

the **INDEPENDENT**

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PHOTO COURTESY OF GLORIA TANNER

Gloria Tanner stands in front of the U.S. Capitol where 4 million people gathered to watch the inauguration.

‘A new era of peace’

Tanner ventures to D.C. for inauguration

By **Hannah Daley**
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With about 2 million people in attendance at President Barack Obama’s inauguration on Jan. 20, English teacher Gloria Tanner was one of the many who witnessed the first African-American to take the Oath of Office.

According to Tanner, there were national guardsmen everywhere at the inauguration. “It never once felt like things

were’t safe or in control,” she said.

Tanner had several first impressions when she arrived in Washington, D.C.

“It felt like the city was vibrating. There were lots of people, and everyone I met was really happy. There was no boasting, it was all about Americans,” she said.

During the inauguration, Tanner was standing about ¼ mile away from the Capitol, near the fourth jumbotron.

While Tanner was there, she felt patriotic.

“I felt an incredible amount of pride

in my country, and I was happy to see Obama become president,” she said.

Tanner thought President Obama’s speech could have been longer.

“I always feel inaugural speeches should be longer. It was very concise, and not overly inspirational. However, anything over the top feeds to the idea that he’s messianic,” she said.

Tanner especially enjoyed several parts of her experience.

“My favorite parts were singing ‘This Land is Your Land,’ and listening to

INAUGURATION, page 2

District scrambles to fill \$830,000 budget gap

By **Stephanie Smith**
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With an anticipated \$830,000 budget deficit for the 2009-2010 school year, the district is looking for ways to fill the gap without cutting services, according to Superintendent Dr. Marcia O’Neil.

She said the Manchester’s and Essex’s Board of Selectmen asked for no more than a 6% budget increase, and with the proposed cuts, the district has come up with a 4.9% increase for Essex and a 5.4% increase for Manchester.

The district already plans to use \$130,000 normally put into the district’s stabilization fund to help fill the gap as well as using \$200,000 from the school choice reserve account.

The district is now looking at other ways to fill the remaining \$500,000 gap while maintaining the instructional program, services to students, and state mandates, according to O’Neil.

According to O’Neil, the district may cut administrative expenses, such as legal services, software support, paper, paperclips, etc.

Health insurance will cost less than expected, according to O’Neil, who said MIIA increased their rates 7% instead of 10%.

She said the school will have some savings in utility costs due to the new green building.

The school may also save money when three teachers retire this year; the new teachers will be paid less since they’ll have less experience, O’Neil said. Remaining teachers may also have fewer professional development days.

Also, the district hopes to gain revenue from **BUDGET, page 3**

Robotics team’s build-season begins

Team will combat frictionless floor at March competition

By **Stephanie Smith**
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Now that the six-week long build season for the robotics team has started, the members are working on designing and building their robot for the FIRST competition in March at BU Arena, according to robotics

president Ross Frazier.

The robot can weigh up to 120 pounds and be 28 by 38 inches wide and up to 5 feet tall. It must launch or dump balls into trailers attached to the other team’s robots to score points; free throwers from the side can also try to throw balls into the other team’s trailers to score points. The robot will need to move on a nearly frictionless surface.

According to team mentor Chris Williams, the frictionless floor poses the biggest challenge.

“It’s so slippery that when we

tried the first year’s robot on the surface, it didn’t move,” he said.

Frazier agreed. “You need friction to move,” he said. “This will be like driving on ice.”

The team plans on using programming to combat the frictionless surface.

“We have our programmers working on making anti-lock brakes by programming the wheels to pulse instead of breaking,” Frazier said.

Williams said the increased importance of programming is

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EMILY HAMMOND PHOTO

Senior Tim Jordan prepares for the Agganis Arena competition.

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BRIEFS

Class of 2011 sponsors raffle

The sophomore class is sponsoring The Second Annual Lucky Leprechaun 50/50 Raffle in February and March.

Each student in the class of 2011 will sell four tickets for \$25 each so the Pot of Gold grand prize will be worth about \$12,000.

Someone will win half the prize money, which could be up to \$6,000. Sophomores will receive the other half of the money to help benefit their senior trip.

The winner will be announced on St. Patrick's Day, March 17. All tickets are due by March 13.

Students prepare for CFL debates

The Debate and Speech program will attend various tournaments soon.

After their home tournament, the team is gearing up to continue traveling for upcoming competitions.

On Feb. 7, part of the team will travel to Shrewsbury High School to compete in the Catholic Forensic League national qualifying tournament. The top six competitors in each event are eligible to attend the CFL Nationals in Albany, N.Y. in May.

From Feb. 14-16, a portion of the team will take part in Harvard University's annual debate and speech tournament.

Sophomore visits Washington, D.C. for inauguration

Sophomore Olivia Peterson attended the inauguration of President Barack Obama in D.C.

As a member of the Presidential Youth Inauguration Conference, Peterson is considered a student leader in America.

Peterson heard Al Gore, Colin Powell, and Desmond Tutu speak.

The group was given VIP passes to the inauguration and its concert. They also had private access to the Smithsonian museum.

After the inauguration, Peterson attended an Inaugural Ball. "It was the most intense four days of my life! I loved it!" Peterson said. "At first, I didn't get the chance to stop and think about how cool it was, but now I realize how amazing it was."

Colleges accept seniors to top choice schools

Sports, programs, and campuses lead to early apps

By Stephanie Smith
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Guidance's bulletin board is filling with stars for seniors who have been accepted to colleges.

Many students who applied early decision, early action, or rolling admissions have already been accepted.

Athletics helped some seniors get into their top choice colleges.

Senior Emily Needham, a swimmer, applied early action and was accepted to Tulane University in New Orleans, La.

"I was recruited but I still had to go through admissions. I'm really excited to go there," she said.

Senior Caroline Martin, a runner, is also happy to be accepted into her top-choice school, Oberlin College, in Ohio.

"I love the school. It has really great academics and a really nice campus."

"The coach helped me get in,"



EMILY HAMMOND PHOTO

Senior Dora Posfai adds her star for UMass to the college bulletin board. Many seniors who applied early action, early decision, or rolling admissions have already been accepted to colleges.

she added. "He can't get you in, but he can make suggestions to admissions."

Although athletics weren't as big a factor in their admissions to Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, seniors Eric Kimball and Jake McIntosh both hope to participate in athletics there.

"I love Maine," McIntosh said. "I wanted a really small school, where I can ski and play soccer,

hopefully."

Kimball hopes to run at Bates. "It's small, it's Division III and the coach is a great guy," he said. He also likes Bates because "it has a beautiful campus."

The campus at Elon University in Elon, N.C. helped senior Elsa Keefe decide to apply early. Keefe also said having a good foreign studies program was important. "It has a great travel abroad pro-

gram," she said.

A good program attracted senior Peter Gudonis to the School of Architecture at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.; it accepted Gudonis, who applied early decision. He decided to apply after doing a summer program at Cornell.

"I did the summer program there for architecture," he said. "It's one of the top programs in the country."

Graduates return to discuss experiences, give advice

By Julia Melamed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR



FILE PHOTO



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FILE PHOTO

Graduates John Byrne, Stephanie Colbert, Steve Driscoll, Aja Heussi and Brenna Kelley addressed juniors and seniors about college on Jan. 9.

As seniors wrap up the college process and juniors begin it, former students spoke to the juniors and seniors separately about their college experiences.

On Jan. 9, John Byrne, Steve Driscoll, Stephanie Colbert, Brenna Kelley and Aja Heussi returned to give advice and answer students' questions about applying to college and campus life.

With the juniors, the former students mainly addressed the college search process.

John Byrne, a freshman at Wake Forest University, said his most important piece of advice was to go into senior year with a list of at least 10 researched schools that the student

knows he wants to apply to.

Stephanie Colbert, a freshman at Tufts University, said juniors should visit schools when they are in session and stay overnight.

The end of the block was reserved for questions. Junior Pat

Hofmann asked about the workload.

"College is probably going to be a little more work," Byrne said. "If you stay organized, you can manage yourself."

During the discussion with the seniors, the graduates focused more on college life.

Discussing their biggest academic and personal adjustments, Byrne said it was not having any academic supervision and learning how to schedule in time to study.

Steve Driscoll, a freshman at University of Maine, said he found it difficult "going to a brand new place not knowing anyone."

Peer leaders asked the students if they felt prepared by their high school experience. "I think the education here will prepare you... for whatever course you end up taking,"

said Aja Heussi, a freshman at Salem State College.

The students discussed social life at their schools. "You should try to make friends with the people on your hall," Byrne said. "I think it's about keeping yourself

open. Take time and put in effort."

To make friends, Colbert recommended joining a team or a group.

Brenna Kelley, a freshman at Boston College, urged students to stay safe. "My biggest advice is don't get into trouble," she said. "Remember who you are."

Juniors and seniors enjoyed the program. "I thought that the former students... had really good advice for us," junior Lisa Goddard said.

Senior Elsa Keefe agreed and said the most valuable piece of advice to her was "adapting to college lifestyle in the first weeks [and] learning how to manage extra time."

FAST FACTS

- Graduates John Byrne, Stephanie Colbert, Steve Driscoll, Aja Heussi, Brenna Kelley
- Presented on Jan. 9
- Spoke to juniors and seniors on applications, college experiences

Continuations

ROBOTICS
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another new feature this year.

"In the past, you didn't really have to do much programming. This year, you're going to need to do that to make a traction control

device," he said.

The team is also working on a device to propel balls into the trailers.

Frazier said the team is considering using an Archimedes screw, which uses half a tube and a big screw, to create an elevator system to propel the balls out of the top of the robot

INAUGURATION
Continued from page 1

Aretha Franklin sing 'My Aretha Franklin sing 'My Country 'Tis of Thee' at the concert. I also liked when Obama said 'So help me God,'" Tanner said.

Tanner said she helped clean up trash and went to the pub Hawk

'n' Dove after the inauguration.

President Obama's inauguration was everything she expected and more, according to Tanner.

"I appreciated Washington D.C. more than I had before," she said.

Two words Tanner said she would use to describe her experience at the inauguration are "crazy amazing."



INDEPENDENT STAFF PHOTOS



Juniors Tavia Pomazon, Kara Thomas, Skylar Coons, and senior Brian Gaffney dress formally (far left). Seniors Lee Stroman and DJ Ball pose as superheroes (above). Juniors Jasmine Bailey and Julia Martz show their spirit on Superhero Day (left).

Spirit Week: Classes compete for \$100 towards Senior Week

By Laurel Edington
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

During Student Council's Spirit Week, the junior class, voted most spirited, won the \$100 prize.

Spirit Week, which was held

the week after exams, consisted of School Spirit Day, Dress to Impress Day, and Superhero Day. Boston Sports Teams Day was canceled because of the snow day.

According to junior class officer and Student Council member Kara Thomas, the whole school had spirit but "[the juniors] really

[stepped] it up this year."

The majority of students only dressed up on School Spirit Day, wearing the school colors—green and white.

Sophomore class officer Ben White said School Spirit Day was the best because it was the easiest for students to put together.

Thomas agreed that it went well because the student body has a lot of school spirit.

In spite of the Student Council's signs and daily announcements about Spirit Week, students said participation was lacking on other days because the week wasn't promoted well.

Freshman Jared La Fontaine said students weren't clear on the themes or forgot to dress up.

According to Thomas, "We as the Student Council didn't promote it as well as we should have; also the snow day kind of confused people, but overall it went well."

DECA students attend Districts; 45 reach States

By Hannah Dumont
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Seventy-six DECA members and adviser Dean Martino attended Districts at the Danversport Yacht Club.

Of 66 students that could have qualified, 45 advanced to States at the Copley Place Hotel in Boston March 5, 6, and 7. Nine students qualified as alternates.

The competition, held Dec. 16, featured events such as Apparel & Accessories Marketing and Automotive Services Marketing.

According to Martino, the competition was successful and he is "very proud of [the team] and their accomplishments."

In many categories, the team swept divisions, such as Sports & Entertainment Management Team Decision Making.

Martino said students participated in a mock competition and class discussions regarding topics such as interpersonal skills and performance indicators, upon



COURTESY AMANDA AZADIAN

Juniors Emily Malik, Tavia Pomazon, Kara Thomas and Justine Kane competed at DECA Districts on Dec. 16.

which participants are judged.

Senior Elsa Keefe said the class discussions were very helpful.

"[Martino] is very experienced in marketing and management. His insight helped a great deal during the role-play portion of the competition," she said.

Senior Jen Bishop also said Martino has been a direct cause of the team's success.

"He is very encouraging and he brings a different style of teaching into class!" Bishop said.

Although students said Martino contributed to the team's success, Martino said, "Just like any team, it's the players that win. All the coach can do is help prepare."

New school update: Building arrives at 70% completion

By Hannah Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With about 75 people working on the new Manchester-Essex Regional Middle/High School, 70 percent of the building is now complete.

Although the structure of the physical building is still progressing, consultants are preparing existing furniture and technology for the move into the new school. Building staff members are also reclaiming items in the existing building.

In the building's interior, floors in the kitchen and the bathrooms are finished, and workers are installing doors and hardware throughout the building along with a second elevator. They are also putting sheetrock in the gym and installing the metal grid for the ceiling tiles.

On the exterior, workers paved the eastside roadway and put down the foundation for the handicap lift. They also put maroon-shaded metal panels above the



DJ BALL PHOTO

While work on the building's exterior is not complete, consultants are working to finalize furniture and technology selections. In other interior work, kitchen and bathroom floors are finished, and workers are installing hardware and doors, as well as a second elevator. The school will be ready for September 2009.

brick on the side of the building.

To prepare to move, consultants are finalizing furniture style choices and technology selections. Vendors are bidding for Smart Boards, computers, and laptops, in order for consultants to determine the best price.

Middle school administrative assistant Muffin Driscoll is surveying the school to make sure everything in the existing building is reclaimed and transferred to the new school. These items include plaques and trophies in the gym and library.

Continuations

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additional school choice slots, according to O'Neil. Although the district plans to keep the number of choice students level, she said the district "anticipate[s] by the census in Essex that we'll have additional slots for choice" due to a small group of incoming kindergartners.

Another way to increase revenue would be reviewing fees, including those for kindergartners.

O'Neil said the district is considering instating a fee for parents who choose to have a child attend full-day kindergarten rather than half-day kindergarten.

The district is also "looking at increasing athletic fees. We have some of the lowest in the state," she said.

Principal James Lee agreed. "They fee they've been paying is

relatively low. Even so, you don't want to do this sort of thing, but you don't want to cut athletics."

Another change students may notice would be the removal of virtual high school courses, according to Lee. "I think their

elimination will affect lots of students who want to take courses we don't offer or they can't fit into their schedule," he said. "Certainly, that's a loss."

Students may also be required to buy more of their own supplies, rather than having the district supply them, O'Neil added.

According to O'Neil, the district is doing "an entire review of our bussing in Manchester and Essex." Bussing must be available to students who live farther than two miles from the school, though it currently offers services to students living within that radius, she said.

O'Neil hopes to retain as many services as possible. "There's hurt involved in cuts," she said. "You don't cut things and not feel the fallout from it."

'There's hurt involved in cuts.'
-DR. MARCIA O'NEIL

Facebook

Should adults be allowed to create an account?

Pro

Sophie Hagberg

One of the most contested issues between teens and parents today is about Facebook. Lately, more and more adults have been creating profiles with various different motives. But whatever their motives may be, adults are allowed to be on this website and should be given the chance to exercise this right.

Many students worry that parents will use their accounts to spy on their kids. In some cases, this is what parents are doing. But most adults use the site not for stalking, but for social networking.

Contrary to popular thought, parents did actually have friends in high school and college. As “uncool” as they may seem now, adults sometimes use the Internet to reconnect with old friends. And the best site for this is Facebook. This site allows for the easiest communications between people, set up in a user-friendly format.

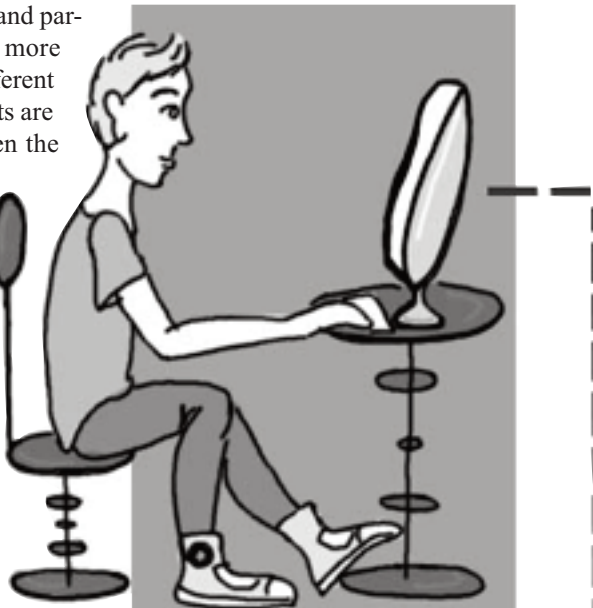
Also, everyone needs to realize that although many adults are on Facebook, not all of them are parents. Many teens have convinced themselves that social networking sites are only for young people, while in reality, adults actually have more of a reason to be on the site. One of the main philosophies of Facebook is to reconnect with old friends, and adults have a greater need to do this. Logically, adults belong more on social networking sites than teens do.

If you are convinced that your parent or guardian is really using the website to stalk you or your friends and watch your every move, there is a simple solution: block them.

Facebook makes it easy to communicate with the people you want to, and also easy to block out the people you don't. Simply change the privacy settings on your account so that nobody outside of your friends can see your profile, and the problem is solved.

If your parent requests to add you as a friend, reject it. You can control what they see, even if they aren't aware of it. Still worried they are getting to you through your friends? Tell your friends that your parent has a Facebook, and they can change their privacy settings too.

The ongoing debate of parents on Facebook is one that can be completely avoided. While it can be awkward if parents of high school students have accounts, keeping them out is completely possible and very easy. So if your mom announces that she is getting a Facebook to catch up with her high school buddies, don't freak out: just change your privacy settings, and your parent won't know how to get to you.



facebook



BOBINA VANDER LAAN CARTOON

Con

Annelise Eaton

When Facebook began, it was populated almost entirely by college students, allowing them to connect and freeing them from the extreme lack of privacy of a site such as MySpace.

Now, the site featuring the slogan “a place for friends” has suddenly turned into a baby boomer rendezvous location, making it far less hip for its intended teenage and young adult population.

Soon, young facebookers will have to flee their online world and find a new site, where their existence will be kept secret from those over 40.

When Facebook changed its student-only policy to allow anyone with an email address to join, annoyance was the general feeling among many young Facebook members. These feelings were exacerbated when groups such as “Beverly High School Class of 1962” started springing up.

While adults, particularly parents, create an awkward atmosphere on Facebook, the effect the site has on them is even stranger.

These parents, suddenly feeling young and hip in an online community where the average age is probably 20 to 30, feel as if decades have been shaved off their life and are suddenly transported back to their youth.

About a year ago, a story appeared in my mini-feed stating that one of my friends' parents had given an online drink to my brother. This icon would appear in his profile with her name printed below. Clearly, this adult was reminiscing back to her teenage years where alcohol was the forbidden fruit, and she felt a desire to share this feeling with my brother. I felt genuinely embarrassed for this mother.

To say that all adults on Facebook are wannabe teenagers experiencing a midlife crisis would be unfair. Perhaps the least welcome adult facebookers are the overprotective mothers and fathers who join the site to snoop on their children's private lives and to gain evidence to support their suspicions on their teenager's weekend activities.

This species of Facebook member is easy to spot. Unlike the wannabe teenagers who have numerous photos and constantly changing statuses, these parents typically have about five online friends and only one or two photos.

Truly, these parents' efforts will prove fruitless, as their teenagers can easily block them from viewing their profiles, making their Facebook existence useless.

Aside from bothering their children, adults on Facebook also have harmful effects on their spouses. When married men and women find previous boyfriends and girlfriends on the site, a previous flame could reignite, creating another hurdle for modern marriages.

While adults may have a use for Facebook, they need to find their own site for online networking. Parents simply create too much tension on Facebook.

Although two separate generations can easily exist simultaneously in the real world, adults need to realize that cyberspace has completely different social rules.

Changing vacation to March will exacerbate student, teacher stress

By Rebecca Lynch

INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

For both students and teachers, the early months after the holidays are the hardest of the year. Midterms, starting a new semester, and the short cold days create a dark void that can only be brightened by one thing: vacation.

For years we've looked forward to February and April vacations for skiing, traveling, and relaxation, but some schools don't have two breaks. Instead, they opt for one vacation in March.

According to Principal Jim Lee, a schedule change for our school

isn't going to happen next year, but it could happen in the future.

A vacation in March means we could get out of school slightly earlier than we already do, but those extra summer days aren't worth two hard months of suffering.

This January, it was harder to come back to school due to the long break, and midterms loomed over our heads the majority of the month. Now that exams are over, we are looking forward to the upcoming February vacation.

Imagine waiting not only through the horror of January but February as well. The weather is just as cold and the slopes are beckoning. March is also a long

month, but not after our refreshing vacation and another break to look forward to.

The sun may not be shining every day, but in April the birds start to chirp and the air gets warmer. Nature is just screaming at us to come outside and enjoy the beauty. Some families go to Florida or the Caribbean every year. Why take away that tradition?

Taking one week of vacation away would give students another week of learning, but we would be so mentally worn out that the extra time wouldn't matter. The February and April vacations are timed perfectly to give us the mental breaks we need.



DJ BALL CARTOON



Interning with a criminal

DJ BALL

When I first met former state Sen. Dianne Wilkerson, I noticed her charm and charisma. She was a woman with a history, and I was more than overwhelmed with joy when she offered me a summer internship.

Fixing my tie and wiping the sweat off my face, I approached the Massachusetts State House's visitor's entrance with more nerves than my legs could support.

By a fortuitous chance, I discovered that I had arrived two hours early, allowing me time to recoup and gain some confidence.

Wilkerson's office was large, adorned with all of her achievements, which only added to my excitement to work with such a successful government official.

As the days past, the charm had begun to fade.

I grew increasingly wary of what had come to Ms. Wilkerson. Whether it was the angry constituent phone calls or the daily news excerpts from the Boston Globe, I began to understand the reality of politics: power corrupts.

Although Wilkerson had accomplished so much in her terms in office and broke down so many racial and gender barriers, her reputation was tarnished by corruption.

I began to understand the reality of politics: power corrupts.

Though she was interested in my future plans and the questions I posed, she seemed older and more preoccupied as compared to when I first met her. Her smile had faded, and she spent the majority of the evening consulting her Blackberry.

With only one more day left in the office, I decided to take measures into my own hand. I took out a pen and paper and wrote to Wilkerson. I did not know why or how, but I wrote a letter detailing the importance of rising above her mistakes and remembering how much she has accomplished.

Despite the various challenges of my internship, I would never have changed a thing. Whether you call her a criminal or an accomplished congresswoman, Ms. Wilkerson was a fantastic congressional leader who got caught up, like so many do, in corrupt politics.

During my third month as an intern, Wilkerson decided to take her staff, including me, out to dinner.

While eating, I noticed how distant Wilkerson seemed.

STAFF EDITORIAL

We must never underestimate the power of a smile

In today's society, people pay thousands of dollars for radical solutions to some of the deepest problems in their lives.

Those who are looking to improve their appearance, brighten their days and relieve their stress need not search far. The answer to their problems can be found in the simple power of a smile.

For years, optimists have been telling others that smiling is contagious. They believe that smiling is an act that could grow exponentially if people made a true effort to display this act of kindness every day.

In an era of economic crisis in which people are trying to conserve money, smiling is the cheapest way to improve one's look. Unlike plastic surgery, Botox and fake tans, which are expensive and can always go wrong, smiling is free and is guaranteed to improve an appearance.

When you smile, you automatically look more confident and less tired and worn out.

A cheerful face is very attractive. People are simply drawn to smiling because it is such a change from the typical cold front that people put on in our culture. An unfriendly face has become a defensive mechanism and an undying symbol of the skepticism that infiltrates our society.

Psychologically, smiling is a proven stress reliever as it causes a release of endorphins, which are the body's natural pain-killers. In this sense, smiling is a natural drug.

Along with its psychological benefits, smiling is proven to improve physical health. By naturally relaxing the body, it boosts the immune system. Studies show that smiling also lowers blood pressure.

While smiling may lead to better health and looks, the most profound effect it can have is that which it has on others. When people see that your mood has changed, theirs will change as well. You can give people money,



DJ BALL CARTOON

food and material possessions, but none of these can compare to changing their outlook on life.

The act of smiling carries a deeper message than simply being a physical symbol of happiness. Smiling is possibly the most democratic action one can produce, because in smiling all are equal. A happy face pays no regard to dif-

ferent social classes, cultures or languages. A smile costs nothing to give and carries the same weight for everybody.

Smiling is a bold statement. When you smile, you tell those around you that happiness is a choice and you explain, without words, that a positive can be found in every negative situation.

Obama's inaugural speech gives hope to Americans

By Molly Friedman
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Barack Hussein Obama entered the presidency as the first African American, promising a new beginning for the American people.

Spreading across the National Mall in Washington D.C., millions of Americans braved the freezing weather waiting for the inaugural speech of hope to be delivered by the soon to be president of the United States.

People in the crowd had a constant emotion of glee with tears of joy to show for it. The eager crowd chanted "Obama" as a sign of respect and happiness for a new president.

The procession of cabinet members and family signaled the beginning of Obama's entrance.



Taking in all the noises and sights, Obama waited his turn to make his grand entrance onto the terrace of the Capitol building.

The roar of the crowd illustrated the support people have in Obama. Greeted by family members and colleagues, he sat in anticipation to take the oath of office.

People from different parts of the globe watched this historic

event. Scenes in Kenya were displayed on national television to show that he is not just supported by Americans but also by people all over the world.

The irony of the fact that the White House was built by slaves and is now commanded by an African American shows how America has matured. Americans discovered that race doesn't matter when it comes to electing a

president; the presidency is based on what they stand for.

We have gone through times of trouble and joy, and are now in need of a drastic change due to the troubling decisions of the previous president.

Throughout his whole campaign, Obama promised us hope and change. Without hesitation, he made the crisis of our country clear. He explained what needs to be done to fix the worsening problems of our country. "That we are in the midst of crisis is now well understood," he said.

The somber tone of the speech did not ruin the glorious day. We need to hear the truth in order to fix the problems created.

Obama's devotion to the country and eagerness to begin the creation of a better nation gives Americans security and reason to believe he will succeed.

the **INDEPENDENT**

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Top 5 worst Valentine's Day gifts

By Kyle Marsh



The first is a gym membership. Nothing says, "lose weight" like a suggested trip to the gym. Even if your significant other's new year's resolution is to work out, a membership can only be taken as an insult.



Secondly, a Facebook gift is a horrible present. Although you may think you are being romantic if you write a cute note with the gift, it just shows that you did not take the time to go out and purchase a present.



Next is old or cheap candy. If someone is going to buy candy, which is very sweet, although cliché, it should at least be good candy. Never give a stale present; it is downright horrible.



A cheap date is the next worst present. A romantic date on Valentine's Day is a great present, but a date centered on you more than your Valentine is inconsiderate. For example, if your girl hates going to sporting events, do not get her a ticket to a game. She will obviously know it is more for you than her.



If you are getting something engraved, make sure to spell it correctly. Also, you should be careful with dates. If you are putting your anniversary date on a gift, make sure it is the correct day.

Unique gifts show you care

For Valentine's Day, ordinary gifts aren't as special or as meaningful as ones that come from the heart.

A typical gift is a box of chocolates. A simple but fun twist on this idea is a box of customized M&Ms from www.mymms.com.

This allows for the personal creation of the common candies through words or pictures.

First choose from the 22 colors, 17 of which can be written on, for the chocolates. You can then either write a message or use a maximum of two pictures to put on the candy.

Personalized candy for Valentine's Day ranges from \$24.99 to \$44.99, but for \$54.99 you can get the candy with a dispenser for the chocolates.

Stargazing is considered romantic, so a special gift is a star that you name.

With a cost between \$54.00 and \$154.95 an actual star in the galaxy can be bought and named.

The packages on the International Star Registry website, www.starregistry.com, include a paper explaining the star's name and location in the sky.

Even though this gift is quirky, it's a present to give someone who has everything, and will remind you about each other every time you look at the sky.

If \$154.95 is too expensive for a Valentine's Day gift, another option is using special talents, like drawing or writing, to make a present instead of purchasing one.

If you possess a musical talent you can compose an original song, or if you have a literary talent rather than a musical one, you could write a poem.

To add romance to your song, go to your love's house and serenade him or her, possibly even with an instrument.

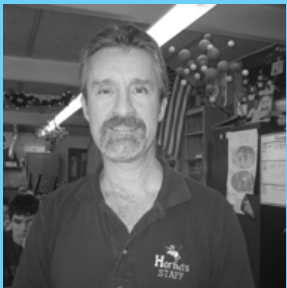
To give a poem a special touch, compliment your valentine's beauty, personality, and say how much you love him or her.

If drawing comes easily, draw a picture of your loved one or of the two of you together.

The tough display of emotion that comes from a picture won't be soon forgotten and will be a reminder of

how much you are in love.

By Laurel Edington



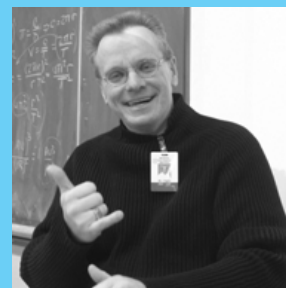
Chemistry teacher Keith Gray:

"She had two tickets to the band J. Giles and needed a ride. I was a cop at the time so she felt safe driving with me. We drove to J. Giles, watched the concert and started dating right after that."



Spanish teacher Michelle Magana:

"I went over to Spain to take a year off to get my Masters. There was an organized trip to Sevilla. My husband was sitting across from me on the seven-hour bus ride to Sevilla. He came over and talked to me. We dated the whole time we were in Spain but split up when we got back to the United States. That year he came to my house for Thanksgiving and never left."



Physics teacher John Chiffer:

"She asked me to do an MIT seminar, and afterwards I asked her out on a date. We began dating and fell in love."

TOP FIVE CHEER

#1 "He"

By itself, this song is not much out there. It demonstrates classic what really pushes this particular its music video.

The video opens on a half filled some sort of class. He introduces ask the girl he likes on a date. About blind, and that Richie has a crush following her around from a restaurant the song in the background.

This video had me laughing, and

#2 "A Moment Like This" by Kelly Clarkson

Many high school students have terrible flashbacks to middle school dances when this song comes on. But memories of standing arm's length away from a member of the opposite sex, swaying awkwardly and trying not to make eye contact is only part of the problem when it comes to this track.

Although the song gets points for not having quite as bad a melody, it loses those when Clarkson croons, "Some people wait a lifetime for a moment like this. Some people search forever for that one special kiss." Lyrics like these compose the entire song. When combined with the bad flashbacks, this song more than deserves its rank at number two.

#4 "Time after Time" by Cyndi Lauper

A classic hit of the '80s, this song is a regular at many school dances. This is as far as it should go. In addition to a tune that deserved to be in the decade it was born in, it also has the added bonus of never actually finishing a lyric.

The style of the song was just to give sentence fragments, instead of completing a thought: lyrics like "Flashback—warm nights—/ all left behind / suitcases of memories, / time after—," create the effect of a writer with an extremely short attention span.

How do you meet your Valentine?



EASIEST LOVE SONGS

#1 "Hello" by Lionel Richie

Different than the thousands of other bad love songs with cheesy lyrics and an overzealous ballad tune. But this track over the edge and into the number one spot is

in an auditorium, where Lionel Richie himself is leading the band. In an ex-con, and for some reason, tells the criminal to go out 10 seconds later, the video reveals that the girl is in love with her. He spends the entire five-minute video following her to her ballet studio to school to art class, and sings

and demonstrates the epitome of a bad love song.

#3 "Lady in Red." by Chris de Burgh

Featured in the movie "Baby Mama," this was the favorite song of the uptight main character portrayed by Tina Fey. This tune was used to poke fun at Fey's character, and this is the only situation in which this song should be used.

The tune is the same as any other of the classic cheesy love songs: ballad-like, with emotional flourishes added. The kicker for this one is its lyrics, which are awful and overdone right from the first line: "I've never seen you looking so lovely as you did tonight, / I've never seen you shine so bright."

#5 "My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion

This song, first introduced in the movie "Titanic," epitomizes the classic cheesy love song. Anyone who has seen the movie will instantly picture the two main characters on the front of the boat, completely and totally in love. The love in this vision, however, will not mirror the love in your sweetheart's eyes if you play this song for him or her.

With lyrics such as "We'll stay forever this way/You are safe in my heart/And my heart will go on and on," this song is sadly disappointing.

The terrible, overly-emotional lyrics combined with a sappy, power-ballad tune make for a clichéd and overplayed song that is sure to freeze hearts instead of melting them.

By Sophie Hagberg

How to spend Valentine's Day single

If you're single, you might begin feeling depressed about the upcoming Valentine's Day. Or you might like being single and have chosen to spend the holiday without a partner. Either way, here are some helpful suggestions on how to enjoy Valentine's Day.

The first step to enjoying Valentine's Day while being single is to realize that you are not alone.

According to www.maximalhappiness.com, more than 80 million people will spend this holiday without a partner. Knowing this should make you feel a lot better about yourself you are definitely not alone.



The next step in enjoying the holiday is choosing how you would like to spend the day. You might want to go about Feb. 14 just like any other day or you

might want to find a way to celebrate it while being single.

If you choose to celebrate the holiday decide whether you want to celebrate alone or with others.

Making a Valentine's Day date not with yourself is not a problem if your friends are out with their significant others. Make or order your favorite meal, rent one of your favorite movies, read a book, watch T.V., scrapbook, the possibilities are endless.

If you choose to spend the holiday alone, make sure you do something that you want to do. You won't feel as alone if you are spending the time doing something that you truly enjoy.

Another option is to get a group of single friends together and throw your own Valentine's Day party. Even if it's just a group of your five closest friends, the night will be one to remember.

Cook dinner and enjoy the night talking and catching up. When you're with a group of close friends, you'll forget that you're single and that you were once sad about spending the holiday without a special someone.

Since Feb. 14 lands on a Saturday, make a day out of the holiday. Go into Boston with some friends and grab lunch. Or go for a walk on the beach just to clear your head while enjoying the view.

Whatever it is that you choose to do with Valentine's Day, make it count.

- Realize you are not alone; more than 80 million people will spend this holiday without a partner .
- Get a group of single friends together and throw your own Valentine's Day party.
- If you choose to spend it alone, make or order your favorite meal, rent one of your favorite movies, read a book, watch TV or scrapbook.

By Emily Hammond

Did you find your Valentine?



Guidance counselor Karen D'Amour:

"I met my husband through a friend. My friend and I were having coffee. My husband stopped by, and it went on from there."



Science teacher Erica Everett:

"He was my neighbor and I wouldn't accept his offer for a date. During the Christmas season he helped me unload a Christmas tree from my car roof so I invited him in for tea. We began to talk, and I soon discovered that he went to the same college as I went to but the thing that got me was that he could recite the whole kreb cycle."



History teacher Daniel Jewett:

"My best friend from high school was her best friend in college. I met her once, and three year later met her a second time and the rest is history."

Health Matters



Superfruit combines health, taste

By Julia Melamed
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Strawberries, blueberries, and other kinds of fruit are all healthy and supposed to part of your regular diet. But the açai berry is a new fruit that's even better – a superfruit.

Açai is a small, round and dark berry that comes from an Amazon palm tree and is grown in the rainforests of Brazil.

On Oprah Winfrey's website, Dr. Nicholas Perricone, a dermatologist and the author of several books, listed what he considers to be 10 "superfoods" and the açai berry topped the list. "Studies have shown that this little berry is one of the most nutritious and powerful foods in the world," Perricone said on the website.

Not only is the berry incredibly healthy, but it's also tasty, says Perricone. According to him, it tastes like an appealing mix between berries and chocolate.

"Hidden within its royal purple pigment is the magic that makes it nature's perfect energy fruit," Per-

ricone said. "Açai is packed full of antioxidants, amino acids and essential fatty acids."

Advantages of the açai berry include the ability to fight the symptoms of aging, a wide variety of healthy fats that improve your cardiovascular and digestive systems, and strengthening your muscle contraction and regeneration. The berry contains 10 times more antioxidants than red grapes.

The fruit is also sold in other forms, such as in

smoothies or in other drinks.

When buying the açai berry, be careful that you are getting the actual berry. Some

websites claim to sell the berry, but they aren't selling a pure form of the fruit and may be overcharging you.

Although you might not have ever heard of this fruit before, the açai berry can be found in health food stores and Stop & Shop sells the berry in juice form for \$2.99.

It tastes like an appealing mix between berries and chocolate.

Sold in juice form for \$2.99 at Stop & Shop.

Contains 10 times more antioxidants than red grapes.

Helps fight signs of aging.

Student

Pietro Guadiano profile



COURTESY PIETRO GUADIANO

By Molly Friedman
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Grade:
10

What is your favorite Christmas present you got?
My Wii

If you could move to anywhere in the world, where would it be?
Rome

If you could be fluent in any language, what would it be?
Portuguese

Do you have a Valentine for Valentine's Day?
No

Santa or Cupid?
Santa

Do you have a favorite Valentine's Day treat?
Sour patch kids

What is your most embarrassing moment?
I was forced to get up on the stage in the cafeteria and sing happy birthday to Nick Corriere.

What is your favorite winter clothing item?
Onesie pajamas.

Blogs act as virtual diaries for students' thoughts, opinions

By Emily Hammond
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the new do-it-yourself designs, blogging has become a way for students to express themselves.

Blogs are websites where people can write entries about whatever is on their minds.

"I like to think of my blog as an online diary, which in a sense, it is. I write mine everyday for me, not for anyone else," senior Holly Ream said. "Anyone can read it, but its purpose is for me to be able to let everything that's on my mind out."

In the past blogging was simple, and, according to many, boring. There wasn't much that could be done with a blog, besides the standard posts.

"The blogging sites today are a lot more advanced. There are sites that allow you to post pictures, music, videos, quotes, and even IM conversations. In the past people were only able to post the standard, diary-like entry," senior Charlotte Cheshire said.

You can also change the layout of your blog to match your style. Most sights offer different tem-

Sample Blog Sites

Blogger:
www.blogger.com

LiveJournal:
www.livejournal.com

Tumblr:
www.tumblr.com

Xanga:
www.xanga.com

plates to choose from or let you use your own. The colors, font style and size, and the arrangement of everything in your blog are all things that are left up to you.

For Cheshire, these new features stood out and made blogging the perfect thing to do.

"On my blog I can post my films that I have made. This is really helpful because they'll always be there so I can show friends and family," she said.

These features are also helpful for senior Alison Nitkiewicz who posts her current photography on her site.

"I especially love that I can post pictures on my blog. I like being able to have my photography there so that anyone who wants to see it can," she said.

All over the world people are making blogs. Anyone from regular teenagers in other countries to celebrities, like Britney Spears and Lily Allen.

Open up your mind and see like me.

MON FEB 2ND



Doesn't this look delicious? I like to make this for my breakfast on the days that I have study first. It's strawberry yogurt, wild maine blueberries, and banana walnut granola. SO GREAT!

I'm Emily. I believe in living in the moment and just loving life. I'm probably the last person you would expect to have a blog, but hey, life's full of surprises! :)



EMILY HAMMOND PHOTO

Tumblr is a popular blog site that is clean and organized. It offers easy to manage blogs with attractive layouts and the ability to post photos and videos.

According to Ream, you can find really interesting people from all over the world through blogging.

"There are some really inspiring people, from all over, who have blogs. I love reading other people's post to help get me inspired," she said.

Some new designers and other celebrities have gotten their big break through blogging.

"There really are some incredible people in the world who have

so much talent. A lot of people get noticed through their blogs and become famous because of their fashion designs, writing, art, anything really," Cheshire said.

Some popular sites to make your own blog are Squarespace, Tumblr, and Blogspot.

"Tumblr is my favorite it's the site I use, but all the sites are good. It's more about what you put into your blog rather than the site that you use," Ream said.

Hornets' Nest



Records as of Feb. 2

Girls' Basketball:

Record: 11-4

Next game: Feb. 6

at Georgetown

Head Coach:

Lauren DuBois

Captains:

Jordan Biggar, Lee

Stroman, Elsa

Keefe

Gymnastics:

Record: 2-6

Next game: Feb. 6

CAL Open

Head Coach:

Rich Healey

Indoor Track:

Next game: Feb. 6

at Ipswich

Head Coach:

John Barbour

Captains:

Leo Daley, Eric

Kimball, Nate Jer-

main

Hockey:

Record: 7-6

Next game: Feb. 7

at Nashoba at 4:30

Head Coach:

Derek Papalegis

Captain:

Sean Golden

Boys' Basketball:

Record: 9-7

Next game: Feb. 6

vs. Georgetown

Head Coach:

Duane Sigsbury

Captains:

Kyle Donovan,

Zeke Gillette, Pat

Orlando

Swimming:

Record: 0-9

Head Coach:

AJ Migonis

Captains:

Erik Walder,

Maddy Huleatt

Girls' basketball team improves composure in close games

By Hannah Daley
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With just five more games left in their regular season, the girls' basketball team holds a record of 11-4, and they are hoping to keep improving their skills since they qualified for the Div. IV state tournament.

The girls defeated Georgetown, Triton, Beverly, Amesbury, Rockport, North Reading, Newburyport, Greater Lowell, Lynnfield, Wilmington, and Triton, and they lost to Masconomet, Pentucket, North Andover, and Ipswich.

"I wouldn't say I was surprised by the losses. The team played hard and never gave up, and we took something away from the games besides a loss," coach Lauren DuBois said.

Senior captain Jordan Biggar and DuBois said the team has improved since the beginning of the season.

"I think one of our major improvements is being composed in



COURTESY OF KAITLIN MCDONAGH

Sophomore Lizzy Ball guards Ipswich senior Hannah Macklin during a home game on Jan. 30. The Hornets lost by 10 points.

close games. We are just winning some of these games by a few points, but we are pulling through because of our composure. Also, we are starting to use our speed and our ability to get ahead of teams," Biggar said.

DuBois said that the girls are playing good team defense, rotating to their spots, attacking the basket on offense, and helping

each other out.

Although the girls have improved, they are still working on several things such as boxing out other players, rebounding, and finishing shots, according to DuBois.

Biggar said they are still practicing their rebounding. During a recent win against North Reading (56-47), North Reading scored most of their points on second

'We are excited to get to that next level, and to start preparing for our time to shine.'

-LIZZY BALL

chance opportunities.

They encouraged each other and worked as a team to win, according to Ball. "We wanted the win so badly, and we wouldn't take losing for an answer," she said.

Ball said she and the team are eager for the tournament, and they want to win all of their upcoming games.

"We are excited to get to that next level, and to start preparing for our time to shine. We want to win every game from here on out, including tournament games," she said. Their next game is away against Georgetown on Feb. 6.



COURTESY OF ALISON DALEY

Senior Eric Kimball and sophomore Ben Girard push themselves to finish during the mile run at Ipswich on Jan. 30.

Track: New team steamrolls JV competition in meets

By Kaitlin McDonagh
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Because the indoor track and field team is new, it's competing at the JV level this year, but members of the team believe they are not competing on the correct level.

The team competes on the JV level, but due to constant success, many students think they are not being challenged.

"We need to be moved up to a varsity level; it is too easy now," freshman Max Rodier said.

Sophomore captain Nate Jermain agreed. "Everything from the 55m dash to the mile has been dominated by the Hornets," he said.

According to coach John Barbour, the team is competing at the JV level because the program is new.

"It's kind of an experiment to

see if there is sufficient interest and commitment to create and sustain a varsity program over the long term," he said.

According to sophomore Tatiana Lyne, the competition is decent. "Hamilton-Wenham is our biggest competitor, but I wouldn't say we are worried about them," she said.

"This is not a bad place to start considering that there are also lots of people who are trying track events for the first time," Barbour said.

The team differs most from other schools in its lack of experience. Students said having veteran track and field competitor Barbour as coach is a big help.

"He is very knowledgeable about the sport," Lyne said.

Sophomore Olivia Dumont described Barbour as easygoing. "He lets us push ourselves," she said.

The team's next meet is at Ipswich High School on Feb. 6.

Gymnastics:

Team perseveres despite inexperience

By Rebecca Lynch
ASSISTANT EDITOR

With a record of 2-6 and wins against Marblehead and Salem, the Hamilton-Wenham/Manchester-Essex gymnastics team is working on overcoming inexperience.

"This year we have many girls with less experience so the expectations are different. But I'm happy with the results we've gotten," coach Rich Healey said. "As the season went on the scores went up with the experience levels."

Sophomore Vicky Nicholas, one of the two Manchester-Essex participants, competed in bars, balance beam, and floor in the first meet against Danvers.

"Vicky's never competed before, so to have her compete in her first meet was big. Her scores have contributed so far," Healey said.

"I was nervous and focused, and the meet went well. Since then I've improved on my beam and bar routines. I can almost do a back handspring for floor," Nicholas said.

According to junior Chandler Kennedy, team has improved.

"Everyone is in a competitive mode. They've gotten new skills and improved routines. With additions to bar routines and vaults, we could improve more as a team. In meets the girls are getting more confident, and their scores are contributing to the overall team score," she said.

Nicholas said all of the girls have at least a simple vault and more girls want to participate in meets. The team achieved their goal of getting an overall score of 130 against Marblehead.



COURTESY CHANDLER KENNEDY

Sophomore Vicky Nicholas performs a routine on the balance beam during a meet and perfects her floor routine during practice.

"We've improved together as a team in all aspects of competition. The season has been fun and we're all good friends now," she said.

Swim team ends season with strong personal times

By Bobina Vander Laan
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Individual times were more prominent than the overall team performance of the swim team's last week of the season.

The team had their last meet last Thursday against North Reading. Varsity narrowly lost 94-83 against the most evenly matched

North Reading. In the last team relay, swimmers finished first with a lot of enthusiasm on the

sidelines.

The Cape Ann League meet was held this past Sunday, with all divers qualifying. Top positions were given for the individuals in diving. Eighth-grader Alex Walter placed first; junior Caroline Moore placed second; and sophomore Christine Walder placed fifth.

'Many swimmers stepped up to difficult races.'
-AJ MIGONIS

best times, more than overall team times. We continue to improve," coach A.J. Migonis said

The culmination of the season resulted in many best individual times.

"We've had lots of personal



COURTESY OF TIM BOUWER

Sophomore Matt Bouwer catches a breath while doing the backstroke during a recent meet against North Reading in the 100.

Prior to the meet, Migonis said he hoped to see more people reach their best individual times and to

have more people qualify for sectionals.

Despite the fact the team fin-

ished with a 0-3 league record, enthusiasm was abundant at meets. The team showed their support for teammates by cheering at the end of the lanes.

As for how the team has progressed since last season, Migonis said that everyone continued to improve.

"Many swimmers stepped up to difficult races. At the beginning of the season I don't think they anticipated they would be at that level," he said.

Migonis gave one example of a student who has improved greatly this season. "I've had one athlete come up to me and say he improved 10 seconds. That's a great accomplishment."

Due to a snow day, a make-up meet with Lawrence is to be held this Thursday. The meet does not count as a Cape Ann League meet because the date has already passed.

Sophomore standout leads team to 9-7 record

By Maura Driscoll
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Sophomore star Joseph Mussachia continues to lead the 9-7 boys varsity basketball team.

After an 83-56 win against Amesbury where Mussachia accomplished a triple double with 35 points, 14 rebounds, 10 assists, he "continues to show why he is an all league performer night in and night out," coach Duane Sigsbury said.

This season, Mussachia has been playing great, according to Sigsbury.

"Joe Mussachia is one of the leading scorers in the state averaging 24.6 points per game and 12.6 rebounds per game. Joe has been amazing," he said.

The Hornets beat Ipswich 58-38. Mussachia had a game high 19 points, but succumbed to a high ankle injury later into the game.

The game versus Triton resulted



MOLLY FRIEDMAN PHOTO

The boys' basketball team gathers for a team huddle before a recent home game. Sophomore Joseph Mussachia proved to be one of the leading scorers in the state, averaging 24.6 points per game.

in a win of 73-41. Mussachia netted 27 points, and senior captain Zeke Gillette had 12 points. With such a large lead, Sigsbury was able to clear the bench and get everyone playing time.

Senior captain Kyle Donovan led the team with 15 points and senior captain Pat Orlando, "played great defense on Wilmington's best player," Sigsbury said.

A close game against reigning league champion, Wilmington, resulted in a 50-45 loss of 50-45. "It came down to the wire, and Wilmington just had a little more left in the tank to pull it out," Sigsbury said.

"It is very hard to compete against a school three times your

size," Sigsbury said in regards to the loss versus North Andover. "We played very well and had a chance to win the game at the end, but we fell a little short."

A game against Newburyport, the team came out on top with a 54-45 win. The next win of 68-58 was against Lynnfield.

In a 59-50 win against Pen-tucket, the team continued to improve their record, but the next game versus North Reading the team lost 83-62.

"A tournament birth is within our grasp and we are working very hard to get in. I know if we concentrate and stay healthy we have a great chance of doing so," Sigsbury said.

Ski and ride the East at awesome mountains

By Skylar Coons
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

The East Coast has many promising mountains to ski and ride at. Tickets for teens at these five mountains range from \$60-63.

Loon is in Lincoln, NH off Exit 32; two and a half hours away. Other than being a family mountain with 55 trails, they have the best terrain park in New England.

The mountain's terrain park has its own trail along with four other parks. The biggest park has two new sets of rail staircases where skiers and riders have the selection of many rails and boxes before they enter the superpipe.

Another popular mountain is Sunday River in Bethel, Maine, which is three hours and twenty minutes away. Their 131 trails range from beginner to expert. This year, the mountain also decided to open for 12-hour ski days by staying open until 9 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Sugarloaf, in Carrabassett Valley, Maine, is four hours and 45 minutes away. It has the most trails out of these mountains with

138 trails. Sugarloaf has three terrain parks-- beginner, intermediate and advanced-- and a course for snowboardcross and skiercross.

Three hours and 50 minutes away is Sugarbush in Warren, Vermont. It has 111 trails and three terrain parks. Along with snow-making and the amount of snow it gets, this mountain has great skiing and riding on the trails and off the trails into the woods. Skiers and riders can buy tickets for only part of the mountain for \$44 or \$60 for the whole mountain.

Five minutes shorter than driving to Sugarbush is Mad River Glen in Waitsfield, Vermont, which has mostly expert trails. The snow is pure at this mountain because there is no snowmaking. There are 45 trails of snowboarder free terrain. It's one out of four of the only mountains in the United States that is for skiers only.

FAST FACTS

- Loon - 55 trails
- Sunday River - 131 trails
- Sugarloaf - 138 trails
- Sugarbush - 111 trails
- Mad River - 45 trails

Hockey: Continues season with 7-6 record; team incorporates tougher drills during practice

By Nick Bouwer
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

With a 7-6 record and a "stronger sense of confidence" according to coach Derek Papalegis, the hockey team is meeting its goals for the season.

Practice over the course of this season has changed. "We used to just do easy drills and then skate at the end of practices, but now we have incorporated speed and puck control," junior player Pat Hofmann said.

Senior captain Sean Golden agreed. "A lot has changed. When we first started practice we didn't



COURTESY OF MATT GRAVES

Junior Matt Graves skates to retrieve the puck during a game against Nashoba Tech. The team defeated Nashoba Tech 7-1.

know the coach that well and we had to get used to him as well as he to us. Now that we've done

that, practice has become smoother and easier to get more work in," Golden said.

The team still has the same goal for the season, to get to the state tournament. They need nine wins out of their 18 game season to compete. "We have been working hard to achieve that goal physically, but one of the main things we're stressing now is dedication and confidence in ourselves. Sure, the game must be played well to win, but one of the main influences in playing harder and doing better is confidence and dedication," Papalegis said.

According to Papalegis and Golden, the team has improved greatly in its problems that it had at the beginning of the year.

"We have started learned that hard work wins games and that

practice improves everything," Papalegis said.

"At the beginning of the season we were having trouble working as a team and passing the puck to one another, but now through many practices and hard work we have improved a lot," Golden said.

They recently played against Nashoba Tech and won 7-1, but according to Hofmann, the win was disappointing because they didn't play their best.

"We did very well, and it was a good game because we got more of the younger players in, but we played down to their level so it wasn't really a challenge like the games ahead of us will be," Hofmann said.

Tight economy still offers options for recreational activities

By Annelise Eaton
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As the economy struggles, teenagers may have a smaller recreation budget as parents lose their jobs and are less likely to give up their cash.

Although expensive concerts and days of shopping may no longer be realistic options, the North Shore offers many inexpensive options to fill up your free time. Many outdoor and athletic recreational options are inexpensive and are often more memorable than a traditional day at the mall.

Take advantage of the Essex County Club golf course, Cranes Beach or the woods at Gordon College to go cross-country skiing.

If you don't own skis, skating is another fun and athletic option. The O'Maley Middle School in Gloucester is open to the public on weekends from 2

to 4 p.m. The price of admission is \$5 and ice skate rentals cost \$4.

When the weather is cold enough and the ice is thickly frozen, local ponds provide an outdoor skating option.

For those who prefer indoor activities during the cold winter months, the Cabot Street Cinema in Beverly presents \$6 movies that are typically different from what is playing at theaters such as Loews and Hollywood Hits.

A tight budget does not mean you need to confine yourself to Cape Ann. A day in Boston does not have to be overly expensive.

Start your journey by buying student-priced train tickets from Richdale for a fraction of the typical cost.

If you are headed into the city with a large group, ask the conductor for a family fare. If the group is large enough, the cost per person roundtrip can get as low as \$3.

In the Prudential Center, Lu-



COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Cabot Street Cinema in Beverly offers movies for \$6 that are different from what play at Loews and Hollywood Hits. The cinema provides comfortable plush seating.



COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Yoga is an inexpensive and relaxing way to get in shape.

lulemon Athletics offers free yoga classes on Sundays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. until early March. Mats are provided.

Either in Boston or closer to home, take advantage of the numerous events available at nearby colleges. Schools frequently have inexpensive

sporting events, shows and speakers that are open to the public.

Economic problems, instead of being a burden, can grant you an opportunity to broaden your recreational options by forcing you to break out of typical weekend routines.



COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Cross-country skiing is a cheap way to enjoy time with friends or family this winter.



COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Skating at the O'Maley Middle School in Gloucester costs \$5 and rentals are \$4.

FAST FACTS

- Admission to the O'Maley Middle School rink costs \$6, rentals cost \$4.
- A roundtrip train ticket to Boston can cost as little as \$3.

Cheap chic: the best clothing for your dollar

By Brittany Edwards
INDEPENDENT STAFF

With the economy in recession, your dollar may not go as far as it used to. Your parents may no longer give you money, and you may be earning less. These stores are cheap alternatives to expensive local shops.

Second Time Around:
219 and 176 Newbury St.,
Boston, MA
937 Great Plain Ave.
Needham, MA
Hours: M-Sat 10a.m.-6p.m.,
Sun Closed

Second Time Around is a high-end, contemporary designer clothing store that sells new and secondhand clothing. All clothing is under two years old and undamaged. You can consign at this store by appointment or you can mail in your items. Second Time Around can donate all unaccepted items for you with a donation slip. You can start both a consignment and customer account online, but you do not need to consign in order to purchase clothing.

Wrentham Premium Outlets:
1048 South St.
Wrentham, MA
Hours for Jan 2 - Feb 28, 2009:
Sun-Wed 10a.m.-6p.m., Thu-Sat 10a.m.-9p.m.



COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Forever 21 offers inexpensive but stylish clothes for both men and women.

The Wrentham Premium Outlets are having winter clearance sales boasting 170 outlet stores ranging from Aeropostale to Barney's New York. These outlets also have many places to eat and buy specialty food such as Lindt Chocolate.

Forever 21:
Route One
Saugus, MA 01906

Forever 21 sells funky apparel and accessories for young women and young men. Casual shirts are generally priced from \$7.80 upwards, with most selling for under \$30, and with many dresses in the \$20 range. Although the material is not very durable, the inexpensive merchandise serves as a quick fix for a much needed item. An additional store is coming to Northshore Mall opening in the spring.

Poor Little Rich Girl:
255 Elm St.
Somerville, MA
166 Newbury St.
Boston, MA

Poor Little Rich Girl offers new and used clothes. The store carries only in-season items that are also in-style. The labels fluctuate depending on the day, but you can anticipate seeing designer items varying anywhere from Forever 21 to Juicy Couture.

They specialize in diverse vintage clothing and accessories from the 1940s to the 1980s.

You can sell your clothing to the store by appointment. Consigners receive 20% of the final selling price.

You can use store credit to get an additional 20% off, and according to the Poor Little Rich Girl website, no other store in the area does this.

Quaint tea shop offers homey atmosphere

By Molly Friedman
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Off of Main St. in Gloucester, Pleasant Street Tea offers a wide variety of tea flavors, food, and a pleasant atmosphere.

RESTAURANT REVIEW To get your attention, a sign at the beginning of Pleasant Street directs you to the shop and has written gift ideas, daily flavors, and ideas for tea parties.

Notices for open mic night or tea tasting are posted on the windows of the shop.

Eye catching red and yellow circular patterns on a long ordering counter sit beneath a chalk-written menu. The counter is filled with an array of dessert breads, biscotti, and items for sale.

The menu is full of different tea flavors and food items. A cup of tea costs about \$2 while specialty drinks cost from \$3 - \$4.

Along with tea, the shop also serves coffee and specialty drinks such as smoothies, apple cider, and hot chocolate.

A drink of the day is elaborately decorated on the menu to stand out against all the other options.



EMILY HAMMOND PHOTO

Pleasant Street Tea, located off Main St. in Gloucester, offers a diverse menu and a variety of activities in a comfortable setting.

Salads, sandwiches, and paninis are offered as well as tea and other drinks. The food items each cost about \$6. You eat at either a wooden table or at the leather couch sitting area, the staff will deliver your food.

Long draped curtains cover a side wall giving the room a more homey feeling. Plenty of reading material is offered along with free wifi connection. Local artists display their artwork that covers the walls of the store.

Although Pleasant Street Tea has many great aspects to it, the portion size of the cups is very small for its price. Dunkin' Donuts and Starbucks offer a much larger portion size for a smaller price.

Despite this drawback, Pleasant Street Tea consists of great food, tea, and atmosphere and accomplishes the quaint tea shop feeling.

DramaFest incites students' excitement, competitive nature

By Hannah Dumont
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For the DramaFest competition on Feb. 28, students will present the parody "Who Brought the Cool Kids," an original script written and presented at DramaFest by students from the class of 2002.

The idea was brought to the attention of director Gloria Tanner by senior DJ Ball. Tanner then contacted the playwright, Elizabeth Gambino, a teacher at Hamilton Wenham High School as well as a graduate of Manchester High School and St. Anselm College. Gambino agreed to co-direct the 40-minute performance.

The four-part play features a cast of 22 high school students.

Tanner was encouraged by the eagerness of the students. "We have a lot of enthusiastic freshmen which is a real positive because it means the program can grow with



DJ BALL PHOTO

The cast of 'Who Brought the Cool Kids' have been rehearsing for the past month.

committed freshmen if they have a good experience," she said.

The show is a takeoff of educational films to teach kids how to be cool in high school. For example one portion of the play focuses on how to ask a girl out, Tanner said.

According to Tanner, although DramaFest is a competition, the purpose is to have fun and entertain the audience for 40 minutes.

"The competition portion is just a bonus," she said.

Senior Taylor Rogers is excited for the competition.

"It's a really fun day for everyone," she said. "I love it because it's a day where you can go perform, watch others perform and

meet tons of new people!"

Several years ago, the group, under the direction of Tanner, made it to semis which are held two weeks after the original competition. Only three schools advance.

This year Tanner hopes to break beyond semis. Although she is not focused primarily on the competi-

tion, Tanner said it does get frustrating not being able to get past semis.

Junior Sarah Goddard is confident the group will have success. "It's a very funny show and most judges find comedies most entertaining," she said. "I'm excited to see how we do because we have a great group of students and directors working on the show."

STARRING

- Female Narrator--Tavia Pomazon
- Male Narrator--Austin Walls
- Billy--Ian Martin
- Susie--Bobina Vander Laan
- Enid--Sophie Hagberg
- Davy--DJ Ball
- Tony--Jeff Kimball
- Marcia--Maura Driscoll
- Vlad--Tyler Helton
- Skip--Emmett Snyder
- Peg--Olivia Peterson
- Teacher--Morgan Kennedy

Self-taught senior plays five instruments

By Kyle Marsh
INDEPENDENT ASSISTANT EDITOR

Senior Peter Crofton has been playing the trombone since he was in fourth grade, but he has taught himself five different instruments since then.

"I have played guitar for six years, piano for one and a half years, and I started trombone in fourth grade," said Crofton, who also plays the drums and bass.

Crofton is open to all types of music. A few of his favorite bands include Phish, Rage Against the Machine, and the Mars Volta.

Crofton's musical inspiration is Trey Anastasio, the lead singer for Phish.

Musical talent runs in his family. His mother, eldest sister, and grandmother all have instrumental backgrounds.

He started playing trombone in the school band in the fourth grade. "I really liked playing, and I started to get into different types of music and teaching myself," he said.

Crofton plays guitar in a band named Diptera, which formed in 2004. Other band members include seniors Reilly Somach, Colin Rosso and Corey Roberts, a student at Wentworth Institute of Technology. The band has two albums which they recorded at Somach's house; the first is self-titled, and the second is "Grantham's Woodhouse."

"I think the CD 'Grantham's



DJ BALL PHOTO

Crofton plays in both the school band and the band 'Diptera.'

Crofton is open to all types of music. A few of his favorite bands include Phish, Rage Against the Machine, and the Mars Volta.

Woodhouse' came out really good, and it was very well put together. I am looking forward to the new CD they're coming out with," sophomore Cam D'Andrea said.

"I thought their CD was epic," sophomore Danny O'Neil said. "It

was very well written and produced."

The band practices about once every week.

"We try to involve ourselves in any competitions around here. We set up shows at cafés, restaurants, basically anywhere we can play," Crofton said.

FAST FACTS

- Plays guitar left handed.
- Names all his instruments.
- Has never taken a music lesson.

Boston Globe Scholastic Art Award Winners

Gold Key: Charlotte Cheshire, "Untitled"



CHARLOTTE CHESHIRE PHOTO

Silver Key

Honorable Mention

Jen Bishop
"Arboles"
Photo-Digital Art

Peter Gudonis
"Self Portrait"
Painting Art

Hannah Gurley
"Teapot"
Ceramics & Glass Art

Sylvan LaChance
"Self Portrait"
Painting Art

Rachel Jones
"Untitled"
Printmaking Art

Alison Nitkiewicz
"Untitled"
Photo-Digital Art

Erin Snyder
"Blue Steel"
Ceramics and Glass Art

Allison Pine
"Untitled"
Painting Art