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Student alumni return for Peer Mentors' Homecoming Panel

Seniors learn about college life, academic changes

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

The Peer Mentors program and guidance director Beverly Low worked with various school alumni to put together a College Homecoming Panel in January to give the senior class a look into college life.

The panel, comprised of six student alumni studying at various institutions, was put together chiefly by the Peer Mentors, particularly seniors in the organization, Low said.

The panel consisted of University of Massachusetts freshman McKenzie Woodman, who majors in environmental science; University of Massachusetts junior Sofia del Valle, who

designed her own major focused on creative development for film and television; New York University freshman Sara Rhuda, who majors in musical theatre; McGill University junior Kendall McCormick, who majors in computer science; Harvard University junior Fiona Davis, who majors in political science; and Wellesley College junior Vanessa Kelley, who majors in biology.

The chief goal of the panel was to give students a realistic look into life at college outside of academics, Low said.

"The school spends a lot of time focusing only on getting into college, which shouldn't be the end," she said. "The panel did a good job talking about the life skills side of the college experience."

Advice from the panelists covered multiple topics, including academics, scheduling, dorm

HOMECOMING, page 3

DECA students excel at district competition, begin to prepare for States

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After achieving success with a total of 12 first-place winners and 10 second-place winners at Districts, members of the DECA team are preparing for the state competition in March, adviser Dean Martino said.

The students competed at Endicott College on Jan. 6 against students from other local schools in hopes of qualifying for States, he said.

According to junior officer Laura Hannafin, who placed sixth at Internationals last year, almost 70 percent of students qualified for States while only about 50 percent qualified last year.

"It was really fun to see so many people do well this year, especially the underclassmen. It's fun to see the improvement, and I definitely hope it will make States



COURTESY OF LISETT RONCHI

The DECA team had a total of 12 first-place winners and 10 second-place winners at the Districts competition held at Endicott College on Jan. 6.

a really fun experience," she said.

There were an impressive number of younger students who excelled in competition, Martino said, and he hopes that the success of younger students will help the program.

Sophomores Drew Charlton and Emma Cochand won first place in the Hospitality and Lodging event, and sophomore Tucker Jaworski scored the highest

DECA, page 3

PUPPIES FOR MIDTERMS



MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON PHOTO

Seniors Zanny Lee and Maura McCormick played with puppies on Jan. 12 that the rescue organization Sweet Paws brought to de-stress students during their midterm exams. Adoption coordinator Denise Levesque said the organization will come to the school's finals in the spring.

New safety committee introduces ALICE implementation, meets to discuss protocols

By Holly Fossa
INDEPENDENT STAFF

A new safety committee was formed between the middle school and high school. The two separate committees formed one committee to discuss new protocols.

The new committee meets four times a year about new safety procedures regarding the middle-high school and deciding the best procedures to ensure school-wide safety.

The procedures for the middle school and high school are now the same because "we are in one building and the procedure should be the same," Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

There is one large safety committee, and within that committee there are separate councils for the Memorial, and the middle/high school.

At the most recent meeting, Puglisi said to ensure protection they made sure the safety folders in the middle school and high school were "exactly the same" and in the same location in each room.

The committee also discussed the procedure that would take place if there were ever an evacuation during lunch.

Puglisi said, "The added benefit of U block is that every student is assigned to an adult during lunch." This way, every student can easily be accounted for.

In the case of an off-site evacuation, the committee decided upon a location that students could be moved to that would be easier for parents to find and pick up their children.

The current off site is Sacred Heart Church; however, students "would move to a place like the Mac or an area with a large parking lot," Puglisi said.

The committee addressed their new enhanced lockdown procedure, called the Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter Evacuate implementation (ALICE).

Teachers underwent the ALICE implementation last school

year to experience the lockdown and to find the best routes that will ensure safety for each classroom.

Puglisi said the committee is going to perform an overview for par-

ents and students sometime between February and March.

Following the information session about the lockdown procedure, the committee will do a drill with the students

SAFETY, page 3

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News Brief

Students volunteer at Essex Elementary holiday fundraiser

With help from high school students, Essex Elementary School held a Holiday Craft and Cake Walk Fundraiser, which raised about \$1,500, according to Essex Elementary librarian Susan Hardy.

The fundraiser raised money for the Ramsden Academic Achievement Award, which is an achievement award that is named after Neil Ramsden, a teacher who was in the school for many years.

"The award has been given out since 1970, and it is given to a student that went through Essex Elementary," Hardy said.

The award is given to around four to 10 students based off of academic achievement, citizenship, and community service each year for generally \$3,000 each.

This year 12 high school students helped out with the fundraiser.

Junior Ellie Taraska, who volunteered at the event, said students helped set up, put together the kits that held the holiday crafts, run the actual Cake Walk, play the music, sell pizza, and clean up.

Hardy said this event takes a lot of preparation and "man power," so she is always looking for help from students.

The fundraiser includes a Cake Walk where students and families pay \$1 for the chance to win a cake and holiday crafts for children, ginger bread houses to decorate, and an area for people write Christmas cards.

Forty-six cakes, which are the prizes throughout the games, were made and donated by volunteers.

Missing Chromebooks hamper online learning

Tech team requests student honesty, returning borrowed computers

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

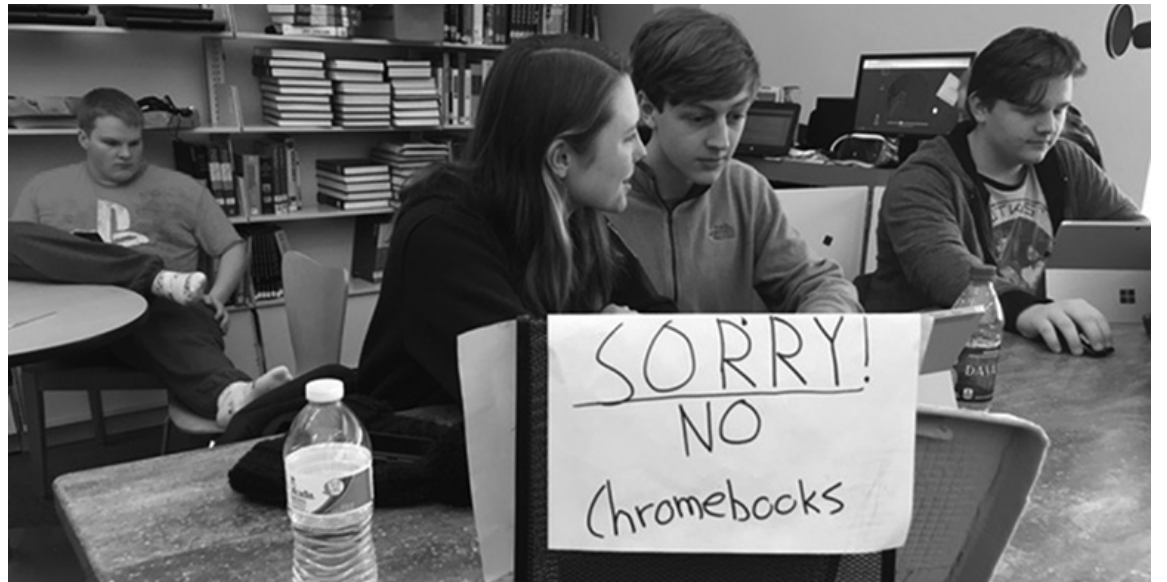
Tech Team has been distributing school-owned Chromebooks to students who do not have personal computers for online learning.

Students who do not return Chromebooks in a timely fashion, however, hamper this goal, causing a shortage of the computers

"There are only 44 high school Chromebooks, if you count the ones [belonging to the Social Studies department], and approximately 10 are missing at any point in time," Tech Team director Dalcione Vollink said.

Currently, she said her "best weapon" to combat this is disabling the Chromebooks, forcing students to return the Chromebook to Tech Team to unlock it.

"I can see the names of the people who last used a Chromebook -- the ones who have not returned it -- but I'm hoping students will take the responsibility to simply return them instead of my having to track them down," she said.



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

The recent shortage of Chromebooks has forced Tech Team to turn away students who need them.

Senior Robert Carter, a Tech Team member, shares Vollink's frustration. "It's hard to turn away someone who genuinely needs a Chromebook," he said.

Senior Nellie Boling, who is also on Tech Team, empathizes with the students because she also relies on

school-supplied Chromebooks.

"Not having access to a Chromebook when I need it really affects my ability to participate in class activities that are on the internet," she said.

She also said that the Tech Team "can only do so much, but it has come down to [mem-

bers] searching the school for the Chromebooks students have left in random places because they don't want to own up to their mistake," she said.

She said the only way this problem can be fixed is "simply student cooperation; we really need people to just be honest."

Students receive early decision college acceptances

By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students have started to receive early action and early decision acceptance letters, and although it is the beginning of the acceptance process, guidance counselor Beverly Low has noticed how this year's class has applications done earlier than most years.

Low said this class is "very diligent" and have been working on their applications.

"Based on what we can see on Naviance, around 86 percent of the seniors have submitted at least one application... It does not mean that the entire 86 percent applied early decision or even early action, but some students felt that when they were done with the application, they didn't want it sitting around; they wanted to get it in," she said.

Of that 86 percent,



EMILY CLARK PHOTO

Senior Matt Kenney applied early decision to Dartmouth College and was accepted.

fewer than 10 of those students applied early decision.

Low hopes that everyone finds the best choice for him or her individually.

"I worry sometimes that people get swept up into the col-

lege application process without breaking away from the pack and thinking individually what is best for him or her. I've seen a little bit of that chaos early on, but it seems to have corrected itself. People are calming down a little bit," she said.

She said not many students apply early decision because the school has to be a perfect fit. If a student gets in, he or she has to attend.

Senior Matt Kenney applied early decision and got accepted into Dartmouth University.

"The moment when you get into the college you really love is kind of a crazy experience, whether you expected to get in or not. It's just amazing to know that, after working for so many years, your work has actually resulted in something awesome," he said.

Accepted early decision into Tufts University, senior

Maura McCormick noticed a lot of stress was relieved.

"The college process was an additional stress on top of school and sports, so not having to worry about that gives me more time to focus on other important things," she said.

Senior Sally Pulver, who got accepted into Fairfield University, and her brother senior Redmond Pulver, who got accepted into Holy Cross, both agreed that a lot of stress has been relieved after being accepted through early decision; they both are excited now to graduate and figure out what they are going to study.

According to Low, it is hard for the guidance counselors to know who gets in where.

"We would love for students to tell us when they hear from a college or make the change on Naviance because that would help with the data," she said.

School Council continues to prepare for upcoming Career Day

By Austin Paré
INDEPENDENT STAFF

In order to expose students to different job options and careers, the School Council is planning a Career Day for the sophomore and junior grades

The Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce has already gathered several different career fields from the Cape Ann community to present at this Career Day that is set to take place on Mon., March 29.

Students will use an online program to choose the presenters they would like to see on Career Day, Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

Some of the career fields that have been chosen already include banking, marketing, health care, hospitality, and insurance.

The day will consist of a

30-minute keynote presentation in the auditorium followed by three 30-minute rounds of meetings with presenters.

Each individual presentation will be 15-minute long and will then be followed by a 15-minute question and answer period at the end of the session, allowing students to ask the presenters more in-depth and personal questions.

After the three rounds of presentations, presenters will follow students to the cafeteria for an informal meeting during lunch.

Students and presenters will be assigned a table for lunch. This gives students another opportunity to ask more questions about the jobs that are being presented, Puglisi said.

Senior Zoe Brown, who is also a member of the School Council,

said the question and answer portion, including the lunch, of Career Day is important and will help give students more information.

"It gives sophomores and juniors the opportunity to ask questions that could determine what they want to do with the rest of their life. I wish that I had the opportunity to learn about different careers before thinking about college," Brown said.

Puglisi asked art teacher Caroline Epp's documenting high school class to make brochures for the Career Day.

"An authentic learning experience like designing a brochure for a real program at the school is more meaningful for the students and allows them to become excited about the upcoming event," Epp said.

Featured Occupations

- Attorney
- Banking
- Non-profit business manager
- Healthcare
- Events director
- Insurance
- Newspaper editor
- Marketing
- Non-profit experiential learning
- Non-profit development manager
- Entrepreneurship
- Human resources
- Heating and plumbing

Long-term substitute French teacher begins in middle of year

Girls' lacrosse coach starts work in foreign language department, adjusts to new environment

By Sirine Benali
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Girls' lacrosse coach Rebecca Smith has recently joined the foreign language department as a long-term substitute French teacher, taking the place of Meghan Barnes.

Smith grew up in New Jersey, but she moved North and recently graduated from Gordon College. While at school, she majored in secondary education and in French.

According to Smith, she has known since she was a child that she wanted to become a teacher when she got older because of her experience during her childhood.

"I grew up with learning differences, and I struggled. [My teachers] couldn't break down the information to what I needed. I wanted to become a teacher to make information become accessible to students like me," Smith said.

After she pursued a career in teaching, Smith eventually decided that she wanted to teach French because it "is the subject most ap-



SIRINE BENALI PHOTO

Girls' lacrosse coach Rebecca Smith, long-term French substitute for Meghan Barnes, hopes her students will become more comfortable with French.

plicable to life since it's a living, breathing language," Smith said.

In the past, Smith worked as a teacher's aid to students with social and emotional needs at Briscoe Middle School.

She also worked at a summer school in Beverly with 4-year-olds who had extreme behavioral needs, and then she

'She's got a lot of energy and is really positive...I think that she'll provide a great perspective on French language and culture.'

- MICHELLE MAGAÑA

again worked in special education to help students with math. She said these students would "hit [her], or curse at [her], some pretty intense stuff."

Acclimating to the new environment at the school has been a very different experience for Smith than adjusting to other new environments in the past.

"So far, everyone is really supportive, and the teachers are really helpful. Mrs. Magaña has been like a mentor to me," she said.

Michelle Magaña, the foreign language department chair, is

FUN FACTS

- **Favorite ice cream flavor: coffee**
- **Pet peeves: using phones in class and over-the-top terms of endearment**
- **She enjoys making ice cream**
- **Spinning is one of her favorite ways to exercise**
- **Fear: snakes**
- **Parents and sister are teachers**

currently helping Smith transition to the school and adjust to the new environment since it is extremely different than the setting of many of the schools where Smith has worked in the past. "She's got a lot of energy

and is really positive... I think that she'll provide a great perspective on French language and culture," Magaña said.

By the end of this school year, Smith said that her goal is for all of her students to learn to be "more comfortable speaking and listening [in French], because that's what language is all about," and because language is useful in many types of real world situations.

Smith also works at the school as the varsity girls' lacrosse coach.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said, "It is always great to have a coach and a teacher all in the same building."

Smith's players on the lacrosse team are also excited to have their current coach begin working as their new French teacher at the school since the players have had past experience working with Smith.

"I think she knows how to react to kids and how to treat them [because] she's fun on our lacrosse team," sophomore Emma Cochand said.

Biology teacher enjoys running, hopes to complete another marathon

By Maura McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Biology teacher Kristin Umile has been running long-distance races since she was 38 and even completed a 50-mile race two years ago.

Although Umile is not currently training for any race in particular, she said she always enjoys running on her own in her free time because it is an activity that she enjoys.

"I like that it is an individualized sport that I have time to do. It clears my mind," she said.

She said she typically runs up to six miles five days a week.

Umile also said that this year one of her main goals is to run another marathon, after taking a lot of time off last year following her 50-mile race.

The 50-mile race, called Stone Cat, went through some trails in Ipswich. It took her 9

hours and 56 minutes to complete, and she said the training for that race was intensive.

Umile said it is hard to fit such diligent training into her schedule as a teacher, so she thinks that at least for this year she does not plan on completing another race longer than a marathon.

"If you do a 50, you feel like you can do anything, but it's all about the training," she said.

Umile is also a vegetarian, so she said that she has to be very careful about her nutrition when training for her various long-distance races.

"I had to do a lot of research

on how to replenish all the protein that my body was using up during that extended period of exercise," she said.

She said she is hoping to complete another marathon this summer.

Olivia Ford and Mia Cromwell, two freshman runners on the track team at the school and in Umile's biology class, both said that they are impressed and inspired by Umile's accomplishments and running success.

"I think it is really amazing that she could run for such a long time," Ford said.

Umile said she likes long-distance races because they provide a challenge.

'I always like to challenge myself and set up goals that might seem a little out of reach... that's sort of what drives me.'

-KRISTIN UMILE



COURTESY OF KRISTIN UMILE

Kristin Umile and her friend Marianne Quaratiello participated in a trail race called Stone Cat in Ipswich. Umile hopes to continue running and run another race this upcoming summer.

"I always like to challenge myself and set up goals that might seem a little out of reach,"

she said, "but that's sort of what drives me is to set some goal that seems a little difficult to attain."

CONTINUATIONS

COLLEGE PANEL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
life, studying abroad, and financial aid.

"Don't take the 8 a.m. class," Woodman said. "You might think it's fine, because you show up to high school at around the same time, but trust me, it's not."

Additionally, because of how much time is spent outside the dorm room, single rooms are not as lonely as one might think, McCormick said.

Both McCormick and Kelley, who will be studying in Australia this semester, recommended taking advantage of any school's study abroad program. The opportunity is one-of-a-kind, they said.

The alumni also talked about the financial aid process. Though it can be tedious, it does help, and schools are willing to work with students to form the right package, del Valle said.

The success of the panel can partially be attributed to a variety in panelists, Boling said.

"The people we had on the panel were from a number of different schools, so the diversity was good," she said.

"The questions were things that I wondered about my senior year, and all of the [other] panelists had different experiences, so it was interesting to hear from all of them," Rhuda said.

The importance of the panel stems from the importance of peer-to-peer interaction, Low said.

"It's much better for everyone

to hear about college from college students than from adults," she said. "I feel like the questions and the way the panel addressed things set the tone for things [for seniors] to be thinking of."

The panel provided alternative insight into the college experience, senior Matt Kenney said.

"Through my parents, friends, and a lot of college tours, I've learned a ton about college, but the college panel was cool because it gave me the chance to hear real students sharing their experiences," he said.

DECA
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
role play out of all 500 students in Principles of Business Management, according to Martino.

The underclassmen also were pivotal in stepping up to help organize the team, especially because there are fewer seniors this year because there is no entrepreneurship class due to a lack of interested students, senior Tracy

Blagden said.

From managing attendance to organizing mock competition, the officers, including seniors Ananya Dwivedi and Tracy Blagden and juniors Izzy del Valle, Clara Tuttle, Laura Hannafin, and Micaela Coonley, were essential parts to the team, Martino said.

Senior Lisett Ronchi said it is quite hard to do well in competition, so students take time outside of class using online resources to prepare for competition.

The nature of competition is difficult because students are expected to think creatively about business problems, Blagden said. "It's not just answering the questions; it's being creative and coming up with a solution that's out of the box. You have to be creative in order to place high" she said.

Looking ahead to the state competition, students will continue to use practice exams and practice role plays to prepare. Martino

'Our goal at each level is to create the game plan to get competitors to Internationals.'

- DEAN MARTINO

hopes everyone who qualified for States will move on to the international competition in California.

"Our goal at each level is to create the game plan to get competitors to Internationals who wants to get there. We always aim for 100 percent success," he said.

SAFETY COMMITTEE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
so that they can do an "enhanced lockdown" where the doors will be barricaded.

Puglisi said, "Generally people feel much safer and more secure after they learn about [ALICE]." She is now a certified trainer for the ALICE implementation.

Technology

Should teachers allow use of personal devices?

Pro

Sirine Benali

The use of personal devices is beneficial in classes since it gives more resources to teachers, allows students to explore a wider range of ideas, and creates a more interactive learning environment.

When students have electronic devices available to them, they are able to connect with classroom materials regardless of their learning preference.

For example, technology allows visual learners to create more visually pleasing notes to understand the material, and auditory learners can use podcasts or create songs to help them.

Before the introduction of technology in the classroom, the main sources of information were the textbook and the teacher. However, the internet provides an additional amount of information available to students, which prepares them for the long-term.

Teachers also have more resources available to them.

Sarah Loyola of the Huffington Post writes that “the students of today have access to a colossal amount of information”; because of this, she argues that we need technology in the classroom “if we are going to prepare them for the modern workplace and a future so technologically advanced.”

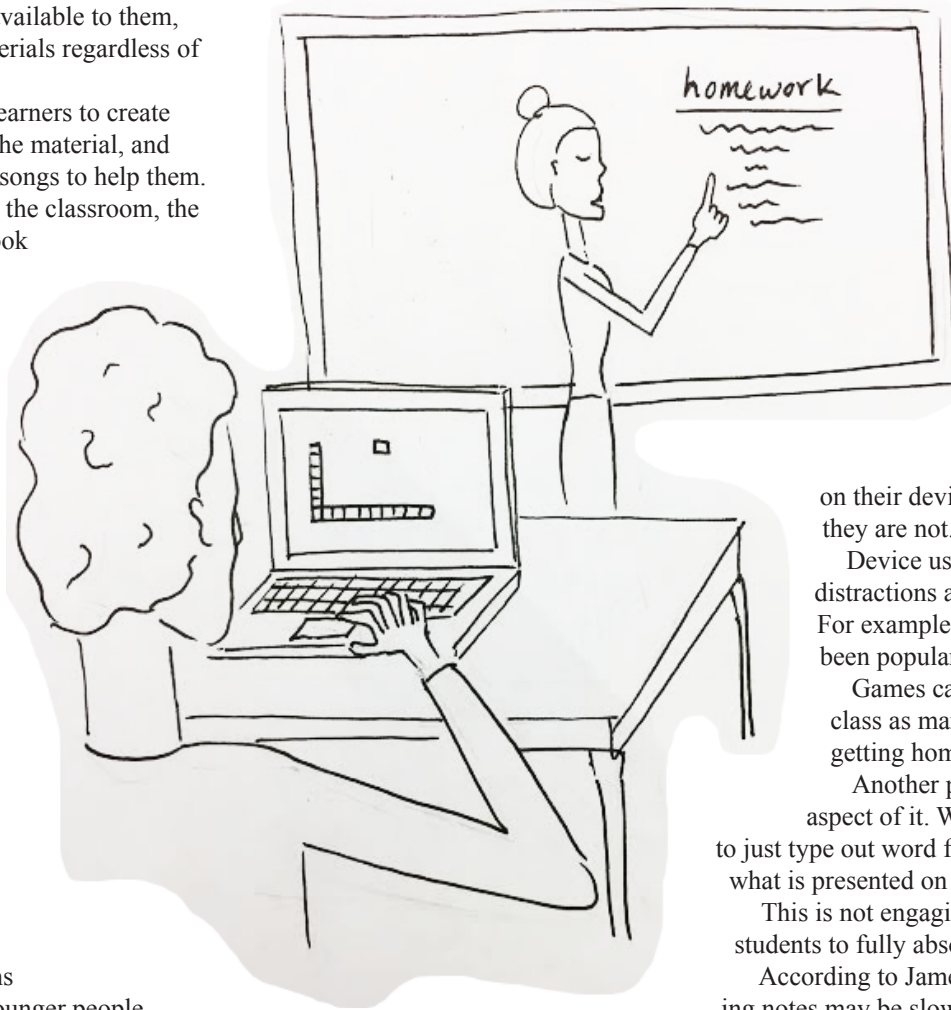
With more information available to students, it becomes easier to understand abstract concepts. Students with different learning styles can use different materials both online and from their teacher to be able to fully understand harder concepts.

Being able to use personal devices also keeps students attentive in the classroom.

A growing amount of interactive lesson plans online help keeps students focused. Since younger people tend to have a shorter attention span, a constantly changing lesson plan is beneficial.

Some studies show that, as a result of introducing technology, test scores improve.

According to Jonah Comstock of MobiHealthNews.com, “UC Irvine reported [in February 2013] that the first [medical] class to receive iPads from the school scored an average of 23 percent higher on national exams than previous classes.”



EVERY SHAW ILLUSTRATION

Con

Heather Holley

While many students find using devices during class to be easier and quicker, it actually causes distractions during lessons and detracts from their full comprehension of what they should be learning.

As today’s society is growing more technologically based, school is too. Devices have become a major aspect of classwork and note taking, but the use of devices during class allows students to set themselves up for distractions.

Especially in classes such as history, devices (laptops, phones, etc.) are highly encouraged, but both students and faculty know that students are not always doing what they should be.

With iPads, Mac Books, and other Apple devices, texting is available, therefore allowing students to be texting on their devices, looking like they are doing work when they are not.

Device usage in the classroom also encourages more distractions as apps and online games are easily accessible. For example, a game involving searching Wikipedia has been popular for students this year.

Games cause further distractions both in and out of class as many students text and play games instead of getting homework or studying done during U block.

Another problem with using devices is the note taking aspect of it. When using laptops to type notes, students tend to just type out word for word either what the teacher is saying or what is presented on the board.

This is not engaging at all, but rather passive and does not allow students to fully absorb what they are supposed to be learning.

According to James Doubek from NPR.org, although hand writing notes may be slower, note taking increases memorization and the recollection of what students are studying. Since students can’t copy word for word everything that is displayed or said by the teacher, students also must actively choose what information is important and should be written down.

Technical difficulties have also proven to disrupt student’s learning. The school’s Wi-Fi has caused many problems in the past as it stopped working and not allowed students to get onto sites such as Google Classroom or Google Docs, and teachers couldn’t play videos or pull up things from the internet that they needed.

School should implement art requirement to foster creativity, balance

Mandatory art classes would help students secure better jobs, get into colleges that require them

By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As of now there is no art or music requirement for students in their four years in order to graduate. In order to create more well-rounded and creative students, this should be changed.

There are very academic students who challenge themselves with various courses, but they are missing out on a whole area of their education when they do not take any artistic courses.

“I think in a setting like this where we don’t have a requirement to take creative art courses, which could be dance, theatre, visual arts, or music, students really miss out,” art teacher Tamera Burns said.

Burns said many of the careers that the students will be going into require great creativity,

due to the modern technology and innovation that the future will be focused on. Art courses, just like her entry-level art lab, would help people open up and help them get in touch with themselves in order to find their creativity.

According to Principal Patricia Puglisi, there has been an increase in the number of students taking art courses this year due to the availability the new schedule offers, so an art requirement is not necessary; the students that want to take art courses have the opportunity to.

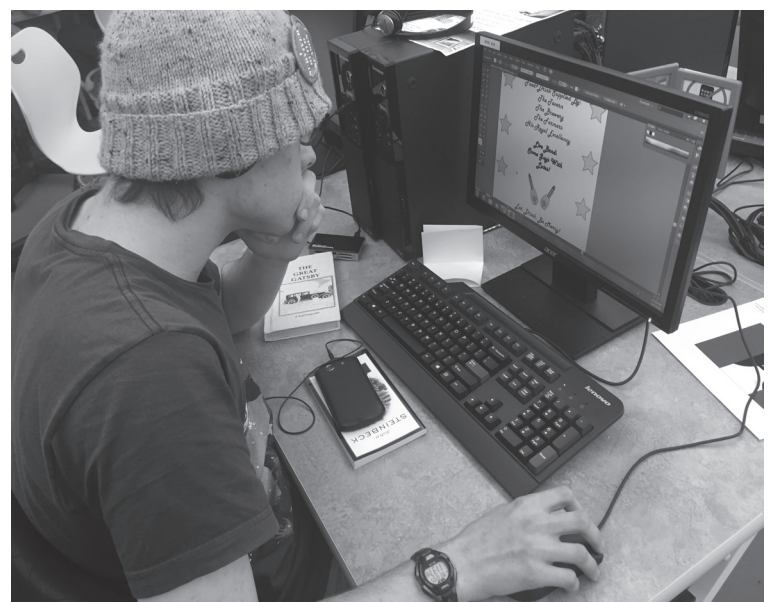
An art requirement, however, would positively affect students who have no interest in art. Students should be urged to expand their horizons and try different courses.

It is not necessary for the

students to take extensive art classes if they are not interested, but simply one course during high school could greatly help students for their futures. They could find new things they love, and expand their creativity and their prior artistic knowledge.

Further, many colleges to which the students may want to apply, such as Middlebury College, require the students to take an art class of any form in their high school lives.

If the students during their freshman year are aware at some point they must take an art course, it is much more manageable for them to work it into their schedules rather than realizing during senior year that the college to which they want to apply requires that they have taken an art course.



EMILY CLARK PHOTO

Junior Michael Conlon uses Photoshop to create an advertisement in art teacher Caroline Hunt-Epp’s Studio Art class. Such classes can give students time to relax during a busy day, strengthen creativity, and may even be required by some jobs and colleges.



‘Manchester’ did not feel like it was set here

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

I saw the film “Manchester by the Sea” about a month ago. My experience with the movie was undoubtedly very different than most of those who saw it due to one simple reason: I live in the town after which the movie is named.

I instantly recognized Gloucester’s hockey rink at the O’Maley School, the golf course behind the high school, and the church downtown where my parents were married.

I felt the poignant themes of the movie in, as I’d imagine, much the same frame of mind most others who saw it did.

However, because I knew the exact areas in which the movie was filmed, I could see discontinuities that someone who has not lived around here for many years would not be able to pick out.

For example, the house of the main character’s brother is in Manchester, but the view from the second-story windows is in Annisquam. On several occasions, characters would reference towns in which they would supposedly be, only for the scenery to be from elsewhere. And more than once, the camera would be focused on one character in a car and by the time it switched to the other a sentence later, they were driving back the way they had come.

I started to look at these discontinuities as a sort of comic relief because the rest of the movie was so utterly tragic and heart-breaking.

Additionally, I found it interesting to compare the movie’s portrayal of Manchester-by-the-Sea to the town I know. Although the movie portrays the town as a working-class fishing village, according to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Manchester is in the top 20 of Massachusetts’ richest towns.

The fishing community is certainly still a part of Manchester, although much less so than it used to be. Now the harbor is mostly made up of boats used for summer sailing, although this inaccurate portrayal would not be so apparent to a person who did not live around here and did not affect the overall quality of the movie.

As a result of this, even though the movie’s title was the town in which I live and I saw the filming taking place around here, I felt removed from the movie; it was hard to convince myself that this movie was really placed in Manchester.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Valentine’s Day shows importance of expressing love to family, friends

Although many people view Valentine’s Day as a reminder that they are single or as a holiday meant exclusively for couples, Valentine’s Day is a time to show love and affection to all loved ones, not only to significant others.

The commercial side of Valentine’s Day, such as candy hearts and boxes of chocolate, is generally what perpetuates the idea that Valentine’s Day is a holiday solely for couples. Although it is a wonderful time for sweethearts to celebrate their love, this makes it hard for those without a significant other to enjoy the holiday.

However, Valentine’s Day is not necessarily about romance. It is about celebrating all types of love, whether for a family member, a friend, or a pet. Everyone has someone whom he or she loves, which is what Valentine’s Day is all about.

For example, it is common in elementary school for children to



AMBER PARÉ PHOTO

Senior Amber Paré and her sister sophomore Austin Paré have a tradition of exchanging gifts every year on Valentine’s Day.

bring Valentines to every person in their class, not only their supposed boyfriends or girlfriends.

This tradition represents what

Valentine’s Day should be about – saying thank you to those who have a special place in one’s heart and showing love for these

special people. This isn’t to say that celebrating love with a significant other isn’t an integral part of Valentine’s Day. This is the most commonly celebrated type of love on Valentine’s Day, which is shown by heart shaped boxes of chocolate lining the shelves in grocery markets, the commercials featuring engagement rings and happily engaged couples, and the dozens of roses in nearly every store.

In fact, a survey by the Huffington Post found that is likely for 6 million couples to get engaged on Valentine’s Day. Consequently, it is easy to feel left out of Valentine’s Day without a significant other. For this reason, it is important to separate this holiday from the commercial side of Valentine’s Day and instead see that it is a time to appreciate all people who are important in one’s life, not only those with whom one has a romantic relationship.

Schools should create an elective theology curriculum for students

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Religion has played a main role in the shaping of major historical events; a solid understanding of theology is often necessary in order to understand history. For these reasons, theology classes should be offered as elective courses.

Unless a high school’s curriculum is built on a religious foundation -- such as a Catholic school -- theology classes are typically avoided and only taught beginning in the undergraduate year of college.

The reason for this avoidance is typically that the vastly different views of what religions mean and how best to practice them are more often than not sources of much tension as people anticipate being forced to believe in an idea with which they do not

agree.

The point of theology, however, is not to create converts but instead study the history of religion and philosophize about what it means without absolute answers.

Thus, an elective theology class must deal with the history of religion and what followers have believed it stood for based on the religion’s main works of literature.

Additionally, although to a Western perspective, monotheistic religions are the most important, they must not be the only ones studied or focused on, as other world

religions were just as influential to the history of the people who practiced them.

Even though the legacy of the Crusades -- holy wars fought between the monotheistic ideologies of Christianity and Islam -- can still be felt poignantly in the Middle East today, the belief of not harming cattle in polytheistic Hinduism came into play with the Indian Rebellion of 1857 that prompted a reorganization

of the British military.

This reorganization eventually allowed the British military to be successful in aiding the Allies in winning World War 1, an event whose repercussions are undoubtedly still felt today.

Such history, and an investigation into why religion-specific

‘A theology elective can yield deeper insights into the human psychology of needing -- and now increasingly avoiding -- religion.’



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

Thought-provoking theology classes will open new learning opportunities for students.

beliefs came about, can be fascinating because theology speaks to intrinsic parts of human nature.

In addition to giving students a better understanding of major historical events, a theology elective can yield a deeper insight into the human psychology of needing -- and now increasingly avoiding -- religion.

the INDEPENDENT

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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.

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Option 1: Free (\$0)



Winter is here and brings with it chilly temperatures and snow flurries. There is no better way to take advantage of these frigid temperatures than to brave the cold and hit the ice for an hour or two with your valentine.

Nearly everybody has a cheap pair of ice skates laying around. For those who do not, picking up the phone and asking a friend to borrow some for a couple hours is quite easy.

Several great spots for ice skating can be found close to town, including Dexter's Pond and Chebacco Lake, and they are of course entirely free.

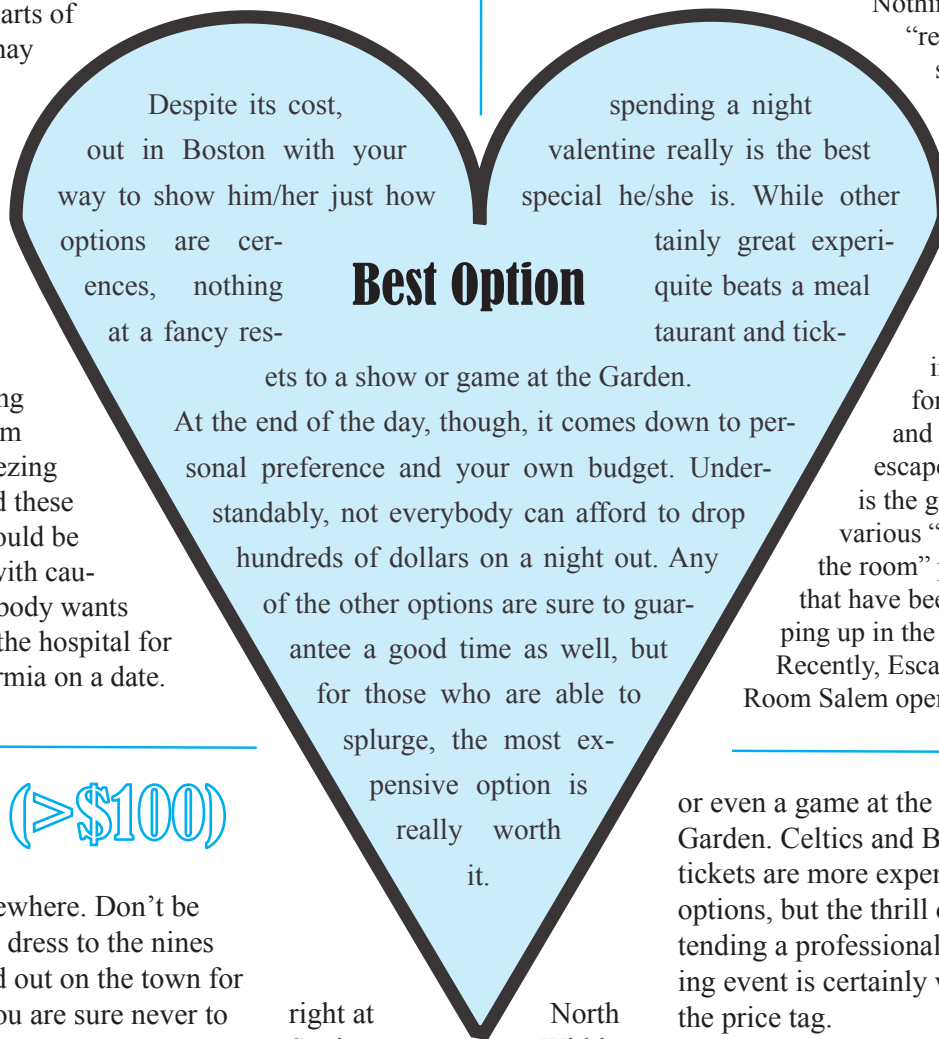
As with all winter activities, safety should be a major concern when ice skating, and the proper safety gear should

be worn at all times in order to protect against falls.

Even though it is quite literally freezing outside, certain parts of the ice may be much thinner than others because of water currents preventing them from fully freezing over, and these areas should be treated with caution. Nobody wants to go to the hospital for hypothermia on a date.

What is the best V-Day date?

By Will Heslop



Best Option

Despite its cost, out in Boston with your way to show him/her just how options are cer- ences, nothing at a fancy res-

spending a night valentine really is the best special he/she is. While other tainly great experi- quite beats a meal taurant and tick-

ets to a show or game at the Garden. At the end of the day, though, it comes down to personal preference and your own budget. Understandably, not everybody can afford to drop hundreds of dollars on a night out. Any of the other options are sure to guarantee a good time as well, but for those who are able to splurge, the most expensive option is really worth it.

right at Station. North Within walking distance are some of the best restaurants in the city such as Giacomo's, and you cannot go wrong anywhere in the North End.

After a satisfying (and pricey) meal, you could catch a show at a local theater

Option 2: Budget (<\$50)



Nothing says "relationship goals" better than being

locked in a room for an hour and trying to escape. This is the goal of various "escape the room" puzzles that have been popping up in the area. Recently, Escape Room Salem opened and

is offering this experience to customers who are willing to pay the \$24 it costs per ticket. Inspired by video games with the same premise, these escape rooms have become increasingly popular recently. There are various themes to choose from, but the general principle is the same. You are locked in a room and have to escape by finding various clues scattered throughout. The entire experience is scheduled to take roughly one hour. Working with your valentine to escape this puzzle will be an incredibly unique experience that the two of you will remember for years to come, and an escape room was even featured on "The Bachelorette."

Option 3: Pricey (>\$100)

For those high rollers out there, plenty of options exist that your sweetheart is sure to love. If money is not an issue, do not be afraid to splurge every once in a while and show your valentine just how much he/she means to you.

Despite the beauty and charm of a town like Manchester or Essex, sometimes you need to get out of dodge for an evening and spend

time elsewhere. Don't be afraid to dress to the nines and head out on the town for a date you are sure never to forget. Only a 45-minute train ride away, Boston has much more to offer from an entertainment perspective.

There are trains heading into Boston every hour, and for roughly \$10 round trip for students, there is nothing more convenient than hopping on a train that gets out

or even a game at the TD Garden. Celtics and Bruins tickets are more expensive options, but the thrill of attending a professional sporting event is certainly worth the price tag.

If sports are not necessarily your cup of tea, there are constantly shows playing in Boston that are sure to entertain. With prices as low as \$35 and as high as \$120, the Blue Man Group is worth seeing at least once, and the TD Garden is a frequent stop on tours for big-time artists.



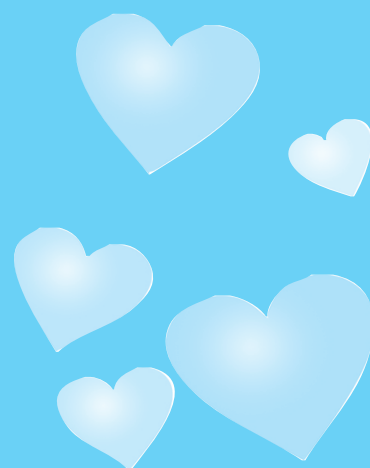
Social studies teacher **Jessica Tran** said, "My husband and I met when we were freshmen in college, and we actually met probably the third week of freshman year. We were friends. A bunch of us were friends – we all lived in the same dorm together. And we actually started dating at the first semester freshman year and have more or less been together ever since. And then got married after we had been dating for 10 years."

Foreign language teacher **Michelle Magaña** said, "I was studying for my master's degree in Spain. So I took the year off from teaching here, and I went over there for the year. It was the end of November, and we had an art trip led by our art professor from Madrid to visit Seville and Cordoba. So on the bus ride on our trip that's when I met my husband because he was sitting across from me on the bus ride. So we got talking because he was listening to music, and I was listening to music, and we started talking about certain artists that we like... We talked pretty much the whole bus ride down. It was like six or seven hours that we went, but we stopped in Seville,



and we talked a lot so that's how it all began. That weekend we were touring a bunch of museums in Seville, and then we went up to Cordoba and toured the city of Cordoba, and as we were touring, we got to know each other, and after that trip he asked me out on a date."

Teacher How did your significant



Dating in high school

THEN

VS.

NOW

By Avery Shaw



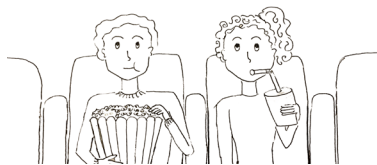
Passing notes is the older version of instant messaging. There may have been the exhilaration of trying not to get your note taken by the teacher (or even worse— read out loud!), but with cell phones allowing sending messages to be faster and sneakier, passing notes has become a thing of the past.

How you first say you like each other

Every relationship begins on Snapchat. The app allows fun and flirty conversations that are low commitment because the conversation disappears as soon as you view it! If a streak (consecutive days of Snapchatting) starts to build up— 10, maybe 11 days long— there is definitely some interest between the two Snapchatters.



Dinner and a movie— a classic and dependable duo for a first date. But movie dates are becoming less and less common. The prices are expensive. You have to coordinate transportation. The theaters are just gross. In this day and age, you can watch your all-time favorite movie from the comfort of your home, and there is no inflated price for popcorn!



Your first date



“Do you watch ‘Game of Thrones?’” = the best pick up line ever. Netflix is an instant conversation starter (because who doesn’t love Netflix?), and it’s a go-to date plan. All you need is a computer and a show you are both interested in, and sparks will fly!

and it’s a go-to date plan. All you need is a computer and a show you are both interested in, and sparks will fly!



Holding hands used to accomplish two things: It was a sweet sign of affection towards your

significant other as well as a polite way to tell any potential threats to the relationship to back off! But hand-holding has phased out. High-schoolers resort to other way to express their affection for one another.

Making it official

Social media is the most efficient way to announce your status. And while Facebook is known for publicizing a “relationship status,” the real truth comes out on Instagram. You know it is official once a couple posts an Instagram together. Sacrificing your Instagram feed’s aesthetic in order to post a picture of your partner is the true testimony of love.



It used to be so simple. Once you had broken up with your boyfriend or girlfriend, you just had to avoid seeing him/her in person. Either avoiding your ex’s presence completely or just choosing to ignore when he/she talks made it very clear that the relationship ended badly.



Break-up aftermath



It’s difficult to avoid someone now with all of the different means of communication available. So couples have had to resort to newer and pettier ways to show their frustration. If you want to hit someone where it hurts, delete all the photos of your ex from Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Or even worse—block him/her on your account! The goal is to try to act like it never happened.

er Speak: d you meet cant other?



Foreign language teacher **Robert Bilsbury** said, “Basically, Kate and I went to the same high school. We graduated the same year - 1989 from Masco. We knew each other, but we were in totally different social groups. She was in the very

theatrical group, and I was more in sports and stuff like that. We had a couple of classes together. We had English together, we had science class together, and I always kind of thought, ‘Oh, Kate Murphy – She’s out of my league or whatever,’ so I never tried to go out on a date with her or anything. And at the fifth-year high school reunion we had a couple of dances together and then started dating, and we got married and planned out the ten year reunion together.”



Math teacher **Daniel Lundergan** said, “It was 30 years ago this past New Year’s Eve. We were at a party in Boston. I had a friend who was a merchant marine, and he was out to sea. His fiancée invited me and a friend to go to this party in Boston. The fiancée’s friend was there, and so that’s how we met. We met at a New Year’s Eve party at the Park Plaza Hotel. I was basically a date for my friend’s fiancée because my friend was shipped out, so basically that’s how it happened.”

A Day in the Life of Steve Hunt



Maintenance Technician



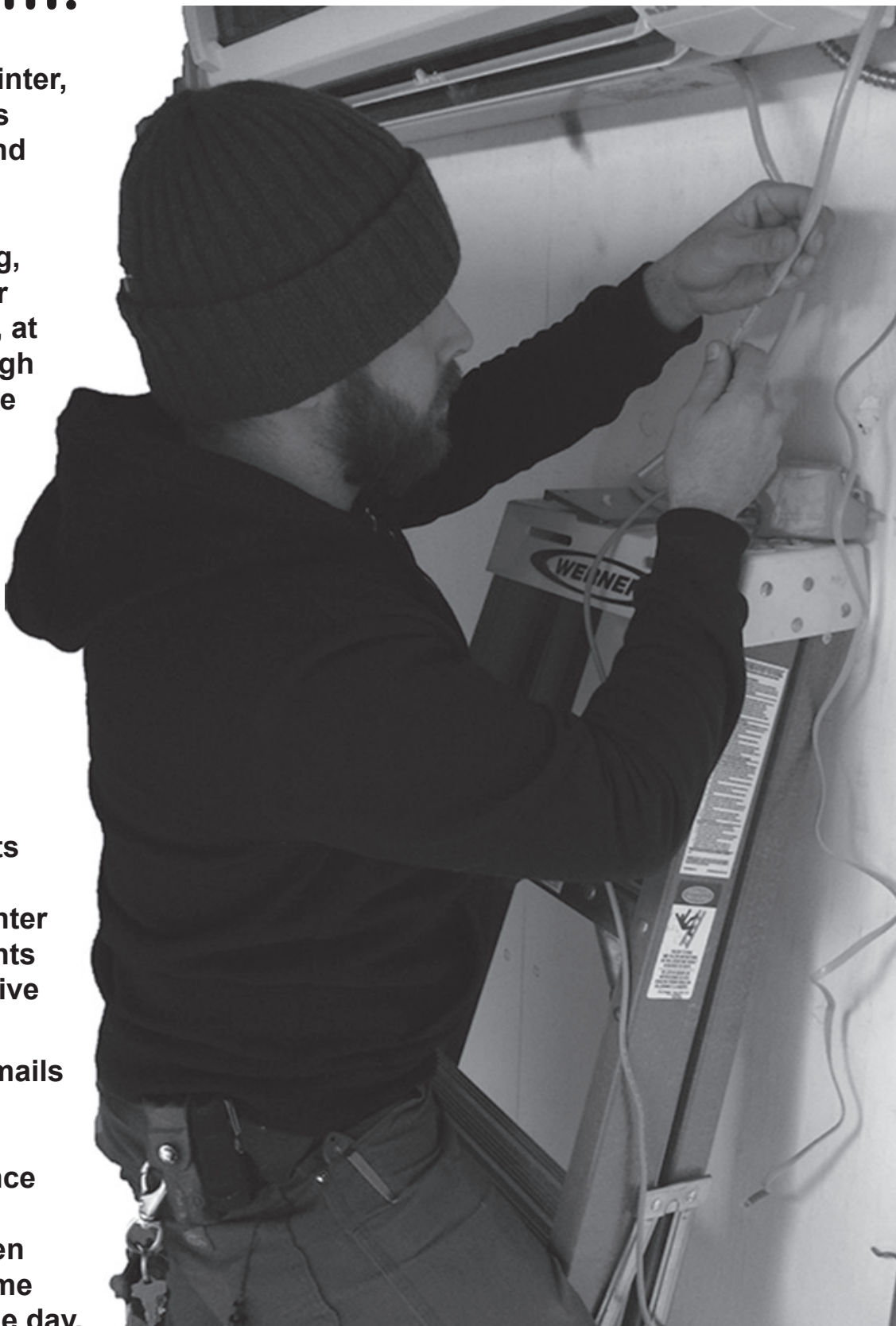
Morning 6 a.m.

-During the winter, Hunt monitors the heating and mechanical systems, HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning), at the middle/ high school and the elementary schools.

-Examples of HVAC are boilers, air handlers, exhaust fans, and the chilled water system.

-He removes snow and salts the walkways during the winter so that students can safely arrive at school.

-He checks emails and the work order system for maintenance requests and responds when he has free time throughout the day.



Afternoon 12 p.m.

-Hunt attends to plumbing, lighting, HVAC, troubleshooting building systems, and day-to-day “fix it” requests.

-He schedules and coordinates trade groups such as electricians, plumbers, and other repair companies.

-Hunt performs preventative maintenance on building systems and equipment, which means doing things to the HVAC or other equipment to avoid future problems.

-Examples of preventative maintenance are changing belts and filters in the air handling units.

-He orders replacement parts or other items that are needed for the building’s system.

-Hunt operates the building management system through a computer that displays the entire school and every room on each floor.

-This controls things such as heating so that he can adjust the temperature in any room from his computer.

-Hunt leaves school at 2 p.m. and is on call for the rest of the day.

Boys' basketball team works through losses with help of key players

Senior Brugger, junior Fleming hope to lead team to victories in final few games

By Karlie Angelis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Despite a current record of 4-10, the boys' basketball team is persevering through the season with the help of senior Jake Brugger and junior Lake Fleming.

Coach Tim St. Laurent notes Brugger as being one of the most skilled players on the team with a strong drive and a passion for defense.

"Jake is the heart and soul of the Hornets' defense. His ability to take defensive charges on a nightly basis is impressive," St. Laurent said.

Brugger's skills are not limited to defense, however. He is skilled on the offensive side as well, St. Laurent said.

"His versatile style of play makes him a challenge for any opponent. Jake can knock down shots from anywhere on the court and has the ability to challenge any defender off the dribble," he said.

Brugger, while he does not

plan on playing basketball in college, still puts in effort to each game thanks to his teammates, he said.

"My teammates make me better. They push me during

practice and make me the better version of myself on the court. I put in more effort because of them," Brugger said.

Senior and teammate Jacob Callahan sees Brugger push himself, and it rallies the team to work together better. "Jake's

'Jake can knock down shots from anywhere on the court and has the ability to challenge any defender off the dribble.'

-TIM ST. LAURENT



COURTESY OF LAKE FLEMING

Senior captain Jake Brugger and junior Lake Fleming have been recognized for their strong play and unmatched team spirit this season. With a few games left, they hope to finish the year strong.

competitiveness during games really gets all the other guys to raise the energy to his level," He said.

Fleming also helps raise the spirit of his team, even during their losses, St. Laurent said.

"When you look up the word 'spirit' in the dictionary, you see Lake Fleming's name. In addition to his work ethic on the

court, he also brings a level of energy, wit, and positive enthusiasm to the team on a daily basis," he said.

Fleming embraces this ability to put a smile on everyone's face. "I just always try to keep everyone motivated, and my witty banter allows the players and the coaches to stay positive, even during tough losses," he

said.

His teammate, senior Spencer Feuerbach, notices his high spirits. "He always has the right response to any situation that will pick us up if we are down. His constant positive spirit is always a help to the team," he said.

Both players are working hard to bring the team victories in the future, St. Laurent said.

Carter, Pomeroy exhibit strong play, leadership for girls' basketball team

By James Riordan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As the season moves closer to the postseason, head coach Lauren DuBois said the girls' basketball team is playing well led by senior captain Melanie Carter and sophomore Bella Pomeroy in overall performance and effort respectively.

With a record of 9-4 as of Jan. 30 she said, "The season has been going very well so far. As far as being on track, I think we certainly are. We have to continue to play at a high level certainly, but we'll face a lot of the same teams. Hopefully we continue to grow to be able to defeat them again."

More specifically, DuBois was pleased with the team's co-

operation and swift adjustments, saying, "This team is playing very much at a high level and is a very coachable group. They are able to quickly grasp the things that I want them to and put them into practice which is great, and we're having a lot of fun doing it."

While first stressing the importance of every member of the team and the versatility of the group, DuBois highlighted Carter and Pomeroy at this point in the season.

DuBois said regarding Carter, "She is doing a great job of being a vocal leader and leading by example on the court. She's been battling game in and game out, and if the team is starting to stand around, she takes it upon



COURTESY OF BELLE ALLMENDINGER

Sophomore Bella Pomeroy has become a vocal leader and has taken it upon herself to create opportunities on the offensive end.

herself to create on offensive."

Fellow senior captain Bridgett Kiernan added, "She's

a great leader on the court. Her ability to be such a strong player at the same time really helps to

drive our team to victory, especially when battling the harder teams."

Carter herself pointed to a different player who has made a significant impact so far. She said Pomeroy "plays great defense in the post and boxes out. Also, she's not afraid to dive on the floor for loose balls. Overall, she's just a very well-rounded, hardworking player."

DuBois echoed her thoughts, adding that Pomeroy, "is just kind of like a workhorse. She is always involved in the action even though she won't always put up big points. She is very capable of scoring but is always involved in the physical plays and has been really strong for us on the boards and on offense."

Indoor track coach acknowledges individual improvement, performances

By Will Heslop
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With only a few meets left in the season, members of the indoor track team, led by senior captain Niamh Dalton and junior captain Patrick Guinee, look to finish the year strong.

Being undersized this season, the team placed the majority of its focus on "individual performances and individual improvement," said head coach Mark Dawson.

"Winning meets has never really been a priority of ours. We are happy to take the team wins as they come, but the majority of our focus has been on individual performances," Dawson said.

With a large number of strong individual performances, Dawson said that Dalton and Guinee have emerged as the team's strongest runners.

"On the girls' side, [Dalton]



MAURA MCCORMICK PHOTO

Coach Mark Dawson identified senior Niamh Dalton and junior captain Patrick Guinee as the team's strongest runners this year.

has been running extremely well. She has won almost every race she has competed in and has qualified for the state meet in the 1000m race. I would not be surprised if we saw her in the all-state meet as well," Dawson said.

For the boys, Guinee has stood out as the strongest runner and a very capable captain, Daw-



WILL HESLOP PHOTO

son said. Guinee has qualified for States in just about every event he has run, and Dawson is confident that he will advance to All-States in whatever event he chooses.

"It is my first year in track after running cross country, and I really like the variety of events. I have been able to get my per-

sonal best down to 4:35 for the mile, which is not too far from my goal of 4:20," Guinee said.

Dawson also identified several individuals who, while perhaps not winning every race, are showing consistent improvement, team spirit, and commitment

For the girls', senior runner Julia Potter has shown the most team spirit and "internal drive to succeed," Dawson said.

Potter said that the biggest thing she has worked on this year was getting in the right state of mind each day.

"I know that my mind is the only obstacle between me and improving my running. The team aspect of track means there's

always a support system in place, but the sport also allows for focus on individual improvement," she said.

Dawson also acknowledged the efforts of juniors Liam Faulk and Dean Campbell. Both ran cross country in the fall and have shown great improvement since then, he said.

"[Faulk] has had some injury problems but has really been working hard to make sure that his body is in good condition," Dawson said.

With runners like Faulk and Campbell showing improvement throughout the season, Dawson is confident that the team will have similar success next season.

'The majority of our focus has been on individual performances.'

-MARK DAWSON

Ski team struggles to find early wins, attempts to turn season around

Captains Hahn, Clark provide team with experience, leadership, individual performances

By Antonio Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For both the boys' and the girls' ski teams, the team mentality for the last few years has been to improve the racing skills of each member of the team, but this year the team is looking to take it one step further, led by senior captain Wolf Hahn and junior captain Emily Clark.

Despite many losses earlier in the season, with 2-5 and 2-7 records for the boys' and girls' respectively, the team is staying positive because they are improving under the leadership of Hahn and Clark, said head coach Tim Wonson.

"We want to take these kids who have already improved to the next level," said head coach Tim Wonson about skiers like Hahn, Clark, and other impressive individuals on the team.

What impresses Wonson about his captains, even more than their racing ability, is their

ability to be role models to the younger members of the team.

"Because the team includes both high school and middle school, it is especially important that our upperclassmen and captains set a high standard for the youngsters," he said.

Despite some poor results to start the season, Clark has been especially spirited, which Wonson attributes to her years of ski experience.

Clark has been a part of the school race team since seventh grade, so she knows the ups and downs that a season holds and tries to pass on knowledge to the young racers.

"I love seeing the older girls giving the younger girls tips at the top of the race course because our coaches remind us of the days when we were the younger ones," Clark said.

Hahn has been at the top of the team since nearly qualifying for the state tournament last season when he missed out by one



COURTESY OF KAREN CLARK

Junior captain Emily Clark is on track to make the tournament for the third straight season.

spot. Hahn said his attention to detail makes him a little nervous on the chair lift ride up to the race, but he has a way of finding his mental focus right before the race, which keeps his race times low.

"When I'm in the starting shack, I know I'm ready," Hahn said.

Experience outside of the school team is something that separates skiers like Hahn from the rest, according to Wonson, as

he has spent eight winters racing during the weekends or with the school.

"Both Wolf and Emily have been exemplary captains for the team and the school," Wonson said.

Swim team led by Shaw, Komishane looks to continue early success

By Maura McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Junior Coleman Komishane and senior captain Amber Shaw are both leaders on the swim team, according to head coach Tiffany Hoveland who is filling in for Shannon Alger who is on leave.

Komishane typically competes in long distance events such as the 200 and 500 freestyle, both of which he won at the Cape Ann League Meet last year. Shaw typically swims the 100 butterfly or I.M.

Hoveland said both Komishane and Shaw are willing to swim in any event, which helps the team do better in meets.

Komishane also swims for the

YMCA Sharks, which Hoveland said helps him do better in high school meets.

"He'll do anywhere from two to three practices a day, so that helps him out a lot and shows a lot about his work ethic," Hoveland said.

Komishane said he likes swimming because it helps him in all areas of his life.

"It gives you so many things that affect your life differently such as discipline and time management. Not only does the exercise help you in life but also everything it teaches you," he said.

Komishane said this year he is hoping to be top three in States and Sectionals. He is also potentially aiming for a Cape Ann



COURTESY OF ZANNY LEE

Junior Coleman Komishane has built upon last season's dominance.

League record.

Ultimately he is hoping to swim in college, and he has already been in contact with a

few coaches.

Hoveland said Shaw has also stepped up this year, becoming a leader and role model for newer

swimmers.

"She's the one who keeps the team morale going," Hoveland said.

Shaw said she likes how swim team challenges her.

"Even though it can be extremely difficult, it's a great feeling when you complete a race you didn't think you could or beat one of your times," she said.

Shaw said she's sad that it is her last year on the team.

The swim team is now looking to the Cape Ann League Meet and hoping to place in the top three teams.

Hoveland said this has been one of their most successful seasons yet because of their depth and versatility.

Boys', girls' hockey teams begin strong push toward deep tournament run

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a current record of 5-6-1, the Rockport boys' ice hockey team co-op with Ipswich and Manchester-Essex has greatly improved their performance from last year, coach Patrick McIntosh said.

McIntosh said the team dynamic has been the most noticeable improvement since the beginning of the year.

"The team as a whole has really learned about how to work together. They are starting to feel more comfortable and have really figured out a system that works for us," he said.

Senior captain Jackson Rice said the team has established themselves as a "hard-hitting team," which has advantages and disadvantages.

"Now we are starting to be taken seriously. But we are struggling with getting a lot of penal-



COURTESY OF KEVIN LEGGETT

Freshman Isabell Amigo has played meaningful minutes all season.

ties too," he said.

Both Rice and McIntosh said the team has proven to be strong defensively and gave credit to Ipswich sophomore goalie Max Kivekas.

"He had kind of a rough start, and then after that he exploded," Rice said.

With the goal of going to the tournament in mind, the team is anxious for any future win, focusing on games like Amesbury, Essex Tech, and Hamilton-Wenham, Rice said.

"[Making the playoffs] is feasible right now, but it's not going to be easy," he said.

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After recent success, the Marblehead girls' hockey co-op is hoping to qualify for the state tournament now that they have reached a record of 7-8-1, according to coach Emily Hudak.

The team began the season with an 0-4 record, but since their game on Jan. 21 against Winthrop, the team has won most of their games, she said.

"After having such a rough start at the beginning, people are coming to practice keep working hard. The wins are going to come; it will pay off, and we've got a good little streak," she said.

The 5-1 loss to Winthrop motivated players to win games the following week, she said.

Games against Winthrop are quite competitive and motivating, said freshman Isabell Amigo.

"The Winthrop games are a

highlight for me because I always play better. It brings out the best in the team because they're competitive," she said.

The team most needs to work on motivation and focus, so players have been putting away their phones before starting to warm up for games, according to sophomore Faithe Shatford.

To improve team chemistry, the team went to Frozen Fenway on Jan. 10 to watch a hockey game between Harvard and Boston College, Hudak said.

The team has also showed consistent effort in practices despite how tricky it is to get everyone from five different towns to a gym in Marblehead. Once a week, players train before school at 5 a.m., she said.

Even through the regular season ends during February vacation, the team hopes to continue beyond the regular season into the tournament, which they did not qualify for last year.

Digital portfolio platform allows students to preserve work

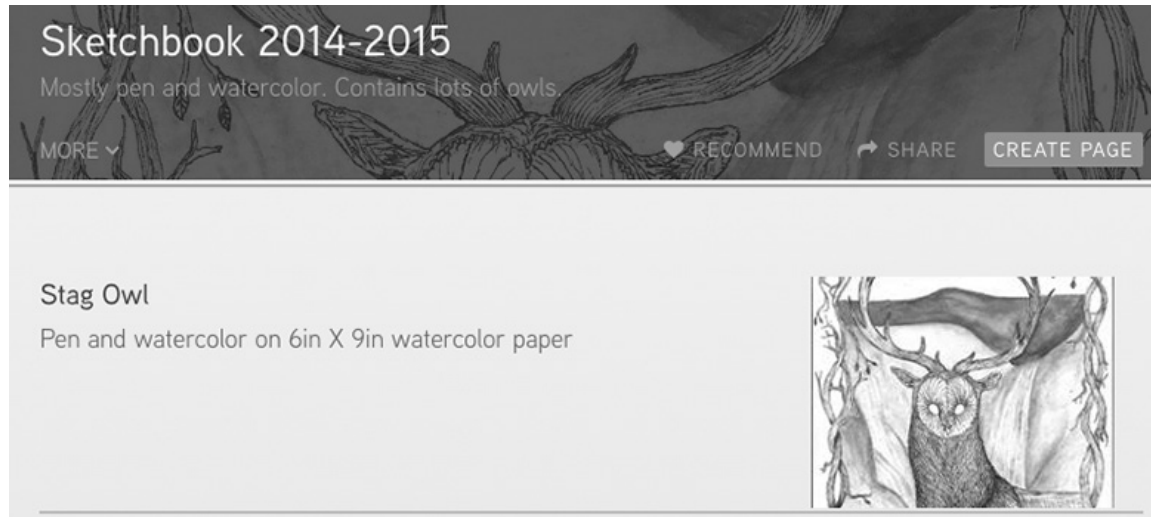
By Amber Pare
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Art students are piloting the online program Bulb—a technology education company specializing in digital portfolios—in order to create online portfolios to store their work throughout the year.

Art teacher Tamera Burns said the high school is one of 30 “high performing schools” in the country piloting Bulb. Students in each of her classes use online accounts to post photographs of their work and descriptions of the media, assignment, and size.

Although Burns still uses Google Classroom to post assignments and contact students, Bulb provides a digital platform that “allows students to share their work more easily,” she said.

Burns said she considers the program to be one of her major achievements of the year because of how students are reacting to



Senior Maya Palmer uses Bulb for storing her artwork from her portfolio class and for her creative writing, their new digital portfolios.

Senior Jasmine Dort, a ceramics student, said she enjoys using Bulb because it allows her to show her work to others without it being physically present.

“In ceramics, my work is really fragile, so I’m sometimes nervous about breaking it when I

show it to people. Having everything online helps a lot because the pictures preserve everything,” she said.

In addition to allowing students to have their work more readily accessible, Burns said the new program has inspired students to go into more depth with their

assignments.

“People always take great ownership of their art...I have seen that be especially true this year. Some students are really taking their work more seriously,” she said.

The program will also help some students with their futures in art, according to senior AP Portfolio

‘People always take great ownership of their art...I have seen that be especially true this year. Some students are really taking their work more seriously.’

-TAMERA BURNS

student Emily Parker.

“I plan on studying art in college, so I’ve liked having a digital place where I can store everything. Even if I’m just doing an informal interview...I can send people the link to my work really easily,” she said.

In order to make students’ uploads to Bulb more high-quality, Burns will be receiving a Spaulding grant for a scanner for students to use in the future.

Sol Bean Café provides extensive menu, health foods, juices, coffee

By Maura McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Sol Bean Café, a juice bar and healthy eatery in Middleton, offers a vast selection of delicious food and drinks in a quaint bohemian atmosphere.

Sol Bean’s menu is full of healthy options. Everyone is bound to find something to his or her liking with over 50 items on the menu.

Although the café is a bit pricey, the delicious offerings are worth the extra cost.

For breakfast, the Yogurt Bowl (\$6.25) is one of the tastiest options. It has apples, strawberries, grapes, and bananas with granola. The

apples provide a satisfying crunch, while the granola adds a touch of sweetness.

For smoothie fans, the café offers 15 options.

While there are some classic options, there are also some more interesting flavors such as the Mint Chocolate Chip Smoothie (\$7.75), which has mint oil, dates, cacao nibs, banana, spinach, and chlorella.

The Strawberry Fields Smoothie (\$8.25) has strawberries, banana, and almond butter in it, creating a sweet and nutty taste.

Sol Bean also allows customers to add any of a long list of supple-

ments such as chia seeds, almond butter, and dates to smoothies for an additional cost.

For lunch, Sol Bean has a large selection of wraps, soups, salads, and quinoa bowls.

Jen’s Fusion Bowl (\$8.25), which has quinoa, almonds, kale, carrots, beets, broccoli, and tahini dressing, is one of the most satiating options.

The Pesto Grilled cheese (\$5.95) is a heavenly and decadent panini. It is buttery with crisp bread and herbs.

Sol Bean also sells cold-brewed coffee and freshly pressed juices.

Aside from the fantastic food, Sol Bean also has a relaxed atmosphere.

With acoustic music playing in the background, dim lighting, a few small tables, and a cozy corner with a couch and some chairs, the café puts customers at ease.

It is the perfect setting to chat

With acoustic music playing in the background, dim lighting, a few small tables, and a cozy corner with a couch and some chairs, the café puts customers at ease.



MAURA MCCORMICK PHOTO

Sol Bean Café’s cozy atmosphere fits perfectly with the delicious healthy food, including sandwiches, smoothie bowls, and more.

with friends over a nourishing meal or cup of coffee.

Sol Bean is open 6:30 a.m. – 5:30

p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

Natalie Portman delivers career-defining performance in ‘Jackie’

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Natalie Portman delivers a bravura performance as former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy in Pablo Larraín’s intimate, original portrait of a grieving American icon determined to cement her and her husband’s legacy.

Straying from the typical biographical structure of an entire life story slimmed down to two hours (with a few staple iconic moments sprinkled in), “Jackie” keeps its span much smaller, Noah Oppenheim’s script focusing only on the week following President Kennedy’s assassination through the frame of the widow’s famed “Camelot” interview with Life magazine.

The film’s score, too, defies many conventions, opting for aching, unsettling strings over more traditional arrangements.

Refreshingly, the film makes a point not to martyrize or simplify its subject. “Jackie” is not merely a depiction of an able woman stuck



WWW.FOXSEARCHLIGHT.COM/JACKIE/

Natalie Portman embodies the cold, determined persona of the former first lady, Jacqueline Kennedy, as she tells a reporter the story of her life after President Kennedy’s assassination.

in a boy’s club, a grief-stricken widow, or a guarded, semi-reluctant celebrity. It combines all of these narratives with that of a woman intent on making sure that she and her late husband leave the mark she desires on American

history.

Naturally, all of this falls on the woman in the role, and to say Portman delivers would be a vast understatement. In a tour-de-force portrayal, she embodies layer upon layer of the enigmatic icon. Re-

maining iron-faced for those around her, she allows herself to unravel once alone, such as when she wipes the blood from her face in front of the vanity on Air Force One.

Portman is at turns icy, splintered, iron-willed and slightly unhinged over the course of the film. Despite playing a role performed by many others in the past, her performance, now, seems to be the only one.

The supporting cast adds layers of its own to the film, from Peter Saarsgard’s sympathetic Robert Kennedy to Greta Gerwig, who provided lighter tones in the role of Social Secretary and confidant Nancy Tuckerman.

Perhaps one of the most arresting qualities of the film, aside from Portman’s performance, is its

cinematography.

Shot in an aspect ratio of 1.66:1, it projects an art-house sensibility, particularly compared to the typically glossy biopics

Portman is at turns icy, splintered, iron-willed and slightly unhinged over the course of the film. Despite playing a role performed by many others in the past, her performance, now, seems to be the only one.

churned out each year (à la “The Theory of Everything,” “The Imitation Game,” and “My Week with Marilyn,” whose lost cinematic potential is made ever more apparent by “Jackie”).

While the plot had a few brief dry spells (a great deal of the duration was spent discussing the burial plan of President Kennedy, with decisions made, revoked and made again), Portman, Larraín and Oppenheim (along with many other collaborators) have crafted an artful film about an artful woman.

Soundwaves, band members prepare for trips, competition, performances

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After an “impressive” high school holiday concert, according to band teacher Joe Janak, both the chorus and band program are looking forward to later performances in the spring.

The winter concert on Dec. 13 was the first time the jazz band has played at the winter concert, Janak said.

“Normally, jazz band starts the second half of the year and have their own concert, but we started earlier this year and were prepared to play at the winter concert,” he said.

The jazz band’s performance also featured solo performances from jazz band members, Janak said.

“In [jazz band] rehearsals, I try to get everyone to try a solo, and then whoever is comfortable will take on a solo for the concert,” he said.

Seniors Maya Palmer, Zoe Brown, Lily Schrafft, Meehan Irose, and sophomores Lucas Zelman and Paul Albani all performed solos in the jazz band performance.

Palmer and Brown soloed in the song “Oye Como Va.” Schrafft, Irose, and Zelman soloed in



The band and chorus both performed in the high school winter concert on Dec. 13.

EVERY SHAW PHOTOS

“Yardbird Suite.” Albani and Irose soloed in “25 or 6 to 4.”

“A big part of jazz is improvisation. Usually, the students have a set of notes that they work with, and through the jazz band practices, they start to see what works and what doesn’t through trial and error,” Janak said.

Chorus teacher Donna O’Neil...was impressed by the performances at the concert.

Albani said he came up with his solo on the spot. “I didn’t prepare really. He tells you a key beforehand and you learn the scales, but the rest is up to you. I practice every day on my own, so it comes easily,” he said.

Chorus teacher Donna O’Neil said she was impressed by the performances at the concert, and she is very pleased with the talented group of chorus and Soundwaves members she has this year.

Junior Alexi Woodward, a member of the Soundwaves, said that she was proud of what the group accomplished, especially during the song “Carol of the Bells.”

“I would say ‘Carol of the Bells’ is probably the toughest song we sang, but our performance actually went really well. It took a long time to get it because there are really difficult rhythms,” she said.

O’Neil said that she has 13 male chorus members

this year, which makes the bass section very strong.

O’Neil had also noticed an increase in numbers of students who are enrolled in both band and chorus, which she said “truly strengthens the program.”

Janak said the band will continue to practice to prepare for the spring concert on April 6 and the Evening of Jazz on May 4. The band also has a trip to Philadelphia planned for March 10 where they will be performing at a venue and touring the city.

The Soundwaves is participating in Acapellooza, an Acapella competition hosted by North Shore Country Day beginning Feb. 10 and ending Feb. 12.

Students begin rehearsing comedy ‘Blithe Spirit’ for preliminary round of Dramafest competition

By Juliette Kelley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As the preliminary rounds of the Dramafest competition approach, cast members and director Margaret Sears are working hard to prepare their play, a dramatic comedy called “Blithe Spirit.”

The auditions, held on Dec. 9, were very successful, Sears said.

“The auditions went really well. We had a lot of interest in the play,” she said.

There are five main female roles in the play and two male speaking roles, and because of the limited number of speaking roles, “it was tough to decide” on who would receive what part, Sears said.

According to junior Belle Allmendinger, although there are not a large number of speaking roles, each role has a lot of lines.

“This year all the roles



Junior Belle Allmendinger runs lines for the drama club’s rendition of “Blithe Spirit” by Noël Coward.

JULIETTE KELLEY PHOTO

are pretty much big roles so whatever role you have you feel like you’re really part of the play,” she said.

According to junior Isabelle del Valle, the cast members are also playing a large role in putting the performance together.

“This year, because Ms. Sears is new, she’s having the actors decide and block what we should, and it’s allowing us to be creative,”

she said.

There is an even mix of underclassmen and upperclassmen participating in Dramafest this year, Allmendinger said.

“[Senior] Lillian Schrafft [is] the assistant director, and there are a lot of juniors, a few sopho-

more, and a lot of freshmen,” she said.

So far, the members of Dramafest have been working on mastering their lines by memorizing lines for the first half of the play one week and the lines for the second half the next week, Allmendinger said.

Additionally, Sears said the group has worked on cutting parts of the play out to keep it within the time limit and has blocked out certain scenes of the play to understand how the play will work when it’s completed.

The crew meets three times a week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday to prepare for the preliminary round, which will take place on March 4.

The location for the preliminary competition has not yet been decided, Sears said.

The crew meets three times a week on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

OSCARS PREDICTIONS

Best Picture

NOMINEES:

“Arrival,” “Fences,” “Hacksaw Ridge,” “Hell or High Water,” “Hidden Figures,” “La La Land,” “Lion,” “Manchester by the Sea,” “Moonlight.”



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WHO WILL WIN:

The race really comes down to “La La Land,” Damien Chazelle’s nostalgic musical comedy, and “Moonlight,” Barry Jenkins’ intimate coming-of-age portrait (though “Manchester by the Sea” could come out of left field). While both deserve the prize (I personally would cut Oscar in half and award both films), a Golden Globes sweep and crowd-pleasing nature make “La La Land” the frontrunner. However, “Moonlight” would boost the Academy’s scanty diversity record and shouldn’t be counted out.

Best Actress

NOMINEES:

Isabelle Huppert, “Elle;” Ruth Negga, “Loving;” Natalie Portman, “Jackie;” Emma Stone, “La La Land;” Meryl Streep, “Florence Foster Jenkins.”

WHO WILL WIN:

With shocking snubs (Amy Adams in “Arrival,” Annette Bening in “20th Century Women”) and surprising nods (we all love Meryl, but was “Florence Foster Jenkins” really that memorable?), the category has gotten messy this year. Portman would be a lock any other year as the glamorous first lady coping with loss in “Jackie,” but Stone’s undeniable charisma and blend of comedic and dramatic tones in “La La Land” put her in front, alongside Huppert’s already-awarded turn in “Elle.” Both won the Golden Globe in their respective categories, so it could go either way.



LALALAND.MOVIE



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Best Actor

NOMINEES:

Casey Affleck, “Manchester by the Sea;” Andrew Garfield, “Hacksaw Ridge;” Ryan Gosling, “La La Land;” Viggo Mortensen, “Captain Fantastic;” Denzel Washington, “Fences.”



MANCHESTERBYTHESEATH-EMOVIE.COM

WHO WILL WIN:

Affleck, as a grief-stricken New England plumber returning to his trauma-ridden hometown following the death of his brother in “Manchester by the Sea,” is practically a lock. His performance has been buzzing since before the film was even released, more than any of the others in the category, and he’s won almost every award the role has gotten him nominated for.

By Fritz Spofford, Independent Editor