

Review of *Something Rotten!*

By Sophia De Alto

Last weekend, the MHS drama club displayed their production of the witty, funny, and entertaining *Something Rotten!* The story follows aspiring play writers, Nick and Nigel Bottom (Danny Fernandez and Zack Pierson) in England in the late sixteenth century. The brothers are struggling to come up with their next storyline, especially when they have to compete with the William Shakesperare, played by Saad Parvez (who Nick also passionately averses). The musical contains many references to other musicals/plays, Shakespeare himself, and well... a dult references. Director Mr. Nahum describes how it was “an interesting combination between modern day parlay and Shakespearean speak. The show used a ton of references to Shakespeare and musical theater”.

After running into trouble with ideas, Nick Bottom goes to see Nostradamus (Alexandria Lisa), a fortune teller who is a bit wacky. There, she bursts out into song, singing “A Musical”. Nostradamus is very animated and expressive. Alex Lisa expressed that “never was anything ‘too much’ because that’s Nostradamus. I was never too much”. From there, Nick starts working on his musical with Nigel. However, Nigel is on the side secretly working with Shakespeare. Nigel is the younger brother to Nick and shows to have more of a talent for writing, as Shakespeare tries to steal his work, and eventually passes it off as Hamlet. He comes up with the premise of his original story while falling in love with the daughter named Portia (played by

Keira Sarkissian) of a very strict Puritan (Christopher Foreman). *Something Rotten!* was Zack’s first major role with Mahwah so far, and while playing Nigel, he says that “getting to work with the cast every day made it a really memorable experience”. On the other end, Danny’s character presented himself to be more wound up and paranoid about creating the best play that would finally take down Shakespeare. He gets advice from Nostradamus, but also his wife, Bea, who is played by Hope Monks. Having a history with theater, Danny discusses how “even when things got hard with the show with other responsibilities, everyone was always there for me to encourage me to keep going”. Contrary to history, Shakespeare was presented to be a figure that many girls from the town fangirled. It’s almost like they had Bieber-Fe-



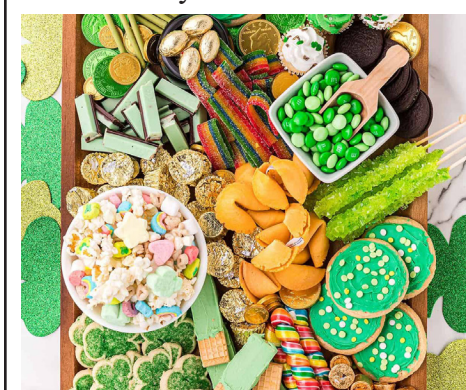
Something Rotten!

ver. In his introduction song, it was much like a concert and all the girls were frat boy flicking around him, which I definitely found humorous. While yes all the actors in the musical did amazing, it is also worthy to acknowledge the stage crew as well! Assistant Student Director, Julia Collucci had her first weekend running stage left by herself during the senior citizen show while Student Director Connor Yturregui was out. She details that the experience made her “really see how many moving parts there are throughout a whole show and how to put them together”. Congratulations and bravo to everyone who participated in the production this year. It was very witty and had everyone in the audience laughing. Definitely one to remember!

St Patrick’s Day Recipes/Traditions

By Abby O’Malley

Happy Saint Patrick’s Day, Thunderbirds! Saint Patrick’s Day is a worldwide celebration honoring the “Apostle of Ireland” and marking the traditional anniversary of his death in the 5th century. Through and through, Saint Patrick’s Day brings family and friends together with the addition of delicious foods, such as corned beef and cabbage, Irish soda bread, and festive desserts. This week the Tom-Tom asked some of our fellow Mahwah High School teachers their Saint Patrick’s Day traditions!



St. Patrick’s Day Snacks

Our first teacher is Ms. Lazar! Ms. Lazar is a visual arts teacher at Mahwah High School. When Ms. Lazar was in her teen years, one of her favorite traditions was walking in the famous New York City Saint Patrick’s Day Parade with her friend. The New York City Saint Patrick’s Day Parade is exceedingly crowded every year. Luckily for Ms. Lazar, her friend’s father worked

Continued on page 6

Spring Sports

Teams started practicing and preparing for their first games and competitions just last week.

Page 2

Olympics Hockey Recap: Controversy

There was some controversy after Team USA secured the gold medal.

Page 3

G.E.M.S. Night

Wednesday, February 25th was the second annual G.E.M.S. S.T.E.A.M. event hosted in the T3 building, and it was a complete success!

Page 3

New Jersey’s Phone Ban ‘26-27

Gov. Murphy signed a “bell-to-bell cell phone ban” into law, prohibiting non-academic devices during school hours.

Page 5

Spring Sports

By Valentina Moreno and Megan Sokolov

As the winter sports come to an end, the Thunderbirds are heading back outside as the spring sports season officially begins. Teams started practicing and preparing for their first games and competitions just last week.

One of the largest groups of athletes comes from the track and field team. Track gives opportunities to runners, jumpers, and throwers to compete in a variety of events. From long- distance, to sprinters, to field events such as shot put and long jump. Early practices have already begun, and the team is already training for their first dual meet against Westwood on March 31st.

The boys and girls lacrosse teams are also preparing for an exciting season of wins. Both teams

continue to work hard and develop new skills for the season. Practices have been focusing on stick skills,

and girls during the spring season. Unlike many sports, golf requires players to focus on precision, pa-

Baseball and softball teams have also taken their spots back on the field. Both teams have started practicing their pitching, hitting, and defensive drills to prepare them for the long season ahead.

Finally, the boys' tennis team is gearing up for competition. They've been out there practicing their serves, volleys, and footwork, while competing for spots in the singles and doubles matches. The sport demands both a player's mental focus and their physical abilities.

Spring sports give students a chance to compete, improve their skills, make new friendships, and represent their school. As the season begins, we wish all athletes the best of luck as they continue to put in the hard work to make this spring season a successful one.



Golf

passing drills, and game strategies to make sure players are prepared for their upcoming matches.

Golf is another sport that offers competition for both boys

tience, and consistency. Players started practicing earlier in March, in captain practices, to get ahead of the game once the season actually started.

The Oscars 2026

By Samantha Sonders

Ah, the Oscars-- the most glamorous movie event of the year. An event where famous people insist on their famousness; don't we all love it?

This year, Conan O'Brien hosted the show, and he wasn't afraid to drop sarcastic, scathing commentary on current events. He opened the ceremony by introducing himself as the "last human host of the academy awards"-- remark-

both the opera and ballet communities." I think his fears are very rational; Chalamet's gotten himself into

son (he really had quite the night). Best actor went to Michael B. Jordan for Sinners. Additionally, Ryan Coogler won best original screenplay and Autumn Durald Arkapaw won best cinematography-- both for their work on Sinners. Lastly, best actress was given to Jessie Buckley for Hamnet.

Some memorable moments from the night include Arkapaw being the first ever woman of color to win the oscar for best cinematog-

ries and lost in every single one. It must've been a very tough night for Chalamet, between the comments and the losses.



Conan O'Brien at the Oscars

ing that next year, it'll be solely hosted by "a Waymo in a tux." Moreover, he also went on the offensive against the recent ballet-opera controversy surrounding universally beloved and somewhat French guy Timothee Chalamet. O'Brien issued a solemn warning to the audience, stating that security would be high for the event, as he feared there "would be attacks from

some very hot thespian water.

Moving on, as per usual there was a diverse ensemble of winners, with both big, blockbuster pictures and smaller A24 films sharing places in the spotlight. The winner of best picture went to One Battle After Another; the movie also won best director and best adapted screenplay for Paul Thomas Ander-

raphy (I can't believe it's seriously taken this long)-- and Michael B. Jordan-- the former basketball player-- winning his first ever Oscar and cementing his place in Hollywood history by being only the sixth black actor to win in his category. Furthermore, one notable upset was Marty Supreme's complete lack of wins. It was nominated in 9 catego-



Timothee Chalamet at the Oscars



Ryan Coogler at the Oscars



Michael B. Jordan at the Oscars



The Oscars 2026

One Battle After Another

Olympics Hockey Recap: Controversy

By Grace Jeong

February 22nd, 2026, marks the first time in 20 years that the United States' Men's Olympic Hockey team has won a gold medal. Jack Hughes is widely known for his dramatic goal in Olympic history, which secured the gold medal for Team USA against Team Canada. However, there was some controversy after the game. After the men's team won gold, they went back to the locker room to celebrate, which included the FBI director Kash Patel. A video online quickly went viral that showed him posing with their medals and chugging beer. Another clip reveals that the team was on the phone with President Donald Trump, who praised the team for their performance and invited them to the White House, and the team

accepted the invitation without hesitation. At the White House, things got awkward when Trump said that he'd "have to" invite the women's team, or else "[he] probably would be impeached" for not recognizing the women's gold medal win

against Canada 3 days prior. Some of the men laughed at his comment, which sparked severe criticism online, since many of them are close to the women. Not only were they getting backlash from the disrespect towards women, but they also faced con-

troversy wearing MAGA gear during a White House visit. General Manager Bill Guerin of the 2026 U.S Olympic Men's Hockey Team responded to the controversy by saying that they "have unconditional love for our country". He also added that he is not concerned with political backlash and said that "people respond to everything nowadays". Additionally, President Donald J. Trump invited the women's team to the White House, but they declined due to scheduling conflicts. In the end, the men's team apologized and admitted that it was a mistake and they should have acted differently. Both teams respect and value each other as equal teammates and have a special bond in representing their patriotism for the USA.



US Men's Olympic Hockey Team 2026

G.E.M.S. Night

By Keira Sarkissian

Wednesday, February 25th was the second annual G.E.M.S. S.T.E.A.M. event hosted in the T3 building, and it was a complete success! Middle schoolers from Ramapo Ridge were invited to spend a fun night completing science experiments, making crafts, and winning prizes, all while getting to see the amazing things our T3 building has to offer. With around 75 students in attendance and about 20 incredible volunteers, this night was certainly one to remember. Each student received a custom "passport," of sorts, when they walked in the door. This was to ensure that they would attend every station before winning their prizes at the end of the night. There were five main stations, each representing a letter of the S.T.E.A.M. acronym, and the first was the handmade bouncy ball station to represent science! With help from our volunteers, students used corn starch, liquid glue, borax, and food coloring to create their very own bouncy balls that they got to walk away with at the end of the night. Borax reacts with the glue, causing the polymers to form an elastomer, long strands of molecules that form a rubbery solid if they stick together in a few places. Borax then hooks the glue's molecules together, allowing it to momentarily deform once it hits the ground and bounce back up. Next, they moved on to making binary code bracelets, representing technology. Using a variety of colored beads and a guide, students made bracelets that spelled out their names, "Mahwah," or any other word they desired. They learned how coding works with pieces of fashion, different colors representing 0s & 1s and turning into a final product that can be read.

The engineering station tested the students' creativity and problem-solving skills, using a single sheet of aluminum foil to create a boat to carry small duck figurines over a bin of water. They were folded, cut, and designed to maximize the amount of space they had, with some students fitting a few hundreds of ducks on their boats! This competitive energy was countered by the art station, where students got the opportunity to create their own sculptures out of air-dry clay. In the end, the room was left with a collection of palm trees, bows, mushrooms, and countless other unique designs. Finally, the technology station really showed off Mahwah's technological talents, with students making circuits to create their very own Harry Potter light-up wands! Using popsicle sticks, copper tape, and batteries, these wands were able to be turned off and on, and had a variety of fun colors. At the end of the night, students each received their very own 3D-printed puzzle cube, a thunderbird keychain to remember the event, and their own stone—or gem. With all these fun prizes and the memories of the experiments they did, we can assure that this night will continue to be a success for years to come.



G.E.M.S. Night

Academic Decathlon's Successful Season

By Keira Sarkissian

This year, Mahwah High School's Academic Decathlon team won medal after medal in this year's competition, based on the theme "The Roaring Twenties." Our team spent countless hours preparing for this tedious competition, in which we had to complete seven different tests in seven different categories: Art, Economics, Language & Literature, Mathematics, Music, Science, and Social Science. In addition, regular competitors had to write an essay, make two speeches, and complete an interview. After reading F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, studying electricity & magnetism, and listening to "The Charleston" and Louis Armstrong on repeat, our competitors went to the regional competition on January 28th, where we swept away the competition. Our competitors were divided into three different categories based on GPA levels, which are Honors (3.8-4.0), Scholastic (3.2-3.79) and Varsity (0.00-3.19), and competed against students in the same level, making our feats extra notable. Mahwah walked away with 16 medals, both with Alternates & Regulars. Honors alternate Aashini Desai won a gold medal in the art category. First time Varsity decathletes, Joshua Braxton, Clara Refaat, and Akshat Singh, all walked away with a multitude of medals between them. Joshua received a silver medal for his interview, earning a whopping 955 points out of

Continued on page 5

GEMS Collage



By Gloria Zhan

Governor Murphy recently signed a “bell-to-bell cell phone ban” into law, prohibiting the use of non-academic devices during school hours. The law requires “guidelines on student use of internet-enabled devices to be developed by the New Jersey Department of Education”. Taking effect starting from the 2026-2027 school year, it prohibits non-academic use of devices on school grounds and is applicable to all K-12 public schools. However, the legislation does allow schools to create and enforce their own policies (like phone storage and consequences) and allows for academic, health, and safety accommodations. For example, students are permitted to use devices during the day if there is a documented need (i.e. IEP or 504 plan accommodation), a student health plan (i.e. health monitoring), translation supports, or safety-related exceptions.

Why was this change passed?

In many districts, the use of phones has become a concern for student well being in schools. The primary concern is distraction, as

New Jersey’s Phone Ban ‘26-27

using phones during the law makes it harder for students to maintain engagement. Another concern is that social media/online pressure can follow students into school, increasing stress and peer comparison. According to WellSpringPre-



Phone Ban on the News

vention, “the idea is not that restricting devices solves every challenge, but that creating clearer boundaries during school hours may help reduce avoidable stressors and distractions, support healthier routines, and give students more space for learning and face-to-face connection”.

So what would this mean for students on the day-to-day basis?

Specific details will depend on how each district adapts to the change. Despite this, students can expect some changes such as new classroom routines, phone storages, and a clear boundary between academic vs non-academic uses of phones. Therefore, some teachers might allow the use of phones for academic purposes, but social-media, texting, gaming, etc will be prohibited.

Potential concerns and answers

With such a change, many students and parents have fears about emergencies and communication. For example, texting/communicating with parents is very important to coordinate drop-off and pick-up plans, new updates, and quick changes. Knowing that there is a quick way to update others about changes could be comforting. So how would students maintain this comfort without having access to their phones? It is predicted that schools will likely emphasize alternative communication methods, such as calling the main office, using school-based messaging systems, or designated times for when students can access their devices.

Academic Decathlon’s Successful Season (cont.)

1000. Akshat Singh had the highest Varsity score for Mahwah, with a gold medal in mathematics, a gold medal in science, a bronze medal for his essay, and received a bronze plaque for the third-highest score across all categories in his division, which is an incredible feat. Our Scholastic competitors, co-presidents Abigail Murphy and my-



Academic Decathlon

self, alongside Nitya Tandon, continued this successful streak. First-time regular Nitya Tandon received honorable mentions for both her speech and her essay. President Abigail Murphy had the highest Scholastic score for Mahwah, receiving a silver medal in art, an honorable mention in language & literature, and a gold medal in social science, so all of her flash cards really paid off! Personally, I received a gold medal in language & literature and another for my essay, an honorable mention in music, a bronze medal in speech, and am so grateful to have been selected as our

team’s MVP. Our final division, made up of Nistha Vyas, Davan Strommer, and Anya Patel, won their own fair share of awards, with Nistha receiving the highest Honors score for Mahwah and an honorable mention for her incredible essay. In the end, Mahwah earned fourth place in our region and 7th in the state, allowing us to move on to states.

At the states’ competition, Mahwah made a valiant effort, receiving seven awards in total—the most medals in our team’s 13 year history. Honors alternate Aashini Desai, once again, received a medal in the art category, this time earning a silver medal. Each Varsity decathlete walked away with a medal, with Clara Refaat winning an honorable mention for music, and Akshat & Josh walking away with a bronze and silver medal in math, respectively. Honors competitor Anya Patel received an honorable mention in economics, which was our only economics award this season, and a bronze medal for her speech. For the Scholastic category, I won a gold medal in music, a bronze medal in interview, and an honorable mention for language & literature. The highest scores in each division for Mahwah were won by Akshat Singh for Varsity, myself for Scholastic, and Nistha Vyas for Honors, with Abigail Murphy earning her position as our team’s MVP. Unfortunately, the team’s run for this season ends here, but this season has been the most successful yet!

Next year, the theme’s competition will

be “Journeys of Transformation: An Exploration of Travel and Transportation,” highlighting the science of animal behavior and migration, the history of human geography, and the novel The Remains of the Day by Kazuo Ishiguro. As sad as our seniors are that we have to miss it, we en-



Academic Decathlon at NJ Regional Comp

courage new members to join the club! Members of any GPA level are free to join, and we encourage people to focus on whatever they’re interested in! If you’re somebody that’s interested in one of the 2027 topics, wants something that looks great on your transcript, or simply wants to learn more, we really encourage you to reach out to Ms. Hartigan-Miller for more information or to ask anybody here about their experience. Congrats on a great season, and I can’t wait to see what next season brings for our decathletes!

St Patrick's Day Recipes/Traditions (cont.)

for Fordham, so they got into the parade smoothly. This infamous parade contains Saint Patrick's Day floats, holiday-themed music, Irish dancers, bagpipers, and marching bands. Thank you Ms. Lazar for sharing your Saint Patrick's Day tradition!

Mr. Dalessio was setting up leprechaun traps for his kids. Watching his kids feel the true excitement of searching for the leprechaun and believing in the "mischievous" leprechaun brought him true bliss. In addition, Mr. Daleesio's wife makes excellent Irish soda bread for herself and her family. Thank you, Mr. Dalessio, for telling us your Saint Patrick's Day traditions!

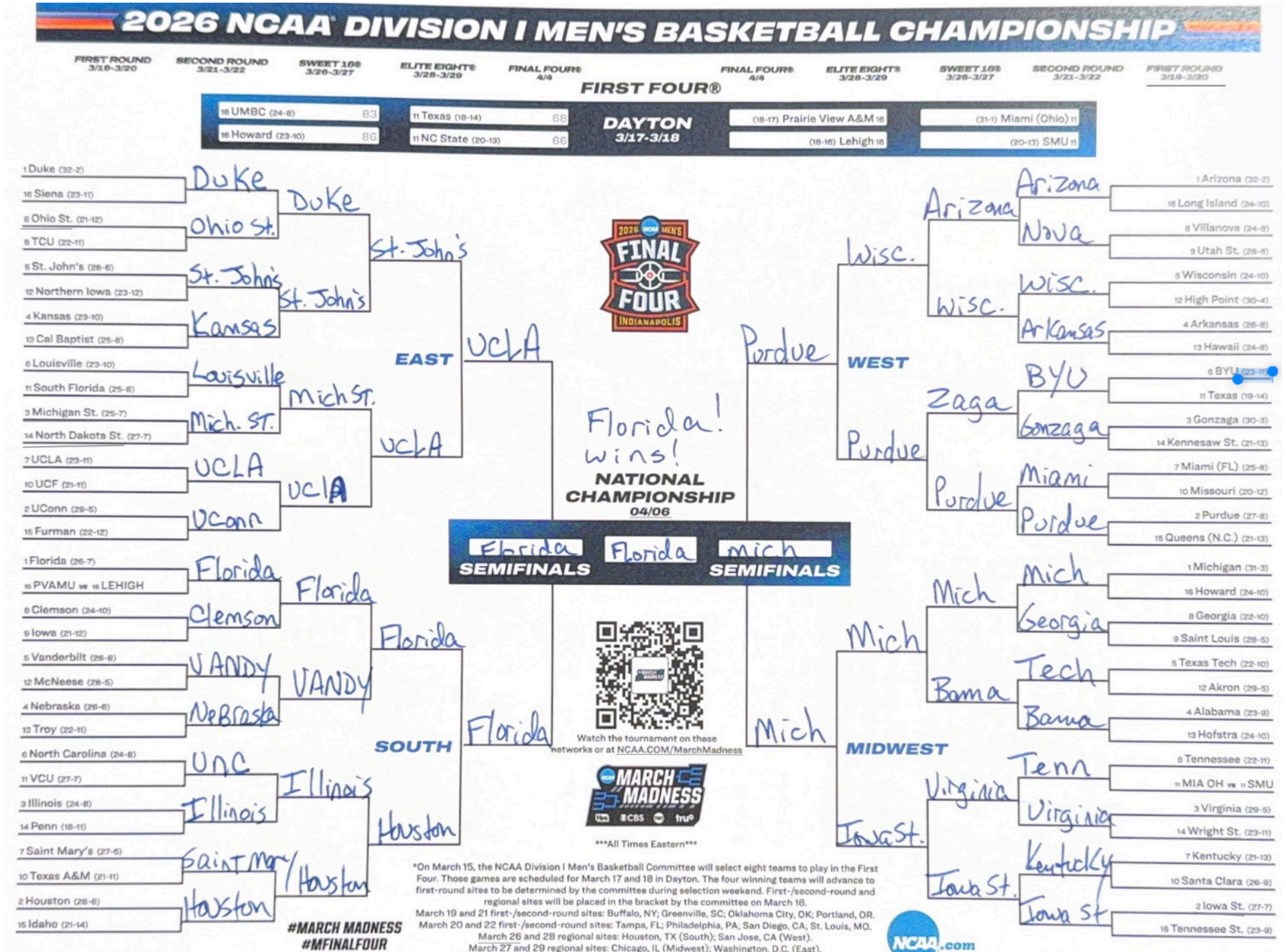
Patrick's Day traditions!

Our last teacher is Mr. Marck. Mr. Marck is a math teacher and a wrestling coach at Mahwah High School. One of Mr. Marck's favorite traditions for Saint Patrick's Day is going out to dinner with his family. During the holiday season, Mr. Marck feels that Saint Patrick's Day brings out joy amongst families. Along with family dinners, Mr. Marck enjoys his mom's homemade Irish soda bread all throughout the month of March. Mr. Marck believes that homemade Irish soda bread is better than store-bought. Thank you, Mr. Marck, for sharing your Saint Patrick's Day traditions!



Irish Soda Bread

Tom-Tom's March Madness Bracket



Mindful March

By Luna Taghlobi and Clara Refaat

Happy spring Thunderbirds! As we are in the beginning of a new season, our school strives to encourage positive vibes. The administration has teamed up to include Mindful March SEL activities available to everyone all throughout the month of March to foster a productive environment.

Spring is the season of relaxation and regenerating. Participating in yoga with Coach Yeck is the perfect way to achieve inner stability. As we enter a difficult time of the year with upcoming tests and assignments, engaging in yoga can help reduce stress hormones, increase focus, and improve memory, ensuring that you have a fresh mindset for the day. Yoga can also

lower blood pressure, improve circulation, and reduce inflammation. The best time to do yoga is

ing school or at home, partaking in yoga can be an excellent way to transform your mindset and body.

The music that is played every Monday during passing periods is another entertaining way that our school promotes mindfulness. Music has a strong impact on people’s moods and displays a positive environment inside the building. Hearing upbeat or relaxing music can help students feel less stressed and make the school day more pleasurable as they move between classes. Additionally, it gives everyone a little something to look forward to at the beginning of the week. Since everyone is going through the same thing, these uplifting moments can help students stay motivated, reset their minds, and make the halls feel like a community in the hallways.



Yoga

in the early morning to start the day peacefully, and maintain a healthy routine. Whether it’s dur-



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