

the INDEPENDENT

Volume XVII Number 4

Manchester Essex Regional High School 36 Lincoln St., Manchester, MA 01944

February 7, 2011

Peer leaders, guidance organize college homecoming panel Graduates discuss college experience

By Maura Driscoll
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As a way to begin the college process for juniors and to give seniors an idea of what freshman year in college is like, the guidance department organized the annual College Homecoming panel.

The panel, comprised of graduated seniors from the class of 2010, was emceed by senior peer leaders Brittany Edwards and Laurel Edington, who led the discussions for both the junior and senior class assemblies.

Seven graduates returned to speak to the juniors and seniors. Bobina Vander Laan of Fordham University, Jasmine Bailey of Bowdoin College, Jack Kelly of Northeastern University, Scott Cowman of Dickinson College, Monique Costello of St. Anselm College, Jake Douglas of The College of William and Mary, and Justine Kane of The University of Massachusetts at Amherst all dedicated their time to the event.

According to guidance counselor Karen D'Amour, "Not only did the graduates themselves play an important part in the organization and running of the event, but the peer leaders did



MAURA DRISCOLL PHOTO

Last year's graduates (from left), Jasmine Bailey, Justine Kane, Bobina Vander Laan, Monique Costello, Jake Douglas, Scott Cowman, and Jack Kelly talk to current juniors and seniors in the auditorium about their college experiences.

as well."

"Members of the Peer Leaders meet with Ms. Maguire and myself to select a date and time for the event, find out which college freshmen will be home and willing to participate, and determine a nice cross section of schools students have attended based on private, public, large, small, medium, with city, sub-

urban and rural campuses," D'Amour said.

The panel members addressed students' concerns about applying to college, talked about their life at their respective schools, and answered questions. Panelists such as Costello and Cowman were able to talk about unique aspects of their college

COLLEGE HOMECOMING, page 3

Graduate competes on 'Worst Cooks in America'

By Molly Friedman
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Class of 2003 graduate Jeff Longcor recently finished filming for "The Worst Cooks in America" and was eliminated due to his inadequate pork and asparagus dish.

When not on television, Longcor works as a senior associate for Maxymillian Technologies that performs civil and environmental construction projects.

Longcor, who made it through two episodes, said he "never really found the spotlight but loved surprising old friends who would turn the channel on at the right time."

He learned that the Food Network was in search of chefs for the show when his roommate brought it to his attention.

In order to apply for a position,



FOODNETWORK.COM

Jeff Longcor, a 2003 graduate, was competing "The Worst Cooks in America" but was eliminated after the second episode.

he wrote to the producers of the show, explaining how he needed to save him from himself. The e-mail also served as an apology to his family and friends who have suffered through his cooking.

According to Longcor, he tried out for the show as a joke, not expecting to make it onto television. His roommate accompanied him to the interview to vouch for his

lack of skill, and they both captured the producers' attention with their laid back personalities and the disastrous Mexican dish Longcor made the night before.

Once on the show, Longcor said he was portrayed at the "quiet" and "shy" member of the group. He said it didn't take him long to forget about the cameras,

JEFF LONGCOR, page 3

Increased insurance prices, decreased state financing prove difficult obstacles for FY-12 budget

By Kaitlin McDonagh
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a 3.2% increase from FY11, the total operating budget for FY12 sums \$20,690,585. This means there is a projected increase in town operating assessments of 4.5%.

This new budget includes new faculty positions, additional support in the special education program, and the reinstatement of the Memorial Elementary School principal.

Originally at 6.4%, the assessment to the towns was reduced to 4.5% by the School Committee on Feb. 1. This impacts the district because instead of the approximately six new teachers needed, only five are budgeted. Also, some curriculum and technology upgrades will be deferred another year.

Because of the increase, the school district is planning to request an override, where there will be an increase in townspeo-

ple's taxes over the 2.5% limit put in place by Proposition 2.5.

According to Superintendent Pamela Beaudoin, if the override passes, there is a "good chance for a solid year." If it doesn't pass, the administration plans to look further into where the budget can be tightened, but there are no definite plans.

The biggest problem concerning the school budget is hiring new teachers.

According to Beaudoin, one of the unique draws of the Manchester-Essex school district is the small class sizes. Because class sizes have increased this year, new teachers must be hired for the entire district.

This will be hard to do because of the price of health insurance and decreased financing from the state.

The school has to purchase insurance for each faculty member, but it doesn't have control over the cost of the insurance. This year, the insurance price is

BUDGET, page 3

NEWS

ASR seminars
-page 2-



OPINION

Morning
announcements
-page 4-

FEATURES

Valentine's Day
spread
-page 6&7-

SPORTS



Winter sports
updates
-page 9&10-

ARTS

Envirojam
-page 11-

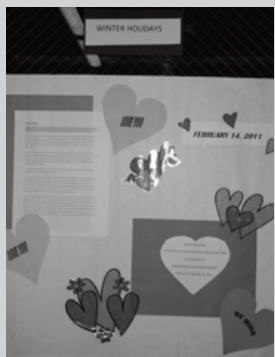
BRIEFS

NHS 1, 2, 3 fundraiser raises money for housing

For two weeks in December, the National Honors Society hosted the 1, 2, 3 Fundraiser. The event raised \$196 for the Mass Community Building Initiative, which profits affordable housing for low-income families. "For our first fundraiser it was a really good start. It got NHS back to being active and NHS organized to start our service activities," NHS adviser Maria Burgess said. According to her, the club is looking to organize events such as a fashion show and arm-wrestling tournament, and all profits will go towards community service.

Library happenings

The library is hosting a January/February holiday window and book display that explains the origin of each holiday. The library is also sponsoring a Valentine's Day poetry contest. Valentine poems should be submitted to Mrs. Krause or Mrs. Hunt by February 18. The winner will receive a Valentine surprise.



Diversity Alliance will launch two upcoming campaigns

This spring, Diversity Alliance will be launching its anti-bullying campaign. According to Diversity Alliance adviser M'Lena Gandolfi, the campaign will primarily be targeting the middle school. Club members will go to middle school classes to discuss bullying in groups. The campaign will also target cyber-bullying in the high school.

The Diversity Alliance will also be launching a campaign focusing on celebrating differences. Club members will again travel to middle school classes and ask students to write down their differences and compile them onto a collage.

Graduates tell of success in journalism

Former journalism students share experiences with Independent staff

By Kyle Marsh
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Former editors-in-chief Emily Browne (class of 2003) and Nick Brancaleone (class of 2005) came to speak to The Independent staff to discuss their collegiate and professional experiences in journalism.

According to journalism teacher Mary Buckley-Harmon, she invited the graduates so the journalism students could see the relevance of journalism and English skills after high school. Browne attended Northwestern University in Chicago, where she majored in magazine journalism.

After graduating, she worked as a press assistant for a politician in Washington D.C, for the attorney general of New York City, and on a political campaign in Manchester, N.H.

She is now living in New York City, working for Sunshine, Sachs & Associates, a public relations firm that represents actors such as Ben Affleck and Demi Lovato, according to her sister, senior Piper Browne.

Brancaleone had a different experience. After graduating from high school with "three great years of journalism," he attended Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University, where he majored in public relations and minored in business.

After graduating, he worked at Holmen Public Relations in New York City, which was a very

'I thought it was really great to get their perspective, after having done exactly what we do and taken their skills beyond the classroom. It was also beneficial to ask them specific questions.'

-MAURA DRISCOLL

ing cooperative stationed in Gloucester. Brancaleone said he is considering getting his MBA or moving on to a "normal" business environment.

Both Browne and Brancaleone credit much of their success to their high school journalism class.

"AP courses and journalism were very helpful. You know how to construct a sentence, and

"cut-throat environment. You are really thrown into it, and you have to shine, or you are thrown out," he said.

Currently, he is working at a fish-



NICHOLAS BOUWER PHOTO

Emily Browne (2003) and Nick Brancaleone (2005) both came to speak to the staff about their respective experiences at Northwestern and Syracuse and of their professional careers.

your professors will be impressed by you right away," Brancaleone said.

He credited his editing, interviewing, and basic writing skills to his high school English and journalism classes.

Browne shared similar thoughts.

"Nothing has helped me more than writing skills. A lot of people don't have them. I can communicate and get what I want so much better," she said.

Students in the journalism class were thankful for the experience.

"I thought it was really great to get their perspective, after having done exactly what we do and taken their skills beyond the classroom. It was also beneficial

to ask them specific questions about their college experience with journalism, if they chose to pursue it, and their jobs after graduation," senior Maura Driscoll said.

"I thought it was really beneficial because I never really realized how journalism affects not only communication careers, but many other writing classes in college," junior Ellen Burgess said.

Buckley-Harmon also found the talk helpful for the students.

"They said everything I would have scripted for them. It really shows how the skills that they use in high school apply to their jobs – whether it be speaking, listening, writing, or simply treating people well," she said.

ASR students present research from summer internships

Presentations tell of work on cancer studies, tissue engineering, protein binding, emotion regulation

By Caroline Wood
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Members of the Authentic Science Research class have recently been giving presentations on the work they did at their internships last summer.

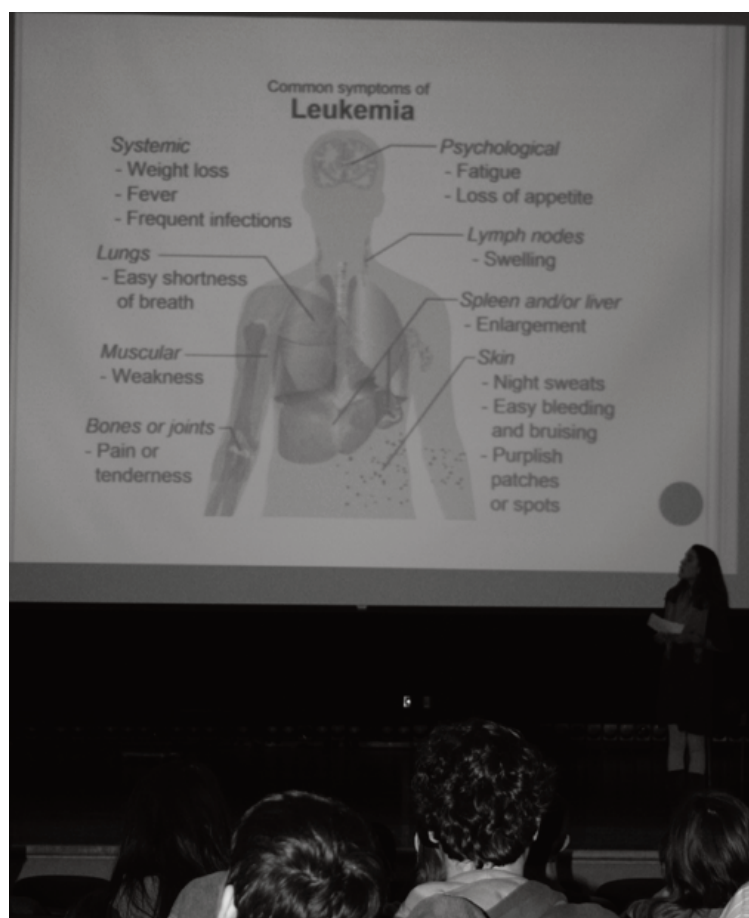
According to ASR and biology teacher Dr. Maria Burgess, students participated in a variety of research-oriented internships.

"The students spend the first quarter and a half really looking hard for their internships," she said. "They pick an area of interest that they are interested in research-wise; they research it to understand the topic better, and then they look for internships where people are doing research in that area, locally."

According to Burgess, internships last summer included cancer studies, tissue engineering of blood vessels, protein binding, and emotion regulation in kids.

Senior ASR student Laurel Edington, who interned in the Oncology Department at Massachusetts General Hospital, was able to go to meetings with doctors, watch a bone marrow harvest, and watch a bone marrow biopsy.

"The work I did was more clin-



MOLLY FRIEDMAN PHOTO

Laurel Edington is the first of six senior ASR students to present their research from their summer internships. Edington's presentation was about acute leukemia and her internship at MGH.

ical," Edington said. "I entered data into a database that collected information about patients with acute leukemia."

Senior Kyle Marsh interned in the Jackson Building of Massachusetts General Hospital with mentor Dr. David Sweetser, a pe-

diatric oncologist.

"Our lab looked at a specific type of leukemia called acute myeloid leukemia," Marsh said. "I tested one specific gene in about 41 samples called CKIT gene to see if it was a cause of AML."

The research that Marsh and her mentor conducted will be published, and Marsh will be listed as an author.

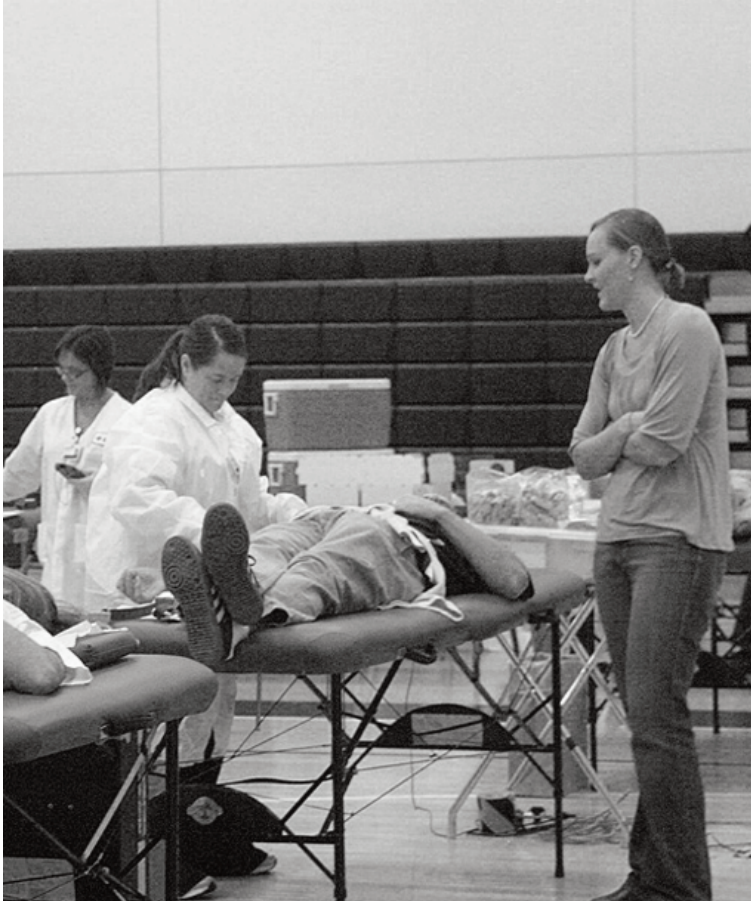
These internships are a critical component to the ASR class, according to Burgess. The students have the opportunity to get insight into the different kinds of thinking required to do research, to see how scientists think, and to start participating in that way of thinking.

"This experience will help me pursue a career in science. It taught me responsibility and independence," Marsh said.

The school will have posters around the school advertising the seminars, which will be given during A block for any interested students, faculty, or community members who want to attend.

"We have had such an independently motivated group of kids this year," Burgess said. "This experience has given them the confidence to go for something and really succeed."

Second drive to donate more blood to Red Cross



COURTESY OF NICOLE D'AMBROSIO

Student Council adviser Sarah DeLuca talks to a volunteer nurse who takes Robert Bilsbury's blood. Student Council will host its second blood drive on March 18 with the American Red Cross.

By Ellen Burgess
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs a blood transfusion. In order to keep up with this demand, there needs to be 38,000 donations every day. For this reason, the Student Council is hosting the second American Red Cross Blood Drive on Friday, March 18.

Students may be timid about participating, but donating blood can save someone's life.

"It was my first time. I was really nervous, but I'm glad I did because I know it might have saved someone's life. I can't wait to do it again at the next blood drive," junior Julia Toby said.

"I'm really excited to donate this year. It makes me feel like I've accomplished something bigger than myself," junior Gina Caponigro said.

According to the American Red Cross, there are many restrictions on who can and cannot donate blood. These are based on age, height and weight requirements,

whether the donor has recently traveled to a malaria infested area, and the amount of iron in the bloodstream.

The shorter a human is, the more he or she must weigh in order to be eligible to donate. For example, a female who is five feet tall must weigh at least 138 pounds.

These requirements are to ensure the safety of donors.

This is necessary because if a human weighs too little, the amount of blood taken can cause him or her to faint, become weak or dizzy.

If one has traveled to an area in which malaria has been found, he or she must wait twelve months in order to be eligible to donate blood again.

If the iron levels in the blood-

stream are low, a person is not eligible to donate. In order to increase the levels of iron in the blood, one can take iron supplements or eat iron rich food, such as red meat, spinach, fish, and beans the week before the donation.

'I'm really excited to donate this year. It makes me feel like I've accomplished something bigger than myself.'

**-GINA
CAPONIGRO**

A multitude of people are eligible to give blood. Donors must be at least 17 years old; however, a 16-year-old can donate with a parent or guardian's signature.

"Diabetics can give blood as long as their

blood sugar levels are healthy on the day of the donation," Student Council adviser Sarah DeLuca said.

According to DeLuca, on the day of the donation, faculty and students planning to donate should drink plenty of water, eat a healthy breakfast, and arrive rested.

ASR student qualifies for semifinals in research competition

Senior enters research based on internship studying oncology at MGH

By Laurel Edington
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Senior Authentic Science Research (ASR) student Kyle Marsh placed in the semifinals for the Intel Science Talent Search for her summer internship at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Over 1700 entries were submitted at first; then a group of scientists narrowed the number down to 300 for the semifinals.

According to ASR teacher Maria Burgess, Marsh is the first ASR student to place in the Intel competition.

Intel's talent search is the top nationally recognized scientific research competition.

"Intel used to be the junior Nobel Prize," Burgess said.

Marsh worked at MGH researching genetic factors that cause acute myeloid leukemia.

During ASR class for the first two months of school, Marsh worked on a research paper about her internship for the contests.

"We first entered the Siemens competition. This paper took us about two months to write.

Then when it came to Intel, we used the same paper. I sent it to my mentor, Dr. David Sweetser,

who is a pediatric oncologist at MGH; he looked it over and made

some suggestions, which were very helpful," Marsh said.

The ASR class never looked online to see if anyone placed, so Marsh received a letter notifying her of qualifying for the semifinals.

"I was absolutely thrilled!" she

said. "When I got the big package in the mail I had kind of a hopeful feeling, but I just thought it was

going to be an informational packet or something. But when I read the letter I could not stop smiling."

She called Burgess as soon as she found out.

"I shrieked with joy," Burgess said. "I'm absolutely thrilled for her. I could not be more proud of her."

Both Marsh and Burgess shared the news with the ASR class.

"I'm so proud of Kyle for making it to the top 300. It's such an incredible accomplishment and the perfect way to top of her extremely successful high school career," senior ASR student Olivia Dumont said.

The top 300 was narrowed down to 40, but Marsh didn't move on.

'I'm absolutely thrilled for her. I could not be more proud of her.'
**-MARIA
BURGESS**



COURTESY OF KYLE MARSH

Senior Kyle Marsh was one of 300 students named an Intel semifinalist. She was selected out of 1700 entrants.

CONTINUATIONS

COLLEGE HOMECOMING

continued from page 1

experience, as Costello is transferring and Cowman is a member of Army ROTC.

Juniors enjoyed talking to the panel and gathering new information about the next steps in the college process.

"I thought the assembly was very useful for juniors because it helped give us an idea of the process we will be experiencing next year as well as giving us important aspects of the application process that we should focus on," junior Katerina Eichenberger said. "They were all very warm and welcoming, and overall, it was a very good learning experience."

Though the panel that took place for the seniors was aimed more at the college experience itself, students still found the discussion useful.

"I feel that the kids coming back to talk to us was beneficial because it allowed me to get more realistic sense of what to expect in college and my life there. I would say that it was definitely helpful, and it actually made me a lot less stressed about everything," senior Jason Stasiak said.

JEFF LONGCOR

continued from page 1

which made it easier to focus on the task at hand.

According to chemistry teacher Keith Gray, he believes Longcor being on the show fits his personality perfectly. "He was such a fun kid and to see him on TV was so cool."

In New York City Longcor met the group and was surprised with the "diverse group of smart, fun, and talented participants." Rather than turning against each other, the group came together and still keeps touch, he said.

Before filming, the Food Network gave the members of the show a crash course on basic cooking techniques, which Longcor was "grateful" for.

Longcor had some prior knowledge of the culinary arts from his mother, special education teaching assistant Ginny Kiefer, who described him as "a believer that it all goes in the same place so it doesn't matter what it looks like or what things you pile and slop together."

When it came to his elimination, Longcor was "disappointed" in himself because he tried to "improvise while helping others out but wasn't ready to do so much at once." Recalling his elimination Longcor highlighted on the fact that he was trying very hard to impress judge Robert Irvine and lost focus. Irvine commented on his lack of attention to following directions which resulted in his fail-

ure.

"The chef thought it was overcooked, but I thought it was the best thing I'd ever eaten," he said.

BUDGET

continued from page 1

scheduled to go up 15%, which is a \$400,000 increase. "This could leave a hole in the piggybank," Beaudoin said.

In addition to increased insurance prices, the school will have less money for educational needs because state financing is decreasing. The state is required to give the district entitlement grants, which cover areas such as special education and student support, but in order to receive more money, the district must submit applications for competitive grants.

According to Beaudoin, competitive grants are much harder to receive because they often have needs-based criteria, and since

Manchester is a fairly wealthy town, the possibility of receiving a grant decreases.

The budget was also increased because the district added support in special education and because the Memorial Elementary School principal position will be reinstated. In order to cut costs last year, Middle School Principal Beth Raucci also acted as the Memorial School principal.

Currently, the district receives substantial support from charitable funds such as the Spaulding Trust and the Enrichment Fund. For example, the Enrichment Fund recently donated \$40,000 to the district to support learning technologies. In addition to these funds, the district also receives donations from the community.

Right now, the school district is concentrating on the override. "We're focusing on an immediate goal," Beaudoin said.

New system of announcements ineffective, disruptive to students

By Kyle Marsh
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After a series of changes in the morning announcement schedule, the administration settled on giving the announcements at the beginning of second block.

The morning announcements are now emailed to teachers after the Pledge of Allegiance is pronounced over the loud speaker.

Initially, announcements were reported via the loudspeaker at the beginning of first block, immediately after the Pledge of Allegiance.

According to Principal James Lee, after a teacher introduced the idea at a faculty meeting,

they were changed to be announced at the end of the block. However, more teachers complained about it being disruptive to class lessons, so the announcements were then changed to be at the beginning of second block.

The announcements were changed to be delivered via email instead of oral presentation because teachers thought students did not listen to the announcements, Lee said.

The morning reports used to be a great way to start the day for students – they could sit down in their first class and listen to the day’s various activities without interruption.

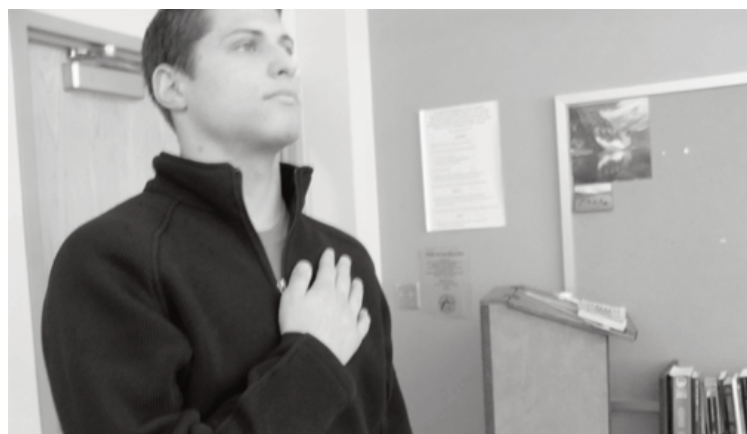
Most importantly – they could actually listen to the school’s

happenings. The vocal projection of an administrator’s voice made sure all teachers did not begin class, so the announcements demanded everyone’s attention.

Now, this is not the case. The current announcements at the beginning of second block are largely ineffective.

Teachers often simply neglect the announcements in an effort to begin their lesson. Having the announcements at the beginning of the block seems to disrupt the flow of the day, acting as an interruption.

Failing to utilize an effective system for announcements merely leaves students clueless – many do not know updates on clubs, sports, prizes, events, or happenings around the school.



NABILA MAHMUD PHOTO

Due to the new system of announcements, junior Trippe Reine-man delivers the Pledge of Allegiance during his second period class instead of during class at the beginning of the school day.

Organizations also rely on the announcements to get information to members about meetings, dates, events, etc., so when this information is not delivered, even more problems arise.

Although it may be true that students did not initially listen to announcements attentively, the new system is even less effective; thus, it may be better to re-

turn to the older system of projecting the announcements over the loudspeaker.

The older system provides a simple, coherent way to deliver information to the student body. It also helps to unite the school community – all students and teachers are hearing the same announcements, leaving less room for misunderstandings.



NICK BOUWER CARTOON

Students deserve three vacations free of homework, assignments

By Hannah Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With 180 school nights—not including weekends—piled with homework, and extra homework given in most classes that drop the next day, school vacations should be the period of time in which teachers shouldn’t administer homework.

Dictionary.com defines “vacation” as “a period of suspension of work, study, or other activity, usually used for rest, recreation or travel,” and that is exactly what a school vacation should consist of.

If a class is behind schedule, assigning homework over vaca-

tion is understandable, but giving homework merely to keep students’ minds functioning and focused on those particular subjects is irritating.

Just as teachers probably are stressed, students are also

Doing homework on the weekends is enough of a hassle.

stressed about balancing academics, sports, extracurricular activities, and college applica-

tions.

Doing homework on the weekends is enough of a hassle. If students can’t have two days off weekly without studying, writing papers, or completing worksheets, they deserve at least a one-week period of relaxation

and fun every so often.

Excluding Thanksgiving recess, that would be only three weeks of absolutely no homework, which is entirely reasonable.

Not only would the lack of vacation homework be beneficial for students, it would also benefit the teachers who would otherwise have to grade even more papers upon their return.

Often, kids complain about having to do homework over vacation because school takes up significantly more time than it should as it is.

Students spend about six hours in class during the day just to come home and do even more work, and then free time is limited thanks to homework assigned for the weekend.

Are nine consecutive days of relaxation too much to ask?

Students fearful of colleges unfairly checking Facebook profiles

By Morgan Kennedy
INDEPENDENT STAFF

As if the college application process is not stressful enough already, a new cause for concern has arisen among students.

Recently, college admissions counselors have checked the Facebook profiles of prospective students when a question arises on some aspect of an application.

In an article from a recent issue of Teen Vogue, Amy Greenwald Foley, associate director of admissions at the University of Delaware, confirmed that the university has used Facebook to check the validity of students’ accomplishments.

According to Foley, an admis-

sions officer decided to check the Facebook profile of a student for proof of an activity mentioned in an interview. While on the student’s page, the admissions officer encountered photos of the student drinking at a party and immediately denied him the full-ride scholarship he was being considered for.

Although posting inappropriate photos on the Internet is a major mistake on the part of students, it is not the job of admissions officers to snoop around students’ profiles and make radical decisions based off of information they were never intended to see.

The recent fear of having their profiles viewed has caused some students to change the name on their page to prevent from being

found by admissions officers, a sure sign that admissions departments are encroaching on students’ privacy.

According to senior Piper Browne, this is also a burden, as it is sometimes difficult to switch back to the original name once it has been changed.

Photos, videos, and other information on Facebook seen by admissions counselors are often misinterpreted.

Is it fair for a student to lose a well-deserved opportunity based on a forgotten photo a friend posted two years ago?

If a college to question the validity of an application, the only fair option is to hear both sides of the story before making any rash decisions.



MOLLY FRIEDMAN PHOTO

Senior Molly Friedman has changed her Facebook settings to make her profile more private in case colleges look at her page.



Advertisement of love through tattoos end up foolish, ridiculous

MAURA DRISCOLL

Despite all the love that Susie may feel for Johnny now, it is just plain foolish to ignore the possibility that it won't last forever. Clearly, Susie's choice to permanently ink her body with a heinous tattoo proclaiming her love for Johnny after only knowing him for just under a year is absolutely ridiculous.

How does one know that his or her once passionate love affair won't crash and burn within just a few months? And when it does, how will he or she cope with having a painful reminder of what once was, on top of mending his or her broken heart?

This firm stance on tattoos with the names or faces of boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, or wives does not extend to the idea of tattoos in general. In fact, I happen to be a major advocate of tattoos. Some things truly are worth having on one's body for the rest of his or her life.

There is plenty of time in one's life to have regrets.

As a matter of fact, not all names or faces used as tattoos are necessarily reprehensible, either. For example, people often view inking oneself with the name or picture of a lost loved one as, rather than foolish and ridiculous, sweet and endearing.

Granted, there are always exceptions to the rule. I'm not narrow-minded enough to think that there are absolutely no relationships that exist in which love will be lost and tattoos will be regretted, but it's always better to be safe than sorry.

Some may call me pessimistic, unable to accept that perhaps some people are so truly in love that it is entirely appropriate to tattoo themselves with the name of their significant other, but I prefer to view myself as a realist.

Forgive me for believing that only in fairytales does everything work out for the best, and that there is plenty of time in one's life to have regrets.

It's impossible to know that you will be with that special person forever, as things are constantly changing, and feelings for another person are no exception.

Why risk the grief of regretting a tattoo that serves as a reminder of your possibly unlucky past?

STAFF EDITORIAL

Word change in 'Huckleberry Finn' subtracts from meaning of literary classic

The fine line between constructive adjustment and deleterious alteration has always been a controversial and much debated one in the publishing world.

That said, the debate over the consequences of manipulating original text is brought to a head when such alterations are directed at an American literary classic such as Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

The issue was brought to the public's attention most recently by Louisiana-based publishing company NewSouth Books, when they announced their plans to replace the N-word with "slave" and "Injun" with "Indian" in future publications of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."

Supporters of the change argue that the insensitive implications of both words interfere with the ac-

cessibility of the story in American school systems, as their presence has resulted in the book's banning in numerous academic communities.

Regardless of the word's controversial associations, however, the connotations and

meaning they add to the story are an essential part of the plot's core revelation when depicting Jim, an African American slave fighting for freedom in the heavily segregated region of the American

South.

Today, censoring is often accepted as a necessary tool to appropriate specific aspects of

society to a diverse demographic.

The prudence of such alterations must be questioned, however, when their instigation alters the central message or pur-

The prudence of such alterations must be questioned when their instigation alters the central message or purpose of a work.

pose of a work.

English department head and Mark Twain scholar at Auburn University at Montgomery, Alan Gribben, who was inspired by the amount of teachers confessing

they were unable to incorporate the book into their curriculum because of its "offensive" language, will oversee the change.

Gribben defends the alterations, which he knew would be received with mixed reviews, saying, "This is not an effort to render 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Huckleberry Finn' colorblind...Race matters in these books. It's a matter of how you express that in the 21st century."

The company plans to have the edited edition of "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" in circulation in the American market by February 2011.

Such alteration of original text, and ultimately, the intended purpose, is unnecessary and unjustified, especially when only done in order to increase its accessibility for a few conservative school districts.

After violence, Sudanese allowed to choose

By Melissa Moore
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Despite a violent past, Sudan reached a concord February 2009. Part of a peace agreement, the government conducted a referendum from Jan. 9-15, 2011, for Southern Sudanese citizens to separate from Sudan or rejoin with the country.

Sudan's most hostile history began in 2003 with the Sudan Liberation Army's and the Justice Equality Movement's attack on government targets. For years, Arabs had oppressed black Africans, who wanted to speak out.

The government responded

with force. Despite President Omar al-Bashir's claims that the government had no assistance from the Janjaweed, an Arab group that brutally destroyed Africans' lives, this is clearly a lie.

The ruthless assaults began with government air raids closely followed by the Janjaweed. They would murder men, rape innocent women, and plunder the towns, taking anything they could find. Once their rampage was through, the Janjaweed felt compelled to burn the town to ensure that the now refugees had nothing.

These massacres continued for years. In 2005, the United States claimed that these acts constituted genocide; however, the

United Nations refused to place these atrocious attacks under this title.

As of 2005, 90% of African villages in Darfur, Sudan, had been destroyed. About 2.7 million people were forced to flee their homes and live in camps near Darfur; however, these victims were still vulnerable to attacks. Though 200,000 more escaped to Chad, the violence followed them like a shadow. The death toll according to Bashir is 10,000, but the UN asserts that the number is closer to 300,000.

Finally, by February 2009 both the Sudan Liberation Movement and the Justice and Equality Movement signed a peace deal with the government.

The International Criminal Court arrested Bashir in July 2008 for war crimes, to which genocide was later added.

From Jan. 9-15, 2011, the people of South Sudan voted in a referendum to determine to maintain current boundaries with Sudan or to break away to form their own country. If they decide upon independence, South Sudan must wait until July 9, 2011, to officially be a new country. The preliminary results, released Feb. 2, showed that 99% of voters chose independence. The final results will be known Feb. 14. After a civil war spanning more than two decades and leaving more than 2,000,000 dead, the Africans have finally had their say.

the INDEPENDENT

Manchester-Essex Regional High School
36 Lincoln St, Manchester MA 01944
978-526-4412
newspaper@mersd.org
online at www.merhs.mersd.org

Editor in Chief
Hannah Daley

News Editor
Kyle Marsh

Features Editors
Rebecca Lynch
Kaitlin McDonagh

Opinion Editor
Maura Driscoll

Sports Editors
Melissa Moore
Marian Siljeholm

Photography Editors

Nicholas Bouwer
Molly Friedman
Nabila Mahmud

Arts Editor

Laurel Edington

Staff

Morgan Kennedy
Ellen Burgess
Caroline Wood
Piper Browne

Faculty Adviser

Mary Buckley-Harmon

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.

DATING

Dictionary

By Nabila Mahmud, Independent Editor

talking \tawk-ing\ *v.* Texting, Facebook IMing, flirting, hanging out on the weekends, thinking each other is totally cute. What separates talking from being “a thing” is that you do not admit your feelings for one another just yet.

crushing \kruhsh\ *v.* The mildest form of liking someone is “crushing” on them. You find them attractive and absolutely want to hang out and spend some quality time together, but you do not know if you are interested just yet.

a thing \a thing\ *adj.* People refer to you as “a thing.” You are absolutely crushing and you know the other person feels the same way. It includes all of the criteria of talking plus you have already admitted your feelings to each other.

hooking up \hook-ing up\ *v.* Engaging in a friendly game of tonsil hockey without any emotional attachments. You’re allowed to canoodle with others because there are no strings attached.

dating/together \deyt-ing or tuh-geth-er\ *v.* Everyone knows that you and that special someone like each other. You would get mad if the other person played tonsil hockey with somebody else, but at the same time there are no binding attachments.

going out \goh-ing out\ *v.* This term is pretty legitimate. The boy has “asked you out.” Now, this does not mean the boy asked you to lunch it means that you are now deemed “boyfriend, girlfriend.” This is the point where you can tell everyone that you do, in fact, have a boyfriend/girlfriend.

facebook official \feys-book uh-fish-uhl\ *adj.* This is the most demanding of all the terms. When your relationship status goes from “single” to “in a relationship,” that’s when you know it is real. This is also where your relationship becomes the most exclusive.

on a break \on a breyk\ *adj.* You got into a fight and you don’t want to deal with what the other person says, so it’s time for a break. This does not mean you can hook up with other people; however, you are free to do some fun harmless flirting. This is the period where you have the opportunity to sit back and think about your relationship status. Having the opportunity to flirt a little bit will help you make your decision on whether or not you want to see other people.



Tamera Burns

“I’ve been married for 35 years. I don’t remember my first kiss!”



Allison Lane

“My first little kid kiss I was when I was in first grade I was on the playground, and I was playing Superman with my friend Gus. I was being Lois Lane, and he was Superman, and he kissed me.”



Robert Bilsbury

“A girl and I went out on a date to the mall, and her brother drove us home. We hung out at my house for a while, and then her brother came and picked her up. I walked with her on the front steps, and then we said good-bye...”

What was
first kiss



Fragrance Poll

Daisy by Marc Jacobs

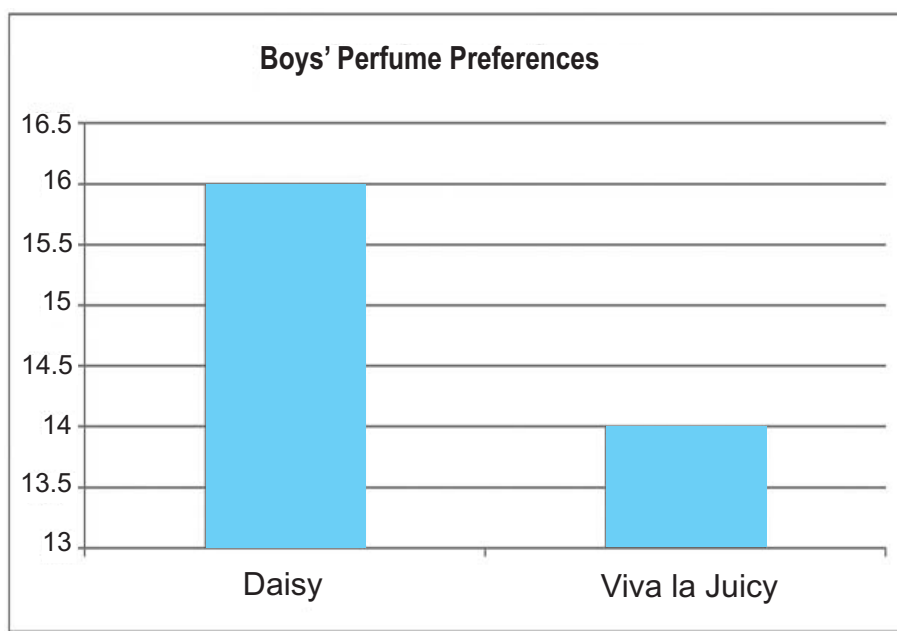
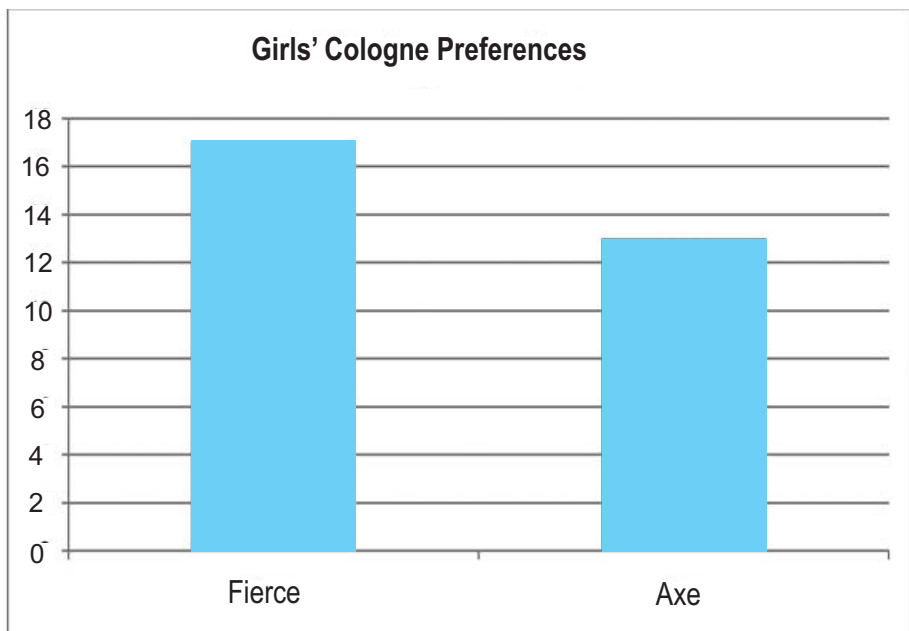


"Daisy" is one of Marc Jacob's finest perfumes. By mixing the fragrances of wild strawberries, violet leaves, ruby red grapefruits, jasmine, gardenia, vanilla, musks, and white woods, the perfume achieves its natural, fresh, and soft, yet sensual smell that will capture any guy's senses. It is encased in an elegant and charming glass bottle with a golden top surrounded by daisies. "Daisy" also comes in spray and roll-on versions. 1.7 ounces of "Daisy" costs \$60, and 3.4 ounces costs \$75. It can be found at almost any perfume or cosmetics store or online.

Viva la Juicy by Juicy Couture



"Viva La Juicy," made by the loud and trendy Juicy Couture, mixes the scents of wild berries, mandarin, honeysuckle, gardenia, jasmine, amber, caramel, vanilla, sandalwood, and praline to release the warm and gentle yet tangy and fun fragrance of couture. It is boldly bottled with Juicy charms and topped with a fuchsia ribbon. This perfume screams, "I know how to have fun." It also comes in body lotion, gel, crème, and a roll-on perfume. 1.7 ounces costs \$67, and 3.4 ounces costs \$87. It can be found at almost any perfume or cosmetics store or online.



Fierce by Abercrombie



The rugged, classic, and cool signature scent of Abercrombie is found in every bottle of its "Fierce" cologne. It is packed with confidence and a bold, masculine attitude. Its clean and fresh citrus scent along with the smell of warm musk will be sure to grab every girl's attention. 1.7 ounces of "Fierce" costs \$54, and 3.4 ounces costs \$74. The best place to find "Fierce" is at an Abercrombie store.

Axe



One of the many Axe fragrances is "Axe Touch," the cologne that captures the adventure and fun in every man. It mixes woody and leather undertones with citrus and spice to get that rugged, hard-to-resist smell that every girl will want to get a whiff of. One can find "Axe Touch" and other Axe fragrances from \$4 to \$16 depending on the store. Axe can be found almost anywhere, but the best place would be department stores or online.

as your
kiss?



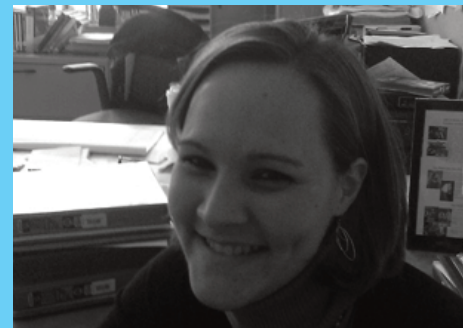
Deborah Isensee

"My kindergarten bus driver had to talk to my mother because I kept pinning this boy to the seat and kissing him. So my first kiss was Paul Carter, but I kind of forced him, so I don't really count that."



Joe Sokol

"I took a girl to a middle school semi-formal dance. She had long blond hair. After, my parents dropped her off and I walked her to the door. Then I gave her a nice kiss goodnight. That was the first one."



Sarah DeLuca

"My first kiss was after the Halloween dance my senior year. I was one of three little pigs with overalls and a brick in my front pocket. My friends had made sure there was no room in their car for me so that he had to take me home."

Health Matters



Maintain moisturized skin amid cold weather

By Hannah Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the harsh, dry, winter air gusting about, maintaining moisturized skin can be difficult but still manageable if one takes advantage of a few tips.

Preventing dry skin begins in the shower.

Washing the skin too much with hot water washes off its natural oils, making it dry; therefore, limiting the time spent in the shower to about seven minutes and using lukewarm instead of hot water is a preventative step.

Shaving using lotion or hair conditioner instead of shaving foam also increases the likelihood of having moisturized skin because many shaving foam chemicals suck moisture out.

When drying after the shower, pat yourself dry instead of rubbing because rubbing can irritate skin and remove more moisture.

Also, be sure to apply a rich skin moisturizer immediately after taking a shower because moisturizing while the skin is still damp helps seal in water and the body's natural oils.

Aside from taking steps for the showering process, protecting the skin outside of the house is also crucial.

Suite101.com recommends



Aveeno
Daily Moisturizing Lotion

\$9.25 for 18 oz.

www.aveeno.com



Clean & Clear
Dual Action Moisturizer

\$6.49 for 4 Fl. oz.

www.cleanandclear.com



Olay
Moisture Balancing
Foaming Face Wash

\$6.49 for 4 Fl. oz.

www.olay.com

wearing SPF 15 sunscreen, even in the winter because the sun can damage the skin just as the summer rays can.

Vaseline should also be applied to feet in the morning before putting on socks and leaving in order to keep them from becoming dry throughout the day.

Along with drinking at least eight cups of water daily, eating fish can also improve dry skin because fish contains omega 3 fatty acids, which help keep skin

healthy by retaining moisture.

While these are all helpful tips, one of the best ways is to apply moisturizing lotions to the dry skin patches a few times daily.

One should look for products that contain ingredients such as oatmeal, ceramides, hyaluronic acids, and essential fatty acids such as shea butter, olive oil, almond oil, and avocado oil.

Avoid products that contain ethyl alcohol, and other alcohols such as cetyl, stearyl, or cetearyl.

Anatomy students explore structure, function of donated cow bones

By Ellen Burgess
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Cow bones, recently donated from Henry's Market, extended the learning of the combined honors and CP anatomy class, according to high school science teacher Maria Burgess.

Henry's Market, located in Beverly, has donated various animal parts regularly to the anatomy class for the past few years.

According to Burgess, this year Henry's Market donated two cow legs, including the hip, femur, and lower legs. Henry's Market cut the parts a specific way in order for students to be able to see the inside of the bones.

"It takes time to cut the parts like Henry's Market cut them. It was very nice of them to do," senior Danny Munn said.

"They got to actually touch and see the fresh bone instead of looking at a picture in the book or using a plastic model. Students got to feel and touch fresh marrow, see the blood supply, observe the small passage ways that carry nerve and blood vessels into the bone. They also saw fresh cartilage and observed tendons and ligaments in the knee," Burgess said.

"[The cow legs had] very fresh



NABILA MAHMUD PHOTOS



Henry's Market recently donated cow bones to the anatomy class. Included in the donation were the hip (above), femur, and lower legs. Senior Roisin Gedeon (left) and her anatomy classmates were able to interact with the legs. Besides feeling the legs, students were able to observe the different blood vessel passages and how the ligaments and tendons function in the knee.

tissue. That was key," she said.

Students enjoyed working with the cow legs the first time.

"We had a lot of fun with the bone marrow. It was really squishy. None of us were expect-

ing it to feel like that," senior Grace Gillette said.

"We got the bones and were just allowed to go and do whatever we wanted with them. It was really fun," she said.



MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON PHOTO

Junior Jeffrey White is the youngest member of the Essex Boy Scouts of Troop 39 to achieve Eagle Scout status. He was honored at a ceremony on Jan. 8. State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Essex Board of Selectmen Chair Raymond Randall, and State Senator Bruce Tarr were in attendance.

Junior achieves Eagle Scout status Planned, led 100-hour community service project

By Caroline Wood
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Junior Jeffrey White, member of the Boy Scout Troop 39, recently met all of the requirements to become the youngest member in the troop to achieve Eagle Scout status in Essex.

"Eagle Scout is the highest rank in scouting. Roughly 4% of people who join scouting make it to be an Eagle Scout," White said.

The ceremony, which was held on Jan. 8, 2011, included many of White's friends and family and various state and town representatives.

"It meant a lot to me to see my family and friends there because they are the people who helped and supported me in becoming and Eagle Scout," White said.

According to junior Ian Martin, a fellow Scout who attended the ceremony, reaching the rank of Eagle

is an accomplishment that shows determination and perseverance to uphold the Scout oath and Scout laws.

"I'm very proud of Jeffrey for becoming an Eagle Scout," Martin said. "He has worked hard for it ever since we joined Boy Scouts."

According to Troop 30 Committee Chairman Mark Jordan, White is set apart because he is the youngest Eagle Scout in Essex. Once a scout has turned

18 and he has not met all the requirements, it's possible for him to lose the chance to achieve the award. Receiving the award shows White is able to live by the principle of the Scouts.

"To me it shows I have done something that sets me apart from others and shows my dedication," White said.

In order to become an Eagle Scout, White completed 21 merit badges and planned and led a 100-hour community service project.

White's service project consisted of scraping, painting, and replacing the reflective strips on the fire hydrants in Essex.

At White's ceremony, Essex Fire Chief Daniel Doucette said White's project was a "significant part of public safety, and it increased the safety of fire personnel and residents."

"The project was a service to the community and improved invisibility for emergency personnel," Essex Chief of Police Peter Silva said.

Other people in attendance at the ceremony included State Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Essex Board of Selectmen Chair Raymond Randall, and State Senator Bruce Tarr, who honored White with positive and inspiring words: "In addition to having a mind that's

dedicated to achieving something, you have a heart that's dedicated to achieving a purpose," Tarr said.

'In addition to having a mind that's dedicated to achieving something, you have a heart that's dedicated to achieving a purpose.'
-BRUCE TARR

Boys' basketball qualifies for Cape Ann League tournament, finds success in 'working as a team'

By Nabila Mahmud
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With an overall record of 11-4 and a Cape Ann record of 8-1, the varsity boys' basketball team has qualified for the Cape Ann tournament, which starts the week after February break.

In their first three games, the Hornets lost two against Georgetown High School and St. Mary's of Lynn. The Hornets won every consecutive game afterwards except against Masconomet.

"We started out rough because we didn't know how to move the ball, and we lost Porter," said junior captain Sean Nally, referring to senior captain Alex Porter, who suffered a hand injury in late December and, until mid January, was unable to play.

"After watching the first game

that I didn't play in, it motivated me to work on my dribbling and agility. I wanted to be able to play at the same level right when I got back," Porter said.

According to Nally the team "needed to learn how to play without Porter."

"He's just one of the best players in the league. When he came back, though, it was a huge boost for us again. We also learned how to play better as a team," senior captain Alex Carr said.

Coach Duane Sigsbury agreed. "Being a team is all about stepping up to the plate when one player is down. Junior Chris Bishop did a great job stepping up for Porter during his hand injury," he said.

"I can't say there are players that stand out anymore because we are so focused on working as a team," he added.



COURTESY OF AMANDA EDWARDS

Junior Chris Bishop shoots the ball in a recent game against Triton High School Jan. 28. The team was victorious, winning with a score of 75-55. The team now has an overall winning record of 11-4.



COURTESY OF LINDSAY ROSE

Senior Jesse Taylor fights for the ball possession in a recent game against Wilmington High School on Feb. 4. The girls' team has a losing record of 1-10, but still hopes to find success in postseason.

Despite 1-10 record, girls' basketball team hopes for success in postseason

By Maura Driscoll
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Unlike last season, the girls' basketball team continues on in season with losing record of 1-10.

"Our results don't reflect our efforts, because we're working hard," senior Kaitlin McDonagh said.

During a Jan. 25 game, Masconomet beat the girls 63-22, though coach Lauren Dubois was "pleased" with the team's performance, as they were able to hold Masconomet's leading scorer to just 8 points, despite her 21 points per game average.

In a Jan. 28 game against Triton, juniors Jelisa O'Hara and Jess Crossen each had five points and four points, respectively, and led the team in the 47-23 loss.

The team lost 51-25 to Pentucket on Jan. 31, with seniors Jesse Taylor and Grace Gillette leading with six points each.

"Our record is frustrating because there are some games that we could have won and because in many games the problem wasn't that the other team was better. We just didn't play our best," DuBois said.

"It's not so much that we are losing a lot of games, but it's just we aren't playing as well as we can," senior captain Rebecca Lynch agreed.

Regardless of the team's record, the girls can still qualify

for the tournament.

"Because we are Div. 4 and play 70 percent of our games above our division, we have to win 50 percent of the Div. 4 games to qualify for the tournament, which is called the Sullivan rule," DuBois said.

Despite the record, DuBois still has an optimistic outlook on the season and still

has goals to work on.

"I want the team to continue to improve, especially on our rebounding every game. We also need to keep working toward qualifying for the tournament," she said.

'Our results don't reflect our efforts, because we're working hard.'
-KAITLIN MCDONAGH

Indoor track team faces final meet after season of much individual growth

By Marian Siljeholm
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After months of persistence the indoor track team has reached the final stretch of its first season with individual triumph, progress, and a few wins against established Cape Ann League teams, according to coach John Barbour.

"[They are] a first-year team and the Cape Ann League's smallest, competing in a sport where numerical depth is everything."

Despite its small size, the team was recently recognized by the MIAA, when numerous runners qualified for the Division 4 State meet while at a recent meet against Triton and Pentucket in North Andover.

Barbour is proud of his team

and the milestones made in this initial season. saying recent meets in particular have "stretched the Hornets runners to new levels."

Size has not stopped the team from setting new records; senior captain two-miler Olivia Dumont stands with a school record of 12:28.1 and junior Sophia Mastendino and junior co-captain Anya Ciarametaro set new school records in the 300 meters and 55 meters.

Junior Kathleyn Carr said the team has a good skill balance. "[Seniors] Haig and Cole Caviston provide middle distance experience, while [freshman] Mia

Rodier and [sophomore] Maddi Bistrong bolster the girls' sprint records," she said.

Despite the school's lack of proper practice equipment, Barbour said junior Amanda Gilson and sophomore Jacob Martz are improving fast in the high jump while boys' 300-meter sprinters junior Joe O'Neil, senior Frank Davis, and sophomore

Brian Gibson have surprised many competitors in the Cape Ann League.

The team will compete in the CALChampionships on Tues., Feb. 8, at Roxbury's Reggie Lewis Center track.

'Recent meets have stretched the Hornets runners to new levels.'
-JOHN BARBOUR



COURTESY OF PETER CURATOLO

Senior Ben Girard runs in the two mile race in recent track meet against North Andover High School at Andover High School on Jan. 26. Despite not winning any meets, the indoor track team will race at the Cape Ann League Championship meet on Feb. 8.

Ski Team starts strong, looking forward to rest of season

Despite an inability to win races, all three female members remain among top twelve ranked racers for majority of season

By Morgan Kennedy
INDEPENDENT STAFF

With a combined boys' and girls' record of 3-11, the ski team is already exceeding expectations during its first season at varsity level, according to coach Chris Ahearn.

"It's great to have three wins already. We're proving that we're not only a varsity team but a winning varsity team," he said.

Previously a JV program, the ski team entered its second year as a high school sport and its first year as a varsity team this January.

According to Ahearn, the team practices four days a week at Bradford Mountain, where their races are also held. The team began practicing on the mountain



MOLLY FRIEDMAN PHOTO

Sophomore Brian McAuliff races second for Manchester during Giant Slalom race at Ski Bradford mountain.

earlier this season to better prepare new and returning members for this year's races.

Junior Andrew Randall is greatly enjoying the start of the season.

"It's been great so far, challenging, but exciting," he said.

According to Ahearn, racers are scored on a point system from 16-2. The top 15 racers earn points for their teams. The fastest racer receives 16 points; the second fastest racer receives 15 points, etc. The team with the highest score wins the race. Racers are also scored individually and can earn up to 25 points per race. Individual scores are used to determine which racers will be eligible for States.

Sophomore Brian McAuliff said the team faced a definite challenge during their race on Jan. 26.

"The course was brutal, and the snow was less than favorable; but it helped seeing a more difficult course, because now I will feel more comfortable on the easier ones," he said.

According to Ahearn, a goal for

the boys' team is to finish in the top three in the North Shore Ski League. They are currently tied with Masconomet for third place. A goal for the girls is to send a team to the state competition.

The top 12 racers go to States, and three girls constitute a team. Currently in the top 12 are senior captain Molly Friedman, sophomore Megan Jones, and eighth-grader Alex Marshall.

"If we can keep all three girls in the top 12, we would be able to compete at States, which would be huge for us. They are all very capable and talented racers," Ahearn said.

"I'm really excited for States this year/ We only have three girls on the team, but we've been placing in on top pretty consistently, so I think we have a good shot at it," she said.



COURTESY OF MICHAEL LATTOF

Senior Cam Smith contributed to Vikings' 6-3 victory over Minuteman Tech on Jan. 22. Smith has 29 points this season.

Hockey team inches to finals with help of senior Cam Smith

By Molly Friedman
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With a record of 6-2-3 the boys' hockey team is three points away from entering the Division III tournament.

The team recently won 6-2 against Nashoba where senior co-captain Cam Smith, the sole Manchester-Essex player, contributed two goals and two assists.

"It was fun watching the team achieve a well deserved victory. Each player on the ice contributed to the victory," senior Vicki Grimes said.

In order to make it to the Division III tournament, teams must win half of their games and score

above 500 qualifying points. Ten teams make it to the tournament and go into single elimination where one loss disqualifies them from proceeding.

"We're on our way to fulfilling my goal of making it to the tournament," coach Derek Papalegis said.

Papalegis said that the team "plays well in spurts," but they "haven't gotten up to the potential I know the team is capable of."

Smith has 29 points, consisting of 16 goals and 13 assists.

"Cam is a player I can count on both on and off the ice," coach said.

Papalegis said he always sees Smith "giving his all" and has the "best knowledge of the sport and is always contributing new ideas."

In pursuit of goal, swim team beats Ipswich in recent meet with hard work and determination

By Piper Browne
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Carrying a record of 1-6-1, the swim team has achieved their goal of winning a meet, with their recent meet against Ipswich, head coach Katie Garvin said.

"It was a really satisfying meet because we have lost to not only Ipswich in the past, but every other team for the last three years. Winning was an amazing feeling," senior captain Nick Bouwer said.

According to Bouwer, the key swimmers in their meet against Ipswich were senior captains Matt and Nick Bouwer and Maddy Huleatt and sophomore Dustin Ferzacca.

According to Garvin, the meet against North Reading, which they tied, was one of their best meets this season. "The meet was back and forth the whole times in terms of the score, and our kids worked ridiculously hard from start to," she said.

"We were really proud of the kids for the tie," Garvin said.

The key swimmers this year have been Ferzacca, sophomore Alex Walder, the Bouwers and Huleatt, according to Garvin.

There have also been multiple



COURTESY OF TIMOTHY BOUWER

Senior Captain Nicholas Bouwer swam the 100-yard butterfly in recent meet against Ipswich.

swimmers who have really improved and stepped up their game this year including, freshman Michael Phelan, sophomores Ellie Mortillaro and Alex Shepard, and seventh-grader Nathaniel Rautio, Garvin said.

"I'm really impressed with our team this season," Huleatt said. "Katie and Reeve have been doing a tremendous job at improving our team and making us more competitive. Everyone's been working really hard and contributing to the team effort."

On February 6, the varsity team competed in the Cape Ann League championships.

"It was a great way to end the

season, and we all look forward to seeing how Alex and the others perform in the upcoming sectionals and states," Huleatt said.

Along with the CAL championships, Ferzacca, Walder, and the Bouwers will be competing in the Boys' Sectionals meet on February 12, at MIT. Walder will be diving in that meet along with the Boys' North State meet the following weekend.

"Our team has come a long way this year, and our coaches have been really good at pushing everybody to do their personal best. I was really happy when we tied, and even happier when we beat Ipswich," Matt Bouwer said.

Despite no wins, gymnastics team 'improved greatly,' had fun throughout season

By Melissa Moore
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Despite a difficult season, the gymnastics team did well in the Cape Ann League Championship meet Feb. 5, sophomore captain Katherine Hennigan said.

Freshmen Jessie Herlihy and Julia Bucci competed on vault, sophomore Emily Ciruolu and freshman Lizzi White competed on bars, seniors Sophie Shea and Vicky Nicholas competed on beam and Ciruolu and Bucci

competed on floor.

"CALs was fun and everyone had a good time," she said. "It was just a fun last meet."

According to Nicholas, the gym was full of people cheering on all gymnasts.

"The atmosphere was really nice," she said. "Everyone was really supportive, making the meet really fun."

The team has improved greatly over the season, coach Rich Healey said. The team has built a good base for next season.

"The team looks stronger than we did in the beginning of the

year," he said.

After losing nine seniors, the team's biggest difficulty is a lack of experience, he said. Their strength, however, is that they are a good team that enjoys each other's company.

"They like each other, making it more fun for me to coach," Healey said. "At meets they get along really well."

"Although we haven't won any meets we have put up a good fight and have had lots of spirit over the course of this season," said freshman Lizzi White, who competed on bars at CALs.



COURTESY OF LIZZI WHITE

Gymnastics team poses for photo at home gym Iron Rail Gymnastics Academy in Gloucester. Despite having no wins, the team leaves season with no regrets, only fond memories.

Envirojam

Seven student-bands perform during Green Team concert

By Laurel Edington
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In a Green Team-sponsored event, eight bands played during the Envirojam, a concert in the high school's auditorium to finish off Earth Week.

Junior Chloe Gothie organized the event.

"I have been working on Earth Week for my Green Team Scholars project along with many other events, and we decided it would be a fun idea to have [a concert] after the week of midterms along with the spirit of Earth Week," she said.

The money made at the concert will go to the Green Team's account.

According to Green Team leader Eric Magers, the club made \$350.

Students made up seven bands, and Mike Forgette, a rapper from Gloucester, was the eighth act.

Junior Sam White plays in "The Sam and Sam Band," which opened the show.

"My band wasn't at its best, partly because we played first so the audience was still showing up," he said. "There were also a lot of bands in a short space of time, so we couldn't play all the songs we were planning on, but it was still a fun concert."

The event lasted from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

"One of the main problems was that we had to be out of the auditorium by 9 p.m., so some of the bands had to get some of their time cut," Gothie said.

Despite having to revise their sets, the bands were happy with their performances.

Seniors John Houston and Misha Berkrot played guitar and sang. According to Houston, although the bands' sets were cut, they all still did great.

The bands could tell that the audience enjoyed the performances.

FAST FACTS

- The Green Team sponsored concert finished off Earth Week.
- Eight bands played; seven were student-bands.
- Mike Forgette, a rapper from Gloucester, performed.
- It lasted from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- The Green Team made \$350.



COURTESY OF CHLOE GOTHIE

Mike Forgette, a rapper from Gloucester, performed during the Envirojam concert at the end of Earth Week. The crowd went on stage with him during his performance. Students performed in the seven other acts during the concert.

the rock bands to the rap groups and was engaged the whole time," White said.

Senior Miranda Johnson, who

went to the concert said, "I thought it was really good, well put together, well organized, and all the acts were great."



COURTESY OF TAMERA BURNS

Seniors Matt Bouwer and Aidan Ostrowski look at ceramics pieces in the new wing of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Thirty-eight ceramics students went on the field trip with ceramics teacher Tamera Burns. The group toured the galleries from the Cape Ann area.

Ceramics students visited new wing of Museum of Fine Arts

By Nick Bouwer
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Thirty-eight ceramics students and four chaperones traveled to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston for an art-oriented field trip on January 11. The trip focused on ceramics and works from the Cape Ann area in addition to other highlights of the new galleries.

According to ceramics teacher Tamera Burns, students were taken on a tour of the newly opened Wing of the Americas.

"The major focus of the tour was beyond the

new wing. It was a focus on ceramics to help educate students on the art form in general and give them a chance to observe different types of work dating back from before the discovery of America to works of modern artists of today. I think it's a world-class

museum, and the trip was incredibly good," Burns said.

Ceramics student senior Aidan Ostrowski liked the trip.

"I think we learned a lot, and I'm looking forward to the next field trip we take there. It's definitely important for students like us to witness work like that and learn from the masters," Ostrowski said.

According to senior Matt Bouwer, the collection of classic Mayan ceramics from outside Guatemala were favorites of the classes.

"I think a lot of people liked the works featured in that exhibit because they were beautifully done and a marvel to look at. I certainly learned a lot from them and felt they were a great benefit to see in comparison to my own work," Bouwer said.

The museum opened the new wing last November and is solely

dedicated to exhibiting American fine art from its early beginnings to present day.

On its opening day alone, the Museum hosted a free full day event which welcomed approximately 14,000 visitors.

Among the highlights of the many pieces featured in the exhibit are a collection of classic Mayan ceramics from outside Guatemala, a collection of colonial New England furniture, silver, and portraits; and a collection of Winslow Homer paintings.

The \$345 million expansion and renovation adds 49 new galleries that display more than 5,000 objects, twice the number of American works that the museum had on view.

The exhibit begins in the wing's basement with the Americas before Christopher Columbus, then climbs three stories through revolutionary Boston to 19th-century manifest destiny landscapes to the abstract existential paintings and works of the past century.

The Museum has also integrated technology into the exhibit, using flat screens to greet visitors at every level and to introduce what is held on each floor.

Eight singers qualify for Districts

By Rebecca Lynch
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Out of 18 students from Manchester Essex that auditioned in the Junior District Competition, eight students were selected to perform in the Massachusetts Northeastern District Junior Music Festival.

Middle school students Frederick Spofford (6 grade), Sarah Rhuda (7 grade), and Ariana Jackson (8 grade) will join freshmen Sofia Del Valle, Elizabeth White, Neil Henry and Alexandra Valenti in representing Manchester Essex on March 19. Freshman Noah Gilbert also qualified instrumentally for drums.

"Given the snow days and everything, [the results] were phenomenal," choral director Donna O'Neill said.

According to O'Neill, Junior Districts is similar to Senior Districts, except there is no sight reading component.

Coming from Brookwood, this was Del Valle's first chance at auditioning for Junior Districts, and she thought the experience was "a little nerve-racking."

This year, Valenti also tried out for Senior Districts. This is her second year qualifying for Junior Districts.

"Senior Districts was pretty similar scoring-wise, but the audition was definitely more challenging because of the sight reading," she said.

This is White's third year in qualifying and Henry's fourth. Ac-

ording to Henry, his first audition was as a soprano, his second year as a tenor, and he has auditioned for the bass section for the past two years.

According to White, preparation involved practicing at home with a recording and rehearsing in front of O'Neill.

"Everyone gets better because we go over [the piece] a lot and share comments on what can make it better. [O'Neill] makes sure everyone is prepared enough and knows the piece thoroughly when it's time to audition," she said.

Not only does the process offer choral experience outside of school, it also benefits the chorus program overall, according to Del Valle.

"We had to learn our line of music backwards and forwards and we'll be able to apply that in

class when we learn new music," she said.

"The students get to work with guest conductors, and they bring a lot of enthusiasm back along with new song ideas," O'Neill said.

Both Valenti and White are looking forward to preparing for and performing in the Music Festival.

"As a singer, it's really amazing to hear all of these people who are so outstanding and genuinely interested in music," Valenti said.

"The concert is my favorite part because we hear all of the pieces together, and performing them after working so hard feels really rewarding," White said.

'The students get to work with guest conductors, and they bring a lot of enthusiasm back along with new song ideas.'
-DONNA O'NEILL

The Script continues successful style in sophomore effort

By Rebecca Lynch
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Featuring meaningful lyrics and memorable choruses, The Script delivers an impressive second album that further solidifies their sound and contains multiple potential radio hits.

Most bands release a poorly constructed second album because they are rushed to further capitalize on their first album's success. The Script, however, manages to produce catchy songs but back them up with solid lyrics and ideas.

The Ireland-based band became fully integrated in mainstream music with their hit "Breakeven" last year. All of the tracks in their second album, "Science & Faith" follow the same formula as the first, but why change stylistically if their debut album had so much success?

The Script chose to maintain the same sound, but their original style is unique. Lead singer Danny O'Donoghue articulates fast-paced verses and then soars into the choruses with a soulful voice that has a wide range. O'Donoghue appears more confident in this album and stretches his voice to hit higher notes.

The Script relies heavily on vocal fills but each are individualized to the song and fill out each track musically.

The style may seem monotonous throughout the album, but each song is carefully constructed with unique phrasing and instrumental melodies.

The album was written in a mere four months. For such quickly produced songs, the lyrics are smooth, well constructed, and poetic. While all songs are about love, The Script acknowledges how dynamic love is through exploring its many forms.

Love is seen as an anchor through difficult economic times in their current single, "For the First Time." The timeless love and support family members share shines through in "If You Ever Come Back," where the band were inspired by their return to Ireland after touring in the United States.

By combining actions such as joining the military and working multiple jobs in "This = Love," The Script deliver a powerful perspective on how both small daily tasks and significant life choices can be all be defined as being done out of love for others.

Within the songs concerning romantic love, each track is individualized by the different themes of love addressed. "You Won't Feel a Thing" focuses on protective feelings, "Exit Wounds" creates a metaphor for the pain of a breakup, and "Long Gone and Moved On" conveys the need to



THESCRIPTMUSIC.COM PHOTO

The Script's new album "Science & Faith" includes songs similar to their first album, since that one worked. All of the tracks were written in four months and they are all about love.

look past previously failed relationships.

The entire album is embodied in the title track "Science & Faith," where The Script uses science and faith as two perspectives

on love, with the idea that love should be accepted and valued instead of being questioned or ignored. The song is meaningful, and the memorable chorus makes it a definite Top 40 hit.

'Jersey Shore': Cast heads back to origin, welcomes new member

By Hannah Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After filming the first half of season 2 in Miami and now returning to the Jersey Shore for the second half, the "Jersey Shore" cast proves to be the best one yet, saying goodbye to the confrontational Angelina while embracing Snooki's friend, Deena.

Since Deena is practically a clone of Snooki, the episodes are twice as entertaining because the two are both loud and outspoken.

Deena also entertains viewers with her secret crush on the grossly muscular Mike "The Situation" and silly things she does



MTV.COM PHOTO

The "Jersey Shore" cast is back in Seaside Heights for the second half of season two. Snooki's friend Deena is the newest member.

with Snooki, such as playing one-on-one wiffle ball on the roof of the house.

While Deena is popular among the Jersey Shore house, Sammi

and Ronnie, the couple that formed during season 1, aren't the house favorites.

The drama between Ronnie and Sammi hasn't ceased and is

increasingly agitated with each new episode.

Sammi picks arguments with Ronnie concerning his previous unfaithful actions in Miami, while talking in a New Jersey accent coated with a pompous attitude.

While the show would be better without Sammi, this half of the season is still more entertaining than the first because they are back in the town where it all began: Seaside Heights.

The girls are surrounded at nightclubs by their ideal "juice-head gorillas," as Snooki would call tan, muscular guidos; and the boys are able to go to their favorite barber shop, gym, and dry cleaners.

Although only four episodes

have aired so far, Snooki has already gotten into trouble.

In the third episode, she is arrested for public intoxication after causing a scene on the beach.

Subsequent to yelling "Where's the beach?" while running alongside it on the boardwalk, Snooki even being able to arrive at the beach was surprising; however, she is out of jail and now uses the "head on her shoulders" to keep her alcohol consumption under control.

While the show is vulgar and should only be watched as a "guilty pleasure," drama-lovers and those looking for a good laugh should tune in to watch MTV's "Jersey Shore" on Thursdays at 10 p.m.

'Black Swan' unnerves audience with complex plot, creepy characters

By Kaitlin McDonagh
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

From the opening scene to the finale, one thing about Darren Aronofsky's movie "Black Swan" is clear: it isn't your average thriller.

Based loosely on the ballet "Swan Lake," the plot follows the life of Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman), a young, beautiful ballerina who desperately wants the part of the Swan Queen in her New York ballet company's production. In order to do this, Nina must dance the part of the White Swan and Black Swan, two completely different roles.

Everything about her perfectly fits the role of the White Swan;

she is timid, fragile, innocent, and her dances are perfectly coordinated. Yet in order to land the role, she must also embody the seductive, wild Black Swan, a dark role in which Nina has no experience.

'Not only is the main character dark, but the aspects of the filming and scenes play a large role in the disturbing atmosphere.'

After managing to convince her director, Thomas Leroy (Vincent Cassel), that she has a sinister side to her, Nina lands the part. As the movie progresses, the audience slowly learns just how twisted that part of

her is.

As Nina becomes more and more invested in her role, she begins to hallucinate violently and imagine scenarios that never happened. She becomes paranoid, be-

lieving fellow ballerina Lily (Mila Kunis) is out to sabotage her and steal her part.

Portman plays her role perfectly; she embodies not only the insanity affecting Nina, but also the personalities of the White Swan and Black Swan. Throughout the movie she completely changes, morphing from an innocent, timid girl to a dark, warped woman.

The changes taking place in Nina represent the differences in the White and Black Queens; Nina becomes so obsessed with perfecting her role that her personality mirrors it.

Not only is the main character dark, but the aspects of the filming and scenes play a large role in the disturbing atmosphere. There are no warm colors; every scene has a gray overtone, and the only light colors depicted are on Nina's clothes, which are primarily light pink, white, and light gray.

The music and sound effects also play a part in creating a creepy tone. While the music of "Swan Lake" climaxes as the ten-



FOXSEARCHLIGHT.COM PHOTO

Natalie Portman plays Nina Sayers, a ballerina who wants to play the Swan Queen in "Swan Lake." Throughout the movie, she hallucinates and becomes paranoid, which stems from an implied mental disorder, when she is trying to perfect her role.

sion in the scenes increase, often the lack of music is what adds to the suspenseful effect the most.

Often in thrillers, the trepidation that builds in the music lets the viewers know when to shield their eyes from a frightening scene. In "Black Swan," there is no music to act as a warning. The only clue is the sound of rustling feathers, which is frequently disregarded because it lasts for only a couple seconds.

The filming is imprecise and often frenetic, adding to the creepy, slightly schizophrenic atmosphere the movie takes on. When a violent image is about to appear, there is no warning as there often are in thrillers.

The multiple, complex layers of "Black Swan" leave no way to escape confusion; the film's deeper meanings can only be reached by slowly sorting through each chilling, evocative scene.