and some books just get lost without a full process to do it,” Valle said.

Though the school had a librarian a few years ago, following digital changes forced by the pandemic and budgeting constraints for renewing positions as



WYETH TAKAYESU PHOTO

The library lacks a proper overseer to manage books and provide access to online databases. Students are unable to find resources, causing them to feel the space is unhelpful and depressing.

staff leave, the library has been left without a proper overseer and no concrete plans to change that, Puglisi said.

“[Hiring a new librarian] comes up every year ... I think it will be a continued conversation until we create a shared vision in our community about the future of learning, technology, and our library,” she said.

Student aides have also been enlisted to help clean and order the library during free periods, but without attention and care from the larger student body, these efforts are ignored and

promptly undone and make tracking books that come and go even more difficult.

Even if hiring a new librarian is out of reach due to budgeting, the school community can work to make the space more available to students and bring back some of the lost digital tools.

More student aides working in the library would make Valle’s system easier to track, allowing more students to check out books they are interested in while maintaining the space for others.

Though the library has been remade as a learning commons

and technology center to accommodate for the lack of a librarian there are still very few resources in the space to help students.

More available technology for students, like free access to computer setups and chargers, would make the space more useful than just a rest stop one goes to in the middle of their school day.

Alternatively more books could be brought in by students or bought by the school to make up for the lack of books in good shape, giving the space an actual library feel as people come in and check out newer books.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Staff thanks Principal Puglisi for 10 memorable years

For any situation, our school has had a reliable and kind leader to visit for advice: Principal Patricia Puglisi.

After being gifted with her presence for 10 years, we are all beyond sad to see her go, and her upcoming departure from our community will be the bitter-sweet end of an era.

Throughout her time, Mrs. Puglisi has shown true care for all members of our community.

She has been supportive of ideas and events, allowing students, especially class officers, to truly explore and thrive in the realm of leadership, fundraising, and creativity.

Recently, Puglisi allowed the junior and senior classes to start a new tradition, the “Snowball,” a winter formal.

Mrs. Puglisi has displayed genuine interest and attended countless events and shows, representing Hornet pride.

Even on frigid Friday nights,

Mrs. Puglisi could be seen alongside the fence supporting teams at sports games.

Completing the image that students will unfortunately not see again after this spring was Mr. Richards right next to her, keeping the student section in check. The two will forever be viewed as a dynamic duo.

Even off campus, Mrs. Puglisi was seen cheering on student-athletes.

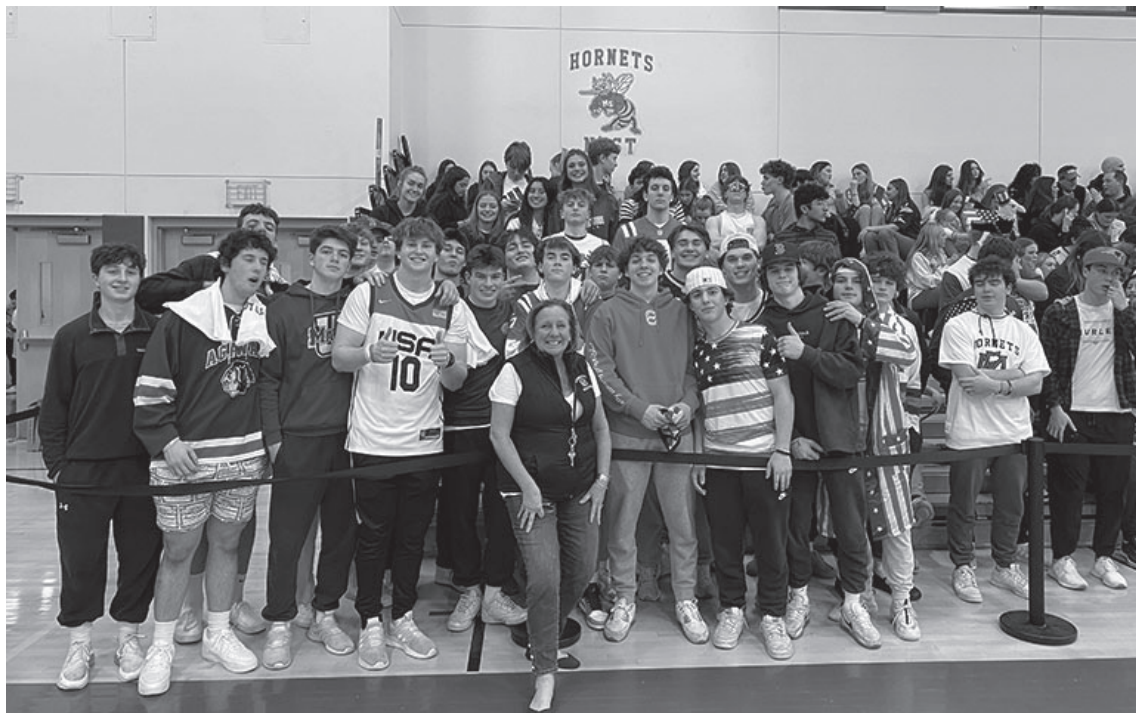
Through her generous actions, she united the community and proved that she is

always a supporter.

As our teams travel to fight against Lynnfield next year, she may be wearing yellow and blue, but she has proven that she will always be a Hornet.

Displaying her reliability and care, she sends her weekly emails, praising works and people, detailing past and upcoming events, and encouraging the community to appreciate the school’s talents, making every-

Don’t forget about us Hornets because we will certainly not forget about you.



PHILEINE DE WIDT PHOTO

Principal Patricia Puglisi was a fixture at games and events throughout her 10 years at the school.

one feel appreciated.

For any student walking through the doors in the morning, eating lunch in the dining hall, or leaving the building at 2:15 p.m., Mrs. Puglisi is there to offer a simple smile, brightening anyone’s day.

Her office is a safe space for all, reflecting the caring school environment she has created.

For the journalism staff, she has contributed to the paper on every issue, agreeing to numerous interviews, and she never fails to offer intelligent insight.

School without Principal Puglisi is a sight that we simply cannot imagine, but we wish her all the best in her next adventures.

Don’t forget about us Hornets because we will certainly not forget about you.

Thank you, Mrs. Puglisi.

High schools should require CPR training in health classes

By Whitney Turner
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can often be the vital component necessary to save a life.

CPR training should be an educational requirement for graduation in the U.S. and be incorporated into health classes at the high school level.

After professional football player Damar Hamlin’s cardiac arrest during a game on Jan. 2, many hands-on CPR resources experienced a surge in interest, reported the American Heart Association’s (AHA) article, “Interest in CPR Resources Up in Wake of Monday Night Football Dramatic Save.”

It should not require a dramatic, nationally-televised revival of



FLICKR.COM

The American Heart Association has many CPR training programs and resources that should be taught in health classes.

a professional athlete on the edge of death to spark such important public education in a life-saving technique.

According to the AHA’s website, “CPR Facts & Stats,” when CPR is performed immediately after an incident, it can double or triple someone’s chances of survival.

They added that 350,000 incidents of cardiac arrests occur outside of a hospital each year,

and 90 percent of people do not survive them.

In the NPR article, “Cardiac Arrest is Often Fatal, but Doctors Say Certain Steps Can Boost Survival Odds,” Dr. Myron Weisfeldt, a professor at Johns Hopkins University, explained that in many cases, friends, family, and other bystanders are unsure of how to assist in a medical emergency of this nature.

“That uncertainty wastes pre-

cious time and rapidly reduces the odds of survival,” he said.

In order to appropriately and quickly respond in an emergency situation, high school students should be trained in the technique at school.

CPR training is required for students to graduate high school in 40 out of 50 U.S. states, though Massachusetts is not one of them, the AHA reports on its “CPR in Schools Legislation Map.”

There are many ways to incorporate this training into high school health curriculums, such as implementing one of the AHA’s ready-to-use CPR training kits.

CPR should be prioritized in health curriculums over topics

students are already familiar with. Many students do not learn this technique elsewhere, so it should be the responsibility of schools to teach CPR.

CPR should be prioritized in health curriculums over topics students are already familiar with. Many students do not learn this technique elsewhere, so it should be the responsibility of schools to teach CPR.

As a school with an active athletic program, educating students in CPR is even more important in order to prevent fatal incidents.

The leading cause of death in young athletes is sudden cardiac arrest, the Mayo Clinic reported in the article, “Sudden Death in Young People: Heart Problems

Often Blamed.”

Educating youth in emergency practices is a public safety service. It equips young people heading into the world with skills that are proven to be effective in saving lives.

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The Independent is published monthly throughout the school year. It is a product of the Manchester-Essex Regional High School Journalism class.

We welcome letters to the editor from MERHS students, faculty, and community members.

All submissions must be signed. The Independent reserves the right not to print letters and to edit the content for clarity and length. While letters can be critical of an individual’s actions, they cannot slander or libel.

The staff editorial may be considered the opinion of the staff of The Independent.

By-line opinions are written by individual staff members and should not be considered representative of the entire staff.

The Independent staff hopes that all Manchester and Essex citizens will take advantage of this forum. The paper is meant to serve the school community, and we are open to suggestions to help it better serve its purposes.

Girls' basketball earns 13th seed in Division IV rankings

Loses in tournament to Notre Dame Academy Worcester in Round of 16

By Amy Vytopilova
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a regular season record of 15-5, the girls' basketball team finish their season as Co-CAL Baker Champions.

The Hornets were defeated in the second round 40-48 by Notre Dame, the fourth seed on March 7.

Senior captain Kendall Newton said the overall CAL win was a big achievement.

"I am super proud of our CAL Baker win this

year. With a tough league with many strong teams, it wasn't easy, but everyone stepped up and it was a huge accomplishment for all of us," she said.

Head coach Lauren DuBois said the team worked hard and executed their plays during their first round game against Blue

Hills RVT, they won 62-29.

"Our first round game went very well, we had a big win and it was because we were very well prepared. We knew what we were going to expect from this team, and we are able to push the pace and transition to get a lot of offensive opportunities," she said.

Senior captain Calista Lai said the team has been very successful this season and she is glad that the team has been very close and encouraging.

"We have a really strong team,

throughout the season we have created a lot of team bonding which has been very important ... Something that I have noticed that has helped our team was that we broke the stigma of older kids versus younger kids, we treat everyone the same regardless of what grade we are in. I think that

'I am super proud of our CAL Baker win this year.'

- KENDALL NEWTON



COURTESY OF @HORNETSINTHEHIVE

Junior Mechi O'Neil gets ready to take a foul shot in a home game Lynnfield on Dec. 13. The Hornets won the game 42-35. The girls' team finished their season with an overall record of 16-6.

is very important to have on a team as it makes our dynamic so much better," Lai said.

Newton said the team had a rough start in their final game

against Notre Dame, but they improved their play in the second half.

"It was a very tough game and we knew that going into it, we

struggled in the first quarter and we started to figure it out later in the game, but unfortunately we were unable to climb out of the hole," she said.

Boys' basketball team goes undefeated in CAL

Achieves perfect record for first time in school history

By Hannah Davis
INDEPENDENT STAFF

This season, the boys' basketball team lost in the Round of 16 of the MIAA Division IV boys' basketball tournament.

On Friday, March 3, they defeated Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School 59-47 in the

MIAA Division IV Round of 32.

The team lost 50-47 to Cathedral High School on Monday March 6, 2023 in Round of 16.

Head coach Tim St. Laurent said the team connected very well during the season and put in the work on the court.

"The team worked hard every day, competed every game, and won 18 games," he said.

St. Laurent said he is proud of the effort the players have put in each practice and game this season.

"I hope that future teams work as hard as these boys did each day," he said.

'The team worked hard every day, [and] competed every game.'

- TIM ST. LAURENT



COURTESY OF AISLING TWOMBLY

Junior Eddie Chareas blocks a shot in a game against Bay Path on March 3. The Hornets won the game 59-47 in the Round of 32.

Senior Captain Patrick Cronin said the team can learn and improve from the loss. He said handling pressure in important games and situations will be important in the future.

The team made program history this season by going undefeated, 15-0, in the Cape Ann

League and an overall record of 18-4 this season

Senior captain Brennan Twombly said he is very proud of what his team has accomplished this season.

"We won the league, and we went undefeated in the Cape Ann League for the first time in our

school's program history, which I am very proud of," he said.

Overall, Cronin said it was a very successful season for the team.

"It was a fantastic season, going undefeated in the CAL was really something special and just overall I'm going to miss this awesome group of guys," he said.

St. Laurent said this team has set high expectations for future boys' basketball seasons, and the team's success this year will lead to even more hardworking teams in the future.

The team this season has set the standard for hard work and attention to detail and set a good example for future teams, he said.

"When you have a good team that sets the framework like [this team] it also leads to future year success because it shows the younger players how to be successful," St. Laurent said.

Indoor track teams send 12 runners to Divisionals

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Twelve members of the girls' and boys' indoor track team, nine of whom auto qualified, were sent to the Divisionals meet. Junior captain Nate Gardner said this number is greater than in past years.

For the girls' indoor track team, senior captain Caroline MacKinnon, sophomore captains Megan Hurd and Whitney Turner, sophomores Sabine Cooper and Stella Straub, and

freshman Cia Donohoe qualified for Divisionals.

For the boys' indoor track team, senior captain Jack Newton, seniors Lucas Rodi and Logan Cooper, junior captains Finn O'Hara and Gardner, and junior Charlie Latons qualified as well.

Hurd said Divisionals went well. They had successful events and a good amount of relays, she said.

Newton set a school record in the 600 M event, girls' varsity head coach Nicole Bembridge said.

Newton and Gardner also competed in the Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association Boys Indoor Track Pentathlon at the Reggie Lewis Center. The Pentathlon consists of five events: 55 HH, 1000 M, high

jump, long jump, and shot put.

Newton finished 20th overall in the Pentathlon with 2776 points and first in the boys 1000 M event with a time of 2:40.92. Gardner finished 50th overall with 2340 points.

Looking back at the season, Hurd and Gardner both said they were proud of the improvement and mindset of the team.

Both teams ended their seasons with a 2-2 overall record in the CAL.

"Both teams have had losing records for many, many years, so to end with a split record, with a team as young as this, was amazing," Bembridge said.

Sophomore captain Megan Hurd said it was one of their best seasons.

"It was a lot of people's first season, and I think they did great

because it's a different kind of sport to try out. It was one of our best seasons in a while," Hurd said.

Bembridge said she was proud of her team.

"Looking back on the season, I couldn't ask for anything more from [the players]. They showed up, they stayed committed, [and] they worked really hard," she said.

She said the sprinters, jumpers, and hurdlers all improved their

speed, coordination, and agility over the season.

The distance runners learned that there's always a little bit more to give on the track, Bembridge said.

"They learned to see and feel what was in them, even if they didn't totally buy it and believe it. They found their grit," she said.

Bembridge said she believed in her players.

"I want them to leave knowing that they did because they could, and it

was there within them the entire time," she said.

'Looking back on the season, I couldn't ask for anything more from [the players]. They showed up, they stayed committed, [and] they worked really hard.'

- NICOLE BEMBRIDGE

Boys' hockey reaches States, loses to Grafton in Round of 32

Team says goodbye to seniors, plans for post-season

By Sam Heanue
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Boys' hockey finished the 2022-23 season with a 5-0 defeat against No. 4 seed Grafton in the first round of the state tournament at Buffone Arena in Worcester.

The team ended 3-2-1 in the Cape Ann League, with an overall record of 7-12-1 to qualify them for the state tournament as the No. 29 seed.

The team faced a tough loss in the first round of the tournament, despite a focused bus ride and a strong warm-up, junior Quinn Brady said.

"They were the best shooting team we had seen all season," he

said.

Brady said although they struggled throughout the season and faced some big losses, the team stayed positive and continued to make an effort.

"We had a lot of good wins, a lot of bad losses, but we would always try our best whenever we stepped out on the ice," he said.

Brady is one of several important players who contributed to the team's success this season, along with seniors Finn Lawler, Micheal DeOreo, and captain Dougie Pratt, head coach Kyle Nelson said.

"Pratt and Brady both lead the team in scoring with 22 points ... and on the defensive line, Mi-

chael DeOreo and Finn Lawler have been a big help," he said.

Pratt finished his senior season with 14 goals and 8 assists, more than doubling his points from last year's season, Nelson said.

Despite their elimination from the state tournament, the team performed well this season, Pratt said.

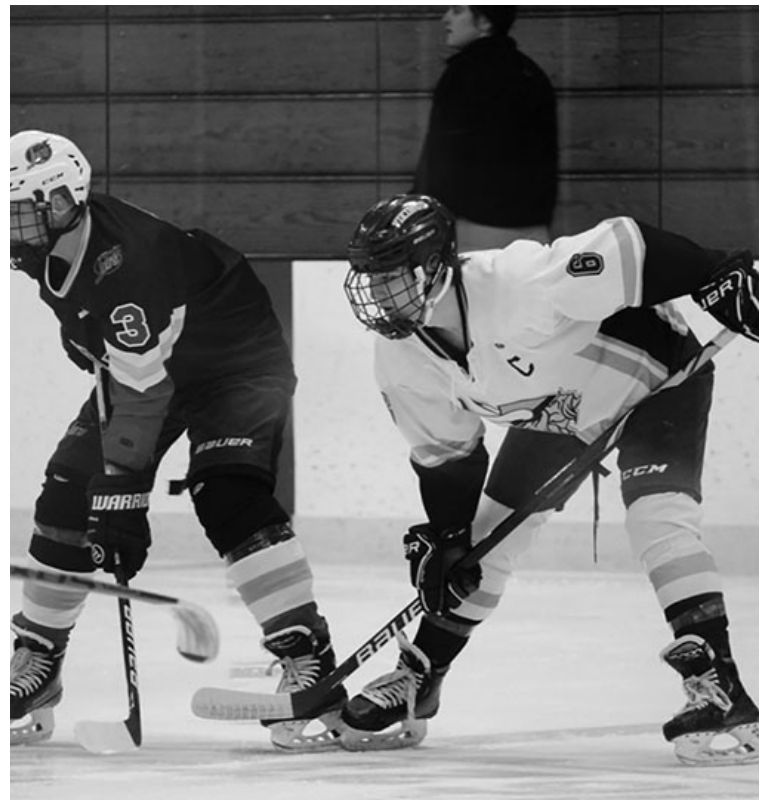
"There were a lot of ups and downs ... but overall it was a pretty good season," he said.

Going into the off-season, the team plans on doing summer training in preparation for the upcoming winter season, sophomore Luke Holmes said.

"Over the post-season ... I think we're all going to try to do something over the summer to keep our skills for pre-season in

'To the seniors, a big thank you. They played their hearts out this season.'

- LUKE HOLMES



COURTESY OF @HORNETSINTHEHIVE

Senior captain and impact player Dougie Pratt waits for the puck during a game against Lynn on Jan 16. The Vikings won 5-1.

November," he said.

Holmes is one of many returning players that are grateful for all of the graduating seniors who

played for the team this season.

"To the seniors, a big thank you. They played their hearts out this season," he said.

Girls' hockey qualifies for States, eliminated in Round of 32

Team works on creating offensive opportunities

By Libby Mulry
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Ending their season with a record of 4-16, the girls' ice hockey team's postseason was cut short in the state tournament.

The Marblehead team, co-op with Swampscott, Hamilton-Wenham and Manchester-Essex, were knocked out in the first round of the tournament after losing 5-0 to the Haverhill Hillies, junior assistant captain Lily Francoeur said.

Freshman Teyah Fleming said that playing better schools gives players insight into what good teams look like.

When playing tougher games, the team never gave up or hung



COURTESY OF COLETTE RODRIGUES

Freshman Teyah Fleming gets ready to step onto the ice and play. The Magicians played Medford on Jan. 9 and were defeated 1-0.

their heads, she said.

"It was definitely the best game I've seen the girls play all year. We played up against a tough team and managed to keep the score 0-0 through the first period," Francoeur said.

In the later periods of the game, the team had trouble scoring, she said.

Coach Brittany Smith said the team has faced problems with offense and consistency throughout the season.

"Some games we haven't put together the whole 45 minutes or created opportunities in the offensive zones," she said.

In the games that the team has won, there were great

defensive zone and goal-scoring opportunities, Smith said.

"We're working on being more consistent with our play, we go up and down a lot, and I think that comes from having a younger team," she said.

The team started the season with many inexperienced players, Francoeur said.

"I think next year we can work on starting earlier with skills because we had a lot of new players to the sport this year," she said.

In last year's season, the team experienced similar skill problems but came together in regards to spirit, Francoeur said.

"Last year, we had a lot of girls, some who couldn't skate, and it was inspiring because,

towards the end of the year, we all showed up and motivated each other," she said.

Getting along is very important to fostering a strong team foundation and playing well alongside each other, Fleming said.

The team continued to motivate one another throughout this season and put in the work, Francoeur said.

"They worked really hard this year and proved their way through the end," she said.

'It was definitely the best game I've seen the girls play all year.'

-LILY FRANCOEUR

Freshmen lead swim team to Sectionals, State Finals

By Mechi O'Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the girls' overall record of 5-2, and the boys' 4-3, the swim team ended off the season with two individual swimmers competing at States.

Senior captain Ava Magnuson, junior Liv Cahill, sophomore Libby McKinnon, and freshmen Megan Graeter and Sydney Hemme all competed at the MIAA Girls North Sectionals Meet on Feb. 11 at their home pool, the Sterling Center YMCA.

Hemme swam the 100 breaststroke and 100 butterfly while Megan Graeter placed 8th in

the 200 IM and 9th in the 100 backstroke.

Coach Caitlin Eramo said the team did exceptionally well, finishing 14th overall, and beating their personal records in all three relays.

In the MIAA Division 2 North Finals on Feb. 18, Hemme competed again along with Graeter, who placed 8th in the 100 backstroke, setting a new personal record.

Hemme said the environment at States was intimidating.

"There were a whole bunch of seniors and juniors there, which was kind of worrying," she said.

Eramo said Graeter and

Hemme were definitely the team's MVPs this season, despite their young age.

"Since they're freshmen, it's really exciting to watch them grow because we'll hopefully have them here for three more seasons," she said.

Eramo also said that because of their experience in the sport, they were able to become leaders for the team throughout the season.

"They both have incredible work ethic and really help to set the tone for all of our practices," she said.

Hemme, who has been swimming competitively since she was very young, is currently a member of the YMCA North Shore swim team, she said.

Graeter, who said she also has been on a club swim team since she was 6 years old, is now a



MECHI O'NEIL PHOTOS

Freshmen Megan Graeter and Sydney Hemme were named impact athletes and reached the Massachusetts State Finals.

member of the Boston YMCA swim team.

Looking toward the next year's season, Graeter said she hopes to be able to improve in

every area.

"I'm going to try and build on what I have now and also try and get to know more people on the team," she said.

Students' art recognized in juried exhibition

Pieces submitted to UMass Dartmouth's online exhibit

By Caroline Mackinnon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Four students won recognition for artwork submitted to the Emerging Young Artists Juried Exhibition held by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth online.

Art teacher Tamera Burns said

she did not curate any of the work and that this particular show is student-driven since students submit their own pieces.

"It gives students a chance to learn the process, and gives them the recognition that they deserve from our school community and beyond," she said.

Burns said art shows and other

opportunities allow students to get recognition for their work.

"For whatever path you take in high school, I think there are growing opportunities for demonstrating your knowledge. Besides an A+, there is increasing recognition and ways to demonstrate something that is produced," she said.

Junior Lily Francoeur received recognition for her acrylic on

canvas and said she put a lot of thought into the meaning of the piece.

"I

wanted to create a mental health piece about loving yourself and show a physical presence of self-love and your soul being open," she said.

Franceour said she was surprised to learn she won an award when she entered the exhibition.

"I was pretty happy when [Ms. Burns] said I got the award. I was

'It gives students a chance to learn the process, and gives them the recognition that they deserve.'

- TAMERA BURNS



COURTESY OF LILY FRANCOEUR

Junior Lily Francoeur's art focuses on the importance of self-love.

kind of nervous to send something in, but I am happy with the outcome," she said.

Junior Alana Martignetti won an award for her charcoal and India Ink piece inspired by a pen-

dant on her late grandmother's necklace.

"I've always enjoyed art as a hobby, but it feels great to be complimented on your accomplishments, especially when you work really hard and spend a lot of time on a piece like this," she said.

Junior Ava Rizzico won an award for a piece made digitally.

"[The piece] is about the censorship of non-binary and intersex people, specifically their bodies. It's also about how society doesn't really know what exactly happens during a gender or sex transition, so they make a lot of assumptions about it. It's important for the public to know these issues exist.," they said.

Senior Ava Ross won an award for a colored pencil portrait.

"The piece I submitted was a portrait of a young girl in Africa. I felt honored to be receiving recognition for my abilities," she said.

Drama Club earns awards at Dramafest

Members celebrate win after months of preparation

By Hannah Davis
INDEPENDENT STAFF

At the Massachusetts High School Drama Festival on March 5, 2023, the high school's Drama Club competed against other Massachusetts schools and won several awards.

The competition took place at North Reading High School and was hosted by the school's performing arts department.

While the show, "Burglars, Bunglers and Neighborhood Thieves" was not selected to move on to the second round of the competition, senior Owen O'Leary and sophomore Josh



COURTESY OF MADDIE MACHAIN

Seniors Owen O'Leary and Annabel Smith act alongside juniors Caroline Quinn and Josh Cohen in their Dramafest performance.

Cohen both won all-star acting awards.

Senior Maddy Officer won an all-star tech award for her stage

management..

Together, the group won the Stage Manager's Award, which is presented to a school by the stage

manager of the host school.

The show was directed by teaching assistant Gianna Baglioni, who said she has been directing Dramafest performances for the past four years and participated in Dramafest as an actor as well when she was a high school student.

Baglioni said she is happy with how the group has been able to take on more responsibilities this year.

"I'm really proud of them for stepping up, and I'm really proud of the fact that we've become a well-oiled machine these past four years," Baglioni said.

She said she is proud of the group's independence this year.

"[The competition is] a lot of hard work, but when I sit in that seat and I see them perform at Dramafest, I immediately feel like it's worth it," Baglioni said.

O'Leary played a police officer in the show. He said their show is a Pink Panther crime mystery where characters aren't what they seem.

He loved being able to have fun with the themes of the show and produce them on the stage, he said

Baglioni said one of the most important parts of competing at Dramafest in the set. Officer is the stage manager, set designer, and prop master for the production.

Officer, who is in charge of making sure everything on stage runs smoothly, said she enjoyed the collaborative nature of the production this year.

"[It felt] a lot more collaborative this year, and so [it was] higher stakes but also a little bit more rewarding," Officer said.

O'Leary said he loves meeting new people at the competition.

"[The competition] is a bunch of theater kids you meet from all across Massachusetts, and it's cool to see their shows and also interact with them as actual people," he said.

Performer visits students in Jazz Band

By Caroline Mackinnon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Musician Alexa Tarantino visited jazz band students in high school and middle school after the half day as part of the Shalin Liu outreach program for the second year in a row on March 1.

Band teacher Joe Janack said Tarantino played a piece by herself and with both groups of students, offering suggestions as well as constructive critiques.

"She played 'Tank' by the Seatbelts with the high schoolers, and the middle school jazz band played 'Superstition' by Stevie



COURTESY OF JOE JANACK

Members of Jazz Band practice playing the song "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder to prepare for meeting guest Alexa Tarantino.

Wonder. It was awesome to have [the students] learn from someone who is a professional musician. [Tarantino] gave them compliments, which was a good morale

booster," he said..

Tarantino talked about how music has affected her life, being a performer who travels the world, Janack said.

"She offered suggestions on how students can maybe go a little further with music even if they think that they can't," he said.

Senior Alexander Wolf said he learned useful information from Tarantino since she has an abundance of experience.

"She gave some good anecdotes about improvisation," he said.

Wolf said having outside experts coming to visit is important because they have a offer a new perspective

"We hear ourselves a lot, so we all have a narrow perspective. Having other people come in and see what we're doing and offer their own opinions is really important," he said.

Junior Ava Rizzico said their main takeaways from Tarantino were methods on how to stay close to the beat of the music.

"We learned about staying on time with each other, getting more of a feel of the room. We don't have a metronome going in our heads, so we don't go exactly to the beats per minute the music is in. She helped us grasp that a bit more," they said.

The jazz band just recently performed with Soundwaves on March 1 at the elementary schools.

Junior Chloé Lilly said she had a great experience playing for the elementary school students.

"It was great to connect with the younger generation of the musical community," she said.

Upcoming events for jazz band are the Evening of Jazz concert on March 16 and the High School Spring Concert on April 6.

‘The Spectacular Now’ portrays realities of adolescent love

Movie ends
on optimistic note

By Ella Chafe
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

“The Spectacular Now,” released in 2013, should continue to be viewed today by those who are looking for a romantic coming-of-age drama.

This movie reminds viewers that although sometimes messy and confusing, high school love is still real.

“The Spectacular Now” was written by Scott Neustadter and Michael H. Weber, and directed by James Ponsoldt. It is based on the novel of the same name

written by Tim Tharp released in 2008.

Filmed in Athens, Georgia, James Ponsoldt’s hometown, the film follows the life of Sutter Keely (Miles Teller), an alcoholic and popular senior in high school.

The story begins after Sutter experiences a breakup with his girlfriend Cassidy (Brie Larson), and he writes a college application supplement detailing how his greatest hardship in life so far has been getting dumped by her.

After getting blackout drunk, Sutter wakes up on the lawn of Aimee Finecky (Shailene Woodley), a quiet girl in Sutter’s grade whom he doesn’t know.

A relationship soon blossoms as Sutter spends more time with Aimee, and they learn about each other’s personal lives.

Throughout their unexpected romance, they encounter great challenges, as Sutter gets caught up in the past, while Aimee continues planning for the future.

The film’s final minutes are frustrating, but it ultimately closes with an optimistic ending.

This movie teaches teenagers about the risks and rewards of first love while giving older viewers the opportunity to reminisce on their high school experience.

It also shows the hidden aspects that high school students could be dealing with behind closed doors such as substance abuse.

Teller is the perfect actor to play Sutter, as he is undoubtedly a charmer and easy to enjoy



HULU.COM

Director James Ponsoldt’s “The Spectacular Now,” starring Miles Teller and Shailene Woodley, tells a story of heartbreak and first love.

watching.

“The Spectacular Now” is rated R for alcohol use, language, and sexuality—all involving teens.

It was officially released on Sept. 13, 2013 and earned itself a 91 percent Rotten Tomatoes critic score.

‘EPIC: The Musical’ shares classic with new audiences

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Jorge Rivera-Herrans’s musical adaptation of Homer’s literary classic “The Odyssey” titled “EPIC: The Musical” is an astounding show of storytelling that pulls new listeners into the classic story.

Beginning as the passion project of creator Rivera-Herrans in 2019, the concept has slowly grown into a series of short albums with hopes of an eventual theatrical performance, according to Jorge Rivera-Herrans’s viral account on video social media app TikTok.

The songs have been periodically teased on Rivera-Herrans’s TikTok as they are finished, building a steady stream of attention on the project that has culminated in over 13 million likes and nearly 600,000 followers.

The popularity of the series re-



SPOTIFY.COM

The first five songs of the adaptation of Homer’s “The Odyssey” titled “EPIC: The Musical” were released on Spotify on Dec. 25.

sulted in a record deal with BRP records, a new record company in New York City that focuses on musical concept albums, leading to the recent full release of the first two sagas in the show, totalling nine songs, with seven more sagas to come, according to a recent publication by musical magazine CurtainCall.

The musical follows the story

of Odysseus, a Greek hero tragically lost at sea for the gods to toy with as he tries desperately to reach his homeland of Ithaca.

Though the original source text is hundreds of pages long and relies on prior knowledge from other Greek stories to fully understand, this new adaptation is compressed and uses tools to help the audience follow along.

Each song tells a part of the story, slicing the long story into easily digestible pieces, and the music connects the listener to the expansive cast by having different characters sing their own viewpoints and explain their past directly through song.

To demonstrate this shift in perspectives, Rivera-Herrans cleverly utilizes motifs and different musical styles to represent the diverse cast of characters, allowing the listener to follow along easily and engage with the story.

The gentle but sharp piano beautifully

tells the audience that the goddess Athena is coming to intervene in Odysseus’s journey, cutting through the rock guitar and drums that show the hero’s passion.

Details like this have been showcased even beyond the released songs as a result of the transparency and excitement demonstrated by Rivera-Herrans over social media.

People are able to directly follow the production process through

numerous posts on his TikTok and Twitter accounts and can even audition for roles in the show, allowing the result to truly feel like a collaboration between numerous brilliant minds and stunning voices.

The success has spread beyond even just Rivera-Herrans’s social media, however, as the recent Spotify releases extend the show into the hands of a global audience.

Every song on each saga has millions of individual plays with the highest being the song “Warrior of the Mind” from the first release “EPIC: The Troy Saga,” having over 13 million plays according to Spotify.

Fresh adaptations that work to engage audiences like “EPIC: The Musical” help share classic literature with those who before may have felt disconnected from such old and often difficult works. This inclusion goes a long way to enticing more people to read the original text, revitalizing the classic.

Each song tells a part of the story, slicing the long story into easily digestible pieces.

HBO Max’s ‘The Last of Us’ series stays true to original game published under Sony Computer Entertainment

By Alessia Omari
INDEPENDENT STAFF

“The Last of Us,” HBO Max’s recent live action adaptation of the popular hit game under the same name, succeeds in presenting a compelling and grisly narrative by staying true to its source material.

The original 2013 action-adventure game was developed by video game company Naughty Dog and published under Sony Computer Entertainment. It quickly received many awards, being praised for its characters, sound design, dialogue, and gameplay.

The series was filmed in June

2021 under the supervision of screenwriter Craig Mazin and Neil Druckman, the writer and creator of the original games.

The catalyst of the story’s post-apocalyptic setting is the Cordyceps fungus, which infects insects such as ants or spiders, growing into their brains and affecting their behavior.

Within the series, the Cordyceps fungus has evolved to withstand hotter temperatures due to climate change, making it able to infect human beings in the process.

The story follows two characters: Joel (Pedro Pascal) is a middle aged goods smuggler who is tasked with transferring Ellie

(Bella Ramsey), a young girl who has a unique immunity to the fungus.

This series does an amazing job at telling the story of the original game within a TV-show format. The original game was already heavily story-based, making for an easy live-action translation.

There is a noticeable effort in every scene to stay true to the most memorable points of the video game. The flashback scenes between Joel and his daughter are almost word for word, shot for shot the exact same.

Aspects of the game are fleshed out through the adaptation. SFX makeup and talented



HBOMAX.COM

HBO Max’s “The Last of Us,” a live action adaptation of a beloved video game, has received critical acclaim and audience support.

actors help to bring the video game’s Clicker zombies to life on screen rather than an obstacle to beat.

The performances of Ramsey and Pascal are noteworthy, with Ramsey able to perfectly encapsulate the role of an angry teen girl

sucked into the middle of the apocalypse. Pascal flawlessly takes on the hardened, father-figure role.

Staying true to its source material has made “The Last of Us” a successful adaptation of the popular video game.