

the **INDEPENDENT**

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9/11, War on Terror class visits museum, memorial

Group views 'The Hunt for Bin Laden' exhibit, sees Battery Park

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT STAFF

The 9/11 and War on Terror classes took a field trip to New York City to visit the National 9/11 Memorial Museum, led by teacher John Mullady.

"This field trip was very different than the other school trips I've been on. It helped further my understanding of the attacks on 9/11 and it was overall a

really good experience," sophomore Olivia Gado said.

On Nov. 1, Students and chaperones left at 5:30 a.m on a bus and arrived in Manhattan around

12 p.m, Mullady said. Five chaperones and 27 students attended the trip, all eager to see to the museum, he said.

When they arrived at the museum, the students had free rein and were able to choose what exhibits they wanted to visit, he said.

The museum contains exhibits that walk through the story of what happened on Sept. 11, 2001, the longest one being very detailed and intense, Mullady said.

The museum has a brand new exhibit called "The Hunt for Bin Laden" that the students were able to see, he said.

The exhibit explains the efforts that were made during the 10-year manhunt to catch Bin Laden and contains many artifacts that have not been shared with the

public until this exhibit, according to the 9/11 Memorial and Museum website.

"Some students went straight to the exhibit about the hunt for



Students visited the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, where they saw artifacts, including a piece of one of the towers. After visiting the museum, they walked to Battery Park and saw the Statue of Liberty.

Bin Laden, and waited in line; others walked through, and some people skipped a certain part of the museum that was a more intense presentation of what happened," Mullady said.

Gado said that the Bin Laden exhibit was her favorite exhibit to visit because of how interesting it was to see all the artifacts.



COURTESY OF JOHN MULLADY

After exploring the museum for two and a half hours, the group walked to Battery Park for a break and to see the Statue of Liberty across the water. This was Mullady's favorite part of the trip.

"It was a nice way to decompress and relax after going through the museum about such an intense event," Mullady said.

He said he thinks the class will do a trip like this again in the future.

Mullady said he had a lot of support from the staff and School Committee to help organize the trip.

"It's really nice that we work in a place that sees the value in this type of trip," he said.

Seniors recruited for athletic excellence

By Paige Swanson
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Seniors Hannah Freeman, Mia Cromwell, Olivia Mariotti, Maya Baker, and Isabell Amigo have been recruited to play sports collegiately next year.

After receiving an offer from the sailing coach and passing through admissions, Freeman said she is excited to sail for Stanford next year.

"I'm really looking forward to having the team atmosphere and a collaborative environment. When I visited, I really enjoyed the way the team interacted and the team spirit," she said.

Freeman said sailing has been a huge time commitment because she spent most of her weekends traveling to be able to sail, so she is glad her efforts have paid off.

Mariotti will be attending



PAIGE SWANSON PHOTO

Seniors Isabell Amigo, Maya Baker, Olivia Mariotti, Mia Cromwell, and Hannah Freeman were recruited for athletics.

Brown University where she will play Division I tennis next year.

She said she is looking forward to being on a team and attending an academically rigorous school.

"Knowing that I'm going to be part of a team and competing together and winning together is something I'm so excited for. Brown is also an amazing university. It's so diverse, and I love the open curriculum there," she said.

Mariotti said she is also glad to be going to Brown because it

demonstrates that her hard work and dedication to her sport has paid off.

Cromwell is committed to Colby College to play Division III soccer. She said that, although the process to be recruited was difficult, it was ultimately rewarding.

"In order to be recruited, I had to put in the effort of showing up to training, working hard to improve my soccer skills, and performing well when college

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Peer mentors prepare for Homecoming Panel, Week of Gratitude

By Izzy DiPasquale
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In addition to preparing for the annual College Homecoming panel and Week of Gratitude, the peer mentors have created a new

bulletin board to help students connect with mentors.

The peer mentors have recently decorated the bulletin board outside of the guidance office with descriptions of each of the members as well as their interests and some fun facts.

Guidance director Beverly Low said that the board was created as a way to better promote

the peer mentor program and to facilitate students' ability to connect with the mentors.

"The whole idea behind the bulletin board was that it is great to have peer mentors, but it is not great if people don't know who they are," Low said.

Peer mentors co-coordinator senior Christina Bullock said that the board was an idea that some of the peer mentors had a few years ago, and she is excited that it has finally been created.

"Having the descriptions will allow students to find mentors with similar interests that they might be able to relate to," Bullock said.

Guidance counselor David Conwell said that the peer mentors have continued to check-in with the freshman U blocks as opposed to previous years in

which the mentors would solely assist with move-in day and orientation.

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'The whole idea behind the bulletin board was that it is great to have peer mentors, but it is not great if people don't know who they are.'

-BEVERLY LOW

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Office detention referral form modernizes school procedures

By Domino Morris
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Academic and behavioral dean Craig Macarelli said he is reforming school procedures to become more modernized, starting with creating a new office detention referral form to promote consistency.

He said that as a new staff member, he observed differences within how teachers assign detentions. For example, Macarelli said some teachers would email him while others would stop by and talk to him.

The idea for a change in this process was in Macarelli's mind since the beginning of the school year, and he said teacher input solidified the plan.

The teaching staff was also

frustrated and confused about the old process of referring detentions, so together they were able to create this updated system, Macarelli said.

English teacher Allison Krause said she was glad to work together with Macarelli to improve the school.

"Mr. Macarelli is really sup-

portive of the teachers' needs... so it felt really good that he is on board with us and really is taking this seriously," she said.

A Google Form for teachers is now being used to give office detentions, he said. This

will allow him to keep track of all records easier, Macarelli said.

"My goal was to create a simple, straight-forward [and] consistent process with office deten-

tions," he said.

A more organized system will leave less room for errors, Macarelli said.

He said he hopes this change will reduce detentions as teachers will be prompted to reflect because the process is more formal and the student may not have caused a serious offense.

The modern approach and use of technology will now allow for the information to be more accessible to him and everyone else, he said.

Macarelli said he hopes this change will act as a catalyst to move the school to a more modern, technological approach with the expectation of improving more procedures.

English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton said she thinks the teaching staff is happy to have this new change to simplify and regulate this process because it has been overlooked in past years.

"I think it is a good idea to evaluate things that you haven't thought about recently," she said.

'My goal was to create a simple, straight-forward, [and] consistent process with office detentions.'

-CRAIG MACARELLI

Referring Staff Name *

Your answer

Reason for Referral *

General Disruptive Behavior (Not first offense)

Defiance/Insubordination (Not first offense)

Tardy to Class (Not first offense)

Cutting Class

Obscene/Inappropriate Language and/or Gestures

Vandalism

Academic Dishonesty (Not first offense)

Other (Please describe below in detailed explanation section)

Detailed Explanation of Incident(s) *

Your answer

The new office detention referral form is a Google Form that includes categories for misbehavior and a section for details.

A World of Difference program receives training from Anti-Defamation League

By Mia Cromwell
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

During the month of December, the new members of the A World of Difference group will have two training sessions, led by representatives from the Anti-Defamation League (the ADL), that are focusing on promoting better culture in schools, adviser Lauren DuBois said.

Jessica Tran and David Conwell are also advisers for the program.

After these workshops, the returning members of the group will run a practice session where they will teach the new students the additional information they learned last year from the ADL, returning junior member Frank Wood said.

Junior Sylvie Oldeman, who was also a part of the program last



MIA CROMWELL PHOTO

Members of the A World of Difference group discuss how to handle bias and bullying during a training with the ADL.

year, said that a few of the issues the group has learned about are racial and sexual differences.

In the spring, the group will lead about four sessions in ninth-grade classes during which they

will arrange different activities and discussions around promoting a positive and safe school culture, DuBois said.

Through training the ninth-graders, she said the members' goal is to promote a school culture of tolerance and anti-bias along with providing a network of students trained to help others during situations where there is inappropriate treatment or language.

"We just want to create a school community in which everybody's differences are not just tolerated but actually celebrated, and people can feel safe in their school," DuBois said.

Oldeman said that the group continues to help students recog-

nize and handle matters of prejudice and cultural differences.

"I think it's important that we implement these kinds of techniques and this knowledge to a wider range of students because

'I have just learned a lot more about what's going on in the world and what we need to do to change certain prejudices and bad things that are happening in our school.'

-FRANK WOOD

it's mostly not known, and if we educate people more on it, it can help our community be better," she said.

Wood said his experience from A World of Difference has helped him discover the appropriate way to handle certain

social situations.

"I have just learned a lot more about what's going on in the world and what we need to do to change certain prejudices and bad things that are happening in our school," he said.

School Council to update current cell phone policy

By Hannah Freeman
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As one of their goals for the year, the School Council has begun the process of revising the school policy on cell phone use in the student handbook.

The guidelines for cell phone use have not been updated since they were originally created in 2005, something that prompted the group to review and revise the policy, history teacher and School Council member Jennifer Coleman said.

"In the last 10 to 15 years,

technology and the way we use it in schools has changed drastically, so it is time to revisit that policy. It is also best practice of the School Council to look at the student handbook every year, so this was a good time to review the current policy," she said.

Currently, the policy classifies phones as "items of distraction" and states that "unauthorized use of any of this technology during the school day may result in it being confiscated."

The policy is generally vague and does not explicitly state when and how phone usage is permitted during the school day, School Council member senior Maddie Bourbon said.

"Unauthorized use creates a gray area. It also isn't as relevant anymore because today people use phones for a lot more than calling and texting, which is what



HANNAH FREEMAN PHOTO

Seniors Abigail Corrao and Lillie Harrison use devices in study hall. The updated cell phone policy will borrow some ideas from other schools in order to address issues with current technology.

you would have needed permission to do under the old policy," she said.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said

that the School Council will begin by assessing the current policy and deciding what specifically needs to be changed.

"As a School Council, we want to look at what our policy says, if it is where it should be given the time we live in now, if it is missing anything, and what other schools are doing. We want to make sure that we are up to date," she said.

In the next few months, the School Council plans to identify several key sections in policies that have proven to be successful at other schools before ultimately writing an updated policy for the school's student handbook, Puglisi said.

"Our next step will be to gather policies from schools both inside and outside of Massachusetts to see how schools are meeting student needs teaching responsibility around technology, then coming up with something that makes sense for our school community," she said.

Spaulding grant provides laser cutter, implements educational opportunities

STEM, art programs will utilize machine to explore varying pertinent subjects

By Anton Kozyrev
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

STEM teacher Steven Cogger obtained funding for the purchase of a new laser cutter machine to augment learning in STEM courses.

He began the process of applying for budgetary approval last spring, presenting to the Spaulding Education Fund the benefits and merits of employing a laser cutter in pertinent courses.

Cogger particularly emphasized how it complements the presence of the 3-D printers already installed in the classroom.

"The thing to understand is that the laser cutter cuts in two dimensions ... and the 3-D printer is using an additive process; it's adding in layers while the laser cutter is a subtractive process," he said.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said the Spaulding Education Fund, the organization that provided the resources necessary to acquire the laser cutter, has been instru-



ANTON KOZYREV PHOTO

As a result of a grant from the Spaulding Fund, STEM teacher Steven Cogger was able to purchase a laser cutter machine, which he is programming to form a DECA diamond for Dean Martino's DECA program's school based enterprise.

mental over the years in promoting the development of pedagogical approaches at the school.

"The grants are usually for things that the school budget cannot afford or hasn't incorporated into its budget ... [Spaul-

ding] helped us with the 3-D printers, and they've also helped with the reconfiguration of the learning commons as well as DNA testers in biology with Ms. Umile," she said.

While this 3-D printer most directly benefits the technical, engineering-based courses offered at the school, Cogger said this is an addition to the school's resources that has the potential to benefit multiple disciplines.

"My primary objective was to create something that would be accessible to more classes than just the technical classes ... that's why I talked to [art teacher] Ms. Burns, since there's a lot of art projects that could be done with this laser cutter," he said.

The art department intends to take advantage of the new access to this educational tool with Burns outlining the arts classes' plans to use the printer for a merging of disciplines.

"It's still very much a work in progress ... it's meant to give students more of an opportunity to explore ... art and science are actually very similar in their processes ... it's discovery," she said.

The laser cutter has already been used by students in Cogger's STEM courses.

Sophomore Andrew Amigo has used the equipment to apply his learning through a more tactile means.

"I created a brand logo in Adobe Illustrator, and then, we used the laser cutter to etch it into a piece of wood," he said.

Science classes build coral reef tank

Students will add different types of coral, anemones, small fish into aquarium

By Carson Komishane
INDEPENDENT STAFF

On the second floor a brand new coral reef tank is being built with the help of the money from the Spaulding grant, which

funds projects outside of the curriculum, chemistry teacher William Novak said.

He applied for the grant to build a coral reef tank and to integrate it into both chemistry and biology classes, and he is overseeing the process.

"For the chemistry program, it would be analyzing the water chemistry and understanding the cycles of the organisms. For the biology program, it would be aqua [farming] coral," Novak said.

Novak has started to explain the process to his chemistry classes to see who is interested in creating the tank, he said.

About 12 students have shown interest in building the tank so far as well as students from his U block, he said.

Sophomore Gracie Susko, along with other students, has helped start the building process of the tank.

"During U block, I helped build the lights on the side of the tank and hung them on the sides of the tank," she said.

Sophomore Sami Turner is also aiding the construction process during U block.

"Developing the tank was really interesting because I could see how the whole process will come together once the coral

will be put into it," she said.

Novak plans to continue developing the tank until it is filled with live coral in January after the Christmas break, he said.

"In the tank, there will be both soft tis-

'For the chemistry program, [the tank] would be analyzing the water chemistry and understanding the cycles of organisms.'

-WILLIAM NOVAK



CARSON KOMISHANE PHOTO

Sophomore Gracie Susko, along with other members of William Novak's U block, is constructing a coral reef tank with the help of a Spaulding grant.

sue coral and hard coral. We will start off with the soft coral, which is easier to grow. Eventually, we will add anemones and maybe some small fish," he said.

Novak chose soft coral because he has never grown coral before and wants to experiment with how the coral reacts to

the water conditions. It is easier to grow because it adapts quickly to worse quality water, he said.

"I plan to have students, at least once per year, test the water chemistry in their classes to maintain the tank, and integrate the idea into my classes," Novak said.

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coaches were watching. The process was very tough, but fortunately, it was rewarding for me in the end... now I am looking forward to meeting new people and being a part of a collegiate level soccer team," she said.

Amigo will be attending Endicott College where she will play Division III lacrosse. She said she was originally skeptical about attend a school so close to home, but she is now looking forward to it.

"I really like the location. It's on the beach, and I really like that. I am also re-

ally excited to get out of this community and join a new one," she said.

Baker will be attending Keene State College to play division III soccer. She

said she is excited to continue to play a sport she loves.

"I'm really excited to be able to keep playing soccer. I've played for so long, and I can't imagine my life without it," Baker said.

PEER MENTORS
CONTINUED FROM

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"Having peer mentors [routinely] visit U blocks shows students that [mentors] have been in their positions and allows them to share some of the tips and tricks they might have learned along the way,"

Conwell said.

The mentors are currently collecting thank you cards in preparation for the Week of Gratitude, which will take place

the week before February break. Low said it is an opportunity for students to thank their peers, teachers, and faculty, and spread positivity throughout the school.

"[Week of Gratitude] is really intended for everybody just to hit the pause button before February vacation because the winter can be hard, so maybe it will brighten someone's day to get a thank you

card," Low said.

In addition, students are preparing for the College Homecoming panel on Jan. 7.

"The College Homecoming panel is something that's existed at MERHS for many years, but this year [we wanted to get] a much wider representation of a student experiences. I want every single junior and or senior to be able to connect with one or two of the presenters," she said.

For students interested in getting involved with the peer mentors program, applications for the next school year will open after February vacation.

'Having peer mentors [routinely] visit U blocks shows students that [mentors] have been in their positions and allows them to share some of the tips and tricks they might have learned along the way.'

-DAVID CONWELL

Green Team works to spread awareness about local, national environmental issues

By Tyler Erdmann
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Recent projects from the Green Team are meant to spread awareness around the community, Green Team teacher Keith Gray said.

Students in the Green Team scholar class are hoping to familiarize students and staff about environmental issues.

Gray said that students have been getting in contact with others involved in green initiatives outside the school.

“We have been trying to get in contact with environmental advocates and get them to be aware of what our Green Team does,” Gray said.

Members of the Green Team are also doing projects around the school building.

Gray said students are building a Green Wall system in the gardens, which will cover up the concrete.

Juniors Josef Vytopil and Will Kenney are spreading awareness about important environmental issues on the national level.

Vytopil said they aim to establish a statewide Arbor Day and that he and Kenney spoke in front of a committee at the state house to make Arbor Day a separate day.

“Right now Arbor Day is combined with Bird Day, and we want to make them separate days to raise statewide

awareness of trees,” Vytopil said.

Kenney said that another part of the project that will help further raise awareness about trees is a tree auction in April.

“We are hoping to get 200

trees and then auction them off,” he said.

Kenney and Vytopil said this will help raise awareness about the importance of trees around the community.

Another project that is happening around the school is being led by seniors Mia Cromwell and Penelope Rodier.

Rodier said the project is a vertical garden system that will go on the third floor

Rodier and Cromwell have been working with a com-

pany called Plants on Walls.

“We are in the process of getting approval and getting our grants done,” Rodier said.

Rodier said that the project is supposed to help the cafeteria by

‘We have been trying to get in contact with environmental advocates and get them to be aware of what our Green Team does.’

-KEITH GRAY



COURTESY OF WILL KENNEY

Juniors Will Kenney and Josef Vytopil are currently working on projects, such as planting trees, to promote the environment.

providing another produce option.

“The purpose of it is to create more produce for the cafeteria, which reduces emissions and offers healthier options,” she said.

Newly offered AP Physics I adds to science curriculum, introduces fresh material

By Hannah Freeman
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

AP Physics I is being offered at the school this year for the first time, taught by Deb Nolan.

The class will be offered in addition to AP Physics C, which was previously the only AP physics course offered at the school.

“Physics I was introduced as an alternative to physics C, which is a calculus-based course. It’s meant to reach a different population who may not have reached calculus yet but are still interested in physics,” said science teacher Joshua Wladkowski, who teaches AP Physics C.

He said that the course will benefit the students who are looking to get college credit and



SOFIA GILLESPIE PHOTO

Physics teacher Deb Nolan instructs her AP Physics I class, which is a newly offered, algebra-based science class.

don’t need calculus-based physics in their intended major.

“The physics requirements in college is very different for

different majors. Nursing and biology majors don’t need the calculus-based physics classes. [With Physics I], you’re not just catering to the mathematicians and engineers, so by offering this class, we are expanding the population who can benefit from the AP curriculum,” Wladkowski said.

Nolan said offering Physics I at the AP level will benefit students by offering a more challenging curriculum and giving students the opportunity to earn college credit.

“There’s kids who want to be challenged more and want to learn more about physics who are interested in engineering and other related topics,” she said.

Nolan said one of the chal-

lenges with the class is that many of the students have never taken a high school physics course before.

“It’s going good so far. It’s a challenge for students taking the class in that they haven’t really had any physics other than the small amount they had during middle school,” she said.

Senior Corinna Brunning said the class has challenged her, but she is interested in learning the new material because it is something she hasn’t studied before this year.

“I decided to take the class to challenge myself in a different way with material I haven’t seen before; I thought taking an AP physics course would be new and interesting,” she said.

Seniors defeat juniors in Power Puff game, raise charity money for Open Door Food Pantry

By Tyler Erdmann
INDEPENDENT STAFF

With a final score of 44-6, the seniors beat the juniors in the Power Puff football game, which was organized by the Global Issues class and raised money for the Open Door Food Pantry.

The event was mainly organized by senior Sofia Gillespie and juniors Anna Coyne, Lilly Bennett, Cosima Massillon, Jennifer O’Neil, Grace Swanciger, and Faith Burroughs.

Gillespie said they made a profit of \$820 from ticket sales, and all of the money made from

the event is going to charity.

“The Global Issues class has a club called the Gardner Project, all the profits we raise go to the Open Door Food pantry,” she said.

The juniors’ team was coached by juniors Carter Crocker, Jack Shaw, Jack McFadden, Sam Rice, and Will Rodier, Gillespie said.

The seniors’ team was coached by seniors Lars Arnsten, Henry Doane, Mason Paccione, and Tristan Nowak, she

said.

Teachers John Mullady and Robert Bilsbury were supposed to be announcing the game, but

Gillespie said the microphone system broke early on in the game.

The game was refereed by physical education teacher James Weed and baseball coach Kevin Winship.

Gillespie said all interested juniors or seniors were offered the opportunity to participate in the game as players, coaches, or cheerleaders.

Tickets to the match were sold during school and at the door of the game, but at a higher price, she said.

Junior Bella Lilly said each of the teams had two practices before the game, which were led by the members of the football team, who shared their real game strategies with each of the players.

During the game, the football players, who were coaching both juniors and seniors, also did the



COURTESY OF OLIVIA FORD

Seniors Sophia Pomeroy, Bridget Miller, Olivia Mariotti, and Olivia Ford played in the Power Puff game, which was run by the Global Issues class to support the Gardner Project’s charity.

cheer routine that the cheerleading team does during the football games.

Lilly said she liked the atmosphere of the game.

“I enjoyed playing with my friends and had fun participating in the game,” she said.

Senior Olivia Ford said she had a lot of fun playing flag football during the Power Puff game

and loved spending time with her fellow classmates.

“It was a great activity to do senior year,” she said.

Ford said she also felt like she was included during the game even though she wasn’t a very experienced flagfootball player.

“[The coaches] made it seem like everyone mattered,” Ford said.

History teacher learned resiliency through challenges with breast cancer

Support from colleagues, family helped Tran to endure adversity

By Sofia Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After being diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 35, history teacher Jessica Tran underwent surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation and said the adversity of it all helped shape her into a stronger person.

Tran was diagnosed in the spring of 2016, only a few years after her mother had been diagnosed at age 60 in the fall of 2012. Tran's two children were 2 and 5 years old at the time of her diagnosis.

With no family history of breast cancer besides her mother, Tran said the news came as a surprise to her and her family.

"Nothing throws you for a loop like an unexpected diagnosis... I struggled to process it because that word, 'cancer,' is big and scary, but when you don't feel like you have any symptoms, it's hard to wrap your head around," she said.

Following the diagnosis, Tran said she worked to be as open as possible with students and faculty.

"It's the teacher in me to not want to be super secretive about it. I know people talk; I know this is a small town, and I'd rather be in control of my own narrative," she said.

Her colleagues, Lauren DuBois and John Mullady, were the first she told after getting a call about the diagnosis while at school, and Mullady said he felt extremely shocked and concerned after hearing the news.

"I thought about her and her family and the ways that her work family could try to help her out while respecting her privacy," he said.

During the months of treatment that Tran endured, her colleagues

from the history department and the entire school worked to be as supportive as possible.

DuBois said they organized meals for her family, took over classes of hers, made cards with students, and kept in touch with her as much as they could.

The history department also organized "Game of Thrones" costumes with wigs on picture day to make Tran feel more comfortable with her loss of hair while incorporating their obsession with the show into their work life, Tran said. The



COURTESY OF JESSICA TRAN

History teacher Jessica Tran (pictured with husband Khoa, son Colin, and daughter Charlotte) said undergoing breast cancer showed her how to put herself first, especially as a mother.

department has made dressing up on picture day a tradition for the past four years now.

Between the months of April through October, Tran went through a mastectomy, chemotherapy, and radiation.

"You're going to do whatever you can ultimately; you're not going to turn down a step that could decrease the likelihood that it could come back," she said.

After losing her hair to chemotherapy, Tran said she felt most comfortable wearing a headscarf instead of a wig but eventually took it off a few months after chemotherapy on the day after the 2016 presidential election.

"I was thinking about taking it off already, but then with the results, the shock, and everything, I was like, 'I'm done; I don't need to hide this anymore,'" she said.

DuBois said she admired the way Tran handled her cancer experience with strength.

"She's always been someone that I admire... I continued to be more impressed by her," she said.

Mullady said Tran's resilience during the experience affirmed

his perception of her as a strong woman. He also said that witnessing what Tran experienced gave him an appreciation for what is really important in life.

"I know it's cliché but you just kind of pause and think about what's really worth stressing about," he said.

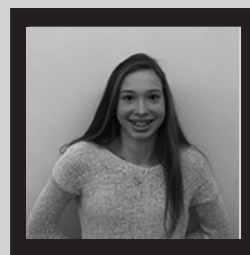
Tran said that although the support from her colleagues aided her greatly through the hardships she had to face, she felt that oftentimes, it was helpful for her to relate with others who had gone through similar experiences.

"Cancer is a really isolating experience... Someone may love you to the ends of the Earth, but it's honestly hard to put yourself in their shoes if you haven't been through that... Finding someone that you can connect with helps the experience," she said.

Tran also said she learned first-hand how important it is for women, especially mothers, to prioritize taking care of themselves instead of constantly feeling the need to act selflessly.

She said she feels stronger having gone through the obstacle of breast cancer but is still working to understand how that time changed her.

"Even now, three plus years later, I'm still struggling to figure out how cancer has changed my perspective or my identity, if it did at all... On the one hand, it's an eye-opening experience... but then I don't want to give cancer that power; I don't want to be defined by the worst moment in my life that I just want to put behind me," she said.



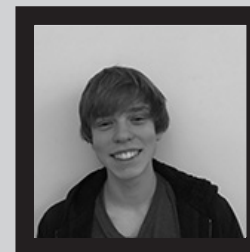
Freshman Sophia Zalosh:
"My New Year's resolution is to get more sleep."



Freshman Wyatt Doyle:
"I really want to do well in school."



Sophomore Mairan Tully:
"I want to be more productive and not procrastinate."

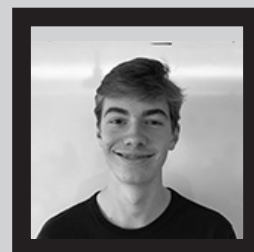


Sophomore Andrew Torri:
"I want to get better grades in all of my classes."

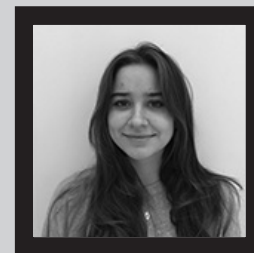


What is one of your New Year's resolutions this year?

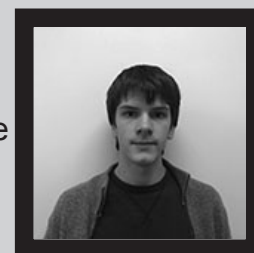
Junior Pieter Brueker:
"I want to become stronger to be better at tennis."



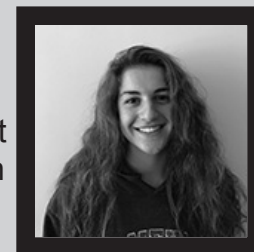
Junior Olivia Renzi:
"I want to not cry as much."



Senior Thad Sobotowski:
"I want to get my homework done earlier, so I can get more sleep."



Senior Kara Glynos:
"I want to accomplish all I need to do for college and get into a school for the major I'm passionate about."





COURTESY OF CLAIRE GENDRON

Walks on the beach

During the winter, it's easy to make excuses for not going outside, but I find it very important to put in the effort to go for a walk on the beach as I always feel refreshed and awake after getting some fresh air and sunlight. Bundle up by putting on a few extra layers and enjoy a relaxing walk on one of the North Shore's many oceanside locations.



GOODFREEPHOTOS.COM

Hot yoga

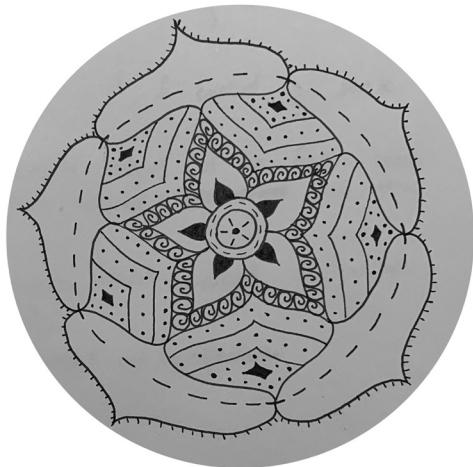
Exercise is a great way to relieve stress, and yoga in particular works as both great exercise and time to reflect and be mindful. I find hot yoga to be particularly rewarding as the strenuous workout makes me feel that much more restored and energized after a class. Most yoga classes end with five minutes of guided or unguided meditation, depending on the class or teacher, in shavasana pose, which encourages a moment of complete mindfulness.



SOFIA GILLESPIE PHOTO

Cooking comfort food

Cooking nourishes both the soul and the stomach all in one. Put on some relaxing music and cook up your favorite comfort-food meal, mine being homemade mac and cheese with bread crumbs on top because it's easy to make and filling to eat.



SOFIA GILLESPIE PHOTO

Drawing mandalas

With art, there are an infinite number of ideas to come up with and an infinite number of ways to visually depict those ideas; in this way, art can be a great outlet to clear up headspace because it functions as a creative channel with unlimited artistic choices to make. My favorite thing to draw in order to relax, as basic and cliché as it may be, is mandalas because you don't really have to think as you draw, and you can just go through the motions mindlessly but mindfully at the same time.

Sof's Self-Care

By Sofia Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In the never-ending stress and chaos that can come from the high school life in Manchester Essex, it's important to find outlets and strategies to keep a clear head and peace of mind. Luckily, I have a tendency to not get too worked up over the small stuff, but I still find myself stressed out from time to time and turn to these strategies, activities, and hobbies to chill out.



PEXELS.COM

Deleting apps to minimize screen time

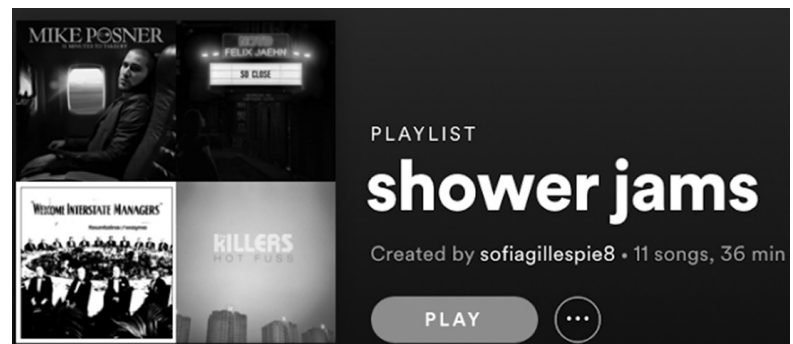
Getting caught up in the consuming world of social media can only worsen one's stress levels; the constant comparisons and judgments that come with social media bring more of a headache for me than providing the reward of being connected online to the people in my life. I often delete Instagram for a week at a time or up to a month at a time to minimize my screen time and improve my overall mental well-being.



NBC.COM

Finding go-to entertainment that will make you laugh

I usually laugh at most types of comedic entertainment whether it is sitcoms, standup comedy, or goofy movies, and they are a great way to boost my mood. Finding something you know will make you laugh when you watch it is an easy tool to instantly improve your energy. For me, I recommend watching John Mulaney's standup comedy on Netflix or an episode of "Parks and Recreation," and you'll find yourself laughing immediately.



SOFIA GILLESPIE PHOTO

Listening to feel-good music in the shower

I'm a nighttime shower person and am usually pretty energized and fired up in the evening, so I love to end my day listening to a playlist songs that I usually end up dancing and singing to. It might be '80s music, rap, or pop hits; make a playlist of whatever you find gets you grooving, and play it loudly while you're getting ready for your day or going through your nighttime routine.

Grading System

Should the school transition from quarters to semesters?

Pro

Hannah Freeman

In order to promote social-emotional learning and reduce stress among students, the school should eliminate quarters, having only semester grades instead.

Both Aspen and Google Classroom allow parents, students, and teachers to view students' progress and grades, meaning that sending an official grade report at the end of each quarter is unnecessary because that information is now available at any time online, without provoking the stress usually created by the end-of-quarter deadlines.

"We have made a push over the past few years to focus on social-emotional learning and I think that we now have the technological capabilities with Aspen and Google Classroom that we can reduce stress among both students and teachers experience around the ends of first and third quarters," social studies teacher Jessica Tran said.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said she has seen the stress that is created at the end of quarters and thinks it may be unnecessary for both students and teachers.

"Each year at the end of first quarter, I see students and teachers overwhelmed trying to fit something in before a date, and I wonder if that date is really that significant. If we move away from defining that as a date, it might help to reduce the anxiety around that time period," she said.

The school is focused overall on creating year-long grades for students, so the rush to complete assignments by the end of quarters is arbitrary and harmful to overall learning.

"Because we are focused on a year-long grade, a running grade with check-in points that people should be prompted to look at where they are at and have conversations with kids about their progress would be more effective," Puglisi said. "I think having quarter grades goes back to a time before computers where there wasn't access to an ongoing look at your grading and there needed to be a mechanism to report student progress home to parents."

Senior Bridget Miller said she thinks that eliminating quarters would provide students more learning opportunities.

"At the end of quarters, teachers rush to push grades in and assign work just so there can be more grades in Aspen. Without quarters, we would be able to focus on bigger ideas, complete longer projects, and connect more over arching ideas with more time to actual focus on it," she said.

One concern with the elimination of quarters is the need for a first quarter grade for seniors applying to college, which Puglisi said can be generated easily.

"At any time you can create a quarter grade to post to a transcript. Aspen makes it very easy to post first quarter grades for seniors. That is a structure still in place at the post-secondary level so we would need to accommodate that," she said.

Quarters should be eliminated in favor of a semester system because technology has made the use of quarters unnecessary and arbitrary.

Con

Paige Swanson

For the good of student's mental health and the convenience of faculty and staff, the school should continue to use the quarter grading system.

While the argument can be made that semesters may decrease student's stress, as there is more time to recover from a bad grade, this is not the case. At the end of each quarter, students are given a fresh start and a time to reflect on how they can improve going forward.

Senior Anthony Curcuro said, "at the end of each quarter I feel relieved because I know that no matter what happened, I have a clean slate and I get to reflect on how I did and think about what I need to do better in the future."

The negative effects of procrastination among students will also be made worse with a semester system. Those who tend to leave the majority of their work to the end of the quarter will experience even more stress, because they will have far more to do at the end of a semester.

The impacts of increased stress can be detrimental to high school students.

In an article published by the Atlantic, Alexandria Osola said, "over long periods of time, elevated levels of stress hormones can degrade the immune system, cause heart problems, exacerbate respiratory and gastrointestinal issues, and bring on chronic anxiety and depression."

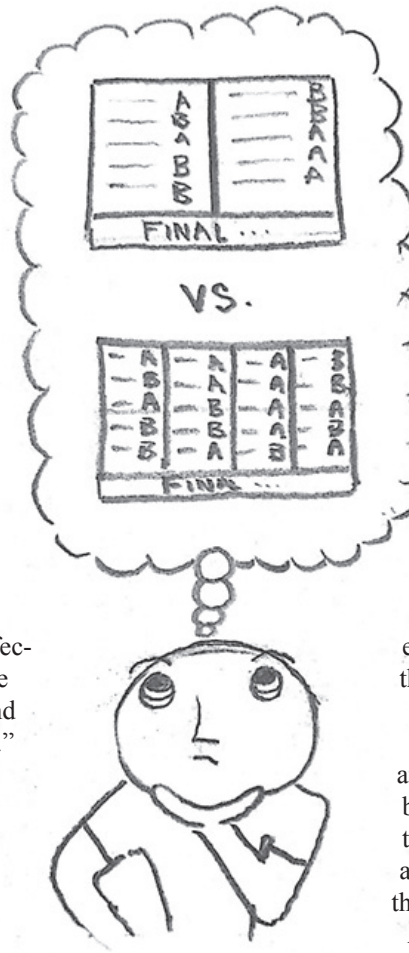
The problems with procrastination that come along with a semester grading system may also extend to teachers who tend to wait until the end of the quarter to enter grades. At the end of the semester, they will be left with far more grades to put in than they would at the end of a quarter.

Quarter grades are more inconvenient for the seniors.

Seniors who apply Early Decision or Early Action to colleges and universities are required to send in their first quarter grades by mid-November. Without quarters, it would be more difficult to send in these grades and the grades submitted may not be an accurate representation of the work the students have completed at that point in the year.

Additionally, seniors also have to complete SCORE during fourth quarter, and the timing of this would be made more difficult with a semester system. The end of the third quarter provides a natural transition for both senior teachers and students who are completing SCORE. With a semester system, students would have to begin their internships and projects in the middle of a semester when they may still have things going on in their classes.

Because quarter grades are more convenient and cause less stress for both teachers and students, the switch to a semester quarter system should not be made.



ELI HEANUE ILLUSTRATION

Practices should not be required over breaks

By Madeline Lai
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Student-athletes should not be punished for missing team practices over holiday breaks, as students should be able to travel for vacation or spend time with family free of obligations to frequent practices over holidays.

Those who miss several holiday break practices are required to practice for two or three days consecutively before they are allowed to play in games again, according to the school's student-athlete handbook.

While athletics during the fall season do not conflict with any holiday breaks, the winter sports season coincides with the holiday break between December and January as well as the week-long break in February for teams who

play in the tournament season.

Spring sports seasons conflict with the week-long April break, too.

For the student-athletes who play sports in the winter or spring seasons, it is unfair that they are punished for missing practices over breaks when fall sports athletes are not conflicted with the same issue, as there are no breaks during the fall season.

Punishing athletes who miss team practices is unreasonable because parents often plan for family vacations well in advance before the season, or other family obligations cause student-athletes not to have a choice in whether or not they miss practices over breaks.

In an article titled "When School is Out, but Practice is On" in the New York Times, Marek Fuchs said parents generally agree that it is frustrating to have to cancel or alter vacation plans around required sports practices where students are penalized if they do not attend.



MADELINE LAI PHOTO

Sophomores Parker Brooks and Amelia Donnellan who play basketball, are required to attend practices over holiday breaks, according to the school's policy, which frustrates athletes.

Some may argue that student-athletes should be aware of the commitment of the team and accept and understand the practice schedule before the season begins.

To this point, though, there is the question as to whether those

athletes should have to sacrifice quality family time for practices and prioritize the team over any other family commitments.

Understandably, coaches are hesitant to interrupt practice schedules over longer breaks to avoid a sudden halt in the

consistency of frequent practices that causes teams to fall behind competitors.

Although this may be an issue in some scenarios, time-off for athletes should be prioritized over practices, and students should be given the option to opt-out of team gatherings over holiday breaks free of punishment.

Specifically, optional practices could be held for teammates who are able and willing to attend where coaches work on skills with players that will not harm or put other teammates who are missing at a disadvantage.

Student-athletes especially need time-off during holiday breaks to relax and take time away from their already rigorous schedules.

The school should change the rule so that practices during holiday vacations are considered optional, and students who miss those practices could return to practices or games without penalty.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Presentation helps students to understand mental health

Speaker employs creative approaches

Minding your Mind speaker Brooke Bridges caught students' attention with a successful presentation concerning mental health.

During the presentation on Nov. 21, Bridges said that one of her main goals as a presenter was to try and make her audience feel less lonely while listening to her presentation. To achieve this, she shared her own stories in a tone that showed the normalcy of mental health issues and no signs of embarrassment.

Bridges engaged students by employing a variety of her personal anecdotes instead of monotonous facts and statistics. She knew how to present effectively.

She amused students early on by making a connection to a formerly popular television show,



COURTESY OF BROOKE BRIDGES

To better relate to high school audiences, mental health presenter Brooke Bridges uses unique strategies to connect with students.

"Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide," which she acted

in as a child. Bridges was able to make per-

sonal appeals to many students through her story, which helped her produce a greater effect and build trust with her audience.

Her openness also promoted this strong connection. Bridges was not hesitant to share details of her personal life in order to help her audience.

Our society often discourages people from sharing out about their struggles, which is harmful, but this presentation took down that need for a facade.

Bridges showed that no matter how perfect someone may seem to be on the outside, there could be major problems that need help and support on the inside. She used herself as an example with her seemingly amazing teenage acting career happening simultaneously as her home issues.

This presentation was very appropriate for students. Students often experience stress at our school, which is just one factor

that can lead to mental health issues.

Junior Anna Whitten, president of the "Minds Matter" student club that partners with Minding Your Mind, said she thought that the presentation was very helpful, and she hopes it can bring more awareness of certain issues to her group.

"I thought that most of the time the presentations at our school don't go into a lot of depth, but I thought [Bridges] did a really good job," Whitten said.

In the future, the school should continue to invite more relatable presenters with essential messages for the improvement of the school's environment that are based off of the necessity of the students. After the presentation, mental health should not be forgotten, and the school should continue to try to improve students' well-being.

US universities must protect freedom of speech, avoid foreign influences

By Anton Kozyrev
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Elite American universities such as Columbia University must pay more heed to the values of the First Amendment and avoid kowtowing to foreign powers.

A panel was scheduled to take place at Columbia University's campus in New York City on Nov. 14 that would have centered on human rights violations by the Chinese Communist Party.

However, according to an article by Stephanie Lai in the Columbia Spectator, Columbia's student newspaper, the panel was canceled due to pressure from pro-Beijing groups on campus, who threatened to stage a protest if the forum were to take place.

Bowing to the pressure of a foreign power, Columbia canceled what altogether would have amounted to merely a discussion about potential human rights abuses, claiming that

the reason was due to the event not having been booked through "proper channels."

While it certainly is possible that this was indeed the cause for a cancellation, the fact that it followed on the heels of the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA)'s announcement of intent to protest raises red flags about the principle of freedom of speech on U.S. university campuses.

The First Amendment of the United States Constitution states that among the rights enjoyed in the United States is the right to a freedom of speech and expression.

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, the restriction of free speech and the freedom to gather on public universities' campuses amounts to government censorship, which is in direct violation of the Constitution.

Private universities, while not under the same regulations as their public counterparts, should still take certain steps in order to protect free speech on their campuses.

After all, the concept of the First Amendment is most certainly being undermined by foreign governments' interference in



INSAPPHOWETRUST/Flickr.COM

U.S. universities would better serve their students and school community by placing the value of freedom of speech before foreign governments' interests on their respective campuses.

discussions at U.S. universities.

Columbia University should not have cancelled the panel on human rights abuses in China. After all, in doing so, the school sent a strong message to its students – that the appeasement of different foreign powers comes before prioritizing the ability of its students to discuss their opinions.

It also behooves foreign governments to avoid interfering with discussions on U.S. campuses – for as soon China

responded to this panel, it sent a message of culpability. That is, that the Chinese government certainly has something important to hide.

It is worth noting that this is by no means an isolated incident. Something remarkably similar occurred at Columbia University in 2013.

According to a Washington Post article titled "Columbia University's cancellation of forum on Turkey draws criticism" by Karen DeYoung, Columbia Uni-

versity cancelled a panel on the freedom of expression in Turkey, again claiming that logistical and planning issues led to the cancellation.

However, the article asserts that many who had been scheduled to participate in the panel suspected that there may have been a deeper reason – such as international pressure from Turkey.

This is by no means a denigration of Columbia University's policies specifically – for this surely is an issue prevalent in many universities across the country. Columbia simply happens to be the most recent high-profile case.

It is also important to note that while Columbia should not have cancelled the forum in response to the threat of protests, it also shouldn't prevent CSSA from protesting – for that is also their own freedom of expression. The Constitution protects both sides.

In the interest of maintaining their students' academic growth and sending a message in favor of civil discourse, U.S. universities should employ their substantial academic status to take a stand in favor of democratic ideals and the concept of free speech on college campuses.

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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.

Editorial space is available to all MERHS students, faculty, and community members.

All submissions must be signed and put in the newspaper mailbox in the front office of MERHS.

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.

GYMNASTICS



Tess Richard



Avari Litka

Coach: Chris Way
Assistant coach: Lizzie Ranger
Captains: Junior Tess Richard, Hamilton-Wenham seniors Ellie Pitkin and Rachel Lee
Record last year: 4-0-0
Impact players: Tess Richard, Avari Litka
Goals: Improve the scores from last season and have fun as a team
Assistant coach's quote: "We are all-inclusive, and we have girls from every level. Our thing is mostly to have fun and work hard, and however the season goes is how it goes."
Captain's quote: "My goal [as a captain] is to create a good environment for everybody on the team and have everything prepared for the season." - Tess Richard
Players quote: "It's really fun to have students from multiple schools because you get more friends and meet people you wouldn't normally meet." - Avari Litka

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Bridget Twombly



Emily Jacobsen

Coach: Lauren DuBois
Captains: Seniors Bridget Twombly and Emily Jacobsen
Current record: 1-0-0
Record last year: 11-9-0
Rival: Amesbury
Goals: Win the league and make the tournament
Impact players: Seniors Bridget Twombly and Emily Jacobsen, juniors GG Huet and Lily Athanas
Coach's quote: "As a team, our goal is to make the tournament and be competitive in the Cape Ann League. We have a great team this year. We have people coming back from last year who are playing well and new people that are going to make a big impact on the team this season."
Captains' quotes: "Just as much as you practice basketball skills, you have to be able to practice team skills. We need to support each other as much as we can and spend time together to get that positive feedback." - Bridget Twombly
 "I think that it is really important that we communicate, especially between younger players and older players." - Emily Jacobsen

BOYS BASKETBALL



Kellen Furse



Frank Wood



Lars Arntsen

Coach: Tim St. Laurent
Captains: Seniors Kellen Furse and Lars Arntsen, junior Frank Wood
Current record: 1-0-0
Record last year: 14-7-0
Rival: Hamilton-Wenham
Goals: Make it to the state tournament and win the CAL Championship
Impact players: Captains Kellen Furse, Lars Arntsen, and Frank Wood
Coach's quote: "Our goal this year is to win the CAL again and hopefully go have a deep run into the state tournament."
Captain's quote: "We have to defend our CAL title this season. We would of course like to make a run in the playoffs, but that will be hard considering its D4 basketball and we play a lot of city teams." - Kellen Furse
 "We have a very strong group of boys this year, and we will do everything we can to make it the best possible season." - Lars Arntsen

INDOOR TRACK

Coach: Nelson Desilvestre, Mark Dawson, John Mullady, Steve Whittey
Captains: Seniors Olivia Ford and Molly Brady, juniors Will Kenney, Emerson Kahle, Kendall Carvalho, and Josef Vytopil
Current record: 0-1-0 for boys' track, 0-1-0 for girls's track
Record last year: 4-6-0 for boys' track, 1-9-0 for girls' track
Rivals: Hamilton-Wenham
Goals: Team bonding, qualification for divisional-level meet, potentially state-level
Impact players: Seniors Mia Cromwell, Molly Brady, junior Elizabeth Loring, Oli Turner, Will Kenney, Emerson Kahle, Sam Kenney, and Eli Heanue
Coach's quote: "For the meets, we want to try and improve as a team every single race regardless of how big or small our team is." - Nelson Desilvestre
Captain's quote: "We really don't have numbers at all, and I'm the only senior sprinter on the team ... so we're just going to do our best because we have a pretty good quality of runners." - Molly Brady



Josef Vytopil



Emerson Kahle



Will Kenney



Kendall Carvalho



Molly Brady



Olivia Ford

SKI TEAM

Coach: Tim Wonson

Captains: Ryan Clark and Hannah Hubbard

Record last year: Boys': 4-8; Girls': 3-11

Goals: Improve basic skills, give all athletes racing experience, teach new racers

Impact players: Hannah Hubbard, Lily Coote, Ryan Clark, Bonnie Gerhardt, Alex Rosen

Coach's quote: "I want my athletes to really know how good they truly are, and I want them to carry confidence on the hill and feel like they really deserve to win."

Captain's quote: "We have a lot of new kids on the team, and it's going to be a challenge to make sure everyone gets good experience racing. I'm hoping everyone improves throughout the season and feels more comfortable skiing by the end of the season," - Ryan Clark



Ryan Clark



Hannah Hubbard

BOYS' HOCKEY



Anthony Curcuru



Kyle Khani



Henry Conway



Andy Panagos



William Pollock

Coach: Kyle Nelson

Captains: Manchester senior Anthony Curcuru, Ipswich junior Rowan Silva, Rockport senior Billy Garlick

Record last year: 4-11-4

Current record: 1-1-0

Goals: Improve every day, make it to the playoffs, improve team chemistry

Impact players: Anthony Curcuru

Coach's quote: "We have a very good skating team, we are fast, [and] we have good size."

Captain's quote: "We aren't just waking up, doing the same thing, [and] expecting the same outcome like we have previously."

- Anthony Curcuru

SWIMMING

Coach: Amy Boyden

Captains: Samuel Rice, Josh Dobson, Elizabeth Athanas, and Maddie Carvalho

Record last year: 6-1-0

Current record: 0-1

Goals: Win the Cape Ann League

Impact players: Elizabeth Athanas, Maddie Carvalho

Rivals: Boys: Lynnfield, Girls: Hamilton Wenham

Coach's quote: "The kids are working hard... We have some new swimmers that are already making progress; I think we're going to have a great season."

Captain's quote: "So we have a smaller team this year, but I still want to maintain us having good sportsmanship, cheering for each other and having a good team spirit."

- Maddie Carvalho



Elizabeth Athanas



Josh Dobson



Samuel Rice



Maddie Carvalho

GIRLS' HOCKEY



Amy Vytopilova



Jane Whitten

Coach: Ryan Wood

Manchester-Essex players: Jane Whitten and Amy Vytopilova

Record this year: 1-0-1

Goals: Make the tournament, connect with the team

Players' Quote: "It's looking to be a really promising season. We've had two games, and we won one and tied one... the whole atmosphere is really nice, and the team seems to be getting along really well."

- Jane Whitten

"Since I have joined the Marblehead team, I have made some of my closest friends... we spend so much time together... I'm excited for the bus rides and being a part of a team again." - Amy Vytopilova

Two seniors receive All-State recommendations

Students accepted to Sr. Districts

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Seniors Paige Mandia and Kiley McGroder were accepted into the Northeast Senior Districts choral ensemble and both received All-State recommendations.

Chorus teacher Donna O'Neill said several chorus students auditioned for the competitive ensemble, which will perform on Jan. 8, 10, and 11 at Galvin Middle School in Wakefield, Mass. for three days in early January at Galvin Middle School in Wakefield, Mass.

"All of the students worked very hard and had exceptional auditions," she said.

McGroder said the audition requires a lot of detailed practice, and she focused primarily on sight-reading for her preparation.

"There's a lot of individual aspects to the grading rubric for getting in that you have to pay attention to like technique, breathing, interpretation, dynamics, and pitch," she said.

Mandia said she began learning her audition piece for Districts over the summer and honed her practice in September with the help of O'Neill.

McGroder said O'Neill offered experience and knowledge about the selection process.

She said in preparation for the concert, they will focus more on smaller details while learning the four pieces they will receive.

Mandia said O'Neill was always there to help her with her singing and mentality.

"She's been there to reassure me to keep trying, so she's not only been a mentor with the vocal part but also the whole mental part of getting in," she said.

O'Neill said All-States is extremely competitive. Students will audition at Shrewsbury High School in late January.

"We haven't had any students recommended for All-States for



OLIVIA TURNER PHOTO

After enduring a rigorous audition process, seniors Kiley McGroder and Paige Mandia received All-State recommendations and were accepted into the Northeast Senior Districts choral ensemble.

around three years," she said.

Mandia said the audition process for the All-State chorus is very selective. Each region of Mass. selects a group of students to audition, and if accepted, these

students perform in a choir at Symphony Hall, she said.

O'Neill said the students were all very well-prepared and performed well at auditions.

"The whole music department

is very proud of all those who auditioned and congratulates Paige and Kiley. The chorus was thrilled and supported them completely all along the way," she said.

Drama club to perform 'Losers' Club'

New actors, director work to improve show for Dramafest

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Under the direction of teacher Gianna Baglioni and with help from teacher Joshua Wladkowski, the Drama Club will be performing the play "Losers' Club" in February for Dramafest.

The play follows a club formed by unpopular students and their decision to deceive and kidnap their bullies, Baglioni said.

"The students band together to take their bullies hostage so they can put them on trial. They want

to punish the people who have ruined their lives for so many years," she said.

Baglioni said she is excited to work with new students to enhance the quality of the performance.

"This play is really cool because everyone is pretty much always on stage, so all the actors have a prominent role in the play. Also, we have a lot of freshmen and sophomores this year, whereas last year the cast had a lot of juniors and seniors," she said.

Previously directed by former student Anna Mewkil, the Drama Club is now under the direction of Baglioni for the first year.

"One of the really cool things about directing Drama Club this year is I get to work with Mr. Wladkowski. He's building the stage and has a few kids help-

ing him with that. I don't know how to build a set, and he doesn't know how to direct, so it's a really great partnership," she said.

Baglioni said she thinks her experience in theatre will help her direct the Drama Club this year.

"I did Drama Club all four years of high school and some professional theatre stuff, so I am very excited to direct the show this year," she said.

Along with Baglioni being excited to direct the show this year, Wladkowski said he is looking forward to help build the sets.

"I'm just excited to do something I'm actually good at. I also have two students dedicated to help me with it and others who will help out occasionally," he said.

Sophomore Chris Siems, who plays a disabled teen in the show, said he is excited for the changes



ELI HEANUE PHOTO

Junior Heather Adams, freshman Ellie Wendell, and sophomore Chris Siems practice blocking a scene from 'Losers' Club.'

made to the club since last year.

"I play Luther, who has cerebral palsy and is bullied about his condition. The club is much more

relaxed than it was last year, and there are a lot more freshmen and new actors, which is new and refreshing," he said.

NAHS aims to increase involvement in the arts

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following the induction ceremony, the National Art Honors Society gained 25 new members from the sophomore and junior classes.

The chapter is advised by art teacher Tamera Burns and led by senior president Spencer Meek, senior vice president Penelope Rodier, senior treasurer Naomi Franklin, and junior secretary Izzy DiPasquale.



OLIVIA TURNER PHOTO

NAHS officers hope to promote the arts with projects, events, and art prompts to engage the members and school community.

Burns said the group divides into committees that manage various fundraisers and activities such as organizing art nights, making Valentine's Day cards for

local seniors, or creating posters to hang around the school.

"Our members are people that come to meetings, follow through on committees or anything we

need, and do their community service hours," she said.

Rodier said the club aims to increase school-wide involvement through collaborations with some classes.

"We planned a poster committee where students can create unique art if a club or class requests some," she said.

The club has a themed schedule of artwork for members to contribute, with themes such as irony, which can be interpreted in any way, Burns said.

Rodier said since the induction on Nov. 6, members have demonstrated high engagement and quality of work.

"It's always exciting to give the new sophomores that put a lot of time into their work a chance to showcase it at a higher level," she said.

In addition to trying to display more of the club's work, Franklin said NAHS is planning events for the future, including community drives and an art night in February.

NAHS is trying to increase the involvement of the school and community in the arts, she said.

"We want people who are really passionate about art to be able to have an outlet outside of their normal classes and an opportunity to get inspiration and maybe learn from their fellow members," Franklin said.

She said the club is planning a mural for inside the school. The officers will paint the outlines, and the rest of the school is encouraged to help fill it in using spare time, Franklin said.

"We really want to make it a community thing," she said.

Hofmann exhibit tells story of color, texture

Peabody Essex Museum displays famous artist's works in separate categories during his life in the US

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Displayed interactively with its audience in mind, the Peabody Essex Museum exhibition "Hans Hofmann: The Nature of Abstraction" explores the painter's unconventional use of color and shape.

The exhibit flows categorically rather than chronologically and focuses on the art Hofmann produced after he moved to the East Coast of the United States from Germany in 1932.

Hofmann's paintings, on loan from various museums and private collections, are displayed in categories characterized by concentrations: landscape, still-life, color, "push and pull," and abstraction.

The first painting in the exhibition, "The Garden," hangs alone in the first chamber. Like a mosaic, raised tiles of brightly colored paint punctuate the plywood in circular patterns, and bright colors create a boldness of nature enhanced.

Walking through each section, the artistic mediums range from thick oil paint on canvas to India Ink on board: a veritable hodge-podge of textures and lines, but a

strangely cohesive one. The way he used color rather than line to create depth becomes apparent in the "push and pull"



A long hallway in the exhibition gallery creates a narrow view directly into one of Hans Hofmann's paintings called "Rubasse."

segment of the exhibition. The art moves like a mirage: large, angular shapes flicker over splotches of dark ink.

According to the Peabody Essex Museum, "the surfaces of his paintings transformed into expressive, independent realities of their own."

Curator Lydia Gordon said Hofmann's colorful, abstract style drew inspiration from European artists and was unique in the United States in the early 20th century.

To allow viewers to interact with the exhibit, a touchable re-

production of Hofmann's "Morning Mist" is accompanied by headphones and a recording that guides museum-goers through the painting's texture.

Nestled in the center of the walk-through is the "color room," which is bordered with strips of color-changing lights. For viewing, five or six flattened bean bags are scattered on the floor.

The 15-second walk through the room felt random and dizzying, and the paintings on the other side of the room were marred by the afterimage of the light strips for several minutes.

A graphic outside the "color room" explains that its purpose is to demonstrate the emotions and feelings evoked by each color in Hofmann's art. It works in theory, but in reality, its overall effect



OLIVIA TURNER PHOTOS

The first painting that is shown in the art exhibit is called "The Garden," and it consists of different textures and paints.

was akin to motion-sickness.

Hofmann's painting "Magnum Opus" features a wash of red oil paint over an ivory canvas. A serene blue square on the work's left side is surrounded with angry red and green marks while diluted pink and orange streaks adorn the painting's right margin.

The painting is exemplary of Hofmann's use of color to evoke emotion, and it demonstrates theories discussed in the infographic outside the "color room."

The next room holds a giant. Larger than a human arm span, "Goliath" was named appropriately. Huge, vibrant rectangles

and stark black brushstrokes mark the canvas, which is one of Gordon's personal favorites. The sharp contrast created by the bold colors evokes an emotion comparable to fear.

The eccentric artist seems to have been ahead of his time.

Hofmann's work is strikingly bold. In some paintings, black India Ink creeps behind signature layers and raised swaths of oil paint.

Other pieces are comprised of colorful, delicately chiseled rectangles and smears of half-mixed paint. Each stroke is deliberate, defining an era.

Tarantino's latest film features compelling acting, entertaining plot

By Sofia Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In the ninth film of his plan to direct 10 films, writer and director Quentin Tarantino delivers, yet again, the iconic movie style of his in the highly entertaining 180-minute "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood."

The movie, which came out in July, takes place in 1969, a year which Tarantino has explained to be very pivotal in the film industry as it transitioned from the "Golden Age Hollywood" of the '50s and '60s to the "New Age Hollywood" of the '70s and beyond; in this way, the movie feels like a tribute of the love he has for Hollywood having grown up and lived there all of his life.

The set, the costumes, and the soundtrack of the movie do a great job of encapsulating the culture of the '60s, and the audience is very quickly transported into the era.

With graphic violence and vulgar, unfiltered language, two staples of Tarantino's works, the movie is R-rated.

The movie mostly follows three separate story arcs as they connect to one another in the last 30 minutes in an unanticipated way. While the film doesn't have a clear, unifying plot throughout, it is still a Tarantino-like movie, filled with interesting characters in a montage of tense and visually enjoyable scenes.

Most of the characters are fictitious creations of Tarantino's, like the actor Rick Dalton (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his stuntman Cliff Booth (Brad Pitt), while other characters come from well-known Hollywood history, such as movie star Sharon Tate (Margot Robbie) and members of cult leader Charlie Manson's "Family."

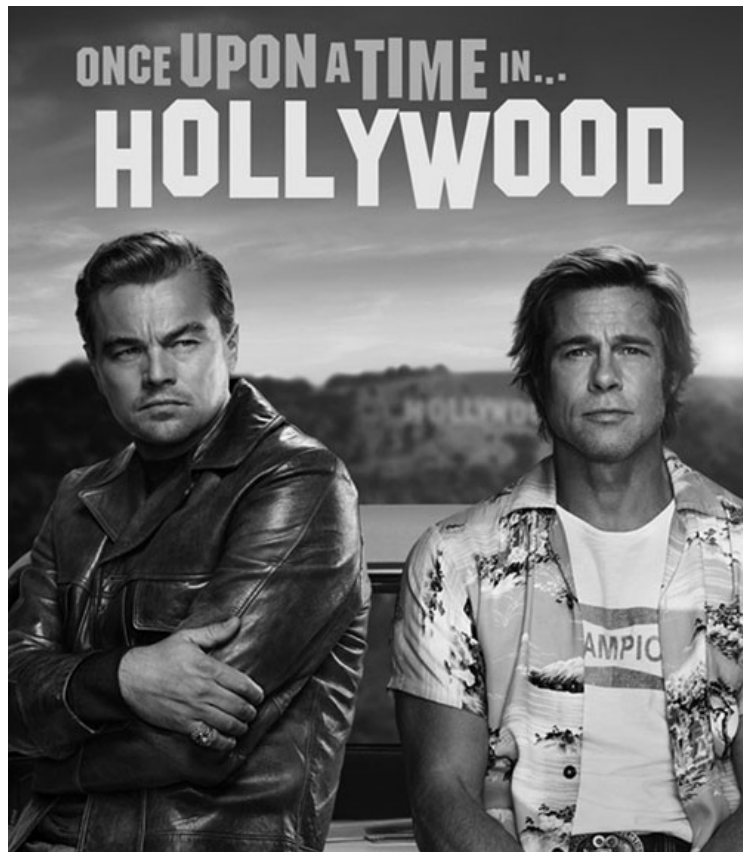
The cast is ample with renowned and talented actors that elevate the movie beyond its well

written dialogue and storyline into an emotional performance.

DiCaprio and Pitt take the leads in the film, and both give career-best performances. The relatable and heartwarming relationship between their two characters is a highlight of the film, along with Pitt's character's relationship with his dog Brandy, a vicious yet loving pit-bull.

Unlike DiCaprio and Pitt, Robbie gives a disappointing performance as Tate because her character doesn't have any complexity or depth beyond being a blond bombshell movie star, which feels very similar to Robbie's real personality as an actress.

Similar to how Tarantino plays with historical facts in creating a new history of World War II in his 2009 film "Inglorious Basterds," he writes his own version of the famous murder of Sharon Tate by the Manson "Family" that is said to have changed the culture of Hollywood.



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Quentin Tarentino's newest movie "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" follows his distinguished style of movie making.

By intertwining commonly known history with fictional storytelling, his writing style

makes for a very intricate storyline and a strong ending to the film.