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Robotics maintains momentum heading into districts

Team aims to qualify for world championship

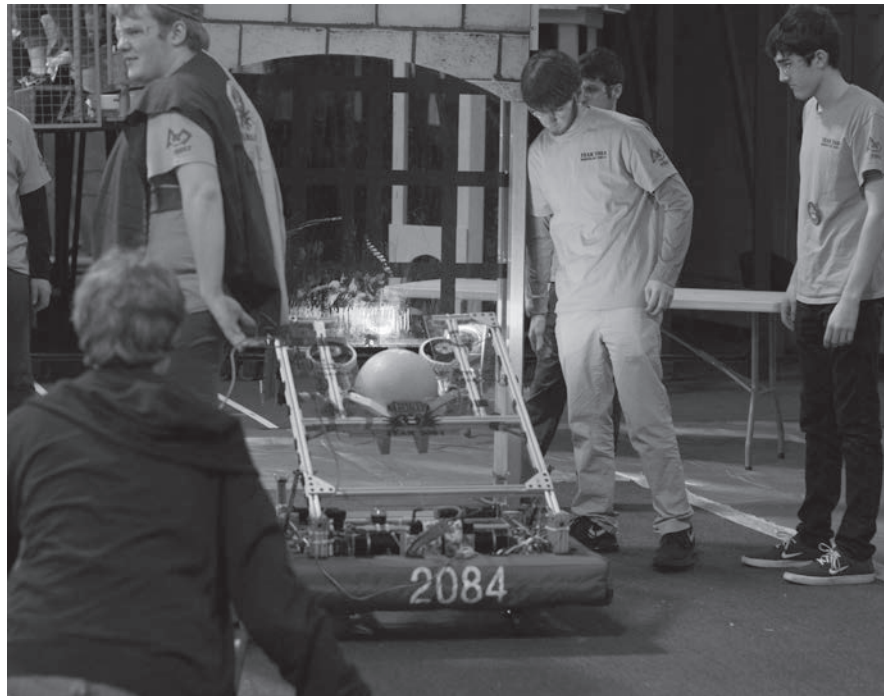
By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a finish that qualifies them for the FIRST District championship in Hartford, Conn., from April 14-16, the MERHS Robotics team placed 26th out of 40 teams at the FIRST Stronghold competition at Boston University, their second competition of the year.

According to Dan Lundergan, robotics adviser, the objective of this event was to shoot "boulders," or large Nerf balls, at the castle and push through outer defenses such as a rock wall, rough terrain, or travel over a drawbridge.

"The kids had to program the robot to traverse through various defenses in order to get to the castle, or tower rather, as the structure was more like a tower," he said.

A few weeks prior to the weekend of April 2, the team had won an award for robot de-



COURTESY OF ZOE BROWN

For the FIRST Stronghold competition, the Robotics team was tasked with creating a robot to shoot large Nerf balls or cross over drawbridges in order to penetrate the defenses of a castle. Members embraced the medieval theme when cheering for their team.

sign at a competition in Reading, and Lundergan said proper design and performance can factor into the decision of which teams should create an alliance.

"You are allied with two other teams and compete against another set of three teams. The pair-

ings occur in a round robin-type fashion, and this can be difficult as you must rely on other teams to perform well. Our team had 14 kids this time, and each plays his own unique role," he said.

Robotics team captain Ben Wolsieffer addressed both

positive and negative experiences with alliances over the past two competitions, noting a change in status based on ranking in each competition.

"In Reading, we were ranked seventh at the end of the qualification rounds and ended up being

the captain of the fifth alliance in eliminations, making it to semifinals. In Boston, we were the second pick of the seventh alliance, and we had a lot of small, frustrating failures, so we were eliminated in the quarterfinals," he said.

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College acceptances, plans for future create excitement, difficult decisions for senior class

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With final college acceptances rolling in for the class of 2016, seniors have been making decisions for the future.

The students' paths include attending small schools, such as Bates College for Megan Clark, and large universities, like Penn State for Molly Lynch. Other students may take gap years, such as valedictorian Jenny Cochand, who may be visiting Southeast Asia, Vietnam, and then backpacking through Europe before starting college.

In general, being a senior looking at colleges means becoming

more realistic and weighing factors such as price, prestige, and distance when considering options.

"Just deciding what kind of place I wanted to live in, like city versus campus, as well as deciding what school I'd get the most out of, like network and opportunity wise, was a factor for me," senior Madeline Surette said.

Seniors considering out of state schools often want a change of atmosphere that completely deviates from schools in the New England area.

Senior Paige Lafferty has decided on CU Boulder. "I like the liberal attitude, outdoor activities, landscape, and sunshine that the state has to offer," she said.

The decision can become more difficult for seniors when taking into account merit awards from some colleges and the hefty prices of others, according to guidance counselor director Beverly Low.

According to senior Mel-
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'The whole process is incredibly stressful, but it feels great once you get accepted.'

-JAKE OSTROVITZ

Class of 2016 to host prom on Gloucester yacht

By Charlotte Freed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

This year's prom will be a unique experience, according to the class of 2016's class president Lydia Parker. Held on the Beauport Princess, a boat docked at the Cruiseport in Gloucester, the prom will be Friday, May 27.

Parker said the boat will be "a really cool experience because it will cruise around the harbor during the night, and prom goers can walk around on the outdoor decks." Barring any weather mishaps, the boat will dock for an hour before going out into Gloucester harbor.

The class officers are expecting around 300 students at the prom from all grades, which is nearing the maximum capacity for the yacht, Parker said.

Class advisers Jill Levine and Bryan Shields both said the class of 2016 has generous funds for class activities such as prom due to a variety of fundraising techniques.

"We tried to do a lot of different things and thing outside the box to get the community involved. The fundraiser that probably brought



LYDIA PARKER PHOTO

This year's prom will take place on the triple-decker Beauport Princess. It includes two dance floors as well as an open top deck.

us the most money was the class along with a raffle each year. auction last year," Levine said.

Parker said she and the class officers have been fundraising steadily for the past four years, allowing this year's tickets to be low for the senior class (\$40) and \$60 for juniors.

She said the class officers held countless bake sales and events such as the holiday gift-wrapping fundraiser,

to be out on the water instead of in a shared room," White said.

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The prom will be catered by Vinwood Catering, which lets the class officers customize the menu.

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News Brief

Meatless Mondays

With support from junior Zoe Brown, a member of the Green Team, and food service director Sheila Parisien, Meatless Mondays are scheduled to return on a once-a-month basis.

The initiative, which was originally started by senior Paige Lafferty, aims to help the environment.

“A lot of people think it’s more of a moral issue... but even if you ignore [that part of it], it’s more of [an environmental] issue,” Brown said.

“Cattle raising causes more greenhouse emissions than all transportation.”

Although Meatless Mondays are not led by the Green Team, director Eric Magers supports the monthly event, emphasizing the same environmental benefits of a meat-free diet. He said the emphasis on meat hurts the environment as a whole.

“If we didn’t have this fascination with meat internationally, we’d be in a whole lot better state,” he said. “We’re cutting down valuable rainforests that are huge CO₂ sequestration [centers] to flatten the land and then raise more meat.”

Magers said that meatless Mondays will also encourage students think about where their food is coming from, pointing to a middle school health class in which students didn’t realize that meat came from the muscles of animals as an example of how disengaged consumers can be.

Because of student backlash in the past, the deli will remain still be an available option on Meatless Mondays to provide an option for students uninterested in participating, according to Brown.

Carin Grimes, who works in food service at the school, stressed that while Meatless Mondays could have a positive impact, in the past, not enough people have actually bought the vegetarian option for it to be worthwhile.

“Our biggest problem, honestly, was that everyone who wanted Meatless Mondays didn’t necessarily come and eat Meatless Mondays,” she said.

Community read offers insight into college process

Parents, faculty discuss student stress, pressure to succeed after high school

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT STAFF

To bring together parents and the school administration about issues relating to college admissions and student stress, the school district hosted a book discussion on Frank Bruni’s book, “Where You Go Is Not Who You’ll Be.”

The community event took place on March 24 at 7 p.m. in the seventh-grade pod and ran for several hours.

Those in attendance were encouraged to read Bruni’s book and come prepared with questions and observations.

The book offers an alternate perspective on the “college admissions mania,” as Bruni calls it. He shows that students can achieve success without following the traditional route to a prestigious college.

Most attendees were parents, but members of the faculty, including superintendent Pamela Beaudoin, high school principal Patricia Puglisi, middle school principal Steve Guditus, and director of guidance, Beverly Low, played a large role in the discussion.

“The goals of the night were to generate more conversation within our community about how to support our students through the challenges they might be facing and to really think about what we



ABIGAIL FITZGIBBON PHOTO

Parents and administrators met in the sixth-grade pod to discuss “Where You Go is Not Who You’ll Be,” a book that presents the pressures of the college process and what is expected of students.

value as a community,” Low said.

The staff then opened the conversation up to parents and faculty to discuss their observations after reading.

“I think it was great because it does start the conversation [about college], but there is so much more, as they talked about; it’s the community, it’s parents, it’s teachers. I think it has to be a conversation that is continued,” parent Tricia Soulard said.

According to Beaudoin, the faculty decided to use the pod instead of the auditorium to generate more conversation and to have a

sort of “fish bowl” to help the discussion flow and decide what the goals of the community should be.

“[Teachers and parents] are partners in trying to accomplish the same goal, which is raising kids that are happy and balanced,” Beaudoin said.

Most responses focused on the culture of the Manchester Essex community, how it puts too much pressure on students to achieve, and what the community can do to change this competitive climate.

“It’s all about helping kids to understand themselves, what they want, and what they

need,” director of student services, Allison Collins, said.

Beaudoin agreed and suggested that the school incorporate career planning to give students more direction.

“We need to adjust how we measure success as a district. I think that’s going to be hard; I think we’ve put a lot of value into rankings and into scores,” she said.

During the discussion, faculty and parents generated a list of ideas to improve the community climate, including a personalized learning plan and a high school career day.

ASR seniors complete two-year research course with presentations

Juniors continue to work with mentors on internships

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Juniors and seniors of the Authentic Science Research class have had a successful year with an improved number of responses to internships as well as impressive research presentations, according to ASR teacher Maria Burgess.

The course is a two-year class. ASR 1 is primarily juniors, and ASR 2 is primarily seniors.

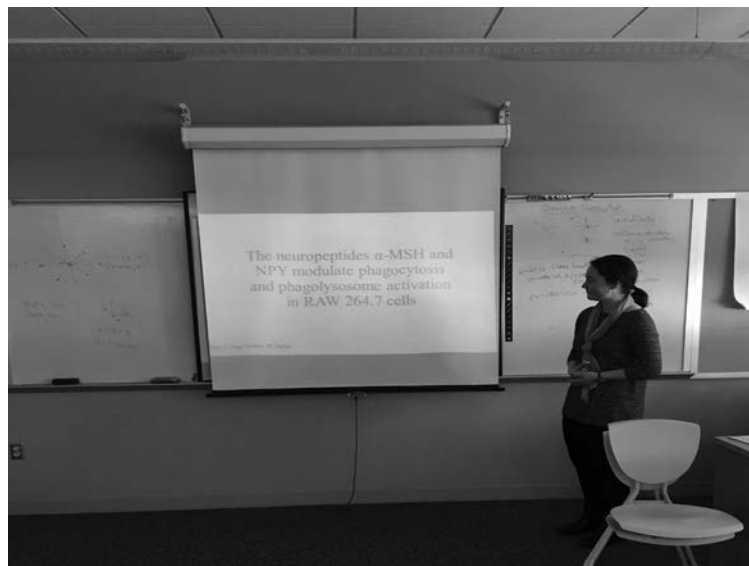
“ASR 1 focuses on research methods and research ethics as well as how to write research and how to read research while ASR 2 works on ways to disseminate the research they collected through their internship,” Burgess said.

Students work on locating a six-week internship for the summer during ASR 1.

“The internships can be lab-based, or they can be research-based, where they do a lot of reading and are assigned to consolidate research for the researcher. Sometimes they work on databases with data that is already there, where they are not collecting data but ma-

‘I took the course to try to get a broader view and to try to learn more specific things...’

—BRENDAN DRISCOLL



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

ASR 1 student junior Maddie Conway presents the research of her mentor. She will be studying Ocular Immune Privilege.

nipulating it to see if there are relationships,” Burgess said.

This year, all ASR students have received positive responses to their requests for an internship, which is an improvement from

last year where two students couldn’t find internships.

“There is one mentor who hasn’t responded after an ini-

tial ‘sure I’d love to have you,’ so we are waiting on that one to happen. Overall, it really has been an impressive outcome this year,” Burgess said.

Senior Brendan Driscoll recommended the course to students who are passionate about science.

“I was interested in science and engineering, but I wasn’t sure exactly what kind of things I was interested in specifically. I took the course to try to get a broader view and to try to learn more specific things, as well as getting an idea of what I might be interested in the future,” he said.

Driscoll said ASR has helped him decide what he wants to study in college.

“It has helped me focus in on an interest. I know I am going to be studying biomedical engineering in college,” he said.

Junior Amber Shaw is working with mentor Cassandra Extavour, a researcher in the department of organismic and evolutionary biology at Harvard University.

“It is a huge relief finally hearing back from my mentor. Now instead of stressing, I can spend my time getting excited about the internship,” Shaw said.

In order to prepare them for the internships, the mentors will provide bibliographic material as well as assign tasks that they require the students can perform, according to Burgess.

“Amber Shaw’s mentor said she needs to be able to pipe out between one and five micro liters of fluid consistently 30 different times in a row. So we have all that equipment, and we will help her learn that,” she said.

The ASR 2 class spent the year compiling their data for their presentations as well as entering their research into various competitions, according to Burgess.

“They enter the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (Intel ISEF) where they have to write a paper about their research. They also enter the Junior Science and Humanities symposium. All of this is alongside of their presentations, which are due at the end of the year,” she said.

Senior projects give students freedom to explore future fields

Internships range from investigating crime scenes to handcrafting guitars

By Ethan Andersen
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Seniors embark on their SCORE projects with the goal of preparing them for college or entrance into the workforce, according to chief adviser James Wallimann.

“Most students don’t get to experience an internship until college, so SCORE gives them a great opportunity to get some important experience with an internship in the real world,” he said.

The project’s goal is to help teach students how to balance a schedule for themselves and be independent with their preparations for work.

Wallimann said this year’s senior class has been the best he’s seen at turning in documents on time.

“This is my third year doing

SCORE, and this is the best group I’ve worked with so far,” he said.

Out of the handful of internships Wallimann had seen, he was fairly impressed by several of them. Some highlights include students writing a screenplay, teaching children Chinese, and working with a sports agent.

Seniors Megan Clark and Bella Mastendino will be working on a crime investigation unit, researching a missing person case.

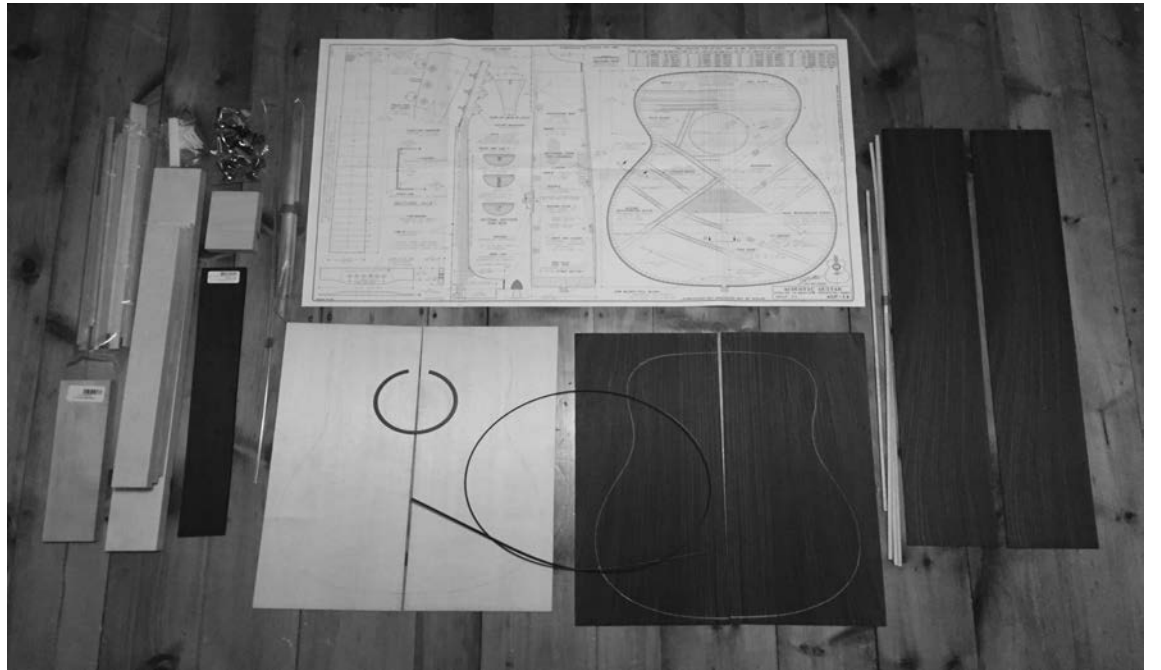
“My uncle works in the field, and I was going to do an internship this summer with him, but Bella and I thought it would be an interesting SCORE project, especially because Bella is pretty interested in this area,” Clark said.

Aidan Burbridge will be constructing a guitar from scratch for his senior project.

to help teach the basics for anyone who is interested,” Phelan said.

‘Most students don’t get to experience an internship until college, so SCORE gives them great opportunity to get experience at an internship in the real world.’

-JAMES WALLIMANN



ETHAN ANDERSEN PHOTO

Senior Aidan Burbridge is building a guitar by hand for his fourth quarter SCORE internship.

“I think it will be an awesome experience that will allow me to combine two of my interests: playing guitar and engineering,” he said.

Senior James Phelan will be making tutorial videos for his SCORE project, instructing

‘I think it will be an awesome experience that will allow me to combine two of my interests.’

-AIDAN BURBRIDGE

how to code basic computer programs using Java Script.

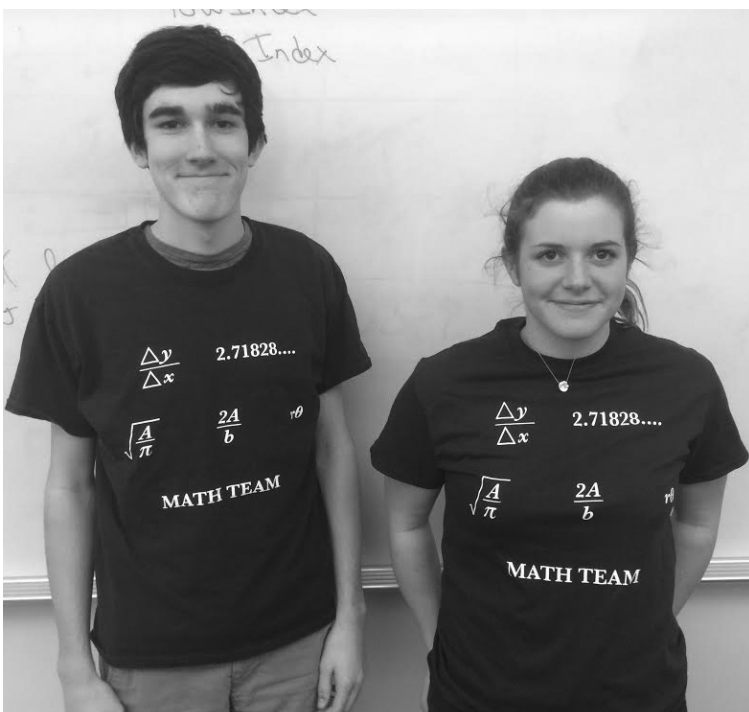
“It’s something that everyone can use. I think computer programming is definitely going to be a big part of education in the future, so I want

to help teach the basics for anyone who is interested,” Phelan said.

Although there are a wide variety of projects, Wallimann said that sometime the more normal projects, such as working in the school, turn out to be the best ones.

“It all really depends on the person and place they choose to work with-- which comes down to the work and time they do when initially searching for an internship,” he said.

They need to fulfill the project requirement of 30 hours a week; however, students who have AP classes get hours deducted.



ZACK EVEN PHOTO

Mathletes Avery Shaw and Connor Coale sport their team shirts featuring mathematic expressions that represent the letters MERHS.

Math Team wins three out of six meets

By Courtney Fraser
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Coming in first for its division three out of the six meets they attended, the Math Team finished the 2015-2016 competition year.

Math department chair Daniel Lundergan has been the adviser of the group for 11 years, helping the students prepare for the meets taking place each month.

The team performed well this year, earning the second highest overall point total that they have scored in the year, according to Lundergan.

“This is another way kids can have fun because they enjoy going to the meets and meeting people from other schools. I really like the opportunity for

the kids to get the chance to represent the school for an academic reason,” Lundergan said.

The team practices after school every Thursday to prepare for the meets that are held during the first Thursday of each month from October through March.

Each meet focuses on different mathematical categories, so the team earns a stronger understanding these categories each month, according to Lundergan.

Overall, the Math Team consists of 17 members, who compete against teams in Rockport, Pentucket, Masconomet, Pingree, Hamilton-Wenham, and Ipswich.

Senior Jarrod Young has been on the math team since junior year.

“Since I don’t play any sports, it provides a sense of communi-

ty. It’s fun to do something competitive. Also, it’s good in terms of helping me in math class because a lot of the problems make you think,” Young said.

Senior Julia Mitrano, one of the five girls on the team, joined this year.

“The team is very close and ready to help whenever it’s needed. The Math Team benefited me greatly during the year. I’ve asked another member to help sort out a problem or better my understanding of a mathematical situation,” Mitrano said.

According to Lundergan, Young, and Mitrano, the team has good chemistry and gets along well with each other.

“On the team, there is a good sense of community,” Young said.

National Honor Society conducts supplies drive to help local shelters in need

By Karlie Angelis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Currently the National Honor Society is working on a drive for local animal shelters, as well as welcoming its new members this April.

Jennifer Coleman, the new National Honor Society co-adviser, is working with her co-adviser Dean Martino and NHS members to benefit the Service Dog Project and local animal shelters like Cape Ann Animal Aid.

According to Lily Moore, a member of the National Honor Society, the Service Dog Project is an organization in Ipswich that donates service dogs to people in

need, but the organization needs more supplies for the dogs until they can find them a good home.

“Students can bring in dog or cat food, towels, or anything animals need or use to help them,” Coleman said.

Members of NHS have split into groups, and a new group will be running the drive each week, according to Coleman.

However, the success of the shelter drive has been minimal, according to NHS

officer Jenny Cochand.

“I don’t think that the drive has had a great deal of success so far; I think there are a ton of different fundraisers going on at the same time, so it’s hard to garner support,” Cochand said.

She remains hopeful that the success of the drive will grow. “I’d love to see the groups who are running it over the next few weeks build on what we have so far,” she said.

In addition to the drive, the National Honor Society in-

‘Students can bring in dog or cat food, towels, or anything animals need.’

-JENNY COCHAND



KARLIE ANGELIS PHOTO

NHS collected towels outside the main office for the supplies drive.

ducted its new members on April 13 in the auditorium.

Katelyn Lordan, the volunteer coordinator at Cape Ann Animal Aid, was the guest speaker.

“I am really excited to bring in the new members since a lot of seniors will be leaving soon; when I joined last year, everyone was really friendly,” Moore said.

Debate students find success in WorldQuest competition

Competitors look to carry momentum on to Nationals

By Oscar Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Four debate students qualified for competition in the National WorldQuest Championship after placing first in the Boston contest.

Seniors Jack Haynie and Joe Alibali and juniors Meehan Irose and Will Heslop comprised the WorldQuest competition team, which came in first out of 14 in Boston's annual competition.

The students were chosen based on their participation in the after-school debate club and their interest in the event, according to Director of Debate Yvonne Robbins.

'I think WorldQuest is a great opportunity to get engaged with global events in a competitive, entertaining way.'

-JACK HAYNIE

"There are eight categories for WorldQuest competition, so we just had each student study up and really prepare for two. The kids prepared after school and definitely seemed to work hard to get ready," Robbins said.

Preparation in advance played

a large role in the team's success at the Boston competition, according to Irose.

"I'm very proud of the way the team came together and worked hard. We put in an effective effort, and it definitely paid dividends," he said.

WorldQuest focuses on topics such as current affairs and international relations, areas that Haynie said attracted



COURTESY OF ZOE BROWN

WorldQuest competition team members Jack Haynie, Joe Alibali, Meehan Irose, and Will Heslop celebrate their first place finish at the Boston contest held at Bridgewater State University on March 19.

all four students to the event.

"I think WorldQuest is a great opportunity to get engaged with global events in a competitive, entertaining way that people don't usually get to experience," he said.

With the team's win in Bos-

ton, the four students will receive a free trip to compete in the National Academic WorldQuest competition in Washington, D.C. on April 23. The winning team will receive \$3,000 in scholarship money.

"I'm definitely excited for

Washington. I think it will be a great chance to show off what we know, and the chance at scholarship money only adds incentive," Alibali said.

Both Irose and Heslop will likely look to find repeat success next year, according to Robbins.

Town meeting discourse leads to effective government process

By Charlie Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

This year's Manchester town meeting, the annual government assembly in which citizens vote on whether or not to implement various articles and provisions, was one of the most smoothly run and well organized meetings, according to Manchester resident Mary Lumsden.

"I thought this year's town meeting was very well run, it was well organized, and they kept to the topics well," she said.

The meeting was held over two nights: April 4 and April 5.

The articles included Article 10, which, according to the town warrant, said any article passed at town meeting that requires the appropriation of \$500,000 or more must go to and be passed at a special town election; Ar-



COURTESY OF BETH DAVIS

Town Board of Selectman members Tom Kehoe, Eli Boling, Muffin Driscoll, and Susan Beckmann ensured the town meeting ran smoothly as citizens debated important topics over two nights.

article 18, which aimed to create a Housing Trust to identify areas to build affordable housing, and Ar-

article 20; which said any residents renting out a living place to a tourist or visitor for under seven

days is required to obtain a permit. These provisions drew many people to the meeting on both nights, according to Lumsden.

Article 10 was defeated in a secret ballot vote on the first night, and Articles 18 and 20 were passed in the meeting's second night.

Town Selectwoman Muffin Driscoll said she was pleased with participation at the meeting this year.

"I thought this town meeting generated some really good community conversation about some important issues, and our goal is always to encourage as many

registered voters in the community to come. I think we had a large number of people who came not just the first night but the second night as well," Driscoll said.

Driscoll also said this year's town meeting was of high quality because of the questions asked by the general population and the answers given by government officials.

"I feel like there were lots of questions asked, lots of really good answers given, and lots of good give and take, so it allowed people to make well informed decisions," she said.

'I thought this year's town meeting was very well run, it was well organized, and they kept to the topics well.'

-MARY LUMSDEN

CONTINUATIONS

ROBOTICS

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The team's next goal is to qualify for the FIRST Championship in St. Louis, Mo., from April 27-30, which depends on their performance at Hartford, according to Wolsieffer.

"If we do well there, this will probably have been our best season ever, and there is a small possibility that we could qualify for the world championship in St. Louis from April 27-30," he said.

SENIOR PLANS

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issa Schuh, cost will play factor into her final decision.

"I am leaning towards Northeastern University right now because of their co-op program that places me into a job for three

years during school...; however, it's very expensive, so I have to make a big decision," she said. Schuh plans to study to become a pediatric nurse practitioner.

Schuh is not in the minority, as many students have yet to make their final decisions. Senior Ben Wolsieffer, for example, is choosing between Dartmouth College, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and UMass Lowell.

This has been a year of many waitlists and rejections due to the high number of colleges the average student around the country has been applying to, Low said.

Senior Olivia Tyler, who will likely continue her education at Boston University, echoed this statement but emphasized that rejections as well as acceptances did not always come when expected.

"It has all been surprising, seeing that 'better' colleges have accepted me and some safeties have rejected or wait-listed me. There is no telling

what goes on when they review the applications -- everything's so unexpected," Tyler said.

But not all students have seen quite these bumps in their college acceptance process. "I've had a relatively easy time when it came to hearing back from colleges," senior Chelsea Rose said, who will attend John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

For Rose, the difficult part of the process was selecting which school to attend, not hearing back.

"I ended up getting almost a full ride to Suffolk and obviously most would say go there... It was tough because I had to choose between going to a school where I knew I belonged or force myself to go where that I couldn't see myself," Rose said.

In addition to being accepted, rejected, or wait-listed, colleges may require students to complete an extra requirement such as spending their first semester abroad.



ZACK EVEN PHOTO

The college acceptance process, although stressful, generally has the outcome of excitement for many seniors.

"The whole process was incredibly stressful, but it feels great once you get accepted," senior Jake Ostrovitz, still undecided, said.

PROM

continued from page 1

The prom will be catered by Vinwood Catering, which lets the class officers customize the

menu, which includes salad, penne with marinara sauce, chicken picatta, seasonal vegetables, potatoes, and chocolate mousse for dessert. The officers made sure to have both vegan and vegetarian options.

Besides the triple-decker yacht, which Parker said speaks for itself, other aspects to look forward to at prom include two dance floors on two separate floors, a top deck with views of the harbor, and the music, which will be a class-created playlist DJ'd by math teacher David Alger.

Health Matters



Nutritionists urge against using detox diets

By Charlotte Freed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For the past two years, “detox diets” have been a popular method for weight loss, according to Deborah Kotz of the Boston Globe. Photos of fit girls holding detox teas or juices and claiming the herbal concoction was the trick to their appearance are spread across the Internet.

Detox diets typically involve some type of fasting. Whether it is eliminating all solid food or just sticking to fruits and vegetables, people are encouraged to choose a detox diet that sticks mainly to liquids.

Different kinds of detox diets include “The Master Cleanse,” which is a 10-day-long all liquid diet of lemon juice, maple syrup, and cayenne pepper, juice cleanses, or laxative teas.

Skinny Teatox, a detox tea company, claims its tea aids in weight loss, suppressing appetite, and increasing energy, often showing before and after photos with reviews praising the routine for its weight-loss inducing properties. It sells tea programs ranging from seven to 28 days in which buyers drink the tea twice a day and eat restrictively the rest of the day.

At the end of the program, understandably, there is a noticeable change in the body. However, Dr. Frank Sacks, a professor of cardiovascular disease prevention at the Harvard School of Public Health, claims the process



PIXABAY.COM

Liquid-based diets have become the new health fad, but they may not be the best way for one to diet if he or she wants long term effects.

is neither healthy nor effective in an article from the Boston Globe, saying the weight lost during the diet will typically return once the man or woman starts to eat solid food again.

Participants will feel hungry and weak due to the diet’s low calorie, nutrient-poor regimen. This approach is not a healthy method for permanent weight loss. In the end, participants end up gaining back the weight loss and have gone through a grueling process for nothing, according to WebMD.

If flushing out toxins is the goal of this type of diet, WebMD says the body naturally does this, and no change in diet would increase its ability to do so.

“What are such toxins? What makes someone think that a short ‘treatment’ period of anything will rid the body of various problem molecules whatever they may be?” Sacks said.

However, if weight loss is the goal, there are healthier alternatives than all liquid diets, Lisa Lewtan, a health coach from Weston, said.

Limiting sugary, processed, high-fat foods and replacing it with vegetables, protein, fruit, and water is a more effective and healthy form of detox for the body, Lewtan said, and the cleanses encouraged by detox diets are nothing more than a more difficult way of improving the nutritional quality of one’s diet.

Students debate in March Madness-inspired tournament

By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Debate students participated in March Madness, a spring event in which they debate almost all of the resolutions they have studied over the year, as well as one new topic, for the fifth year in a row.

This spring the unique topic is “Resolved: On balance, since 2010, Kendrick Lamar is the most influential artist.” March Madness is one to two months long. The partnered pairs, debate other teams randomly.

Eventually teams start to get eliminated until there is a winning team, which this year was senior Oscar Heanue; he went maverick, which means he debated alone, and beat sophomore Kevin Albertazzi and freshman August Kahle in the final round.

Debate teacher Jessica Tran said, “I like March Madness because it is an opportunity for the students to review all of the content that we have talked about throughout the year.”

As well as remembering the past resolutions, the students, especially the novices, can greatly benefit from March Madness. They are paired with a varsity debater who they debate with as partners, so they can learn new



EMILY CLARK PHOTO

Sophomores Nina Williams and Maggy Delisio participate in a round of debate to see who will move on in March Madness.

skills and methods Tran said.

“It is a bonding experience because we purposely put together novices and experienced debaters, which is like an extension to the mentoring that we have done throughout the year,” she said.

Senior Emmett Strack agreed with Tran on the benefits of March Madness.

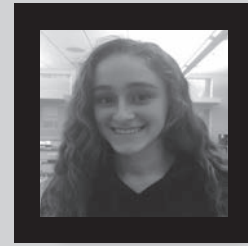
“March Madness highlights what’s fun about debating. It’s a carefree environment in which the students can focus on the fundamentals of debate rather than simply aiming to win the round,” he said.

Sophomore Nina Williams

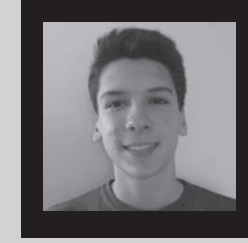
said the event is a fun way to debate and practice for the end of the year.

“It is a positive and fun activity because it draws in the culture of the current basketball tournament. We learn something as students that we are really interested in learning,” she said.

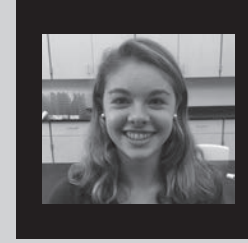
According to Tran, this year’s March Madness went well, like past years, but she is unsure if debate will participate in it in upcoming years. The department is still figuring out the Evidence Based Argumentation class format for next year, but she likes the tradition of having this way to end the debate year.



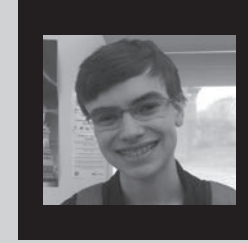
Freshman Lena Brzezinski:
“Putting soap on door handles so nobody can open them.”



Freshman Will Janowicz:
“Starting a food fight in the cafeteria.”



Sophomore Chanel Bullock:
“Putting a bucket of water over a door so when someone opens it, water falls on their head.”



Sophomore Kevin Albertazzi:
“When you put shaving cream in someone’s hand and then tickle their nose so it gets all over their face.”

Student Speak

What is the best April Fools’ prank?

Junior

Bridgett Kiernan:
“Putting a hair band around a faucet, so it splashes everywhere when someone turns it on.”



Junior

Mac McCoy:
“Toothpaste in Oreos and then putting them out for people to eat.”



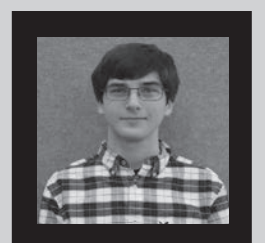
Senior

Susie Buck:
“Putting a cow on the third floor of the school so they can’t get it down the stairs.”



Senior

Jarrold Young:
“Putting a stapler in Jell-O.”





Apple releases new iPhone SE in stores to global market

By Courtney Fraser
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Apple's announcement of their new iPhone product, the iPhone SE, has recently been in stores for hungry consumers.

On March 21, the tech world awaited news about the iPhone SE and what new features it has that sets it apart from other iPhone products.

The device has been in stores since March 24, selling at a price of \$399.

"Similar in size to that of the iPhone 5, the smartphone sacrifices little in its lithe design. Its lightning fast A9 processor packs a powerful punch in just a four-inch package, as does its micro coprocessor," April Siese of the Bustle said.

The iPhone SE, too, has a powerful front and back-facing camera similar to that of the iPhone 6, according to Siese.

For those who struggle with draining battery power, this new Apple product may be the ideal fix.

Scott Stein, a writer for CNET, reviewed the

many perks of this new iPhone and how it compares to the iPhone 6S.



APPLE.COM

Apple recently released the new iPhone SE, which features longer battery life, better web browsing, and similarities to the iPhone 5.

"Battery life, according to Apple, is better than the iPhone 6S: in particular, better Web-browsing time (12-13 hours versus 10-11 on 6S) and video playback (13 hours versus 11)," Stein said.

Despite the products smaller sized screen, positive reviews

were released from the public.

"The old design is still attractive – self-contained, and maybe even easier to hold than the newer,

curvier iPhone designs. It feels, mostly, like I got some magi-

cian engineer to gut and upgrade my old phone to premium processing," Stein said.

The iPhone SE has been undoubtedly compared to the iPhone 5S in several ways. The two are almost exact replicas of one another, visually speaking.

According to Lauren Goode of The Verge, "The only differences, aesthetically-speaking, between the iPhone 5s and the iPhone SE are the abovementioned colors, the matte edges, and that the Apple logo on the back is color-matched stainless steel."

Following the release of the iPhone SE will be of the iPhone 7 on September 9, according to Apple. The price of the iPhone 7 is to be determined.

The iPhone SE has a powerful front and back-facing camera similar to that of the iPhone 6, according to Siese.



SARAH WILLIAMS PHOTO

Find misplaced valuables on bulletin in main office

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Items often slip through the fray of people's memories when they lose something, so to combat this issue, the main office installed a bulletin board to showcase which items need reclaiming.

On the pin board located on the left wall when one enters the office, for the past four years, valuables such as neck-

laces, pins, earrings, and rings adorn the otherwise empty wall.

There has even been an instance when the board held keys that would seemingly be necessary to get back but are never reclaimed. As well, watches will at times be put on the board to be found as well.

The board was originally started in an effort to simply organize lost jewelry that custodians found when clean-

ing the school in the evening.

When they did find a lost item, they put it on Mary Lumsden's desk to be put on the board in the morning.

English teacher Alison Krause proved to be an example of the board's usefulness when she lost one earring and it was found on the board by her mother later on.

"It is helpful sometimes and can lead to some happy endings," Lumsden said.

STUDENT Bobby Beardsley PROFILE



By Lydia Parker
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Describe the perfect day.

A warm day when I don't have to do anything in particular and have no set plans.

If you could see any band or artist in concert, who would it be?

Jimi Hendrix because he is the best guitar player.

What are your plans for the summer?

Playing football and going to New Hampshire.

What's your dream job?

Engineer

What's the funniest moment you've ever experienced?

My sister tickled me until I threw up on her.

What's your pet peeve?

Loud sniffing

What's your favorite movie?

"Hot Rod"

What's something that not everyone knows about you?

I am very scared of horses.

What's your best quality?

I'm decently funny.

If you could travel anywhere where would you go?

Hawaii

If you could be any celebrity for a day, who would you be and why?

Bill Gates, just to be able to do whatever I wanted.

What's your favorite sport to play and what is your favorite sport to watch?

My favorite sport to play is lacrosse, and my favorite sport to watch is football.

Would you rather travel forward or back in time?

Backwards



CHARLIE DAVIS PHOTO

Senior Connor Senay proposed to senior Lydia Parker by pretending his car had been broken into.



COURTESY OF JENNY BEARDSLEY

Senior Henry Rohner proposed to junior Ciara Lyne by making a scavenger hunt to spell out “prom.”



COURTESY OF ABBEY ROUNDY

Senior Nick Warren proposed to junior Phoebe Savje in the high school parking lot after school.



COURTESY OF DENISE GRAVES

Senior Brad Graves proposed to senior Maddie Shaw by writing a note inside an Easter egg.

Students begin ‘promposing’ as prom season approaches

Upperclassmen find creative ways to ask dates to prom

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With prom looming closer, students have executed their “promposals,” finding creative ways to ask classmates to prom.

Senior Nick Warren asked junior Phoebe Savje in the parking lot after school by writing the

invitation on his chest.

“After school I walked outside, and he was waiting at Abbey’s car for me. Then he ripped off his shirt and it said ‘Prom?’ on his chest,” Savje said. “I thought it was actually really funny because it’s something he would do, and I was happy that he surprised me.”

Senior Brad Graves used an Easter egg hunt to ask fellow senior Maddie Shaw.

“We were doing an Eas-

ter egg hunt, and I eventually opened up one egg that just had a slip of paper in it that said, ‘Prom?’ on it,” Shaw said. “I was completely surprised and was really glad he asked me.”

Senior Connor Senay took a more radical approach, according to senior Lydia Parker, pretending his car was broken into and writing his proposal on a brick.

“It was actually Oscar’s idea, but I thought it was a really good

idea, and he told me to take it, so I did,” Senay said.

“It was really elaborate, and car alarms were going off the whole time,” Parker said. “I thought it was really clever.”

Senior Alex Beckmann kept it simple, according to senior Charlotte Freed, when asking her.

“Arden asked me to get coffee after her lax practice, so I stayed after school, but it turns out Arden just wanted to make sure I was at the school. He came

with flowers and a sign and asked me,” Freed said.

Senior Henry Rohner took an elaborate approach, creating a scavenger hunt to ask junior Ciara Lyne, according to Lyne.

“I went to breakfast with my friend and saw the letter, ‘P,’ and each clue sent me to different places with a different letter each time, spelling out, ‘PROM,’” she said. “The last clue was Henry standing there with flowers and the last letter.”

Ability to play sports outside of school allows students increased flexibility

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Instead of having juniors and seniors participate in a gym class or a school sport, the school allows them to play a sport outside of school to compensate.

Most students who chose to play an outside sport mention increased flexibility and the fact that they had played the sport for many years in their decision.

Junior Nellie Boling participates in a fencing club run out of Waring School’s gym.

“I’ve been fencing since I was in seventh grade and spend about three hours twice a week at practice,” she said.

If students want to use an outside sport as a substitute for a school sport or gym class, they must participate in their chosen sport for 40 hours per year, according to a handout from the guidance department.

Furthermore, she said, “If I played a school sport, I probably wouldn’t get as much sleep.

I have a fair amount of work to do ... [and] I just wouldn’t have time anymore. It would be a bit stressful.”

Junior Annabelle Haskell said she has been figure skating since she was 5 years old and spends four hours per week, year round, at rinks in Newburyport and Gloucester.

“It was more convenient for me, how I can [skate] on weekends and on my own time,” she said.

However, Haskell pointed out that she misses the group aspect of a school sport, both because figure skating is individual and because her program is not run through the school. “The whole team aspect, including meeting people in the school, is missing,” she said.

In addition to juniors and

seniors who use outside sports in order to forgo school sports or a gym class, freshmen and sophomores play outside sports as well and plan to continue playing them as juniors and seniors in order to increase the flexibility in their schedules.

Sophomore Rebecca Braimon has been riding horses three times per week for 10 years at Ascot Center in Ipswich. In addition to more time and flexibility in

her schedule, she also says she doesn’t have to “worry about the [commitment]” of specific times and dates of games and practices.

“I have never been a fan of PE in school, so I will for sure be using riding as my exercise [next year] in addition to something like a yoga class,” she said.

‘If I played a school sport, I probably wouldn’t get as much sleep.’

-NELLIE BOLING



AMBER PARÉ PHOTO

Junior Annabelle Haskell participates in figure skating outside of school to meet the fitness requirement.



EZ Vegetarian Chili

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEITH GRAY

Ingredients:

- 1 medium Onion
 - Variety of canned Beans (choose what you like) you will need 5-6 cans
Kidney Beans, Black Beans, Fiesta Beans (for spice), Black Eyed Peas, Chick Peas
 - Spices to taste
Salt, Pepper, Cayenne
 - Salsa
 - Veggie Crumblers
 - Bag of Frozen Corn
 - Butter / Olive oil
 - Sugar
- 1) Cut up one medium onion.
 - 2) In a sauté pan, melt 1 tbs. of butter or heat an equal amount of olive oil. Place onions into pan and sprinkle 1 tsp. of sugar on the onions. Sauté until the onions are transparent. Now add one bag of frozen Veggie Crumblers into the pan with the onions, and heat until they are thawed (they will look like cooked hamburger). Remove from heat.
 - 3) In a large sauce pan, put in all of the cans of beans. If you want thicker chili, you can drain some of the liquid out of the can before you add it to them. Add frozen corn. Once the ingredients are up to low heat, add the onion/Crumbler mix to the pot. Test flavor at this point for the spices. Add them to taste. Add salsa if you want some additional flavor.
 - 4) Bring to a low boil, and then reduce to a simmer for 30 min.
- Enjoy!

Nantucket Tomato Soup



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIA BURGESS

Wash and chop the following:

- 1 eggplant (do not remove skin)
- 1 seeded red pepper
- 1 seeded green pepper
- 3 carrots
- 1 onion
- 6-8 ripe plum tomatoes

Add:

- 8 lg. cloves garlic, peeled but not chopped

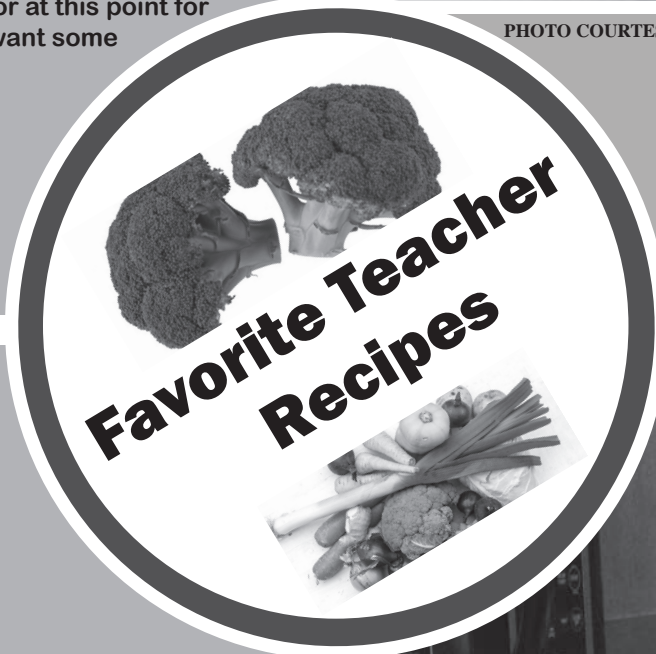
Place all vegetables and garlic on large baking sheet. Toss with extra-virgin olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Roast in 350 oven for 45 min., until soft.

In food processor with large blade, or using immersion blender:

Pulse 1 – 28 oz. can plum tomatoes with juice until smooth. Add roasted vegetables, and pulse 3-5 times, or until veggies are chopped but chunky. You can process more if you prefer a more uniform, smoother soup. Simmer over medium heat until bubbling.

Add 1-3 lg. tablespoons of prepared Pesto, or to taste
Add 2 cups chicken broth.
Thin with more chicken broth, if you prefer a thinner soup.

Simmer until heated through, about 15 min over medium heat. Stir occasionally. Serve hot. Great sprinkled with parmesan cheese.



Lasagna al Forno

Recipe courtesy of Tyler Florence

Yield:
12 servings

Ingredients:

- 1 pound dried lasagna noodles
- Olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh basil, chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 pound ground Italian sausage
- 6 ounces tomato paste, (1 can)
- 30 ounces ricotta cheese, (2 containers)
- 1/4 cup Italian flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh oregano, chopped
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 4 cups tomato sauce, prepared
- 1 pound mozzarella cheese, shredded
- Grated Parmesan and mozzarella, for topping

Directions

Cook the lasagna noodles in plenty of boiling salted water until pliable and barely tender, about 10 minutes. Stir with a wooden spoon to prevent sticking. Drain the noodles thoroughly, coat with olive oil keep them moist and easy to work with.

Coat a large skillet with olive oil. Saute over medium heat, onion, garlic and herbs. Cook 5 minutes. Brown beef and sausage until no longer pink, about 15 minutes. Drain fat into a small container and discard. Stir in the tomato paste completely. Set aside to cool.

In a mixing bowl, combine ricotta, parsley and oregano. Stir in beaten eggs. Add Parmesan, season with salt and pepper.

To assemble the lasagna: Coat the bottom of a 13 by 9-inch pan with a ladle full of tomato sauce. Arrange 4 noodles lengthwise in a slightly overlapping layer on the sauce. Then, line each end of the pan with a lasagna noodle. This forms a collar that holds in the corners. Spread 1/2 of the meat mixture over the pasta. Dollop 1/2 of the ricotta mixture over the meat, spread to the edges with a spatula. Sprinkle 1/2 of the mozzarella on top of the ricotta. Top with a ladle full of tomato sauce, spread evenly. Repeat with the next layer of noodles, meat, cheeses and sauce. Top last layer with noodles, sauce and shredded mozzarella and Parmesan. Tap the pan to force out air bubbles. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 1 hour. Remove from oven. Let lasagna rest for 30 minutes so the noodles will settle and cut easily. Cut into 2-inch squares and serve.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MICHELLE MAGANA

Prom Traditions

Is the idea of boys asking girls to prom sexist?

Pro
Lydia Parker

As prom season approaches, many high school students are beginning to think about what to wear, and for many, whom to attend the event with. Though it is not a written rule that prom is a dates-only event, societal pressure and traditions typically dictate otherwise. Each year, teenagers experience stress and pressure to find a date to prom.

Equally prevailing in tradition is the unwritten social rule that boys ask girls to prom. Though it is perfectly acceptable and even with events like Sadie Hawkins dances where girls are encouraged to ask boys to prom, the vast majority of “promposals” consist of a boy asking a girl.

In a time when women are encouraged to take control and not wait for men to be the assertive ones, the tradition of boys asking girls to prom is sexist and outdated.

As a society, we argue for gender equality and the end to male-dominated traditions, yet prom remains one of the most stereotypical and gender-biased high school events.

Many girls find themselves obsessing over who will ask them, though they could take alternate routes, such as asking a date themselves or attending with a group of friends. This is due to the long standing belief that it is the boy’s job to ask the girl and the girl’s job to await the “promposal.”

The tradition of boy-girl prom dates calls into attention the fact that students may not even fit into the straight stereotype to begin with and may wish to bring his or her significant other of the same gender.

Girls can be labeled as pushy for being the ones to ask their dates to prom. Society can even label this role reversal as emasculating to boys. This belief is ridiculous, and it should not fall solely on the shoulders of boys to ask their significant others or peers to prom.

It’s unfair to demand that all boys cease asking girls to prom and that only girls be the ones to do the asking, as this would defeat the purpose of gender equality at prom. Instead, school communities and the students themselves should remove the negative connotations that surround girls asking whomever they choose to prom.

If girls could feel more empowered to take control and ask a person of their choice to prom, it could be a more enjoyable and lower stress event for everyone.

Con
Charlie Davis

Prom has been a popular American event since the 1930s, a time when social norms and customs were much stricter.

In the mid-1900s, males were typecast into dominant roles and females into more stereotypical, submissive roles. Men were supposed to be the strong figures in the workplace and in relationships. As a result, boys would always ask girls to prom.

Undeniably, this practice was sexist based off of the reasoning behind it. However, in 2016, social progress has left women with far more social freedom; behavior that is acceptable and normal now would have been denounced 80 years ago.

This is not to say that women don’t still deserve more equal treatment even after such progress, but especially in the school setting, they are given the same opportunities as men.

It is still true, however, that boys are predominantly the ones who ask girls to prom. This begs the question of whether or not this trend is still sexist.

Since there is not the same incredibly strong social pressure for boys to ask girls as there was when prom started, the formerly sexist tradition is simply waiting to be broken.

At the high school, there have been a handful of girls who have asked boys in the past few years, and there has been no public backlash against these girls or their actions.

Thus, sexism and stereotyping no longer drive the trend of more boys asking girls than girls asking boys; rather, it is a matter of girls being willing to step outside the comfort zone of being asked by boys.

Sexist barriers have been broken, but the actuality of girls asking boys to prom simply needs to catch up with the opportunity.

For example, women were not allowed to run the Boston marathon as late as 1947, but even after they were allowed to participate, it took a long time for the number of female runners to come close to the number of male runners.

The more girls who ask boys to prom, the more comfortable girls will be in the future if they feel the need to take control of their own prom experience.



ETHAN ANDERSEN ILLUSTRATION

Online streaming services offer equivalent programming to cable TV

Cutting cable slashes costs for television viewers each month

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Netflix and other online streaming services are taking over the world of television, becoming the primary way that many viewers watch their favorite shows.

With the click of a button, viewers are given the liberty to pick and choose exactly what they would like to watch and when they would like to watch it.

Viewers are given the liberty to pick and choose exactly what they would like to watch and when they would like to watch it.

Cable television lacks this feature because the options of what to watch are limited to what is currently being aired. Furthermore, the program options are endless on online

streaming sites. Websites such as Netflix, HBO, and Hulu are growing daily with new shows being added to their collection.

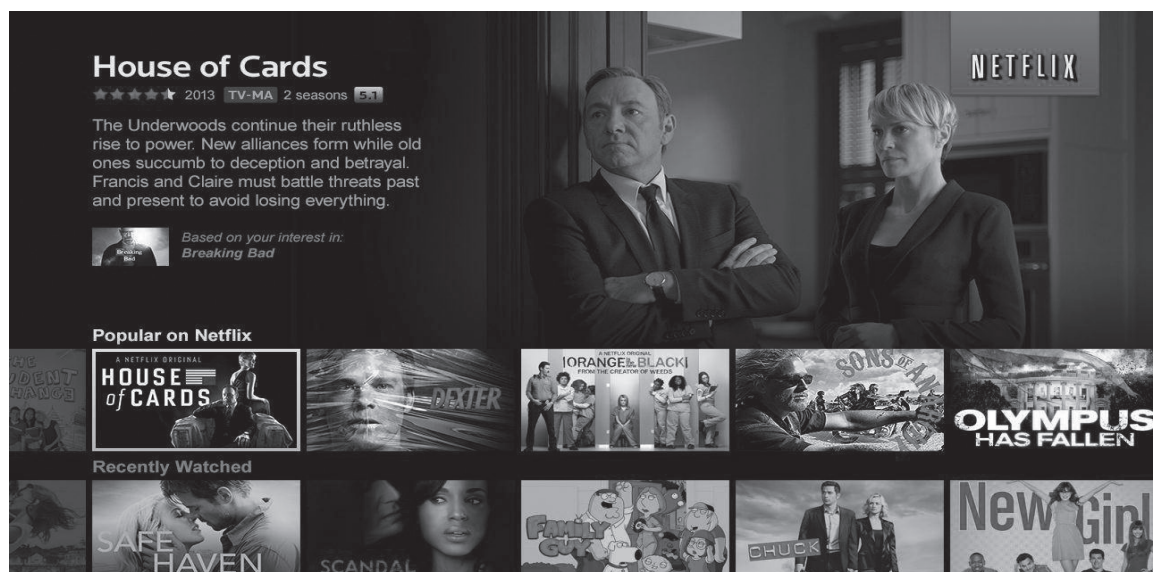
Not only are most programs accessible on these online services, there are also many programs that are exclusively aired online, making it impossible to view if you only have cable television.

Cable television is becoming a thing of the past; however, there are a few benefits that cable television has that online streaming can’t compare to.

For true sports fans, cable television is the most reliable and enjoyable method of watching live games.

Sports aficionados can’t bear to miss a game, so relying on spotty Internet connection and glitchy streaming is nothing they are willing to put up with.

Networks have recently been



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

“House of Cards” is just one of the numerous television shows Netflix has to offer. From shows exclusively aired on Netflix to a whole catalogue of movies, streaming services increase user access.

feeding money into sports television, adding features such as dual screens as well as commentary and statistical information, making the cable watching experience far superior from anything accessible online.

Live airings are the most significant loss, and if households are willing to sacrifice that, then switching to live streaming is a cost-effective choice.

A study done by the Federal Communications Commission showed that the average American pays around \$65 a month for the most popular cable package in the country.

In comparison, if a family spends \$9.99 a month for a Netflix account, \$7.99 a month for a Hulu subscription, and \$14.99 a month to stream HBO now, the cost lands to be around \$33 a month.

Most families are paying that monthly cost alongside of the additional costs of Netflix and other streaming sites.

Making the switch would save television viewers hundreds of dollars each year without any drastic change in their lifestyles.



I'll miss high school... with the exception of a few aspects

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As third quarter comes to a close, so does my senior year of high school...or so I initially thought. AP classes are keeping me here for an extra month, but since this is my last newspaper issue, I'll dedicate this month's column to aspects of the school I do not have an ounce of sorrow leaving behind.

To begin, I'm not tearing up at the thought of walking through the halls without sixth-graders crashing into me like bumper cars as they sprint to the cafeteria. Being first in line at lunch is a critical skill in life, guys!

Even limited contact with middle school students can be aggravating, but at the same time, it's hard not to think back and realize that I once behaved in the exact same manner, full of energy and having an overly positive outlook on life.

Additionally, nothing positive ever comes out of awkward eye contact in the hallway. Honestly, can my teachers and I just be on a first name basis? We've known each other for almost FOUR YEARS. Can't I just say "Sup, Jenny Coleman?" once in a while?

Mornings are an absolute pain in the neck. Late passes will be the death of me; I'm not getting up any earlier to change this, and the bell schedule isn't changing, so there's only one possible outcome. Sure, it is 7:45:01, but is it really that gratifying for you to send me to the main office to get a pass and miss at least three minutes of class? I think not, but suit yourself.

Lunch time rolls around later in the morning, which is an atrocity. 10:39 is not an acceptable time to eat lunch considering I eat breakfast later than this on most weekends. My eating schedule is ruined during the school year, and although third lunch has much better timing, lunch should be at noon at the earliest.

Anyway, I'm happy to be escaping before the new schedule brings this school to its downfall. I have no idea how the rotation will work. Power blocks that last 45 minutes and consume students' time for an extra study hall limit freedom and may force students to take an extra class in order to fill the additional class requirement. Whatever the outcome is, I send my best wishes to the lower classes. Enjoy!

STAFF EDITORIAL

Speakers for school-wide assemblies must be screened

School-wide assemblies have the potential to deliver strong messages, but sometimes those messages are too strong. Speakers need to be better screened before coming to the school.

Recent presentations involved dark themes and seemingly tried to alert students to the dangers of the outside world.

In March, the advocate for Lucy's Love Bus seemed to stray from her message and instead of promoting her cause, tried to make students and faculty feel bad for their "white privilege."

Rachel's Challenge was supposed to promote kindness, but instead led to confusion as students wondered why the speaker went on rants, trying to link Anne Frank with Columbine.

These emotional assemblies have received mixed reactions from students and, in some cases, have gone too far. Students are not the only upset body.

Principal Patricia Puglisi



ETHAN ANDERSEN PHOTO

In order for assemblies to be effective and have lasting impacts on the school, their content must be interesting to the student body.

also said she wants to improve organized presentations.

Additionally, Puglisi said that she is not a fan of school-wide assemblies in the first place, explaining that they tend to not be very effective at making change.

"I'd rather have assemblies focused on curriculum or a certain group's specific needs. That

is a better use of time, especially when the kids can make an instant connection," she said.

Previously, assemblies were not discussed past whether or not the idea had potential to be beneficial. The speaker usually was not spoken to by the principal beforehand. Puglisi intends to change that.

SeaWorld deserves recognition for recent decision regarding orcas

Ending of breeding programs will only prove to be beneficial

By Amber Paré
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following public outcry due to the 2013 documentary "Blackfish," SeaWorld executives released an announcement on March 17 saying it will end its orca breeding programs, a commendable action and step in the right direction for the theme park.

According to National Geographic writer Tim Zimmerman, who worked on the film "Blackfish" and has written about marine mammal captivity since 2010, the announcement of the ending of the park's breeding was an expected change.

This is because the announcement came just eight

days after it became public that Tilikum, the notorious orca responsible for a total of three human deaths, was dying of a lung infection. Tilikum's sickness fueled even more backlash coming from animal rights activists who were upset following the release of "Blackfish."

According to Ameena Schelling, writer for the animal rights news website The Dodo, Tilikum's condition is likely due to stress and poor living conditions. In fact, Tilikum's daughter Unna died earlier this year due to an infection as a result of poor treatment.

It is both inhumane and hypocritical for an organization that claims to protect animals to subject the orcas in its care to an environment so harsh that it leads to disease and death, indicating that current conditions at SeaWorld must change.

The ending of these breeding programs can only prove to be beneficial on the whole now that SeaWorld has recognized that it must change the way it cares for animals in order to better protect them.

Despite activists from organizations such as PETA insisting that the orcas should be immediately released back into the wild, SeaWorld has decided to keep the whales in its care and transform their habitats into more "natural environments," another beneficial decision that is more reasonable than PETA's demands.

Most of the whales currently in the care of SeaWorld have been raised in captivity and

"I will be working with the School Council to develop a protocol in the future and whether or not I should be seeing all the speakers before they come to the school," she said.

A pattern among assemblies is their scare factor or reliance on sympathy. This does not resonate with students.

If assemblies are to become influential, they must be more appealing to students. Most often, students think about the content discussed for about a week and then forget about it.

Assemblies can be great vessels for information, take, for example, ex-Celtics player Chris Herren, whose presentation about his recovery from substance abuse left a lasting imprint among the student body.

When an assembly is properly planned, it can be effective. The content students see needs to be better censored and catered towards the student body.

SeaWorld has recognized that it must change the way it cares for animals in order to protect them.

the current living conditions of the whales while still giving them the protection and veterinary care they need.

SeaWorld's actions demonstrate the organization's willingness to change for

the better in order to best fulfill its goal of protecting endangered species.

Although the public may not be completely willing to forgive SeaWorld for its previous treatment of orcas, its current actions are a step in the right direction and should be applauded.

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.

Senior skip day requires effective punishment

Clear consequences would discourage students from participating in collective day off

By Julia Bonaccorso
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

When 65% of seniors are purposely absent one day, administrators and faculty have the right to be upset; however, their failure to inform students of the consequences of a skip day has made impossible for them to implement a punishment.

Though a senior skip day hadn't happened for a few years before this most recent one, administrators should expect such a day regardless and prepare accordingly.

At the beginning of the school year, it would have been smart for the school to have taken five minutes and decided on a punishment, whether it be taking away a day of Senior Week or retract-

ing a senior privilege, that would prevent students from skipping school.

Informing the seniors of the consequences early on would've erased the temptation before any trouble could have occurred.

However, since no such information was actually shared, the administration could not punish the class.

Instead, the class was let off with merely a warning which clearly hasn't deterred seniors from pulling equally risky and destructive pranks.

This not only makes the school appear as if it has no authority over students, or simply just doesn't care about students' actions, but it also sets a terrible example for the rising seniors.

Students go through two factors before participating in bad behavior. (1) Has someone else done this before me and gotten away with it? and (2) Can I get away with it too?

For the current junior class, the answer to both of these questions



CRISTOPHERSESSUMS/FLICKR.COM

65% of seniors skipped school on the same day this year, which administrators could have prevented.

is yes.

Since they have watched their older classmates get away with a senior skip day scot free, the

younger class has therefore developed the mindset that they can do the same.

Recognizing this risk, the

administration would be wise to take the necessary precautions to prevent a skip day in upcoming years.

Student evaluations of teachers would improve education

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In most schools, students are given grades on their academic performance, but because that often relies on their teachers, students should be able to evaluate their teachers.

According to a New York Times article, schools are increasingly using standardized testing scores to evaluate teachers. This, however, is innately flawed because not all students perform well on tests, and important aspects of a classroom, such as the teacher's behavior, do not directly come through on tests.

Students often feel uncomfortable approaching teachers with their feedback for fear of backlash, so an anonymous form would be beneficial in addressing problems that would otherwise go unnoticed.

According to the article, a

start-up company called Panorama Education has started to collaborate with charter schools to distribute evaluation forms as well as interpret the data.

One teacher, Leila Campbell, who was quoted in the article, said that the survey "indicated that her students did not believe she was connecting with them," an issue she said she was unaware of. She said she was grateful for the notice.

The evaluation must be school-wide, school-mandated, and anonymous.

Students must provide constructive feedback. They cannot unfavorably evaluate a teacher just because they got a bad grade.

In an article for The Atlantic,

Amanda Ripley, that advocates for teacher evaluation by students, writes that "study after study has shown that [teaching quality] matters more than anything else in a school."

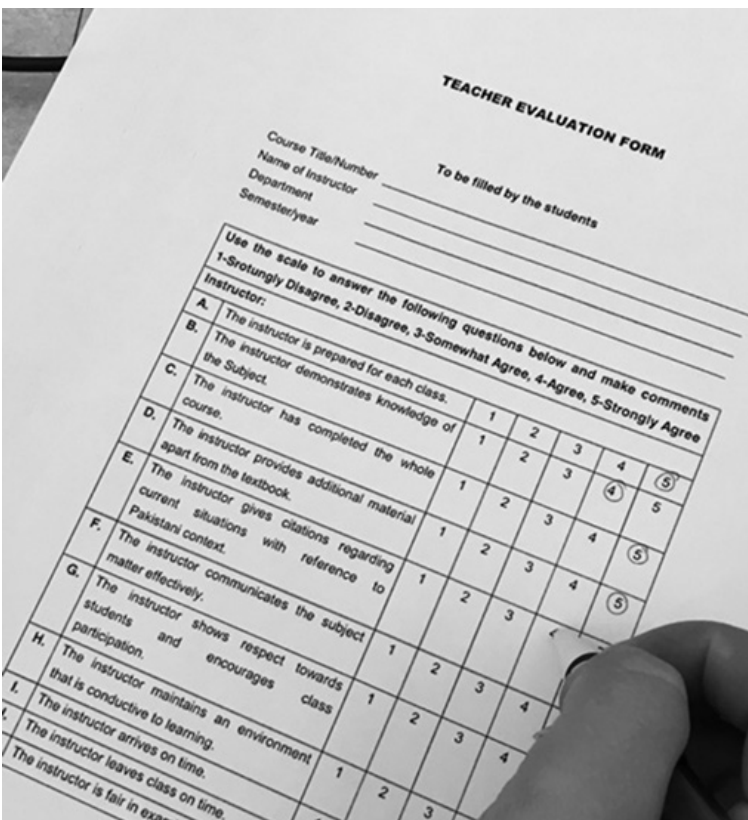
The article backed up the inaccuracy of test scores as an indicator of teacher performance,

saying, "Test scores can reveal when kids are not learning; they can't reveal why. They can't help teachers improve."

Principal Patricia Puglisi said the school's former principal, Jim Lee, sent out a form that teachers could use with their students. She added that some teachers still use this form.

"It's a great practice, as students really are the ones who know if a teacher is meeting their needs or not," she said.

Students often feel uncomfortable approaching their teachers with feedback.



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

Student surveys could provide constructive criticism for teachers.

Publicized criticisms of Trump actually increase support from his followers

By James Riordan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Despite being one of the most polarizing presidential candidates in recent history, Donald Trump's negative media portrayal needs to be stopped if people truly want him to lose the race.

Logic would dictate that hours and hours of negative press on an individual would make him or her less popular, but the opposite is true in the case of Trump. It seems like he keeps going up in the polls while news outlets are criticizing his every move.

Satirical shows, such as John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight," have used their airtime to address Trump's candidacy and

poke fun at him.

The polls, however, indicate that these programs did not weaken his popularity and have actually had the reverse effect. He has all but locked up the Republican nomination, and his sights are set on the general election this fall.

Why is this the case? How is his popularity still on the rise? Many cite the famous "backfire effect," which could offer an explanation for this phenomenon.

This effect states that an in-

dividual's opinion on a subject will grow stronger despite being

presented with evidence that would promote the exact opposite view. People can be too prideful to realize that they might be wrong, and their prior beliefs are only reinforced after being

shown new evidence.

The backfire effect is clearly at work in Trump's case.

The backfire effect can be extremely powerful, and the distinction between a stance borne

Satirical shows, such as John Oliver's "Last Week Tonight," have used their airtime to address Trump's candidacy and poke fun at him.



GAGESKIDMORE/COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

The extra attention that Trump gets in the media, even if it is critical of him, ends up making him more popular among voters.

from the facts and a stance based on a strong personal bias can be difficult to make.

Negative media coverage of Trump just increases the defiant opinion of his followers, and

spreads knowledge about his campaign.

Although media outlets think they are hurting Trump's ability to win upcoming elections, they are doing the opposite.

Despite poor weather, girls' tennis still starts off strong

Practicing indoors allows girls to prepare for matches against important rivals

By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT STAFF

The girls' tennis team started off the season facing difficulties with practice time due to weather, but the girls are looking strong, according to the coach Ken Rawson.

The predicted lineup this season will be sophomore Chanel Bullock as the first singles, freshman Christina Bullock as second singles, freshman Sophia Schatz as third singles, eighth-grader Bridget Miller and freshman August Kahle as first doubles, and seventh-grader Courtney Deliker and eighth-grader Page Swanson as second doubles.

The team had a match scheduled for Mon., April 4, and Thurs., April 7, but both were cancelled due to rain. Along with these cancellations, many practices have been moved or cancelled due to rain as well.

"We don't get access to the

gym, but we have been over to the Manchester Athletic Club four times. We also have some work that can be done in the classroom," Rawson said.

According to him, there are some valuable lessons that he thinks the girls should learn at some point in their career in the classroom, such as watching professionals play in order to understand their techniques.

Although there are indoor options for the tennis team, it is dis-

appointing to miss some of the practice the girls would get from these pre-season games, he said.

Despite the lack of practice time, Rawson could see the dedi-

cation some girls have put in outside of school and is pleased.

"We have a number of girls who have gone indoors to train like at the Manchester Athletic Club over the winter, and that is very helpful in starting the season quicker. We don't get on the courts right away due to weather, so the girls who have put time in are ahead," he said.

Besides past efforts the girls have made for this season, Rawson was excited and pleased with the talent he saw on the first days of practice.

"I would say we have a great deal of talent this year, and we have around 25 girls who have stuck with it. The only other side to that coin, however,

'We don't get on the courts right away due to weather, so the girls who have put time in are ahead.'

-KEN RAWSON



EMILY CLARK PHOTO

Junior Sally Pulver practices at the Manchester Athletic Club. The team has been practicing indoors due to the weather.

is that many of these players are young," he said.

Captain sophomore Chanel Bullock agreed with Rawson that the team has talent.

"I was surprised to see so

many players with strong skills this season. Even though they are so young, I believe they can be a strong asset to the team against the older competitors," she said.

Boys' tennis to face strong opposition in opening matches

By James Riordan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After starting off the season with tough league matchups, the boys' tennis team suffered an early loss. According to the captains, however, they have played well.

"We have a lot of fight in us. We played three competitive matches against tough opponents and showed we can compete with the best," said junior Dewey Komishane.

The team was supposed to begin the season with an away match against Marblehead, but the contest was postponed due to unplayable weather conditions. Their first actual competition came at the MAC Jamboree with Marblehead, Pentucket, and St. John's Prep on April 8 and 10.

After finishing second to St. John's Prep with a 4-1 loss in the finals, they prepared to face Masconomet at home. The result of the April 11 match was a 3-2 loss.

Senior captain Azzie Economo was not discouraged and said, "We looked good against Masco. They just came out

with the win on that day. I know we can beat them, and I'm sure we'll get them next time we play them."

Head coach Robbie Bilsbury said that their schedule started off with quality opponents, and that "it is nice in that the competitive fire of all the challenge

matches will have us mentally ready to compete and play hard."

While the varsity lineup has been constant so far, Bilsbury said that it will be fluid throughout the spring and is always subject to changes. One surprising point of the preseason is the presence of freshman Hugh Gist. He is currently be-

ing homeschooled, and Bilsbury said that he is a welcomed, valuable addition to the team.

Regarding the jamboree at the Manchester Athletic Club, he said that it was a helpful experience because he could "try different doubles combinations and kind of get an idea of how well

'We showed we can compete with the best.'

-DEWEY KOMISHANE



COURTESY OF ANTONIO GILLESPIE

Junior Dewey Komishane prepares to serve at a practice match.

kids play together."

The preliminary practices have gone well, according to both Bilsbury and the captains, and they said the fitness level is fairly high considering that it is

just the beginning of the season. Bilsbury added that due to the fact the players either participate in other sports or are committed to personal conditioning, fitness is usually not a problem.

Co-op track members hope to see success even with poor running conditions

By Karlie Angelis
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Gloucester Co-op Track is preparing for their meet against rival Marblehead by doing drills



KARLIE ANGELIS PHOTO

Junior Abbey Roundy and Gloucester runner Marlaina Fulmer practice a relay baton handoff in preparation for a meet.

that develop better running form and technique, according to coach Jeffery Destino.

"[Marblehead is] a strong team that will require us to have

our team at full strength," Destino said. "It is a good opportunity for us to go against them this early in the season because I feel we have a good edge on them."

Due to snow, the meet was postponed to a date that is yet to be determined, so Destino continues to prepare for with running drills.

The drills help runners adapt to what their event is, according to sprinter Abbey Roundy, a junior from Manchester Essex. "We use starting blocks during practice like we would in a real sprinting event to practice it like it was the real thing," she said.

'We have been trying to make sure to have fun while at the same time getting some good training in.'

-NATHAN EVANS

Destino also stressed the importance of warm ups before the practice starts. "We do a thorough warm up that helps activate the muscles to be able to work hard at practice," he said.

According to senior Nathan Evans from Manchester Essex, practices are going well. "We have been trying to

make sure to have fun while at the same time getting some good training in," he said.

"We are working hard in the sprints and distance events on both the girls and the boys side," Destino said.

He also stressed the talent that he is seeing in everyday practices. "We are getting some good talent in the field events, especially the boys long jump and girls high jump," he said.

New runners such as Gloucester freshmen Lauren Wood, Leah Rudolph, Mark Smith and Jan Ortiz Pena have caught his eye, and impact runners from Manchester Essex such as Charlie Davis and Nate Evans and Gloucester impact runners Tyler Muensaveng, Jeb Hogan, and Kyle Manley have shown their talent at practices as well, according to Destino.

The kickoff banquet where the captains were to be announced was cancelled due to snow according to Roundy, but the impact runners are all prospective captains.

Girls' lacrosse players, coach have high expectations

Series of early wins for girls' lacrosse team reflects hopes for strong season

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After finding success in pre-season as well as the start to the season, the girls' lacrosse team is expecting the rest of the season to be strong, according to new coach Rebecca Smith.

Before the start of the season, the girls' lacrosse team had won both of their scrimmages against Gloucester 15-0 and 8-6.

"It is great that we have been winning, but I am more impressed by the creativity and the cohesion of the team, and all the parts seem to be coming together really well," Smith said.

The team won its first three games: one against Pingree 16-11, Newburyport 11-10, and Georgetown 16-4.

Junior captain Liddy DeConto said the team has enjoyed Smith's coaching style.

"The drills she has us do are useful. It takes the team a while to ease into them because they

are brand new drills, but they are definitely helping," she said.

The practices have had a focus on conditioning, according to senior captain Bella Mastendino.

"We knew it was going to be a year concentrated on conditioning ever since we were assigned a packet of conditioning to do for preseason. But I don't think it is a bad thing; it's a fast moving sport," she said.

Smith said that the team is made up of a strong combination of new and returning players.

"We have a pretty strong and relatively new attack, but then we have also got a lot of really strong returning defenders. So as a whole unit, the team works really well," she said.

The team has been working on coordinating the offenses and defenses together, according to Smith.

"Usually, you practice the attack, and then you practice the defense separately. The area in between where the ball is



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

Seniors Jenny Cochand and Arden Edgerton and junior Liddy DeConto attempt to block a pass and take back the ball from a Newburyport player. The team won the game 11-10 and is undefeated in its two other games against Georgetown and Pingree, which the team attributes to its cohesiveness.

transitioning is often forgotten. We have been practicing the transition a lot, and hopefully if that improves, we have a good chance of being strong this season," she said.

The team has bonded this year, which it tends to every year, according to DeConto.

"The team morale is awesome. We were close right from the very start, and it's one of my

favorite parts about the lacrosse season. Every year we always get along so well; we are like a family," she said.

Smith said that she appreciates the team's spirit.

Several boys' lacrosse victories hint at more success to come

Boys' lacrosse team boasts three victories against rivals already

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With three victories already under its belt, the boys' lacrosse team is showing signs of a promising season.

The team played its first game against Haverhill on March 29 with a victory of 6-2.

The team also played a second match against Mystic Valley on April 2, winning with a score of 15-4, and a third against Boston Latin on April 9, with a score of 15-2.

"I honestly can't credit [our victories] to anyone in particular; we've been playing so well to-



FRITZ SPOFFORD PHOTO

The boys' lacrosse team has won all three of its games, and due to this early success, coach John McCavanagh has expressed hope that the season will continue in a similar fashion. He, along with his captains, say that this success is due to the team's united spirit.

gether as a team," senior captain Henry Rohner said.

Part of the team's success can be attributed to hard work during

practices, according to coach John McCavanagh.

"The team has not only set their sights high this year with hopes

of reaching the postseason but they have worked hard in the preseason to ensure they achieve their goals," McCavanagh said.

Practices are also indicative of the skills of this year's team members and work well due to the variety of drills used, according to Rohner and fellow senior captain Chris DiFluri.

"This is the best ball movement I've seen since I've been playing," DiFluri said.

"The drills we do vary based on the team we are playing next and what we need to work on specifically as a group, with a little bit of running involved, too."

"We've been doing a lot of six-

on-six and man-up. We practice our plays with the correct personnel so they are much easier to execute in-game," Rohner said. "Unlike other years, we have a set routine we do to get a little energy before we stretch. It really helps to get everyone fired up to play."

'I think such strong wins against these good teams really gives us hope to achieve our goal of going to the tournament.'

-HENRY ROHNER

Both captains remain optimistic about the rest of the season, particularly considering the success the team has seen so far.

"I think such strong wins against these

good teams really gives us hope to achieve our goal of going to the tournament," Rohner said.

"I could not be happier with the boys," McCavanagh said.

Captains, coach encouraged by team's effort in beginning of sailing season

By Juliette Kelley
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Despite a difficult start regarding races this season, the sailing team has been working hard in practice and is very hopeful for more success in the near future, according to coach Kieran O'Connell.

The team's first race was on March 21 against teams from Portsmouth Abbey and Cape Cod Academy. Although the team lost, these other teams are the top two teams in New England, according to O'Connell, and had been practicing in Ireland and Florida preceding the race.

"[We're] encouraged by the fact that we didn't lose terribly against those teams," senior captain Ethan Andersen said. "It's

a good sign that we'll be able to build from that and improve in the coming weeks."

Junior captain Cole Charlton is also hopeful for the upcoming season. "I think later in the season we'll be better matched," he said.

Overall, the team's record this season so far is 2-4, according to Andersen.

Meanwhile, during practices, the team has been practicing racing both downwind and upwind, according to O'Connell. Charlton adds that the team has

practiced boat speed as well.

In addition to outdoor practices, the team has also had a few classroom sessions. "[During these,] we go over strategies and the rules of sailing," Andersen said.

Another focus for the team has been rebuilding after losing a significant amount of seniors last year. "We've been teambuilding and getting used to sailing with each other," Charlton said.

According to O'Connell, the team has three primary skippers: Andersen, Charlton, and junior

Shane Macleod. The team has been trying different crews.

Because the team is a relatively young team, "there's a lot of opportunity for freshmen and sophomores to get into the mix as well," O'Connell said.

Charlton also thought it was a good idea for some of the younger team members to try out various positions. "We have a good starting three, but we need to work on having more skippers for next year when Ethan leaves...and if anyone can't make [a race]," he said.

According to O'Connell, although it has been difficult losing so many impact players the team relied on last year, the team has had successful practices and is off to a great start.



COURTESY OF LAURA HANNAFIN
The sailing team practices at Tuck's Point. Coach Keiran O'Connell says the team has been practicing especially hard to make up for losing seniors.

Ultimate Frisbee team concludes captains' practices, begins season

By Will Heslop
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After two weeks of captains' practices wrapped up, members of the Ultimate Frisbee team are excited to be practicing with head coach Eric Magers and competing against other schools.

While other sports began full practices on March 21, Ultimate was restricted to captains' practice.

According to Magers, the team likes to have a couple of captains' practices as a "trial period" for newcomers to try Ultimate.

Magers led the first official practice on April 5. Their first four scheduled games on April 6-12 were all canceled due to poor weather and field conditions.

Despite not practicing with a coach for the first few weeks,

LaForge likes how the team has been progressing. "Between returning players getting back into the groove and new players getting the hang of things, the team looks to be in great shape to start the season," he said.

Magers is also thrilled with how the first few weeks have gone. He is most encouraged by the sheer number of players that have signed up this year.

[Coach Eric Magers] is most encouraged by the sheer number of players that have signed up this year.

The team has numbers that are "off the charts compared to previous years. We might end up splitting into two teams if we can find enough schools that do the same," Magers said.

According to junior Jake Brugger, the Ultimate team often has also had difficulty finding a place to meet. "Lacrosse, baseball, and softball usually take up the turf fields. We have had practices at Masconomo Park and



WILL HESLOP PHOTO

Lack of a permanent practice area is a common difficulty for the Ultimate Frisbee team but does not affect the team's love of the game; they often practice at Masconomo Park or at the beach.

even the beach," Brugger said.

The difficulty in finding conventional practice conditions does not get in the way of their love for the game, according to Brugger. He explained that it does not matter where they practice as long as they have a

Frisbee to throw around.

Magers also enjoys this aspect of Ultimate. "It is the easiest sport to play. All you need is a couple of guys to get together with a cheap piece of plastic," he said.

Fellow junior Mac McCoy

is also looking forward to the official start of the season. "Although we try to go out and win every game, everybody is just really laid back about everything, which makes the whole season less stressful and more enjoyable," he said.

Baseball team starts season strong with win against Gloucester

By Maura McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



MAURA MCCORMICK PHOTO

The baseball team often practices behind the Essex town hall.

After their 7-0 win in a scrimmage against Gloucester, the baseball team is excited to start playing regular season games, according to senior captain Chris Carr.

Coach James Weed said in their game against Gloucester on March 31 the team looked "very crisp" and he thinks they are already in "mid-season form."

Senior captain Hunter Flood said he thinks their success against Gloucester is a good indicator of the potential that the team has this year.

"We only allowed two hits and played with a lot of heart. I think we are ready to go," he said.

The team also scrimmaged against Salem academy on April 2, which ended in a 2-2 tie, but

the game was cut short due to the rain.

The rain and snow at the beginning of the season has posed a challenge for practices and games. The team has put in a lot of effort to continue practicing through the difficult weather conditions.

"We have gotten a lot of work in at the Sports Plex in Danvers when it rains. It helps us stay ahead," Weed said.

The team also practiced in the gym during the snowstorm on April 4.

In practice, the team has been focusing a lot on fielding and developing plays.

Carr said even though all players have different positions, they still try to be versatile and

practice a variety of drills.

"Each player mainly focuses on drills that are relevant to his position, but we also want to be well-rounded players," he said.

Weed said they have primarily been focusing on detailed infield, outfield, and pitching drills, and trying to become more consistent.

Carr said the team is excited for the upcoming regular season games.

"We are looking forward to getting the season started and hopefully getting some early wins under our belt,"

In practice, the team has been focusing a lot on fielding and developing plays.

he said

In their game against Amesbury on April 11, the team was down early but came back to tie the game with a 5-5 score.

Softball team looks forward to promising season; practices start off strong

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Even though games have barely started, the varsity softball team is proud of their start to the season.

According to Frank Sarro, the team had its first scrimmages on Sat. April 4 after two weeks of regular practices.

"So far, everyone seems very enthusiastic, and if we keep practicing the way we are, I think we'll be able to win some games. I am very positive about this season and the attitude of the girls," he said.

Captains, seniors Isabella Hickey and Molly Lynch, agreed that practices have been going well and there has been a lot of improvement from last season.

According to Sarro, now that the team has been able to prac-

tice outside on a real diamond after having bad weather, the team is looking quite promising.

The team has also becoming good at adjusting to new plays and positions, according to the captains.

"People are very willing to learn with [Sarro's] positive mindset," Hickey said.

According to Lynch, the team is working on improving communication on the field, especially with new positions a new players.

"I'd say it's a rebuilding year, but I think it going to only get stronger," she said.

In terms of specific goals, Sarro is hoping to get more prac-

tice defensively as well as more hitting.

Sarro's coaching style has had a positive impact on the

Sarro's coaching style has had a positive impact on the team and has contributed to their success, according to the captains.

team and has contributed to their success, according to the captains.

"I think people were nervous at the beginning to see where it would go because we've had a

bad track record, but once they realized it was a new year with a new coach, everyone was just super accepting and willing to go all the way," Hickey said.

Sarro and the captains agree that the team is quite cohesive thus far in practices.

"There's a good team chem-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOLLY LYNCH

Softball practices show performance improvement from last year, according to senior captains Isabella Hickey and Molly Lynch.

istry here. The captains are doing really good job leading the team, so I'm really positive and upbeat right now," Sarro said.

The team is looking forward to its upcoming game against

Rockport on April 20 because their coach from last season now coaches for Rockport, and games with Rockport are usually quite competitive, according to the captains.

Band, chorus classes prepare for upcoming spring events

Music students get ready for series of year-end concerts, performances

By Amber Pare
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Members of the band and chorus classes are currently preparing for their spring performances, according to chorus director Donna O'Neill.

For the spring concert on April 14, the chorus prepared a total of four songs, and the band prepared five pieces.

O'Neill said two of the chorus' arrangements, "The Elder Scrolls: SKYRIM" and "The Keel Row," were suggested by students, showing "a great deal of investment."

The school's a cappella group the SoundWaves is preparing for its annual a cappella

night on April 28 that will feature a total of five other schools including Pingree and Salve Regina University, according to O'Neill.

O'Neill said half of the proceeds earned at the performance will go to the Andrew William Rennie Scholarship Fund, which was established last year and will be awarded to a member of the class of 2016.

Junior Axel Fougere, a member of the SoundWaves, said he is looking forward to the a cappella night.

"We have put a lot of work into our rehearsals. Because the a cappella night is the last performance for the seniors, everyone

Both O'Neill and Janack said their students are well-prepared.



Seniors Nathan Evans and Megan Clark practice as a part of the night band program. Under first-year director Joe Janack, the band has prepared five pieces for the spring concert on April 14.



OSCAR HEANUE PHOTO

is hoping to make it a special night," he said.

O'Neill echoed this sentiment. "The seniors' contribution to both the chorus and the SoundWaves for the past four years has been invaluable. I hope it's a great and special night for them," she said.

Band director Joe Janack said the jazz band is rehearsing pieces for a performance on May

16 featuring trumpet player Alex Lee Clark.

At the performance, students will play the first half of the concert, and Clark will play for the second half with his group from Boston, according to Janack.

Members of the jazz band are looking forward to the opportunity to perform with Clark. Janack said they have "adapted extremely well" to new music he

has given them for the performance.

"The kids have all been so great in rehearsals. I have high expectations that are being fulfilled because of their dedication," he said.

Both O'Neill and Janack said their students are well-prepared for all upcoming performances and said they appreciate chorus and band members' dedication.

'Midnight Special' crafts intriguing mystery, wonderful characters

By Zack Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Like the best sci-fi movies with appeal for both children and adults, "Midnight Special" succeeds in creating a feeling of mystery and wonder.

The film, which follows Alton, an 8-year-old with strange abilities, as he flees the government and members of a cult, feels both epic and grounded, drawing from heartfelt Spielberg classics like "E.T." and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" as inspiration.

Director Jeff Nichols ("Mud"), only 38, forgoes exposition in favor of character development and powerful imagery.

As he did with "Take Shelter," Nichols creates as many questions as he answers, making the conscious decision to leave numerous loose ends. As he recently explained in an interview with The Verge, Nichols believes

plot is best used as a tool for emotionally impacting the audience, not as the overall focus of a film.

According to Nichols, his status as a new father helped inspire him to write the film, which shines as the grounded story of a father protecting his son. The added supernatural elements only serve to augment the dramatic heft of the characters' relationships.

Perhaps due to Nichols' unique views on plot, in its final act, "Midnight Special" struggles a bit to live up to the immense mystery it crafts in its first half, tripping over the same pitfall as many other indie sci-fi movies (think "Safety Not Guaranteed"); however, its memorable characters and uniquely grounded story make it well worth the while.

The film offers a talented cast, including Michael Shannon, who has appeared in every one of Nichols' four films, Joel Edgerton, Kirsten Dunst, and Adam Driver, as well as worthy characters for

them to inhabit.

Jaeden Lieberher's portrayal of Alton, who he plays with both vulnerability and otherworldliness, may be the most affecting.

Nichols doesn't split up the film into dull bouts of character development and dynamic action sequences, instead seamlessly combining the two in single scenes.

In one of the tensest moments in the film, Shannon, who plays Alton's father Roy, and Edgerton, his friend Lucas, witness a car crash while trying to remain unseen. The way they each deal with the situation perfectly highlights Roy's devotion to his son and Lucas's loyalty to his friend.

Nichols' talent for combining grandeur and intimacy, explosions and emotions, are on full view in "Midnight Special," foretelling a long and successful career for the young filmmaker.



MIDNIGHTSPECIALMOVIE.COM

Director Jeff Nichols, one of Hollywood's youngest filmmakers, has gained acclaim for his indie sci-fi movie 'Midnight Special.' The film seeks to both visually impress and elicit strong emotion.

Kendrick Lamar surprises with B-side bombshell 'untitled unmastered'

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

When the CEO of Top Dawg Entertainment Anthony Tiffith announced that a new project from the record label would be released the following week, no one expected it to be another Kendrick Lamar project.

Ironically titled "untitled unmastered," this new eight-track album gave fans a deeper look into the raw creative process behind his previous album. Each track is simply "untitled 01-08" with a date accompanying it. As aggravating as this may seem, it allows listeners to enjoy the project for what it is rather than struggle to identify songs to their titles after one listen.

The first track "untitled 01 | 08.19.2014." starts off with a jazzy bassline, soft snare drum rolls, and a crooning, seductive baritone voice. Styles incorporated on "To Pimp a Butterfly" are evident, and although his lyrics and flow are at their peak, the off-kilter beat and lack of catchy hook prevents this song from becoming a hit regardless of its greatness.

"untitled 02 | 06.23.2014." introduces "pimp pimp...hooray!," a narrative line unheard on the previous project but indicating its creation during that time period of recording. Wailing saxophone introduces an ominous, bass-heavy beat, followed by a chorus featuring an unforgettable line of "get God on the phone!" This

easily could have been a hit had it been featured on his last album, but Lamar felt it did not mesh with the intricate storyline.

A three-part heavy hitter, "untitled 07 | 2014-2016" packs a major punch in the first two minutes and 30 seconds as the hype builds around the "levitate levitate levitate" line, slowly lapsing into a solely bass and vocal outro similar to "untitled 04." Each part portrays a different mood and side of Kendrick from his "HiiiPower" lifestyle to his increasing philanthropic nature.

The funk seeps through every crack and flows through the entire melody of "untitled 08 | 09.06.2014." Synthesizer riffs and an upbeat boom-clap to keep this funk machine moving, La-



KENDRICKLAMAR.COM

A year after his album "To Pimp a Butterfly" topped charts, Compton rapper Kendrick Lamar surprised fans with a new project.

mar proves he found success in a world where black Americans often face difficulties financially. While others are seen "walkin' around with them blue faces," he "hit the bank today" for "new money, and it's breakin' me down, honey."

Despite its brevity and lack of concept, "untitled unmastered" still provided fans with never-before-heard material. The project shows the depth of Lamar's repertoire and potential to have impact. What a pleasant surprise, King Kendrick.

Ray LaMontagne delivers most cohesive, least memorable work in 'Ouroboros'

New two-part project introduces different instrumentals while maintaining LaMontagne's signature rural sound, vocal style

By Oscar Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

While storied singer-songwriter Ray LaMontagne may have hit his sales peak with his last album "Supernova," he has shown no signs of letting the success slow his creative growth.

LaMontagne saw consistent radio play in 2014, with the upbeat coffee shop-inspired hits "Supernova" and "Drive in Movies" both placing on the Billboard charts. With his latest project "Ouroboros," however, LaMontagne deviated from the soft rock sound to deliver a crunchy

way disrupts the flow of the album. Instead, "Ouroboros" delivers the most full and rich sound of LaMontagne's decade-long career, with each song transitioning seamlessly into the next.

The album kicks off with "Homecoming," an eight-minute lyrically-sparse journey of a song that sets the stage for the grittier sound that encompasses the album. Despite adding a twang and crunchy instrumentals not familiar to LaMontagne's longtime listeners, the song still manages to maintain the delicate rural sound that the singer is known for.

yet cohesive album more derivative of the blues than his folk roots.

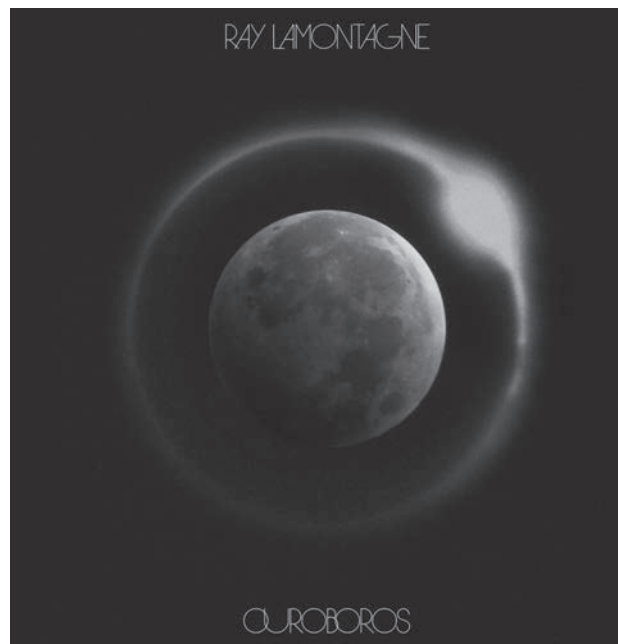
"Ouroboros" is a return to the album format in a single-

driven world. LaMontagne opts for a two-part project in a callback to classic vinyl, a move that in no

Despite the cohesion and consistent ruggedness of the project, the album's tracks lack the replay value of many of LaMontagne's more well-known works.

cover the new-sound Ray LaMontagne. The track hits hard while still maintaining LaMontagne's

That changes, however, as the album progresses. Track two, "Hey, No Pressure," comes on guns blazing, inviting listeners to dis-



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Ray LaMontagne's "Hey, No Pressure" focuses on blues-like instrumentals instead of on the lyrics, and despite deviating from the sound of his previous album "Supernova," the track is the highlight of the album.

soft and understated vocal style, creating a sound that is as much Elliot Smith as it is Jack White.

Though it may be his most uncharacteristic track, "No Pressure" is truly the highlight of the album. Despite the cohesion and consistent ruggedness of the remainder of the project, the album's final tracks lack the replay value of many of LaMontagne's more well-known works.

Despite delivering the most thorough and tied-together work of his career, LaMontagne leaves listeners wanting more out of "Ouroboros." There is no "Jolene" or "Trouble" on the project; no single song stands out as especially captivating. Rather, LaMontagne delivers an album that is enjoyable for a full-length listen but that will likely fade from memory before long.

WEBsurfer

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



Chrome Music Lab

Chrome Music Lab opens up the world of music production to people of all ages, no additional cost or equipment required. With 12 different realms in which to create a melody, ranging from rhythm to strings and even incorporating art in the "Kandinsky" tab, the possibilities seem limitless as new combinations of various notes never cease to come about. "Kandinsky" allows the user to paint a line with his or her mouse, and the program will generate an adequate note relative to the shape of the line. One of the beauties of this program is its easily accessible user interface, allowing even the youngest of composers to produce a masterpiece.

Noisey

Noisey indulges music fans by giving them an in-depth, behind the scenes look at artistry. From exclusive interviews with up and comers to biopics about a city with strong musical roots, their material is currently more diverse than that found on most music websites. Like other competitors such as Pitchfork and Rolling Stone, they feature new music and reviews of new albums/tracks yet also boast opinion pieces crafted by people who understand the world of music extremely well. Their influence on informing the public on regarding musical news is backed by their new TV show titled "NOISEY," with a new episode featuring Bampton, a nickname for Compton in southern Los Angeles, and prominent hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar.

Amp Me

Amp Me is not a website, but since I found it on the web and have experienced the need for an app like this before, I feel it is worth sharing. If you've ever experimented with multiple phones in a group and tried to have them play the same song in rhythm, the resulting audio is one phone echoing the other. This problem will never occur again with Amp Me, an app that allows you to sync up with nearby phones and create a group speaker. Whoever decides to initiate the jam session chooses the "Start a new party" on the main menu, and fellow participants locate the name of that iPhone on their list of available parties. I have not yet tried this app out to test sound quality and effectiveness, but if anyone does and either approves or detests it, feel free to let me know.

What to...

Watch: Movie "Room"



ROOMTHEMOVIE.COM

A suspenseful and a tear jerker film, "Room" is definitely a must see movie this spring.

Nominated for various Oscars such as Best Picture, Best Director and taking the award for Best Actress, "Room" received stellar reviews and acclaim that were well deserved.

The movie is the story of a woman called Ma who was kidnapped as a teenager and then has a child named Jack. It follows their consequent escape from the kidnapper and their immersion back into the real world.

The beauty of this heartbreaking movie is Jack's discovery of the world. As the boy is growing up, Ma only tells him that the room is the world, but as the story progresses, the he learns so much more.

The film was extremely well made and at points can take your breath away just by anticipation that fills the heart for Ma and Jack.

Read: Book

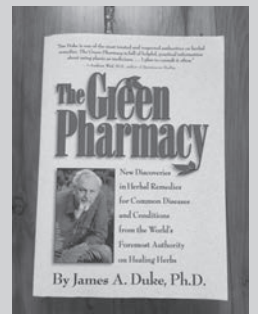
"The Green Pharmacy" by James A. Duke

While taking pills and medicines can help with sicknesses and aches, there are more natural ways of curing these ills that do not involve putting those chemicals into one's body.

"The Green Pharmacy" by James A. Duke is a book filled with multiple herbal remedies for common colds and conditions. Many of the plants recommended, for say a headache, are already in the kitchen.

This book is useful because it shows how much one can really do to naturally heal oneself before going straight to a pill, which can slowly decrease in strength if used too much.

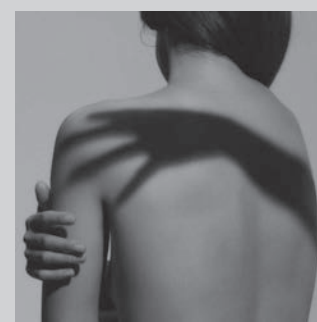
The book is fun to read for overall knowledge of how different plants affect one's body and to see what plants actually have numerous health benefits, like the Chaga mushroom or blueberries.



SARAH WILLIAMS

Listen To: Album

"Don't You" by Wet



BYGONE/FLICKR.COM

With summer and warm breezes just around the corner, the softer happier music vibes are sure to be felt in the coming weeks. The newest album "Don't You" by Wet is the way to go for a summer vibe.

"Don't You" is a soft yet rhythmic album that is great for those soulful sing alongs. Despite having the lyrics of love ballads that yearn for lost loves or ones to come, her music takes on a happier tone of hopefulness.

Various instruments such as the piano, drums, and the guitar mixed with electric synthesizers make her music almost like the wind, with the sounds all mixed together.

Her song "Deadwater" on the album is particularly upbeat and has a very fluid feel to it while "Don't Wanna Be Your Girl" has a more tribal sound to it.

By Sarah Williams, Independent Editor