

# the INDEPENDENT

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MANCHESTER-ESSEX REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

February 6, 2012

## Student Council organizes blood drive

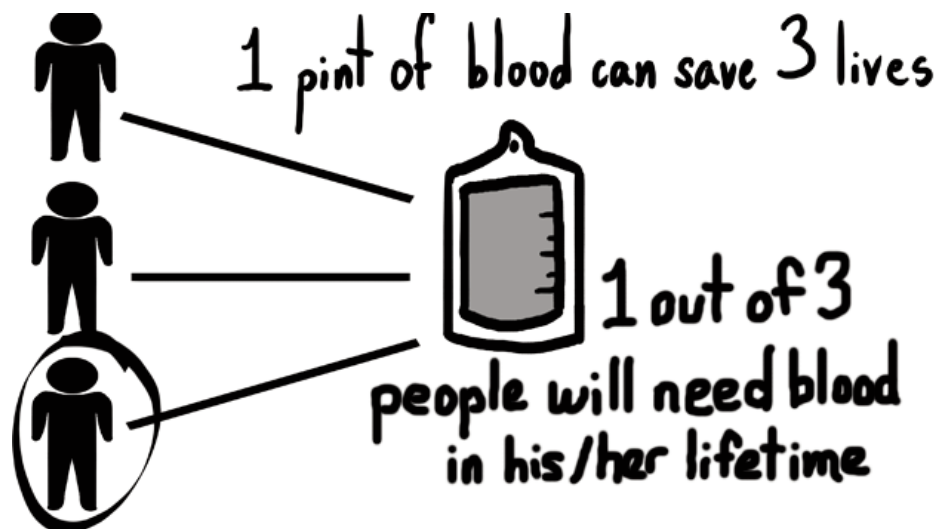
### Group partners with American Red Cross to help save lives

By Maggie Lehar  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs blood. For this reason, the Student Council will be holding an American Red Cross Blood Drive on Friday, March 16.

The need for blood is constant, according to Sarah DeLuca, Student Council adviser. "With all the technology that we have, we still can't manufacture blood. The only way to save a life with somebody who needs a blood transfusion is to give blood," she said.

A local woman, who asked to remain anonymous, expressed her appreciation to donors who provided blood used for her emergency blood transfusion while delivering her son. "Thank God there are people that donate blood, or else my son could be growing up without a mother," she said.



EMMA JAKES ILLUSTRATION

According to the American Red Cross, someone needs blood every two seconds. By donating one pint of blood, the donor can help save up to three lives.

According to the American Red Cross, donating doesn't hurt as much as most people think. When the needle is inserted,

the donor feels a quick pinch which is over in seconds.

**BLOOD DRIVE, PAGE 3**

#### BLOOD DRIVE FAST FACTS

- Someone in the United States needs blood every two seconds.
- 44,000 units of blood are needed to meet these needs.
- One pint of blood can save up to three lives.
- Five million patients in the U.S. need blood every year.
- One in three people will need blood at some point in their lives.
- If a person donated blood every 56 days for 69 years, he/she would donate 48 gallons of blood, helping to save more than 1,000 lives



COURTESY TOTAL CONTROL ENTERTAINMENT

Freshman Sam Woodman was among the 63 students who attended the DECA-sponsored Highlighter Dance despite new grinding rules. Because of the small turnout, DECA lost \$280.

## New grinding rules lead to unprofitable Highlighter Dance

By Emily Arnsten  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Because of the new school rule prohibiting grinding at dances, the DECA-sponsored Highlighter Dance on Jan. 6 lost money.

DECA was set back \$280 because only 63 students attended. "DECA took a financial loss

because of the dance, but we understand the factors that lead to that event," DECA teacher Dean Martino said.

"We typically look at dances as 'fun raisers' instead of fundraisers because they are very expensive, but they do at least make money instead of lose money," Martino said.

**HIGHLIGHTER DANCE, PAGE 3**

## Superintendent proposes 2.9 percent budget increase for fiscal year 2013

### Beaudoin emphasizes need for fiscal responsibility

By Fiona Davis  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Representatives from the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, town residents, and school district management met Jan. 24 to discuss the fiscal year 2013 district budget, originally proposed as a 4.9 percent increase over the 2012 budget but dropped to 2.9 percent after the meeting.

According to Superintendent Pamela Beaudoin, the new budget emphasizes the need for fiscal responsibility and strategic planning for future capital improvements.

Beaudoin said she advocates for a more feasible 2.9 percent budget increase for 2013 because



FIONA DAVIS PHOTO

Community members discuss alterations to the fiscal year 2013 budget. The budget is expected to increase by 2.9 percent, but it will not allocate funds for hiring new teachers in the district.

the plan would allow the district to cover the most pressing budget items while maintaining reserve funds for future spending needs.

### The new budget emphasizes the need for fiscal responsibility and strategic planning.

Parent Eli Boling said he is gravely concerned, along with several other parents present at the meeting, that the budget will not

allow for the hiring of more teachers to address large class sizes.

"We were able to hire some additional staff last year, which made things a little bit better. We would look for the same thing this year if the money is there," high school Principal James Lee said.

Director of Finance and Operations Avi Urbas said the School Committee hesitates to add new staff to the high school if the

**BUDGET, PAGE 3**

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## BRIEFS

## Freshman accepted to Junior Districts

Freshman Ariana Jackson was accepted to the Northeast Junior District Festival Chorus with a very high score for the second year in a row, according to chorus teacher Donna O'Neill.

She was the only ninth-grader accepted this year and will be representing Manchester-Essex along with six middle school students.

## Senior signs National Letter of Intent

Signing the National Letter of Intent on Feb. 1, senior Taylor Coons is now legally bound to play field hockey at St. Anselm's College next year.

Anyone playing in the NCAA at the Division I or II level with a scholarship must sign the National Letter of Intent.

According to Coons, she has wanted to play field hockey at the collegiate level since she began playing.

"I am really excited as well as really nervous," she said.

## Global Issues classes raise money for well in Haitian school

Teaming up with non-governmental organization H<sub>2</sub>O for Life, the two senior global issues classes plan to raise \$6,500 to help build a freshwater well for St. Pierre School in Mirebalais, Haiti, global issues teacher James Wallimann said.

According to him, the classes created four fundraising efforts: selling carnations, selling paper water droplets (similar to the shamrocks sold in grocery stores near St. Patrick's Day), multiple restaurant nights, and a large walk-a-thon.

The carnations will be sold Feb. 6-14 for \$1 each during lunch and in Wallimann's room, senior Brianna Malik said. They will be delivered on Valentine's Day.

According to senior Savannah Repucci, the water droplets will be sold in local stores, restaurants, and at the high school from mid-February until May. Each water droplet will cost \$1, but "people are welcome to donate as much as they want to the cause."

Tennis courts to be built outside Memorial School  
Varsity teams await mid-May completion of new practice, game space

By Kendall McCormick  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Following years of controversy, three new tennis courts are due to be finished around the middle of May. The courts, which are being built directly in front of Manchester Memorial School, will be used for both the girls' and boys' tennis teams during their season and will additionally be open for recreational purposes.

Prior to the building of the courts, both tennis teams had to practice at the Manchester Athletic Club, which was a strain to the athletics department's budget, according to athletic director Kelly Porcaro.

Porcaro thinks several benefits result from the new courts.

"Obviously, in the MAC we don't have to worry about weather, but when you go away, you're not used to playing in the weather," she said.

Porcaro also said the location is beneficial especially due to the fact that the two tennis courts behind the Memorial School can be utilized during the teams' practices as well.

According to Spanish teacher and boys' varsity tennis coach Robert Bilsbury, the three courts not only qualify both teams to host league matches but will be useful when it comes down to the state tournament as well. He said

both tennis teams tend to get used to playing without weather, which poses a problem during the outdoor state tournament matches.

Bilsbury thinks that the courts will bring more support and spirit to both teams.

"Now that

[the matches] will be on campus, it will be awesome to have lots of people at our home matches," he said.

Additionally, the proximity of the courts to the school will make the state tournament more excit-

**'The three courts not only qualify both teams to host league matches but will be useful...to the state tournament as well.'**

**-ROBERT BILSBURY**



KENDALL MCCORMICK PHOTO

Three new tennis courts are being constructed at the Memorial School.

ing for the students in general, he said.

While some support the building of the new courts, a few members of the tennis team would prefer to stay in the MAC.

Sophomore tennis player Michelle Fuca said, "I love play-

ing indoors with no elements, and I feel like we play a lot better indoors."

Fuca does agree the courts result in some benefits, however, such as being within walking distance so that more people will watch the matches.

## Senior class hosts first ever 12-hour dance marathon

By Rachel Daley  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

For the first time in school history, the senior class will be hosting a 12-hour dance marathon. Students will be granted 30-minute breaks every three hours, and current dancing regulations regarding grinding will remain in place.

According to senior class president Andrew Randall, games and different eras of music will appear throughout the night.

"It's a fundraiser to help raise money for the senior class, and our goal is to raise enough money to cover Senior Week," Randall said. "At the same time, we want to provide an awesome dance for everyone to attend and look forward to."

Some of the genres of music will include the '60s, '70s, '80s,



**Class president Andrew Randall and the senior class are preparing to host the first ever 12-hour dance marathon.**

'90s, hip hop, current music, dub step, country, and movie soundtracks.

Randall credits the idea to history teacher and co-class adviser James Wallimann, who used to attend dance marathons in high school.

Prizes will be awarded throughout the night to the most energetic people and the best costumes.

"We'll also have a bunch of games going on while people are dancing," Randall said. "However, the dance is exclusive to the people who sign up on time."

"On a social level, it will be an awesome way for classes to bond and hopefully become a part of a new Manchester-Essex tradition," he said.

According to Randall, students must raise \$96 in sponsors in order to participate. Permission slips and sponsorship money are due by March 1.

"Everyone should attend this event; it's going to be wild," he said.

Senior Jess Crossen questions the length of the dance marathon. "I have no idea how people are

going to dance for 12 hours straight," she said. "I feel like people will run out of energy after a few hours, but I'm sure the breaks and games will help."

Junior Nicole Bradley plans on attending the marathon. "I think it's a really cool idea, and I'm glad something new is coming to the school," she said.

"I don't know if I'll be able to continuously dance, but I'll give it my best shot," she added.

Crossen has a different plan. "I'd like to go if I could just watch; I want to see someone actually dance for 12 hours."

"If you all thought the Homecoming dance was fun, this is going to be Homecoming on steroids," Randall said.

**'If you thought the Homecoming dance was fun, this is going to be Homecoming on steroids.'**

**-ANDREW RANDALL**

## Interact Update:

## Club strives to reach out to community, plans to donate to new charities

By Emma Jakes  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

While on a temporary hiatus, the Interact club is planning future events and goals to work towards.

The Rotary Interact is a club within Manchester Essex Regional High School that works to reach out to the community by "raising money to donate to charities," according to junior Olivia Mastendino, a co-president of the club alongside junior Carolyn

Heslop. The club is a local extension of the community's Rotary Club.

Recently Interact has taken part in many fundraising events. The group helped plan a local house-decorating contest for the holidays, according to Mastendino. A bake sale was also held prior to December vacation and was successful in raising a small amount of money.

According to Mastendino, the club did not have any meetings in January but has ideas for future

community service opportunities. Heslop said the club is looking work at the Open Door Cape Ann Food Pantry in the near future.

Interact hopes to fundraise money to donate to Rotaplast, a charitable organization that provides reconstructive surgery to underprivileged children afflicted with cleft lip and cleft palate syndrome, according to senior Katie Cochand.

Cochand also expressed the club's collective desire to revisit the annual penny drive at the

school since the last one was unable to bring in many donations. Many students were not aware of the fundraiser while it was going on, Cochand said.

Each grade has a large container into which they are able to donate spare change, mostly pennies.

This year's penny drive garnered less attention than hoped, but Interact is working towards another more successful drive before the end of the year, Cochand said.

# District competition qualifies 40 DECA students for States

## Students plan for State Career Development Conference at Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel

By Anna Tyler  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

DECA adviser Dean Martino accompanied 58 students to the annual DECA district competition held on Jan. 5, 2012, at the Crowne Plaza North Shore Hotel in Danvers. The results qualified 40 students for the State Career Development Conference (SCDC).

Four other students are sitting as first alternatives, having been as close as two points away from the necessary 300.

The competition was made up of 540 high school students from Massachusetts' seven districts.

"I thought it was cool to see how many people are really serious about DECA and to see people I know from other schools competing as well," SCDC qualifier Julie MacLeod said.

The district competition is the first leg of a three-part competition series, which consists of a

district, state, and international competition. At the beginning, 220,000 high school students from nine different countries are involved in the competition who then need to qualify for a spot in the next part of the series.

"It's sudden death, if you will," Martino said.

Students can compete individually or work in teams to complete a 100-question written exam, which is followed by a 10-minute case or role-play that is judged live by a business professional. The judge is allowed a five-minute question-and-answer period.

"District competition is a lot of work, but it is also very fun," DECA president Kelly Dodge said.

To help prepare for the competitions, Martino held a mock competition for the students in the fall, which allowed them to understand the layout and mindset of the real competition.

"Students work pretty hard to get there. It can be stressful, and it can be very exciting," he said.



COURTESY OF KELLY DODGE

Senior DECA students prepare to compete at the District Career Development Conference in Danvers. The competition qualified 40 students for the State Career Development Conference in Boston.

Over the past three years, the DECA team has broken many state records including the largest number of students exceeding the state's competency levels on written exams. Two of these years, the team has been the highest performing DECA chapter in the

state.

"I am always proud of my students. They have a wide range of capabilities and strengths," Martino said.

The SCDC will take place at the Boston Marriott Copley Place Hotel on March 8-10. There,

DECA members may qualify for the International Career Development Conference (ISDC) that will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, on April 27-30. This competition will consist of 12,000 DECA members from all over the world, Martino said.

# Graduates return, advise juniors, seniors on college process

By Melissa Moore  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Returning to the high school on Jan. 6, graduates Rebecca Lynch, Connor Hoff, Kaitlin McDonagh, Olivia Dumont, Amy Fraser, and Rachel Jones advised high school juniors and seniors on the college process.

Lynch attends Pennsylvania State University in State College, Penn.

According to her, high school prepared her very well for college. "The high and challenging expectations plus balancing school and extracurriculars prepared me so

well for the workload and how I spend my time," Lynch said.

Hoff attends Salem State University in Salem, Mass.

Hoff advises juniors and seniors to "not worry about [college]." They should "take it seriously, but...not stress," he said.

McDonagh, at Connecticut College in New London, Conn., advises that incoming college freshmen should "be confident and go up to people and introduce [themselves]," she said.

Attending the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Dumont advises that seniors should enter college "with an open mind."

According to her, the high school workload helped prepare her for college, because she has "much less work and a lot more free time."

Fraser attends Fitchburg State University in Fitchburg, Mass.

According to her, the biggest difference from high school is "being completely on your own. It forces you to grow up faster and take more responsibility."

Jones attends Roger Williams University in Bristol, Rhode Island, enjoys the liberty college offers compared to high school. Jones enjoys having late classes and taking merely one or two classes a day.



**'[You should] take it seriously, but...not stress.'**  
-CONNOR HOFF



**'Be confident and go up to people and introduce yourself.'**  
-KAITLIN MCDONAGH

## CONTINUATIONS

### BLOOD DRIVE

continued from page 1

"Donating blood didn't hurt," said junior Ellie Mortillaro, who donated blood at the blood drive last year.

The process of donating blood is also simple and consists of only four steps, according to the Red Cross.

First, the donor completes donor registration, which includes basic information such as his or her name, address, and phone number.

Next, he or she will answer questions about his or her health history and undergo a mini physical.

Then he or she will be ready to actually donate blood. The needle is inserted, and then he or she will relax while the bag is filled, which takes about 8-10 minutes.

After donating, the donor rests for 10-15 minutes and is served refreshments while his or her body adjusts to the slight decrease in fluid volume.

The entire process takes about

one hour. Donors can then continue with their normal daily activities. After donating, donors should avoid any strenuous activity such as an intense sports practice or heavy lifting, DeLuca said.

If a student is going to donate blood, he/she needs to do a few things in order to prepare. The week before, students want to make sure they eat some iron rich foods, drink lots of water, and get plenty of sleep, according to DeLuca. For the morning of the donation, "it's really important that they eat breakfast," she said.

"I decided to donate because I know it can really help someone sick," Mortillaro said. Donating blood is a rewarding process that is a great experience, she said.

According to the Red Cross, many restrictions exist on who can and cannot donate blood. These are based on age, height, and weight requirements. According to the Red Cross, donors must weigh 110 pounds or more, depending on their height.

Options are also available for people who cannot donate blood. For example, he or she can become an organ donor or support a

friend who donates blood.

### BUDGET

towns will be unable to sustain new staff members in the long term.

"We thought this year we would try to put two teachers back into the [district] budget. They were in the tentative budget, but it looks very unlikely that we are going to be able to keep them into the final budget this year to address rising enrollment," Urbas said.

According to Lee, enrollment in the high school has risen from 470 students to 490 students in a one year period.

Besides not being able to add staff, Beaudoin said many other items on the list of district priorities will have to be left out of the final 2013 budget, such as new supplies, technology, and school improvements.

"Every year we have a to-do list...the more we put off things, the list just grows longer and longer every year, so at some point there is going to have to be a correction year where we can clean off the list and get a clean

slate," Beaudoin said.

### HIGHLIGHTER DANCE

Because so few students went to the dance, DECA was unable to send their promotional supporter Dew Tour a video of the dance, which means they are no longer in the running for \$3,000 for private buses to a DECA event.

"I feel that many of the male students failed to support the objective of the dance. Unfortunately, we couldn't send a video of the sparsely populated dance to Dew Tour," Martino said.

Senior DECA captain Anya Ciarametaro agreed.

"Since all the sophomores, juniors and seniors protested against going to the dance because of the new grinding rule, we definitely lost money," Ciarametaro said.

Because the dance was unsuccessful, the DECA team has to pull together another fundraiser before they can go to State Finals.

Ciarametaro said if dances won't be profitable, DECA has better ways of raising money such as selling wreaths and raffle calendars.

For some high school students

the appeal of the dance was taken away when they were informed they couldn't grind.

"Dances are a good way to make money, but if people can't grind, then no one is going to go, and dances aren't fun unless a lot of people go," sophomore Lila Hughes said.

"I can see where Mr. Lee is coming from because people were a little out of control at the Semi-Formal dance, but banning grinding altogether is a bit ridiculous," Hughes said.

Senior Matt Corwin, who attended the dance, agreed. "The dance was probably worse since less people went," he said. Even with the new rule, he absolutely plans on going to prom this year.

Though fewer students than usual attended the dance, chaperone Elizabeth Edgerton said she thought the students still had fun.

"After seeing that the kids at the dance can still have a ton of fun without grinding, I think the rule should stay in place," she said.

Edgerton also expects that the new rule "won't stop people from going to prom this year."

# School Dances

## Should grinding be banned?

### Pro

Sofia del Valle

Lately the issue of inappropriate teen dancing has been quite controversial. Some have referred to it as “sex on the dance floor,” but this comparison is an extreme and inaccurate representation of how the majority of students dance at school dances.

Dances are a great way for classes and organizations, such as DECA, to earn money, and when done correctly, they can result in a high turnout of students. Since the high school only hosts three dances a year, students go to have fun and go a little wild.

In January, DECA hosted the Highlighter Dance, which is always the most anticipated dance of the year. After the “no grinding” rule was implemented by the administration, a whopping 60 people showed up, even after a reduction in ticket prices, a disappointment considering such high turn outs for the previous dances.

After working hard to put the dance together, DECA did not deserve to lose money solely because of the controversy over the style of dancing. Administrators say that if the grinding doesn’t end, they will permanently cancel dances.

Though other methods of fundraising can also be successful, by eliminating high school dances, potential opportunities that guarantee success and high revenue will be lost, as will a standard and exciting high school tradition.

After the Homecoming and Semi-Formal dances, multiple faculty members complained that the style of dancing had gone too far, and that they feel uncomfortable watching kids grind, especially when girls bend over and touch their hands to the floor. This move, referred to as “Jersey Turnpiking” is in fact crossing the line.

Unfortunately, only a small number of girls and guys are responsible for this behavior; yet, as a result, the entire high school has been penalized. Instead of the chaperones and administration discussing the situation with those few girls guilty of dancing in this manner, all further grinding has been prohibited at dances.

While grinding may not be the preferred way to dance, it is the current trend. Popular styles of dancing change each decade, and in 2012 there should not be anything wrong with a little bump ‘n grind.

In the ‘50s when Elvis shook his hips, he caused an uproar among the adults of that generation, and today, grinding has the same effect. Ten years from now, most likely the trends in dance will be different, but until then, banning students from dancing in a way that is common among high schools is unfair.

So what if grinding is a little risqué? A school dance lasts all but three hours. Depriving high schoolers of fun for that short amount of time should not be worth the trouble.

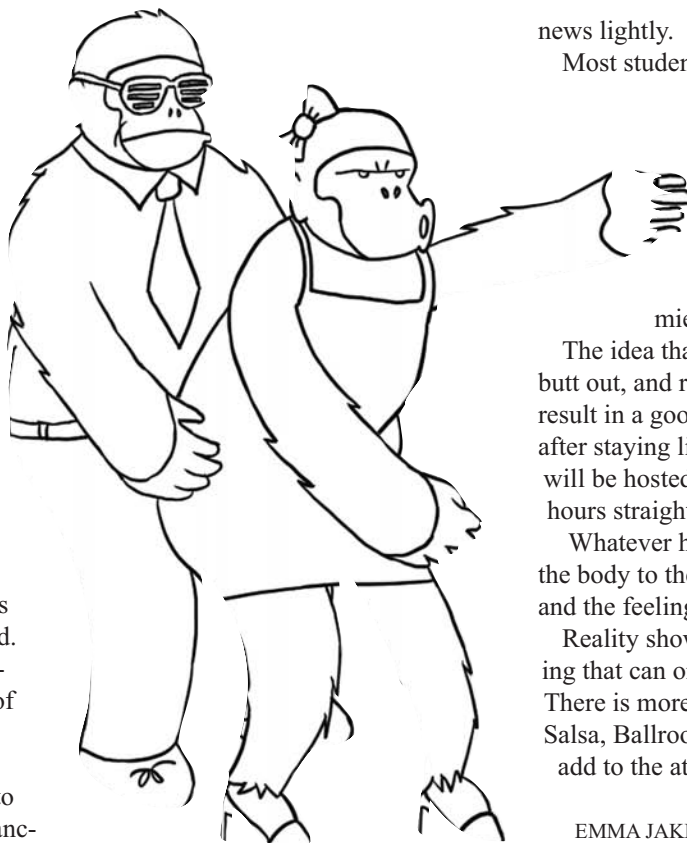
### Con

Caroline Wood

By now, everyone is aware of what happened at the Winter Semi-Formal dance: kids were out of control, The Jersey Turnpike reared its ugly head, and the chaperones could not enter the cafeteria without feeling extremely uncomfortable.

The debut of this over-the-line style of grinding caused the administration to finally take charge and introduce a new rule that changed the students’ outlook on dances entirely.

Principal James Lee announced the “no grinding” regulation to each class on the day of the Highlighter Dance, Jan. 6. Students did not take the



news lightly.

Most students boycotted the Highlighter Dance in order to protest this new rule; some students even went as far as standing in the parking lot until Lee told them to join the dance or get lost.

While grinding does not bother most people, the worst part of the students’ reaction to the no grinding rule is the belief that grinding is the only way to dance. If this is true, students can anticipate the release of the new game “Just Dance: Grinding Edition” or they can watch the season premiere of “Grinding with the Stars.”

The idea that the only way to dance is to stand in front of someone’s pelvis, butt out, and rock back and forth, is completely ridiculous. While grinding may result in a good leg workout, the enjoyment factor is extremely low, especially after staying like that for multiple songs. For the upcoming dance marathon that will be hosted by the senior class, what are kids going to do? Grind for 12 hours straight?

Whatever happened to simply dancing to the music; moving every part of the body to the rhythm and drawing inspiration for future moves from friends and the feeling of the moment.

Reality shows such as “The Jersey Shore” exemplify this vulgar type of dancing that can only be described as an insult to dancing cultures around the world. There is more to dance than just the classic ballet, tap, or jazz; Broadway, Salsa, Ballroom, Hip-Hop, Latin, Country, Folk, Disco, and many more styles add to the athleticism and skill it takes to be a dancer. However, just because not everyone knows specific moves does not mean that experimenting different styles during a dance should be frowned upon.

Many kids grind because that way they do not have to face their dance partner; the intimidation factor of actually having to make eye contact with another person is too much to handle and students would rather escape the awkwardness of the situation by facing a different direction, while dancing like a bunch of hormone-crazed animals.

For the next dance, a strong piece of advice: grow up, show up, and just have fun.

## Outdoor eating area would be beneficial to entire student body

By Maggie Lehar  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

One of the most cherished senior privileges is the option to sit on the balcony outside the cafeteria and eat lunch while getting some fresh air. While this is a great opportunity for the seniors, the option to eat lunch outside should be available to all of the students.

Yet this change does not have to affect seniors; in fact the balcony outside the cafeteria could even stay exclusively for seniors. Plenty of other locations around the school are available where a few picnic tables could be placed

for underclassmen. Not only are picnic tables inexpensive, but they would also be well worth the school’s money. Students spend the majority of the school day sitting inside at a desk. Then they go home and spend another few hours at home inside at a desk doing their homework. That does not leave much time for students to spend outside. If there was the option to eat outside at lunch, that would give students an opportunity to get some fresh air. Lunch is already a time where students enjoy taking a break from their stressful day; however, the cafeteria can be loud and crowded. An outdoor eating

area option would make lunch even more relaxing experience for students. In addition to being beneficial to the mental health of students, the option to eat outside could also be beneficial to them physically. With students spending less and less time outside, many are not getting enough vitamin D. A few extra minutes in the sun every day at lunch would add up quickly and could have a positive effect on the health of the students.

After eating lunch outside, students would be happier and more alert when they go back to class, which would be favorable for both the students and the teachers.



MAGGIE LEHAR PHOTO

An outdoor eating area, like the one reserved for seniors shown above outside the dining hall, would be beneficial to all students.



Pastime which once engaged, inspired now takes backseat

MARIAN SILJEHOLM

Mark Twain once said, “The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can’t read them.”

A book, even a classic work, is only as powerful as the message it carries and the minds it impacts. And that message, with all its potential to transform and inspire, is useless if unheard.

Today amidst constant distractions of cell phones, iPods, laptops, Kindles, and Facebook, more things that entice our attention than ever before, allocating time to sit down with a book has become a foreign idea, especially to teenagers.

The problem with this literary isolation is that it renders suddenly meaningless the words of authors whose writings once defined eras and changed history. Reading opens eyes to alternative worlds, be they fictitious or authentic, while simultaneously improving readers’ grammar, spelling, vocabulary and writing.

That this generation is less literate than its predecessors is an absurd notion in a society in which books are more accessible than ever.

Therefore, this paradox can only exist because technologies are not promoting reading as much as they claim. After all, if the purpose is to read, why not simply buy the book, or get it from the local library? There, books are free and do not have to compete for your attention with thousands of apps, movies and unlimited Internet access.

History department chair Daniel Jewett adds that the lack of reading is actually “less a generational problem than a societal one.”

Chemistry teacher Keith Gray blames the media for the growing illiteracy, saying, “The media makes it possible to get excitement from television in half the time as you’d need to read, taking away the allure reading once held.”

Regardless of age, the general consensus is the same: I don’t have the time.

The thing is, you have more time than you think. By dedicating those moments that are usually spent on Facebook, to reading, you might discover that reading can even be fun. Who would have thought?

If nothing else, try these simple changes so that in your college interview you have something more erudite to say than “Twilight” when asked about your reading preferences, unless of course you know your interviewer is an avid team Edward member; in that case, go right ahead.

# STAFF EDITORIAL

## Abnormal lack of snowfall dampens students’ morale

Winter in New England is typically defined by one specific characteristic: snow. A New England winter without snow is like an oxymoron; it seems impossible. Unfortunately for students, this year has seemed to prove all previous stereotypes wrong.

The first brief flurry of snow in October seemed promising for a snowy winter. Yet December came and passed, and still not a single flake appeared.

For many, a snowless winter is not a problem but an advantage. A winter without snow prevents shoveling, slippery roads, dampness and other hassles that usually accompany snow. Lack of snow is less expensive, both for the government and the individual.

But can you really put a value on the feeling of waking up to a blanket of snow covering the treetops and glimmering in the sun?

In the long and cold New England winters, snow raises spirits and brings happiness. Even in



KENDALL MCCORMICK PHOTO  
Snowstorms, a staple in nearly all past New England winters, have been noticeably absent this year, discouraging students.

high school the childhood feeling of excitement that arises from a new snow, for many, ceases to

disappear. Aside from snow, there remains very little to look forward

to during the long, cold months following the holidays. The unbearable length of winter is made just a bit more bearable through the happiness that typically accompanies snow.

Moreover, snow can be essential for recreation as well. Especially in the north, activities that require snow such as downhill skiing, snowboarding, and cross-country skiing are immensely popular.

A 2008 poll by the National Ski Areas Association found that there were 6.5 million skiers and 5.9 million snowboarders in the United States. Lack of snow not only loses business for mountains but also is unfortunate for those who have paid for season passes or just for those looking forward to occasionally taking part in these activities.

While the amount of snowfall each winter is not a factor anyone can change, a winter with a small amount of snow is certainly a disappointment for many.

## Midnight premieres provide excitement, fun for fans

By Austen Coviello  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

When a long-awaited movie premieres in the theater, the mad rush of people who had anticipated the film since the airing of the first preview can be overwhelming. On the bright side, however, the alternate option is a midnight premiere.

Midnight showings are available in most theaters for fans who are dedicated enough to brave the late night hours along with the seemingly crazy people

who imitate “Twilight” and “Harry Potter” characters.

Leaving a warm house at 10 p.m. and waiting in a long, tedious line for hours on end may not appeal to a majority of people; however, for those who long for the opening of a movie, the experience is one to be celebrated.

Unfortunately, most movies come out on Fridays or Saturdays, leaving people to attend the outings on Thursday nights, the night before a long day of school or work. Such late nights make it difficult to wake up after only having around three hours of

sleep and be motivated to work through a busy and potentially stressful day of work or school. Before making a decision, a fan must consider the question of whether or not staying out all night is worth it.

Attending the midnight premiere of a movie has a number of benefits. The viewer is able to boast about being the first to see a movie the rest of the world will be seeing the following day, and the experience is one to be remembered for years to come. In a majority of cases, midnight showings are most popular when the movie is based off a popular

book like “Harry Potter” and the hype of a premiere builds excitement within every devoted fan in attendance.

While daytime premieres are busy and somewhat exciting, the crowded theater filled with supposed fans is often discouraging for those who actually care about the movie.

Midnight movie premieres are by no means social events, as most movie theater visits are. They provide opportunities for true, brave fanatics to display their affection for the film without having to deal with the nonsense of an average movie visit.

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### the INDEPENDENT

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The Independent is published monthly throughout the school year. It is a product of the Manchester-Essex Regional High School Journalism class.

Editorial space is available to all MERHS students, faculty, and community members.

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

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

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

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

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# How to attract a girl: How to attract a boy:

By Marian Siljeholm

**Be brave.**

Most girls are attracted to confidence but not an ego. There is definitely a line, says senior Eliza Rohner. "I love when a guy is attractive, but only if he isn't super cocky about it, especially when he'll show you that by initiating the conversation whether it's texting or talking in person."

**Show her you care.**

Ask her about her day. It is a simple way to show her that you are interested in how she is feeling. When she starts to talk, give her your full attention and look her in the eye. As senior Katerina Eichenberger says, "It always gets a girl's attention when guys notice you're having a bad day and go out of their way to make you feel better."

**Make an effort with her friends.**

If her friends like you, you'll have a better chance of winning her over, as girls often turn to their friends for advice or a second opinion, so being on good terms with them is always a plus.

**Take good care of yourself.**

Women take pride in their own appearance so if a boy has good hygiene or dresses well, it always adds to his appeal. In addition, bad hygiene can often be a deal breaker. As senior Leanne Ciccone says, "Nothing turns a girl off like a guy who doesn't smell good." Senior Margaret Henry agrees, saying, "I love when guys take time to look good, especially when they dress preppy."

**Love her for her quirks.**

It is one thing to give a girl a compliment, but complimenting her on something that she feels insecure about will earn you major points.

Girls like guys who can be straight with them. It shows that you are ready and mature enough for a relationship. If you are thinking something, tell her. If you can't figure out what she's thinking, tell her. That way if anything does evolve into a relationship, it will be one based on openness and honesty and not flattery or false promises.

By Nabila Mahmud

**Jealousy is unattractive.**

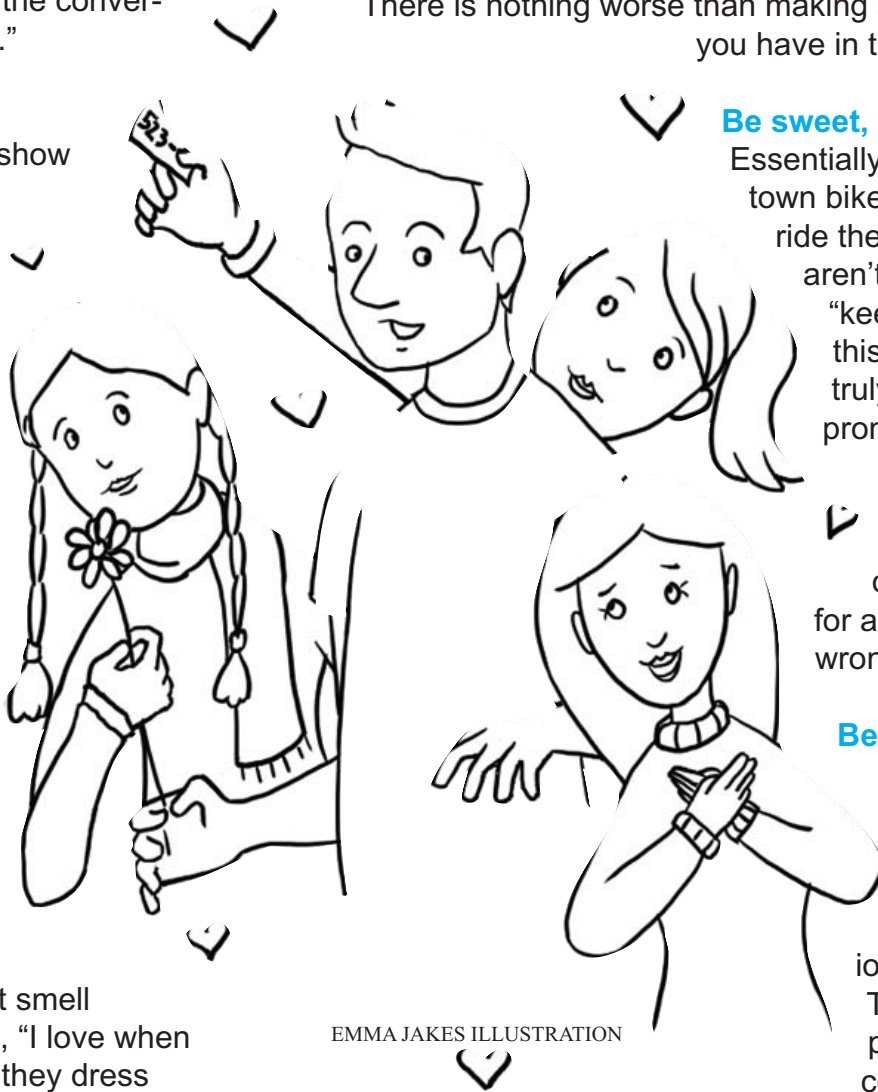
Don't drive a guy insane with constant scrutinizing questions and death glares whenever he talks to another girl. It emphasizes insecurities and makes you look petty. Trust your guy. There is nothing worse than making someone question the trust you have in them—it's a slap in the face.

**Be sweet, and "datable."**

Essentially, no one wants to date the town bike...if everyone has had a ride then chances are that you aren't really considered a "keeper." Sometimes girls have this distorted idea that guys will truly like them if they are promiscuous or, for lack of a better word, slutty—this is not true. Guys want to know that their girlfriend can be respected and liked for all the right reasons—not the wrong ones.

**Be appealing but not trashy.**

Being attractive doesn't just mean wearing short shorts and tank-tops with plunging necklines. Be a little sassy, have an opinion, and radiate confidence. There is nothing more appealing than a girl who is confident in herself.



EMMA JAKES ILLUSTRATION

**Let him hang out with his friends.**

"Babe, hang out with your friends tonight! Have fun!" Those are the words every guy loves to hear once in a while. Although you might love hanging out with him...make sure you know you're not the only hangout buddy in his life.

**Don't always count on him to make the first move.**

Classic girl move: Wait for him to text you first, don't kiss him first, and don't tell him you like him first. News flash: Guys hate when girls are so traditional. This isn't the '50s. Guys get just as nervous as girls do, so take some stress off of them and be confident unless it's just totally clear a guy doesn't like you...then that's really awkward.



**M'Lena Gandolfi**

"My date took me skiing... (I'd never skied before)...When I got off the lift, I knew I was in trouble. He swooshed ahead of me, and I fell five times...and veered off the trail into the trees. When I finally made it down, he asked "What took you so long?" I didn't respond, walked right past him, and never spoke to him again!"

SOFIA DEL VALLE PHOTOS



**Marion Powers**

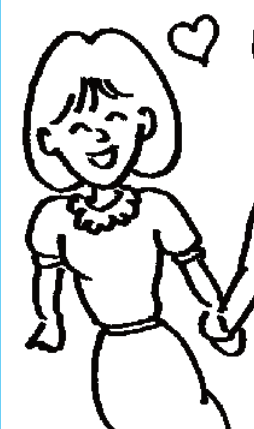
"I was a sophomore...My school did "The Dating Game." I sat on one side of a curtain, and three junior[s] sat on the other. I asked them questions, and based on their answers, I chose... [a]date. It was pretty hilarious. This was my first "get in a car" date. We won movie tickets, dinner, and ended up going out for a few months."



**Jennifer Coleman**

"I was in 11th grade. I liked this boy so much, and we finally made plans to go to the movies. He called me and cancelled. I was devastated, so I invited some girls to go instead, but they were "busy." When I got home, my mom ordered me to go to the basement, and my date had organized a surprise birthday party for me!"

What w  
first/wor



# Is it love, like, or lost?

**When your significant other is with his/her friends and sees you he/she:**

- A. Smiles.
- B. Says hi to you.
- C. Calls you over.

**Your relationship with his/her family is:**

- A. Really close; they're always asking about you.
- B. You say hi when you go over but you still feel awkward.
- C. Conversation is kept at a minimum; it's not a priority.

**When he/she asks you to hang out and you're with your friends you say:**

- A. I'm with my friends now, but I can see you tomorrow!
- B. Yes! I'll come over right now.
- C. You ignore the question all together.

**If you had a bad day he/she:**

- A. Brings you a pizza and a Pixar movie.
- B. Asks about your feelings.
- C. Tells you everything will be fine.

**When you're not with him/her but around people of the opposite sex you:**

- A. Are still thinking about him/her, but know you can talk to other people
- B. Stay away from the opposite sex ; no questionable Facebook pictures!
- C. I'm in a relationship?

**If you had to compare yourself to a celebrity couple it would be:**

- A. Lamar and Khloe
- B. Justin and Selena
- C. Ashton and Demi

**When it comes to conversation you and your guy/girl talk about:**

- A. Everything—no limits.
- B. What needs to be talked about...nothing trivial.
- C. Kissing is more important than talking.

**What does he/she think of your best friend:**

- A. They're best friends too.
- B. They get along pretty well!
- C. They hate each other.

**When you fight, you fight about things like:**

- A. We disagree on what is best for each other.
- B. Where to go to dinner
- C. "DID YOU JUST CHECK THAT PERSON OUT?"

**When you make decisions it usually goes:**

- A. Well. We compromise.
- B. Decently...we argue until someone gives in.
- C. Fine. I usually just let him/her make the choice.

## Mostly A's

I think it's safe to say you are falling in love. When your relationship becomes less about the physicality and more about the true emotions it's a sign that you've reached a new height. You know that you can trust him/her and vice-versa. Trust is key. He/she can get along with your family and friends and hold a conversation for days—you've got a keeper

## Mostly B's

You definitely like each other. You're in the beginning stages of a fun relationship. You love hooking up, and keeping it light is great for both of you. Attachments are adequate and feelings are appropriately strong. The dynamic in your relationship keeps it young and fresh.

## Mostly C's

Your relationship is lost. There is no more heat, passion, and your feelings are slowly fading. It's either strictly a physical thing or neither physical nor emotional. You may be better off as friends if you aren't vibing well enough to sustain a relationship with each other.

as your  
st date?



**Eric Magers**

"I was a sophomore at Gould Academy. I brought the biggest crush of my life out for pizza and ICB root beer. It was a cold winter night, and we had skied together that day. Her name was Betsy, and she had the cutest little gap between her teeth. We held hands and kissed on the lips... it was uncomfortable. Then we dated."



**Dan Koughan**

"I was a sophomore... with a senior [prom date]. The wind on Route 1 wrecked her big '80s hair. Suddenly [our] driver pulls over...the car had no power. A pickup truck pulls up... next thing you know, it's pushing our limo down the highway. The only[dinner] table was the faculty table. We ate with the principal... [My date] was mortified!"



**James Wallimann**

"I'm driving my date home... she tells me how awful her ex-boyfriend was...and starts crying hysterically. I told her how confused I was. In the midst of sobbing she says, "I just want to know where we're headed!" This was the first date. I remember thinking, 'You're headed to your door; I'm headed far, far away from you...'"

# Kindle Fire provides additional resources

## Tablet has access to popular applications, games, email

By Maya Shnider  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Since its release on Nov. 15, the Kindle Fire has become increasingly popular. The seven-inch touch screen tablet, which has access to all of Amazon's features, costs \$199.

The Kindle Fire can hold over 19 million movies, television shows, magazines, songs, and books and has access to thousands of popular applications and games such as Angry Birds and Doodle Jump. Its ability to connect to the Internet provides for ultra fast Internet speed and access to email.

The Kindle Fire's touch screen makes the device easy to use, understand, and navigate. The high-resolution screen gives outstanding color and clarity and is 20 times harder and 30 times stiffer than actual plastic.

The dual core processor allows for music to be played while streaming the web or read-

ing a book and gives free cloud storage for Amazon digital access and Amazon's accounts.

The Kindle Fire has an application called Prime, which is an Amazon membership. Users who have Prime are allowed to read and borrow books, as often as once a month, from an online library for \$79 a year.

The tablet does not require any type of computer. Every Kindle Fire has 8GB of memory, which is enough to store 80 ap-

plications, 10 movies or 800 songs or over 6,000 books. The battery holds a charge for about eight hours and takes four hours to completely charge; however, battery life depends on wireless usage

and the amount of content downloaded.

The Kindle Fire has been compared to the Apple iPad and is thought to be the first successful tablet not sold by Apple.

The tablet is a go-to resource for just about anything and is not only useful for reading books but also watching movies and playing music.

**[The Kindle Fire] has the ability to hold over 19 million movies, television shows, magazines, songs, and books.**



WWW.AMAZON.COM

The Kindle Fire, released on Nov. 15, can hold 8GB of memory and holds battery charge for eight hours. The Fire is considered to be the first successful tablet sold by a company besides Apple.

### KINDLE FIRE FAST FACTS

- Can hold over 19 million movies, television shows, songs, magazines, and books
- Access to popular applications and games
- Ultra fast Internet speed
- Access to email
- Durable screen, 20 times harder than plastic
- Can simultaneously play music and read or surf the web
- Holds 8 GB of memory
- Battery lasts 8 hours
- First successful tablet not sold by Apple

# Debate update: History department reforms system, incorporates debate into other classes



COURTESY TAYLOR COONS

**Top: Senior Max Rodier presents his debate piece for his class. Bottom: Congress teacher James Wallimann and sophomore Chris Dente listen to other students' pieces. This year, the history department reformed the debate program with mixed reactions.**

By Morgan Kennedy  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Having taken over the debate program, the history department hopes that students "leave debate class feeling like they have learned something every day," department chair Daniel Jewett said.

For the first time, the debate classes are all scheduled for the same block, and each is taught by a different history teacher, as opposed to a single debate teacher, according to Jewett.

"Four of us have worked very closely on the subject, but all six of us have studied it to some degree. It's helped all of us grow professionally as teachers," he said.

Initially taught according to grade level, teachers broke up the classes by category as time passed and students figured out what style of debate they were most interested in, Jewett said. Classes are now categorized by Speech and Congressional Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate.

Public Forum teacher Jennifer Coleman said Jewett taught the new teachers about debate.

"This is my first time teaching

it, but I wasn't thrown in cold turkey. We spent at least 20 hours learning about debate before school started. I feel confident, but I am someone who realizes that you learn something new every day," she said.

Debate president Graham Shaw said the new system has been successful.

"Having multiple teachers opens up new opportunities to practice and learn."

Other students responded unfavorably to the reformed system.

"My biggest complaint is the grading system. It's based on the class average of points earned at tournaments, but I think it would be better if x amount of points earned an A and x amount of points earned a B," sophomore Landon Komishane said.

Sophomore Fiona Davis agrees.

"The teachers are using a really great method, but I think some things need to be tweaked. It's hard to transition how you rank at a tournament to how you perform in class," she said.

Senior Max Rodier is pleased with the new program. He said the system is very fair and the program is steadily improving.

"We are more successful than in past years. Everything is going in the right direction, which is a

testament to the way Jewett took over and gave some organization to the program," he said.

Jewett said the program requires hard work and an open mind and is satisfied with the reformed system.

Some students may have trouble adjusting to "[raised] academic expectations and accountability," he said.

"In terms of something that has high expectations for student learning and is sustainable, I think it has been very successful," he said. "Of course there are growing pains, but we have teachers who want to teach it again and students who want to take it again."

Jewett said the department is also working to incorporate debate practices into the regular history curriculum.

"We believe the debate model is valuable and we should be using it in our social studies classes. Many teachers in the department have already done so," he said.

Congress teacher James Wallimann agrees that connections between classes are beneficial.

"I have incorporated debate into global issues and global issues into debate. We have built a foundation this year that is a recipe for success," he said.

# Boys' basketball players attribute success to Sigsbury

## Coach leads team to 13-2 record, displays dedication, commitment

By Nabila Mahmud  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Due to team work, dedication, and the hard work of Duane Sigsbury, the boys' varsity basketball team has improved throughout the past four years, according to players.

Sigsbury began his Hornet coaching career with a 14-7 record in 2009 and improved it to 17-5 last year.

According to senior captain Joe Burgess, Sigsbury's coaching method has led to triumph for two reasons: Sigsbury's unique coaching style and the bond formed between the team and the coach.

"It's the way he taught us to play the game. He taught us to work together as a team. He just made us all better competitors," Burgess said.

On a personal level, Sigsbury has affected each player in his own way. According to senior captain Sean Nally, Sigsbury is one of the people that influence him the most in an "unexplainable" type of way.

Senior captain Casey Weld attributes his personal growth within the game entirely to Sigsbury.

"Sigs has changed my game in a variety of ways. He's showed me that in anything I do, I've got to go 100 percent. On the court he's taught us toughness and determination. Under his coaching my game has improved tremendously, and our team accredits ALL of our success to his coaching," Weld said.

Senior captain Chris Bishop agreed.

"He is the greatest coach we've ever had. He just wants us to succeed, and as long as we put the work in and show up, he's

**'He is the  
greatest coach  
we've ever  
had.'**

**-CHRIS BISHOP**



ELLEN BURGESS PHOTO

Teammates Joe Burgess, Sean Nally, Max Nesbit, Chris Bishop, and Taylor Ketchum strategize in their game against Masconomet. The team credits this win and others to skillful coaching.

pretty much able to out coach anyone," Bishop said.

In terms of knowledge of the sport, the consensus is obvious: Sigsbury truly knows the game.

"He's got everything down to a system. He can formulate plays

in like three seconds," Nally said. Manager Max Rodier supports Nally in saying, "He motivates the team and is very skillful. He has a deep knowledge of the game."

Although Sigsbury's skill and

dedication can be attributed to the team's 13-2 record, according to Nally the bond is what really connects the team on the court.

"Sigs is a great guy; he loves us all and we love him back. Best coach in the world," Nally said.

# Ten pairs of siblings improve track team's chemistry, unity



LANDON KOMISHANE PHOTO

The track team warms up during practice on Highland Field. The team includes 10 sets of siblings that add to the team dynamic.

By Landon Komishane  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Ten pairs of siblings on the track team have impacted the team's chemistry as the team progresses through the season, according to senior captain Anya Ciarametaro. Siblings include Ciarametaro and her freshman brother Troy, senior captain Joe O'Neil and his freshman brother Luke, senior Stephan LaForge and his seventh-grade brother David, sophomore Kendall McCormick and her seventh-grade sister

Maura, senior Sophia Mastendino and her junior sister Olivia, freshman Olivia Lantz and her seventh-grade sister Evelyn, sophomore Fiona Davis and her eighth-grade brother Charlie, junior John Beardsley and his seventh-grade sister Jenny, sophomores Ella and Mia Rodier, and seventh-grade twins Redmond and Sally Pulver.

Ciarametaro loves having a lot of siblings on the team. "It helps with our team chemistry," Ciarametaro said.

"I think it's wonderful,"

coach John Barbour said. "It is nothing I quite expected or even fully noticed for a while."

The team has about 70 members, according to Barbour, and he thinks the amount of siblings on the team is unique.

"I think the amount of siblings is a result from a word of mouth within families," Barbour said. "A Sophia Mastendino or a Joe O'Neil comes out one year and has a good experience, and then an Olivia or a Luke decides it might be worth a try."

According to Barbour, the

team has progressed even though their record doesn't necessarily reflect that success. The boys are 1-5 and the girls are 2-4, with the boys winning their first ever track meet against Lynnfield.

"The program here is still young, and it will be a year or more before we're on a par with established Cape Ann League track programs," Barbour said. "The girls secured the first-ever Hornet dual-meet win in December over Amesbury, and the boys came within two points of Cape Ann League powerhouse Hamilton Wenham, 42-40."

## Gymnastics wins first meet, athletes pursue personal goals

By Fiona Davis  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

At the beginning of the season, the gymnastics team hoped to win at least one meet, and they accomplished that goal on Jan. 25 to make their record 1-6, according to junior captain Katherine Hennigan.

"We were so excited to finally see our hard work pay off," sophomore Lindsey Duff said.

According to sophomore Evanthia Boling, the team has seen improvement as a whole due to individuals working hard in practice.

"We have definitely gotten stronger as a team, and we have

learned who is best at what events. Many have improved their meet scores," Boling said.

According to Duff, team members take pride in accomplishing skills.

"Diligent practice and advice from coaches and captains has helped me get some skills I had no idea I would be doing when I started out the season. Some of my best memories from practice are made when I finally get a skill I've been working on forever, because everyone is so supportive and encouraging," Duff said.

According to freshman Lizzie Ranger, she herself has become stronger and now competes regularly, while at the beginning of the season she didn't compete at all.

Team members benefit from the work of captains who make the season fun by organizing team dinners and giving pointers in practice, according to sophomore Madeline Dahlin.

"Katherine is always at the



COURTESY LINDSEY DUFF

**In competition, Katherine Hennigan displays new skills she learned on the beam.**

gym working hard and supporting us. The team camaraderie this season has been one of the most fun aspects," she said.

## Smith offers experience, ability to tri-town hockey team

By Rachel Daley  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

A coalition of girls from Swampscott, Manchester, and Marblehead form the Marblehead girls hockey team; their home practices and games take place at Salem State College.

This is the first girls' hockey team the three towns have ever had, and according to Smith, "If you didn't know that about the team, you would've thought we had been together for years."

According to Smith, their record is 4-3-1. On a personal level, Smith has contributed to the team with two hat tricks and 10 years of experience.

Although the team's personalities coincide, according to Smith, some girls have never even played hockey on a team

before.

"It's hard for the coaches to incorporate the beginners into some of the drills," she said. "But they always find a way to get everyone involved."

Smith looks up to the four senior captains for advice and knowledge on the sport. "The captains have been especially helpful in welcoming me to the team," Smith said.

Smith has two more years to play on Marblehead's hockey team, and her outlook is positive.

"The team is mostly sophomores and freshmen, so by my senior year we will have grown as team both physically and mentally," Smith said.

"Being on a team from a different school has opened up my mind to new people, and at the same time has improved my athletic ability and mental toughness," she said.

# Girls' basketball needs one win to reach tournament

## Team fights through injuries, inexperience, aiming for state tournament berth

By Max Nesbit  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

The girls' basketball team may be "young" but after a 4-8 start, the team is only one divisional game win away from a state tournament berth, according to coach Lauren DuBois.

"The team has been playing well so far despite the early problems. We've had to adjust to a lot of injuries and to the fact that we have a younger team than years prior," DuBois said.

Senior captains Jelisa O'Hara and Ellen Burgess have missed extensive time with injuries and there have also been several players who missed a few practices and games, according to senior captain Leanne Ciccone.

Ellen Burgess, who suffered two concussions towards the end of her field hockey season, still hasn't fully recovered.

"It has definitely been hard. Missing time with friends and



ELLEN BURGESS PHOTO

**Girls' basketball team cheers on team members before Ipswich game on Dec. 28 at Newburyport. The girls may qualify for a state tournament berth if they win their final game against Rockport on Feb. 16.**

falling behind in school has been difficult, but I've especially hated missing basketball. It's tough to miss time from my senior year and have to watch all the girls play," Burgess said.

Another thing that the team has had to adjust to is a younger group of girls than in years past.

"The team has had to work more on fundamentals because of our inexperience, but we have a

very strong group of freshmen, and they definitely help the team," DuBois said.

"At the start of the year, our younger players weren't used to the pace and intensity of varsity

games, but they have stepped up and now are crucial members of our team," Ciccone said.

The team has already doubled their wins from last year and is close to earning a state tournament berth.

In order to make the tournament the team only needs to win half of their Division Four games. There are only six Division Four games scheduled for them, and their record within Division Four is 2-2.

The team has two division four games against rivals Rockport and Georgetown remaining. Both games are ones to watch because of the rivalry, and a win would mean a tournament berth, according to DuBois.

### Upcoming Games

**Ipswich, Feb. 10, 6:30**  
**@Lynnfield, Feb. 14, 6:30**  
**Rockport, Feb. 16, 6:30**

## Swim team stays positive despite inconvenient practice times

By Carolyn Heslop  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Despite having to deal with inconsistent practice times, the swim team is well on its way to achieving the goals for the season, according to junior captain Dustin Ferzacca.

Junior captain Alex Walder said that the team currently has a record of 2-6 and has already qualified a relay team for Sectionals, as well as a diving team for States. Qualifying both a relay and diving team were two of the team's main goals at the start of the season, he said.

The team's practices are currently held at Gordon College,

with pool times ranging from 5:45 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., according to varsity coach Katie Garvin.

Walder said that these practice times make practices interesting because they are never the same, but waking up early for before-school practices can be difficult.

However, the team members are generally very willing and accepting of these practice times and locations because they all have a genuine love for the sport, according to Ferzacca. If anything, these times force the swimmers to be much more dedicated to the sport, he said.

"Because the practices and competitions are all off-site, there really isn't that school spirit aspect that is present in many other high school sports,



COURTESY OF ALEX WALDER

**Swim team members dive off of blocks at the beginning of a race at Ipswich meet on Jan. 25.**

yet this is a team that has a great level of camaraderie, and the kids all feel very much a part of a team," Garvin said.

According to Walder, transportation can sometimes be an issue for the swimmers because not everyone on the team can

drive. This means that swimmers must somehow find a ride to the Gordon College pool each day, he said.

"The kids are all motivated by the actual sport because there is nothing really convenient about it, and it is a big commitment for

both the swimmers, as well as their families," Garvin said.

Even though the practice times are not ideal, the team is still hoping to finish the season off strong and build up a good base for future years, Garvin said.

## Ski team pushes past snow shortage

By Austen Coviello  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Despite the lack of snowfall this winter, the ski team, through perseverance and dedication, has begun the season successfully, according to coach Tim Wonson.

Locally, the amount of snow this year has been quite limited, which, Wonson said, was a minor setback for the team. Before the regular season started, the team went through extensive dry-land training because of the weather.

"We missed a lot of pre-season on-hill practice time which proved very valuable last year and would have helped some of the newer kids this year," Wonson said.

Junior captain Megan Jones

said the lack of snow "delayed the season." However, Bradford Ski Way, she said, successfully created manmade snow which was a "big help" to the team.

According to junior captain Brian McAuliff, dedication is necessary for members of the ski team due to the long hours they endure each week.

"Ski team runs on a much different schedule than most other sports," he said. The members leave school at 2 p.m. and travel for 45 minutes to Bradford for races twice a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays for boys and Mondays and Wednesdays for girls. Races are directly followed by practices, and the team returns at 7:30 p.m.

"It does get tiring," Jones said, "but it's doable, and I love it."

According to Wonson, every member is dedicated to the team,

despite the time commitment, and they impress him more and more each time they ski.

According to McAuliff, the goal for the team this year is to have some members make it to the statewide competition at the end of the season.

Wonson said a majority of the skiers on the team are doing extremely well for such a small school, and the younger members, like freshmen Alex Marshall and Chris McAuliff, are able to "crush" older skiers.

"I will be at the top of a freezing cold, wind-swept, ice-covered race course, and I will look at the racers and tell them if they can push aside fear, put down hesitation, and try their best, they have already succeeded. I am very proud of this team's courage and sportsmanship," Wonson said.

## Young boys' hockey players practice hard, improve skills

By Kelsi Field  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Being younger players on the team, freshmen Alex Tognazzi and Cole Spencer and sophomore Emmett Ryan all say that they are gaining experience playing with the Rockport Vikings boys' hockey team. Although ice time is limited for the younger players during games, according to the players just practicing is helps them improve and be prepared to be leaders in the future.

Ryan, Spencer, and Tognazzi are the only players from Manchester-Essex who participate in the co-op program with Rockport. Tognazzi is a goalie for the team, and junior captain Conor

Douglass said he brings a lot to the team.

"Alex is very young, but he comes to practice to do one thing, to stop the puck, and he is very good at it," Douglass said.

According to the captains and coaches, all three players are very focused on improving their personal games. Head Coach Derek Papalegis notes that all three have a great work ethic and try their hardest every time they step on the ice.

According to Tognazzi, meeting new friends and having teammates from another school is one of the best parts of hockey. According to Tognazzi, everybody gets along well together.

The Vikings clenched a spot in the state tournament and are top contenders in their league.

# 29 students receive Boston Globe Scholastic Art awards

By Marian Siljeholm  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Since 1923, the Boston Globe Scholastic Art and Writing Awards have been awarding public and private school students with publicity and scholarships for creative talent in 28 categories of art and writing.

Today the competition is the oldest recognition program for creative teens in the U.S., and the largest source of recognition and scholarships for young artists and writers, awarding \$250,000 annually to winners and their teachers.

This year MERSD students earned 30 awards out of 60 submitted pieces.

"We submitted six pieces the first year. Now because of digital technology it's easier to submit more pieces; yet regardless of the year, selecting the works for submission is always the hardest part," art teacher Marion Powers said.

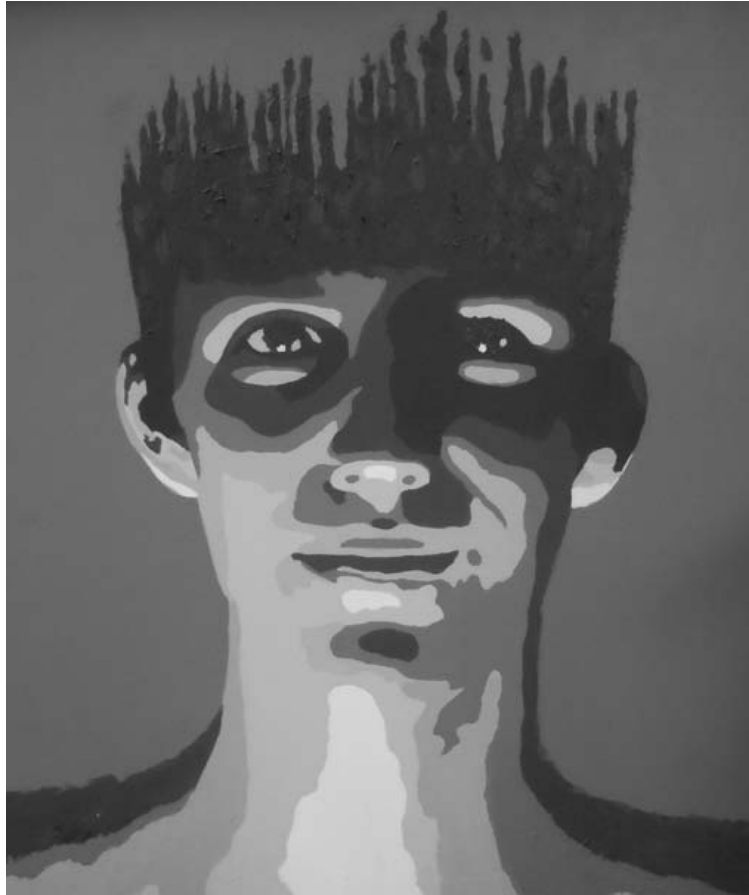
A panel of renowned visual and literary artists judge the pieces, which may be awarded honorable mention, silver key, or gold key based on originality, technical skill, and strength of personal voice.

Out of dozens of school districts many times its size, Manchester-Essex tied for number of awards with many and earned three of the 51 photo portfolio gold keys given statewide.

Art teacher Tamera Burns had two students receive gold keys, as well as one silver key and an honorable mention in ceramics and painting.

Photography teacher Caroline Epp is especially proud of her senior students, many whom have been with her since freshman year. "The senior photographers especially are very strong. This competition is our championship for the year, so we are very proud of our students for doing so well." She said.

Epp believes that a key factor in judging was the quality of a "clear vision or central theme,"



SOFIA DEL VALLE PHOTO



COURTESY OF MEMO.MERSD.ORG

which senior gold key winners Anny Carr and Alex Clarke both embraced.

"I thought the pictures looked good together, but I didn't know what the judges would like. I sent in dance portraits because I thought they were my strongest conceptually," Carr said.

Senior Kaitlin Cochand, a gold key winner for her clay mural of a Japanese temple, felt humbled by the award. "I wasn't expecting to win. I know that there are many great artists that submitted

work this year so it feels great to be recognized as being on their level," she said.

Regional gold and silver key winning art will be displayed in the State Transportation, building accompanied by an awards ceremony at the John Hancock building.

After being evaluated for a second time, select pieces will then be shipped to New York City or Washington D.C. for the national ART.WRITE.NOW exhibitions in June.



MEMO.MERSD.ORG

Anna Carr (top), Calvin Lamothe (left), and Jas Davis (bottom left) all received awards for their pieces of art that they entered in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art awards. Carr received both a Gold Key and an Honorable Mention, Lamothe received two Honorable Mentions, and Davis received a Gold Key. This year twenty-nine students received awards for their outstanding work.

## Boston Globe Scholastic Arts Awards

### High School Students

Anny Carr, Photography, Arc, Honorable Mention  
Anny Carr, Photo Portfolio, Gold Key  
Alex Clarke, Photo Portfolio, Gold Key  
Kaitlin Cochand, Ceramics & Glass, Oriental Oasis, Gold Key  
James Davis, Photo Portfolio, Gold Key  
Willy DeConto, Photography, relapse, Honorable Mention  
Willy DeConto, Printmaking, Subway, Gold Key  
Zac Fleming, Photography, Warmth, Honorable Mention  
Rachael Gallagher, Photography, Edge, Honorable Mention  
Megan Gardner, Photography, Playa del Carmen, Honorable Mention  
Megan Gardner, Photograph, Bokeh Baby(self portrait), Silver Key  
Megan Gardner, Photography, Pearl Harbor, Honorable Mention  
Chloe Gothie, Photography, Cold Cream, Gold Key  
Calvin Lamothe, Digital Art, Pour Les Lumières (Portrait of Zach Condon), Honorable Mention  
Calvin Lamothe, Painting, Melting Mind, Honorable Mention  
Sarah Lewiecki, Painting, Green with Envy, Gold Key  
Melissa Moore, Printmaking, You Can't See Me, Silver Key  
Samantha Nieberle, Photography, Bronte, Gold Key  
Jimmy Pappas, Printmaking, soaring sunset, Honorable Mention  
Amanda Ryan, Ceramics & Glass, The Plague Phantom, Silver Key  
Jamie Rynkowski, Comic Art, The Chase Part 2, Honorable Mention  
Jamie Rynkowski, Digital Art, Polar Guardian, Honorable Mention  
Madeline Smith, Photography, Play, Gold Key  
Hannah Thorne, Fashion, Consumer Cycle, Silver Key  
Zack Trembowicz, Mixed Media, Classics Never Die, Honorable Mention  
Julia Whitten, Comic Art, Project Symphony Belt, Silver Key  
Nicola Bothwick, Mixed Media, I'm Stuck In A Maze, Silver Key  
Connor Senay, Mixed Media, Peaches Of Me, Honorable Mention  
Maddie Shaw, Mixed Media, Visages Mèlangés, Honorable Mention

# 'Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close' portrays real, raw feelings

By Melissa Moore  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Make sure to bring some tissues. "Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close" is filled with emotional intensity and will not fail to make people cry.

Based on the book by Jonathan Safran Foer, the movie follows 9-year-old Oskar Schell (Thomas Horn) in his quest to make sense of his father's death.

Oskar and his father, Thomas (Tom Hanks), were very close. Thomas always set up "reconnaissance missions" for Oskar, in which Oskar had to find clues to solve the puzzle his father had set up.

A year after Thomas' death in the Sept. 11 attacks, Oskar finds a key in his father's closet and

believes it to be another reconnaissance mission his father had set up before he died.

Oskar goes on a wild goose chase to discover the lock that the key opens so he can keep his father close for as long as possible. This leads him on his greatest mission ever, forcing him to wander all over New York City and talk to hundreds of people.

In Horn's breakout role, he flawlessly captures and portrays Oskar's emotions. While in his search, Oskar is obsessed with finding the answer. Because of this, he can come off as rude and impatient, overly-inquisitive and refusing to take no for an answer. Partway through the film, it can be assumed he has Asperger's Syndrome through a reference to a test with "inconclusive" results.

Between Hanks, Horn, and

Sandra Bullock (Oskar's mother), the acting in this movie never fails. The actors never break from character and are able to portray an incredibly believable story. The characters are raw and real.

Bullock and Horn create the feeling of a family suffering from loss and show the hole left behind by the sudden death of their beloved husband and father. The entire movie is intensely heartbreaking, yet unexpected twists and turns keep the story moving.

The script, written by Eric Roth ("Forrest Gump," "The Insider"), is unpredictable yet remains realistic. Lines go from extremely harsh to loving and caring in a matter of minutes, which works due to the incredible acting.



EXTREMELYLOUDANDINCREDIBLYCLOSE.WARNERBROS.COM

Oskar (Thomas Horn) and Thomas (Tom Hanks) had a deep father-son relationship before Thomas' death in the Sept. 11 attacks. Oskar proceeds to go on a reconnaissance mission to keep the memory of his father close to him for as long as possible.

# Cast of 'FIVES' continues preparing for Drama Festival

By Maya Shnider  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

For their second year hosting preliminary rounds of Drama Festival, the drama club will perform "FIVES," a collection of five short plays by David Ives. This festival consists of preliminary rounds, semi-final rounds, and final rounds. The winners move onto the showcase of "New England Drama Festival."

The drama club last year advanced all the way through finals and onto New England's with their play "The Complete History of America (abridged)." The plays are, "Time Flies," "Enigma Variations," "Soap Opera," "Arabian Nights," and "Philip Glass Buys a Loaf of Bread."

This year's play is a comedy, very similarly to last year's. "I

think that this year's play is both very similar and very different to last years. Both are comedies; however, while last year's play was mostly a slapstick comedy, this year's is focused on a more intelligent brand of comedy," senior Ian Gillis said.

"We will be hosting preliminary rounds on March 3; seven schools will come to our festival. They are, Lynn Classical, Melrose, North Shore Tech, Ipswich, Marblehead, Swampscott, and Rockport," co-director Elizabeth Edgerton said. Manchester-Essex hosted preliminary rounds last year as well. "In my opinion I believe hosting will be easier and smoother because we have one year under our belt. Of course, we still have problems here and there, but we know the basics and hopefully

will make it even better than last year!" senior Katerina Eichenberger said.

Each school has to put on a one-act play that cannot be more than 40 minutes long. On the day of the festival, each team has up to five minutes to set up and take down their set. Breaking any of these rules will result in disqualification.

Prior to the day of festival, each school will go to their hosting site and set up for one hour to get a feel for the stage and the different technical equipment.

Rehearsals began just as midterms, sports, and away debate tournaments were beginning as well. However, according to Gillis, "The energy towards the play is overwhelmingly enthusiastic; almost everyone I have talked to is extremely thrilled with the choice of the play."



MAYA SHNIDER PHOTO

Seniors Allie Freed, Katerina Eichenberger, Emmett Snyder, Morgan Kennedy, and Ian Gillis rehearse one of the five vignettes in the Drama Festival production of "FIVES." There will be an open dress rehearsal on Feb. 15 for anyone who wants to come see the production before the preliminary round.



"Lioness: Hidden Treasures" is Amy Winehouse's last album released in late 2011 after her shocking and sudden death. Winehouse was able to control her issues of drug and alcohol abuse in order to produce three successful albums. Winehouse was in the middle of recording an album of duets with Tony Bennett when she passed away.

AMYWINEHOUSE.COM



## 'Lioness: Hidden Treasures' gives fans final look at singer's rare talent

By Sofia del Valle  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

### CD REVIEW

Amy Winehouse was truly a hidden treasure. Her sound was a blast from the past, and she was able to popularize a style of music, which only older generations seemed to appreciate. Her soulful style combined varied amounts of jazz, R&B, and pop making Winehouse one of the most unique artists of the decade.

She was born in the suburb of Southgate, North London, in

England. She grew up listening to jazz and singing Frank Sinatra at a young age. She was independent, outspoken, and a bit rebellious.

When Winehouse was 16, her classmate sent her demo tape to a recording label, and she landed a record deal as a jazz singer with Island/Universal records.

Her first album, "Frank," was released in 2003, and her reputation for being a reckless partier began to emerge. A shaky relationship marked the start of her addiction to hard drugs, and the romance turned violent along with the excessive use of drugs and alcohol.

In 2006, she released her second album "Back to Black," and her first single "Rehab" was an instant hit.

The lyrics talk about her refusal to check into rehab to clean herself up, but also her feelings of loneliness and her constant struggle with substance abuse. Though the song is catchy and seemingly upbeat, listeners seemed to overlook the seriousness she sings about when she pleads, "I just, Oh I just need a friend."

Unfortunately her behavior only got worse. She would show up visibly intoxicated to her concerts and eventually cancelled

entire tours due to her addiction.

Though Winehouse received much praise for her music and set Grammy records, her deteriorating personal life continued to hinder her stability, and she died this past summer.

Her posthumous album titled "Lioness: Hidden Treasures" was released in late 2011. Once again, Winehouse brings new life and spunk to jazz and R&B by incorporating old brassy instruments into her tracks, and she makes the genre accessible to young people who wouldn't normally listen to music with her type of sound.

Her voice is not soft and

sweet, but it has a raspy and mournful quality that evokes emotions and provides a nostalgic feeling to listeners. Her renditions of classic songs such as "Our Day Will Come," and "Body and Soul," featuring Tony Bennett, create a nice contrast against her more contemporary tracks such as "Valerie," and "Like Smoke," featuring rapper Nas.

Winehouse was such a creative and versatile artist, and though she is no longer here, "Lioness: Hidden Treasures" gives listeners a final taste of her imaginative, musical mind, and her exceptional and skillful voice.

## Freshman accepted to All-State chorus, will sing at Symphony Hall

By Morgan Kennedy  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After being accepted to the Massachusetts Northeast Senior District Chorus in November, freshman Tucker Evans auditioned for and was accepted into the Massachusetts All-State chorus.

According to chorus teacher Donna O'Neill, Evans auditioned for the All-State chorus among 1,100 other students from across Massachusetts on Jan. 21 in Shrewsbury.

Senior Savannah Repucci said Evans shows strong potential as a musician.

"It's a big deal to get accepted into Senior Districts as a freshman, so to get an All-State recommendation and be accepted to

the All-State chorus is a huge accomplishment," she said.

According to O'Neill, she helped

Evans prepare his audition piece, an early Renaissance song by Hans Leo Hassler entitled "Angelus and Pastores."

"Tucker worked tirelessly on sight-singing and preparing his solo the last few days before his audition," O'Neill said.

His All-State audition was made up of three parts including a prepared solo, vocal scales, and

a sight-singing exercise.

Evans said he didn't think his audition went well.

**'Tucker worked tirelessly on sight-singing and preparing his solo for the last few days before his audition.'**  
-DONNA O'NEILL

"I walked out of the room thinking it had been an awful audition. There were a lot of problems. The CD player broke during my solo, and the sight singing was not in the key I was expecting," he said.

Despite these problems, Evans received a perfect score on his solo evaluation and impressively high scores for his scale evaluation and sight singing, according to O'Neill.

"I was super surprised when I

found out I had been accepted," Evans said. "I was kind of floating on a cloud for the rest of the day."

Evans' peers were equally as excited.

"We were all extremely proud of him when we found out. Everyone was rooting for him," Repucci said.

As a member of the bass section of the All-State chorus, Evans will travel to Boston on March 1, stay in the Seaport Hotel, and rehearse at the World Trade Center, leading up to a performance at Symphony Hall on March 3.

O'Neill said Evans has worked hard to get to this point.

"He is absolutely driven to face new challenges," she said. "His success comes from a unique and wonderful combination of innate talent and strong work ethic."



COURTESY OF DONNA O'NEILL

Freshman Tucker Evans will perform as a member of the bass section of the All-State chorus on March 3. The choir will be singing at Symphony Hall, which is located in Boston.