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Drama Club advances to final round of Dramafest Performance of short play WASP carries group to competition

By Maggie Lehar
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After performing in the preliminary and semi-final round of the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild Drama Festival, the Drama Club advanced onto finals with its performance of "WASP."

The club will be one of the 14 schools out of the original 111 to compete in the final round, according to director Elizabeth Edgerton.

Edgerton said the play is a dark comedy written by Steve Martin, the comedian.

"It is about a family in the '50s,

who on the surface seem to be the perfect family, but they are all unhappy in their own ways," she said.

One challenge the performers faced during the competition was making sure the audience received the play the way it's supposed to be received, and the actors did a perfect job of making that happen,

Edgerton said.

"The energy and excitement were overwhelming, which really helped all the actors put on a strong performance," senior Jacob Martz said.

Time was another concern the club had going into the competition, according to Edgerton.

"We only have 40 minutes, so I'm always ner-

The energy and excitement were overwhelming, which really helped all the actors put on a strong performance."

-JACOB MARTZ



COURTESY OF TIERNEY MCTIERNAN

The Drama Club performed their short play, WASP, at Westford Academy in the semi-final round of competition. Besides winning multiple awards in the preliminary round, the group earned honors as one of the top 14 schools out of 111 that will advance to the final round of competition March 22.

vous about time," she said.

The club won multiple awards for their performance in the preliminary round.

"We were very proud of

our awards; we won both acting and tech awards.

Junior Molly McCoy and senior Nicole D'Ambrosio won acting awards,

junior Nick Janowicz won for

sound, junior Charlie Hoff for lighting, and senior Julie Macleod for set," Edgerton said.

"It's exciting that CONTINUED PAGE 4

Global Issues hosts teacher talent show, fights human trafficking

By Fiona Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Raising \$4,000 for the Somali Mam Foundation to fight human trafficking, the Global Issues class capped a strong week of fundraising with a teacher talent show attended by 389 community members, according to teacher James Wallimann.

Senior Evy Weihs, a Global Issues class member, said she and her classmates chose to put on the talent show to bring an enjoyable event to the school community.

"The talent show is the idea that most people were energized about, and the teachers wanted to get involved in some way... we were so surprised at how



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO

At the Global Issues teacher talent show, teachers performed for an audience of 389 people. The fundraiser benefited the Somali Mam Foundation to fight human trafficking. Sophomore Sam Creighton said his favorite performance came from two teachers, James Wallimann and Colin Cook, with their interpretive dance.

many people came out," she said.

According to Weihs, the class works on Somali Mam fundraising projects on every day one, many of which took place this week including Power Point presentations, a Texas Roadhouse restaurant night, and a dodge ball tournament.

Wallimann said he was excited about the event... because it united the school and community.

Continued PAGE 4

Sophomore Sam Creighton said he commended the class for working for a worthy cause.

"Human trafficking is an important issue, and the class has been working really hard to raise money," he said.

Wallimann said he was excited about the success of the event in terms of the money it raised, but also because it united the school and community for a good cause. "Not only was it able to raise money, but it brought community CONTINUED PAGE 4

Reading Memorial High School assistant principal accepts new high school principal position

By Fiona Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After a week of principal candidate site visits in both the high school and middle school, the district selected Patricia Puglisi as the new high school principal and Steven Guditis as the middle school principal.

The school community received the announcement by email on March 8.

According to Beaudoin, Puglisi stood out for her knowledge of the classroom, ability to understand the complexity of the job of principal, and the "skill and grace" with which she does her job.

"She is someone who really gets invested in the places that she works... she is a very collaborative person by nature who is also good at making difficult decisions when she has to," Beaudoin said.



COURTESY OF PATRICIA PUGLISI

Patricia Puglisi, an assistant principal at Reading, will be the high school principal next fall.

Puglisi, currently an assistant principal for curriculum and instruction at Reading Memorial High School, said her background as a history teacher, student club leader, and school projects initiator has prepared her well to take on the responsibilities of a principal. CONTINUED PAGE 4

'She is someone who really gets invested in the places that she works.'

-PAMELA BEAUDOIN

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News Briefs

Ski Team competes in State Tournament

The Ski Team was able to send both a female team and an individual male racer to the State Tournament that was held on Tuesday, Feb. 26. The girl's team included senior captain Megan Jones, junior Lizzi White, sophomore Alex Marshall, and freshman Megan Clark. Representing the boys was senior captain Brian McAuliff. "Making States was not only a great personal achievement, but it was also a huge team achievement," Jones said. "We set goals at the beginning of the season to make States, and we achieved those goals." Overall, the girl's team finished 7th out of about 40-50 teams.

National Honor Society promotes new school-wide tutoring program

The National Honor Society is running a tutoring program on Monday and Thursday afternoons from 2:30-3:15 in the library. Members from the National Honor Society will be available for test review, homework help, and essay revisions. The aim of the program is promoting scholastic unity and forging bonds between upperclassmen and underclassmen. Although the program has not yet had much success, the society is refusing to be discouraged. Interested students should sign up on the 2nd floor senior Bulletin Board.

International Week explores the wonders of travelling

By Sarah Beckmann
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

International Week, running from March 12 to the 15, consisted of 20 different presentations by both adults and students on countries from around the world.

The week itself is state-sponsored, so most schools across Massachusetts participate in the festivities. Spanish teacher and foreign language department chair Michelle Magaña organizes this annual celebration for both the middle and high schools. Magaña usually begins the preparation process after midterms, recruiting a variety of travelers from within and outside the school to tell their experiences to every foreign language class.

For example, senior Nikki Southard presented on her year abroad in Spain; as a junior, she lived with a family in a foreign country, and she described how different her school and social life were to life at home. Magaña, having lived a similar experience, commented on Southard's presentation. "Everything is much more live and in-person rather than through Facebook and texting. I loved that, because you're not staring at a screen. You're ac-

tually interacting with people, and that was a huge difference she found between the United States and [Spain]," Magaña said.

Sophomores Oliver Hull and Josh Ward presented on their separate trips to India. Hull went for three weeks during the fall because his dad had to work. Ward has family living in India and traveled over the summer.

"I found it bizarre that on the side of the street there'd be rich folks in five star hotels, and on the other there'd be the poorest of the poor living in tents," said freshman Toni Rerisi, who viewed Hull's presentation.

More student presenters included

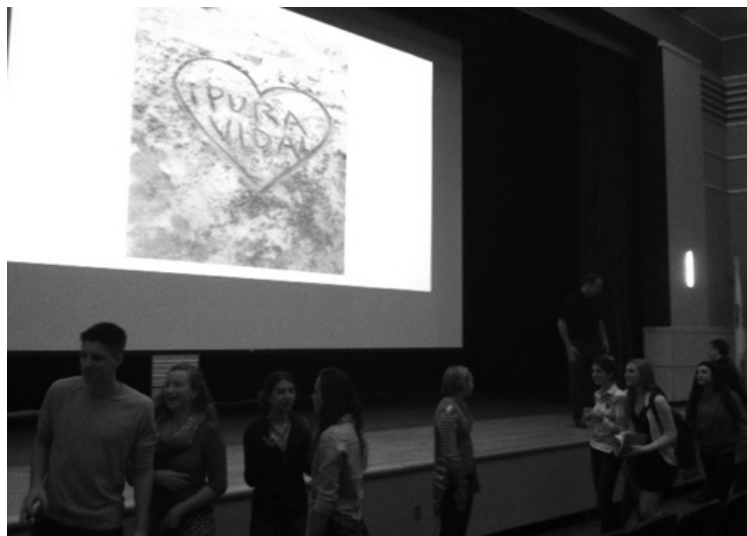
juniors Madeline Dahlin and Erik Rajunas. Dahlin accompanied the Costa Rica group last February, and Rajunas had visited Aruba a couple years ago with family; he presented to middle school foreign language teacher Doris-Ann Vosseler's class.

Dahlin explained the Costa Rica trip to various high school Spanish students, and noted the tight bonds that formed between the students who went, even if they hadn't known each other as well before.

Among the invited speakers was Manchester Essex graduate Traynor Canny, who went to Spain after college because he didn't get to study abroad in

'Everything is much more live and in-person rather than through Facebook and texting. I loved that, because you're not staring at a screen.'

-MICHELLE MAGANA



SARAH BECKMANN PHOTO

Students congregate in the auditorium in order to ask questions after a presentation on the school's Spanish trip to Costa Rica.



SARAH BECKMANN PHOTO

The guidance counselor from the Essex Elementary School, Gillian Polk, presented to students on her trip to South Africa.

school. Working one month and traveling the next, "he didn't have an official job, but [knew] he wanted to travel," Magaña said. Magaña thanked the caf-

eteria ladies for their hard work integrating International Week not only within the foreign language classes but also throughout the entire school.

S.C.O.R.E projects encourage students to experience the real world before college

By Emily Arntsen
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



FACEBOOK.COM

For his S.C.O.R.E project, Kurt Statz-Geary is working for a small business called Imagine an Ocean. There, he will experiment with coral and how it grows at various temperatures.



FACEBOOK.COM PHOTO

Megan Jones will be working as an intern manager and chef at the restaurant Latitude 43.



FACEBOOK.COM PHOTO

Because of her interest in horses, Riley McCarthy will be working at Windrush Farm.

Each year senior students are required to participate in S.C.O.R.E, Senior Choice of Related Experience, where students choose an internship that interests them and will prepare them for future jobs.

Lasting roughly one-month, internships start April 8 and finish at the end of May. Students must complete 30 hours of work a week at their internships and conclude their experience with a 15-minute presentation and a 12-page essay.

S.C.O.R.E counts for 25% of senior's final grades and is necessary to graduate.

This year, S.C.O.R.E leader Daniel Jewett is encouraging students to find projects outside of school and family businesses, but there are no formal changes to the overall program.

As a result there are fewer students who will be working in the

high school, according to Jewett.

Projects range from internships at the Trustees of Reservation, animal shelters and hospitals to radio broadcasting, theater and web design.

"There are still several students who need to re-submit paperwork, but generally, everyone is on track," Jewett said.

Many seniors are interested in their projects. Of them, seniors

'I'm going to be helping kids with special needs through therapeutic [horseback] riding. I'm going to work alongside a specialist to learn more about the kids' needs.'

-RILEY MCCARTHY

Riley McCarthy, Megan Jones and Kurt Statz-Geary are particularly excited.

McCarthy will work for the Windrush Farm in Boxford, Mass. "I'm going to be helping kids with special

needs through therapeutic [horseback] riding. I'm going to work alongside a specialist to learn more about the kids' needs," she said.

Restaurant Latitude 43 in Gloucester is employing Jones as an intern manager and chef.

"I'm basically just going to be shadowing the manager and learning the ropes of running a business. I would love to go

Four debaters qualify for national tournaments

Individual students achieve more success with each competition

By Hannah Riordan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Throughout February and March, four members of the Debate team qualified for national tournaments. Senior Jacob Martz

and junior Fiona Davis qualified in Congressional Debate for the National Catholic Forensics League (NCFL) tournament.

In Lincoln Debate, sophomore William Kiley qualified for the NCFL tournament, while sophomore Nick Albertazzi qualified for both the NCFL tournament and the National Forensics League (NFL) tournament.

‘I’m very grateful of the support that Mr. Jewett has given me over the years.’

-WILLIAM KILEY

Albertazzi qualified and attended the NCFL tournament as a freshman during 2012.

Senior Colin Babikian is the first alternate to attend the NFL tournament; he and Albertazzi finished the qualifying tournament with the same record, and a coin

was tossed to see who would attend.

Debate coach Dan Jewett said the team has increased the number of students achieving solid performances at each tournament this year.

“Our expectations for next year are to maintain this solid performance of most of our debaters and start to have some

individual breakout success on the national circuit,” Jewett said.

Kiley noted support from his coaches Jennifer Coleman and Jewett as a major contributor to his success.

“I’m very grateful of the support that Mr. Jewett has given me over the years. He has been a big supporter of my attendance of national tournaments, which have no doubt helped prepare me to qualify,” he said.

Coach James Wallimann teaches Congress, the event in which Martz and Davis qualified.

“Both Fiona and Jacob have a focus and work ethic that is seldom seen in student their age,” Wallimann said.

Along with Jewett, Wallimann said that the qualification of four students shows that the team is on the right trajectory in terms of becoming competitive on a national level.



COURTESY OF JESSICA TRAN

Sophomores Nick Albertazzi and William Kiley, senior Jacob Martz, and junior Fiona Davis all qualified for national tournaments in different events at the debate States competition.

Student Council runs annual Red Cross Blood Drive

25 volunteer donors bring in 29 pints of blood, save people in need



COURTESY OF ALEX STASIAK

Junior Will Davis was one person who donated double the regular amount of one pint of blood. The Blood Drive, run by the student council and sponsored by Red Cross, took place in the school’s gym March 12. Twenty-five people were able to donate, and at the end of the day 29 pints of blood were collected. Before having blood taken, donors had to answer eligibility questions. After donating, they were provided snacks and took a 15-minute rest.

By Anna Tyler
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With help from Student Council, the American Red Cross was able to collect 29 pints of blood during the annual Blood Drive on March 12. A single donation can help up to three people, and there were 25 donors who volunteered and qualified to donate their blood.

“I decided to donate because I know that blood donations save countless lives each year, and what is a pint of blood here and there to me?” senior and second time donor Audrey Davis said.

One pint was taken from each donor; however, a few donors were able to give double the regular amount, according to Student Council adviser and math teacher Sarah DeLuca.

“I think we focus so much on community service being time and money, and this is just one area of

community service that we don’t always think about,” DeLuca said.

The Blood Drive took place in the gymnasium where donors

then needed to qualify in order to give blood. Afterwards, they were provided with snacks and drinks during a 15-minute resting period while being cared

for by Student Council members.

“I thought it would be a lot scarier, but it wasn’t. I also thought it would hurt more, but it really didn’t. All of the nurses were very nice, so I was really comfortable,” senior and first time donor Whitney Hammond said.

The blood was then taken to a Red Cross blood component laboratory where it will be sepa-

rated into various components such as red blood cells, plasma, platelets, and cryoprecipitate.

DeLuca believes the Blood

Drive was a success and that “anytime we have first time donors and just students in general thinking about other people and being able to give like that is a good thing.”

Even though a few donors made trips to the nurse, Hammond said she would definitely donate blood again.

“It was really just so easy, and it goes to help people who really need it or to research that will help people as well. The nurse also told me that my veins were meant to donate, so I’ll definitely be donating again,” Hammond said.

‘I decided to donate because I know that blood donations save countless lives each year.’

-AUDREY DAVIS

Students compete at DECA States, 7 qualify for Internationals

By Carolyn Heslop
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

This year, 26 students qualified for the DECA State Competition that was held at the Boston Marriott Copley from March 14-16.

According to DECA adviser Dean Martino, this competition affords the students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do with problem solving in specific business areas.

At the competition, most of the contestants take their first 100-question exam at 10 p.m. on the first night and then are up by 7:30 a.m. the next morning to take their second one, Martino said.

“It ends up being a pretty long 24 hours because after tak-

ing our two exams, we all have to complete two roles plays,” senior Austin Waldsmith said. “However, the satisfaction that comes at the end is totally worthwhile.”

According to senior Taylor Ketchum, the four scores are all compiled, and this final number determines the student’s final rank.

Martino said that the team had a very successful year with seven students qualifying for Internationals and 17 individual medals awarded to students that scored in the top three of either their test or role play.

Those who qualified for Internationals included sophomores Eric Fossa and Alex Thompson, juniors Charles Hoff and Zachary Trembowicz, and seniors Brian Gibson, Taylor Ketchum, and Austin Waldsmith.

According to Martino, the Quizbowl team lost in a close tie-breaker to the team that ended up winning first place, and this was something that the team had never accomplished before.

“This year’s team was also one of the most spirited and enthusiastic groups that we have had in a while,” Martino said. “They really got into the event, showed great team camaraderie, and were just an overall great group to travel with.”

Although the group did enjoy themselves on the trip, Martino said that they faced some issues with judges who inaccurately scored students, preventing them from moving on to Internationals.

However, the students are taking everything in stride and remain. CONTINUATIONS PAGE 4



COURTESY OF RACHAEL GALLAGHER

Sophomores Alex Thompson and Eric Fossa competed in the DECA States competition and were two of seven students that qualified for Internationals. Twenty-six students participated in the States competition in Boston mid-March. Also, 17 students received medals for scoring in the top three in one category.

Excitement builds for teachers, students anticipating prom

By Natasha Statz-Geary
INDEPENDENT STAFF

With only a little under three months to go before prom, students and teachers alike are beginning to finalize every last detail of the event.

The prom this year will be held at the Double Tree Hotel in Danvers, formerly the Sheraton Ferncroft, and due to the SATs taking place Saturday, June 1, the prom has been tentatively changed from Friday, May 31 to Saturday, June 1 from 8-11 p.m. as of the page's deadline.

"The venue is very upscale and will fit all of the students perfectly. It just underwent major renovations, and I think students will appreciate the large sitting area," senior class president Calvin Lamothe said.

Senior class adviser Jared Harvey, the main coordinator, is in charge of all the details.

An Italian buffet will be served for

dinner, and a police detail will be at the venue due to the large number of students attending.

"We're planning on having the same DJ as we had last year because the students liked him so much, and an idea we're also considering is having a bin full of flip-flops for when girls' feet get tired," Harvey said.

Students will be required to ride with the school on the way there in school buses.

Prom tickets will go on sale March 20 in the library.



DOUBLETREE3.HILTON.COM

The Double Tree Hotel's ballroom is much different than the Coco Key Resort that is a part of the same hotel. The venue is designed to be elegant. It was formerly known as the Sheraton Ferncroft.

Tickets are \$75 each and can be bought before or after school.

Even though there are still over two months to go before prom, the creative invitations have already begun.

On the recent school trip to Costa Rica over February vacation, senior Devin Congdon asked senior Ellie Mortillaro on the beach during sunset.

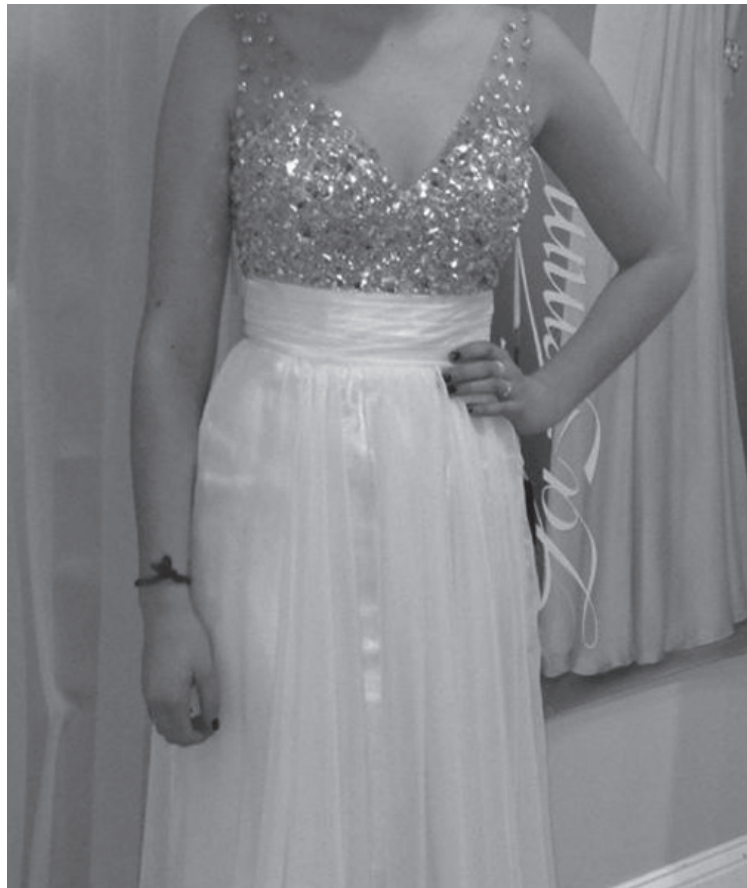
"We were in Jacó, Costa Rica, and we were all walking on the beach during sunset, and then he suddenly asked me! I was so shocked, and I obviously said yes. It was really cute," Mortillaro said.

Some girls have even begun their searches for the perfect dress and shoes.

"I have so many dresses and shoes that I possibly want to wear to prom saved on Wanelo," junior Alexandra Valenti said.

'I have so many dresses and shoes that I possibly want to wear saved on Wanelo.'

-ALEXANDRIA VALENTI



FACEBOOK.COM



NORDSTROM.COM

At left is senior Carolyn Heslops's dress that was posted on the 2013 Prom Dresses Facebook Group. She bought it at Glitterati in Danvers. Above is senior Austen Coviello's Adrianna Papell dress from Nordstrom.

CONTINUATIONS

DRAMAFEST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
so many people from our school won awards," Macleod said.

Every host site also awards what's called the "Stage Manager's Award," which goes to the school that is the most helpful, the most friendly, and the easiest to work with, Edgerton said.

"We won that award, which was a really big deal," she said.

According to Edgerton it was difficult to tell what the club's chances were for moving onto the final round.

"The competition obviously gets more difficult in the second round, and it really depends on what the judges are looking for. That's something you don't know going into it, you just have to do your best performance," she said.

Edgerton said the Drama Club was surprised when they won in the semi-final round.

"At the end of the day, after you've seen all of the plays, you start to think about if you were the judge who you would pick to move on," she said.

Edgerton said the judges' commended WASP for how it created the whole world of that '50s family.

Between now and when they compete in the final round

on Friday, March 22, the group will be putting some of the judges recommendations from the semi-final round into the play, according to Edgerton.

"It's usually something small, like an extra action, facial expression, or more movement. We're calling it polishing," she said.

The Drama Club is thankful for how supportive the school has been, Edgerton said.

"We've all had a lot of support from the faculty, the staff, and the administration, and we really appreciate it," she said.

TEACHER TALENT SHOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

members together, teachers, students, parents...it fostered this team atmosphere and this school spirit. It was a really great feeling," he said.

According to Wallimann, the class hopes to continue the event in the future because the response the class received and the effect on the school community was so positive.

"It was just fun, and everybody had a good time. It is certainly something we are going to do moving forward. I would like to see it every year," Wallimann said.

Up next, the Global Issues class will be raffling off Bruins tickets for \$2 per ticket during the week

of March 25, Wallimann said.

Wallimann said that the class will also host a Cape Ann Pizza night.

"We have one more Cape Ann Pizza night, which was such a success the first time that they decided to let us do it again, and that is going to be April 1," he said.

According to Wallimann, seniors Nicole Brosch and Kelsi Field will be completing their S.C.O.R.E. projects by doing a major fundraiser as well, which he hopes will give the last push to reach the ultimate \$15,000 goal.

For more teacher talent show pictures go to page 8.

PRINCIPAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I think there are always new and interesting challenges facing the school community. I believe that is important to face challenges thoughtfully and methodically," she said.

According to Beaudoin, teachers and parents were impressed by Puglisi's professionalism and experience but also by her compassion for students.

"She really gave them a sense that she cares about kids ... and will be present and involved in the community," Beaudoin said.

According to Puglisi, one priority in creating a successful school

is safety and satisfaction of students, which depends on students feeling comfortable at school.

"The successful school community is a collaborative community focused on what is in the best interest of kids," Puglisi said.

Junior Sarah Lewiecki, one of the students who served on the Principal Search Committee, said Puglisi immediately connected with students through her interest in student activities as well as her kindness.

"She spoke so fluently, but at the same time stayed on our level and related to us," Lewiecki said.

Puglisi will likely become a fixture in all aspects of school life, according to Beaudoin.

"She loves education, she loves working with high school students, and she is looking for a place where she can come and stay for a while," she said.

According to Beaudoin, students and parents will have the opportunity to meet Puglisi and the new middle school principal, Guditis, on March 26, from 6-7 p.m. in the high school library.

S.C.O.R.E.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

to culinary school after I go to college. I want to learn about the business side of restaurants along with the cooking

FAST FACTS

- Tentative date: Saturday, June 1
- Time: 8-11 p.m.
- Menu: Italian Buffet
- Location: Double Tree Hotel in Danvers
- Tickets are \$75
- On sale March 20. Available before and after school in the library

To read The Independent online please visit: memo.mersd.org or scan this image.



Health Matters

Chocolate provides health benefits

By Isadora Decker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Almost everyone loves chocolate, which is why it's so exciting to hear that it's actually good for you.

Chocolate is made from cacao seeds—different brands and types have different levels of cacao in them, with dark chocolate generally having the highest levels.

When trying to maximize health benefits while fulfilling chocolate cravings, shoppers should look for the percent to which their chocolate bar is enriched with cocoa powder. The higher this percentage is, the healthier it will be.

According to the Chemistry Central Journal, cacao seeds have more antioxidants than many other fruits and powders that have been deemed “super-fruits” for their high nutritive value.

Antioxidants bind to free radicals, which can clog arteries and contribute to cancer, blindness and many other conditions, according to Harvard School of Public Health.

Cocoa powder and dark chocolate are especially high in flavanols, which are strong antioxidants with many health benefits. The Chemistry Central Journal writes that these include



MARKRED.COM

Chocolate, which is full of antioxidants, has high fiber content and anti-inflammatory properties that make it nutritious.

an increase in artery elasticity, blood flow and insulin sensitivity (which can combat diabetes), decrease blood pressure, and protect skin from sun damage.

According to the Huffington Post, many of the health benefits of dark chocolate are due to its anti-inflammatory properties and high fiber content, which help to reduce risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the US, according to the CDC. This makes

chocolate even more essential as a method of preventative care.

A study done in 2011 in Sweden discovered that women who had less than nine grams of chocolate a week had a 20 percent higher risk of stroke than women who ate over 45 grams.

While many people prefer milk chocolate to dark chocolate, the vast benefits of dark chocolate make the small sacrifice in taste worth it. Next time you're feeling down, sit back, relax, and enjoy a not-so-guilty pleasure: chocolate.

Olivia Lantz races in Nationals, breaks five-minute mile

By Max Nesbit
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Olivia Lantz, as sophomore, set a Manchester Essex High School record by running a 4 minute and 57.7 second mile at the All-States championship race and qualifying for the National meet where she placed 13th.

In the All-State race, which included the best runners from all over Massachusetts, Lantz posted a personal best time, finished second in the race, and also qualified for the New Balance National Championship meet where she finished 13th and was the top sophomore.

“After Nationals I was a little disappointed because I did not beat my personal record (.6 seconds off),

but overall I was extremely happy with my season because I was able to achieve my long term goals of breaking five minutes, and going to Nationals was an amazing experience,” Lantz said after her Nationals race March 10 in New York.

Lantz is a focused and disciplined runner. She is constantly



COURTESY OF ANNA HEFFERNAN

Sophomore Olivia Lantz (center) accepts her second place medal after running a 4 minute 57.7 second mile at All-States.

focused on the race at hand and never gets too caught up in what's at stake, according to

varsity coach John Barbour.

“I wasn't really thinking about going to Nationals during my race. I just tried to really focus and reach or beat my goal time,” Lantz said.

Winning a race is great, but she is more concerned about her personal time and how she can

improve on herself, Lantz said.

“After my All-State race I was super excited when I saw that I came in second, but I was even more excited that I had ran a personal best time. It's more important to me to improve my time than to come in first because competition helps, but racing is all about improving your own speed and not how the other people around you are doing,” Lantz said.

She said she is also looking forward to next season and trying to improve her running.

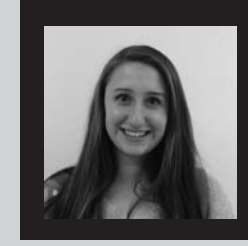
“I haven't really thought about stuff for the long run, but right now I take it one race at a time, and at each one I just try to better my time,” Lantz said.

‘I was super excited when I saw that I came in second, but I was even more excited that I had ran a personal best time. It's more important to me to improve my time.’

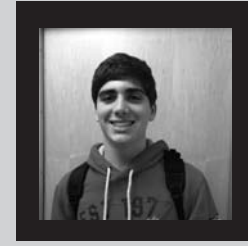
-OLIVIA LANTZ



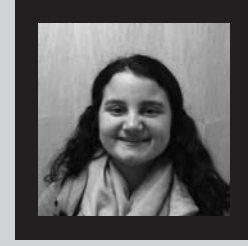
Freshman
Oscar Heanue:
Steven Colbert



Freshman
Jenna Allen:
Lana del Rey



Sophomore
Michael Fuca:
Will Ferrell

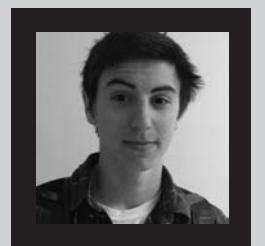


Sophomore
Breanna Arnold:
Beyonce

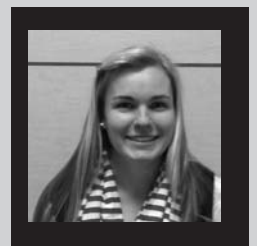
Student Speak

If you could pick any celebrity to be our new principal, who would you pick?

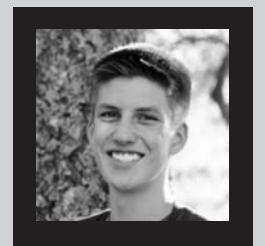
Junior
Ely Koufman:
Jim Carrey



Junior
Taylor Meek:
George Clooney



Senior
Calvin Lamothe:
Barack Obama



Senior
Chloe Schwartz:
Johnny Depp





Green Team selected to advance in award process

By Rachel Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After a long application process, the school has been nominated as the one public school from Massachusetts to be sent to the Federal Department of Education to be reviewed for the Green Ribbon Schools award.

The U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools recognition award honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and providing effective environmental and sustainability education, according to Green Team Director Eric Magers.

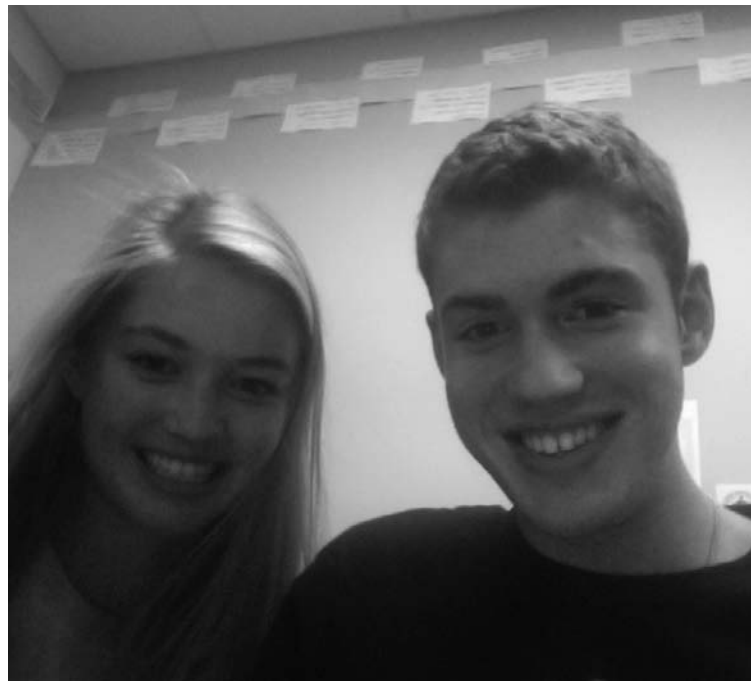
Before reaching this point, two Green Scholars, along with the aid of several teachers, compiled a 23-page application for the award portraying why the school deserves the recognition.

According to junior Brittany Smith, the application process consisted of answering questions regarding the school's green aspects and Green Team program.

"I'm so happy we got selected for the federal level selection," Smith said. "It made the 12-week application process worth it."

The Green Team has been able to achieve numerous successes

The Green Team has been able to achieve numerous successes by giving students real world experiences in the Scholars program.



COURTESY OF KEVIN CELLUCCI

Green Team president, senior Kevin Cellucci and junior Brittany Smith worked to compile application for the U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbons Schools recognition award.

by giving students real world experiences in the Scholars program. Receiving this award increases the district-wide recognition of the program, Magers said.

Additionally, agencies such as Green Schools, Alliance for Climate Education, Green Education Foundation, Mass DEP and Mass Recycle have informally recognized the school as the greenest in the state.

"There is no formal recogni-

tion, but if there were one, we would have it," Magers said.

The award poses many indirect benefits for the program as well.

"Perhaps the greatest benefit from this award will be that we may be able to increase the amount of grant money we receive in the future as foundations will recognize our school's commitment to sustainability," said Green Team president, senior Kevin Cellucci.

"It is incredible to finally be recognized for all of our hard work and it really makes me feel as though I am making a difference in my community," Cellucci said.

Harry Potter club begins, group plans various activities, trivia, quidditch

By Isadora Decker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Because sports now are required to start after 3 p.m., creating more time for clubs, art teacher Caroline Epp has created the Harry Potter club, open to all students grades 6-12.

"I just started it for fun. My husband and I like Harry Potter and knew some kids did too," she said.

The club has met once so far, and, according to Epp, they spent their time discussing Harry Potter and playing Harry Potter trivia.

According eighth-grader Robert Carter, a self-proclaimed Harry Potter fanatic, there is a club for sixth- and seventh-graders and one for eighth-graders and all high school grades.

Epp said 13 students attended the first meeting, and said they are "testing out the idea for the club, and if it goes well, [they] will run it next year."

In future meetings, according to Carter, the club is planning on making butter beer, doing more trivia, inventing Weasley's Wizard Wheezes, and, if they



MEMO.MERSD.ORG

Eighth-grader Robert Carter, ninth-grader Emmy Waldsmith, and senior Calvin Lamothe answer trivia questions about the books while attending a Harry Potter club meeting.

get enough members, playing Quidditch,

Another hope for the club, Epp said, is to participate in something called the Harry Potter Alliance.

According to Epp, this organization "encourages Harry Potter fans to do charitable work to fight the evil in the world."

She said they may start with a book drive in which the group

will collect books and donate them to local hospitals to use in their waiting rooms.

"My friend is an ER nurse and said that they always need beach-type reads because sometimes people are there waiting for hours," she said.

Carter said he is excited for what the club is planning for the future. "I love Harry Potter! It's the best series in the world!"

STUDENT PROFILE

Winston Feuerbach



By Kelsi Field
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Who is your celebrity crush?

Meghan Fox, obviously.

What is your favorite color?

Blue

Favorite ice cream flavor?

Mint chocolate chip

If you had to be stranded with anyone on a deserted island who would it be?

Kevin Durant

Baseball or lacrosse?

Lax

What is your favorite restaurant?

Fire and Ice

Dream vacation? Somewhere in the Caribbean.

Summer or winter? Summer

Group hikes, ziplines, visits local school in Costa Rica during break

By Austen Coviello
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

During February vacation, 20 students in Spanish classes grades nine, 11, and 12, took a trip to Costa Rica with EF Tours.

The trip spanned all nine days of vacation, and the group began in San Jose, the capital city, traveled to La Fortuna, Monteverde, and the Central Pacific Coast, and returned to San Jose.

“The purpose of all of our language trips is to try our best to immerse the kids in as much target language as possible as well as in the culture of the country we are visiting,” Spanish teacher and chaperone Robbie Bilsbury said.

Bilsbury was accompanied by math teacher Brian Carlson and English teacher Gloria Tanner as chaperones on the trip.

“The goal of this trip was to speak as much Spanish as we could so we could change the way our brains process information and become more fluent in Spanish while exploring the culture and having a really good time, too,” he said.

Junior Julia Paccone said she originally expected speaking a majority of Spanish would be “annoying and hard.” However, according to Paccone, “It was actually much easier than I thought it would be. As the week went on, it became easier and more natural to speak in Spanish,

and by the end of the trip, I was even thinking and dreaming in Spanish.”

The group traveled with another group of eight high school students from New York and their two chaperones, none of whom spoke Spanish. They shared a bus and had the same guide, Moisés, for the duration of the trip.

“We were caught with the dilemma at times of ‘Hey, do we have one fun bus and no Spanish or kind of divide ourselves from the other group and speak only Spanish?’ I think in the end we got to know the other kids while still speaking as much Spanish as we could,” Bilsbury said.

On the way to La Fortuna from San Jose, the group visited Inbioparque and hiked to a crater on the active Poas Volcano. In La Fortuna, they spent a few hours in hot springs heated naturally by Arenal Vol-

cano, kayaked in the pouring rain on Lake Arenal, took a hike to see the La Fortuna Waterfall, and spent an afternoon at La Guaria school.

The school has one teacher for 20 students in grades one through six. The children performed two traditional dances for the group, gave tours of their little school, and played soccer and other games with the group.

“I think this was the best part of the trip. It is really important to help people that need it, and giving the school some supplies and spending time with them was



AUSTEN COVIELLO PHOTO

Above: The students went on a scenic hike at La Fortuna Waterfall.

Right: The group visited a local school and spent time talking to and playing with the children there. They also brought supplies for the school, which has 20 students in grades one through six, and one teacher. This was many students’ favorite part of the trip, and they spent time playing games and dancing with the children.



AUSTEN COVIELLO PHOTO

really rewarding,” Bilsbury said.

According to senior Olivia Mastendino, the school visit was her favorite part because she really enjoyed talking to and playing with the kids.

Next, the group traveled to Monteverde where they hiked in the Santa Elena Cloud Forest, ziplined and rode horses at 100% Aventura, and planted trees to help with a local teenager’s reforestation project.

“My favorite part of the trip was the canopy tour and specifically the Tarzan Swing. It was the most intense and insane and crazy 10 seconds ever where I didn’t know what was happening, and then all of a sudden I was hanging above the Costa Rican jungle,” Paccone said of the 295-foot tall Tarzan Swing at 100% Aventura.

Finally, the group travelled to the Central Pacific Coast where

they stopped and Carara National Park and stayed in Jaco. Here they spent a day at the beach at Manuel Antonio National Park.

On the last day, they traveled back to San Jose from Jaco, and they stopped in Sarchi, the oldest ox-cart building town in Costa Rica. In San Jose on their last night, they went to Tiquicia where they had dinner with other EF groups and saw traditional Costa Rican dances.

Faculty members beat varsity players in student-teacher basketball game

By Lila Hughes
INDEPENDENT STAFF



LILA HUGHES PHOTO

Student and teacher athletes wait to see if a shot will go in.

With a successful fund-raiser for the class of 2014 making \$1,200, the student-faculty basketball game gave students and teachers the opportunity to battle each other out on the court, ending with a teacher victory of 71-68.

According to junior class adviser Jennifer Coleman, the idea of having the game came from junior Quinn Anderson. He used to go to Rockport High School, where they had a similar event in order to raise funds.

From there, junior class president Zack Trembowicz arranged the event by organizing a referee, asking junior Alex Valenti to sing the national anthem, and asking the starters from the boys’ and girls’ basketball teams from this year to participate in the event.

“The plan was to make sure all the teachers and students were on board; I can’t thank everyone enough for their participation because without them, the success of the event wouldn’t have been possible,” Trembowicz said.

According to junior Petey Morton, five students were substituted into the game every five minutes, and there were four groups of players in total. There was also the rule of having at

least two girls in the game all of the time, which, according to junior Sean Gutierrez, was not communicated well between the students during the game.

“I think the teachers got tired a little quicker than the students, so we had a lot of substitutes going in, but we just tried to get players in an out as much as we could,” Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury said.

A memorable moment during the game included sophomore Will Burgess hitting a three-point shot to tie the game, which caused both the bench and crowd to go crazy.

“When Will made his first three-pointer, the student crowd got really into the game, and it was great to see all the school spirit,” Coleman said.

Another memorable moment during the game was when Mor-

ton taunted Assistant Principal Paul Murphy by saying, “Shoot it” and Murphy making a successful three-point shot right after.

A memorable moment during the game included sophomore Will Burgess hitting a three-point shot to tie the game, which caused both the bench and the crowd to go crazy.

According to Morton, in the last two minutes, students put in their best group to finish the game. While they did not win, he says that they played hard and were impressed with the faculty’s skill.

The game was extremely competitive and exciting according to Morton, and the consensus between faculty and students is that there should be a rematch, possibly during the upcoming Senior Week.

“Whether it be the class of 2014 or another organization, I think this could be a great event that people would look forward to every year and would be a fun tradition for the school to continue,” Coleman said.

‘I can’t thank everyone enough for their participation.’

-ZACK TREMBOWICZ

Where are they
now ?

Max Gove

By Kelsi Field
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Class of 2012 salutatorian Max Gove dealt with transition for much of his life, attending four different schools throughout his childhood, but this fall he faced his hardest change yet, leaving the small town where he was generally accepted, regardless of his sexual orientation, to relocating to New York City where he didn't know if he would fit in.

Gove says he always knew he was gay, even at a very young age. In high school, he says nobody seemed to care that he was gay. Gove had a broad group of friends and was involved in drama, NHS, and carried a course load of almost all AP classes.

When applying to schools,

Gove said he knew he was qualified. He maintained a 5.2 GPA and was confident that he would be accepted at one of the colleges of his choice.

Gove refrained from any mention of his sexual orientation in college and scholarship essays, and did not mention it on any applications.

'I wanted to be admitted to a school because of my hard work, not because a school wanted 'the gay kid' to diversify its campus.'

-MAX GOVE

"I wanted to be admitted to a school because of my hard work, not because a school wanted 'the gay kid' to diversify its campus," he said. "Yes, being gay is who I am, but I don't think it is the most important thing about me for everyone else to know."

According to Gove, he decided to enroll at NYU at the last second. He was accepted at George Washington, Northeastern, and UMASS Amherst, all with significant merit scholarships.

NYU is known for having a large gay population, which Gove said was a draw but not the

2012 salutatorian thrives at New York University



COURTESY OF MAX GOVE

Max Gove is a freshman at New York University and has become very acclimated to the city life.

deciding factor.

"Ultimately, I made the decision for financial reasons and because realistically I would not live in New York City at any other point in my life, and I thought it would be a fun experience. Also, the school has a great academic reputation. Being here, I feel comfortable with who I am and not judged in the least. I can be completely open and there is a social life especially catered to

gay college students, complete with support groups and foundations, all of which I have become a part of," he said.

Gove says he has become very acclimated to city life. He warns that social life at city colleges, especially NYU, is hard at first and not much goes on at the actual campus, and according to Gove one must utilize the city. He says that as soon as he became comfortable navigating around

NYC, he was able to be much more social.

According to Gove, much like in high school he has become acquainted with many more girls than boys. He says that this is not uncommon for young homosexual men, but he is making an effort to meet more male friends, maybe even somebody he could begin a relationship with. In the near future, Gove will pledge to join an all-gay fraternity at NYU.

Band performs at Museum of Civilization in Quebec



ANNA TYLER PHOTO
The band traveled to Quebec City, Quebec, Canada to perform at the Museum of Civilization and explore the city. The group was able to watch the Red Bull Crashed Ice Competition on Saturday.

By Anna Tyler
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With 70 students, six chaperones, and one tour guide, the band began a seven-hour drive up to Quebec City in Canada for a three-day, trip on the morning of Friday, March 15. Chaperones included art teacher Marion Powers and her husband; network administrator Stephen Kwiatek and his wife; history teacher Jennifer Coleman; and band director Joe Sokol.

Upon arrival in Quebec City, the band began to setup for a performance at the Museum of Civilization. The performance had been publicized in the museum's newsletter, so the audience consisted of 40 or so people, according to Sokol.

The band played both the United States and Canada's national anthem, "Eagle Mountain Overture," "An English Celebra-

tion," "Summon the Heroes," "Be Our Guest," and "Great Movie Adventures."

"The band was excellent. There was a great audience, and it was nice to hear, 'Bravo! Bravo!' from them afterwards," he said.

After the performance, the students explored the museum before going to the Hilton Hotel to rest and prepare for dinner at the Spag and Tini Restaurant.

"My favorite part was watching my band members, especially at dinner, just having a great time," Sokol said.

Saturday consisted of a walking tour through Old Quebec where students learned about the history of the city. The rest of the afternoon was dedicated to exploring Old Quebec and watching the Red Bull Crashed Ice Championship. The event took place on an ice raceway that led downhill into Old Quebec. Competitors had to ice-skate

down the hill and through the city as fast as possible to beat their opponent(s).

"It was freezing and walking around Old Quebec was fun as long as you kept going into shops to warm-up," senior Allyson Conway said.

The group then toured the Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré before eating dinner at Le Relais des Pins Sugar Shack, which involved music, maple syrup, and lots of dancing.

"I liked the trip because we all got along, and it was very easy going," junior Tatum Hosman said.

Before the seven-hour journey home on Sunday, the group toured The Citadelle, which was a British fortress and now active military garrison built in the early 1800s.

"Mr. Sokol did a great job organizing the trip. We all had an amazing time. We owe him so much," Conway said.

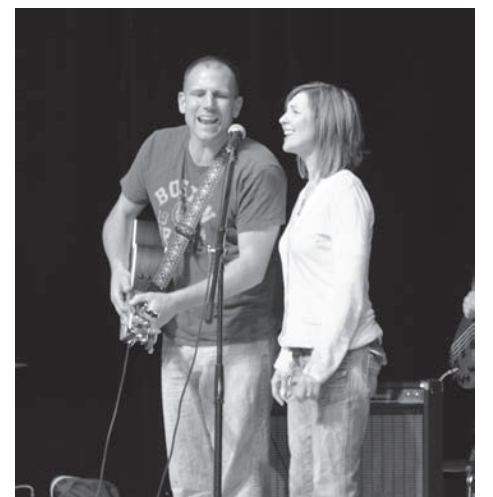
Teacher Talent Show (continued from page 4)



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO
Thomas Durfee raps a song that he wrote.



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO
Students of the Global Issues class present James Wallimann with flowers.



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO
Robert and Kate Bilsbury sing a duet.

Video games

Are video games considered to be a leading cause of violence?

Pro

Natasha Statz-Geary

In the wake of the Sandy Hook tragedy, a good amount of debate and attention has been given to video games and their effects on the user.

While many argue that video games promote violence by desensitizing the magnitude of it, this argument has huge fallacies in it.

Video games cannot be blamed for mass shootings and other outbursts of violence. If one assumes that violent games cause children to think that violence is acceptable, video games are no worse than the news.

Nearly every day there are stories on the news about gun violence, so listeners become accustomed to hearing about shootings. Video games are just the same if not better because they use pretend violence.

These critics also assume that all video games involve violence, which is simply not true. There are many video games out there that do not include any violence, such as any racing or sports games.

Violent video games are usually set during a war or an unrealistic situation, showing the gamer that the violence isn't actually acceptable in real life.

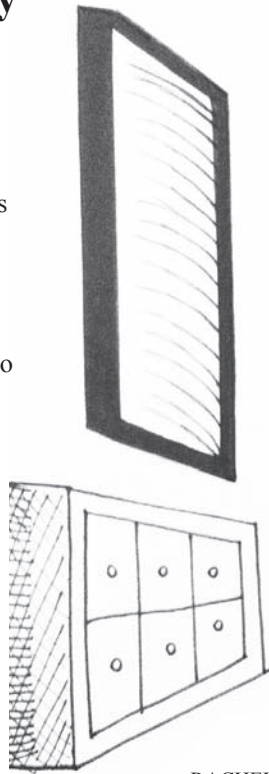
While there might be some games that actually do promote real life violence, such as Grand Theft Auto, as a whole, most video games do not depict violence in daily life.

Video games don't corrupt the user at all. Video games can actually offer benefits. Obviously there are many games that offer exercise to the user, such as Wii Sports or Just Dance. With the number of obese children in the country today, these games can help make exercise more fun and help fight childhood obesity.

Additionally, multiple studies have shown that video games improve hand-eye coordination, concentration and processing speed.

Even more importantly, video games have been used as treatment for children with ADHD and have even been used as a method of helping autistic children. These games are designed to boost communication skills, cooperation, coordination and body awareness.

These concrete benefits of video games far outweigh all of the hypothetical harms related to violence.



RACHEL DALEY AND JULIA PACCONE ILLUSTRATION

Con

Kendall McCormick

Recently, the popularity of video games has dramatically increased; however, the main problem with this is not the increase in popularity but the development of the games themselves as they become more realistic and complex.

Growing up, I was never allowed to play video games. At the time, I hated the fact that my parents didn't allow me to have a Game Boy, but now I appreciate their logic.

Video games are inherently different from TV and movies because the user controls what happens. When a TV show is over, the viewer can do and think about other activities, but a video game is never truly over until the user wins.

This can make video games distracting and addicting. Spending extended time indoors is unhealthy, and the constant desire to play detracts from other activities. Life is about interacting with other individuals and the world, not wasting away hours in front of a television screen.

Video game addictions can cause sleep deprivation, loss of focus in school, and even disrupt friendships.

The biggest problem with video games is the violence. Children are being exposed violent video games when they are young.

Introducing children to these games is not a good idea. Children not only view the violence; they are the ones creating it.

Whether intended or not, violent video games support the idea that violence is acceptable.

The connection between violent video games and certain acts of violence is not remote. Though not everyone who plays violent video games is violent in real life, for those who are mentally ill, the lines can be blurred

between what is acceptable in a game versus what is acceptable in real life.

In fact, in the recent Newtown shooting, gunman Adam Lanza was reported to have "thousands of dollars worth of violent video games" at his home, according to NY Daily News.

Not only do these games promote violence, but the ones that simulate war situations, such as "Call of Duty," are actually demeaning to the true experience of the armed service. For them, war and violence is not a game but a reality.

These soldiers risk their lives to serve their country, and their sacrifices deserve to be honored and respected, not degraded through video games that let anyone "experience" what they are going through in the comfort of their own living rooms.

While not all video games are necessarily harmful, and nothing is terrible in moderation, they can be destructive and are generally needless.

Frozen yogurt can be a healthier alternative to high caloric ice cream

By Natasha Statz-Geary
INDEPENDENT STAFF

As the latest food fad sweeping the country, frozen yogurt

has gained a reputation of being healthy. Well, moderately healthy in comparison to ice cream, at least.

Frozen yogurt actually isn't as healthy as some foodies, including myself, like to believe it is.

Take Pinkberry for example. I'll put myself up for judgment and evaluate the calories in my typical order.

I am a total chocolate-hazelnut kind of girl, and when I go there I usually get a medium.

Not even including all the toppings I insist on putting on, the yogurt itself is about 375 calories.

Being the health nut that I am, I usually steer clear of all fruit top-

pings. Occasionally I'll order strawberries or raspberries on top, but for the most part I stick to chocolate covered pretzels, coconut shavings, mini M&Ms and a caramel drizzle on the top.

All my toppings alone total 150 calories. So after I leave Pinkberry, I'm 525 calories heavier, and I've consumed over ¼ of my daily caloric intake. Yikes.

This situation is only made worse when I go to self-serve frozen yogurt places. Admittedly, I seriously lack self-control, so when I can help myself to as

FAST FACTS

-Pinkberry serves daily hand cut fruit

-A medium chocolate hazelnut without toppings is 375 calories

-Pinkberry's frozen yogurt is made from hormone-free milk



NATASHA STATZ-GEARY PHOTO

Though frozen yogurt can be healthier than ice cream, toppings cause helpings to be high in calories.

much frozen yogurt as I want, I tend to go overboard.

Additionally, since I can mix flavors here and take varying amounts, calculating calories is nearly impossible.

All of this is not to say that frozen yogurt can't be healthy.

Compared to ice cream, frozen yogurt is still much healthier.

Since it has up to 4 grams more protein and 14% less fat than ice cream.

If someone who exerts more willpower than myself orders a small with fruit, the calories

will be somewhere around 200, which is close to the same as regular yogurt.

Frozen yogurt is in no way a health food, but in moderation it's totally acceptable and preferable to ice cream for health benefits.



My new strange addiction: 'The Bachelor'

By Sofia del Valle
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

I am just one of the millions of Americans that tune in every Monday night to watch a show nearing the end of its 17th season: "The Bachelor."

Despite the sappy romantic image "The Bachelor" gives off, conceptually, the show is bizarre.

Imagine being in a relationship with a man who is also simultaneously dating upwards of 10 women. Or better yet, imagine being Sean Lowe, this season's bachelor, who over the course of 12 weeks is meant to select his wife from a pool of women that have been selected for him by various casters and producers.

Realistically though, they aren't seeking to create a match made in heaven so much as they are drama and high ratings.

Certainly ABC doesn't have to worry about that.

By far the weirdest aspect of "The Bachelor" is how little the viewer sees. What actually goes

They aren't seeking to create a match made in heaven so much as...drama and high ratings.

on behind cameras? People often question the outcome of certain episodes such as when Tierra, this season's "diva," was finally booted in the midst of a heated fight. One could easily suspect that the uproar had been arranged prior to its occurrence.

What is it that makes this show so horribly addicting? Is it the corny montages? The model-esque contestants? The seemingly scripted arguments? For whatever reason, this highly anticipated dating show has lured in many helpless viewers.

For someone like me who has followed this season since the first episode aired, I can't just simply sit and watch the show. As the season progresses, I find myself forming strong opinions about each woman to the point where I feel as though I should determine whom Sean sends home.

The show forces viewers to get strangely attached to certain women. I know that I'm still recovering from the elimination of Desiree, the fourth runner up and a charming Katie Holmes look-alike. If you ask me, she should've been the last woman standing. Then I remember that I'm not the one trying to get married.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Gym requirements remain outdated and unnecessary

Rising obesity rates, traditional scholastic values, and perceived student enjoyment are all factors that have contributed to upholding the physical education requirement in schools.

Yet, with the changing academic landscape placing more weight on grade point averages, students becoming more athletically specialized, and the rise of alternative forms of entertainment to physical activity, gym class has come to symbolize, for many students, nothing more than an unfortunate obligation.

A modernized approach to physical education is needed to address the changes in the lives of today's student. Gym class reform should incorporate the needs of the physically inactive, the athletically inclined, and the scholarly student alike.

While students who do not participate in any form of sports or exercise outside of school need to attend a gym class to maintain good health, most athletes should either be exempt from regular gym activities or allowed to partake in an alternate form of class.

Not only can athletes become fatigued or injured during gym class, possibly affecting their performance in games, but most athletes would prefer to



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO

The current gym class structure may be necessary for students who don't participate in sports, but for athletes it is a waste of time and may unnecessarily bring down GPAs to fulfill a requirement.

attend a class specifically with athletes in mind.

For students with an interest in the field of sports science, a class centered on nutrition, health, and exercise for athletes would help engage students who are tired of the basic, traditional gym class.

Even a normal gym class could be enhanced by using newer kinds of equipment such

as exercise balls, weights, and total body resistance exercise equipment and by teaching a more stimulating health curriculum.

Most athletes should...be exempt from regular gym activities.

Currently, gym class serves only to lower grade point averages for students in honors level

classes.

If gym were to become a more curriculum-based class

where students could learn about physiology while also exercising and testing out their new knowledge, the academic credits acquired by taking gym could be raised accordingly.

Receiving more credits while learning new information and trying out previously unexplored exercise techniques will invigorate students' enthusiasm for gym class and will serve the interests of students with diverse athletic abilities.. There is no reason for a stagnant gym system.

Lockdown drills should be implemented in case of emergency

By Sarah Beckmann
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Police presence a few days after the Sandy Hook Elementary incident probably caught the attention of most students, yet what new defenses will be implemented at the school to prevent such incidents in the future?

Along with help from community representative Tom Kehoe, middle and high school faculty members, including both principals, administrative assistants Margaret Driscoll and Mary Lumsden, and the team chair of High School Student Services,

Louise Vose, have collaborated to debate this question.

These leaders have produced a new plan for general student safety after several meetings, covering a lockdown among other widespread precautions for events such as evacuations, natural disasters, and hazardous spills, etc.

Though promised earlier this year, a practice lockdown has yet to take place; however, Principal Sharon Maguire said that the school will indeed undergo a lockdown sometime this spring.

"We haven't forgotten about it," she said.

Most elementary schools in the district have already started

rehearsing a lockdown. Thus, all the more reason for the middle and high school to do the same.

Another question to ponder is why the school has not exercised a lockdown previous to the Sandy Hook tragedy. Perhaps the probability of such an attack in Manchester seemed unlikely—but now people everywhere, not just in town, have realized the potential threat.

Administrators, to their credit, have allowed the addition of new alarms at certain exits (even though they have proved more annoying than helpful,

as the student body continues to exit through the prohibited doors), along with the buzzer system for admittance through the main entrance.

The one task they should have accomplished long ago, however, is the incorporation of a lockdown drill to the school's overall protection methods. Similar to the common fire drill, a lockdown drill should be no different in its frequent execution.

If schools promote lockdown drills, students will be better protected from the unexpected.

A practice lockdown has yet to take place.

the INDEPENDENT

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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.

Teen drivers' overconfidence can lead to deadly consequences

By Sofia del Valle
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Each year, the problem of texting and driving becomes more prevalent, especially among teenagers, the most inexperienced drivers on the road. Though legislation has been passed by 39 states making it illegal to text and drive, there has yet to be an effective method of implementing the laws and regulating drivers.

According to CBS, 24% of all vehicle accidents are attributed to drivers using their phones.

Despite numerous ads, commercials, and even deaths that should raise further awareness, according to SolarPoweredDriving, 77% of young adults feel confident in their ability to safely text and drive.

That's the problem. Until a

person gets into an accident as a result of texting and driving, the possibility of an accident ever happening seems distant.

No matter how long a person's been driving for, all drivers are equally vulnerable to the dangers of texting while driving.

A person who drives under the influence of alcohol and kills another person on the road can be charged with manslaughter

All drivers are equally vulnerable to the dangers of texting while driving.

and sentenced to many years in prison. He/she has made a conscious decision to put him/herself and others at risk.

Texters should be treated no differently. Such accidents are completely preventable and only require the self control of a person to not look at his/her phone. Realistically, how important is the text? Can it wait 10 minutes? Is it worth putting oneself and others at danger for the sake of a text that says LOL or Kk?

While such heavy penalties are incredibly harsh, fear can



SOFIA DEL VALLE PHOTO

Texting while driving is a dangerous habit that can result in death but is not taken very seriously.

often be a wakeup call to people who take the issue of texting and driving lightly.

An article by Jena Kehoe, published in Web2Carz online magazine, covers the car accident involving Aaron Deveau, an 18 year-old boy from Massachusetts charged with vehicular homicide. He killed a 55 year-old man, the

father of three children. Deveau was sentenced to two years in jail and faced 15 years of license suspension.

Though two years in jail is not comparable to the jail time sentenced to people charged with first and second degree murder, for an 18 year-old, this penalty can be life-changing. And not

only does Deveau face his charges, he must live with his guilt just as he is entering his adult life.

While taking a few seconds to look at one's phone is incredibly tempting, the prospect of steering off the road or hitting another car should be enough to make a person wait until the car is stopped to read or respond to the text.

Hacker group Anonymous fights injustices in questionable ways

By Maggie Lehar
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

From getting directions to keeping in touch with friends, the Internet has redefined the way people do many things. The Internet has even changed the nature of activism.

Anonymous has been one of the most prominent groups that has been transforming civil disobedience for the digital age during the past few years.

Anonymous is a loosely organized international movement of online activists who share similar social and political ideals. The group claims to promote equal

rights, free speech, and responsible government.

The group is anarchic, with no leader, official spokesperson, or official website. Individual members communicate protest ideas to one another via social media, and if those ideas gather

The group usually performs hacks in cases where injustice or corruption is concerned.

enough support, a collective agreement is made. Participants then launch a campaign to accomplish whatever goal they've set out to achieve.

One method of protesting that Anonymous uses is collaborative hacking activities, or "hacktivism." These hacks usually shut down targeted websites or obtain and release private information.

The group usually performs

hacks in cases where injustice or corruption is concerned. While many of these actions are controversial, they usually have merit.

For example, after the Westboro Baptist Church (the group best known for picketing the funerals of soldiers) announced plans to picket the funerals of the victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting, Anonymous hacked into the website of the Westboro Baptist Church and posted the names, addresses, and email addresses of members. In this situation, it was easy to see Anonymous as a force for good.

Other hacks seem more extreme and dangerous. Members of Anonymous have gone as far as to shut down the website of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Knowing that Anonymous has the ability to perform actions of this severity is especially unsettling given their



The Anonymous logo portrays their ambiguity anarchic nature.

unstable and incoherent nature.

While they provide more openness into the world, they also act outside the law and cause chaos and instability.

Members of the group have been described as both cyber-terrorists and the freedom fighters of the Internet. The truth probably lies somewhere in the middle.

Lack of school spirit, game attendance disenheartens sports teams

By Landon Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



LANDON KOMISHANE PHOTO

Bleachers devoid of fans can be discouraging for any sports team, and many school teams have faced the silence of an empty gym.

Going to sporting events and supporting the school is common for most students; however, school spirit regressed this year,

leaving a negative impact on the school.

School spirit is lacking around the school. From not attending basketball games to showing no enthusiasm at pep rallies, students have become less energetic in supporting their school.

The difference between last year and this year is massive enough that sports teams are frustrated by the lack of atten-

dance.

Last year, sports teams like the basketball team were able to feed off the crowd and their chants. They always encouraged fans to watch them, and the fans responded.

There always needs to be more to a school than just academics.

This year is different. Attendance at football and basketball games has lessened, and that shows the lack of school spirit.

Some fans are upset over the sportsmanship rules. Trash-talking was a commonality a few years ago, and fans loved it. However,

since more stringent rules are in place, fans have less incentive to come because they feel that they will not have fun.

Another possibility that arises is the excitement of the actual game. Some fans actually come

to the game to watch it because they feel it will be a close game or they might see a spectacular moment. These instances have lessened because of graduated players. That makes some games boring for fans.

While excitement may have lessened, that isn't a good reason for school spirit to regress.

These teams represent the school and its colors. Fans should show the school sports teams respect because of all of the hard work they put in to succeeding.

There always needs to be more to a school than just academics. Sports teams can shape the identity of a school. That's why there are school mascots.

School spirit allows the students to unite even if they are not on the actual team. The lack of school spirit leads to less incentive to support the sports teams.

BASEBALL

Coach: Robert Garrett

Captain: Senior Max Nesbit

Record last year: 10-11

Goals: To build off of last year, improve the offense, and to make the state tournament

Impact players: Seniors Max Nesbit, Cory Burnham, Jacob Fitzgerald, and Henry Gedney, and sophomore Dominic Cirone

Coach's quote: "It was nice to get the team winning and [to see] the change in the players' mentality from not really knowing how to win a game to [gaining] the confidence to win."

Captain's quote: "We revolutionized Manchester baseball last year going into the tournament for the first time in 30 years, so [we want] to keep it up this year and maintain our goals."



Max Nesbit

SOFTBALL



Nicole Bradley



Kelsi Field

Coach: Steve Price

Captains: Seniors Nicole Bradley and Kelsi Field

Record last year: 3-16

Goals: Improve their record

Impact players: Seniors Nicole Bradley and Kelsi Field, and juniors Rachael Gallagher, Cailey Lafferty, and Paige Zaval

Coach's quote: "I'm going to have to learn about the culture of the program, which may be different than my previous philosophies. I want honest input from the players, and hopefully I will improve the program through my positive outlook and enthusiasm for the sport."

Captain's quote: "We're all excited to get a fresh start this season and work with a new coach."-Senior Kelsi Field

BOYS' LACROSSE

Coach: John McCavanagh

Captains: Senior John Beardsley and junior Chris Dumont

Record last year: 5-11

Goals: To improve their record and get into the postseason

Impact players: Seniors John Beardsley and Dylan Estes, and juniors Chris Dumont and Alex Taliaferro

Coach's quote: "The team needs to focus on the fundamentals of lacrosse. If we can get that down, we can do some damage this year."

Captain's quote: "Our team needs to focus the most on offense and scoring. It should come with a brand new coach."-Junior Chris Dumont



John Beardsley



Chris Dumont

GIRLS' LACROSSE



Carolyn Heslop



Olivia Mastendino

Coach: Sarah Holch

Captains: Seniors Carolyn Heslop and Olivia Mastendino

Record last year: 10-6

Goals: Make it to the third round of the state tournament

Impact players: Senior captains Carolyn Heslop and Olivia Mastendino, juniors Brittany Smith and Taylor Meek, and sophomore Katie Furber

Coach's quote: "I'm excited for this season because each year we play a more sophisticated game."

Captain's quote: "Lacrosse is such an up-and-coming sport, so we have a lot of young players that we can train for the future."-Senior Carolyn Heslop

BOYS' TENNIS

Coach: Robert Bilsbury

Captains: Seniors Calvin Lamothe and Colin Babikian

Impact Players: Sophomore Michael Fuca, seniors Calvin Lamothe and Colin Babikian

Coach's Quote: "As the years go on, all of the teams are getting more competitive with each other, which is great." -Robert Bilsbury

Captain's Quote: "I am really looking forward to the season, and it's looking like this is going to be one of the better ones." -Colin Babikian

Record Last Year: 11-7

Goals: Make it to the state tournament



Calvin Lamothe



Colin Babikian

GIRLS' TENNIS



Michelle Fuca



Kendall McCormick



Rachel Daley

Coach: Philip Logsdon

Captains: Juniors Kendall McCormick, Rachel Daley, and Michelle Fuca

Impact Players: Juniors Kendall McCormick, Rachel Daley, Michelle Fuca, and senior Brittany Collens

Coach's Quote: "There is abundant talent this year, energy and drive from both the JV and varsity teams. Our team will grow stronger this year and it should be a very rewarding season" -Philip Logsdon

Captain's Quote: "I think our team is going to do really well this year; we have really solid singles and doubles teams, and I can see us going all the way in the tournament." -Rachel Daley

Record Last Year: 17-1

Goals: Win a state championship

SAILING

Coach: Kevin Dooley

Captains: Junior Quinn Andersen and senior Brady Winn

Impact Players: Juniors Quinn Andersen and Cam Shaw, seniors Brady Winn and Jacob Martz

Coach's Quote: "When we put in a serious effort towards our goals, I feel we can contend for a New England Championship." -Kevin Dooley

Captain's Quote: We had a fantastic season, and we are looking to build on that success to go even further this year." -Brady Winn

Record Last Year: 1st in the Massachusetts Bay League

Goals: Place first in States



Brady Winn



Quinn Andersen

CO-OP TRACK

Coach: Jeff Destino

Captains: (From Gloucester) Seniors Matt Carpenter, Jacob Holscher, Bianca Giacalone, and Elle Wierbicky

Impact Players: Juniors Anna Heffernan and Fiona Davis

Coach's Quote: "I'm really excited to join this coaching staff and work with the athletes. All of the athletes I've met so far have so much potential and talent that I cannot wait to help develop."

-Girls Coach Cary Lipovsky

Captain's Quote: "I am most looking forward to seeing my team again. It was incredible how much fun it was last year." -Anna Heffernan

Record Last Year: Boys: 5-2, Girls: 2-5

Goals: To have success in the conference

ULTIMATE FRISBEE

Coach: Eric Magers

Captains: Junior Sam Nesbit, seniors Alex Shepard, and Alex Walder

Impact Players: Junior Sam Nesbit, seniors Alex Walder, Alex Shepard, and Ellie Mortillaro

Coach's Quote: "This is my 11th year coaching the team, and even though we are in a rebuilding year I am equally excited this year as I have been the last 10. We have a lot of young talent and good leadership. This year is going to be a lot of fun." -Eric Magers

Captain's Quote: "Disk is something people play to have fun and to get some exercise." -Alex Walder

Goals: To go out and have fun every day

You Know You Love YouTube

Carrie Hope Fletcher celebrates one year of vlogging

By Devon Musgrave-Johnson
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Well known YouTuber Carrie Hope Fletcher, also known as “ItsWayPastMyBedTime,” is one of the most successful female video vloggers on YouTube.

On March 12, 2011, Fletcher uploaded her first video and gained popularity rapidly. She now has over a hundred videos and more than 15,000,000 video views and 238,000 subscribers after just one year.

Although she is most well known for her musical talents on YouTube, she has been acting since she was seven. Her

first role was as the young Éponine in “Les Misérables” at The Palace Theater in London.

Her Brother, Tom Fletcher, is the lead vocalist and guitarist for the English pop rock band McFly. Fletcher currently resides in London.

The Things I’ll Never Say Project, in which any one can submit a positive secret that they don’t have the guts to say, was created by Fletcher. At the end of her videos, the last slide will be one of these anonymous secrets.

Musician Alex Day is often associated with Fletcher. She has appeared in his music videos “Lady Godiva” and “Good Morning Sunshine.”



COURTESY OF CARRIE HOPE FLETCHER

Carrie Hope Fletcher performs for an audience of YouTube fans at a vlogger convention in Chicago.

Fletcher also appears consistently as part of the series “Becoming YouTube,” produced by Benjamin Cook, also known as “NineBrassMonkeys.” On “Becoming YouTube,” Fletcher discusses topics such as YouTube fame, being a female vlog-

ger, and the overall community that surrounds YouTube.

She has released many tracks on her own that can be found on BandCamp.com. Fletcher’s most popular songs are “Plod Along,” “Why Can’t I be a Disney Princess?,” and “I want, I want.” She

writes her own music and lyrics.

Many videos on her channel are also song covers. Fletcher has covered numerous songs including “Set Fire to the Rain” by Adele, “She Will Be Loved” by Maroon5, and a duet of “This Kiss” by Faith Hill.

Freshmen Rhuda, Buck star in ‘The Sound of Music’



COURTESY OF SARA RHUDA

Alex Buck stars as Friedrich in the Hamilton Community House Theater’s production of “The Sound of Music” in early March.

By Landon Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Freshmen Sara Rhuda and Alex Buck, who performed in Hamilton Community House Theater’s “The Sound of Music” this past month, had a new experience performing outside of Manchester.

Rhuda, who played Liesl, the oldest of the Von Trapp children, said that the audition process was more critical than other plays.

“The director, Myriam Cyr, had more input in my singing and line reading than other director I’ve worked with,” she said. “She would stop me in the middle of a scene and tell me

how to deliver a specific line, then make me do it all again.”

According to Buck, who played Friedrich, the production started at the end of October, and the actual performances were March 1-3 and March 8-10.

Rhuda and Buck are both veterans of Manchester Summerstage, a non-profit theater organization, so they both feel that their experience paid off in their production.

‘During rehearsal, I really try to embody the director’s vision of the play. It’s been really incredible working with talented adults.’

-SARA RHUDA

“[Manchester Summerstage and Community House Theater] are just too different to even begin to compare,” Rhuda said. “I was working with mostly adults at the Community House, and [Cyr] had a totally different method

than [Summerstage director] Carol Gambino did. [Cyr] has worked mostly in film, so she knows a little bit less about staging musicals.”

Buck and Rhuda both have different viewpoints on what they focus on during a musical.

“Production-wise, I focus on learning the choreography because that doesn’t exactly come naturally to me,” Buck said.

“During rehearsal, I really try to embody the director’s vision of the play,” Rhuda said. “And when I’m on stage, I try and embody the character that I’m playing as much as I can.”

Buck said that his experience with this production was surreal.

“I’ve loved every moment of rehearsal with my cast members, and I’m not really looking forward to it being over,” he said before the performances.

“It has been really incredible to work with such talented and experienced adults,” Rhuda said. “All the actors were so nice to me and were a joy to work with.”

Graphic novelist Gareth Hinds inspires students during presentation

By Lila Hughes
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Gareth Hinds, a successful graphic novelist, visited both middle school and high school art classes to talk about how to combine visual design with an effective story.

According to Hinds, he always knew he was going to be an artist, but he didn’t know exactly what kind of artist. He thought, for a period of time, he was only going to create art for recreation, but he then chose to pursue his art career and attend art school.

“When I was in high school trying to make my mind up of what I was going to study, I knew I wasn’t going somewhere like MIT or any competitive technical schools like my friends were, but instead I could go to a re-

ally good art school,” Hinds said.

Hinds graduated from Parsons School of Design in New York and got a job making computer games while making graphic novels in his spare time.

In his recent school visit, Hinds presented a step-by-step tutorial on how to create a graphic novel by engaging students in his presentation and by doing in-class activities. Hinds talked about the basic principles needed in a story such as characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution.

“Hinds specifically talks about sequential art, which is very applicable to my middle school art class because we are currently working on three-to five-panel sequential assignment dealing with a conflict in the life of a middle schooler,” Burns said.

During the presentation, Hinds handed out a sheet describing the process on how to turn

an idea into a story; for example, he laid out steps like creating a text outline, visual design, making a rough layout, and proof-reading. He then asked students to start brainstorming their own stories and talked about how to create simple but effective drawings to go along with the story.

“I don’t think I’d want to be a graphic novelist when I’m older, but I think the idea of combining art and writing is a very interesting but difficult process,” junior Julia Paccone said.

According to Hinds, he wanted students to get some tools to spark their own creativity in whatever medium they’re working in and learn artistic principles that will help in any visual medium.

“Hopefully they are just inspired that they can in fact do something creative in their lives and at the same time earn a living,” Hinds said.



LILA HUGHES PHOTO

Gareth Hinds presents to art class about being a graphic artist.



'Friday Night Lights' attracts, satisfies fanatics

By Hannah Riordan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Few shows are blessed with a devoted fan base, closely knit cast, and the ability to spend five seasons on the air in the viciously competitive world of network television. "Friday Night Lights" boasts all these accomplishments and more.

The show, written and directed mostly by Peter Berg, takes place in a football obsessed town called Dillon, Texas.

The plot centers around the town's high school football coach, played by Kyle Chandler, and his wife, played by Connie Britton; it also delves into the lives of the football players, students at the high school, and other important members of the Dillon community.

Sophomore fan Annie DeConto said that she was originally drawn to the show because of its diversity of themes.

"Today, a lot of the appealing shows are kind of similar, so when I heard that 'Friday Night Lights' was not only about football and had other elements, it really interested me," DeConto said.

Other viewers praised the show's universal application to real life as one of its strengths.



FRIDAYNIGHTLIGHTS.COM

Fans of 'Friday Night Lights' are still addicted to its unique plot even after its two year break from the air.

"My favorite thing about 'Friday Night Lights' is that it is taking place in high school. Every situation that happens is something that would happen in high school, so that makes the show realistic," sophomore Christiane Noriega said.

Senior Henry Gedney, varsity football player, said that many of his teammates recommended the show to him, and that he values a show about high school football.

"The football was realistic for the most part. There are a lot less cliché endings in real life, but the

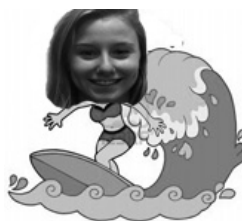
emotion was real," Gedney said. "When you train all week for a game, losing is hard; winning also means a lot to the players. The show showed that well," he said.

The show has been off the air for two years. Fans expressed the sentimentality that comes with nearing the end of the series.

"Even though I have not finished, I still go back and re-watch some of my favorite episodes and find them just as exciting or emotionally compelling as I did the first time I watched them," DeConto said

WEbsurfer

By Lila Hughes
INDEPENDENT STAFF



Whercoolthingshappen.com

Websites have many different purposes; for example, they can increase someone's knowledge, detract someone from being productive, or possibly inspire new ideas. Whercoolthingshappen.com inspires every kind of person, from an artist to an engineer, giving you that "wow" moment. Whercoolthingshappen.com is essentially a collection of interesting photos posted as a "daily feed" that is categorized into groups such as places, art, outdoors, food, architecture, and more. Following the theme of "cool things," the categories of photos all start with cool, like "coolgadgets" or "cooladvertisements." Under specific categories you can also find videos and brief descriptions about the photo you selected. The coolest part about this website is that you can follow it on your Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, and Stumbleupon accounts to receive a daily feed. Something you might come across under "coolgadgets" can be items like a futuristic wrist computer, a hot tub boat, a hovercraft bike, and countless new and exciting inventions. Whercoolthingshappen is a fun way to discover new ideas, places, and things that are, of course, very cool.

Getbuttonedup.com

If you're like me, you might have some trouble with your organization skills, not just as a student, but also in your everyday life. Getbuttonedup.com offers simple ideas and great tools to become more organized, or rather "buttoned up" and back on track. On the home page, the website offers five categories to click on: tips of the day, cool finds, life essentials, everyday life, and life events. Each category has sub-categories such as finances, home, food and fitness, work, etc. These will bring you to a list of articles and posts all about the certain category. For example, an article under everyday life is titled "Tired of 'losing' your cell phone? 10 ways to keep it from happening." Getbuttonedup.com also has a YouTube channel you can follow with tutorials on how to become more organized, and even sells products such as password logs and scheduling notebooks under "our products." This website is completely free and will give you the push you need to put every setting of your life in order.

Apps of My Eye

Cool apps for a smartphone or tablet

By Rachel Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



Tinder

Shiver me Tinder! It seems as though everything we've been taught about not judging a book by its cover has been wiped out by the newest dating app, Tinder. After it connects with your Facebook account and locates where you are in the world, you are free to browse through thousands of people. The catch is you are only provided with up to five pictures of each person. At first glance, you are only shown his/her age, first name, and profile picture. If his/her picture interests you, you may click on it and see a "more detailed" profile which will tell you how many shared Facebook friends you have with that person, what shared interests you have (according to what you've liked on Facebook), and how far away he/she is. You may also see the rest of his/her pictures if they've uploaded any. What it all comes down to, however, is if he/she is attractive to you or not. If so, drag his/her picture to the right; this will indicate that you have "liked" them. If you find them below your standards, drag his/her picture to the left. After doing so, the word "Nope" will appear on the screen. If it so happens that this person has liked your picture before you liked his/hers, it will automatically signify that "It's a match!" Once you match with someone, you are able to chat them on Tinder's message center. To narrow down your matching pool, you can adjust the radius in which your significant others may be located. Luckily, no one else can see if you've matched with anyone. My advice: Tinder away! Although it's potentially creepy, this app is an amusing, simple way to meet new people near you.



Llama or Duck

You do not know exactly how challenging it is to distinguish a llama from a duck until you play this game. The title basically explains it all, but it's trickier than it sounds. The app opens with a catchy, yet annoying theme song, "The Llama Song," which will be stuck in your head for the rest of your life. After listening to the high pitched voice sing the tune a few times through, you must press start and embark on one of the most stressful experiences of your life. A picture of a llama or a duck will appear and, interestingly enough, you must press "llama" or "duck" before two seconds pass by. Although the game may not require much logic, its simple complexity will leave you wanting to play more and more, until you throw your phone across the room screaming swears rhyming with "duck."

'Zero Dark Thirty' opens up Osama bin Laden death details

By Kendall McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following the revelation of the U.S. execution of distinguished al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, many facts regarding the incident were concealed from the general public. Kathryn Bigelow ("The Hurt Locker") directed "Zero Dark Thirty" in an attempt to expose the public to select parts of what was involved in the highly secretive operative.

Jessica Chastain ("The Help") does an excellent job portraying Maya, a CIA agent who has devoted numerous years to the search for bin Laden. The film focuses on her perseverance and high attention to detail, two traits that eventually pay off in finally locating bin Laden. Maya is credited with much of the success of the mission.

The amount of the movie ac-

tually based on truth is a bit controversial; many people claim the discovery of bin Laden was the result of many individuals' hard work. However, the movie aims to shed some light on the practices of the CIA and how they elicited the intelligence necessary to hunt down bin Laden, an incredible process that took almost 10 years to complete.

Unlike many typical Hollywood movies that feel the need to incorporate a love story into just about any plot, "Zero Dark Thirty" refrains from adding romance for entertainment. Though a love story between Maya and one of her coworkers (played by Joel Edgerton) could easily have been

developed, the producers make the conscious choice to focus on the series of events, without getting sidetracked.

The film takes viewers through the entire progression, beginning directly after 9/11 and leading up to the night (May 2, 2011) bin Laden was killed by Navy SEALs in his covert Pakistan home.

"Zero Dark Thirty" is definitely not a movie for the weak of heart.

While not exactly gory, the producers do try to keep the film realistic by depicting various torture scenes, as CIA agents try to extract information from former al-Qaeda members, one of the biggest controversies of the film.

Though these scenes are a bit

The film takes viewers through the entire progression... leading up to the night bin Laden [died].



ZERODARKTHIRTY.MOVIE.COM

Actress Jessica Chastain plays CIA agent Maya in the reality film.

difficult to watch, they are necessary to stay true to the methods agents actually used to discover information.

No dull moments exist in this movie, and viewers can expect to be on the edge of their seats almost the entire time. The operation truly was an amazing process, and Bigelow does

an excellent job in portraying the meticulousness necessary to track down the most wanted man in the world.

She finally opens up to the public, at least partially, the highly covert operation that resulted in one of the most impressive U.S. triumphs against al-Qaeda to this day.

'Safe Haven' exceeds expectations, excites viewers with chick flick flim

By Isadora Decker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Almost every teenage girl knows who Nicholas Sparks is—not from reading his books but from seeing the movie adaptations of his novels. The most recent Sparks-based movie is "Safe Haven," where a young woman flees Boston and lands in Southport, North Carolina—a quiet beachside town with few residents.

After seeing the previews for "Safe Haven," directed by Lasse Hallstrom, many people expected to see a sappy chick flick with no real substance.

Exceeding expectations and averaging a rating on imdb.com of 6.2/10, the movie opened with \$21.4 million. Rather than being



FACEBOOK.COM/SAFEHAVENMOVIE

"Safe Haven," expected to be a cliché chick flick, surprised watchers with dynamic action.

a dull and corny flick, the movie superfluously blended action and romance to deliver a tantalizing experience for viewers.

The film starts off with a mysterious woman named Katie,

played by Julianne Hough, who moves to a new town and meets a handsome widower. Throughout the 115-minute movie she has periodic flashbacks to her troubled past, which is not fully

revealed till much later.

The movie cuts back and forth between Hough's new life in NC and a drunken cop in Boston, played by David Lyons, with an insane desire to find her.

The perfect movie for a girls' night, "Safe Haven" is full of sigh-worthy moments and romantic gestures that will make any girl swoon.

"Safe Haven" has the best of both worlds—it is the perfect balance between love and suspense, all tied together with a heart-wrenching twist at the end.

Being a tad predictable, except for the twist in the last few minutes of the film, viewers can easily guess at what will happen next.

The cast also includes Josh Duhamel, who plays Alex Wheatley, and Cobie Smulders as Jo. All actors deliver a strong performance, and even though the outcome is predictable, the action is successful in keeping viewers on the edge of their seats from the start to the very end if the movie.

Two art students receive multiple accolades for creative outlooks on art assignments

By Rebecca Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After long months of hard work, art students junior Julia Paccone and

sophomore Hannah Thorne have been rewarded with the American Vision Award and an Endicott College Art Award, respectively.

Paccone was one of five Golden Key winners to be selected for the American Vision Award and will next be up against a panel of judges in New York. These judges will decide if the dress moves on to the next level of competition.

Although too late for the Boston Globe Art Awards, Thorne's dress was entered in an Endicott College art competition and was

extremely successful.

For an art class project, students were challenged to create an article of clothing out of nontraditional materials. Both Paccone and Thorne took the assignment to a new level, accord-

ing to art teacher Marion Powers.

Paccone wove her dress out of grass and rope while Thorne created a dress out of pencil shavings and paper. Thorne even installed a zipper in her dress, allowing her to wear it more easily.

They toiled over their projects, putting enormous amounts of thought and effort into them. "It took me about 48 hours total over a span of about 4 months," Thorne said.

Paccone recounts that her



REBECCA EVEN PHOTO

Hannah Thorne's dress won an Endicott College Art Award.

dress took her over a month to make; she worked on it at home and in class.

Both girls were astounded by the recognition their projects received, but Powers said she

was unsurprised.

"The fact that she was able to look and see beauty in [pencil shavings] is amazing," Powers said of Thorne's dress.

She added that Paccone's dress is incredibly unique and deserving of accolades. "It's always hard to figure out what the judges will pick, but I wasn't surprised in the least that [her dress] won a Gold Key."

Paccone and Thorne both plan on focusing on art throughout their high school years. "I definitely want to continue with art," Paccone said.

"My goals for my artwork are simply to improve upon my current skills and dedicate more time to doing what I love," Thorne said.

Powers has high hopes for both of her students. She said that she expects them to become very successful if they choose to continue with art after graduating. "They're both very strong artists," she said.