

the INDEPENDENT

Volume XXIII Number 3

Manchester Essex Regional High School 36 Lincoln Street Manchester, MA 01944

December 12, 2016

School troubleshoots Wi-Fi, students see improvements

New multiple hardwares allow web traffic to flow through different outputs

By Heather Holley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After the changes were made to the school's Wi-Fi before Thanksgiving break, students and staff members have been seeing improvements with the upgraded network.

Many students and teachers had been struggling with the school's Wi-Fi, preventing them from getting tasks completed; as of now, they are seeing improvements after the school took measures to fix the issue.

Dalcione (Del) Vollink, digital learning specialist, explained the problem with an analogy.

"If you had a leak somewhere in your house, and your handyman looked at it and patched the



HEATHER HOLLEY PHOTO

After frequent issues with the Wi-Fi during U block, students began using their own data plans in order to use the internet. This is no longer necessary now that the school has fixed the problems.

leak and said, "Okay I patched it," and then you notice leaks in the ceiling and somewhere else, and then you get a whole house

inspection and realize there are a lot of different problems in different areas," Vollink said. John Kwiatek, network

manager/technician, elaborated further on these issues. "Some kids had infected computers that could cause unwanted

traffic, and some kids were using torrent sites, illegal upload and download sites, which causes issues [because] trying to download information from computers can take up a lot of our bandwidth," Kwiatek said.

Vollink, Kwiatek, and Principal Patricia Puglisi all said the largest problem during the school day was during U block.

"U block is the biggest issue during the day since it is when most students and faculty are on and using their devices," Puglisi said.

Puglisi has been working with Vollink, John Kwiatek, network administrator Stephen Kwiatek, and director of curriculum and technology Julie DeRoche to fix these issues that have been creating heavy traffic on the Wi-Fi.

"We've put in a new router that now blocks a lot of [torrent site] activity. We've also added in two additional internet connections, and we've rerouted traffic," John Kwiatek said.

Instead of all internet traffic going through a single form **WI-FI, page 3**

School Council plans first Career Day for students

By Fritz Spofford
Independent Editor

Working with the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, the School Council is developing a career day this spring, a chance for students to learn about different occupations.

The School Council decided to focus on community partners this year, leading to chamber head Ken Riehl attending

a meeting in September, Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

Gloucester's career day, which Riehl helps run, came up during that meeting, and following support from parents, Riehl volunteered to partner with the School Council to host the same event here, she said.

The School Council met again

in November to begin planning the event, senior and School Council member Zoe Brown said.

"We've just basically been running through the agenda for the whole day - things like which rooms are going to be used, what the schedule might look like, how to ensure that everyone can see presentations by people in all different fields," she said.

The event will be held on March 29 and will be open to sophomores and juniors, Puglisi said.

"Kids will sign up for three different sessions and rotate through those sessions," she said. "Each session will be a 10-15-minute talk by the professional followed by a question-and-answer portion for kids."

The event will showcase "a minimum of 13 businesses" and will begin with a keynote speaker who presents to all of the students, Puglisi said.

The key purpose of the event is to show students the variety of opportunities they have and that

CAREER DAY, page 3

School plans pilot of proposed four-by-four schedule for spring to determine if plan will fit community

By Juliette Kelley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

The school will be launching a pilot of the four by four schedule this spring in order to identify if it is right for the school community.

According to Principal Patricia Puglisi, in the four by four schedule, students would meet with four blocks each day and also have U block.

"You'd have class every other day, and the classes would be about 74 minutes each," she said.

However, this schedule would be a big change, said math teacher David Alger, who is a member of the scheduling committee.

For this reason, the school has made the decision to pilot the schedule in May after AP and MCAS testing, said Puglisi.

"Kids don't know what it feels like...and teachers haven't had the opportunity to try it out, [so] we thought it would be good to pilot a seven day or eight day rotation of it to see how it feels," she said.

Puglisi also said the school was originally going to move to the

74 MINUTES	7:45 - 8:59
74 MINUTES	9:03 - 10:17
74 MINUTES	10:21 - 11:35
30 MINUTES	11:39 - 12:09
47 MINUTES	12:09 - 12:56
47 MINUTES	
30 MINUTES	
75 Minutes	1:00 - 2:15

Green	White
A	E
B	F
C	G
LUNCH 1	LUNCH 1
PB 1	PB 1
PB 2	PB 2
LUNCH 2	LUNCH 2
D	H

PATRICIA PUGLISI GRAPHIC

The proposed schedule features longer blocks and also requires students to enroll in eight classes rather than seven classes.

four by four schedule next year but decided there is too much that needs to be adjusted before moving to the new schedule, such as negotiating with the teachers' union since they would be teaching six classes in total instead of five.

"We might find out that the [four by four] is not right for us," she said.

One of these changes is making sure students will have enough blocks to fill their

schedule, according to Alger.

"[The new schedule] would involve adding courses [because] there aren't enough courses for kids to take eight classes, so that is going to take some time and planning," he said.

Another adjustment will be having longer blocks, according to Puglisi.

"We've been doing some professional development

SCHEDULE, page 3

News

Robotics update
-page 2
"Week of Gratitude"
-page 3

Features

Former Independent
editors: Where are
they now?
-page 5

Opinion

Should everyone
wear the same color
graduation gown?
-page 8

Sports

Winter Sports
-pages 9-10

Arts

Featured artist:
Jillian Furber
-page 12

Survey gives students recommended careers

Guidance prompts juniors to consider potential plans beyond high school

By Holly Fossa
INDEPENDENT STAFF

During the first week of December, Guidance directed juniors to the “Do What You Are” survey on Naviance to help them define their personality and receive recommended colleges.

The survey is based off the Myers Briggs indicator, a self-report questionnaire. Guidance Counselor Karen D’Amour said it gives students a “personality type after [they] do the survey, and personality stays with you so the information is valuable for a while.”

The final result of the survey is a four letter code. The first letter decides if the student is an introvert (I)—a shy person or extro-

vert (E)—an outgoing person.

The second letter determines whether the student is sensing (S)—attentive to reality or intuition (I)—works well with theories and symbols.

The third letter decides whether the person is thinking (T)—logical and technical or feeling (F)—decides based off feelings and values.

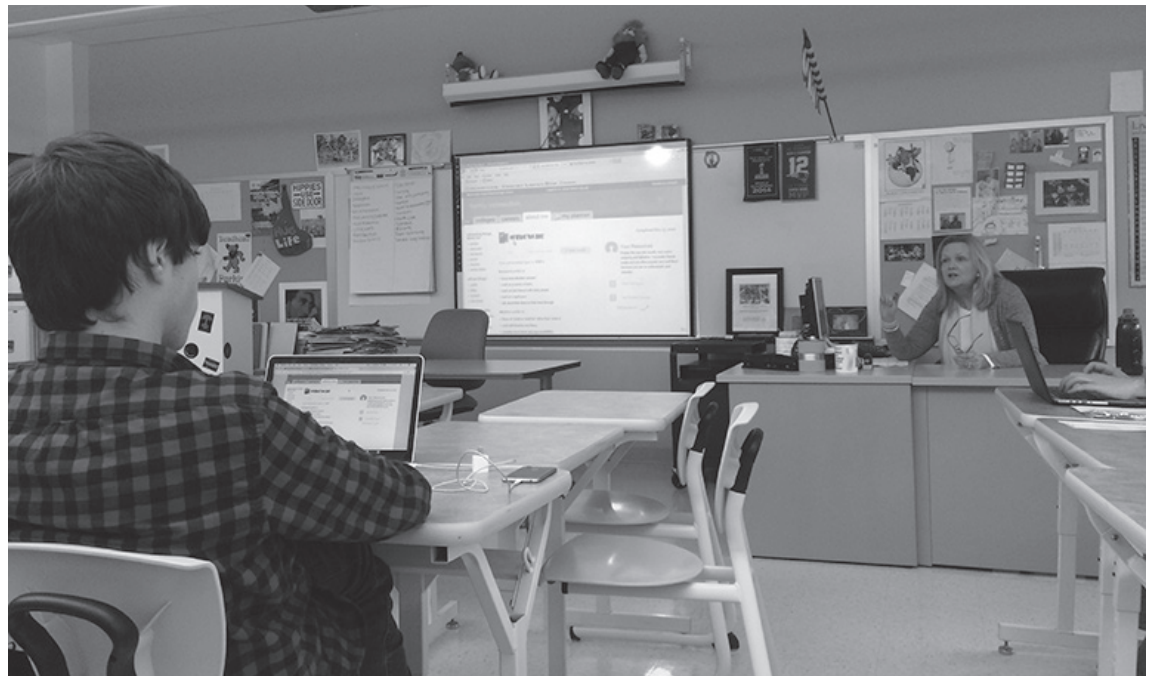
The final letter of the code says if a student is judging (J)—task oriented and organized or perceiving (P)—open and casual.

The derived four letter code can help decide the best learning approach for their personality type, D’Amour said.

“It is ideal if it really sounds like you because then it’s really accurate,” she said.

Junior Ames Sheriff said his personality results were accurate.

According to D’Amour, after receiving the code, the student can then view appropriate colleges, based off his or her personality. The survey also recommends



HOLLY FOSSA PHOTO

Guidance counselor Karen D’Amour explains to a junior class how to access Naviance to a junior class. The website provided students with suggested colleges and professions based on their survey responses.

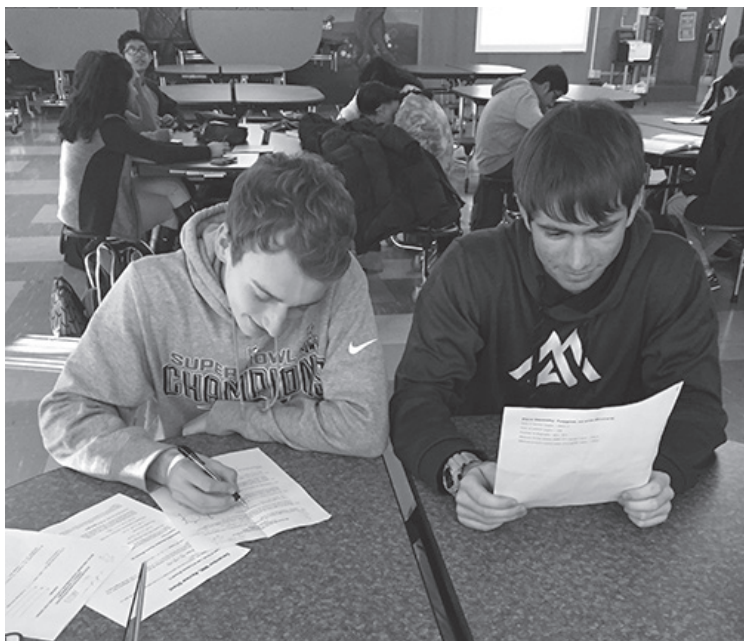
majors and professions that would best suit that personality. Junior Summer Burroughs said that the profession results are not

completely accurate, but it was accurate in what type of field she wants to go into.

The results tell each student

their strengths and weaknesses. D’Amour said with this “you can play to your strengths... and understand how to help yourself.”

Math team gains new members, competes in third meet



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

Seniors Matt Kenney and Ledyard McFadden work together to solve the team round questions during a math meet. The math team has come in the top three in all of its meets so far this year.

By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Starting the season off strong, the math team has come in second in the division in October and third in November and December, according to math department chair Dan Lundergan.

Other teams in the division include Rockport, Pentucket, Ipswich, Hamilton-Wenham, Pingree, and Masconomet.

The team has participated in three meets this year, the third on Dec. 1. The season started in October and goes through March, with practices every Thursday and occasional meets one Thursday most months. Participating in math team can earn students extra credit in math class.

Lundergan and junior Connor Coale said the team has done

well this year but not quite as well as the last year’s team, which won three of their six meets. Coale said many strong seniors graduated last year.

“[The season] will be a little worse than last year because we had some impactful seniors graduate last year, so we lost their skills,” he said.

In each meet the students have three questions in each of the six rounds, and they progressively get harder. Each round has five students from each team, and everyone does three rounds and one group round at the end.

“There are 10 kids. Only four of them can be seniors, and only eight can be juniors or seniors, called ‘regulars’ that are the actual team, and then any other kid can participate as alternates,” Lundergan said.

A few freshmen and sophomores joined the team this year, which helps.

The kids always enjoy working together, Lundergan said.

“The kids always have fun. There are always foods and drinks, and it is a good time to socialize and work together,” he said.

Senior Ledyard McFadden said math team is a great opportunity.

“The team is working well together, and we are all having a lot of fun at our weekly Thursday practices. We are always looking for new people to join the team, and there are tons of different categories of math to choose from. It’s a great way to try out some new and challenging math while getting some extra credit and representing the school,” he said.

Robotics team hopes to have a successful, learning-based season

By Abby Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After competing in the initial VEX Competition, the robotics team is focusing on getting back on track for the regular season after the loss of several seniors.

For the robotics team, the season consists of a VEX Competition in November followed by the more vigorous First Robotics Competition (FRC), which lasts eight weeks through the winter, according to senior captain Ledyard McFadden.

The VEX Competition took place on Nov. 19 at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. It is an opportunity for students from 32 local robotics teams to gain experience before the regular season begins, junior captain Connor Coale said.

According to the team’s adviser, Memorial Elementary School teacher Joseph McDonough, the

team is already showing their promise as engineers early in the season.

“We have brand new captains... It seems like we have a very

strong group of engineers. We have a few people who can code, which is going to be very important,” he said.

Both the rookie and the veteran teams from the school advanced to the elimination round with the rookie team advancing to seventh place, Coale said.

“We’ve lost a lot of seniors who definitely took a big part of the team, so we’re getting back on track and learning to do the stuff that they were experts at,” he said.

The purpose of the VEX Competition is to integrate new

members into the team with a more manageable competition before the more difficult FRC season, McDonough said.

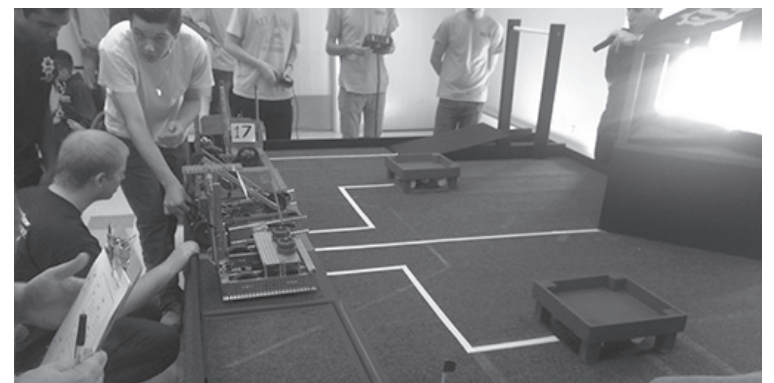
Even though the team has lost many seniors, the team is adapting and learning well as they head into the competition season, McFadden said.

“Overall, we have lot of new, really smart people that

came in this year, so we’re looking pretty good,” he said

Coale said the team’s robotics skills were tested at the VEX Competition as members of the team had to use the robot they built to lift wooden eggs into baskets to earn points.

The team hopes to qualify for FRC World Competition in St. Louis this year after the team did not move on from the District Championship last year, McFad-



COURTESY OF CONNOR COALE

The robotics team advanced to the elimination round in VEX, their first competition this year, which took place in November,

den said.

The FRC season will start during the first week of January with the announcement of this year’s challenge, which will be released to all the 48 countries that compete in robotics.

From that point on, the team will spend every day after school preparing for the New England District Championship, which

is rumored to be Steampunk-themed, Coale said.

What sets the school apart in robotics competitions is the student-driven atmosphere and focus on learning, McDonough said.

“We try to stay competitive and have fun and learn, so every year it’s something completely different,” he said.

Guidance will introduce Week of Gratitude in February

Students will have a chance to thank those who have assisted them through high school

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In order to give students, especially seniors, a chance to thank people who have helped them throughout high school, Beverly Low, chair of the guidance department, is planning a "Week of Gratitude" for the middle week of February.

The idea came from math teacher Amanda Warren, who said that Rockport High School, where she had previously taught, had held a Week of Gratitude in the past to thank teachers for helping students.

Low said that the Week of Gratitude was something which she had been thinking about since last year.

According to Low, the idea for the Week of Gratitude started because she, along with Warren and other school staff, felt concerned that seniors were not thanking teachers who had helped them through their college admissions processes.

"This is our job; it's not about that, but teachers often put so



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

Guidance chair Beverly Low looks at thank you cards students will write on to thank teachers during the Week of Gratitude.

much of themselves into helping their students beyond what they are required to do. We thought holding a Week of Gratitude would help students to show just

how thankful they are," Low said.

The idea of a Week of Gratitude has quickly become more than just seniors thanking teachers who write students' recom-

mendation letters for college applications, according to Low, who said the Week has expanded to include high school students of all grade levels.

Additionally, she said that "it's not just teachers who can be thanked. Coaches, teammates, or anyone who just lent a hand in a hard time – it doesn't even

have to be academic -- can be a recipient of a thank you note."

"We're a very busy school, and I don't think we take enough time to pause and thank those who have helped us," she said.

Senior Avery Shaw, as the teacher's assistant for Low, the senior class president, and guidance advisory board member, will also be helping to plan and coordinate the Week of Gratitude, according to Low.

"We're going to be putting out stationery and markers for students, probably in the guidance office," Shaw said.

'Teachers often put so much of themselves into helping their students... A Week of Gratitude would help students show just how thankful they are.'

- BEVERLY LOW

Shaw said that moving forward, she will be advertising the Week of Gratitude, in order to make sure that "although it's targeted at seniors, everyone understands that they can write

a card." In order to advertise, she plans to create a flyer for the event and announce it every morning throughout the week.

Although more planning is needed to initiate the Week of Gratitude and "it's still a work in progress," according to Warren, she, as well as Low and Shaw, say that they are excited for the Week of Gratitude to happen.

"Now, we just need people to donate thank-you notes," Low said.

Students begin process of preparing for DramaFest competition

By Austin Pare
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Members of the Drama Club have recently been preparing for their upcoming performance of "Blithe Spirit" in February at the DramaFest competition.

"Blithe Spirit" is a dramatic comedy that was written by Noel Coward. The play is about a psychic follows a novelist and accidentally summons the ghost of his ex-wife.

Spanish teacher Maggie Sears, who is directing the play this year, said selections for the competition must be under 40 minutes long. The plays also have to be approved by the school and the festival.

"The play can be written by a student or by a well-known playwright. You must get permission to perform and cut down plays that have

been copyrighted," Sears said.

Sears has been preparing for the performance by deciding on who will be the stage manager, assistant director, and who will play each part.

Auditions were held on Dec. 9. The cast list was not released by press time.

"The casting was definitely challenging this year. I'm the director, but I had to rely on advice and help from other faculty and staff members," Sears said.

When she was in high school, Sears competed in drama festivals at Saint John's Prep, and she also took various workshops in acting. This is her first time directing the DramaFest play.

Sears said her main goal is to have fun and have the actors and actresses work to reach their full potential.

"Sometimes the smaller roles are where students are

awarded prizes in the process, so one of my goals is for there to be a balanced cast so that we do not have one person outshining another," Sears said.

Sophomore Jia Mulvey said the competition is intimidating but also a great experience to meet other people.

"Everyone is so fun and nice, and everyone becomes a family. [DramaFest] helps people break out of their shells to meet new friends," Mulvey said.

Senior Robert Carter is a member of the tech group in the Drama Club. He said the DramaFest performances are difficult but rewarding.

"You need to have a competitive performance as well as productive rehearsals if you want to succeed. It is rewarding if you make it through the preliminary round and have the opportunity to move on," Carter said.



AUSTIN PARE PHOTO

Students audition for this year's chosen DramaFest play, "Blithe Spirit," a dramatic comedy. Selected students will perform this play during the preliminary competition round this February.

The preliminary round of the DramaFest competition will take place during February

in Brockton, Mass. The locations for the following rounds have not been determined yet.

CONTINUATIONS

WIFI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 of hardware, there are now multiple forms of hardware that traffic may flow through so that it is not all backed up.

"Channeling traffic going through one modem is split up so that all YouTube traffic will go through one modem, Google in one, and miscellaneous in another modem," Vollink said.

Since these changes, Puglisi said, "over the past week we have found that [Wi-Fi] has been consistent, [and] students have been able to access [it]. For kids who were not able to, it was their computer that had malware that the tech team helped to resolve

so that they could reconnect."

Before, most students had been using their own data plans since the Wi-Fi was not a reliable source, but with the improvements made to the Wi-Fi, this is not the case anymore.

"Kids are relying on the wireless network more now than using their own data plans,"

Kwiatek said.

Junior Hadleigh Richard said the Wi-Fi has improved.

"Throughout the last two weeks I have seen a lot of improvement in the Wi-Fi. I haven't had any issues trying

to connect to the internet from my laptop, but sometimes it can be slow on my phone. Overall it has been a lot better than before, which makes it easier to get work

done in school," Richard said.

Lauren Dubois, history teacher, also recognized the improvements.

"The most recent round of improvements have been a big impact since before they were made we were having trouble even getting on to Google Classroom so so far... any time I try now [to use the internet] I've been able to have my students log on," Dubois said.

CAREER DAY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 not everyone finds his or her own path the same way, Puglisi said.

"Our objective is to let students know as they hear different professional stories that there are many paths people follow, and they don't all have to be the same. People come to what is ultimately their final profession in many different ways," she said.

"I'm super excited, and I genuinely believe it'll be super helpful for the underclassmen, particularly the juniors, who are just starting to get into the whole

college thing," Brown said.

SCHEDULE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 about how to teach in [longer blocks]...It's very different from a traditional class," she said.

However, Puglisi said longer blocks provide new opportunities for students and teachers alike.

"With the longer block...teachers would teach

three classes each day...and it would provide more sections which would lower class size. It would also provide opportunity [for] more interdisciplinary classes, more opportunity for authentic learning, and different class structure," she said.

Alger supports the idea of the pilot, as it will give an idea of how the schedule could work.

"We're thinking it would be

great to take a week and try it out, even if it's not the way it would actually be, just to see how people like it and what the pros and cons would be," he said.

Longer blocks provide new opportunities for students and teachers alike.

Junior Belle Allmendinger thinks the schedule may be helpful.

"I love the idea! Having four classes a day is not as stressful; you get to focus on just those classes," she said.

According to Puglisi, the school may pilot another rotation of the four by four next year for additional data to assess what schedule works for students.

"At the end of the day, we're really trying to be thoughtful about what we do, and we're moving very slowly," she said. "If you move slowly in making change it becomes more meaningful, and it will become more sustainable over time."

Health Matters



Study shows negative effects of screen exposure

Mice subjected to repeated lights and sounds lost brain cells, exhibited changed behavior similar to children with ADHD

By Juliette Kelley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

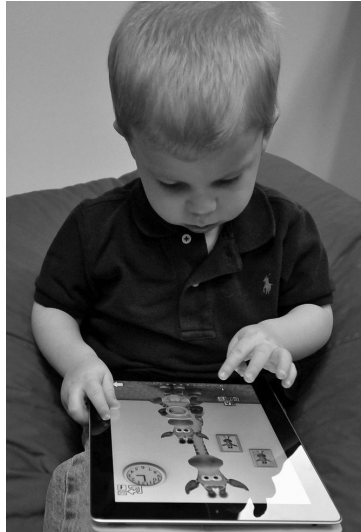
As use of iPhones and laptops becomes increasingly common, there have been a growing number of studies regarding how screens can affect the brain.

A new study about screen exposure done by the Seattle Children's Research Institute reported that mice that were exposed to glowing lights and sounds had brain abnormalities and behavioral troubles similar to those in children who have attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

In order to mimic screen exposure, researchers bombarded the mice with flashing lights and TV for six hours a day for four weeks from the time they were 10 days old, according to an article by Laura Sanders in Science News. The mice's brains were then studied to see any changes.

According to study co-author Jan-Marino Ramirez, changes were found everywhere in the mice's brain. In the hippocampus, which aids with learning and memory, the stimulated mice had fewer new nerve cells than mice not exposed to stimulation. Despite having fewer nerve cells, the stimulated mice had certain nerve cells that became more active.

Another effect of the audio and visual stimulation was that the stimulated mice displayed



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Seattle Children's Research Institute's study finds that repeated screen stimulation completely alters mice's brains.

behaviors associated with ADHD in human children. According to the study, many of the mice were more active, and some had difficulty remembering if they had come across a certain object before.

However, these effects were not shown when adult mice were overstimulated. According to Sanders, this leads researchers to believe screen

stimulation affects the developing brain and not fully formed brains.

Although this research may be slightly alarming, especially to parents, Sanders writes it is still too early to change any guidelines regarding screen time.

According to Neuroscientist Gina Turrigiano from Brandeis University, one reason the research is too preliminary to affect guidelines is because the research was done on mice, and therefore there may be issues when relating the results to humans. Also, different children are likely to respond to sensory input in different ways, which makes it hard to predict how screen time will affect each child individually, she said.

Although effects of visual and audio stimulation seem detrimental according to this study, Leah Krubitzer from the University of California points out that in today's technological world, overstimulation may help children to adapt to technology.

As screen time becomes a growing concern in today's population, studies such as these may be important to help understand the effect of technology on the brain.

Although this research may be slightly alarming... Sanders writes it is still too early to change any guidelines regarding screen time.

New auditorium supervisor replaces Kavanagh

By Antonio Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Former Beverly and Hamilton-Wenham substitute teacher Dritan Aranitasi has taken over as the permanent sub for Pat Kavanagh and teaching assistant position in the auditorium.

Aranitasi grew up in the coastal city of Fier in Albania where he went to a public high school. He furthered his education by attending college where he focused on law.

He then attended university in Tirana, the capital city of Albania. With math being his best subject in school, he decided to study economics.

In Sept. 2012, he decided to move to the United States in search of opportunities.

Moving to the U.S. was a massive change for Aranitasi, who said he has so far loved life in the U.S.

"The United States shows freedom in all meanings of the word," he said.

He has taken advantage of his opportunities by getting a job at Beverly High School as a substitute and then earlier this school year at Hamilton-Wenham High School.

FUN FACTS

- Favorite ice cream flavor: chocolate
- Favorite sport: soccer
- Favorite music genre: country
- Place he'd like to visit: California



COURTESY OF DRITAN ARANTASI

New Albanian teaching assistant Dritan Aranitasi hopes to learn about the school's atmosphere.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said Aranitasi's high math skills will translate well to him making an impact on the school community. Puglisi also said that he has expressed interest in helping the math department and in other areas of the school like athletics.

Students have noted Aranitasi's commitment to the position as permanent sub along with

exceptional organization. "He always does his job thoroughly," senior Marco Kaper said.

When comparing students to those in the other school communities that he has been a part of in Albania and the North Shore, Aranitasi said that the politeness of students and teachers is noteworthy.

Furthermore, he noted a "good atmosphere in the teachers' room for lunch and other breaks" as a positive quality compared to other schools.

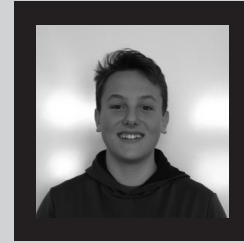
Aranitasi's main goal for the year is to get to know the student body. "It is important to not only teach, but also to learn," he said.

He said he is ready to learn from the students, the teachers, and others of the school community.

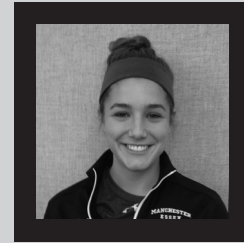
Aranitasi is continuing his education at the Harvard Extension School where he is furthering his studies about economics.



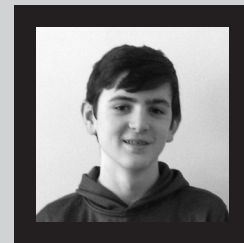
Freshman Alanna Fitzgerald:
"Pug with a stocking in its mouth."



Freshman Owen Cox:
"A glass penguin ornament from the Museum of Science. It has a top hat, a tuxedo jacket, a scarf and gloves."



Sophomore Christina Calanda:
"Case of Coke bottles."

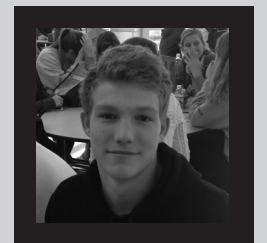


Sophomore Luke Quine:
"The star on the top of the tree."

Student Speak

What is your favorite holiday ornament?

Junior Brett Donovan:
"Reindeer in a clear ball with snowflakes painted on the ball."



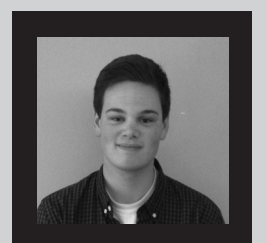
Junior Belle Allmendinger:
"A small tree with bells and silver and white decorations."



Senior Zoe Brown:
"Nativity scene that my yai yai gave me from Costa Rica."



Senior Meehan Irose:
"Monkey sitting in leaves and eating a banana. It has broken four times, and I glued it back together."



Maura Driscoll



COURTESY OF MAURA DRISCOLL

Maura Driscoll was a sports editor during her sophomore and junior years and an opinion editor and columnist during her senior year. While she was attending Union College majoring in psychology and minoring in Spanish, she was able to work as a paid intern with the Marketing and Communications Office while also writing for the school press and maintaining her own personal blog about student life on and off campus. After graduating in 2015, Driscoll started working as a Legislative Aide for Assistant Minority Leader Brad Hill in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, where she

is currently the Chief of Staff and manages tasks including social media, press relations, and delegating tasks to other staff members. Driscoll said she uses her journalism skills “every single day” in her career. “The ability to say that you are fluent in AP Style is far and away one of the most valuable talents that I have, and employers are always impressed.”

Molly Friedman

Molly Friedman, also a member of the class of 2011, was a photo editor. After attending the University of Colorado at Boulder with a major in Communication and a minor in Technology, Art, and Media, she worked as an intern at a ski magazine, writing press releases and professional skier biographies. Friedman said she used her journalism skills in college when writing research papers by looking at subjects “with a reporter eye and turning [the paper] into something with [her] personal voice.” She currently uses her journalism knowledge when writing anything from emails to press releases.

Friedman lives in New Orleans and works as a marketing director at a food hall called St. Roch Market. She loves New Orleans and the opportunities it has provided for her. “New Orleans has taught me more about culture, social justice, food, art, how to be afraid, jazz, how to eat crawfish, and most importantly myself. This time in my life has been nothing but a time for exploration,” she said.



COURTESY OF MOLLY FRIEDMAN

THE INDEPENDENT
Editors:
Where are they
now?

Hannah Daley



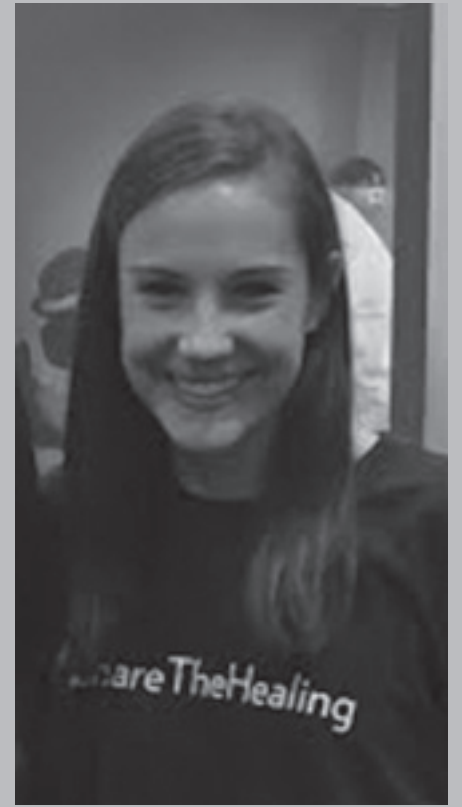
COURTESY OF HANNAH DALEY

Hannah Daley was the editor in chief of The Independent her junior and senior years. After graduating in 2011, Daley attended Wake Forest University in North Carolina where she double-majored in Psychology and Honors Psychology with a concentration in Crime and Criminal Justice. While at Wake Forest University, Daley wrote for the school’s newspaper. Daley began working at a social policy research company called Mathematic Policy Research in New Jersey after graduating in

2015. At the company, Daley is responsible for working on

human service activities that include being a project manager for an early childhood healthcare program. Outside of work, Daley is an avid fan of “The Bachelor” and “The Bachelorette,” and she participates in a fantasy league for the shows with her friends from work. Daley is also a member of a club Dodgeball team. In the future, Daley hopes to potentially return to New England and enroll in graduate school. Daley noted that she still uses her skills from her former journalism class, saying, “Journalism provided me with fundamental knowledge to produce proper sentence structure and to write concisely.”

Kyle Marsh



COURTESY OF KYLE MARSH

Kyle Marsh, a former news editor, attended Columbia University and majored in Sustainable Development and Business Management. At Columbia, her journalism skills helped her with the core curriculum and courses that had “a rigorous reading and writing schedule.” Marsh also worked as an intern at the Columbia Earth Institute where she helped write a book about sustainability policy. Her bosses “were continually impressed with [her] swift creative and editing skills.” For the past two years, Marsh has worked in marketing and sales for a multi-conglomerate food and personal care company called Unilever in New York City. Similar to her experience at Columbia, Marsh uses her journalism skills “every single day” at her current job. “Journalism helped me develop an incredibly acute attention to detail that I could not learn in any other class. I never saw how losing 10 points for one spelling error on a news article would benefit me in the long run, but these details, alongside the seemingly annoying grammar lessons, taught me to pay attention to each word, sentence and paragraph,” she said.

By Amber Paré, Independent Editor



Why are the second-floor water fountains so warm?

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Any consistent water-fountain user has learned through trial and error to steer clear of the second-floor water fountain, unless he or she is looking for a lukewarm water supply.

For unknown reasons, the second-floor water fountain sporadically provides warm water.

Senior Bridgett Kiernan says that in all four years of her high school, the second floor water fountain has been curiously warm.

“At this point, it has really just become a way of life around here. Ever since I was a freshman, it has been warm,” she said.

Students have grown accustomed to the fact and have resorted to different floors’ water fountains when thirsty, Zoe Brown said.

“[When on the second floor] I normally just ask my teachers if I can go to the third floor to fill up my water bottle. They understand why and expect me to take a little bit longer,” she said.

According to English teacher Daniel Koughan, even second-floor teachers are being affected by the warm water in the teacher workroom.

“You come in the morning. You know you have whole day of teaching ahead of you. You just want a good, long drink of cold water to keep yourself hydrated, and instead you get a mug full of sometimes not just warm



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

While the facilities department continues to look into the second floor’s unusually lukewarm water, the issue remains unresolved.

but really hot water,” he said.

‘At this point, it has really just become a way of life around here. Ever since I was a freshman, it has been warm.’

-BRIDGETT KIERNAN

Principal Patricia Puglisi said The Independent is the first source to bring the issue to her attention.

Facilities manager Jay Pagliarulo said the facilities department

is aware of the problem and is investigating a solution.

Puglisi said she will look into finding alternative ways students can drink water on the second floor if the water-fountain temperature cannot be addressed.

“If the problem is something that we are not able to fix, then we will begin to look at some options for making sure there is water available on the second floor, like a water cooler,” she said.

Foreign language teacher welcomes baby boy, adapts to new changes

Fortunato plans to bring son to visit school before returning to work in early February

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After a taxing delivery process, foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato is adapting to life with her firstborn baby, a boy named Griffin Douglas Fortunato.

Griffin was born early in the morning of Oct. 28 at Beverly Hospital. His first name is an old family name from his father’s side, and the name Douglas is the name of Fortunato’s grandfather and uncle, she said in an email.

After going into the hospital on a Thursday night, Fortunato was surprised by the difficulty of the

delivery process. She was in labor all night until she ended up having an emergency C-section after there were some complications, she said. Because of the C-section, she ended up having to stay at the hospital for several days. Both her and her husband’s parents were the first to visit them and the newborn in the hospital.

Fortunato found the staff at the hospital quite helpful, which made the whole process easier, she said.

“My husband and I got meals while we were there, and Beverly Hospital has pretty good food! Plus, the nursing staff was amazing. They were nice and informa-

tive, and they could tell when we were tired of visitors,” she said.

Even though Fortunato and her husband have spent months preparing, she said it seems odd to finally come home with a baby when nothing truly seems “ready,” but it all starts to work itself out, she said.

The Fortunatos are adapting well to caring for Griffin and themselves, but she said she was surprised by the amazing amount of time Griffin takes up.

“My husband and I are a really good team, so that is huge. We are good at taking turns with middle-of-the-night feedings and diaper changes, switching off who is going to unload the dishes... and who is in charge of the angry baby,” she said.

Despite the new edition to the family, Fortunato said that their lives are almost the same, but their typical activities are more rare and brief. Griffin does not do much besides crying, sleeping, staring at things, and needing a diaper change, she said.

Generally, Fortunato said she

‘My husband and I are a really good team, so that is huge. We are good at taking turns with middle-of-the-night feedings and diaper changes, switching off... who is in charge of the angry baby.’

-ERIN FORTUNATO



COURTESY OF ERIN FORTUNATO

Fortunato devotes much of her time as a new mother to caring for her son, Griffin Douglas Fortunato, who was born on Oct. 28.

needs to work on getting to bed early and manage the extra laundry, but these things are easy to adapt to. Even her cats are getting used to the crying baby.

One of the biggest surprises for the Fortunatos was Griffin’s red hair. “He’s a ginger! My husband

and his family all look very Italian, so I thought for sure Griffin would be dark-haired,” she said.

Fortunato plans to return to school around Feb. 3 after about 12 weeks of leave, and she also hopes to bring Griffin to visit the school in late December or early January.

GUESS WHO?

TEACHER EDITION

First job?

Bailey’s Service Station (now known as Sunoco Gas Station)

Favorite type of food?

Italian

Favorite ice cream flavor?

Ben and Jerry’s Chubby Hubby

If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

Back to Italy

Netflix show?

“The Crown”

Celebrity crush?

Leonardo DiCaprio

What sports did you play in high school?

Softball, basketball, soccer

What is your favorite season?

Summer

Who have you know the longest at the school?

Mrs. Krause (English teacher)

Favorite subject besides the one you teach?

Foreign language

Secret hobby or talent?

Performed theater in high school

Cats or dogs?

Dogs

What type of car do you drive?

Jeep

iPhone or Samsung?

iPhone

Fiction or nonfiction?

Fiction

Handwritten or typed?

Handwritten

Answers can be found on Page 12 under Read, Watch, Listen

School Absences

Should students be allowed to take mental health days?

Pro

Maura McCormick

For students who are sleep-deprived and overwhelmed with schoolwork, skipping a day of school to recharge improves their mental health and ability to learn.

High school students are increasingly stressed out and tired, according to a study published in the *Frontiers of Psychology* journal.

Forty-nine percent of the students in the study reported feeling stressed in school.

Students often take on many extracurricular activities along with rigorous course loads and every once and a while may need a day off to prevent stress from rising to unhealthy levels.

A study done at Carnegie Mellon University found that people who are stressed get sick more easily. If students don't listen to their bodies and take a break when they need one, they will eventually become sick and have to skip school anyway.

Lack of sleep also causes illness and decreased productivity in the classroom, according to the Division of Sleep Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Another Harvard Medical School study found that sleep-deprived people feel more "stressed, angry, sad, and mentally exhausted."

Many students stay up too late studying and working on projects and essays.

Senior Meehan Irose, for example, said that on some school nights he has only slept for one hour, which is eight hours less than the amount recommended by the National Sleep Foundation. He said when he stays up too late he feels exhausted for the rest of the week.

Instead of going to school and struggling to stay awake and focus, taking a day off allows students to catch up on sleep and be more productive in school when they return.

A mental health day can give students the few extra hours of sleep they need.

Students should not skip school on a test day or project due date, or take too many mental health days, however. It is important that students only take mental health days when they are truly needed.

Students should also be responsible enough to know when they can take a day off from school and still stay on track.

Con

Maddie Conway

While many students may see mental health days as a viable option for lowering their school-related stress, they actually take away from valuable class time and can cause a student to stress even more.

With the new schedule, teachers lose 15 percent of the class time they had last year, and accumulated mental health days can add to the number of classes lost.

Additionally, students who take many mental health days have lost class time that is meant to prepare them for standardized tests with fixed testing dates, such as the MCAS in 10th grade with biology, math, and English and any Advanced Placement classes.

Furthermore, a mental health day that is meant to reduce anxiety invariably falls on a day that will be very stressful: one where an exam is administered or where an essay or project is due.

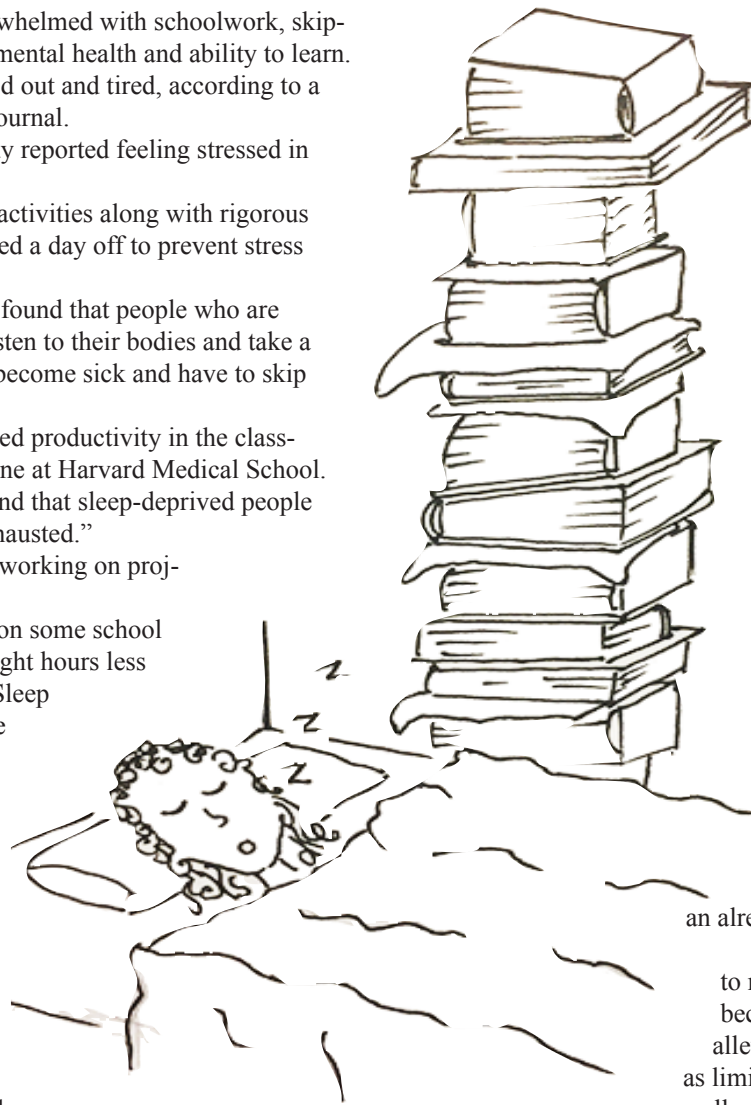
To a teacher, repeated absences on days where a large assessment is scheduled may look like the student is simply ducking responsibility and using the day off to cram for a test or type an essay. This only degrades a student's reputation.

In addition, it is irritating and detrimental for teachers to take time from other classes, their work blocks, or their lunch to administer a test or help students understand what they missed.

Chronic absences from classes often lead to poor grades as students end up overwhelmed by the work they missed. This, in turn, just adds anxiety to the life of an already stressed student.

Instead, students should focus on other, less impactful ways to reduce their stress. Students often take mental health days because they are overwhelmed, but this stress can often be alleviated by a little bit of proactive planning. Strategies such as limiting time spent on cell phones and social media can help as well.

If, however, the mental health day is not due to academic stress but is rather due to problems such as a poor relationship with a teacher, the underlying issue must be addressed because skipping school will not solve the problem.



EVERY SHAW ILLUSTRATION

Teaching gender neutral foreign language classes hampers understanding

Forcing teachers to eliminate, modify masculine, feminine articles is unreasonable, unrealistic

By Amber Paré
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Foreign languages that are taught in schools, such as French and Spanish, often include words with genders. Transgender and agender activists across the country have urged schools to stop teaching languages with these gendered nouns to accommodate transgender or agender students. This change, however, is unrealistic.

According to K-International, a website specializing in language translation and education, masculine and feminine words in foreign languages are meant to break nouns into different groups based on their structure.

This structure of having words masculine and feminine articles has been present in languages such as French and Spanish for hundreds of years, and it would be impractical to expect teachers to change or eliminate the genders of these nouns when teaching transgender or agender students.

Sometimes, the meaning of a word can depend on the article before it. This can lead to miscommunication, something foreign language teachers strive to eliminate.

For example, "un livre" means "a book" in French. "Une livre," however, means "a pound." If teachers were forced to eliminate this article or modify it so it was agender in order to accommodate transgender or agender students, it would lead to confusion.

Furthermore, millions of people speak French around the world, and they use the words with gendered articles. Students who learn French without using masculine or feminine articles will not be able to communicate with these speakers in the real world, thus making their knowledge of the language unusable.

On the other hand, it is reasonable for teachers to accommodate these students by allowing them to choose the pronouns by which they wish to be referred.

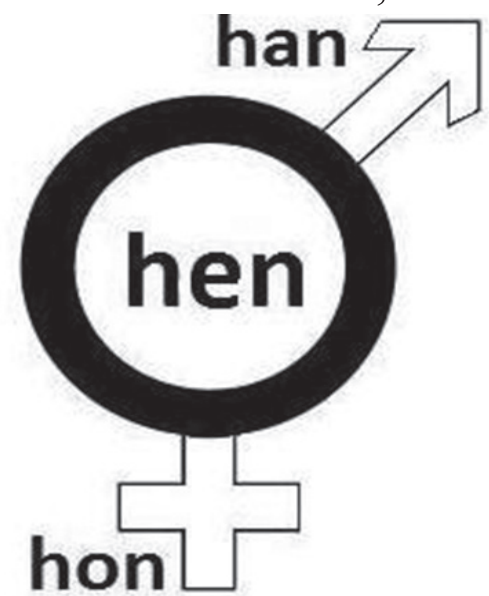
The Spanish pronouns for boy and girl are "él" and "ella." If a transgender student wishes to be called by one of these pronouns rather than the other, he or she should have the right to choose the pronoun he or she wishes to be called.

Gender non-conforming students, meanwhile, could perhaps come up with their own pronouns or blend the masculine and feminine pronouns to create one they deem suitable.

For example, some languages like Spanish already have an array of gender neutral pronouns such as "ele," a pronoun that blends a male pronoun with an "e" to make it gender neutral.

Allowing students to choose their own pronouns in this way will not impede their abilities to communicate with other foreign language speakers. These changes are more reasonable for teachers to implement in their foreign language classes.

Being inclusive of all students should be a priority of



WIKIPEDIA.COM

There is currently a push for foreign language teachers to take articles and either eliminate or modify them to be gender neutral. This will cause students to be misunderstood by others. However, transgender and agender students must be allowed to use the pronoun of their choice or one that is agender -- such as the Swedish "hen" -- if they wish, as that will not cause confusion.

all teachers, but there is a point where this inclusiveness can hurt students' understandings of foreign languages and its real-world

application. For this reason, teachers should find other ways to accommodate transgender or agender students.



Stay vigilant for dangerous, fabricated news

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Part of what made the election so sickening – the plethora of fake, fabricated news meant to degrade both candidates – has not gone away, even more than a month after Election Day.

This would not be so upsetting if no one believed it, if false information did not sway opinions – or votes – either way.

The fake news comes from a variety of sources, from biased and uninformed individuals to, as it has been alleged but never proven, the Russian government. It has come from both Clinton and Trump supporters, although as Trump made conspiracy theories himself, his example encouraged his followers to do the same while Clinton refrained from doing so.

Take the example of the tour buses in Austin, Texas. Eric Tucker, an Austin businessman, saw a line of tour buses in downtown Austin and hypothesized on Twitter that their purpose was to bus anti-Trump protesters into the city for that day's rally.

As it turned out, the tour buses were there for a data-analysis conference being held at a convention center nearby.

Fake news is not unique to the 2016 presidential campaign or even politics in general, however. Just take a look at any celebrity-centered magazine, for example, or the rumors people may spread about an opponent.

Fake news can be as simple and benign as misinformed citizens reacting to what they heard, thus perpetuating the false information. It can also be as malicious as purposeful libel for personal gain.

In journalism, we must have at least three sources in our news and feature articles to ensure that our opinion doesn't creep in and that we cover all sides of a story. Most of these claims that go viral, however, are impulsive and don't even quote one source besides the personal opinion of the person who posted the fake news. Both are perfect conditions for the creation of fake news.

What I'm trying to say is stay vigilant: humans are all biased, and this prejudice may make a simple picture and caption seem like an enticing piece of real news. Be skeptical of news that could be tainted by opinion so much that it is patently false.

But even more than that, do not share, repost, or like something on social media that seems to be fabricated news because that is just perpetuating a dangerous lie.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Uniformity in senior graduation gowns promotes inclusiveness

Graduation gowns have been color coded by gender for years, but the increased awareness of gender identity issues signifies the need for change. The move to uniform robes regardless of gender, therefore, is a welcome and necessary adjustment.

This is an issue of inclusiveness. Gowns that are colored by gender alienate students who do not identify with either side of the gender binary and cause complication for transgender students, specifically those who are not "out."

Principal Patricia Puglisi said that the decision to reconsider the robe colors was initiated by a revision to the student anti-discrimination provision of the Access to Equal Education Opportunity Regulations set by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

This revision prompted schools across the state to recon-



COURTESY OF CLAIRE SPOFFORD

Because students are lined up alphabetically, the two colored robe system creates an aesthetic conflict since there is no pattern.

sider gender-specific customs and policies, she said.

"It really is about making sure that all students feel as though

they are a part of our school community and don't feel in any way marginalized," she said.

Furthermore, uniformity in

the color of the robes promotes a sense of unity among the graduating class.

Complaints against the change in robe color are largely superficial.

Students are merely concerned with the color that they want to wear and what "looks good."

Even in that argument, though, uniformity in robe color would actually be more aesthetically pleasing on the whole. Students were assigned colors by gender in the past, but they were also seated alphabetically, leading to random clumps of green and white on stage at graduation.

Aside from inclusiveness and unity, having all robes be one color will simply look better.

Though the concept of tradition has its own merits, the social obligation that prompts this change outweighs any arguments of tradition – traditions must be broken for progress to be made.

Electoral College system is outdated, should be changed for future elections

By Antonio Gillespie
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Although the Electoral College was important in establishing the country, it no longer has a role to play in the presidential election.

This argument has nothing to do with the sentiment that Donald Trump will be a bad president.

Rather, it is part of something much larger about American election procedures.

When a candidate gets two million more votes and still loses the election, the system needs to change to represent the country as a whole.

The state-focused Electoral College made sense when the country only consisted of 13 states and around three million people.

However, now with 50 states and a population one hundred

times as great, changes to the presidential election must occur.

Just as it does not make sense to be using outdated software that is making a computer run slow, just as it does not make sense to be using the Electoral College, which has rewarded the candidate who has fewer total votes, in two of the last five elections.

The Electoral College is part of the Constitution which holds the most fundamental American values of government, yet there are parts of this document that were meant

to be solutions for the time and not precedents for hundreds of years to come.

Similar to how the country has

moved past some of its greatest social and political issues, the country must move past an out-of-date Electoral College.

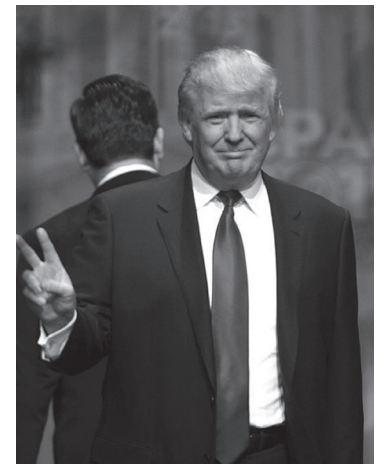
The Electoral College makes it so twelve swing states become the center of attention throughout the campaign, ignoring hundreds of millions of Americans along the way.

It would be a much more fair representation of the country's opinions on the whole if it came

down to a pure popular vote because it would raise people's political efficacy since their state would not be considered already a lock one way or the other.

In the Electoral College system, a Republican from Massachusetts might not vote because he or she knows that the Democratic nominee will win.

The Electoral College makes it so twelve swing states become the center of attention throughout the campaign.



GAGE SKIDMORE/FLICKR.COM

The Electoral College has granted the presidency to the candidate with less total votes in two of the last five elections.

However, this person's vote is just as important, and the vote would be more powerful if the system were a popular vote.

The Electoral College turns what should be a nation-wide election process into one where a fraction of the states determine the president when it should be a more representative process.

the INDEPENDENT

Manchester-Essex Regional High School
36 Lincoln St, Manchester MA 01944
978-526-4412 newspaper@mersd.org
online at <http://www.merhs.mersd.org/domain/702>



Editors in Chief
Maura McCormick
Amber Paré

News Editor
Juliette Kelley

Features Editors
Avery Shaw
Emily Clark
Abigail Fitzgibbon

Opinion Editors
Maddie Conway
Antonio Gillespie

Sports Editors
Will Heslop
James Riordan

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.

Arts Editors
Fritz Spofford
Karlie Angelis

Staff
Holly Fossa
Heather Holley
Austin Paré
Sirine Benali

Faculty Adviser
Mary Buckley-Harmon

Follow us on Twitter:
[@MERHSjournalism](https://twitter.com/MERHSjournalism)

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Bridgett Kiernan



Melanie Carter

Coach: Lauren DuBois

Captains: Melanie Carter (senior) and Bridgett Kiernan (senior)

Record last year: 12-9

Rivals: Georgetown, Ipswich, and Amesbury

Goals: Focus on one game at a time, make the tournament, win the division, have fun, master the fundamentals, put in lots of effort, and be competitive

Impact players: Captains, Sarah Robinson (senior), Ainsley McLaughlin (senior), Courtney Holley (senior), Bella Pomeroy (sophomore), and Grace Brennan (sophomore)

Coach's quote: "It's good to realize that putting in the effort and being competitive with one another is going to push us to be the best team we can be. A good, competitive, and fun atmosphere at practice can translate to success in the games." - Lauren DuBois

Captains' quotes: "Because we have a lot of younger members on the team, a lot of them will step up to fill the roles that are gone from the seniors last year rather than just upperclassmen."

- Bridgett Kiernan

"I'm very excited for the season, and it looks like we're going to have a great team this year. Everybody is going to be an offensive threat." - Melanie Carter

INDOOR TRACK

Coaches: Mark Dawson, Nelson Desilvestre, Steve Whittey, and Liza Rosenfield

Captains: Maura McCormick (senior), Abbey Roundy (senior), Patrick Guinee (junior), and Zach Edwards (junior)

Record last year (Boys): 3-4

Record last year (Girls): 3-5

Rivals: Ipswich

Goals: Improve across the board in races, achieve individual qualifications for All-States, and have at least one relay team reach the All-States

Impact runners: Captains, Maura McCormick (senior), Holly Fossa (junior), Jade Cromwell (sophomore), Matt Carter (sophomore), Bobby Beardsley (sophomore), and Mia Cromwell (freshman)

Coach's quote: "As far as winning meets, it probably won't be a huge concern for us because we are small, but we have a chance for individuals to step up and do some great things." - Mark Dawson

Captain's quote: "We have a really close-knit group of athletes on the team this season. All of us are dedicated, and there is a good balance of experienced athletes and motivated newcomers, which will definitely help us do well in meets." - Maura McCormick



Abbey Roundy



Maura McCormick



Patrick Guinee



Zach Edwards

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Coach: Tim St. Laurent

Captains: Jake Brugger (senior), Jacob Callahan (senior), Ethan Ketchum (senior), Spencer Feuerbach (senior), and Will Heslop (senior)

Record last year: 6-14

Rivals: Georgetown and Rockport

Goals: For all players to make an impact on and off the court this season

Impact players: Captains, Antonio Gillespie (senior), Marco Kaper (senior), Lake Fleming (junior), Mitch Paccone (junior), Joey Cirone (junior), Will Janowicz (sophomore), Dylan Wilson (sophomore), and Kellen Furse (freshman)

Coach's quote: "All the players...worked really hard this offseason on their basketball skills and conditioning to put them in the best position to achieve success at the beginning of the season. I could not be any more pleased on how the team is coming together." - Tim St. Laurent

Captain's quote: "I'm pumped to see how far we can go. We get a fresh start from last year, and we have tons of depth and experience, so we should have a great shot at making a run in February and March." - Ethan Ketchum



Spencer Feuerbach



Jake Brugger



Jacob Callahan



Ethan Ketchum



Will Heslop

HOCKEY

Boys' coach: Patrick McIntosh

Girls' coach: Emily Hudak

Boys' captains: Diego Corona (senior, Rockport), Jameson Kamm (senior, Rockport), Paolo Recuperio (senior, Ipswich), and Jackson Rice (junior, Manchester-Essex)

Girls' captains: Bruno Connor (senior, Marblehead), Warren Perry (senior, Marblehead), and Olivia Susegni (senior, Marblehead)

Boys' record last year: 3-13-1

Girls' record last year: 6-12-4

Rivals: Beverly, Gloucester, Medford, Shawsheen, Winthrop

Goals: Score more and qualify for the state tournament

Manchester-Essex participants: Maddy Litka (junior), Jackson Rice (junior), Faithe Shatford (sophomore), and Isabell Amigo (freshman)

Girls' coach's quote: "You walk into the locker room, and they're all having fun. They've become pretty close pretty quick."

- Emily Hudak

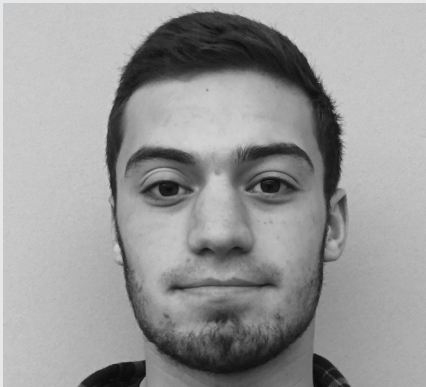
Boys' captain's quote: "We didn't lose a lot of players, and we have a bunch of new players. Everything is in place for a good year." - Jackson Rice



Isabell Amigo



Maddy Litka



Jackson Rice



Faithe Shatford

SKI TEAM



Emily Clark



Wolf Hahn

Coach: Tim Wonson

Captains: Wolf Hahn (senior) and Emily Clark (junior)

Boys' record last year: 3-6

Girls' record last year: 4-6

Rivals: North Andover

Goals: Have three boys and three girls qualify for the state tournament

Impact players: Captains, Samantha Booma (junior), Katie Donnelly (junior), Max Hahn (sophomore), Claire O'Brien (sophomore), and Hannah Hubbard (freshman)

Coach's quote: "I would like to have everyone come together as a team, spend a lot of time outside, have fun, and teach kids how to ski. We've got some really good young skiers, and I'm excited to see how everyone has progressed. We've also got some kids returning to the team that I think have real potential." - Tim Wonson

Captain's quote: "We can definitely improve on both our win total and our racing skills." - Wolf Hahn

"The coaches have tons of dedication to improving each racer, and I'm really excited about what we could do this season."

- Emily Clark

SWIMMING

Coach: Shannon Alger

Captains: Jasmine Dort (senior), Kevin Hiselman (senior), Dewey Komishane (senior), Zanny Lee (senior), and Amber Shaw (senior)

Record last year: 5-2

Rivals: Hamilton-Wenham and Masconomet

Goals: To win the Cape Ann League and have many qualifying relays and individuals

Impact players: Captains, Coleman Komishane (junior), Gus Hawley (sophomore), Elizabeth Athanas (freshman), and Olivia Gado (seventh-grader)

Coach's quote: "They are an amazing group of student athletes who are extremely determined. They possess a lot of grit and are really supportive of each other." - Shannon Alger

Captains' quote: "Everyone has their own strengths. One person is good at one stroke and another person is good at another stroke. We all come together, and it's just strong." - Zanny Lee



Jasmine Dort



Kevin Hiselman



Dewey Komishane



Zanny Lee



Amber Shaw

Emotionally charged 'Manchester by the Sea' reflects North Shore

By Will Heslop
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Filmed across the North Shore, independent director Kenneth Lonergan's "Manchester by the Sea" guarantees viewers a heartbreaking tragedy and something extra for those familiar with the area.

Both overt and more subtle references to Cape Ann are clearly evident in Lonergan's latest film. Whether it is through the stunning aerial shots of Manchester harbor or the faded J.T. Farnham's logo on star Casey Affleck's T-shirt, a very distinct setting is created that is sure to entertain audience members from town.

In general, the film does an outstanding job representing the town and surrounding area, yet it does present the town of Manchester as slightly more blue-collar than its real-life counterpart. In many ways, the small-town intimacy that makes Manchester so wonderful is replaced by a more working class portrayal.

This does not have a huge effect on the film's plot dynam-



MANCHESTERBYTHESEAMOVIE.COM

'Manchester by the Sea' presents a tear-jerking tragedy while appealing to those in the Cape Ann area.

ics, but anyone who has spent enough time in the town can easily point out that not everyone from Manchester has a fishing boat and a thick Boston accent.

Lying underneath the impressive filmography is a rich story that carries an enormous emotional weight that will surely remain with the viewer long after the final credits have finished.

The story revolves around Lee Chandler (Casey Affleck), who is given the responsibility of looking after his 16-year-old nephew Patrick Chandler (Lucas Hedges) after the death of his brother Joe (Kyle Chandler).

On the surface, Patrick's interactions with Lee make his uncle appear negligent or even uncaring, but his tragic backstory, told

mostly through flashbacks, points out the underlying heartbreaks that he has experienced.

Seemingly ordinary people can carry an extraordinary amount of baggage with them that can cause deep-rooted emotional trauma.

Despite the film's overwhelmingly somber attitude, it still manages to weave in moments of humor. Patrick is able to make the most of

the situation by frequently joking around with Lee and trying to engage with his tight-lipped uncle.

Lee's ex-wife Randi Chandler, who plays a minor role in the film, is played by Michelle Williams. Though only appearing in a fraction of the scenes, Williams's performance is strong and certainly deserving of the many Best Supporting Actress awards for which she has been nominated.

"Manchester by the Sea" caters to different types of movie watchers. For residents of the area who enjoy seeing scenic shots of Manchester and surrounding towns, it functions very well in simply capturing the essence of the North Shore.

For hardcore film analysts, the movie offers the opportunity to digest a truly tragic story that unfortunately offers very little in the way of a positive resolution. Viewers can feel Lee's strife with every action, and he comes to command the sympathy of every single audience member by the end.

Superfine offers gourmet dining in modern, casual atmosphere

By Heather Holley
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Superfine has replaced Christine's Coffee Cup in Manchester-by-the-Sea and has brought a new modern touch to the space. There are no more old red vinyl booths or plastic blue chairs but instead new natural wooden tables and counters, giving the restaurant a refined look.

Three locals own Superfine, including Chris Robins, Paul Emmett, and Matthew Gaudet. Emmett, originally from Chicago and a former salesman, said he followed his passion for cooking and worked with Gaudet for West Bridge in Kendall Square.

After the closing of West Bridge, the two relocated and started Superfine on 25 Union St.

The name Superfine came from the idea of fine dining in a casual atmosphere, Emmett said.

Exposed brick and dimmed lighting elicit a calm and relaxed atmosphere. The square shaped furnishing, art, and cool blue lighting create a sophisticated look.

Emmett said the decor is inspired by the idea of your older brother's room that you were never allowed to step foot in as there are video games, a record player, and sports pictures around the dining space.

Similar to a fast food service, Superfine requires customers to walk up to the large wooden counter where they may order a small appetizer, entree, dessert, or a drink from the full cocktail bar with select wines and beers.

After placing an order, the customer is given a table number stand with the order number to place where he/she chooses to sit, so when the food is ready, it is delivered directly to the customer.

Ordering online and over the phone is also an option.

Superfine's appetizers, called "snacks" on the menu, include only two options. The garlic knots (\$3) are small tasty treats made of bread crust with garlic tied into a knot, and the side fries (\$4) are thin homemade fries coated in a thick

cheese sauce and garnished with shaved green onions.

Veggies of the day specials are provided as well. One specialty veggie was cauliflower sautéed in sweet scallion ginger vinaigrette (\$11).

A delicious salad on the menu is the quinoa & farro whole grain salad with feta, cucumber, and seasonal veggies (\$15).

One of the most popular dishes is the restaurant's daily barbeque from the smoker served with monkey bread (\$18).

The restaurant also has daily specials. A rib special, the Pork Butt (\$15), was complemented with a barbeque-based sauce, a cinnamon biscuit, and sautéed vegetables.

Pizzas at Superfine are also a major hit, especially the brussels sprouts, lemon, and parmigiano pizza (\$15). The entree provides a healthy, vegetable-based meal with a delicious savory taste.

Desserts (\$7) are easily purchasable as they are provided



HEATHER HOLLEY PHOTO

Superfine serves delicious food and keeps an informal atmosphere.

through point-of-purchase displays and include a variety of pastries such as cookies or sticky buns as well as bread pudding.

As of now, a new recipe for a dessert pizza is being developed to top off the restaurant's unique menu.

The restaurant provides merchan-

dise as well that includes Superfine shirts (\$20) and hats (\$20).

Superfine is open from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. Friday; 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. Saturday; 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. Sunday, and closed on Monday.

Two chorus students accepted into this year's Senior Districts

By Sirine Benali
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Two chorus students, senior Jenny Duff and freshman Paige Mandia, were selected to participate in the Massachusetts Northeast Senior District Festival. Duff was additionally recommended to audition for All-States.

Every year students from over 50 schools in the area audition for the Senior District Festival. Duff and Mandia were accepted out of the 1,126 participants at the audition and are part of the 210 chorus students that will be participating in the festival, according to the Massachusetts Music Educators Association.

"The competition was tough this year. We had five students this year audition, three freshmen, which is unusual but nice to see



SIRINE BENALI PHOTO

Senior Jenny Duff and freshman Paige Mandia are in the process of preparing multiple pieces for Senior Districts.

the confidence," chorus director Donna O'Neill said.

Duff's audition for All-States will be held on Jan. 21, O'Neill

said.

"It is a huge accomplishment to get an All-State recommendation. In the past five years we have

had the pleasure of having one or two MERHS students in All-States. You have to get a really high score to get a recommendation," O'Neill said.

Duff said she plans to prepare by talking to people who have auditioned for All-States before. "It will give me a bit of insight on what it will be like," she said.

O'Neill said she was very proud of both of the students, and is excited to see Mandia accepted so early. "It is a great accomplishment to make Senior Districts as a freshman," she

said.

Mandia said she had been working with her singing coach for a while.

Before the festival, both of

Duff and Mandia were accepted out of the 1,124 participants...and are part of the 210 chorus students that will be participating in the festival.

the students must practice more pieces. "I'm excited for the rehearsals, practices, and getting to learn the music," Mandia said.

Overall, six students,

five chorus, auditioned, and most missed the cut off by a small margin, O'Neill said.

"I will definitely audition again next year!" Mandia said.

Tom Ford returns to the screen with glamorous neo-noir ‘Nocturnal Animals’

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Fashion mogul and filmmaker Tom Ford returns to the screen after seven years with “Nocturnal Animals,” a lush, noir-ish meditation on weakness, revenge and regret.

Susan (Amy Adams), an art gallery owner in Los Angeles, is wealthy and unhappy. She never sleeps and is addicted to working, an effective distraction from her rocky marriage to second husband Hutton (Armie Hammer).

The plot is set in motion when a manuscript, a violent revenge tale written by ex-husband Edward (Jake Gyllenhaal) and dedicated to Susan, arrives in the mail one afternoon, which Susan then begins to read each night.

The film’s noir influence is evident from the start – leaving her gallery opening, Susan drives through the night in her black automobile, her face illuminated by headlights, and pulls into her starkly elegant Beverly Hills mansion overlooking the lights of LA, accompanied by foreboding strings.

Following a dual storyline, the narrative



Amy Adams stars in Tom Ford’s darkly atmospheric ‘Nocturnal Animals’ as Susan, a wealthy art gallery owner unhappy with the materialistic life she’s made for herself.

alternates between the story of the manuscript and Susan’s day-to-day life as she devours each page. Also intertwined are flashbacks of Susan and Edward’s

The production design is breathtaking, practically overshadowing the convincing performances of the cast.

doomed grad-school relationship. One of the highlight of these flashbacks is a meeting between Susan and her mother (Laura Linney), a

Southern-Belle-turned-ice-queen clad in a white Chanel suit, a massive pearl necklace and Jackie Kennedy hair, who advises against marrying Edward, calling him “too weak” for

her.

As expected from a film helmed by a magnate of the fashion industry, the production design is breathtaking, practically overshadowing the convincing performances of the cast. Ford creates a lavish, brooding world of martinis, stilettos and dark eye shadow where every shot is meticulously crafted.

One of the more intriguing aspects of the film, though, is Ford’s apparent aversion toward the vanity, materialism and throw-away culture of the luxe lifestyle – a notion that contradicts the majority of his career.

Susan throws things away the minute they begin to falter. She threw

NOCTURNALANIMALS.COM

Edward away immediately when problems in their relationship surfaced, abandoning his sensitivity for a wealthy alpha-male who could fill her more superficial needs. For this very reason, though, she is the weak one, and as she reads the manuscript and looks back on their relationship from her hillside ivory tower, she begins to realize just that.

Incorporating elements of both melodrama and film noir, “Nocturnal Animals” presents a captivating story of love and regret, a cautionary tale on why one should think twice before letting things go. Rated R for violence, nudity and language, it is now playing in cinemas nationwide.

Featured Artist

Senior performs in North Shore Music Theatre’s ‘A Christmas Carol’ for fourth consecutive year

By Austin Pare
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After several years of acting, senior Jillian Furber is performing in the North Shore Music Theatre’s “A Christmas Carol” for the fourth time.

Furber has been pursuing her dream of acting ever since she started in her fifth-grade play. At the age of 8, Furber auditioned for the role of Martha Cratchit at the North Shore Music Theatre.

“They told me I was way too young to play Martha, so I came back my freshman year to audition. They contacted me within the next two weeks to inform me that I got the part,” Furber said.

Throughout the years Furber has performed in a number of non-professional shows including “Cinderella,” “Aladdin,”



Jillian Furber plays the supporting role of Martha Cratchit in NSMT’s ‘A Christmas Carol’ each winter.

“Pippin,” and “Into the Woods.” Last year, Furber participated in a five-week program at Yale University for drama.

Furber said she enjoys performing at the professional level because she has the opportunity to watch professional actors and actresses perform around her.

“I love some of the scenes that I am not in more than my own, because it is so much fun seeing people dance and sing together,” she said.

Sophomore Clara Davis went to see “A Christmas

Carol” when she was in eighth grade.

“I think it is really interesting how someone from our school is in such a big production,” Davis said.

Senior Jenny Duff said she loves that Furber is able to balance all of the work from school and also be a part of this production.

“I love how she is able to put so much time and effort into the performances and practices as well as school. She was really amazing, and she gets better every year,” Duff said.

Furber plans on applying to colleges for mainly drama in either California or New York. She hopes that her career in theatrical arts will take off from there.

Furber has been pursuing her dream of acting since the age of 8.

What to...

Listen To: Album

“We Got It From Here... Thank You 4 Your Service”

Eighteen years after the release of their previous album “The Love Movement,” rap group A Tribe Called Quest has released its sixth and final studio album. The 16-track album, titled “We Got It From Here... Thank You 4 Your Service,” debuted at number one on the Billboard 200. Reminiscent of their earlier work, A Tribe Called Quest’s final album carries a charged message throughout its jazzy and rhythmic lines. It spends time reflecting on the group’s history over the past 18 years, yet its main effect is as a social commentary that calls out continued issues of racism in the world. The group plays off of rhetoric from president-elect Donald Trump’s campaign to point out deep-rooted prejudices that exist within society.

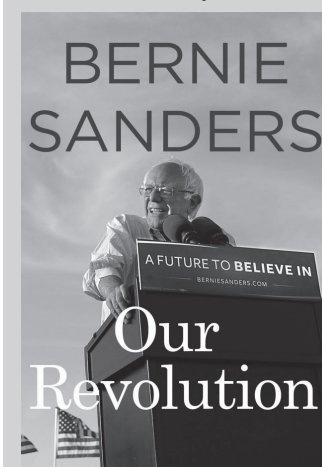


ATRIBECALLEDQUEST.COM

Read: Book

“Our Revolution: A Future to Believe In”

In light of recent political events, many Americans need reassurance more than ever. Sen. Bernie Sanders, in the wake of a loss in the Democratic primary to Hillary Clinton, aims to provide this reassurance to citizens across the country in his new book “Our Revolution:



OURREVOLUTION.COM

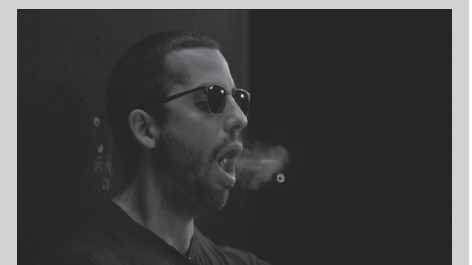
A Future to Believe In.” Sanders looks with optimism towards the future and reminisces on his run at the presidency with pride and positivity. He looks back fondly on the movement perpetuated by young Americans and appreciates the immense following that materialized during his campaign. His book fondly reflects on the “Feel the Bern” movement and encourages

citizens to continue the fight towards a social revolution that embodies the ideals of a Democratic Socialist ideology.

Watch: T.V. Special

“Beyond Magic”

Magician David Blaine returns to the magic scene and aims to baffle audiences with his latest TV special “Beyond Magic,” which can be viewed in its entirety on YouTube. Similar to his previous specials, it focuses on capturing the reactions of audience members to whom Blaine performs his tricks. Celebrities such as Margot Robbie and Drake are featured reacting live to Blaine’s tricks as he performs them. While card tricks are surely captivating, the true highlight of Blaine’s show is his performance of the bullet catch, which is widely regarded as one of the most deadly tricks a magician can perform.



DAVIDBLAINE.COM

For fans of conventional card magic with a dangerous twist, “Beyond Magic” is unlikely to disappoint.

By Will Heslop, Independent Editor

Guess Who? Answer: Liz Edgerton