

the INDEPENDENT

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Lip sync performers battle in Global Issues fundraiser

Event raises \$1800 for Heifer International

By Lydia Parker
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Global Issues hosted a student-teacher lip sync on Thursday, February 4 to fundraise for Heifer International, raising \$1,800 with the help of performers, audience members, and donations.

Though the fundraiser got off to a slow start with students reluctant to buy tickets, the end result exceeded expectations, according to Global Issues teacher James Wallimann. "Up until a couple days before, it didn't look like we were going to make even remotely close to that [profit], but ticket sales really boomed in the last couple days, and we were very pleased with the outcome."

The show itself was a huge success, according to Wallimann. "I thought the acts were really impressive. Everybody put in time and effort to coordinate and cho-



Three groups made it to the final round. Seniors Connor Senay and Nathan Evans won, beating history teachers Jessica Tran, Jennifer Coleman, and Abigail Donnelly as well as seniors Owen Sears and Quinn Dunbar with their performance of "Pocketful of Sunshine."

reograph their performances, and I was surprised by some of the kids who don't strike me as ones who would do well with this," he said.

Eight groups performed in the lip sync, with four teacher groups and four student groups. The judging panel for the com-

petition was comprised of Wallimann, history teacher John Mullady, and Spanish department head Michelle Magaña.

"I thought the fundraiser was great. It was nice to see the school community come together like that, and I just hope that



LYDIA PARKER PHOTOS

the kids had fun," Mullady said.

The trio of seniors Charlie Davis, Ethan Andersen, and Oscar Heanue started off the competition with their performance of "Jesus Take the Wheel" by Carrie Underwood. The surprise entrance of Andersen dressed as

Jesus at the chorus was one of the most memorable moments in their performance, making the audience laugh and applaud.

Based on positive audience reactions, crowd favorites from the lip sync included the senior duo

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Text-a-Tip aims to improve school community by allowing students to send faculty anonymous info

By Zack Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In response to data from last year's Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the school will start using Text-a-Tip,

an anonymous way to contact and converse with the administration about sensitive student issues.

"When we did the Youth Risk

Behavior Survey last year... one thing that we found is a lot of kids are either not feeling so well socially... or are taking part in behaviors that put them at risk, either drug or alcohol use," Principal Patricia Puglisi said. "We

also found out... that kids know about what's happening with other kids, but they don't want to tell an adult because they don't want to put their friend in... an uncomfortable position and they don't want to be outed as having told."

Students can send in a message by texting the number 847-411 and using the keyword "MERSD" at the beginning of the text.

Puglisi hopes the program will help keep the community safe and emphasized the complete anonymity of participating students. Even if the school faced

a problem as serious as a bomb threat, Puglisi explained, the identities of the people who sent in information would be inaccessible.

"All of the information is secure on their server. It's kind of like [the situation with Apple] where they won't unlock the phone," she said. "They would fight it legally because it would destroy their product."

TEXT-A-TIP, page 4

Students can send in a message by texting 847-411 and using the keyword "MERSD" at the beginning of the text.

Drama Club hosts first round of Dramafest, performs 40-minute play 'The Flower Girl'

By Amber Paré
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Members of the Drama Club hosted the preliminary round of the state's Dramafest competition on Feb. 27, performing their 40-minute play "The Flower Girl."

Adviser Erin Fortunato said "The Flower Girl" is an adaptation of George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion," which served as a basis for the musical "My Fair Lady."

"The Flower Girl" focuses on Henry Higgins, a snooty British language professor who meets a flower girl with a low-class accent. Fortunato said the play follows the pair's relationship as Higgins attempts to turn the flower girl into a lady by changing her accent.

According to Fortunato, the Drama Club has been rehearsing since the early winter and held an in-school performance on Feb. 26 in preparation for the competition.

"A lot of the students seemed to be more nervous for the in-school performance than the actual Dramafest performance. This is important because per-



AMBER PARE PHOTO

Senior Maddie Shaw and sophomore AJ Rhuda starred in "The Flower Girl" as Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins, respectively.

forming for one's peers is a great way to prepare," Fortunato said.

A total of eight schools participated in Dramafest, each of them performing a play that could be no longer than 40 min-

utes. The judges selected Malden, Danvers, and Lynnfield to move on to the semifinal round of the competition, according to senior Chelsea Rose, who directed the

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News Briefs

Junior class raffle

To raise money for the junior class, there will be a 50/50 raffle with a drawing on March 25.

According to the treasurer for the Class of 2017, junior Avery Shaw, the raffle's name refers not to one's chances of winning but to the amount of money the winner receives.

"The winner will get half of the money... earned from the tickets sold," Shaw said.

Each junior is responsible for selling at least three tickets, which cost \$20, so Shaw is confident that the raffle will raise a significant amount of money for the class. Similar fundraisers done by the senior class have raised thousands of dollars, according to Class of 2016 President Lydia Parker.

Parker added that 50/50 raffles are a great way to engage the students in a class as well as the extended community.

Junior Marco Kaper thinks the raffle will successfully support the class but sees the cost of a ticket as overly expensive, stressing that \$20 is a large amount of money to expect friends and family to pay.

In addition to the raffle, the Class of 2015 has a spaghetti night planned for later this year where attendees will be able to both make and eat pasta.

Budget update

Despite a complicated budget override last year, the district School Committee was able to come up with a budget to bring forward for approval.

"Things went fairly smoothly this year. The budget being proposed is only a slight increase, fairly in line with what it has been in previous years," Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

One of the biggest adjustments in the tentative budget would be the allocation of funds for a second middle school counselor, due to the sharp increase of students per grade in the middle school.

For the high school, the priority was hiring a new full-time health teacher, which would have allowed current teachers to teach more electives, according to Puglisi. The new health teacher could not be worked into this budget.

College panel offers advice to students, parents

Guidance hosts four assistant directors of admissions from different colleges

By Abigail Fitzgibbon
INDEPENDENT STAFF

To help juniors better understand the college admissions process, the guidance department hosted a college panel last week.

The panel was comprised of four representatives, each an assistant director of admissions at their own college. The colleges represented including Roanoke College, SUNY Geneseo, UMass Lowell, and Boston University.

Of the roughly 35 people in attendance, most of them were parents. The panel ran from 6:15 p.m. to 8 p.m. This is the third consecutive time the school has hosted.

The purpose of the panel is to give students an honest, inside look into the college admissions process from the perspective of the colleges themselves.

According to Guidance director Beverly Low, "This is not an info session for them to talk about their campuses but talking more broadly about the college process and how important it is to find your fit."

According to panelist Rebecca Guynn from Roanoke Colleges, these panels are quite helpful to students and parents.

"I think it helps build the relationship with colleges to show that we're not intimidating and we're not scary. We're people who want to help through and



ABIGAIL FITZGIBBON PHOTO

Speakers on the college panel gave junior parents and students advice on the college admissions process. Topics included standardized testing, essays, financial aid, athletics, and contacting schools.

demystify the process," she said.

Low hopes that students gained a better understanding for their preferences in a college.

"They want juniors and their families to have accurate, clear information, and this is one of the best ways to get that by really going to the source," she said.

Panelist Brian Ford discussed the importance for students to simply walk around a campus and take the initiative to learn more about colleges.

Many students took time to ask questions about the admis-

sions process. Junior David La-Forge said the panel answered many of the questions about aspects of the application process that were confusing before.

"It definitely gave us a lot of information that I never really knew before, and it helped us because deadlines were one thing I never really knew before, and they definitely gave us good dates," he said.

In addition to discussing application deadlines, the panel also touched on college essays, financial aid, college athlet-

ics, and reaching out to schools.

One of the most discussed topics was standardized testing. Because the SAT is changing this year, many parents and students had questions about how colleges are adapting to the shift in the popular test.

According to parent Michelle Kenney, "We have a particularly difficult year with SAT being old and new and trying to compare what's important. Seeing what's important to [the panelists] is enlightening to parents and students."

Extensive coverage of global cultures presented during International Week

18 speakers shared world knowledge, experiences

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

To promote cultural literacy among middle and high school students, International Week took place from March 8 to 11 and featured 18 different speakers who discussed their experiences in various countries.

Foreign language department chair Michelle Magaña spoke on the importance of International Week and how it bolsters cultural knowledge from countries around the world.

"I think it gives the students the opportunity to learn a little bit about each culture. I don't expect them to walk out and say, 'I know all about this country!' I think it opens up their minds to want to experience new cultures, explore, go around the world, and just start learning," she said.

Senior Jack Haynie said that he enjoyed the presentation on Argentina by Mariana Fagnilli because it stretched beyond simple facts and incorporated personal experiences that made it captivating.

"Tying personal experience into facts and culture is extremely important in and of itself to give a thorough and attention-



COURTESY LAUREN DUBOIS

Pictured above is Park Güell by architect Antoni Gaudí; it is one of the landmarks Lauren Dubois saw on her trip to Barcelona.

grabbing presentation," he said.

Junior Matt Kenney believes the importance of International Week lies in immersing oneself in another culture rather than simply adding it to the current one that most high school students experience.

"We too often find ourselves caught up in our own lives and our own community, and this program gives us a chance to step back and think about life outside our community by hearing first-hand, personal accounts of life across the world," he said.

In order for International Week

to occur, Magaña had to connect with people through multiple outlets in order to receive a variety of presenters.

"I reached out to the faculty, and we asked teachers in this department to reach out to their students. I also put an announcement in the Cricket because I like for community members to participate as well. This year, we were

really lucky because we had community members Axel Magnuson and Sylvia Vriesendorp present, and they lived in Afghanistan for a period of time," she said.

Requests for presentations on never-before-featured places included Sweden, Finland, Russia, Poland, India, and southern Asia in general.

Freshman Brigid Edgerton said she loved the presentation on Japan but would like to see more in-depth coverage of Asia and especially Africa.

Magaña said the cafeteria staff did incredible work during the week, preparing different meals for each featured country, including Sweden, Ethiopia, Turkey, and Uruguay.

"I also really want to thank the cafeteria ladies. They worked super hard to work with our schedule and create menus for the specific countries that we chose. We just gave them the countries, and

they said, 'Okay, we'll create a menu for you!' I think they put in an awesome effort and our department is really appreciative of that," she said.

She additionally expressed her gratitude for

student and community presenters who made the week happen.

'It gives the students the opportunity to learn a little... culture.'

-MICHELLE MAGAÑA

School looks to climate survey results for ways to improve

Results reveal issues with drug and alcohol use outside of school

By Ethan Andersen
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Working to better the environment and culture of the community, the School Council's climate survey has provided them with helpful information.

According to Principal Patricia Puglisi, the survey is required every two years and was administered to teachers, students, and parents.

"The School Council then reviews that data and tries

to develop goals for the school improvement plan," Puglisi said.

In the future, Puglisi hopes to slightly change some aspects of the survey after using the same one from two years prior so that the information is more concise and relevant to the times.

"The results were really informing actually. We pulled out differ-

ent themes based off of what was consistent between the teachers, parents, and students," she said.

School Council member junior Avery Shaw agreed with Puglisi and thought the survey was effective for pointing out which issues needed to be addressed.

'The overlapping data that was presented by the student, faculty, and parent surveys clearly showed which issues needed to be addressed.'

-AVERY SHAW

"I think that the overlapping data that was presented by the student, faculty, and parent surveys clearly showed which issues needed to be addressed, such as the concerning level of drug use," she said.

Shaw thought that the council's agreement on key issues helped speed up the process of improving the climate.

Faculty member of the School Council Jennifer Coleman thought that the survey could offer some information on what the school doesn't necessarily see.

"It definitely offers insight on some of the issues we



ETHAN ANDERSEN PHOTO

Principal Patricia Puglisi discusses the survey results with juniors Avery Shaw and Zoe Brown.

might not know about—I think it's really good data!" she said.

Puglisi identified a couple of key components that the council wishes to improve such as better and faster feedback from teachers, a better health curriculum, more emphasis on drug education for students, and an expanded curriculum to include a more global view.

"One of the places where we scored the highest was with our custodial staff. People were very satisfied with the way they keep the school looking beautiful, and we were pleased

'It definitely offers insight on some of the issues we might not know about.'

-JENNIFER COLEMAN

drug and alcohol use outside of school reported in the survey was something important to note.

"I wouldn't necessarily say it was alarming, but I think it is important to address it as it could be a much bigger problem that we imagined," she said.

The school council will continue to work towards meeting their school improvement goals. The council hopes to improve the school's climate soon so that students can benefit from the changes that they plan to make.



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

Senior Jennifer Cochand won the \$1,000 scholarship from Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Program. Many other scholarships that are available to students on Naviance require students to fill out an application, some of which use the same format, and potentially write an essay.

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Scholarships are available to seniors going to college and can help with the expenses colleges place on students from tuition to books to art supplies.

At this time of year, many seniors are encouraged to take the extra step in applying for the scholarships for a chance to win anything between \$250 to \$10,000 in a single award. Every dollar helps in paying for all of the things that college requires spending on.

Although students are not required to submit their choice on college until May 1, many of the scholarships are due by April 4.

Scholarships, which can be

started in memory of someone who cared a lot about kids getting the college experience. Clubs like the Rotary Club or the Lions club,

also raise money to give to students in scholarships. These groups wish to "see kids simply move on to the next level," guidance counselor Beverly Low said.

Groups that give scholarships

are working to help the students. "They do a lot of their fundraising to raise money for scholarships to help young people succeed," Low said.

There are approximately 30 different scholarships available to students that generally require evidence of going to college and something that shows why giving them the scholarship is worthwhile.

Senior Jennifer Cochand recently received a scholar-

ship of \$1,000 from Comcast Leaders and Achievers Scholarship Program. In order to get the award, Cochand was first nominated and then filled out a form much like the Common App and wrote a small essay.

Many of the scholarship forms have a central format much like the Common App which makes it easier for seniors to apply for a few at a time.

Scholarships have different ways in which they give the students the money sometimes it's at the end of the school year and other times it may be halfway through a student's freshman year of college.

Seniors can find scholarship opportunities listed on their Naviance account.

'Local clubs like the Rotary Club and the Lions Club do a lot of their fundraising to raise money for scholarships to help young people succeed.'

-BEVERLY LOW

New electives aim to reduce student stress and foster student engagement

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In order to reduce students' academic workload, allow teachers to teach to their passions, and increase students' excitement about taking classes, the school has introduced a wide range of electives to be offered next year, according to several teachers.

"It's nice to have a break from the class-to-class pound of high school, and electives help to balance a busy schedule while giving students a creative outlet that core classes often don't provide," director of guidance, Beverly Low, said.

In addition to the English

electives for seniors that will count as core classes, new electives include Documenting High School, Art Lab, Sustainability 101, and Women in Engineering.

Unlike traditional electives, the English electives are a group of 15 classes for seniors take to meet the requirements for English 12. Each student will take one class per quarter, with the third quarter based on film rather than books.

English department chair Deborah Isensee said that the idea for this unique curriculum came from her visit last year to Philip's Andover with fellow English teacher Daniel Koughan, where the school has an extensive elective curriculum.

Isensee commends her department on their enthusiasm for the change. "It says a lot ... that everyone was eager to teach their own electives rather than wondering how much of a burden the [extra classes] would be," she said.

The 15 electives will all be offered at both the Honors and CP level, with Honors students required to read one more book and write one more paper per quarter than CP students.

The art department was also looking to change their curriculum, according to art teacher Tamera Burns. The department has introduced Foundations classes in Photography, Drawing/Painting, Art Labs, and Ceramics,



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

Electives will be available in art, English, Green Team, and math.

which are entry-level classes that can be taken at both the Honors and CP level, rather than such classes being offered only at the CP level in previous years.

The material they cover is very similar to what was already in place, but the new leveling is different. Honors classes will

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DECA team earns 54 awards at state competition

By Courtney Fraser
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

At the state competition, members of the DECA team earned a total of 54 trophies, medals, Awards of Excellence and Top 10 finishes.

Overall, 90 percent of MERHS students earned awards at State Competition.

The event held at the Boston Marriott Copley Place brought together 2,400 winners from the 10 districts across the state.

Students were aiming to compete for a spot on the MASS DECA international competition team.

“The team did very well; about one-third of the students qualified for Internationals at the competition,” DECA teacher Dean Martino said.

The DECA team added nine new state champions in the Buying and Merchandising Team, Hotel and Lodging, Entrepreneurship Innovation Plan, Marketing Communications Team, and Quick Serve Restaurant Management.

Seniors Anna Walsh and Isabella Hickey qualified for the Inter-



Seniors Anna Walsh and Isabella Hickey qualified for Internationals.

‘About one-third of the students qualified for Internationals.’

-DEAN MARTINO

national Competition in their event of Buying and Merchandising Team Decision-Making.

“The competition went very well for us. I was very impressed with everyone, especially the first year students, and I was blown away by their performance,” Hickey said.

“The competi-



COURTESY OF DEAN MARTINO

Students competed in a variety of events at the state competition. Ninety percent of students received an award, and nine qualified for Internationals in Nashville.

tion gave me direction of where I want to go; it boosted my confidence a lot. I was very quiet freshman year, but I’ve been able to come out of my shell. Now I feel better now that I have more of an understanding,” Hickey said.

Junior Tracy Blagden competed at the state competition but didn’t qualify for the Top 10 in her event.

“The competition went well for me. It was a good experience to see how competitive DECA is at the state level. I was satisfied with my performance, and I plan on taking the course next year in hopes

of qualifying for States,” Blagden said.

Students who will be moving forward to Internationals in Nashville, Tenn., on April 23-26, include seniors Nick DiPietro, Jack Hennigan, Isabella Hickey, James Marshall, Chris Milne, Jack Ostrovitz, Tyler Quade, Anna Walsh, and junior Laura Hannafin.

“I’m very satisfied with how the team behaved, held themselves, and how they performed. In the future, we hope to build the program at school in numbers of students coming in,” Martino said.

CONTINUATIONS

LIP SYNC

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of Owen Sears and Quinn Dunbar, performing “You Should Be Dancing” by the Bee Gees. Sears wore a gorilla suit and Dunbar dressed as a stereotypical tourist, socks and sandals included.

Though the competition and critiquing from the judging panel were tough, seniors Connor Senay and Nathan Evans ultimately won with their first round performance of “Ignition (Remix)” by R. Kelly and second round performance of “Pocketful of Sunshine” by Natasha Bedingfield.

“Everyone must have been watching Connor because I definitely didn’t know what I was doing. I think the only reason that we won is because Mr. Wallimann would never let [Dunbar] win,” Evans joked.

The only group of female students to perform was comprised of seniors Cassandra Gonser, Madeline Surette, Sarah Williams, Olivia Tyler, Susie Buck, and Julia Mitrano, dressing up as the Spice Girls to perform “Wannabe.”

“I think it went really well because we actually had real choreography. The judges didn’t agree, and we didn’t advance to the next round, but it was okay. We’re not too upset about it. Overall I think it was a great fundraiser, and it was so much fun to be a part of,” Buck said.

Teacher groups, like the history department group made up of teachers Jennifer Coleman, Jessica Tran, and Abigail Donnelly, surprised the audience with well-choreographed routines and creative costumes.

The history department group performed the original version of the “Alexander Hamilton” rap by Lin-Manuel Miranda, complete with colonial-themed costumes.

“We made it to the second round, where we had to perform ‘Single Ladies’ by Beyoncé on the fly, which was pretty scary, but we had a great time,” Coleman said.

The English department performed a mash up of various theme songs from a variety of TV shows, like “Friends,” “Family Guy,” and a rendition of the “Game of Thrones” theme song sung by cats.

James Thomas in a dress and wig narrowly missed the second round with its performance of “Respect” by Aretha Franklin.

Spanish teachers Robert Bilsbury and Margaret Sears and English teacher Gloria Tanner also contributed, performing “She Blinded Me with Science” by Thomas Dolby while dressed in lab coats.

TEXT-A-TIP continued from page 1

Puglisi explained that she would relay most information from the service to other parties rather than getting involved; if she heard about a party, she may inform the police, or if a message came in about a troubled student, she would let the guidance department know.

Puglisi met with the School Council to discuss the program. According to Megan Clark, a senior and a member of the council, Text-a-Tip received an overwhelmingly positive reaction although there was some worry that students may at first send in false tips.

Junior Matt Kenney also saw Text-a-Tip as a bright idea. “I think kids often times see things but are a little bit reluctant to tell anybody, but if it’s anonymous... maybe we can start to fix some of the things that are maybe unseen at our school,” he said.

Puglisi, who has experience with a program like this from her time as a principal in Reading, stressed that the tips received will not be treated as fact and instead be investigated before any action is taken outside of contacting the involved student and his or her parents.

DRAMAFEST continued from page 1

play for the first time this year. Rose said the performance went “extremely well” despite the fact that the club was comprised of many new members and had to adapt to having a new director.

“Even though we didn’t move on this year, the more important thing is that people were able to have fun and form great friendships throughout the process,” Rose said.

According to junior Lily Schrafft, who won an award for her portrayal of Mrs. Higgins, the process was rewarding.

“All of our long practices and hard work paid off at the competition. I had so much fun and learned a lot over the past few months,” she said.

Fortunato shared a similar sentiment, saying that she appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the process.

ELECTIVES continued from page 3

have an outside weekly outside assignment that, according to Burns, will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

One of two new art electives is Art Labs, which was run as a pilot first semester this year and exposes students to the four mediums of drawing and painting, 3D design, digital design, and fabric as well as developing a student’s ability to think abstractly.

The second new art elective, Documenting High School, is based on a previous elective, MEMO, which focused on photographing everyday aspects of school life.

“We will have a class YouTube account, as well as Instagram and Twitter, where we will post photos that can be used by everyone in the school,” she said.

According to Epp, students and teachers missed MEMO, which was not available as an elective this year, because it captured everyday moments in high school that were not necessarily big enough to put on the school’s website or in the newspaper. She also plans to incorporate elements of graphic design into the class because there is no graphic design elective anymore due to lack of student interest and increase in her workload.

In addition to English and art electives, Green Team adviser Eric Magers will be teaching Sustainability 101, which he said is similar to Green Scholars in idea but is more classroom-based.

Additionally, math teacher Kara Brown’s new elective, Women in Engineering, is also new for next year. She said its inspiration came from her time at Georgia Tech, where she majored in engineering in a class that was about three-quarters male.

“It’s a class that talks about engineering, STEM-related fields, but it will focus more on getting women involved rather than too much of the engineering math,” she said.

Brown said that although the course focuses on women, it is open to everyone.



COURTESY OF SUFFOLK

Journalism students received the First Runner-Up award for Excellence in Editorial Writing at the Suffolk University Greater Boston High School Newspaper Banquet on March 3. Opinion page head editor Connor Senay (center) accepted the award on behalf of the class. Amber Paré and Maura McCormick (to the left and right of Senay) are also opinion page editors. Along with the award ceremony, Ian Thomsen of NBA.com spoke about the importance of journalism.

Health Matters



Sleeping your way to a healthy body and mind

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Sleep is an essential part of a healthy mind and body. If one doesn't get enough sleep, it can be hard to be healthier in other aspects of life.

Not getting enough sleep can make the average person unable to perform well in school. It can also make one gain weight because their self-control would be down and they would eat more junk food. A person's motivation has shown to drop as well because the body is simply focusing on going back to bed.

When a person sleeps, the brain practices memories through the REM stages, which are the cycles the mind goes through. The two most important stages, deep sleep and dreams are needed at least four times a night for a fulfilled restful feeling. This process takes around eight hours.

Sleep is the brain's time to relay new information and let the body recuperate.

First and foremost, creating a schedule for your sleep is vital in creating a basis for a healthy outcome.

Whether you decide to do some simple meditation for 10 minutes or listen to music before



WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Routines when going to bed, like drinking tea, help calm the mind.

you fall asleep, having a routine allows the brain to mentally prepare itself for sleep.

Another major key to a sound sleep is to not eat food four hours before going to bed. If one goes to bed with new food in the body, it is likely to wake the person up more and make falling asleep a more restless process.

Bedroom setting also plays a large role in one's ability to sleep well. Having temperatures between 60 to 67 is generally the idealistic temperature. Having as little light as possible in the

bedroom is also very helpful.

Sometimes, when counting sheep seems to not be sufficient, it's usually advised to simply get up for a bit and do something. Whether watching a little TV or reading a bit of a book, forcing yourself to sleep does not always work.

A rather difficult task for many, but one that is very useful, is to only use one's bed for sleeping and not for homework and other activities not involving sleep.

Student Council hosts the annual Red Cross blood drive

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

The Student Council and their adviser, history teacher Abigail Donnelly, organized an American Red Cross blood drive in the gymnasium on March 10, and according to Donnelly, they surpassed their goal by more than ten donors.

"This is the second one I've run, and blood drives are really important. We can't make artificial blood, and it's not just for accidents. It helps people who are going through all sorts of treatments, including chemotherapy," she said.

According to Redcrossblood.org, every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs a blood transfusion, and a single car accident victim can require as many as 100 pints of blood. Donnelly added to that, saying that a single donation, roughly one pint, can save up to three others.

"We had about 50 people signed up to donate. Of those people, 31 were able to make a donation," she said.

People can be deferred for a variety of reasons, including recent international travel, being underweight, and recent illness, Donnelly said.

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs a blood transfusion, and a single car accident victim can require as many as 100 pints of blood.



MADDIE CONWAY PHOTO

Abigail Donnelly, Melanie Carter, and Amber Paré look through the list for the blood donors for the Red Cross blood drive.

"Turning away those who have signed up is not unusual."

Donnelly also applauds the "24 of those people who were first-time donors. They really helped us surpass our goal."

Additionally, one person met the requirements and donated double red blood cells, a procedure that takes twice the amount of red blood cells but replaces the fluids, according to Donnelly.

High school students are more likely to donate as opposed

to those who are over 20 years of age, according to Donnelly. Redcrossblood.org said that the number one reason why they donated was because they "wanted to help others."

Such a sentiment was shared among the students who donated blood.

"I believe I made a difference, 100 percent. This blood is going to help three people who are in need," junior Liam Martin said.

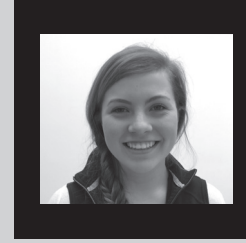
Senior Hannah White said that the significance of a donation made up for the slight discomfort associated with one. "Even though I feel kind of dizzy right now, I have officially saved three lives," she said.



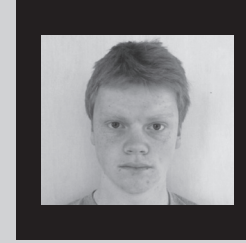
Freshman Annika Dahlin:
"Being in denial and pretending that every day is Friday."



Freshman Atticus Strack:
"Knowing that my birthday is at the end of March."



Sophomore Taylor Reader:
"Food"



Sophomore Cole Hay:
"Thinking about the weekend."

Student Speak

What gets you through March?

Junior Jenny Beardsley:
"Spring sports starting up again."



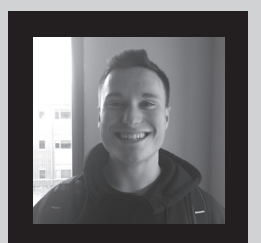
Junior Charlie Baker:
"Lifting weights."



Senior Cassandra Gonser:
"Netflix"



Senior Bennett Strayton:
"Getting ready for lacrosse season."





Mobile World Congress gives world a glimpse of the future

By Will Heslop
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Held annually in Barcelona, this year's Mobile World Congress hosted over 100,000 attendees from 204 countries and territories, and many brands came to demonstrate the latest and greatest technologies in the mobile industry.

Since its inauguration in 1987, the MWC has been the conference of choice for the biggest mobile tech manufacturers in the world. This year, the conference was held in Barcelona on Feb. 22-25.

Samsung and LG were among the more well-known companies to attend, but countless other newcomers had products of their own to showcase.

Samsung's new Galaxy S7 and Galaxy S7 Edge are sure to resonate with fans of previous iterations, since the new model is quite similar in appearance.

LG also displayed their new flagship smartphone, the G5. The new version offers a unique removable battery system that allows users to swap

out a portion of the phone with other modules and replace the battery when it starts to get low.

Chinese manufacturer Xiaomi made its debut on the international



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Samsung Gear VR offers users a 360 degree virtual reality roller coaster experience with moving seats to add to the experience.

stage at the MWC, as it announced its new flagship phone called the Mi5. With Xiaomi already the most popular cell phone maker in China, time will tell if their products are a hit in Western markets.

One phone in particular has been a huge hit with the tech community because it offers seemingly unlimited storage thanks to its ability to store data in the cloud. The Nextbit Robin automatically uploads certain files to the cloud in order to ensure that the device has plenty of free space.

Virtual reality was also displayed at the MCW, and com-

panies like LG and Samsung were eager to demonstrate their new headsets. Samsung even recreated a virtual reality roller coaster experience that included moving seats and immersive 360 degree video.

Oral-B was also present, and they announced their new "smart toothbrush." Intended to link up with a smartphone via Bluetooth, the toothbrush analyzes movement and gives the user a sense of how well he/she is brushing.

Not all of the major brands were present, however. Google and Apple, for example, will hold their own conferences later in the year to update the world on their latest products. Analysts expect both companies are expected to release numerous new laptops, tablets, and smartphones.

Virtual reality was displayed at the MCW, and companies like LG and Samsung were eager to demonstrate their new headsets.

Freshman, sophomore classes host semiformal dance

By Juliette Kelley
INDEPENDENT STAFF

As a fundraiser for their grades, the freshman and sophomore classes recently hosted a semiformal dance.

After all expenses are paid, the classes will make approximately \$1,200 combined, according to sophomore vice president Alison Marshall. These funds will be split between the two classes.

Sophomore class adviser Kara Brown said it was the class officers' idea to have a dance. "Everybody's been saying they wanted a dance," she said. "[This] is a way for [freshmen and sophomores] to have a dance that isn't in the cafeteria, [and] they get to dress up and have fun."

The event was held on March 4 in the Essex Room, the reception hall behind Woodman's Restaurant.

According to sophomore class president Taylor Reader, 108 tickets were sold. "We were trying to think of something creative to do to raise money... We thought a dance would be good because we haven't had a lot," she said.

Students enjoyed themselves, according to sophomore Elizabeth Dolan. "It was a pretty good mix of freshmen and sophomores [and] I think both classes had fun," she said.

Freshman class adviser Shannon Alger received simi-



KAREN CLARK PHOTO

Members of the sophomore class gathered together at a classmate's house to take group photos before the semi-formal.

lar feedback. "I heard that everybody had a great time... and that they were really glad that they went. Overall the feedback was very positive," she said.

Students wore formal attire to the dance. The majority of students spent the night dancing. Many also took periodic breaks at the tables set up around the room.

At the dance, there was a "soda bar... and desserts, as well as finger foods," said Brown. These were brought by parents in order to save money and get the community involved.

Many parents wanted to help out, according to Reader.

The classes also hired a DJ and a photographer, both from mobile entertainment com-

pany Total Control Entertainment, according to Reader.

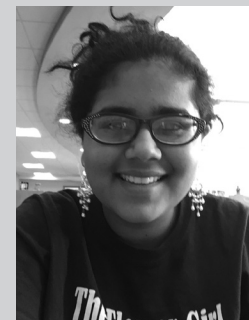
Many students, such as sophomore Luke Heffernan, liked the songs that were played. "The music was great!" he said.

Nina Williams, a sophomore like Heffernan, enjoyed the dance as well. "I had a really fun time, and I would love to have another dance," she said.

Even supervisors, such as Alger, found the dance pleasant. "Students coming together through dance and music is a perfect opportunity [for them] to share a special memory outside of school," she said. "We're hoping that the freshmen-sophomore semiformal will be an annual event starting this year."

STUDENT PROFILE

Ananya
Dwivedi



By Julia Bonaccorso
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

What would you eat for your last meal?
Drunken noodles

If you could vote, which presidential candidate would you vote for?
Hillary Clinton

Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, or other?
Starbucks

What's your favorite TV series of all time?
"Friends"

Who's your celebrity crush?
Marlon Brando

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go and why?
I would go to São Paulo because I love Brazil and want to spend more time there.

What is something no one knows about you?
My oldest cousin is a famous Bollywood actor.

What book would you love to see made into a movie?
"Mozart's Shadow" by Carolyn Meyer

What's the most exciting thing you've ever done?
Went to Thailand.

Would you rather eat a snack that's salty or sweet?
Sweet

Where is your ideal place to live?
A 50th floor penthouse in Manhattan.

If you could go a concert by any artist or band, dead or alive, which would you go to?
The Beatles

What's your dream job?
Cardiac surgeon

Where did you live before you came to Manchester?
San Francisco

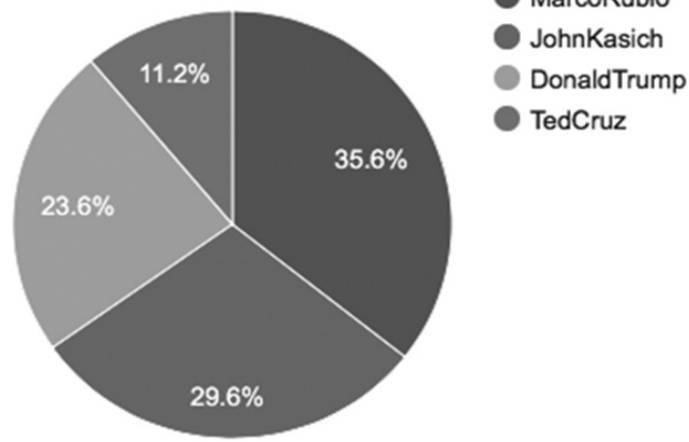
What person has had the most influence in your life and why?
My mom, because she's my mom

Would you rather never speak at all or always speak what's on your mind?
Always speak what's on my mind.

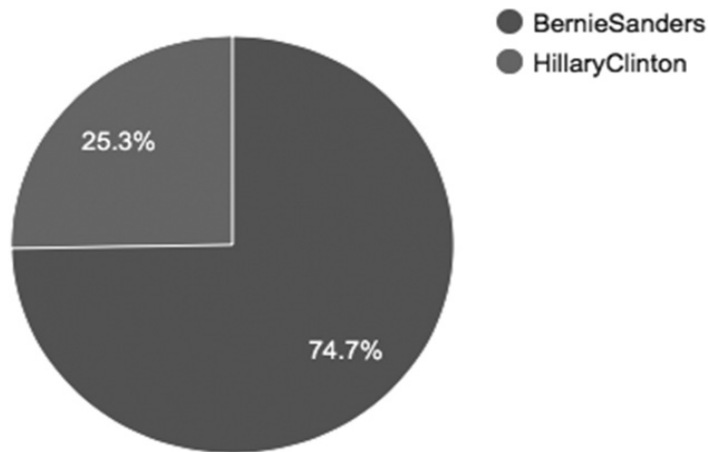
Where are you the most content?
In my bed.

AP US Government class campaigns for presidential candidates

Republican Primary



Democratic Primary



Students conduct a mock election to mimic the primaries

By Charlie Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the election season in full swing, the AP United States Government and Politics class conducted a mock presidential election for high school students.

The election occurred on March 1, the same day as the real Massachusetts presidential primary.

Senior Joe Alibali said students in the class formed groups roughly a month before the date of the election and each campaigned for a Democratic or Republican candidate.

Campaigning included making audio or video advertisements, hanging up posters, polling the electorate, and creating

Regarding the results of the mock election in school, Marco Rubio dominated the Republican Primary, and Bernie Sanders defeated Clinton in the Democratic Primary.

an issue platform handout.

AP Government teacher Jennifer Coleman said the students completed all aspects of the project very well.

"I think the students did an excellent job with the campaign-

ing part, but also with running the election... a lot of faculty members came to me to tell me what a great job they thought the students were doing, so it's nice that their hard work was noticed," Coleman said.

Junior Mac McCoy, who was in a group with fellow junior Dewey Komishane that campaigned for Republican candidate Senator Ted Cruz, said the election project was educational as well as fun.

"I liked how there was a competitive drive behind the project, and it was also cool to use the concepts we learned in class in the real world," he said.

Coleman also said she enjoyed seeing the students apply

classroom concepts to the mock election.

"It's great to see the students learn something and then put that into practice," she said.

The winner of the mock Democratic primary was Senator

'I think the students did an excellent job with the campaigning part, but also with running the election.'

-JENNIFER COLEMAN

Bernie Sanders, and the winner of the mock Republican primary was Senator Marco Rubio.

On the Democratic side, Sanders received 204 votes while Secretary Hillary Clinton received 69 votes.

For the Republicans, Rubio received 83 votes, Governor John Kasich received

69 votes, businessman Donald Trump received 55 votes, and Cruz received 26 votes.

Coleman noted that "there was significantly higher voter turnout from the student population than there was last year."

Coleman said the increase in turnout could be due to the increased publicity and press coverage during presidential election years.

Former athletes highlight differences between high school, college sports

High school alumni discuss personal experiences regarding college sports

By Charlie Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In the past few years, the high school has seen many athletes transition from the high school level to the college level.

Curry College sophomore and football player Liam Logue said one of the largest differences between high school and college athletics is the amount of time that must be put in.

"Something people don't realize is that once you're playing a college sport, it's no longer a seasonal thing; it's a year-round commitment," he said.

Despite the increased level of commitment, Logue said there



BRIAN DAVIS PHOTO

Dartmouth College freshman and MERHS alumni Olivia Lantz runs cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track at college.

are typically policies in place to help student athletes balance schoolwork and practices and games.

"There are always great tu-

tors and study halls for athletes so that help to take away some of the strain on us," Logue said.

Logue also said that college teammates become an instant

friend group in the first few weeks of school.

Dartmouth College freshman Olivia

Lantz, who runs cross country, indoor track, and outdoor track, said another way college sports differ from high school sports is the level of independence and self-regulation that is required in college.

"It becomes one's responsibility to make sure they are keeping themselves healthy both physically and mentally. You don't have your parents there anymore to help you along the way," she said.

Brown University sopho-

more and sailor Quinn Andersen said coming from a small school like Manchester-Essex

and competing for a Division I program, there is a difference in the amount of resources and level of commitment put towards sports.

"At a DI university, sports are much more serious and have a lot more

support from the school... I feel more like a professional athlete because the school treats me like one," Andersen said.

Andersen added that he likes competing in college more because of this increased support of athletics.

'It becomes one's responsibility to make sure they are keeping themselves healthy... physically and mentally.'

-OLIVIA LANTZ

Juniors win the high school book drive in association with the Teen Board

By Karlie Angelis
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Manchester Community Center's Teen Board had a book drive that ended March 4 with the junior class winning with 117 books, the freshmen in second with 32, sophomores with 12, and seniors with zero.

The lack of participation has left members of the Teen Board feeling discouraged since they were hoping for about 100 books from each grade, according to Kim Kaner, manager of the Teen Board.

The donated books have to be in either fairly good condition or brand new in order to provide children with the best books possible, according to the REAL

Program, the organization that distributes the books to children around the Lynn area.

Rachel Schwartz works with the REAL Program as well as Manchester's Teen Board, which is where the idea for a book drive originated. The students created the idea for a class competition.

Each grade has a bin decorated and assigned to them, and the bins were then placed in the main lobby of the school so high school students could compete to see who could bring in the most

books.

The grade who contributed the greatest amount of books wins free food at Buffalo Wild Wings, according to Kiersten

Wood, a member of the Teen Board and a student at Pingree High School.

"There [was] free wings and even cake for the [juniors]," Wood said.

Becka Hille, another member of the Teen Board, helped organize the drive within the school. "We wanted to make the drive a competition so students would be more

'We wanted to make the drive a competition so students would donate.'

-BECKA HILLE



KARLIE ANGELIS PHOTO

Bins for the book drive were located at the entrance of the school building to encourage students to donate and be competitive.

likely to donate and bring some friendly, fun competition into it," Hille said.

However, the competition's lack of success leaves Kaner undecided whether the Board will continue to do more drives in the

future but remains hopeful.

"The drive was not very successful, but the Board is thinking that we should try the elementary school next time. Maybe we'll have more luck," Kaner said.



Sam Koufman

2015 graduate Sam Koufman attends the University of Vermont and plans to be an Environmental Studies major. He has completed the first introductory course to environmental studies, which is a broad course intended to provide an introduction to the “ecological, social, and political-economic aspects of contemporary environmental issues...” In addition to his introductory course, Koufman completed a course titled “The City,” which examines social inequality and urban sustainability in analyzing a city’s environment, and an international environmental studies course that explores the global environmental issues such as fresh water, waste, and climate change. Koufman said he was offered many job opportunities and internships through his experience with the Green Team, including his internship at the Conservation Law Foundation in the summer of 2015, and attributes his interest in large part to the program.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAM KOUFMAN

Jelisa Vasquez O’Hara

2012 graduate Jelisa Vasquez O’Hara currently attends University of California, Santa Clara, as an Environmental Studies major and works in sales for Tesla Motors, which manufactures high-quality electric cars and is looking to expand into other renewable energy sources. Once O’Hara graduates, she said she will switch into marketing or Human Resources. She said Green Team, which started her freshman year, got her really excited about environmental issues and how people can lead more sustainable lives, which served as a catalyst for her interest in the environment.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JELISA VASQUEZ O’HARA

**Green Team:
Where are they
now?**

Simon McIntosh



2012 graduate Simon McIntosh attends University of Vermont and is an Environmental Studies major. He is working in cartography and water quality research at the Spatial Analysis Lab at UVM as well as at the Mongol Ecology Center in the summer, which works with national park conservation in Mongolia. He said he became an Environmental Studies major “50% from Green Team experiences and 50% because of a job [he] had in conjunction with the Green Team at the Food Project.” When McIntosh chose his Green Scholars project, he chose farming because it was a hobby of his, and he commends the program for its flexibility in interdisciplinary projects such as his.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SIMON MCINTOSH

Kevin Cellucci



2013 graduate Kevin Cellucci is Applied Economics and Management major at Cornell University with concentrations in entrepreneurship and environmental, energy, and resource economics. Despite his economics-focused major, he said he has “taken a great number of environmentally-based courses that are required by [his] concentration, but he would not have chosen to concentrate in environmental economics without [his] experiences at Green Team.” He spent the past summer working as an energy and financial analyst for a wind farm called Black Oak in New York. He said although he is pursuing finance and banking this upcoming summer at Standard and Poors Global, a financial services company, it is likely that he will return to the alternative energy field. He said that Green Team helped him to learn how to do independent research and led to his current, self-founded non-profit solar company, Energizing Impact, which installs solar panels on the roofs of charities and is looking to install on the local science museum in Ithaca to reduce their carbon footprint, lower utility bills, and increase environmental awareness.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN CELLUCCI

Technology

Should Apple help the FBI in the San Bernardino case?

Pro
Will Heslop

What was initially a simple question of whether or not a company should unlock a phone has descended into an unnecessarily complicated debate over the importance of privacy versus national security.

In order to truly see why Apple is obligated to help the FBI by unlocking the perpetrator's phone in the case of San Bernardino, the debate needs to be brought back down to the core issue.

It should not be a debate over the role over government in our everyday lives, but rather an isolated case in which evidence could be found to help prosecute a couple that was responsible for the terrorist attack that killed 14 and injured 22.

Microsoft founder Bill Gates offers an interesting perspective on the case. "This is a specific case where the government is asking for access to information. They are not asking for some general thing. They are asking for a particular case," he said.

It is not like the FBI is going to ask companies to make exceptions like this every other week. This is clearly an isolated case, and given the number of victims, it is not unreasonable to ask a company as powerful as Apple to help the government.

Additionally, a software patch would be extremely secure. A company like Apple clearly has the resources and means to extract information in a way that would not endanger the safety of other iPhone users.

To understand the situation, consider it in the frame of an analogy. If there was a locked safe that might contain information crucial to a legal case, people would not think twice if the FBI decided to contact the manufacturer in order to have a duplicate key made.

In fact, it is surprising that Apple would even defy the FBI in the first place. It is a poor reflection on the company to refuse to help out in this case given the number of those affected.

The victims are not the only people who want justice, but their families too deserve for the truth to come out. Apple has the opportunity to help achieve justice, yet they have refused to do so.

San Bernardino is a far simpler case than people make it out to be. Apple would be able to get the phone unlocked in a very short amount of time, yet its impact on those affected would be incredible.

Regardless of what is actually found on the phone, it is sad to think that a company like Apple could get away with obstructing justice and prevent the perpetrators from being punished to the highest extent of the law.

Con
Charlie Davis

In the United States, the federal government, which has increasingly ramped up its electronic data collection efforts after the September 11 terrorist attacks and the creation of the Patriot Act, has overstepped its authority in its efforts to force Apple to unlock the iPhone associated with the San Bernardino shooting.

The line between justifiable anti-terrorism efforts and the breaching of citizens' privacy is very thin; in this instance the government has clearly crossed it. Even though the government says the software it wants Apple to create would only be utilized for the San Bernardino phone, there is no way to ensure this.

Software that can unlock any phone would be a prime target for hackers around the globe, as well as an irresistible tool for the government; the danger with the decrypting software the government wants is that it could lead to a world in which no private information is safe. Even the mere threat of this slippery slope is grounds to say the government is in the wrong.

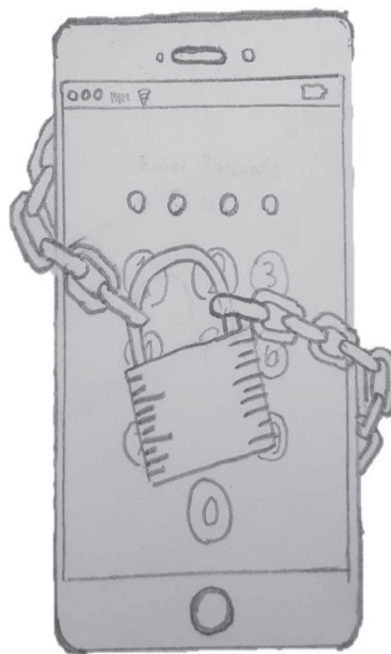
Additionally, the government cannot even be sure it would find any new information on the phone in question. The investigators already have the perpetrator's phone call records, texts, and emails, so what critical information could be left that would justify decryption software? Without certainty that the phone will lead to the foiling of new terrorist attacks, Apple should not give in to the government's demands.

Further, all concerns about privacy aside, there is no precedent for the government being allowed to coerce a private company into creating a device, mechanism, or software.

This prospect in and of itself is a reason for Apple to hold fast in its resistance against the government.

In order for a capitalist economic system to continue to function properly, private industries must keep separate from government workings.

Up until this point, Apple has been cooperating with the FBI's investigation; the company has even independently offered advice and guidance. However, this request goes beyond reason and government authority.



ETHAN ANDERSEN ILLUSTRATION

Beyoncé, Lamar's performances demonstrate power, but not change

In order to enact real change, artists must take concrete action

By Julia Bonaccorso
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Beyoncé and Kendrick Lamar have recently taken to two of the biggest stages to relay their messages of racial injustice and black pride to the world, but these performances seem to have little effect on enacting the much needed change they advocate for.

During Beyoncé's Super Bowl 50 appearance, she debuted her new single "Formation" that preaches black pride.

With the song's powerful message and her controversial choice of dressing her background dancers as Black Panthers, Beyoncé made her

statement clear.

The Grammys this year featured a similarly politically charged performance by Grammy winner Kendrick Lamar.

Lamar opened with his song "Blacker the Berry" with he and his other performers in chains with a prison backdrop.

His second song, "Alright," featured Lamar in front of a bonfire surrounded by traditional African dancers.

Lamar made his concern about modern black oppression known to 25 million Grammy viewers.

Like Beyoncé, Lamar made his concern about modern day black oppression known to the around 25 million Grammy viewers.

As both of these artists have touched on, racial inequality is a pressing issue in the country that needs to be immediately addressed.

And while I understand the desire of these performers to bring attention to the issue on a huge scale, I don't seem to be

making much of a change.

If these stars are serious about tackling this problem taking real action against racial injustice seems like a more effective way to reach the end goal of equality.

With their millions of fans and millions of dollars, Beyoncé, Lamar, and other mega stars that support racial equality could really help the black community and the country as a whole.

Tackling an issue like poverty, the need for better education, or crime that cripple the black community would be a good place to start.

Oprah Winfrey showed this type of initiative on a trip to South Africa to visit Nelson Mandela in 2000 during which she recognized a need for better education for young women in the country.

By 2007, Winfrey had built Oprah Winfrey's Leadership Academy for girls in South Africa providing for them the opportunity to improve their quality of life and guaranteeing them their right to an education.



BEYONCÉ /INSTAGRAM

In her Super Bowl performance, Beyonce dressed as a Black Panther as part of a political statement about racial equality.

I'm not saying that every celebrity has to go to this extreme, but Winfrey exemplifies someone who identified an issue and took action to fix it.

Creating racial equality in

this country needs to be at the root of the issue, and while it's good to bring awareness to the injustice, it's better to do something to change it. Hopefully stars will start to take this step.



The notorious 45th president

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Upon receiving my voter form in the mail, I was ecstatic to participate in the primary and the general election.

For the amount of time I had spent pondering what voting would be like, I never thought I would make the choice between candidates I believe are undesirable leaders for this country.

Not every candidate is a complete buffoon, and I'm not trying to be biased towards the Democratic party, but the Republican nomination will pose problems for this country regardless of who it is. Some Democrats are unfit for the presidency, but I'll begin with the obvious: Donald J. Trump.

When Donald Trump announced his candidacy, I laughed. This quack could never become the president!

Eight months later, Trump has over a 90 percent chance of winning the Republican nomination. Who let this happen?! Trump voters made this happen.

Trump has a powerful following of voters, regardless of his controversial statements and stances on political issues. The problem is he's bold and unfiltered, which the public loves.

Before Trump announced his campaign, his political views were nothing to scoff at. He proved to be moderate by making campaign contributions to six Democrats and four Republicans.

If Trump wins the election, he will act reasonably. Candidates make bold claims that never materialize, and Trump, while currently acting the political fool, is intelligent guy and knows business and how this country works.

Do I believe his decisions will be perfect? No. Do I think that each candidate has flaws? Yes, so each candidate will bring pros and cons.

Ted Cruz is a loose cannon from the Republican Party, and while Marco Rubio is level-headed, the probability of him winning the nomination is small.

On the Democratic side, Hillary has more political experience than any other candidate, but her secrets uncovered during her time as secretary of state make people question her honesty. Bernie Sanders outlines beneficial proposals, but some of them (such as free college) may take more than four years to achieve.

The bottom line is each candidate has his or her pros and cons, but each candidate's strengths are questionable. At this rate, I would feel just as comfortable if Vermin Supreme became president.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Additional honors electives provide broader education

Electives are essential to holistic learning. Most of next year's electives will be offered at the honors level, encouraging students to reap these benefits.

In previous years, CP electives could lower a student's GPA. A student who earned B's in all honors classes would have a lower GPA if he earned an A in a CP elective.

Next year, students will not need to worry about GPAs. All electives will be offered at the honors level except chorus.

According to Principal Patricia Puglisi, teachers added "other assignments and deeper work" for honors students.

Allowing students to take challenging versions of electives will allow them to expand their learning without needing to worry about GPAs.

Puglisi said the administration chose to offer honors electives due to the new schedule.

With the extra block, she



MAURA MCCORMICK PHOTO

Honors-level electives, such as art classes, are essential due to the fact that they allow students to explore a wide variety of subjects.

said she was concerned students would take too many AP courses.

Honors electives will prevent students from taking seven high-level academic courses by encouraging them to explore subjects outside the academic core.

Now that these courses do not pose a threat to GPAs, more students will take advantage of

the courses' benefits.

While the changes to electives are beneficial, they should be extended to the chorus class.

Although a cappella is offered at the honors level, the only chorus class available is CP.

Chorus is very different than a cappella because it does not require an audition and focuses

on singing within a larger group with an accompaniment.

Students who don't make it into a cappella but still want a higher level singing class should have the option of taking honors chorus.

The school could incorporate more advanced material for honors chorus students. For example, they could complete additional coursework such as sight-reading or improvising harmonies. Just as English electives require honors-level students to read an additional book and write an additional paper, honors-level chorus could require a research project.

Chorus is an elective and should be offered in the same way that other electives are offered: at the honors and CP level.

While the decision to offer most electives at the honors level is a step in the right direction, all electives deserve to reap the benefits of this new system.

Oscars should uphold integrity of individual achievement awards

Recognition is not meant to encompass career-long success

By Oscar Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Leading up to, during, and after this year's Academy Awards, Leonardo DiCaprio was the talk of critics and audiences everywhere. The veteran actor finally received his first Oscar for best actor, but the question of whether or not he earned the award remains.

In the lead-up to the awards, many claimed that it was "finally time" for Leo to win an Oscar. Many considered DiCaprio a shoo-in simply due to being a well-known nominee who had always walked away from Oscar night empty-handed. At this year's awards, sure enough, DiCaprio was the big winner.

However, there is questionable merit to giving an award based on performance in an individual film based on career achievement.

While there is no debating that DiCaprio has established himself as one of Hollywood's best and brightest, it is simply unfair to award Oscars on the basis of past results.

One notable candidate for this year's best actor award was Eddie Redmayne, the previous year's winner for his portrayal of Stephen Hawking in "The Theory of Everything."

While Redmayne's performance in "The Danish Girl" impressed both critics and audiences and he likely would have been a viable candidate to win in any other year, the Academy is often leery of giving awards to the same actor in back-to-back years.

Only Tom Hanks has achieved such an accomplishment, following up his appearance in "Philadelphia" with another win for his classic performance as the titular character in the film "Forrest Gump."

The Academy's reluctance to give repeat awards can often devalue the accomplishments of individual actors in great films. In recent years, actors such as Redmayne, Jeff Bridges, and Russell Crowe have been virtually eliminated from contention due to the phenomenon.

Other empty-handed actors suffer as well due to the willingness of the Academy to use individual achievement awards as

an unofficial recognition of a career's work. Many feel that Matt Damon, whose only Oscar is for screenwriting, was robbed by the then-winless Jack Nicholson in

The Academy should simply give lifetime achievement awards to those who it feels are worthy.

1997. Countless other examples of such handed-over awards have occurred over the years, robbing many great performances of proper recognition.

The Academy should simply give lifetime achievement awards to those who it feels are worthy. Individual achievements awards are intended to recognize the year in film, and using them to recognize a full career's worth of work simply devalues the ceremony and fails to recognize many superior performances.

the INDEPENDENT

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The Independent is published monthly throughout the school year. It is a product of the Manchester-Essex Regional High School Journalism class. Editorial space is available to all MERHS students, faculty, and community members.

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

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

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

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

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

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Pennies harm economy, no longer hold value

By Avery Shaw
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Besides to drop in a tip jar, to contribute to a charity, or to avoid breaking your dollar bill, pennies are simply a nuisance that fall between your couch cushions and take up space in your wallet.

Pennies may be a symbol of good luck when they are found on the sidewalk and may serve as a means of making a wish by tossing one into a fountain, but their economic burden outweighs their sentimental value.

According to the United States Mint, the penny cost 1.67 cents to make in 2015, causing the United States Mint to lose \$55 million on the production of pennies annually. The production of money is costing more than the money itself.

And there is no cheaper alternative. The current composition of the penny is as cheap as it will, according to the United States Mint.

Furthermore, the price varies based on inflation. In 2006, inflation raised the price of the production of a penny to 2.4 cents, which is more than double its worth. The unstable price of the penny's production can cost of millions of dollars.

United States legislation is already focused in the direction of removing the penny from our currency.

Private businesses are allowed to refuse pennies. It is only a matter of time before businesses will gradually move away from the coin.

The removal of a coin in our currency wouldn't be new to American history either.

In 1857, the United States Mint got rid of the half penny because inflation had made it unreasonable to continue to produce.

To deal with the questions of implementation, the United States can just follow the lead of countries such as Canada, Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand



AVERY SHAW PHOTO

Inflation has decreased the value of pennies while consequently increasing the cost of their production.

who have all recently removed their smallest unit of currency.

The largest concern is from retailers, who are afraid that rounding the price to the nearest 5 cents will lose them money. However, in a matter of time, the

rounded prices will become the norm.

The country will adjust and the benefits of no longer producing the penny will outweigh the disgruntlement in reaction to the change.

The penny is simply more trouble than it's worth. For such an impressive annual cost on our country with such little reason for its existence, it is clear its production is harming our economy more than benefiting it.

Novice-only debate class poses new challenges to program

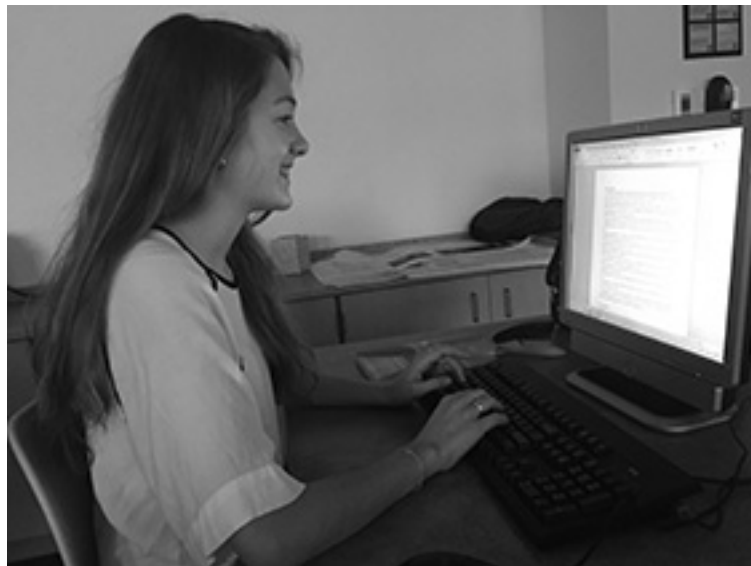
By Emily Clark
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Debate club for upperclassmen provides different experience than honors-level class

Although beneficial in some aspects, debate being changed to Evidence Based Argumentation, a class for students who have never taken debate before and a club for everyone else, will have some drawbacks.

Evidence Based Argumentation will be a daytime class next year, for mostly freshman and sophomore students who are new to debate, also known as novices.

This class is for to learn the background knowledge needed to then be successful at debate tournaments; they would take this class for one year and then do the club later to compete at various tournaments.



EMILY CLARK PHOTO

Sophomore Juliette Kelley will not be allowed to take Evidence Based Argumentation, next year's novice version of debate class, because she already has experience from debate class this year.

Debate teacher Jessica Tran said, "I, or whoever would be teaching the course, would love if a few varsity debaters were interested in being a teacher's

assistant due to their varsity expertise."

Although a few varsity debaters may be present in the class, one advantage that the new class

will lack is the opportunity for the new debaters to learn from older, practiced students who have been doing debate for many years.

It will be harder for the novices to adapt to debate and learn the fundamentals in one year without a classroom of experienced students.

Sophomore Kevin Albertazzi, who has taken debate for two years, said, "I kind of dislike the idea of not having a debate course open for me next year because my favorite part of debate is the class, and this set up will mostly just encourage going to tournaments."

Another challenge that may

arise for debaters who just take the club is a loss of motivation. If every day they have home-

work and lessons that improve their debate skills this year, they may have a hard time adapting to more independent work next year.

Sophomore debater Nina Williams said, "My motivation to work hard at debate and go to as many tournaments as I can

may be lost next year because I won't have the daily class time in school."

This step from a daytime class to a club is a major change for the debate program, and challenges throughout the process of learning debate may arise for the novices next year.

It will be harder for novices to adapt to debate and learn the fundamentals in one year without a classroom of experienced students.

Forgoing class rankings causes deeper consideration of students in admissions

By Maddie Conway
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON PHOTO
Tucker Evans was last year's valedictorian. Valedictorian and salutatorian are determined based on class rank.

Valedictorian, salutatorian, and the top 10 percent of the class are made known at our school, but numbers that denote rank are not given to any other student; this reduces competition for place and instead focuses students on learning rather than grades.

Rankings are done here in a manner that is becoming the new national trend, according to director of guidance Beverly Low, as schools are realizing that assigning a number to everyone benefits very few and can demean those at the middle and bottom of the rankings or those

who just missed the top spots.

Lee Coffin, dean of Undergraduate Admissions at Tufts University, said in a Washington Post article that only 20 percent of students who applied to Tufts University in 2015 came from a school that ranked every student.

However, in schools that do not rank students, college admissions officers said that they are struggling to view students within the context of their school, according to the article. Because so many students now have GPAs above

4.0, due to AP courses that are weighed on a 6.0 scale, colleges

Only 20 percent of students who applied in 2015 to Tufts University came from a school that ranked every student.

are relying less on GPA because it is hard to distinguish one student from another.

"It's disappearing as a metric. Then the subject testing and the standardized testing helps break that traffic jam," said Jim Bock, vice president and dean of admissions at Swarthmore College in the article.

According to the article, mov-

ing away from using GPA causes standardized testing scores, such as those from the SAT and ACT, to be more closely considered in college admissions. However, due to the simultaneous movement against these scores because of their inability to predict the long-term success of a student, colleges are turning to extracurriculars in making their admissions choices.

These activities show students outside of the high school setting, giving them the opportunity to show off non-academic talents, giving admissions officers a more well-rounded view of the students than the class rank, which solely assesses a student's academic achievement.

GIRLS' TENNIS

Coach: Ken Rawson

Captain: Sophomore Chanel Bullock

Record last year: 14-3

Goals: Win the league championship and States

Impact players: Junior Sally Pulver, sophomore Chanel Bullock, freshmen August Kahle and Andrea Rennie, and eighth-graders Christina Bullock and Bridgett Miller

Coach's quote: "I want everyone to become a better player by the end of the season, I want the team to perform to the best of their ability, and certainly if we do perform to the best of our ability we will a lot."

Captain's quote: "Even though we are a young team, I see us making it far this season. I am excited to help others on my team improve, so we can grow as a team together." -Sophomore Chanel Bullock



Chanel Bullock

BOYS' TENNIS

Coach: Robbie Bilsbury

Captains: Seniors Azzie Economo and Jake Rich

Record last year: 12-0 (regular season) 14-1 (overall)

Goals: Practice hard everyday, make everyone better, push each other, and help each other as teammates

Impact players: Seniors Azzie Economo and Jake Rich, juniors Dewey Komishane and Red Pulver, and sophomore Garrett Lamothe

Coach's quote: "This year is going to be awesome because we have a lot of people of similar ability all vying for top positions on the team. We have got such a great competitive energy within the group and when we challenge each other, we make each other better. That has been the case the past few years with the captains' leadership."

Captain's quote: "I am really excited about this season. We have a great coach who makes sure that everyone has fun, but also takes tennis seriously. I can definitely see us making a run in the state tournament again this year even though we have lost some key guys since last year." -Senior Jake Rich



Azzie Economo



Jake Rich

CO-OP TRACK

Coach: Jeffrey Destino

Captains: To be determined

Boys' record last year: 6-1

Girls' record last year: 6-1

Goals: To win the NEC meet and to get as many athletes to qualify for the Division 1 meet as possible

Impact players: Seniors Nathan Evans, Charlie Davis, Connor Senay, Jeb Hogan, and Megan Clark and junior Kyle Manley

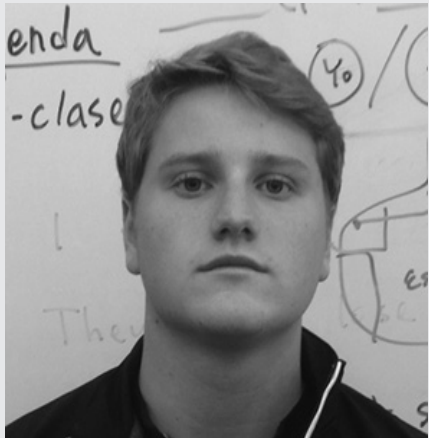
Coach's quote: "We are coming off a successful season and we have a lot of strong runners returning. Hopefully we can repeat our success."

Runner's quote: "A lot of girls have improved tremendously since last year, and we are gaining a few strong freshmen, from both Manchester and Gloucester, which will definitely be to our advantage." -Senior Megan Clark



Manchester seniors Megan Clark, Charlie Davis, Nathan Evans, and Connor Senay are potential captains.

BOYS' LACROSSE



Henry Rohner



Derek Walker



Chris DiFluri



Jack Hennigan

Coach: John McCavanagh

Captains: Seniors Henry Rohner, Derek Walker, Chris DiFluri, and Jack Hennigan

Record last year: 5-11

Goals: Work better together than in the past, improve last year's record, and make the playoffs

Impact players: Seniors Henry Rohner, Derek Walker, Chris DiFluri, Jack Hennigan, and Bennett Strayton, sophomore Patrick Guinee, and freshman Dan Rodier

Captain's quote: "Our main goal is to make the playoffs, something we haven't done in years. We have a lot of strong seniors who can make a deep run in states. We have worked together for the past 2-3 years and have started to gel with each other. I have a good feeling about the team this year. We have our whole team returning from last year with the addition of some skilled freshmen as well." - Senior Henry Rohner

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Coach: Rebecca Smith

Captains: Seniors Jenny Cochand and Bella Mastendino, and Junior Liddy DeConto

Record last year: 7-8-0

Goals: To win the conference title

Impact players: Seniors Jenny Cochand and Bella Mastendino, and Junior Liddy DeConto

Coach's quote: "I am wholly committed to creating a strong, winning program. My expectations are incredibly high for this team because I know them to be an extremely talented and hard-working group. I am a person and a player who likes to have a lot of fun; I love getting into the warm-up music, the themed-practice days, etc. That will definitely carry over into coaching."

Captains' quotes: "We have had a great turn out for our captain's practices, which really makes a big difference for our season. It's important that we don't waste time during our actual season getting back into shape."-Junior Liddy DeConto
 "Everyone is excited to start off the season. We don't really know what to expect this year, especially the seniors who have to adjust after having the same coach for three years. It's going to be a big switch." -Senior Jenny Cochand



Bella Mastendino



Jenny Cochand

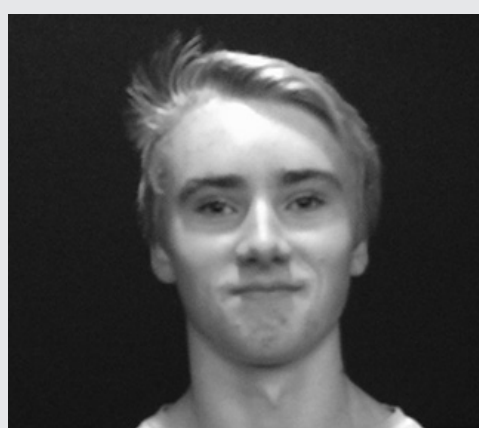


Liddy DeConto

SAILING



Ethan Andersen



Cole Charlton

Coach: Kieran O'Connell

Captains: Senior Ethan Andersen and junior Cole Charlton

Record last year: 12-7

Goals: Build on success from last year, promote the younger kids on the team, and develop the team as a whole

Impact players: Senior Ethan Andersen, juniors Cole Charlton and Shane Macleod, sophomore Anika Martz

Coach's quote: "We had a really awesome year last year. I'm looking forward to getting back on the water with the team."

Captains' quotes: "We have a lot of raw talent and if we come together and work hard towards our goal I think we can achieve it." -Senior Ethan Andersen

"[We want to] rebuild the team after losing a lot of seniors last year" -Junior Cole Charlton

BASEBALL

Coach: James Weed

Captains: Seniors Hunter Flood, Brad Graves, Chris Carr, and Brandon Bartlett

Record last year: 9-11

Goals: To make the state tournament and win the annual Rockport tournament

Impact players: Seniors Brandon Bartlett, Hunter Flood, Chris Carr, Brad Graves, Mackenzie Woodman and Damian Palmer; juniors Charlie Otterbein, Peter Coyne, and Jack Colpoys; sophomores Jackson Levendusky, Robbie Sarmanian, and Mitch Pacone.

Coach's quote: "We hope to get better as a team every day, taking one game at a time."

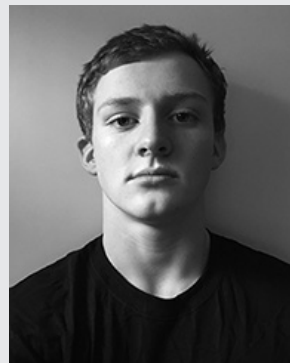
Captain's quote: "The team this year has depth in almost every position and is very versatile this year, which should be an advantage."
 –Senior Brandon Bartlett



Hunter Flood



Brad Graves



Chris Carr



Brandon Bartlett

SOFTBALL

Coach: Frank Sarro

Captains: Seniors Isabella Hickey and Molly Lynch

Record last year: 2-18

Rivals: Rockport and Ipswich

Goals: Making the tournament for the first time, getting better everyday individually and as a team, being competitive in CAL, and building confidence

Impact players: Senior Amanda Loebelenz, juniors Melanie Carter and Ainsley McLaughlin, and sophomore Taylor Reader

Coach's quote: "I really have high hopes for the team. I think we can do really well, and I think we can improve a lot from last year, and I really think we're going to win our share of games. I think we have to get over that hump a little bit after last year, and I think winning is almost a learned style...so I you have to have the winning, then that carries over...and then it takes on its own momentum. So I think it's going to be super important to us to get off to a good start."

Captain's quote: "I think this season will be good for the team because there's a new coach, a large amount of returning varsity players, and strong leadership from all the upperclassmen." –Senior Isabella Hickey



Isabella Hickey



Molly Lynch

ULTIMATE FRISBEE

Coach: Eric Magers

Captains: David LaForge and Tyler Malik

Record last year: 9-6

Goals: To encourage more middle school students to join the team and have a blast

Impact players: Juniors David LaForge and Tyler Malik

Coach's quote: "I love Ultimate in the sense that it is a unifying sport that is more about the spirit of the game, camaraderie, and respecting one another in a competitive way."

Captain's quote: "It definitely feels like we are all in it together during the season. Regardless of the result, we always have fun."
 –Junior David LaForge



David LaForge



Tyler Malik

Band, chorus members move on to Districts, All-States

Student performers join distinguished high school musicians across state

By Charlotte Freed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Both chorus and band members have achieved success on the district and state level this year, according to choral director Donna O'Neill and band director Joe Janack.

Six students were accepted to the Northeast Senior Districts, which took place January 6-9. Seniors Sara Rhuda, Josh Ward, Alex Buck and junior Jenny Duff were selected through chorus. Senior Alexei Goldsmith and sophomore Thomas Surette were selected through band.

O'Neill said this is the most students that have ever gone to Senior Districts.

Out of these six students, Rhuda, Goldsmith, Surette, and Buck all received high enough scores at Districts to get All-State recommendations. After

her audition, Rhuda was accepted All-States, which was March 10-12 at the Boston Symphony Hall.

This is the second year in a row that Rhuda has made All-States, which is an "exceptional accomplishment," considering students from the entire state attend, O'Neill said.

"The biggest thing that has allowed me to go to All-States two years in a row is practice... Even though preparing [for auditions] is sometimes stressful, I had the most amazing experience last year and am excited for a similar experience this year," Rhuda said.

Students from the high school have attended All-States for five years, and O'Neill is "very proud of students' talent, dedication, and strong work ethic" for having such success.

In the high school, the band



COURTESY OF ROBERT FITZGERALD

Senior Sara Rhuda performs in Northeast Senior Districts, earning a high enough score to advance to All-States. Rhuda has qualified for All-States two straight years, which she attributes to practice.

and chorus, which includes the Sound Waves, have a high school spring concert on April 14.

The Jazz Band concert is May 10. Janack received a grant from Spaulding Education to bring in a special guest musician for the concert, which he said would be a "great opportunity for the students to work with a professional jazz player but also give the audience members a

chance to see something for free that they usually would not be able to see."

Janack said the band is working on new, more challenging music for the students.

Both the chorus and the band went to Boston Symphony Hall February 25 to watch an open rehearsal with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus.

At this open rehearsal, students saw the conductors work with professional musicians in practice.

"These are some of the best musicians in the world, so they [saw] some amazing music being played but also [picked] up some of the same things those conductors say to their musicians as Ms. O'Neill and I say to them," Janack said.

Art department submits students' work to various contests, shows



COURTESY OF EMILY PARKER

Junior Emily Parker received a Grand Prize Award for her photo 'Unraveled.' She was given the award by Congressman Seth Moulton. The piece will now reside in the Capitol Building.

By Charlotte Freed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students in the Tamera Burns' and Caroline Epp's art classes have received several awards for submissions of art in different mediums.

The four contests that students submitted work to include The Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards, Youth Art Month run by the Massachusetts Art Education Association, the high school Endicott Art Show, and the Congressional Art Awards.

Epp said she submitted 20 senior students' artwork to the Boston Globe and eight portfolios. Seniors Liam Crossen and Jake Tognazzi, sophomore Will Finn, and junior Emily Parker received Gold Keys. Five students received Silver Keys.

Buck said she was really proud of her photo, which is of the sunset's reflection on the water of Manchester Harbor but

was not expecting an award for it, so the photo's success proved to be a welcome surprise.

Burns said she thinks these shows are great experiences for the students, but the art program does not exclude based on talent or which student could feasibly win an award for the school.

"I always support my students. I always say, 'If you want to work hard, you can get there.' That is my philosophy for awards and submissions such as these," Burns said.

Six students were submitted to the Youth Art Month for photography, and three were submitted for other mediums.

Junior Laney Franklin, sophomore Nell McKeon and senior Katie Bernier were submitted to the Endicott Art Show, which is a display of three high school students' art in differing mediums from each school at Endicott College.

However, Burns submit-

ted five students to the juried Congressional Art Awards on March 5, including seniors Maddie Shaw and Taylor Hamlen, Parker and Franklin, and sophomore Kayley Wright. Epp submitted a photograph taken by junior Zanny Lee.

Parker's artwork "Unraveled" was named the Grand Prize Award Winner. She was presented with an award March 5 by U.S. Representative Seth Moulton at Monsterrat College of Art. Her piece will be sent to the Capitol building in Washington D.C. for one year, which is "quite an honor," according to Burns.

"Awards are great, but I just think it's so wonderful for the kids to receive recognition and have their artwork put out there... this has been a great way for [Burns and I] to show our colleagues and other schools what our art program is about," Epp said.

Sundance darling 'The Witch' effectively horrifies without sacrificing plot

By Fritz Spofford
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After horrifying and intriguing Sundance audiences last year, "The Witch" is receiving a full theatrical run, providing audiences with a morally ambiguous tale of the unraveling of a Puritan family after the devil himself comes knocking at their door.

Director Robert Eggers has effectively made a name for himself with this artfully crafted feature debut, in which a Puritan patriarch moves with his family to the edge of the wilderness after being excommunicated from his village, only to be terrorized by a mysterious figure lurking in the forest.

The intensity of the hor-

ror instilled in audiences can be credited to the masterful, Kubrick-inspired use of sound

and visual – one of the most intriguing moments of the film is a long shot of the family, all packed into a single wagon, riding away toward the forest as women's voices moan and warble forebodingly in the background, growing louder and louder before ceasing altogether.

The film is a slow burn but a burn nonetheless, searing through any sense of security

an audience member may possess and inducing full-blown paranoia – nonexistent figures

begin to appear in the background; every rustle of leaves becomes a threat.

Though the majority of the film builds on plot development, there are sequences in the film that remain

the most terrifying images I have ever witnessed.

The artistic credibility of "The Witch" also manifests itself through the cast. Ralph Ineson is convincing as the patriarch, a man torn between his own be-

The artistic credibility of 'The Witch' manifests itself through the cast.



THEWITCH-MOVIE.COM

'The Witch' captures audiences by both holding true to the horror genre and maintaining an uncommon sense of literary integrity.

liefs and his love for his children. Scottish actress Kate Dickie also shines as the mother, but it is Anya Taylor-Joy who carries the film as the daughter, Thomasin.

"The Witch" is rated R for graphic (but not sexualized) nudity and disturbing violent content, and is not recommended for the faint of heart.

Vogue's YouTube channel offers a variety of interesting videos regarding art, culture

Vogue's videos give subscribers an easy way to learn more about their favorite celebrities' interests, informs them about foreign lifestyles.

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

YouTube has a plethora of channels which one could spend days digging through. Arguably one of YouTube's best channels however is Vogues.

The Vogue channel is filled with videos on fashion, inspirational people, and news spotlights on major events in the world of art.

For any fashion maven, Vogue is a great place to see the best runway shows and opinions on them from people like Anna Wintour, the editor of Vogue, style icon Alexa Chung, and many other celebrities.

Along with the runways, there are videos such as "Modern Etiquette" about manners one is expected to have in today's time.

The video "Learn to Surf with World Champion Stephanie Gilmore" is another interview that follows Stephanie Gilmore



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

Individual private sections of the channel specific to different countries allow viewers the opportunity to explore popular trends in major cities around the world.

and takes the viewer out onto the ocean for a quick lesson.

"Princess and the Pea"

For any fashion maven, Vogue is a great place to see the best runway shows and opinions on them from many celebrities.

has one of the Vogue editors looking for a new bed and how to find the best and most comfortable ones.

There is also a mini-series within the Vogue channel that is led by Alexa Chung as she looks into what it takes to get into the

fashion world and all the jobs that are available in the business.

Overall, the Vogue channel varies on what it publishes to its channels, and though it is fashion orientated, it can span trends in many different areas. For example, what types of dogs are stylish in Westminster.

Within the Vogue channel, many countries also have their own private Vogue section that has a dozen other videos to spark viewer's interests.

France's Vogue channel has a collection of fantastic interviews called "73 Questions." A man, who

the viewer never actually sees, interviews celebrities like Reese Witherspoon, Blake Lively, Victoria Beckham, Daniel Radcliffe, Sarah Jessica Parker and many more.

As he interviews them, the celebrity's generally tour him around their gorgeous homes or fabulous gardens. The interview as a whole is very casual.

On the Paris channel and in other countries as well, there are feature episodes which talk to girls within that country. They talk about their style and the manner most well dressed women in their culture carry themselves.

WEBSurfer

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



FiveThirtyEight

FiveThirtyEight is essentially the Internet at your fingertips under one domain name. Named after the amount of electors in the Electoral College by creator Nate Silver in 2008, the site was originally a political blog to complain about American politics. In 2013, ESPN bought the rights to the website and appointed Nate Silver editor-in-chief. Five categories of stories are listed at the top of the home page (Politics, Sports, Science & Health, Economics, and Culture) to give viewers an organized way of branching off towards different subject matter. Silver has created numerous algorithmic models for predicting the winners of political races, NBA games, etc., many of which are shown on the right side of the page under "Interactives." Want to mindlessly surf the web but don't know where to start? FiveThirtyEight is the obvious answer.

FactCheck.org

FactCheck.org provides the answers to statements by presidential candidates that you may seriously question whether or not they are factual. A project created by the Annenberg Public Policy Center, each candidate's actions and questionable statements are either posted in article form under "Home" or "Articles" or in Q&A format underneath "Ask FactCheck." If you have an interest in researching one particular candidate, mouse over the "2016 Election" tab and click on any of the current candidates in the running to see all articles and news stories related to him or her. Whatever your purpose for browsing, FactCheck debunks all potential political falsehoods and provides an honest look into each candidate's intents and the election's proceedings on the whole.

Smarty Pins

Smarty Pins is an interactive game using Google Maps software in order to answer geographical trivia questions. Upon entering the website, you can either click "Start Now" to receive miscellaneous questions chosen from various categories, or you can choose a favorite category. For example, "March Madness" prompts numerous questions regarding locations of notable college basketball achievements. It may seem difficult, but when the question is asked, the map narrows down to a one-state radius, and you have the capability of zooming in or out on the map if you so choose. With Google's technology rapidly advancing, it is nice to be able to utilize such technology in an entertaining and creative way.

What to...

Watch: Movie "Brooklyn"



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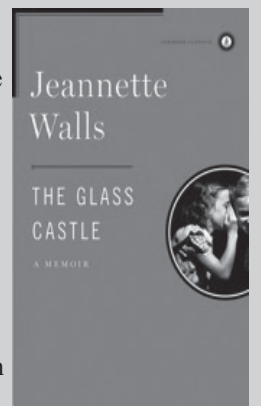
Taking place in the 1950s, "Brooklyn," written by Nick Hornby and directed by John Crowley, focuses on the life of immigrant Eilis Lacey. The screenplay

was written based on the novel by Colin Tóibín. Lacey finds herself moving to New York from Ireland in hopes of leading a better life. Upon moving to North America, Lacey is suddenly caught in a life filled with great romance. When her past catches up to her while living her new life in Brooklyn, however, she must choose between two countries and the lives that exist within them. Torn between two lovers, Lacey is forced to make a decision that could potentially have a lasting impact on her life. This 2016 PG-13 rated drama, due to scenes of sexuality and strong language, stars actors Saoirse Ronan, Domhnall Gleeson, and Eileen O'Higgins, and has a run time of one hour and 51 minutes. This emotionally-charged film will leave viewers on their toes as they impatiently await the decisions Eilis Lacey will have to make in her life.

Read: Book

"The Glass Castle" by Jeannette Walls

Written by Jeannette Walls, "The Glass Castle" is a 2005 memoir that explores the intense love of a peculiar but loyal family of four children and two parents. Living like nomads, the family constantly moves along Southwest desert towns. The parents, Rex and Rose Mary, enlighten their children, teaching them physics, geology, and the importance of fearlessness in life. Dysfunction in the family gradually intensifies; however, as Rex resorts to alcohol as an escape from the shabby lifestyle his family is living. As Rex disappears for days, drinks endlessly, and acts unruly, the children find themselves leaving their parents for New York. Here, the siblings learn to care for one another, and they manage to embrace a new, worthwhile lifestyle. This tender, moving story shows what it takes to be independent. Walls pours feelings of sadness, shock, and surprising affection throughout the memoir, keeping characters interesting and readers on edge.

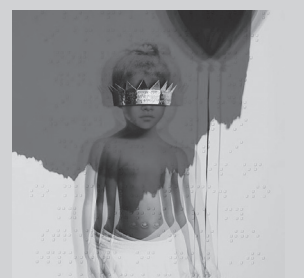


WWW.JEANNETTEWALLS.COM

Listen To: Album

"Anti" by Rihanna

"Anti," released on January 28, 2016, is the eighth studio album recorded by pop and R&B artist Rihanna. The singer began planning the album since 2014 under the label Roc Nation. Rihanna contributed to most of the albums' lyrics and collaborated with several producers including Jess Bhasker and Timbaland to make her songs successful. Rihanna's music reveals a departure from her previous dance and club music genre, creating a primarily pop and R&B feel. Popular songs on the album that have caught the public's attention include "Work," "Needed Me," and "Desperado." Each of these songs incorporate the overlapping themes of romantic love and self-assurance. The album isn't filled with overpowering dance-oriented hits but contains deep, meaningful, and emotional tunes that speak towards independence and lust.



COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG

By Courtney Fraser, Independent Editor