

the INDEPENDENT

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First Workshop Wednesday teaches students new skills

Teachers, community members offer sessions as part of new advisory program

By Rebecca Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In the first of two such events, the Dec. 4 Workshop Wednesday offered 41 different activities for students to participate in and took over 130 hours to plan, according to math teacher Sarah Deluca.

Deluca, along with the teachers running activities and various community members, began planning in Sept.

The workshops, which ranged from cake decorating to salsa dancing and lasted 2.5 hours, offered students the opportunity to participate in new activities.

Students took chances and tried something new, such as juggling or mountain biking. Many, such as senior Madeline Dahlin, found the experience rewarding.

According to Dahlin, who went on a hike with math teacher David Alger, her group learned skills such as how to start a fire and how to dress appropriately for hiking in cold weather.

"He told us that... when you



COURTESY SARAH DELUCA

Freshmen Bailey Houghton and Annabelle Lord-Patey, left, participate in Erin Fortunato's sauce cooking workshop. Marion Powers, right, works with a group of students in her art workshop. Students participated in a variety of workshops presented by teachers.

go out on a hike in the woods, you have to have warm layers, be waterproof, and be able to resist the wind," she said.

Many students, including senior Julia Paccone, are looking forward to the next Work-

shop Wednesday, for which the hypothetical date is March 12.

"I thought it was a very good idea. A lot of the workshops seemed very interesting, and I'm excited to do it again so I can pick a different one," Paccone said.

Sophomore Alexei Goldsmith, who participated in the Hearts workshop, agreed, calling the experience engaging and interesting.

However, despite the overall approval from the student body, Deluca is still striv-

ing to improve the system.

"A survey will be sent out for both students and instructors, so hopefully we can make the next one better," she said.

Deluca hopes to add new
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Spirit Week split by weekend is overall successful

By Lila Hughes
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Spirit Week is an annual tradition consisting of silly outfits for different themed days and a pep rally to conclude fall sports—both students and faculty participated to enhance school spirit this year.

According to Student Council adviser Abigail Donnelly, Student Council members met to brainstorm the themed days that seemed most



MEMO.MERSD.ORG

Student Council adviser Abigail Donnelly leads the staff in a teacher flash-mob at the pep rally that closed out Spirit Week.

popular with students for Spirit Week. Representatives from each grade would then decide what they wanted specifically within that theme. The themes this year included Movie Day, Decades Day, Music Day, and Twin Day.

"My favorite day was Decades Day by far because all the

seniors definitely went all out and there were some pretty good '80s outfits," senior Seth Cohen said.

"If I was able to decide everything, I would've changed some things to make it more fun for seniors. Like for character day, I wish it could've been any character. It's hard to make the majority of people happy, but hopefully the seniors liked the music genre and decade that were assigned," Student Council president Annie Gonzales said.

This year, Spirit Week had to be split up into two weeks, starting on
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Academic integrity issues concern students, teachers

By Fiona Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New technologies such as smartphones have presented more challenges to maintaining academic integrity within the student body, according to history department chair Lauren DuBois.

"As teachers we have been having a conversation about issues of cheating and how technology is bringing up concerns that we didn't realize were concerns," she said.

According to anonymous student sources, many students who engage in cheating activities hide phones beneath their desks while taking exams in order to access websites such as quizlet.com or text messages from friends with answers to test questions.

English teacher Allison Krause said she addresses at least one issue of cheating each year in her classes. She said the most common incidents of cheating occur when students plagiarize on at home writing assignments by copying from websites such as shmoop.com, a literature analysis website.

According to Krause, students also copy off each other, and two students even turned in the exact same paper to her.

Students said peers often ask to copy homework and other assignments, or they will share photos of test answer keys that they steal from teachers' desks.

"It makes me uncomfortable when I see someone with a phone under the desk. I also get upset when people ask me for my work
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'It is about honor, it is about integrity, it is about knowing what is right and wrong.'

-LAUREN DUBOIS

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News Briefs

Cross country team performs well at Division 2 state meet

The cross country boys' team placed 9th out of 17 teams, and the girls placed second in their division at the All State meet, making them a state finalist. Both the boys and girls shared victories the week before, winning the Division VI East championship.

Coach Andrew Migonis said, "I was most definitely happy with the way the team performed this year and at the All State meet."

The race was run on a golf course, which was hilly, and "it was hard to spread out because of all the tight turns. People had to tuck in and wait their turn," he said.

As far as competition goes, both boys and girls moved up from last year as the boys went from second to last place out of 17 teams to 9th place.

Drama Club chooses play to perform for winter competition

For this year's Drama Festival Competition, the Drama Club will perform "Faulty Towers," a British sitcom that takes place in a hotel, according to senior Molly McCoy.

Director Elizabeth Edgerton said many more freshmen auditioned to try something new, and many students are interested in helping backstage to learn how to use the lights and sound system.

"I had more freshmen audition this year than I've ever had," she said.

According to Edgerton, the school will be hosting the first round of competition on March 1, with the help of parents and students.

"It has to be super organized," she said.

McCoy said she is excited to host this year to have a leg up on the competition.

"Having home field advantage always helps," she said.

Robotics team competes in first competition

By Zack Even
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

While the Robotics team's 26th place finish at the Savage Soccer tournament may not have been as successful as last year when they placed first, team members still saw the competition as a worthwhile endeavor.

"We had success in different ways besides scoreboard results. Our team worked really well together," said Samuel Creighton, one of the team's three captains.

The competition, which was held on Nov. 23 by the Worcester Polytechnic Institute, consisted of teams from over 40 different schools. As the tournament's name suggests, robots were pitted against each other in a chaotic and complex challenge.

The goal of each round was to collect points, and the game offered a number of ways to do so.

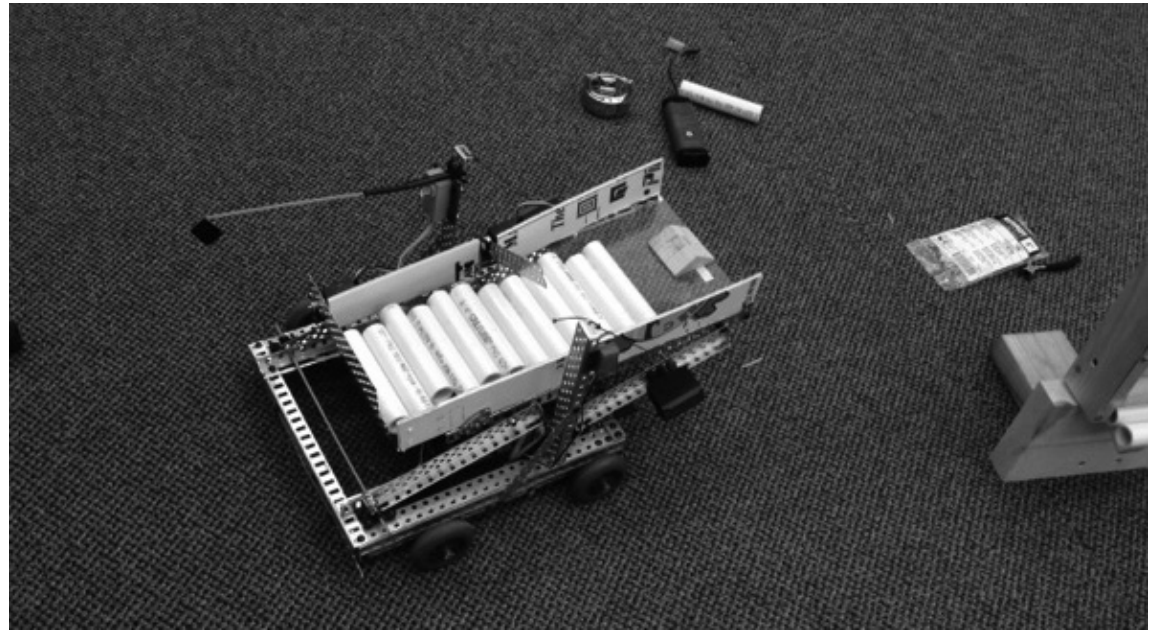
"There's an arena, it's about 10 feet by 10 feet... there are scoring zones on each side of the arena. And there are 15 tubes per dispenser and there are five

'We had success in different ways besides scoreboard results. Our team worked really hard together'

-SAMUEL CREIGHTON

dispensers. The goal is to get these tubes into different scoring zones," Joseph McDonough, the team's adviser, said.

Additionally, teams can rack up points battling to the top of a platform. If the robot ends the round atop the stand,



ZACK EVEN PHOTO

The Robotics team created a robot that moves through tubes to reach scoring zones. Though they placed lower than last year at the tournament, members were happy with the team's cooperation.

the team earns 15 more points. Teams can also push a short pole to different positions around the small field, which acts as a score multiplier. As many points as possible must be earned in possible in just two minutes.

Teams are randomly paired up for each round to go up against a different pair of teams. Because most robots are created for specific purposes, teams are forced to adapt to how the other team's robot operates.

The robot that the school's team created aimed to move the tubes into the scoring zones.

"Our robot has a tray that lifts it up and down. It has a little ramp that causes all the tubes to go into the tray, and then the tray lifts up to go into the scoring zone," said Ben Wolsieffer, another one of the team's captains.

Everyone at the tournament must work together. As a result, the competitions have been dubbed "coopertitions."

The vibe is very exciting, according to McDonough.

"You've never seen so many people cheer for robots," he said.

This year's toy drive looks to break records

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

With Christmas approaching, the annual toy drive has officially commenced. The goal of the charity is to collect donated gifts and deliver them to Pathways for Children, a nonprofit organization that helps disadvantaged families in Cape Ann.

Last year, the toy drive was extremely successful with over 1,000 toys donated to Pathways for Children from the middle school and high school, according to Paul Murphy, assistant principal of the high school.

The organization told Murphy that Manchester Essex High School was the largest toy donor last year. Murphy said he expects to collect over 1,000 toys this year. When he and Joe Lucido load up the school truck with toys and bring it to Pathways for Children, Murphy said "it really makes you feel good because of what all the students have done to donate."

The debate team is also having a toy drive of their own, which serves as a competition between the individual debate classes. Whichever debate class brings in the most toys wins the competition and a prize. History teacher Jen Coleman,

'[The toy drive] really makes you feel good because of what students have done.'

-PAUL MURPHY



CONNOR SENAY PHOTO

The toy drive box is located in the main office. Assistant Principal Paul Murphy hopes to collect 1,000 toys this year from students.

also the travel coordinator on the debate team, said she is looking forward to this year's competition.

"Last year, 136 toys were raised among the debate team alone. Over 10 percent of the school's

toys were raised by 60 students. That's impressive!" she said.

When asked about the motivation for the students bringing in lots of toys, Coleman said, "Debaters have competitive spirit, and it is in our competitive nature to organize activities such as this between the debate classes."

The victorious debate class receives a pizza party with soda if they win the competition. James Wallimann's class won the competition last year, and he said he

hopes to be reigning champion.

This year, since Thanksgiving is so late, the Toy Drive will run from Nov. 25 to Dec. 15, which gives students two and a half weeks to bring in toys to be donated to the organization. All types of gifts are accepted, but toys are preferred.

At the end of the drive, Lucido and Murphy will load up on the truck and deliver the toys to Pathways.

Murphy hopes that the number of gifts he will bring will far surpass the number donated in past years.

The only way for that to happen is if most students contribute to the fundraiser, he said.

FAST FACTS

- Over 1,000 toys donated last year
- All toys donated to Pathways for Children
- Debate class donated a total of 136 toys last year
- Manchester Essex has been largest toy donor in the past.
- Box is located in Main Office
- All students are encouraged to donate.

Global Issues students kickstart new fundraisers

Classes aim to mitigate world hunger through restaurant nights, events

By Isadora Decker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Global Issues classes have already raised \$1,000—more than they have ever raised at this point in the year.

One of their most lucrative fundraising ideas has been restaurant nights. They have a designated restaurant group that is in charge of planning out and executing all of the restaurant nights.

According to senior Paige Zaval, a student in the restaurant group, the restaurant nights are totally student-run. Global Issues teacher James Wallimann steps back and lets the students do the organization.

They have already had fundraisers at Texas Roadhouse and Orange Leaf, both

of which were very successful, Zaval said. There has also been a dodgeball tournament.

“We had so many kids from Manchester come [to the Orange Leaf fundraiser]. We have seen a lot of kids, and everyone on the restaurant group runs a shift and has responsibilities on the restaurant night,” she said.

For the rest of the year, the

‘We had so many kids from Manchester come [to the Orange Leaf fundraiser]... Everyone on the restaurant group runs a shift.’

-ALYSSA REEVES

class expects to have about one restaurant night per month. They are planning Cape Ann Pizza on Feb. 12, and Nick’s Roast Beef and Chipotle have been contacted about having fundraisers there as well.

Other than restaurants, there will be penny wars in mid-January, and in March, the class will host a teach-



COURTESY OF PERRY BURNHAM

Seniors Tao Sardonius and Mike Loebelenz, Global Issues students, use an F block class period to work on the Gardner Project. This year’s cause is stopping world hunger, and students spend one day of a six day cycle working solely on the project. This year’s non-governmental charity is called Stop Hunger Now.

er talent show, another dodgeball tournament and a dinner.

The money that they raise will go to Stop Hunger Now, an NGO group. “If we meet our goal of \$10,000, we will package 40,000-50,000 meals, and we’ll package them ourselves here in the

end of March,” Wallimann said.

“I like that we’re able to help a greater cause, and this year it’s world hunger. It’s also really cool to be able to see other people wanting to help out too at restaurant nights,” senior Global Issues student Reeves said.

MONEY RAISED SO FAR

- **Texas Roadhouse Restaurant Night: \$400**
- **Orange Leaf Night: \$150**
- **Dodgeball Tournament: \$450**

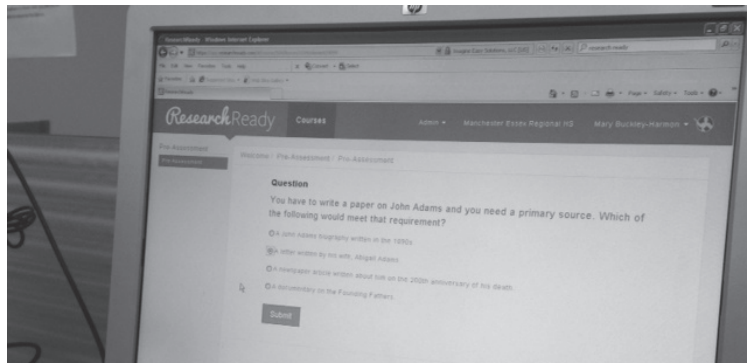
Freshman class undertakes informational research literacy program

By Natasha Statz-Geary
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Noticing a lack of mastery of research skills in students, librarian Sue Krause proposed and implemented an online informational literacy program, Research Ready, for all freshmen students to complete.

“The idea started last spring. All teachers, including myself, noted how students really didn’t know where to go for research, what a legitimate source is or how to cite sources properly. It was becoming a pain for teachers to go over this every time a formal paper was assigned,” Krause said.

After looking into various programs, Krause de-



NATASHA STATZ-GEARY PHOTO

The Research Ready website helps freshmen do research for all of their classes. The new material learned has schoolwide utility.

‘Students really didn’t know where to go for research.’

-SUE KRAUSE

ecided upon a program that could be done completely online.

Research Ready, which is run by the makers of EasyBib, is composed of six different courses that are assigned periodically throughout the year.

“The courses cover a wide

spectrum of research related topics and subtopics, but the main six are the different types of sources, teaching the Internet, website evaluation to identify legitimate sources, conquering the research process, citations, and plagiarism,” she said.

Students complete the various lessons and activities online, and once they finish, they re-

ceive a diploma, which they then must forward to their English teacher a for a homework grade.

“The first due date is coming up in December. I think the idea of the program is great because now at least we’ll know that students have all received the same information on what is expected of their research,” English department chair Debra

Isensee said. Krause expressed a similar sentiment, saying that the goal of the program is “for all freshmen

to come out of the program with a very solid understanding of research skills and informational

literacy skills that they can use for the rest of their high school career.”

At the end of the program, English teachers will assess students’ success in each course and will then reinforce whatever they deem necessary. The content of further classroom instruction will vary by class and by teacher.

“I like Research Ready because it clarifies all of the questions I have when writing research papers, and the content is very reliable,” freshman Liddy DeConto said.

‘The first due date is coming up... I think the idea of the program is great because now at least we’ll know that students have all the same information on what is expected of their research.’

-DEBRA ISENSEE

DECA hopes to achieve, maintain stability with newly hired teacher

By Fiona Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Math department chair Daniel Lundergan said the goal for the DECA program is to provide stability with the addition of Daniel Tanguay as the new DECA teacher to replace short-term substitute Alex Pirrotta, who left for another position he had previously accepted.

Tanguay taught math at Haverhill High School and also has experience in the business world, Lundergan said.

“It is difficult because they haven’t had the same teacher there consistently, but we have all been in communication about the direction of the classes,” he said.

With the unexpected departure of former DECA teacher

Dan Martino, the DECA team has had a difficult start to the school year, according to senior Alyssa Reeves.

“It is tough with losing our teacher... Now our officers are working with the kids and trying to teach them,” she said.

Senior Billy Burnham, who is in his first year of DECA, said the late start to learning how to compete

this year has also delayed fundraising efforts, like the calendar raffle they usually do in the fall.

“We’re getting off to a late

start. We are still going to get everything done, it just might be a little late,” he said.

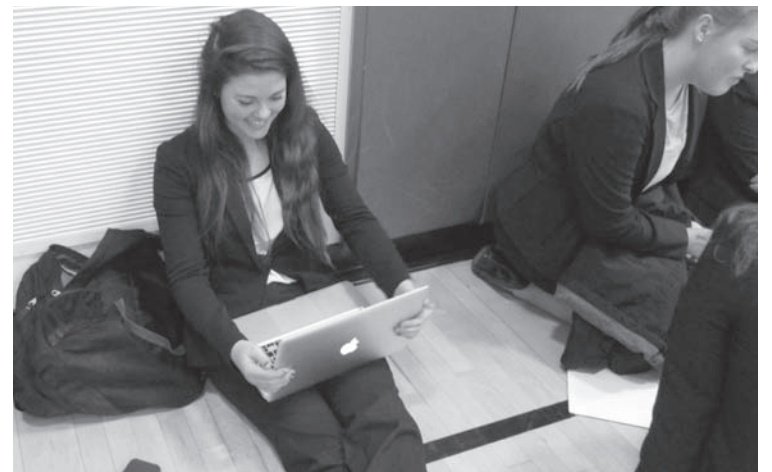
On Nov. 25, the team organized a practice competition, which according to Burnham, helped to clarify the competition process.

“The goal was to get ready for real competition and to give us an accurate simulation of what that competition would be like. I

learned a lot. I know there were a lot of questions about what competition would be like, and a lot of those were answered for

‘It is difficult because they haven’t had the same teacher there consistently, but we have all been in communication about the direction of the classes.’

-DANIEL LUNDERGAN



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO

Sophomore Sydney Christopher prepares for a night of practice DECA competition organized by former substitute Alex Pirrotta in an effort to give students a constructive learning environment.

me,” he said.

Reeves judged at the event and said though students seemed unprepared, the competition helped to direct the officers as to

what needs to be learned next.

“Kids haven’t been taught critical things. We need to practice the fundamentals and learn what judges expect,” she said.

SCORE provides senior work experience, independence

By Tess Hosman
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Developing a sense of independence and a feel for the work place, high school seniors undertake the SCORE project internship, selecting a business to work with in a field that interests them.

This year a few changes have been made to the process. James Wallimann has been positioned as the new SCORE coordinator.

Seniors cannot spend their internship in a family business and their work has to have meaning. Their internship must be well spent as an educational experience.

In the past, SCORE usually consisted of a six-week internship, yet this year it has been shortened to 30 hours a week for five weeks.

Through this period se-

niors are able to receive a real work experience and “an idea of how to carry themselves professionally in the work place,” Wallimann said. Students build their resumes and gain glimpses into fields they hope to work with in the future.

‘It’s not a hand-holding exercise, so there’s a lot of independence that needs to come along with it’

-JAMES WALLIMAN

Students are given a list of businesses that have hired in the past and a few tips on how to find a job, but from there they must be independent in their search for a place to work.

“You look at different shops around where you live and kind of think about what you want to do in life,” senior Athena Venetsanakos said.

According to Wallimann, past proposals include internships in law offices and hospitals. Students have viewed open heart surgery and gone to New York to work with business executives.

“It’s not a hand-holding exercise, so there’s a lot of independence that needs to come along with it,” Wallimann said.



TESS HOSMAN PHOTO

Senior Athena Venetsanakos begins researching her SCORE project to work in a retail store.

FAST FACTS

- **Senior Tatum Hosman: Working with guidance to create college application guide**
- **Senior Ellie Zwart: Researching how computers have changed the way people learn**
- **Senior Athena Venetsanakos: Working in retail at Bananas in Gloucester with displays and merchandising**
- **Senior Landon Komishane: Working for Cape Ann TV to create a website covering Cape Ann sports in the spring**

CONTINUATIONS

WORKSHOP WEDNESDAY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

workshops. She plans to combine workshops that had too much time to spare, like card game groups.

Students agree that the program could use some adjustments.

“I think they should have given first priority to seniors,” Paccone said.

Dahlin agreed, also mentioning that many students had trouble accessing the signup website, which prevented them from getting into their top workshops.

Overall, however, students enjoyed learning new skills.

“I think it’s a really great idea. A lot of the kids liked it, and it was great to hear about [students] trying something new,” Dahlin said.

SPIRIT WEEK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Thursday and ending Wednesday.

According to senior class adviser Jennifer Coleman, fewer people participated in Spirit Week this year than in the past because it was scheduled a different time of year and that people, “weren’t necessarily ready for it.”

Although, according to Gonzales, “It was better that we had it split up by a weekend and have it on the last day of school before break rather than one full week of school. It just makes the last days of school before Thanksgiving more fun.”

The pep rally was, according to the majority of students, a success. According to Assistant Principal Paul Murphy, there was concern that the pep rally would be done prior to the 11:25 dismissal, but with the many planned activities and the teacher’s flash-mob, that was not the case.

Students from each class par-

ticipated in the pep rally while Student Council members helped judge the competitions, which included games such as “The Oreo Game,” where students have to move the Oreo from their forehead to their mouth without hands.

Other games included unraveling toilet paper without hands, a handstand contest, and a game called “Buckethead” where students had to get tennis balls into a bucket their heads.

According to Coleman, the teacher flash-mob was so popular from years past that teachers were inspired to do it again. Teachers wanted to share what their high school experience was like with students—they were asked what their favorite songs were in high school, and the mix started from the ‘70s all the way up to present day.

“Because the teachers did a flash mob last year I think everyone was kind of expecting one,

but it was still really fun to watch and I thought it was really well done,” junior Lucas Firme said.

“I think next year we’ll advertise better and also probably not do Spirit Week over a weekend. It wasn’t communicated as well as I wanted, but still a lot of people participated on each themed day and everyone seemed to have a lot of fun with it,” Donnelly said.

CHEATING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

because I put a lot of effort into it. People know it is wrong, but they do it anyway,” one student said.

According to DuBois, teaching students about the ethics of why cheating is wrong is an important part of addressing the issue.

“Part of it is the ethics piece of it, which is why it is wrong, why you want to turn in your own work, and you want to be proud of everything you turn in,” she said.

DuBois also said consistent enforcement of the policies

in the student handbook would help to discourage cheating.

An anonymous student said most people who cheat do not get caught, so they continue the behavior.

“If kids get away with cheating once, they will do it again because they don’t get caught,” the student said.

When students are caught, they push the blame onto other students, according to an anonymous student.

“I was really angry when someone I know blamed a friend for cheating. The real cheater got off without a punishment, and it was not the first time the person had cheated. It becomes a habit,” a student said.

Students who do not cheat feel that their peers who do cheat are able to progress in classes unfairly, according to an anonymous student.

“The only reason some people are in honors and AP classes is because they cheat,” the student said.

DuBois said she supports the idea of having an honor code, similar to that of many colleges and universities.

“It is about honor, it is about ethics, it is about knowing what is right and wrong,” she said.

Spirit Week



LILA HUGHES PHOTO

Seniors Isadora Decker-Lucke and Anna Heffernan dress in pajamas for twin day.



MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON PHOTO

Math teacher Daniel Lundergan plays air guitar with a tennis racket.



LILA HUGHES PHOTO

Juniors Charlie Brennan and Lucas Firme dress up in suits for “Men in Black” day.

Health Matters

Elimination diets reduce allergic symptoms

By Hannah Riordan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

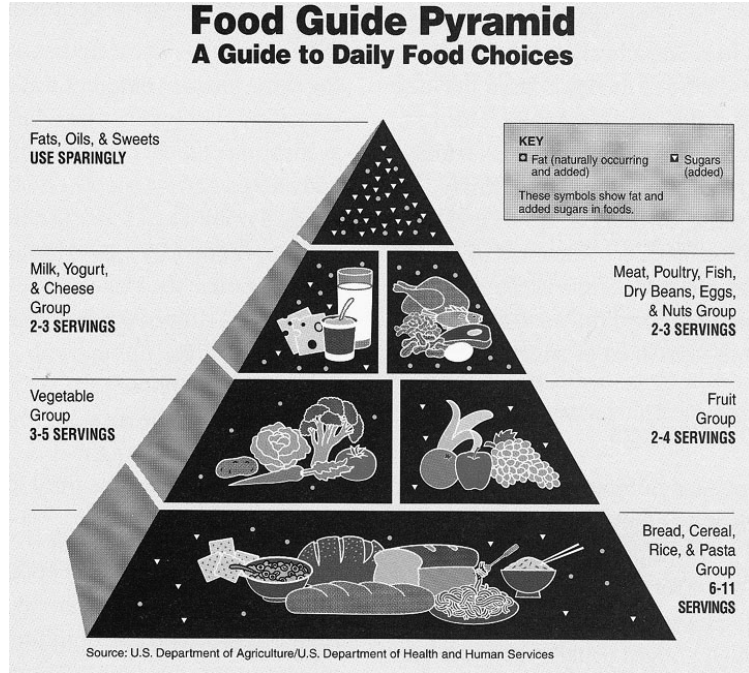
Traditional diets typically involve decreased caloric intake and rigorous exercise routines. A recent trend called elimination dieting has reduced the complexity of following traditional diets while allowing people to discover their personally healthy eating habits.

During the first stage of elimination diets, dairy and gluten should be completely avoided. This period lasts for four to six weeks in order to completely cleanse the system. Gluten free options are becoming increasingly available as a reaction to elimination diets and to more frequent diagnosis of celiac disease, a gluten intolerance.

Many people go through the majority of their lives suffering from a slight dietary intolerance or mild allergy. Allergies and hypersensitivities cause two types of reactions: immediate and delayed. Immediate reactions are more dangerous, with symptoms ranging from hives to anaphylactic shock. Delayed reactions occur hours or even days after consumption, and usually lead to stomach pains or indigestion.

Those who benefit the most from elimination diets often experience unknown hypersensitivity to common foods that promptly disappear once they pare down their food choices.

Stage two of an elimina-



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Elimination diets are a new trend where dieters entirely eliminate certain food groups in order to lose weight and reduce allergies.

tion diet involves gradually reincorporating the prohibited food groups to see which ones are irritants and which ones are benign.

The motivations behind elimination diets vary greatly, as the simplified eating habits can improve digestive, muscular, and immune health.

For some, eliminating food groups can lead to unexpected weight loss. If one food group causes digestive unrest, it can disrupt the entire digestive process and cause unnecessary weight gain even despite healthful eating and exercise.

Having to restrict gluten and lactose consumption can also cause people to avoid packaged foods, leading to an overall healthier diet comprised more of fresh fruits and vegetables than simple carbohydrates and fattening dairy products.

Although it may be a difficult lifestyle transition from unrestricted dietary options to strict elimination of many common food groups, the weight loss and reduced allergic symptoms are well worth the temporary sacrifice.

Freshman lands starring role in ‘A Christmas Carol’

By Oscar Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Martha Cratchit, the eldest of the Cratchit children, will be played by freshman Jillian Furber in the North Shore Music Theater’s production of “A Christmas Carol.”

Furber, a member of the chorus and an experienced actress, earned the role during auditions in September. The play will mark her 7th performance in a play and her first with the North Shore Music Theater. Furber noted that this performance is different in nature than her past performances.

“Being in a show that comes back every year, most of the actors know their parts already, so we get everything done very quickly,” Furber said.

Though the cast may be diverse, and the production goes by quickly, Furber noted that the cast still felt close and connected.

“Actors and actresses are some of the most outgoing



COURTESY JILLIAN FURBER

Freshman Jillian Furber plays Martha Cratchit in “A Christmas Carol” at North Shore Music Theatre.

people there are; the youngest members of the cast joke with the oldest, and there’s none of the strain that can come with meeting someone for the first time,” she said.

Fellow students are excited at the prospect of seeing one of their peers star in the popular play.

“I know I would be more likely to see the play if some-

FUN FACTS

- She plays the role of Martha Cratchit.
- The play runs from Dec. 4 until Dec. 22 and returns each year.
- This is her 7th performance in a play.

body that I knew was starring in it,” said freshman Carl Parkhurst, one of Furber’s classmates.

Furber has also faced extra challenges, having to balance being a member of the production with her school work. Fortunately, according to her sister, sophomore Katie Furber, she has been making the best of the situation.

“Jillian has always been an amazing student, so it has been easy for her to balance everything. She has always been really good at managing her time and getting her work done when she can,” she said.

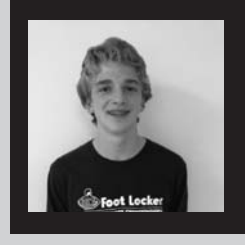
The production will run from Dec. 4 until Dec. 22.



Freshman Spencer Feuerbach:
“White Christmas”



Freshman Liddy DeConto:
“Jingle Bell Rock”



Sophomore Nathan Evans:
“Jingle Bells”



Sophomore Charlotte Freed:
“Wonderful Christmastime”

Student Speak

What is your favorite holiday song?

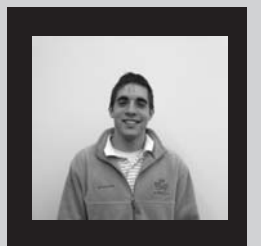
Junior Leo Gallo:
“Jingle Bells”



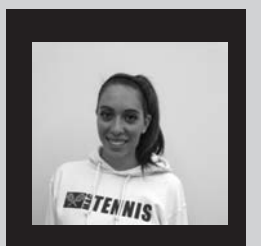
Junior Olivia Lantz:
“Rockin’ Around The Christmas Tree”



Senior Michael Davis:
“Let it Snow! Let it Snow! Let it Snow!”



Senior Michelle Fuca:
“All I Want for Christmas is You”





Lasers advance the search for a brain disease cure

By Isadora Ducker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

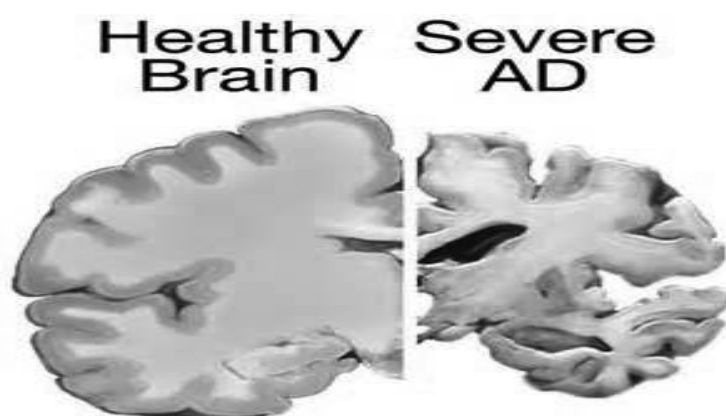
According to livescience, there is a new piece of technology that uses lasers that use light to identify abnormal tissue, and may one day be able to “detect and annihilate disease-causing proteins in the brain.”

Lasers are used to differentiate which tissue is normal and which is abnormal. Abnormal tissue is the type of brain tissue found in patients with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (a brain disorder which is degenerative and terminal).

The technique has not yet been tested on animals, but researchers hope that it will eventually be able to treat people with brain diseases.

The method for detection is very specific. Brain diseases like Alzheimer’s cause proteins to form clumps, or amyloids. Researchers believe that they can use concentrated beams of light to detect and destroy amyloids.

Piotr Hanczyc is a biophysicist at the Chalmers University



US.GOV

Laser technology that utilizes light to detect and destroy abnormal tissue in the brain may lead to a treatments for different diseases such as Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease.

of Technology in Sweden and a researcher on this study. “Using

just a source laser, we can distinguish between proteins in the amyloid structure and those functioning properly,” he

said in the article by lifescience.

Researchers used a laser to shine light through a small amyloid sample and measured

how much light was absorbed. Healthy proteins cannot be

seen because the laser light passes through them. The amyloids, however, absorb some of the light, which makes them much easier to see.

While this project is still in the beginning stages, it

has many scientific and medical implications that will truly advance the search for a cure for these debilitating brain diseases.

‘Researchers hope that it will eventually be able to treat people with brain diseases.’

Composting improves, Magers receives award, Green Scholars present at recycling conference

By Rachel Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

November proved to be successful for the Green Team. Composting has improved, the program was represented at a conference in New York, and director Eric Magers received an educator award.

With the help of Green Team students and school faculty members, the composting system in the cafeteria is now efficient and lacks cross-contamination, Magers said.

At every lunch, Green Team students monitor the system and direct where certain items should be placed in order to ensure proper composting.

According to Magers, the school now composts roughly 1,980 gallons of food and paper products every two weeks compared to zero gallons previously.

“I’m ecstatic that we have gotten back to our previous levels of excellence in sustainability. Waste reduction is one of our most important initiatives, and we must live up to the standards that are expected of us as the greenest school in the state.”

Additionally, Magers ventured to Newport, R.I. to accept the 2013 New England Environmental Education Alliance Formal Educator Award.

He, along with juniors



ERIC MAGERS PHOTO

Junior Christiane Noriega and junior Sam Koufman accompanied Green Team adviser Eric Magers to accept the 2013 New England Environmental Formal Educator Award.

Sam Koufman and Christiane Noriega, attended the ceremony, which took place at Salve Regina University on Nov. 2.

Senior Green Team president Jacob Tyler nominated Magers for the award, which is designed to recognize a public or private school classroom teacher

who promotes individual and societal environmental responsibility, encourages students to make informed decisions about environmental issues, and inspires student involvement through individual and group projects.

Finally, juniors Justin Eichenberger and Cameron Holley attended the 24th New York State Annual Recycling Conference.

According to Eichenberger, many individuals and companies presented various ways to become more sustainable and reduce waste.

Holley and Eichenberger presented on the Green Scholars program, the school’s recycling systems, and waste management policies.

According to Holley, there was also a recycling trade-show, in which many green entrepreneurs displayed their environment-friendly products.

“I have always wanted to pursue a career in environmentalism, and now I have some ideas of paths I can take in the future,” Holley said.

STUDENT

Jack Haynie PROFILE



By Sofia del Valle
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Favorite song?

“Wake Me Up” by Avicci

Favorite movie?

“Schindler’s List”

Dream job?

Secretary of State.

Dream college and major?

Georgetown, Political Science.

Celebrity crush?

Jennifer Lawrence

Biggest pet peeve?

Dishonesty.

Favorite book?

“The Great Gatsby.”

Some of your hobbies outside of school?

Skiing, scuba diving, hiking.

Who is your idol?

Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury

Favorite superpower?

The ability to read people’s minds.

Something weird you know how to do?

I can wiggle my right ear, but not my left, and I can recite the presidents backwards.

Favorite quote?

“Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm.” -Winston Churchill

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

China.

Best piece of advice you’ve ever received?

The best is yet to come.

If you could go out to lunch with any person in history who would it be?

Aristotle.

What would your rapper name be?

2 Haynz.

What is something you want the high school to know about you that they don’t know already?

I have been accused of this more than I would like, but I do not read my history text book every night.

Don't Panic! Four last minute gift ideas for your girlfriend, boyfriend

By Emily Arnsten
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For Her
Wish necklace
I know few girls who don't like jewelry, especially jewelry with meaning behind it. Wish necklaces are perfect because they give off the impression that you put a lot of thought into your gift when really you waited until the day before Christmas break to find one. There are multiple wishes to pick from including luck, love, and happiness. You can purchase the necklaces online or at department store like Macy's and Nordstrom's.



DOGEARED.COM

This necklace is the perfect gift because of its sweet meaning.

Tea & Mug
Does she like tea? If so, this is a more creative option than a piece of jewelry. Teavana has the most delicious loose leaf teas and beautiful mugs and kettles. Don't know anything about tea? Chai is generally a popular flavor. Pick up some sugar rocks, too! They instantly make any tea taste delicious.



TEAVANA.COM

Tea is an especially creative option for this holiday season.



NORDSTROMS.COM

Mittens are really nice when they have touch screen thumbs.



LLBEAN.COM

A flannel is great because its both practical and comfy.

Tickets
Quick, what's her favorite band? This is easy because all you have to do is order the



NIKE.COM

A watch is a classic, practical gift that a guy will really love.



NORDSTROMS.COM

Headphones pair perfectly with a CD of his favorite music.

tickets online and print them out. You don't even have to leave your house! And if not a concert, get tickets to a play, musical, or museum. It's something you can enjoy together.

Mittens & Hat
Not only are mittens the most adorable winter item, but now they're more practical than ever. Mittens and gloves with touch screen thumbs are now available

so you can keep your fingers nice and warm while using your phone. Finding a knit hat or headband to match will create a perfect and complete gift for your special lady.

For Him
Flannel
There's nothing like a new flannel. Guys usually don't like spending their money on clothes, so this is a good opportunity for you to get him something that he wants but wouldn't necessarily buy for himself.

Watch
Watches are practical and classy. It's something he'll wear every day and probably have for a couple years if it's good quality. For a more athletic guy, try a Nike or Puma brand. G-Shocks are also nice and come in a variety of colors.

Music & headphones
Get him some dude music. CDs are awesome for a couple reasons: You can play them in cars if he doesn't have an auxiliary plug, and you own the entire album opposed to just the most popular songs on the album. A nice pair of headphones is a good compliment to a CD.

Cologne
You know best how you want your man to smell. Browse through Macy's or Nordstrom's and pick your favorite cologne. It'll make him feel sexy, and you'll also enjoy his new scent.

Seniors who attended 'Waiting for Godot' give praise to the production

By Sarah Beckmann
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

AP English Literature students traveled to Boston on Nov. 10 to watch an Arts Emerson performance of "Waiting for Godot," an absurdist play written by Irish author Samuel Beckett.

English teacher Daniel Koughan, who organized the event, said he tries to bring his students to at least one play every year. Prior to this year's trip, his students read British playwright Tom Stoppard's play "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" (which is often referred to as a similar version of "Waiting for Godot"); thus, the chance to see "Waiting for Godot" this year was serendipi-

tous, he said. "We had read Shakespeare's 'Hamlet,' [which] is a logical tie in with 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead'...and it just so happened that this wonderful theatre troop from Ireland was performing 'Godot' in Boston right around the time when we were finishing 'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead' [in class]," Koughan said.

Senior Vanessa Kelley also said the timing to see this play could not have been better. "I liked watching [the play] a lot, and I think it really helped clarify the things that we were learning in class," she said. "The actors did a really great job of keeping the audience's attention throughout, because the plot was not that full of action."

The actors, collectively

called the Gare St. Lazare Players, were all born in Ireland, save the boy who plays the youngest role; adult actors Gary Lydon and Conor Lovett portray the two main characters who literally find themselves waiting for a man named Godot the majority of the play.

However, the play is not centered solely on this waiting aspect but on the inner thoughts and sensations the characters experience as they begin to realize that Godot might never appear, Koughan said.

"I was very pleased that they captured the comedy of the play. It should be a funny play and not a depressing, hopeless play, despite some of the subject matter," he said. "I think the most interesting thing about the play is that you can laugh at their situation...but at the same time it's horrifying."

Senior Will Davis said he too appreciated the actors' sense



ARTSEMERSON.ORG

The Gare St.Lazare Players perform 'Waiting for Godot,' written by Irish Author Samuel Beckett, at Emerson College.

of humor. "I thought the way the characters dealt with their circumstances was interesting...I remember laughing a lot during the play," he said.

Although traveling to the Emerson College campus to see the play was not a requirement of the class, 24 members of the two

AP classes paid \$57.50 each for bus fair and the ticket costs, a fact that Koughan said he deeply admired.

"I think that says a lot about the students in this school...they just wanted to have the cultural experience," he said. "That was the best part of the play."

Tips for how to master the college interview process without all the stress

FAST FACTS

- Dress well.
- Be confident and honest, yet polite.
- Ask intelligent questions.
- Be appreciative.
- Research the school before the interview.
- Show up early.
- Don't over prepare.

By Rebecca Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Before my first college interview, I spent an hour changing outfits and re-brushing my hair.

I practiced answers to potential tricky questions in my head. I googled common interview errors and promised myself that I would not commit them.

Too nervous to sit around, I left home an hour before my interview, even though we were meeting in Ipswich, a short drive away.

Of course, my first interview was with my top choice school, Dartmouth, which made the experience all the more intimidating. I had to answer perfectly. I had to stand out.

I walked into Zumi's with sweaty palms and my brain stuffed with quirky things to say, but I walked out with a smile and a weight off my shoulders.

Despite the stress, I was able to enjoy myself.

The woman who interviewed me was truly interested in what I had to say. We shared a lot of the same views. She was excited to tell me about her own college experience. In my eyes, the interview was a success.

I learned a lot from that interview, but one thing above all: alumni interviewers are people too.

They want to help you. They

are there to see if you would be a good fit for their school, but they also want to see if the school is a good fit for you.

These people obviously have fond memories of their own college years, and they want you to have the same experience.

Alumni interviewers are people too. They want to help you.

The questions they ask are meant to help you flesh out your own motivations.

Ironically, a college interview can be a good place to solidify your reasons for wanting to attend the college by talking your thoughts out with someone who loves the school.

At Dartmouth, interviews are supposedly optional, meaning the applicant can turn down the

opportunity for an alumni interviewer. However, why would you decline and miss the opportunity to gain unique insight into the school?

An interview is another chance to make yourself stand out in the ruthless, impersonal world of college admissions.

Of course, the usual interview tips apply: dress appropriately (business casual), be polite, arrive on time, answer questions honestly and tactfully, bring a notebook, be prepared with your own inquiries, and send a thank you email or card.

All are necessary. But also remember to be natural. Laugh. Have fun. Listen to and care about what the interviewer has to say. Make the interviewer want to help you.

Where are they
now ?

Jas Davis

By Isadora Decker-Lucke
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Jas Davis graduated in 2012, and since then his photography career has taken off.

Davis works as a freelance filmmaker, photographer and editor.

Last year he spent a semester at UMass Dartmouth, balancing school-work with several tours where he was paid to film electronic concerts.

"They have a very high-energy atmosphere," he said.

Tucker Oppenheim was in Davis' graduating class, and the two were close friends. "I've known Jas since kindergarten and he's always been one of the nicest people you'll ever meet. He used his free time to teach him-

self the editing programs that he uses to make incredible photos and videos," Oppenheim said.

Davis took the spring semester off to spend a month touring the West Coast with Sperry Top-Sider, where he created short promotional videos. During the summer, he continued to work and travel.

He focused mainly on "creating short documentary-style pieces with musicians," Davis said.

According to Davis, this included trips to Las Vegas and Sweden, where he created short films.

Currently, he lives in Boston and is enrolled at Massachusetts College of Art & Design.

"I was a bit reluctant [to continue the college process], and I'm not a firm believer that a degree is a necessity in life," Davis said. He also added that

'His talent and passion were obvious to me from the beginning, and as I see his work now I'm amazed at his progress.'

-JAMES WALLIMANN

Graduate transitions to working in photography



COURTESY OF JAS DAVIS

One of Jas Davis's photographs. He recently transitioned to photography from filming concerts.

balancing school and work is very intense.

However, he is extremely passionate about his work. "I enjoy what I do because it allows me to be creative in a variety of ways and truly love and respect life and the opportunities that we are given. Filming with my friends is something I always love and is how I got started for the most part," he said.

Lately, he has become more interested in capturing nature on film, and he believes that "we live on a truly beautiful planet and going out into the middle of nowhere to capture a silent starry night or vast seascape really gives you time to think about how fortunate we are."

History teacher James Wallimann taught Davis during his junior and senior year in US His-

tory and Global Issues, respectively. Davis also participated in the film club that Wallimann runs.

"His talent and passion were obvious to me from the beginning and as I see his work now I'm amazed at the progression he went through," Wallimann said.

For the remainder of the year, he plans to continue working in art and attending school.

Students react to natural disaster in the Philippines



U.S. NAVY PHOTO

A Filipino marine stands guard at the village of Guiuan in the Philippines in the damaging aftermath of Super Typhoon Haiyan.

By Emily Jaworski
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Natural disasters occur all over the world, impacting thousands of lives. The recent typhoon that hit the Philippines affected more than 5,200 people, killing and injuring families by fierce winds.

Typhoons are tropical storms capable of destroying communities and smashing buildings with its strong winds.

The majority of the homes that were in the storm have been destroyed, leaving thousands homeless. News stations have revealed that bodies are still being found even weeks after the storm occurred.

This disaster was one of the most powerful typhoons to ever impact an area, and although many people were evacuated, extremely large amounts of people lost their lives through this hor-

rific incident.

Relief efforts from different countries have come to the island and witnessed just how badly the storm affected the area. Survivors are trying to pick up from where they left off before the storm, but it's proved to be difficult.

Officials say more than 20,000 people were injured from the storm, and relief funds are being created to provide aid for the recovering natives.

Approximately 1,600 people are missing from the Philippines, and officials are still searching to help improve the recovery process for the remaining population.

Students around the school, who have heard this news, are sympathizing with the loss that the Philippines have endured and some students have shared their ideas to help the Philippines.

"I've heard that there are lots of people creating fundrais-

ers, and I'm happy that people are trying to make a difference," junior Mariah Litka said.

"It seems like a terrible tragedy, and I hope they get the aid they need. I'd start a fund to donate through the school," junior Student Council member, Delaney Byrne, said. Student Council members have discussed developing fundraisers to raise money for the people in need who are searching for assistance.

"I was initially surprised, and I wanted to do something for the victims. I think the school should do something similar to the ribbons people made for the Boston Marathon to raise money to help," sophomore Erin Carlson said.

"I can't imagine something like that happening here, and I hope that people help out as much they can. I'm sure certain companies will start fundraisers and branch out overseas," senior Dylan McClure said.

Slave hideaway in historic home retains authenticity

By Sara Stanton
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Seventy-eight School Street in Manchester is a rare find. Within its walls there can be found a board-and-batten back door, original paneling, plaster walls, possibly a ghost, and an undocumented slave hideaway.

The current owners of the house are John and Sally Huss, who have been living there since 1979 when they bought the house from John and Sally Gibson.

The house itself is basically the same since its creation in the early 1720s, provided a few

newer details and an addition in the back.

"We do everything we can to preserve the house," John Huss said.

The entrance to the hideaway is found in what was the parlor but now is a dining room. The door to the hideaway is about a foot and a half to two feet long. The inside is just as small except it goes back a couple feet. There area is currently used as storage.

The hideaway actually contained stairs, no longer there, that led up to a hidden room on the second floor. Markings of where the stairs were can be clearly seen on the wall.

Sally Gibson, the previous owner of the house, wrote a document that states, "In the 1840s the house's owner, John Lee, was an ardent anti-slavery man and is said to have hidden escaping slaves on the Underground Railroad with the help of the 'secret' staircase."

On the opposing wall to where the stairs were, is newspaper from the 1840s which is believed to have been used for insulation purposes.

The whole house was built around its large chimney. The front door was made to face south, which was done in the 18th and 19th centuries so that

when someone walked out of his or her house, the sun was facing the front door.

Sally Gibson created a painting that shows what the house and its surroundings would have looked like in 1850.

"Mrs. Gibson said there was a ghost in the house, and do not be surprised if you smell apple pie baking," John Huss said. The Husses said that they have not encountered any ghostly activity recently, but they believe that if there is a ghost, it is friendly.

"We feel that we are stewards of the house and that we belong to it. We are just taking care of it for the next family," Huss said.



SARA STANTON PHOTO

Home owner Sally Huss stands in front of the slave hideaway in the house's dining room.

Education

Are small high schools more beneficial to students?

Pro

Rachel Daley

Small schools enhance class unity, promote academic competition, and foster a more personalized education for students due to close relations with teachers.

Although small schools typically lack socioeconomic diversity due to class sizes, they also unify students in all grades. They lack social, athletic, and academic cliques and encourage students to socialize with those they would not normally talk to.

Students at small schools tend to be involved in many extracurricular activities regardless of the difficulty of their courses. Because of this, socialization at small schools has less to do with academics and popularity.

Since this commonality of extracurricular participation applies to most students from small schools, a chain reaction occurs throughout the whole school, enhancing unity of all grades.

While larger schools typically feature relaxed, less intense academic atmospheres, small school environments are mainly focused, on-task and highly competitive.

Classes that have fewer than 30 students generate hardworking and focused atmospheres. When there are fewer people in a room, students are more apt to pay attention and respect their teacher.

In-class participation and work ethic travels home with the student as well. This is why small schools produce ambitious and well-rounded individuals.

It is also common for academic competition to be highly present when students have classes with friends from contrasting academic levels.

Peers in smaller schools fuel each other to excel in school and support each other when in need, both socially and academically. Thus, there is both teamwork and competition present, two factors which, together, promote an ideal learning environment.

Lastly, small schools foster personalized educations for students due to close relations with teachers.

It is commonplace for a sailing coach to also be a math teacher or a drama teacher to also be a softball coach. Teachers go beyond the typical role of giving lectures or presentations; they are also coaches, counselors, and even parent-like figures.

Teachers at small schools are therefore more inclined to go the extra mile to ensure that each of his/her students understands the material that is being taught.

While larger schools decrease class unity, lack widespread academic competition, and provide straight-forward educations, small schools entail unified classes, focused learning atmospheres, and personalized educations.

Con

Sarah Williams

Small schools, they have their perks, but they also have their drawbacks. A blessing or a curse, small schools can, at times, limit students from what they might have received in a larger school.

In schools such as Manchester Essex there aren't as many extracurricular as there are in a large school. With a small school comes fewer teachers, and with fewer teachers there are fewer opportunities.

Instead of being able to take just Spanish and French, larger schools may have Italian and Chinese as other options. In larger schools, students could learn to play the cello or violin in its school orchestra alongside the band in school assemblies. A possible Home Economics class where students could bake a pot pie or learn to carve a stool in wood shop, these opportunities come with having a bigger school.

A school with more students means more classes to fill which means more opportunities.

In small schools students can be blinded by the harsh reality of the real world. It's easy to be the best at something when your only competition is five other kids.

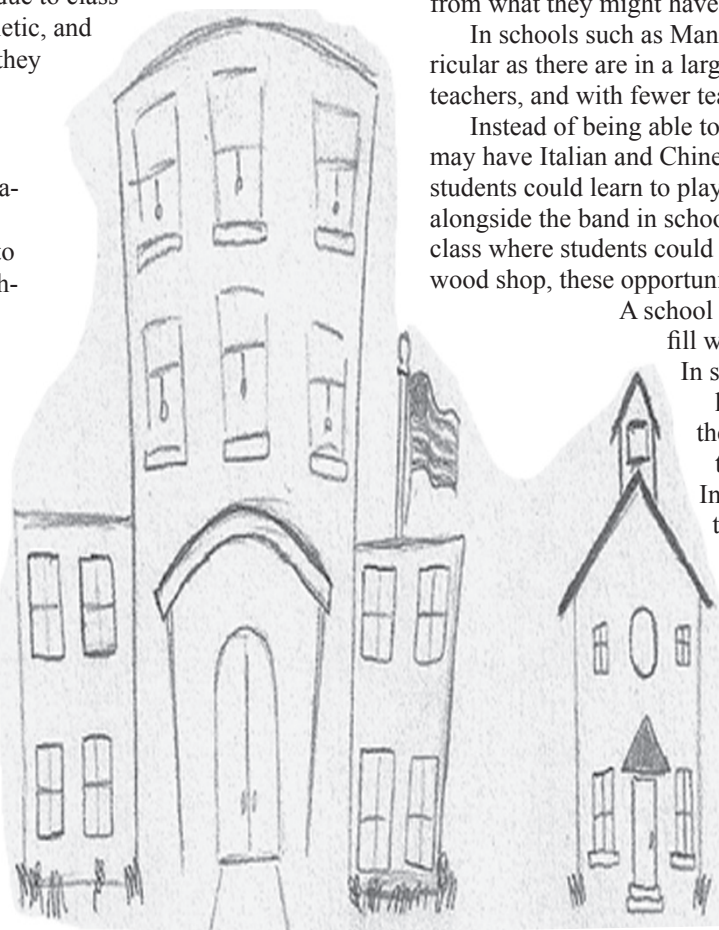
In a small school students may not realize that there are a thousand other kids who like to make movies in their free time or break computer codes. It's not as hard to become the smartest kid or the most theatrical when you are only going against five other kids in your grade. Granted, maybe you are one of the best, but it is hard to know for sure until you've gotten out into the world a little and experienced everything for yourself.

In a small school your personal life can easily become everyone's favorite topic for gossip. Whatever you're trying to keep under cover can quickly become hit news around the school. One person tells another

person, and soon a whole grade knows. Then, if it's juicy enough, a good portion of the high school may learn about it.

In small schools word gets around whether it is someone going to the principal's office or what you did last Saturday night. Your private life can sometimes be hard to keep private in smaller school communities.

Small schools definitely have their faults. Whether we should look past them is the question. For better or for worse one can argue that a larger school is better.



ETHAN ANDERSEN ILLUSTRATION

Dangerous drug Molly rises in popularity at concert scene

By Hannah Riordan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Concerts have a unique ability to unite strangers through a

common interest in the performer.

Fans can bond for a few hours, then go their separate ways once the spectacle is over.

Thousands of people dance and sing along in unison. Although the sense of community is strong at a concert, many attendees turn to drugs to feel more included.

In recent months, the designer drug Molly has become frighteningly prevalent. Molly is a pure, powder form of MDMA,

which is one of the main ingredients in Ecstasy pills.

The drug is known for eliciting feelings of closeness and euphoria while reducing anxiety. Anyone who feels anxious at

a concert certainly shouldn't turn to Molly as a way to relax.

Many Molly users cite Molly's alleged purity as the reason why they feel safe doing it. Several recent concert deaths, however, have tainted its clean reputation.

True side effects of

the drug include hyperthermia, seizures, dehydration, insomnia, and anxiety. Users often do not notice that they are experiencing dangerous side effects; symptoms will worsen until they are put in life threatening situations.

Pop culture glamorizes Molly. Rick Ross, Miley Cyrus, Kanye



FLICKR.COM

Use of the drug Molly, a new form of Ecstasy, has recently increased due to its nonaddictive nature. Several recent deaths occurring at concerts such as DJ Zedd have been linked to the use of Molly.

West, Lil Wayne, and Madonna have all referenced the drug in song lyrics or at concerts, and Vanessa Hudgens was even photographed dipping into a white powder thought to be Molly.

Molly also lacks addictiveness and inconspicuousness. Being

high on Molly is not noticeable as being high on marijuana, and it is certainly easier to ingest a Molly capsule or inhale a powder than it is to inject heroin or snort cocaine.

In an age where electronic communication is more common than

face-to-face interaction, a drug that fosters a sense of belonging and human connection may be just what consumers crave. Nonetheless, people should be able to attend concerts and bond based on a shared passion, not a shared high.



Magazine provides summary of world news

By Sofia del Valle
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Life for high school students is often times quite stressful. Teachers, coaches, parents and friends all hold us to demanding expectations, and at times it feels that there just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done.

On top of sports practice, completing homework, and extra-curricular activities, if your dad is anything like mine, he also expects you to be somewhat informed of today's current events both foreign and domestic. I barely have time to read a book for pleasure let alone the newspaper.

That is, until my parents introduced me to magazine The Week. I had seen it laying on the coffee table numerous times, even on the magazine rack in the school library, but not once had it piqued my curiosity enough to pick it up and flip through the pages.

A half an hour is all you need

Amidst the perpetual Twitter addiction... The Week is the perfect break from the excessive amounts of time spent on social media.

to skim through the 40 pages of The Week, front and back cover included. It is composed of brief summaries encompassing a broad range of topics falling under the categories of news, arts, leisure, and business.

News coverage includes the weekly controversy, both U.S and world news "at a glance," talking points, political cartoons, health and science, and technology. There are book, music, film, television, and visual art reviews, restaurant and recipe recommendations, the best real estate of the week, consumer product reviews, and the last word, an extended two-page story.

Amidst the perpetual Twitter and Instagram addiction that consumes our generation, The Week is the perfect break from the excessive amounts of time spent on social media.

The magazine is accessible for adults and teenagers, especially those who lack the attention span to read the newspaper because it can be read in one sitting. Anyone can flip through the short articles and get a general yet informative look into what is going on in the world.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Students disrespect veterans by using phones at assembly

Many audience members at the Veteran's Day assembly showed that they were more interested in their smartphones and side conversations than the actual ceremony, disrespecting the speaker and America's troops.

The assembly featured Lieutenant Colonel Robert Visnick, an Air Force JAG Corps member. Despite his lack of battlefield experience, he delivered a smart and patriotic speech. Visnick also demonstrated that he was a very skillful orator. In addition to the speech, high school band and chorus members performed a selection of patriotic numbers in front of the school.

Despite the engaging material, many students made it clear that conversations with friends and using phones were better alternatives. Kids in the audience could be heard loudly whispering with their friends and in many cases, seen using social media and playing games on phones.

The high school band and chorus worked hard and practiced for this event and deserved to be respected while they performed. Many of their peers apparently disagreed, remaining inattentive throughout the musical numbers.

Disregarding the fact that



MEMO.ORG

By using their phones during the Veteran's Day assembly, students are showing a lack of respect for our troops, proving that, to them, conversations are more important than our own soldiers' bravery.

students should be paying attention to any Veteran's Day event, students should welcome the assembly simply as a change from regular routine. An assembly with an entertaining and educational speech, not to mention musical performances, is much more preferable to class.

Even if the material had been

slow or boring, the day itself should have commanded the

Kids... could be heard loudly whispering.

respect of the audience. Veteran's Day is a day of respect by its very nature. It is a day to remember and be thankful for the sacrifices that our brave troops make for our country.

These very sacrifices allow

us to go about our daily lives, and on the day to remember them, all that was asked from students was to pay attention to an assembly.

The disrespect present at the assembly shows that our own generation cares more about the small details of their own lives than about honoring the brave men and women who routinely sacrifice so much for the United States and its citizens abroad.

Netflix ruins lives of television addicts, provides ad-free streaming

By Devin Musgrave-Johnson
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Netflix is the worst thing that has ever happened to me. I can't tolerate commercials anymore, I've managed to explore TV shows that otherwise would have never taken my time, and I've become a binge watcher.

Some people have food, I have Netflix. A binge watcher is someone who watches an unhealthy amount of TV in one or a few sittings.

Granted, I mostly go about one episode of a show a day, but

during school vacations or snow days I watch an obscene amount of TV shows on Netflix.

I managed to watch two seasons of "Young Justice" in one week. That's 46 20-minute episodes, 15 hours, or about 8% of the week. This statistic is a whopping 50% under the average time Americans spend per week watching TV, according to The New York Times.

During school vacations... I watch an obscene amount of TV.

In case the last fact was assumed to be a typo: Yes, I, a binge watcher, still manage to watch 50% less TV than the average American.

In addition to having the audacity to take up 8% of my week,



NETFLIX.COM

Netflix, with its absence of commercials, is an addictive website.

Netflix has ruined my relationship with my mother.

Both my mother and I enjoy watching "That 70s Show." Because of our mutual enjoyment, we began to watch it together.

However, my own mother

watched an episode of "That 70s Show" without me, and I haven't looked at her the same way.

This madness needs to stop before cable TV realizes that Netflix has gotten it right and the whole world goes into anarchy.

the **INDEPENDENT**

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

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

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

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

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Parents favor unusual names to promote individuality

By Hannah Riordan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Blue Ivy, North West, and Apple Martin among them, celebrity babies have names that sound like exotic new plant species, directions on a compass, or luxury alcoholic drinks. While many parents value giving their children unique and unusual names, they should consider what that will mean for their children's future.

Names offer the ultimate first impression. Face to face introductions, job applications, and name tags at social events all begin with a simple first name.

In celebrity culture, shocking and different names are the norm and even the expectation. One would be hard pressed to find an A-list celebrity baby

with a name that also holds a place on the most popular baby names list for everyday civilians.

The rise of hipster culture has perpetuated the need for odd names. Neighborhoods like Brooklyn, New York, positively scorn common names in favor of surprisingly spelled, hard to pronounce nomenclatures.

In celebrity culture, shocking... names are the norm.

Strange names can present a constant handicap to those who possess them. Repeatedly having to teach strangers the correct spelling and pronunciation of a name is a daily annoyance that wastes time and energy, proving tedious after years of polite corrections.

Several viable alternatives to strange first names exist, such as unconventional mid-



ETHAN ANDERSEN ILLUSTRATION

Celebrities have been engaging in a trend of giving their babies unusual names. Although these names may gain attention for the famous parents, they can be damaging to their children socially.

dle names or quirky nicknames that act unofficially as first names. This way, as they grow up and have to put their full names on official paperwork, children can use more traditional names without sacrificing the

individualism that comes with a one-of-a-kind name.

Many children appreciate unique names because they help them stand out in a crowd and eliminate the awkward social faux pas of new acquaintances

forgetting common name.

Strange names, however, can lead to a daily life full of explanations, teasing, and sarcastic comments questioning parental judgment when it was time to fill out the birth certificate.

Being vegetarian provides lifestyle challenges for families



LANDON KOMISHANE PHOTO

Vegetarians have to rely on sources other than meat for their protein, such as the rice and black beans dish pictured above.

By Landon Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Approximately 13% of Americans identify themselves as vegetarians, according to a 2013 Public Policy Polling survey. These people do not eat meat. I am one of those people.

I am a vegetarian and have been since birth. My parents decided to change to a vegetarian diet shortly before I was born due to their altered views on the treatment of animals.

They never forced me or my three younger siblings to be vegetarians, but we never complained. Vegetarianism is a way of life for us.

From a young age, the biggest

challenge of being a vegetarian is getting a sufficient amount of protein. Since meat is a main source of protein for most people, I have to get my protein through different sources. Rice, beans, peanut butter, and fake meat from soy comprise my protein needs.

When I was young, kids at school often looked at my lunch with bewilderment as I would pull out the latest incarnation of fake meat.

As I've gotten older, I explored the possibility of eating meat since I will have limited options in college, but after trying meat several times, I got multiple stomach aches. I realized I didn't like the taste, because I wasn't used to eating meat.

Being in a vegetarian household became even more challenging four years ago when my

brother Coleman was diagnosed with celiac disease, an allergy to gluten. It was clear that our family would again have to adjust.

Coleman is no longer a vegetarian due to his inability to eat fake meat, so my mom is forced to make two separate meals.

Although my family has transitioned to a somewhat-adjusted food lifestyle, being a vegetarian has not only health challenges but also social challenges when we go to restaurants. We have to be more selective on which restaurants to go to in order to fit both our vegetarian needs and my brother's gluten-free needs.

Being vegetarian is the only life I've known, but it's worth it because not only am I achieving my health needs through different sources, but I am also sparing animals' lives, which is the reason my family are vegetarian in the first place.

Vegetarianism is a way of life for us.

Holiday decorations extend their stay more and more every year

By Lila Hughes
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Some say the holiday season comes earlier and earlier each year, but most would agree that it's a little ridiculous to see Christmas decorations being hung up the day after Halloween.

There are four big holidays in four consecutive months: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's. Halloween decorations start

to go up around mid-Oct., not including the town of Salem, of course. Spider webs are hung from porches, scarecrows and graveyards placed in the yard, and carved pumpkins sit outside each door.

Many people start putting up Christmas decorations because of all the hype.

But what happens once it hits Nov. 1? Instead of putting up decorations for Thanksgiving, which every American celebrates, everyone starts to get their Christmas decorations out. The anticipation of Thanksgiving is neglected because people can't wait for Christmas to come and

end up skipping over an entire holiday to decorate for.

It has been this way for many years because of our country's culture of consumerism. We start seeing advertisements for Black Friday the moment it hits November, making us think more about what we will be getting our friends and family for Christmas rather than focusing on what Thanksgiving is all about—gratitude.

Christmas starts in November for all the malls and stores, and

they start playing Christmas music and breaking out their sales before Black Friday even begins. In response to this chaos, many people start putting up Christmas decorations because of all the hype.

Decorations for the holidays should only be put up after Thanksgiving has already taken place. There is also debate about whether or not decorations should be kept up after the holidays are over. Typically, they are still up because people are lazy and don't want to take them down. However, if it took a long time to decorate the Christmas tree and it still looks great, it's acceptable to keep it up through New Year's.

Moreover, Christmas lights can be used in many different fashions, and are not always associated with the holiday season; for example, many people still use them to decorate their houses even in the summer. Therefore,



LILA HUGHES PHOTO

Though holiday decorations are welcome during December, many people choose to leave them up for far longer than that.

the only kind of Christmas decoration that is acceptable year round would be Christmas lights.

It is definitely not acceptable for people to still have Christmas

decorations up after New Year's; there might still be snow on the ground, but that does not mean that holiday decorations should still be up.

BOYS' BASKETBALL

Coach: Bryan Shields

Captains: Seniors Petey Morton and Sean Gutierrez

Record last year: 13-7

Goals: Make the state tournament

Impact players: Seniors Petey Morton, Sean Gutierrez, Jack Freed, Jeffrey Durkin, and Tao Sardonicus

Coach's quote: "We have some new plays that we're putting in to effectively use the players we have this year, as opposed to some of the things we did last year. Working on conditioning so we can get up and down the floor is always on the list, too."

Captain's quote: "Even though we lost a lot of good players from last year, I think our team still has talent...making it to the state tournament is a goal I think we can [achieve]."-Senior Petey Morton



Sean Gutierrez



Petey Morton

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Sam Taylor



Eliza Logue



Fraley Morton



Maya Heath

Coach: Lauren DuBois

Captains: Senior Sam Taylor, and juniors Eliza Logue, Fraley Morton, and Maya Heath

Record last year: 7-15

Goals: Make the state tournament

Impact players: Senior Sam Taylor, juniors Eliza Logue, Fraley Morton, and Maya Heath, and sophomore Sydney Christopher

Coach's quote: "I expect the older players to lead by example on and off the court. We need everyone to give it their all on the court and also encourage their teammates during the games."

Captain's quote: "We are focusing on improving our conditioning, fundamentals, and communicating well as a team. Focusing on these basics will help us improve in every aspect of the game throughout our season."-Junior Eliza Logue

INDOOR TRACK

Coaches: John Barbour, Steve Witty, and Mark Dawson

Captains: Seniors Fiona Davis, Sarah Lewiecki, Sam Nesbit, and juniors Cam Holley and Troy Ciarametaro

Record last year: Girls: 4-3 Boys: 5-2

Goals: Qualify members for the state tournament and lower times in relay events

Impact players: Seniors Fiona Davis, Sarah Lewiecki, Mike Davis, Will Davis, and juniors Cam Holley and Olivia Lantz

Coach's quote: "As a coach, I want to enable upperclassmen to achieve personal and team goals while also meeting the needs of younger newcomers to the sport."-John Barbour

Captain's quote: "The team has built up strong long distance runners and hopefully can develop more depth in sprinting and other events."- Senior Sarah Lewiecki



Sam Nesbit



Cam Holley



Troy Ciarametaro



Fiona Davis



Sarah Lewiecki

SWIMMING



Peter Cottingham



Easton Ehlers



Maddie Pomeroy



Lila Hughes

Coach: Shannon Alger

Captains: Seniors Peter Cottingham, Easton Ehlers, Maddie Pomeroy, and Lila Hughes

Record last year: 0-8

Goals: Develop team camaraderie and be more competitive in meets

Impact players: Seniors Peter Cottingham, Easton Ehlers, Maddie Pomeroy, Michael Phelan, and Lila Hughes, and sophomore James Phelan

Coach's quote: "I hope to develop a consistent team spirit by having more swimmers participate and more captain-run events. I want it to be a more competitive program this year,"

Captain's quote: "Changing coaches the past two years has been really chaotic, but I think this year we have a strong coach who can take our team to its full potential."-Senior Lila Hughes

SKI TEAM

Coaches: Tim and Peter Wonson

Captains: Senior Lizzi White, juniors Alex Marshall and Chris McAuliff

Record last year: ?

Goals: To score more points as a team and become one of the top three competitors in the Cape Ann League

Impact players: Senior Lizzi White, juniors Alex Marshall, Parker Edington, and William Kiley

Coach's quote: "What I emphasize with the team is effort. If I see that, I see it as a success, whether we win or lose."
-Tim Wonson

Captain's quote: "We have a lot of people on the team who were on it in previous years, so having veterans competing will give us a great advantage."-Senior Lizzi White



Lizzi White



Alex Marshall



Chris McAuliff

GYMNASTICS



Madeline Dahlin

Coach: Alexandra Terenzoni

Captains: Hamilton-Wenham seniors Julia Bucci and Jessie Herlihy, junior Olivia Young, Manchester Essex senior Madeline Dahlin

Record last year: 2-6

Goals: To better last year's record by at least one more win

Impact players: Hamilton-Wenham seniors Julia Bucci and Jessie Herlihy, Manchester Essex junior Lizzy Ranger

Coach's quote: "We are really excited this year to work hard and try to improve our record."

Captain's quote: "We are excited this year to make sure everyone has fun and works hard at practice, and also that we build a strong sense of unity on the team."-Senior Madeline Dahlin

GIRLS' HOCKEY

Coach: Emily Hudak

Captains: Brittany Smith

Record last year: 9-12-1

Goals: To achieve unity and to beat the Beverly, Masconomet, and Winthrop teams

Impact players: Marblehead Juniors Caroline Hughes, Abby Dimare, and Aly Hopkins

Coach's quote: "We are a young team, so the more we get the young players incorporated into our systems, the better we will be."

Captain's quote: "Our main goal is to make the state tournament this year."



Brittany Smith

BOYS' HOCKEY



Jonathan Ferrante



Kyle Nelson

Coach: Derek Papalegis

Captains: Rockport senior Jonathan Ferrante and junior Kyle Nelson

Record last year: 9-9-2

Goals: To make the state tournament

Impact players: Rockport seniors Jonathan Ferrante and Jake O'Maley, Manchester Essex sophomores Chris DiFluri and Jake Tognazzi

Coach's quote: "[The younger players] will have to step [up] and play a larger role on the team than they normally would."

Captain's quote: "While we have depth on defense, we lost an All-League goalie, and we also need some players to step up and score some goals."-Senior Jonathan Ferrante

You Know You Love YouTube

Pentatonix a cappella group revamps popular songs

By Sofia del Valle
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For all you a cappella junkies out there, the Pentatonix are a group of five singers with a tight and balanced sound.

The group, named after the five-note “pentatonic” scale, originated with three of the current members Kirstie Maldonado, Mitch Grassi, and Scott Hoying who all attended the same high school in Arlington, Texas.

When they heard about an a cappella contest on the radio with the grand prize being a chance to meet the cast of “Glee,” they arranged a trio arrangement of Lady Gaga’s “Telephone.” Though they did not win, their

entry stirred up attention for the group around their school and on their original YouTube channel.

Their career was really jump-started, though, by the show “The Sing Off,” an American Idol-esque competition catered to a cappella groups.

Hoying’s a cappella arranger at University of Southern California encouraged him to try out, so he got in touch with Maldonado and Grassi, who missed his high school graduation to make the audition. They added Avi Kaplan, a noteworthy bass in the a cappella community to meet the show’s four-member requirement, followed by Kevin Olusola, a beatboxer famous on YouTube for his videos of him “celloboxing,” simultaneously



PTXOFFICIAL.COM

The Texan a cappella group, Pentatonix, became famous through YouTube after their video entry for an a cappella contest went viral. Further fame came during their participation in “The Sing Off.”

beatboxing and playing cello.

The group won the 2011 season and have since recorded two albums and started a hit channel on YouTube. Some of their noteworthy covers include “Somebody That I Used to Know” by Gotye, “We Are Young” by Fun, and more recently a stellar cover of “Royals” by Lorde.

Two of their most impressive arrangements are their “evolution” videos, one of which covers the history of music and how it has changed over the decades, the second being a mash-up of Beyonce’s hit songs through the years.

The group is incredibly cohesive, and their voices blend effortlessly even

with just one female member.

Grassi, the group’s leading tenor, supports Maldonado with his unique range that lets him hit high notes with ease, and Olusola’s crisp beats makes a strong foundation for the voices to build off of and create complex layers of harmony and syncopation.

Senior Nick Janowicz pursues music for fun, SCORE, career

By Sarah Williams
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Most high school students have heard of the budding musical artist, senior Nick Janowicz. Whether they’ve watched his popular YouTube videos, seen him perform, or just heard his name drifting throughout the hallways, students know Janowicz by name.

Janowicz started getting into music about seven years ago.

“My mom bought me a guitar, and she told me that I needed to do something other than play on the computer. I hated it at first, but after a while it grew on me, and after I started playing the guitar, and I started to pick up singing, and I became more serious with that,” he said.

Since then, Janowicz has been building up his resume with a list of notable musical achievements. He is able to play four different instruments: the guitar, drums, piano, and ukulele.

“If I’m just given an instrument I pretty much learn how to play it by ear, just kind of



COURTESY OF NICK JANOWICZ

Senior Nick Janowicz expresses his passion for music through his band, “Of The Monarch,” and his duo work with senior Hannah Parker.

messing around with it. I like playing instruments, it doesn’t really matter what it is,” he said.

Janowicz created his own recording studio in a spare room in his house.

“I live in my studio,” he said.

The studio is covered in studio foam to soundproof the room accompanied by a bunch of microphones and a small console to control it all.

What started out as just a small project turned into

a full blown sound system, according to Janowicz.

Janowicz is also the drummer for local band in Ipswich called “Of the Monarch.”

“There is no vocalist, so we make this loud swelling music. It’s really pretty and beautiful, but it’s also really heavy sometimes,” he said.

He joined last year.

In addition, Janowicz also has been collaborating with senior Hannah Parker. They plan on making a mini series of Christ-

mas songs for his YouTube channel, “Nick Janowicz,” each week leading up to Christmas.

“We found that are voices clicked really nicely,” he said.

Janowicz isn’t only making music for his own enjoyment; he also plans on incorporating his love for music into his SCORE project.

Janowicz said, “The idea is that I want to take kind of an epic story. Whether it be “Beowulf”

or something like “The Iliad” or “The Odyssey,” one of those classic epics and kind of almost score it.

The way I’d do it is write three, 10 minute pieces that represent each of the three struggles that the protagonist has to face.” He went on to say that he wanted the listener to be able to tell where they were in the story based off the way the music sounded.

If Janowicz doesn’t end up as a musician, he said he’d probably go into the business of making music or making recordings. He

also said he wants to be around music in general and hopes to be able to sing for people for the rest of his life.

No matter where he ends up, Janowicz said, “I kind of a have three part criteria as to

where I want to be in 10 years. I want to be able to eat really good food, I want to meet a lot of awesome people, and I still want to be surrounded by music. As long as those three things are there, I don’t really care.”

In 10 years I want to meet awesome people and be surrounded by music.

-NICK JANOWICZ

Chorus, SoundWaves, band perform at Manchester tree lighting, winter concert

By Devon Musgrave-Johnson
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

The high school band, chorus, and SoundWaves performed alongside the Memorial Elementary School Chorus and La Petite Chorale at the Community Friendship Tree Lighting ceremony at the First-Parish Church in Manchester on Dec. 8.

The band, directed by Joseph Sokol, performed first. Only half of the band was able to attend due to the small venue, so students volunteered to play. They played “Christmas Carol March,” “Merry Bells of Christmas,” and “Feliz Navidad.”

According to Sokol, the general community really seemed to enjoy the band’s performance.

Later, directed by Donna O’Neill, the chorus sang “The First Noel,” “Bashana Haba’ah,” and “Jingle Bells.” The chorus was followed by the SoundWaves, who sang a selection of songs from their repertoire of 10 winter songs.

“Both the chorus and the SoundWaves were excellent. They were well prepared and sang with enthusiasm and a great deal of dedication,” O’Neill said.

On Thursday, Dec 12, the band, chorus and SoundWaves held the annual MERHS Winter Concert in the high school auditorium.

“It’s always a pleasure, mu-

sically speaking, to play in the auditorium as the acoustics are amazing and it is very beautiful,” Sokol said.

All three groups were able to perform a larger selection than at the Tree Lighting Ceremony. The chorus sang “America the Beautiful,” “The First Noel/Pachelbel’s Canon,” “Bashana Haba’ah,” and “Jingle Bells.”

They were followed by the SoundWaves, who sang “Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire,” “All I Want For Christmas is You,” “Lo How a Rose E’er Blooming,” and “Your Smiling Face.”

“I think the performance went very well, both the chorus and The SoundWaves were fantastic,” said junior Tucker Evans, mem-



EMILY JAWORSKI PHOTO

Chorus and SoundWaves, directed by Donna O’Neill, performed a selection of songs for the annual Friendship Tree Lighting.

ber of chorus and SoundWaves.

The band then performed eight holiday-themed songs. The entire band was able to attend this event.

“The band members were pleased with themselves after

their performance. From the moment they came in to warm up, I could tell that they meant business and it showed their dedication to the music during the concert,” Sokol said.

'Catching Fire' exceeds expectations

By Kendall McCormick
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

"Catching Fire," the much-anticipated sequel to "The Hunger Games" lives up to and far surpasses expectations. Debuting Friday, Nov. 22, Francis Lawrence's film depicted the second novel in Suzanne Collins's trilogy.

Though a difficult task, the first two films in the trilogy have seamlessly transitioned the novels onto the screen. Dedicated fans of books are often highly critical of film adaptations; however, the first film satisfied most fans, receiving high ratings and mainly positive reviews.

Even with a change of directors, the second film proves to be just as exciting and well-produced as the first. With several new cast members joining returning members, the acting is extremely effective.

The story begins where "The Hunger Games" left off. Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) has recently been named a co-victor of the Hunger Games and returns to live in District 12.

As she tries to return to life as she knew it, she is haunted by memories of the games. She is also conflicted with tension between her and Gale (Liam Hemsworth), her lifelong friend.

Her relationship with Peeta (Josh Hutcherson), the other



CATCHINGFIRE.COM

'Catching Fire' continues the story of Katniss Everdeen (Jennifer Lawrence), who allies with opponents in the next Hunger Games.

victor, has become icy as well.

In the meantime, the country is beginning to crumble as people starve, and Katniss's escape from the Hunger Games results in a security crackdown.

She soon discovers that, although unheard of, this year's Hunger Games will pick tributes out of the existing pool of victors rather than the usual pool of children.

"Catching Fire" follows Katniss's struggles in the Hunger Games, along with the parallel story of rebellion and social unrest that is occurring in the rest of her country.

Special effects and sound effects, necessities for the storyline, are flawlessly ex-

ecuted, allowing viewers to immerse themselves in the film.

One scene realistically depicts vicious tropical monkeys attacking the characters, with sound effects contributing to the gripping moment.

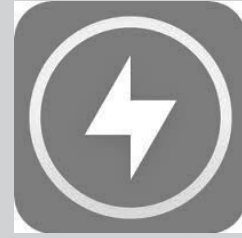
If the plotline, character development, and special effects aren't enough to pay for a movie ticket, its surplus of attractive men should be. From Gale, to Peeta, to newcomer Finnick (Sam Claflin), the actors make for an ideal cast.

The movie will surely keep viewers on the edge of their seats for the entire duration and promises to leave them satisfied but craving more. Maybe another viewing?

Apps of My Eye

Cool apps for phones and tablets

By Rachel Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



QuizUp

This new quiz app is ranked No. 2 on iTunes for obvious reasons. First, it appeals to an extremely broad audience. QuizUp matches two people from around the world to face each other in a quiz category of their choice. Ranging from categories like British History and English Literature to Harry Potter and The Hunger Games, this app offers trivia questions for all types of smartphone and tablet users. Once you choose the category in which you would like to compete, the app matches you up with someone who has a similar worldwide ranking as you. Each matchup consists of six rounds and a bonus round which is worth double the points (if you get the question right). Each question is multiple-choice, and the faster you answer it in the 10 given seconds, the more points you receive. At the end of the matchup, if you have more points than your opponent, you win the game and get extra points for doing so. QuizUp is simple, addictive, satisfying, and will fill up your free time with fun.



Elf Yourself

OfficeMax's Elf Yourself app is just in time for the holidays. This hilarious app allows you to insert five faces of you, your friends, or your family members onto dancing elf bodies which sing to holiday, hip hop, '80s, and soul music. First, you must select up to five headshots (from your camera roll or Facebook) to be placed on the holiday elves. Next, you choose the theme of the dance. Lastly, you can share the video via Facebook, Email, YouTube, or text message. Elf Yourself is sure to bring laughter and joy to the holiday season, which is why you should download it off of iTunes today.



Flipagram

Flipagram is a photography app designed for iPhones and iPads. This app allows you to create a short video slideshow with pictures from your camera roll to bring moments and memories to life. Flipagram is simple: You select as many pictures as you'd like from your camera roll and then organize them in whichever order. You can then add music and text to the slideshow. This app is made so you can easily store your slideshow on your camera roll and share it with Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and more. Flipagram has reached the top 20 on iTunes, most likely because of its unique and appealing features.

WEBsurfer

By Connor Senay
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR



HadOneJob.com

"You Had One Job!" is a site recognized by Time Magazine for its true comedy found in everyday life. It holds an enormous collection of pictures that show the hilarity in stupid mistakes that people have made. The title of the website describes perfectly the ridiculous lack of attention it took to make these mistakes. From misprinting shoe brands to doors being installed on an unbelievable slant, these images are sure to make the least amused person laugh. The list of pictures could entertain for hours. If you're feeling bad, just know that you probably haven't made a mistake that is nearly as bad as any of these.

Incredibox.com

Incredibox allows the user to create complex sounds with the simple click and drag motion. This website was created about four years ago, but recently, they have made a third version and the beats, melodies, and sound effects are even better than before. There is still access to all three versions, but with each new version, additions and changes are made to how each sound combines with one another. You drag a musical clip onto the DJ table and he is immediately suited up in the proper attire to match the era of music. The objective of the website is to create sounds, and you can download your wonderful creations. Most of the music is club-like or techno, but some clips work well a capella. The resulting sounds on the DJ table will work perfectly together, regardless of the combination.

StaggeringBeauty.com

Staggering Beauty is a game involving a wiggly stick figure that dances as you move your mouse back and forth. Starting off with a black figure on a white background, it unexpectedly transitions to both a fluorescent figure and background filled with lightning storms while these colors flash in a mesmerizing pattern. Once the trippy visuals are activated, fast-paced electronic notes play, making the experience even more hypnotizing. It goes back and forth between these two color schemes based on how much and how fast you move the mouse. Move with caution.

Six students accepted into Senior District Chorus

By Ethan Andersen
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Six chorus members are in the midst of preparing for the Northeast Senior District Chorus, an audition chorus that contains members from around Northeastern Massachusetts.

Members who were accepted into the chorus include sophomores Alex Buck, Sara Rhuda, and Josh Ward, junior Tucker Evans, and seniors Lindsey Duff and Alexandra Valenti. Ward, Evans, and Duff were recommended for the All-State Chorus.

Auditions for the District

Chorus were held at North Andover High School on Nov. 23.

According to Buck, participants had to practice and then perform a piece of their harmony part to a song and then do a six to eight measure sight singing. Sight singing is an unprepared solo given to the singer to read on the spot.

'The students have worked very hard... they are all dearly talented.'

-DONNA O'NEILL

Rhuda explained that the chorus has a great atmosphere. "I really like it because you are surrounded by other singers that take it seriously and worked hard to get there," she said.

This will be Rhuda's second year in the chorus, along with Buck and Valenti. Duff and Evans are entering their third year



COURTESY DONNA O'NEILL

Seniors Alexander Valenti and Lindsey Duff, junior Tucker Evans, and sophomores Alexander Buck, Sara Rhuda, and Josh Ward have been accepted into the Senior District Chorus.

in the district chorus, and this is the first year for Ward.

Donna O'Neill, chorus teacher, explained that this year has brought the most All-State

Chorus recommendations for the chorus.

"I'm very excited and very proud. The students have worked very hard... they are all dearly

talented," O'Neill said.

The Senior District Chorus performance will take place on Jan. 11, 2014 as long as there are favorable weather conditions..

Kanye West's 'Yeezus Tour' is a creative adventure

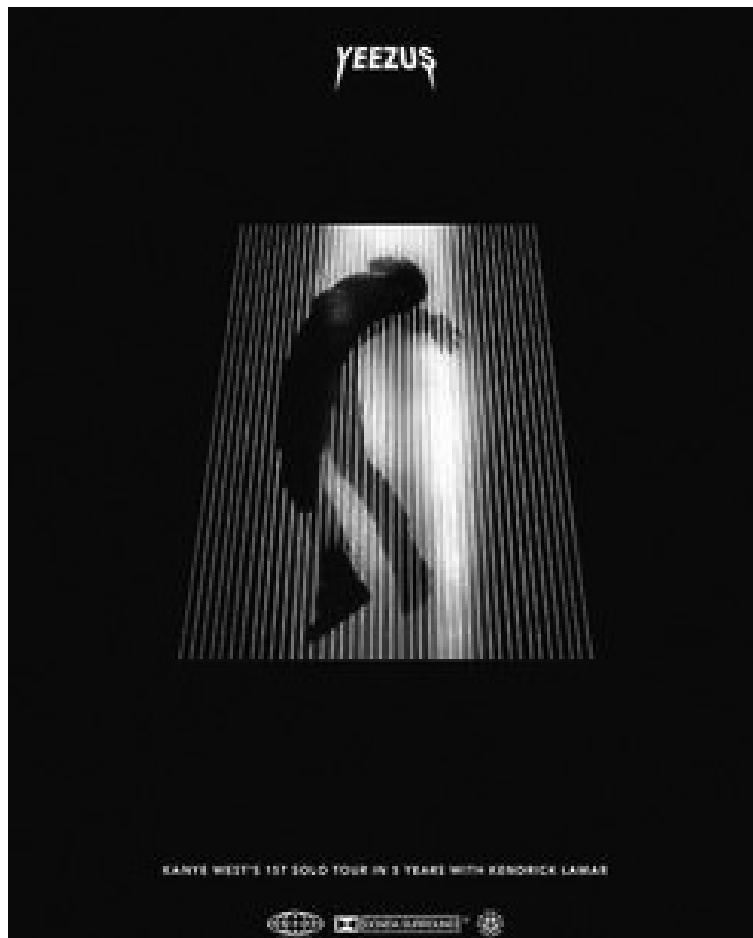
By Oscar Heanue
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

"What do you have to do to prove that you're creative?" This was the resounding message of Kanye West's five-minute long rant at the Boston stop of the Yeezus Tour. Well, he can rest assured: after this tour, no one can say he isn't trying hard enough.

West's two-hour long set was prefaced with a 50-minute opener from Compton rapper Kendrick Lamar. Lamar, performing hits from his sophomore album "good kid, m.A.A.d city," brought the nearly full crowd to its feet. Energy was running especially high during title track "m.A.A.d city," as Kendrick, backed by a live band, played an extended version of the fan favorite.

Empty seats quickly began to fill, as crew stripped the stage and put up the elaborate set for West's lengthy show.

Twelve women, referred to as "Yeezus's Disciples," graced the stage first. As smooth and elaborate gospel music played, the disciples knelt down, ex-



A poster for the Yeezus tour depicts Kanye ascending to heaven.

tending their heads to the heavens. Suddenly, lights revealed an enormous faux mountain behind

the stage, and the mellow gospel changed to the hard electronic instrumental of "On Sight."

A single spotlight shined down, and Yeezy himself grabbed the microphone, mimicking an angel ascending to heaven. Draped in an American Flag tank top and adorned with an elaborate, jewel encrusted mask, he began his first verse.

For the first hour, West owned the stage, playing mostly head-banging electronic songs from his collaboration projects. Soon after, however, he mellowed out, playing a few of the slower songs from "Yeezus" as well as a number of often overlooked songs from "808s and Heartbreaks." Finally, after performing the bulk of his emotional songs, he addressed the crowd.

After briefly tapping out the first few notes to "Runaway" on the keyboard, West stopped altogether. He instead addressed the audience, discussing his high school years and his lack of due respect as an artist. After five minutes of classic Kanye ranting, he broke out into an energetic performance of "Runaway," immediately followed by his

departure from the stage.

West's brief intermission was quickly followed by a return to the stage. Still wearing his signature mask, he turned backwards and glanced at the mountain. The mountain, expanding and opening, revealed a path of light. Emerging from the smoke came a Jesus lookalike, at which Kanye took a knee. As Jesus approached the stage, West removed his mask, locking eyes and maintaining a knee. This interaction was followed by a show-stopping performance of

West's first hit, "Jesus Walks."

As the show finally began to wind down, West slowed down and began to interact more with the crowd. Smiling, offering high fives, and generally being friendly, Yeezy finished off the show with an encore performance of "Bound 2."

The uniqueness and complexity of the Yeezus tour is unlike any other concert in the world. West doesn't just claim to be creative, he inarguably cements himself as the most original artist in the music business today.

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'Brooklyn Nine-Nine' makes name for itself as quirky cop show

By Rebecca Even
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As an emerging television show on Fox, "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" has already made a name for itself as a smartly crafted, heartfelt comedy despite its youth.

Although the show's first season premiered on Sept. 17, it has already found a signature rhythm.

With new episodes airing every Tuesday at 8:30 p.m., the show follows the trials and tribulations of Detective Jake Peralta of the fictitious 99 Brooklyn precinct.

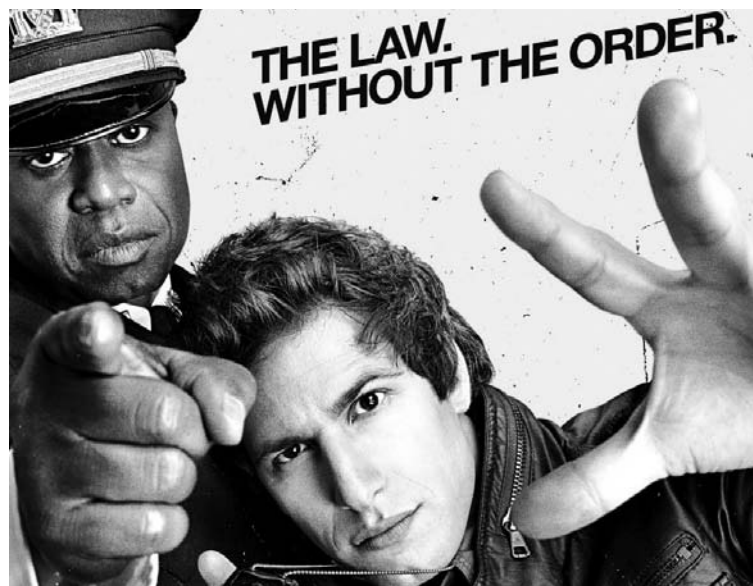
Andy Samberg plays Peralta, a young, talented, yet immature detective who solves crimes in

a leather jacket. Andre Braugher is Captain Ray Holt, a serious, driven man who replaces the precinct's lax previous captain.

Peralta often butts heads with his new captain. The precinct resents Holt's crackdown on their freewheeling atmosphere. Before Holt's arrival, Peralta and the other detectives, Diaz, Santiago, and Boyle, often held wheelie chair and fire extinguisher races, which Holt has banned.

Peralta, unused to stringent regulations, invents crazier and crazier ways to foil the captain's command. In one episode, he wears a Speedo to work in protest of the captain's insistence that he wear a tie.

"Brooklyn Nine-Nine" is



FOXCOM

Andre Braugher and Andy Samberg put a fresh spin on an old premise in "Brooklyn Nine-Nine," a new cop comedy on Fox.

familiar without being formulaic. The episodes find a perfect balance between understated and

slapstick humor.

In one episode, Peralta bets Holt that he can break into the

captain's office and steal his medal of valor out of a locked safe. As Peralta's attempts get more and more desperate— from sneaking into the office as a janitor to stuffing doves through the air vent, the episode becomes more and more entertaining and silly.

However, toward the end of the episode, Peralta reveals a twist in his plan that changes the entire plot, as well as the way the captain views Peralta.

The plot is used not only to elicit laughs but to develop the characters and make their relationships believable.

While outrageous behavior allows for laughing out loud, the subtleties of the show allow for significant character development and depth, making "Brooklyn Nine-Nine" more than just a typical sitcom.