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Spirit Week, pep rally fuels competition, enthusiasm

Community gathers outside for team recognition, games

By Carson Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students and teachers participated in Spirit Week during the last week of October, dressing up each day, and holding a pep rally to play games and compete against each other.

The dress-up days included Monday as country versus country club, Tuesday as decades day, Wednesday as pajama day, which was moved to the following Monday due to a storm, Thursday as Halloween costume day, and Friday as Hornets pride day.

On Halloween costume day, different departments participated in the annual teacher Halloween competition with group costumes.

The history department dressed up as characters from “Napoleon Dynamite”, the English department dressed up as dead poets,

and the guidance department dressed up as characters from “Charlie Brown”.

To count the number of students who participated, U block teachers tallied the number of students each day who followed the assigned dress-up day.

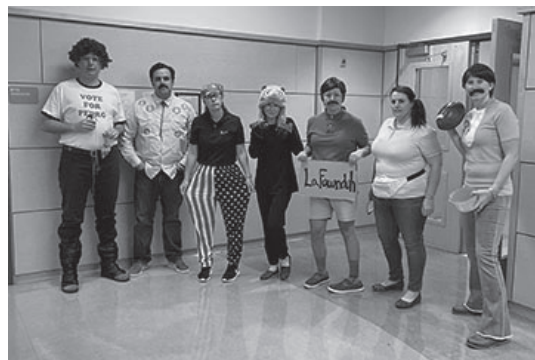
“The participation was good, but really the seniors really dominated the week in terms of dress up days, and they also were the winners at the pep rally as well,” Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

Puglisi said with COVID, Spirit Week was similar to previous years except that the pep rally this year had to be on the turf.

“I think for the most part, kids prefer it in the gym, so hopefully we will be able to go back to that next year,” she said.

New Student Council adviser and learning commons aide Barrett Alston said he helped plan Spirit Week and the pep rally.

“This was my first time doing it, and I was a little stressed that it wasn’t going to go well, but ultimately I got a lot of help from the seniors who had done it as sopho-



COURTESY OF MICHELLE MAGAÑA



COURTESY OF CAROLINE WILLWERTH



COURTESY OF ALEX BRIGGS



COURTESY OF JULIANA SAUNDERS

Students dressed up for different Spirit Week prompts including country versus country club, decades day, pajama day, and Halloween costume day, which the teachers also participated in.

mores,” he said.

Senior class adviser Erin Fortunato said the seniors brain-

stormed some of the days with the Student Council. They proposed them to Alston, and he was able

to talk to several students to get their input.

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SCAR plans on implementing impactful changes to curriculum

By Phileine de Widt
INDEPENDENT STAFF

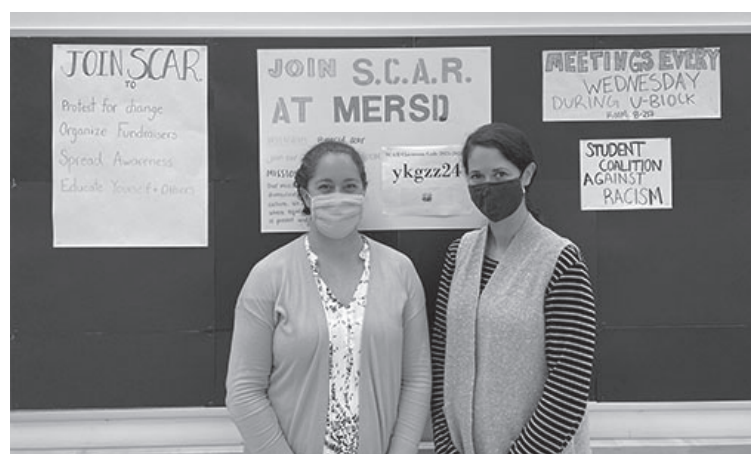
While adapting to in-person meetings with new advisers, the Student Coalition Against Racism has set new goals for the school year.

According to the MERHS Students Activity Booklet, the coalition prioritizes the development of a safe and accepting school community for all students. It hopes to spread awareness and advocate for those who feel as though they cannot speak up. English teachers Allison Krause and Elizabeth Edgerton were recently appointed the new advisers, following the departure of former adviser Craig Macarelli.

Students asked Krause and Edgerton to fill the newly opened position and they eagerly accepted, Edgerton said.

“I was really happy to be asked. I think it is a great opportunity,” she said.

Though their role is to supervise the students, Edgerton said



PHILEINE DE WIDT PHOTO

English teachers Elizabeth Edgerton and Allison Krause have been appointed as SCAR advisers to help plan future activities.

that the club community shares a common goal of allowing SCAR to be more student-centered.

“I really like that it is student-led and think that because it comes from the students, it can actually affect more change than if it just came from teachers,” she said.

So far, the club has met four times, and students primarily run the meetings, Krause said.

Sophomore Caroline Doucette said “[the club] usually meets in Mrs. Krause’s room, and we’ll discuss different current events or possible organizations that we could donate to.”

Edgerton said that during this upcoming year, the coalition

hopes to take part in more practical events.

SCAR members said some future activities could be fundraisers, protests, and making impactful changes to the community.

Sophomore Lucy O’Flynn said that with the meetings being in person rather than on Zoom like last year, the coalition will be more active.

The group has already considered possible changes to the school curriculum, Krause said.

“We want to look at what has already been done to diversify the school content and ways that we can build on that,” she said.

Amid the new SCAR goals, SCAR UPDATE, page 2

Online dashboard shows number of COVID cases throughout district

New spreadsheet updated weekly by school nurses

By Caroline MacKinnon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Updated every Wednesday, the new COVID Positive District Dashboard is now accessible through the Manchester Essex Regional School district official website.

Superintendent Pam Beaudoin said that the MERSD COVID Positive Dashboard is a new and more efficient substitute for sending out form letters when there is a positive case. “Instead of sending the letter, we are posting them

to a spreadsheet that lives online, so people can look at it any point in time and see what our total number [of cases] have been for the year,” she said.

Beaudoin said even though the previous process for informing families about positive cases had a lag time with many different

steps, there are circumstances where it will be used again.

“If one of the teams, for example,...had a little outbreak, we would send something home in writing to families explaining it, or if one particular class had an outbreak, we would send something written...it would be like last year,” she said.

School Nurse Cyndi Aldrich said that the COVID Positive District Dashboard can be comforting for families to have access to all the time.

“It can ease people’s minds and show them that we are doing pretty well with the [number of cases],” she said.

Aldrich said that the numbers for positive cases as seen in the dashboard are low because the district school community is following all precautions.

“It’s our mitigation things. We’re all masking, staying three feet away, so we are doing what we

COVID DASHBOARD, page 2

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ADL reimplemented after interrupted by pandemic

Organization allows students to fight hate, promote equality

By Mechi O’Neil
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After its prolonged break due to COVID, the Anti-Defamation League has returned. ADL, an international organization based in the U.S., has been reinstated after a year and a half and is pursuing its mission of fighting hate and securing justice. ADL was only in their second year before it got shut down due to COVID. They are hoping to get back on track as soon as possible, social studies depart-

ment chair and co-adviser Lauren DuBois said. “I really just want to get the program going again and reestablish ourselves and the group,” she said. Social studies teacher Jessica Tran said ADL is going to meet once or twice per week during U block. “We want it to feel as normal as when we originally started the program, just with the exception of masks,” she said. DuBois said she is still unsure if they will be able to attend the in-person events because of COVID. Despite the uncertainty, DuBois said ADL is still planning on attending sessions, where they will learn more about

‘I think there’s a lot that we can all learn, including how to have challenging conversations, and... that’s best done when it’s coming from the students themselves.’

-JESSICA TRAN



MECHI O’NEIL PHOTO

Co-advisers of ADL Jessica Tran and Lauren DuBois meet with senior Charlie Weld and junior Juliana Saunders, both members of ADL, to discuss the reestablishment of the organization.

the organization. “We will have two training days with leaders from the ADL and another full-day training with just ourselves in preparation for going into the ninth-grade classes,” DuBois said. Senior Charlie Weld acknowledges the fact that many tragic incidents occurred during the pandemic, such as the murders

of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. She hopes that these events give students the drive to fight racism, prejudice, and inequality everywhere, she said. Tran said she agrees with the mission of the program to promote understanding in the school community. “I think there’s a lot that we

Tennis coach takes Student Council adviser position, learning commons aide

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Formerly known as the junior varsity tennis coach, Barrett Alston has become the Student Council adviser and learning commons aide. Before this year, Alston was a substitute teacher at the elementary school for one year and a tennis coach at the Waltham Athletics Club for 16 years, he said. Alston attended Shepherd Hill Regional High School in Dudley, Massachusetts. He then attended Bentley University for his undergraduate degree in marketing and then went to Nichols College where he received his masters degree in business administration, he said. During his free time, Alston enjoys golfing, reading, and spending time with his dogs, he said.



EMMA KETCHUM PHOTO

Barrett Alston helps students in his roles as a learning commons aide, Student Council adviser, and coach.

As learning commons aide, Alston said he fulfills the basic duties of a librarian, serves as a resource for the students, and ensures that the library is a positive and safe space for students to

work. Alston has enjoyed getting involved with the school through his new position as Student Council adviser. He said planning Spirit Week with the class officers has been his favorite part of being at the school so far, and he was impressed by how creative the students were throughout the whole process. “The kids, especially the seniors, love it, and it’s impossible to not feel that infectious energy,” he said. Senior class treasurer Theo Brown enjoyed planning Spirit Week with Alston and said he likes playing chess with him in the learning commons. Brown said, “He will play anyone who asks in chess.” As for future Student Council plans, Alston is sending out information soon about a toy drive for the holiday season, he said. “It’s been a tough couple years for a lot of people, so I’m hopeful that this year in particular we can really make a difference for the families in need,” he said. Alston said he is greatly looking forward to the upcoming tennis season this spring, as he has gotten to know many of the players better through his involvement with Student Council and while being in the learning commons. Senior class vice president Aidan Cunningham had Alston as his tennis coach last year and has worked with him in Student Council. Cunningham said in previous tennis seasons the school team didn’t have a second coach, so when Alston came they were able to have more one-on-one time for advice. He said Alston is very knowledgeable about tennis and helped them improve.

“He was really good at teaching us what we needed to know,” Cunningham said.

FUN FACTS

- **Favorite novel:** “The Sun Also Rises”
- **Aspires to** basic chess competency
- **Enjoys a red Skittles and black coffee diet**
- **Would like to be lost in Paris**
- **Is brought low by “Puff the Magic Dragon”**

CONTINUATIONS SPIRIT WEEK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“He was able to figure out what people liked and didn’t like about the proposal and what would be most popular for students,” she said. Alston said he also thought the participation was high for these themed days, especially among the seniors. “Although everybody wished the pep rally was in the gym, I thought it was pretty spirited and awesome outside, and we made the best of it,” he said. Senior Gelsey McCue said with the pep rally outside, there were a few things they had to adjust to. “The weather wasn’t particularly great, and also the sound system was difficult because of the wind,” she said. Even with these limitations, the

pep rally allowed students to take a break and have a little fun, McCue said. “I liked being able to have a pep rally this year because last year we weren’t able to have one. Also, being able to dress up for each day was really enjoyable because most of the senior class participated, so it was fun to see everyone come together to win against the other classes,” she said. **SCAR UPDATE**
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 there are also many eager freshmen that joined the group this year, O’Flynn said. “I think it is going to be a lot more successful this year since we have many interested participants,” she said. Krause said SCAR is an important club in today’s world. “Especially in light of events

that have happened in our country in the past few years, I think students really feel the need to create a change,” she said. **COVID DASHBOARD**
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1 are supposed to be doing,” she said. Aldrich said she attributes the number of low cases to the high vaccination rate among the district. “Vaccinations are number one [in prevention]; that’s why there is a drive to get as many people vaccinated,” she said. Junior Juliana Saunders said she thinks the COVID Positive District Dashboard is very helpful to everyone within the community. “I think [it] will benefit all kinds of people. I think it’s a really cool idea. It will probably ease some stress,” she said.

SPIRIT WEEK



COURTESY OF ALEX BRIGGS



COURTESY OF JULIANA SAUNDERS

Students participate in one of the Spirit Week dress-up days, country versus country club, by wearing formal attire.

New Beach Cleanup Club strives to improve environment, make difference

Two juniors create club, organize cleanups, on weekends

By Ella Chafe
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Juniors Caroline MacKinnon and Chase Dickson established the Beach Cleanup Club this fall. The club plans to meet two or three times a month on the weekends. Students also earn community service hours, MacKinnon said. MacKinnon said she feels passionate about making a differ-

ence and was impressed with the 20 students who attended the first meeting. She said she originally created the club because she truly cares about the environment and wants to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to the community. “It brings the community together to improve something that’s important to all of us,” she said. MacKinnon said the cleanups show responsibility and said she

enjoyed seeing students care about the beach. The students plan to improve other common areas in the town and eventually clean the trash off beaches in

‘We made a lot of progress, and it felt like we made a big job smaller.’

- GRACE GERHARDT



CAROLINE MACKINNON PHOTOS

Juniors Paige Garlitz, Michael DeOreo, Mark Pollock, Wyatt Riehl, Ben Hurd, and Amy Vytopilova picked up trash during a Saturday morning cleanup on Singing Beach from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. There were nine trash bags collected between all of the club members by the end of the cleanup.

nearby towns. The club’s goal for the first cleanup was to eliminate all of the litter in the bushes, which is where they found the most trash, MacKinnon said. Biology and environmental science teacher Keith Hartan took the role as the club’s adviser and provides trash bags and gloves for the students. Hartan said the club is a great way for students to participate in the community. He said he appreciates their desire to clean the area at no expense. “It gives them a sense of agency, and I respect how they are able to see a problem and decide to take action,” he said. Junior Grace Gerhardt, who attended the first cleanup, said she

is appreciative of the club, as she greatly cares about the environment. At the first meeting, the students successfully filled nine trash bags and are looking forward to more members joining the project, Gerhardt said. “We made a lot of progress, and it felt like we made a big job smaller,” she said.

School plans to update outdated technology with interactive whiteboards

Teachers sample new panels for efficiency, student engagement levels

By Jordie Cornfield
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Certain classrooms have gained state-of-the-art interactive white boards for week-long trials as the school considers replacing projectors with a more modern successor. The pilot panels from Touchview and Cleartouch have been circulating between classrooms as teachers test out their abilities.

“When it’s all said and done, we’ll get the chance to try out five or six boards,” said Matt Tangney, digital learning specialist. Tangney said current classroom technology is not compatible with the modern learning environment and referred to the connector boxes in the front of the classroom as “black boxes of doom” since they are difficult to use and take a while to start up, often having sound issues. The new boards, on the other

hand, have no tangled HDMI cables and confusing knobs; instead, they are equipped with a built-in wireless speaker, Tangney said. History teacher Jennifer Coleman used the Touchview panel

‘I think [the boards] are the future of where technology is going to go.’

- ELIZABETH EDGERTON



JORDIE CORNFELD PHOTO

Elizabeth Edgerton uses the Cleartouch interactive white board to create new lesson activities about narrative essays.

in her classroom and found the speaker to be very helpful. “I liked that [the board] had sound built into it because sometimes when we try to show a video, we waste time trying to figure out how to make the sound work. I didn’t have to fiddle around with 12 million buttons,” Coleman said. English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton used both boards but preferred the Cleartouch to the Touchview. “The board has the capability to connect to a laptop, but everything is within the board itself,” Edgerton said. Edgerton said the touchscreen feature has been useful as it al-

lows students to get up and interact with the board. “The students really like it. I had four students up at the board working together, really excited. One kid told me that he learned four things he didn’t know by doing the review on the board,” Edgerton said. “I think [the boards] are the future of where technology is going to go,” she said. Student engagement is a key factor in the school’s decision to incorporate panels into the classroom setting, Tangney said. The district is in the process of evaluating the pros and cons of panels versus projectors but has not yet decided what the best solution for replacement would be, Tangney said. For example, the panels are more expensive, but they last twice as long as the projectors and require less maintenance along the way, he said.

Science League, STEM club combine forces

By Finn O’Hara
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Leaders of the Science Team plan to help students find their passion in STEM after making adjustments to the club. In past years, Science League and STEM Club lacked organization with no real schedule to structure everything around, said senior Lukas Shan, a co-president of the Science Team. He said this year is different as they have combined both clubs and developed a rotating schedule that has a different activity for each week.

The first two weeks of the schedule consist of practice for a competition, followed by the competition. On the third week, a guest speaker comes in to present to all of the students, he said. Shan said their new plan will help ensure that the club is productive for everyone. “This schedule will allow us to stay organized so that we can fulfill the club’s goals,” he said. Kristin Umile, science department chair and club adviser, said they want to increase the club’s participation and help members explore their interests within the

‘My favorite thing has been seeing how committed the students are to learning.’

- KRISTEN UMILE

STEM field. She said one of the ways that students figure out what they are interested in is by trying out different topics in the competitions. “Students are able to select a category to compete in whether it be life science, building, or chemistry and physics,” Umile said. In addition to the competitions, students can use the guest speakers to find out what intrigues them, said junior Charlotte Lawrence, co-president of the Science Team. “We try to find guest speakers from different fields in order to expose the students to as much of a variety as possible,” she said. In reference to the first guest speaker of the year, Shan said the experience was beneficial to all of the students. Lucy Lai, a professor at Har-



FINN O’HARA PHOTO

Sophomores Nate Gardner and Diego Sanson collaborate together during U Block on a Google form about animal anatomy for the Science Team. The group meets Tuesdays after school.

vard presented about her profession and then followed by speaking about science in general and answering questions, he said. A new addition to the club outside of the schedule is an internship program that can give students authentic experiences and help them find their passion, Umile said. “The students who have partic-

ipated in STEM internships in the past are creating a spreadsheet for the other kids to find opportunities available to them,” she said. Umile said that the new changes to the Science Team have been great so far. “My favorite thing has been seeing how committed the students are to learning each Tuesday when we meet,” she said.

Administrative assistant represents school community

Staff values Mary Lumsden’s knowledge, kindness

By Hadley Levendusky
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Administrative assistant Mary Lumsden is seen as the heart and soul of the school by many students and teachers.

Lumsden is currently in her 24th year working at the school where she originally started as a part time worker in the mornings, she said.

“My two children were in school. They always wanted me to be home when they got home and to be able to go to their after school activities, since they were both athletes,” she said.

Lumsden’s daughter Rebecca played field hockey and softball for the high school. Lumsden’s son Ryan attended St. John’s Prep, in Danvers.

Lumsden grew up in the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania and attended school at Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia, Lumsden said.

She later met her husband, David Lumsden, moved to Massachusetts, and has lived in Lexington, Bedford, and Manchester, she said.

Lumsden said now that her children are much older, she enjoys spending time with them and her two grandchildren: Penelope, 3 years old, and Benjamin, 3 months old.

Working under three different principals, Lumsden said it takes



Administrative assistant Mary Lumsden poses with her husband David, daughter Rebecca, daughter-in-law Tamara, granddaughter Penelope, and son Ryan. Grandson Benjamin not pictured.

a little while to adjust, but once she gets to talk to them it’s fun.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said when she was hired as principal eight years ago, she was thrilled with Lumsden because of her knowledge base and skill level.

“She really provided me with some strong insight and understanding of the school community,” Puglisi said.

Lumsden said her favorite part and reason for working here is the kids.

“She does so much for students and staff. She is really a fixture in this main office, and we would be really lost without her,” Puglisi said.

Lauren DuBois, social studies

head, has been working at the school with Lumsden for 18 years.

“She is the most helpful, the most thoughtful person. She is always ready to help and she works incredibly hard,” Dubois said.

Head of the foreign language department, Michelle Magaña, was hired around the same time as Lumsden.

“In her office, she is always very helpful and willing to help,” Magaña said.

“During the summer because I’m not in school, she will do some orders [for classes] for me because she is here and has the paperwork for me,” she said.

Magaña said Lumsden is very

caring and thoughtful whenever Magaña enters the main office.

“Whenever I go in [the main office], she is always asking about me and how my family is doing. She really likes to check in, which is really sweet and I appreciate it,” she said.

Magaña said it is nice to have a relationship where Lumsden is not just a coworker but a friend.

Along with caring about the staff’s family, Lumsden also often exchanges recipes with Puglisi and other staff members, Puglisi said.

During the pandemic, when math teacher Richard Brown and she would exchange recipes, Lumsden said she found one of her favorite chicken recipes that she still cooks today.

Along with running the main office, Lumsden also runs the Students Activities Fund.



HADLEY LEVENDUSKY PHOTO
Mary Lumsden is working her 24th year at the school.

The Student Activities Fund is the bank account for all the different clubs and classes in the school. She manages all of the deposits and checks for the fund, Puglisi said.

“I don’t think that everyone really understands the extent of the amount of work she does for the school. In terms of not just handling attendance but also the Student Activities Fund,” she said.

There are a lot of aspects to her position that need to be happening efficiently, Puglisi said.

“[Without her] the school would be a mess,” Puglisi said.

FUN FACTS

- Enjoys sewing and knitting
- Loves to go on walks
- Enjoys spending time with family

Longtime athletic administrative assistant shows commitment to school community through efforts, dedication

By Ema O’Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After working in the school district for 20 years, athletic administrative assistant Margaret “Muffin” Driscoll continues to demonstrate her passion for school sports.

Driscoll said she grew up and went to school in Manchester-by-the-Sea.

After high school, she got her paralegal certification and worked in that profession for about two years.

Later, she worked as a systems analyst for a bank, Driscoll said. After having children, she stopped working until she was hired by the elementary school office.

At that time, both of her children were students at the school. Her son, Stephen Driscoll, was in 5th grade, and her daughter, Maura Driscoll, was in 2nd grade.

“It worked out great because I had the same schedule as them,” Driscoll said.

After working in the elementary school office for about three years, she was offered to work in the middle school office, which then included 7th and 8th grade, she said.

Driscoll said she worked there until 2009 when the new middle and high school building was constructed. She then managed the new middle school office.

‘When I retire, I’m going to walk away with a good feeling about the work I’ve done here. ’

- MUFFIN DRISCOLL

Now, Driscoll works in the high school athletic office full time as the athletic administrative assistant.

Her role includes scheduling games, practices, buses, hiring sports officials, collecting physicals, and anything athletic-related that needs to be done, Driscoll said.

“She has really been the glue that has held the athletic department together,” Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

Puglisi said over the years,

the athletic department has seen many people come and go; however, Driscoll has stayed consistent in her role at the school.

“I really admire her knowledge, attention to detail, and her pride in Manchester athletics. She keeps things running smoothly,” Puglisi said.

Puglisi also shared her favorite memory of Driscoll. She recalled that one year, the referees of a football game never showed up.

Puglisi said that Driscoll immediately took action and was able to find a set of referees in a short amount of time.

The game only ended up being delayed, and the students were able to play.

“I thought that really showed how committed she is to this school,” Puglisi said.

Over the years, students have also recognized their appreciation for Driscoll’s commitment.

Former high school student, Ciara Lyne, said that Driscoll is still a good family friend of hers.

Lyne, who played field hockey all four years of high school, said she could always rely on Driscoll for anything related to her sport.

“Whenever I went to her, she would always ask me how my



COURTESY OF MUFFIN DRISCOLL
Athletic administrative assistant Muffin Driscoll, poses with her husband Steve Driscoll at Fenway Park. Driscoll has worked in the school district for 20 years. She also served on the Manchester Board of Selectmen for nine years.

family was doing. You can tell she really cares about the students at the school,” Lyne said.

Senior Vaughn O’Leary similarly said that Driscoll’s passion for the school’s sports is evident through her hard work.

“I always can count on her organization and determination to make my baseball season possible and enjoyable,” O’Leary said.

Outside of her work, Driscoll said she enjoys hobbies such as cooking, hiking, watching musical theater, and cheering on Boston sports teams.

“In my spare time I volunteer on the Action, Inc and Hooper Fund board of directors and am also on the Manchester Parks & Rec Committee and the Affordable Housing Trust,” Driscoll

added.

She said she also was a member of the town of Manchester’s Board of Selectmen for nine years. Driscoll and the other members were responsible for setting policy, developing the operating budget for the town, negotiating labor contracts, and hiring department heads.

“She shows devotion and commitment in almost everything she does,” Puglisi said.

Driscoll said that the favorite part of her job is being able to watch students play sports. She loves being able to have the opportunity to work in and support a great community, she said.

“When I retire, I’m going to walk away with a good feeling about the work I’ve done here,” Driscoll said.

Open Campus

Should juniors and seniors be allowed to leave school during the day?

Pro

Hadley Levendusky

Juniors and seniors should be allowed to leave the school grounds during the U block, study halls, and lunch to take a break or grab food.

For many students, being in school is very stressful, including the physical environment of the school building.

“Sometimes we just need a break [from being in school],” junior Kate O’Neill said.

Longer school days can result in attention deficit and fatigue, Kristine Tucker wrote in the newsletter The Seattle Pi.

If a student needs personal space or to be alone, there are not many places in the school for them to go.

Having the ability to leave the school grounds can be very helpful for students who deal with anxiety or emotional distress.

Additionally, many students have difficulty being in the same setting for too long. Leaving campus to take a walk can help many students relax and refocus before returning to school.

A study from Mind magazine found that time in nature increases people’s ability to pay attention.

The peace of being in nature also allows students to rest their overstimulated minds, allowing them to refocus before coming back to school.

While parents, teachers, and the school may think it is a liability to have students coming and leaving from campus during the day, open campus gives upperclassmen the ability to take responsibility and learn how to become independent.

In order for the school to maintain the safety of students, this privilege can only be allowed if a parent grants permission for their child to leave during school hours.

If a student leaves school during a time when they have a break, then it is their responsibility to come back in time for class.

Many upperclassmen believe that they are mature enough to keep track of themselves. Juniors and seniors are around the upward age of 16 and 17 or are already 18, which means they are legally adults.

Allowing the upperclassmen an open campus helps prepare them for college and the real world.

Students need to know time management to make it to classes on time and keep up with their school work, which can help them in the future in college and at jobs.

Open campus would provide them with this much needed learning opportunity.

Con

Jordie Cornfield

Juniors and seniors should not have the privilege of open campus, as it creates danger during the school day.

Many students with cars enjoy leaving the school and returning during the school day as they please.

At the moment, this is prohibited, but students will leave campus regardless of the rules, although it is the school’s responsibility to know where students are at all times.

“As soon as students walk in the door at 7:45, I become a parent to 451 kids. I take you all under my responsibility until 2:15,” Dan Richards, dean of students said.

The school cannot assure that every student who leaves signs out at the front desk. The school needs to be able to account for all student whereabouts, Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

“It’s a huge liability to the school if students were to leave during the day without proper dismissal by their parents. We have a responsibility to families to make sure that students are staying safe,” she said.

Richards, who is a veteran to the education field, came from a school that had an open campus for grades 9-12 during free blocks and lunch. Richards said he likes the freedom that students have when it comes to an open campus, but he says the safety of students comes first.

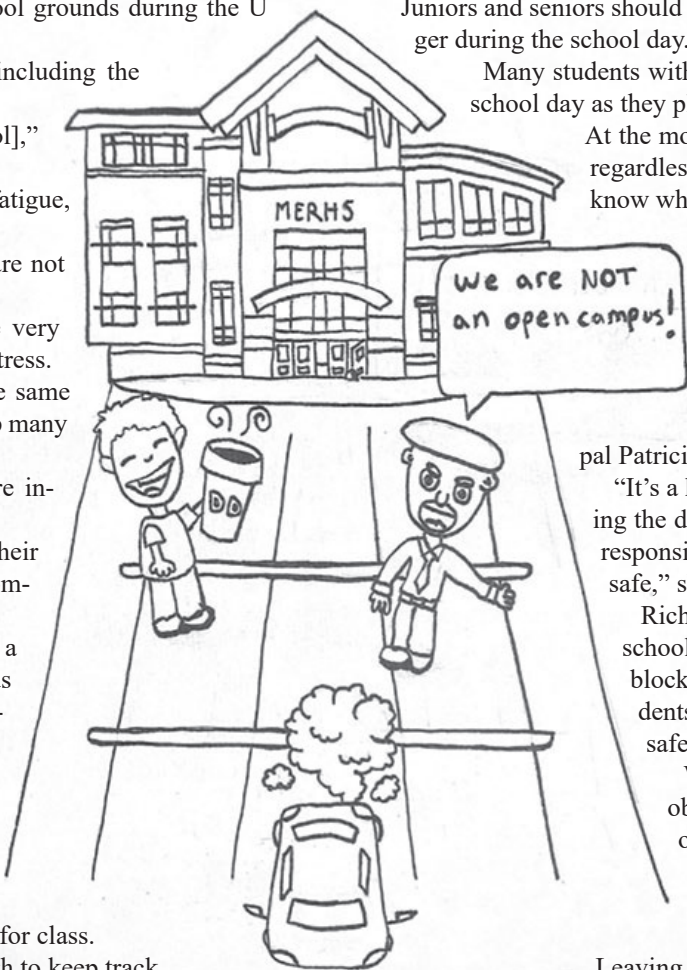
While the hope is that students with drivers licenses will obey the rules of the road, an open campus raises the risk of a student getting into a car accident.

“There’s always the concern of students rushing to get back on time and not driving as safely as they should be,” Patricia Puglisi said.

Leaving campus during free blocks seems like a good solution for students with anxiety and other mental health conditions. However, this may cause students to refrain from socializing with their peers and instead isolate themselves at home, which is proven to be detrimental for students’ mental health.

A better solution would be to create a space in the school for students to relax and unwind with their friends rather than leave campus altogether.

This space would also allow underclassmen a chance to destress from their workload as well and help destigmatize mental illness.



CAROLINE MACKINNON ILLUSTRATION

Employers should pay new employees for training

Workplaces escape giving compensation to trainees

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New employees need training days to learn how to correctly do their job, but some employers neglect to pay them for these hours of work.

Although new workers are not as skilled as others may be, they still deserve to be paid for their training days.

Alison Green writes in an article from The Business Journals called “Managing: Do we have to pay new hires for training time?,” “Not paying your new hires during their training is nearly always illegal,” but there are still multiple ways that employers can get away with not paying their new workers for their work during training shifts.

An article written by Steffans Legal Team called “The Ins and

Outs of Training Time Per the Massachusetts Wage Act and Fair Labor Standards Act,” outlines certain factors that distinguish the difference between whether someone is considered an “employee” or just a “trainee” that will not get paid.

If the new employee is working under close supervision instead of taking a position, if the person is not necessarily entitled to their position at the end of their training, or if the employee is aware that they are not getting paid for their training, then the employer is not obligated to pay them for training days.

In some cases, employers will still not pay the new worker even

if one of these factors does not apply.

This is more apparent among teenagers because they are less likely to be aware of these rules, therefore allowing the employer to take advantage of the situation.

In an article called, “The Pros and Cons of Teens Getting jobs,” Tracy Morgan said, “The other concern about teens working is the fact that they are often naive and inexperienced, which leaves them open to being unfairly treated and exploited by employers.”

An example of this would be an employer using part of a shift to explain the tasks of the job and to supervise the new worker but then immediately expecting them to fulfill the same responsibilities as an experienced employee without supervision and not paying them

If teenagers are properly educated on their rights as an employee, they are less likely to be taken advantage of in the workplace and more likely to stand up for themselves when they realize they are being treated unfairly.



CARSON KOMISHANE PHOTO

Junior Juliana Saunders works at Captain Dusty’s Ice Cream, where they pay employees minimum wage during the training days they require before becoming an official employee.

at the end of the day.

If teenagers are properly educated on their rights as an employee, they are less likely to be

taken advantage of in the workplace and more likely to stand up for themselves when they realize they are being treated unfairly.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Sick students worried over missing work come to school

Students are coming to school sick due to stress, leading to a large health risk within the school community, but this issue is avoidable by both students and teachers.

Despite the ongoing pandemic and the beginning of flu season coming up, students are still in school when sick due to fears of missing assignments and lessons.

“I came to school one time even while I felt like someone was going at my throat with sandpaper because I had so much anxiety about falling behind in class,” junior Olivia Royle said.

Royle is not alone in this feeling, as a poll conducted by AP Government and Politics junior Jordan Cornfield and seniors Elorie Willwerth and Madison Curran found that around 50% of students come to school even when they are sick.

However, this problem is solvable in a number of ways by both students and teachers. The best way to ensure students don’t fall behind when they’re out is communication.

“If a student is sick, we have a number of protocols to help tran-



WYETH TAKAYESU PHOTO

Junior Olivia Royle sketches an art project at home while she works to catch up in her other classes.

sition students back into school, but student concerns can be managed by a conversation with their teacher and explaining why they might need something different,” Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

There are methods available for students to contact teachers about making up tests and assignments. For example, Google Classroom allows for digital

classwork completion, and email allows students to contact their teachers while absent, but not all teachers use these applications to their full ability.

In the student sickness poll by Cornfield, Willwerth and Curran, around 60% of students said teachers could be more helpful when the students need to make up work.

Some teachers post minimal material online, such as only important assignments, but they don’t post daily assignments or classwork. Other teachers do not use Google Classroom at all, leaving students without any material to work with online while absent.

Teachers are not entirely responsible for students making

up work. Students should reach out to teachers if they are able to complete work at home but don’t have access to the assignments. Teachers are swamped with multiple emails each hour, so expecting perfection is not fair.

Students also need to realize that being sick is natural and that missing work is normal. To stop the spread of illness, students and teachers need to work together so students feel safe staying home sick and teachers stay safe while teaching a healthy class.

‘I came to school one time even while I felt like someone was going at my throat with sandpaper because I had so much anxiety about falling behind in class.’

-OLIVIA ROYLE

Incidents of littering raise questions of school respect

Student’s trash outside could lead to liability issues, punishment

By Mechi O’Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With many students eating lunch outside, there has been an increase in trash being left on the turf field and other eating areas.

Students enjoy the privilege to be able to eat outside, but this liberty is being poorly misused when it comes to students not picking up after themselves.

Dean of Students Dan Richards has acknowledged this problem and said everyone has dignity in this

school, but leaving trash sets a tone suggesting otherwise.

“The minority that is leaving this trash needs to be reminded

‘The minority that is leaving this trash needs to be reminded that we are obligated to take care of our campus and have more pride in it.’

-DAN RICHARDS

that we are obligated to take care of our campus and have more pride in it,” Richards said.

Guidance counselor David Conwell said it is often the custodial staff who has to collect the trash from the field, even though this is

the students’ responsibility.

Conwell said he wants to remind everyone that the people



MECHI O’NEIL PHOTO



Wrappers and bags of chips are abandoned on the field after students have lunch outside and don’t spend adequate time cleaning up after themselves.

picking up after students have their own lives, and their whole day can get thrown off because they had to spend an extra 30 minutes picking up trash.

This issue is not only disrespectful to the school, but it has also become a danger for students allergic to bees because the

trash attracts them to the turf.

Sophomore Gabbi D’Andrea said the number of bees that she encounters on a daily basis is the most she has ever seen.

“I know it scares most students, but I couldn’t even imagine how it would be for someone with an allergy,” she said.

An easy fix to this problem would be to just eat inside, away from the bees. But for most students, lunch is a time to go outside and get fresh air.

“I think people really need some time outside of the classroom to relax, and I think that lunch time is gold for students,” Conwell said.

Fortunately, a variety of solutions are being applied to assist in the resolution of this problem.

Richards said that the custodial staff has tried to empty the trash more often so the bees don’t linger around a big pile coming out of the trash.

Staff members who monitor lunches are making an effort to regulate the issue, he said.

“What we’re trying to do is circulate around the eating areas more often, reminding students to pick up their trash,” Richards said.

As the cold weather approaches and fewer students eat outside, littering will decrease. However, if this behavior happens in the spring, students will lose the freedom to eat outside.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Boys’ soccer wins Cape Ann League Baker Division

Defeated by Amesbury in second round of tournament

By Libby Mulry
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Boys’ soccer ended their regular season with a record of 6-11-1 and a Cape Ann League title, but their chance to win the state championship was crushed after a loss against Amesbury 2-0.

The team’s first five matches weren’t played on turf, and they faced a rougher start to the season, coach Robert Bilsbury said.

After initial losses, the team had important wins, like beating Pentucket on a grass field 3-2. They also won against Lynnfield 2-1, coming back strong in the second half, he said.

“It was just amazing positive energy where everyone was working so hard and it all came together for us in that match,” he said.

Spectators at the game mirrored Bilsbury’s enthusiasm. “If there’s a really high energy atmosphere, then I feel like everyone plays better,” senior Wrede Charlton said.

The Lynnfield game gave the team motivation, captain and senior Naderson Curtis said.

“That was pretty big for our team, knowing what we can do in certain situations,” Curtis said.

Early losses connected the team and allowed them to see what needed to be improved

upon, Curtis said.

Similar sentiment was expressed by Bilsbury.

“Earlier matches helped us learn to play with more physicality, to be tougher in set pieces, to mark tighter,” Bilsbury said.

Due to incorporating more physicality in gameplay, a mostly consecutive winning streak followed earlier losses, he said.

Growing chemistry also improved their record, Curtis said.

At the beginning of the season, players were unaware of each



COURTESY OF PAUL CLARK/THE MANCHESTER CRICKET

Senior Cian Doyle nearly misses a header in the second half of the Hornets’ 2-0 loss to Amesbury in the Division IV State Tournament. The team’s regular season record was 6-11-1.

other’s playing styles, but as they became friends, they could play better as a team, he said.

With a team of 17 seniors, many have played together before, Bilsbury said.

Newer players have stepped up, like freshman Sammy Bothwell, he said.

“He had two big assists last night at the game, at our Cape

Ann league title-clinching win,” Bilsbury said.

Players also stepped up in the wake of team injuries, Curtis said.

“We had our starting center back get injured earlier in the season, and so Finn Lawler stepped up and took that role,” Curtis said.

Penalties in the first game of

the season also prompted students to step forward, Bilsbury said.

When starting goalkeeper and senior Theo Parianos got a red card and had to sit for two games, senior Simon Rubin jumped in as the backup goalkeeper and helped the team win both games he played in, Bilsbury said.

Cross country teams train for final league meets

By Avabella Mitrano
INDEPENDENT STAFF

As the season came to an end, the cross country team ran in their final league meet and placed high in Divisionals.

Girls varsity cross country coach Mark Dawson said the boys’ record was 3-2, while the girls’ record was 2-3.

Dawson said the team has performed well at four invitationals beforehand despite being a split season, and on average they were doing well.

“They’ve been running pretty well, and that’s actually what we’re happier about, that they have been improving well at longer intervals,” he said.

The league meet was on Oct. 30 where the boys’ team took

fifth place with 152 points and the girls took seventh place with 167 points.

Divisionals took place on Nov. 13 with the boys’ team mov-

Freshmen Whitney Turner and Lassen Ando are moving onto All States...

When preparing for these larger meets, Dawson said the team had a few methods.

“You put in a lot of miles early in the season and take off a lot of miles at the end so that you’re refreshed and ready,” he said.

Steve Whittey, boys’ varsity cross country coach, said the

team also had a co-op with Rockport for the first time in several years.

“We’ve had three good runs with Rockport so far. They helped out this year, so we like the fact that they are here with us,” he said.

Whittey also said that as a result of the pandemic, there was

still a shortage of bus drivers, causing parents to have to adjust and transport their athletes to meets.

However, Dawson said more athletes were allowed to come back this season, following the school fully reopening.

“We were never really a large team anyways, but we did see fewer numbers last year and now notice greater numbers this year,” he said.



AVABELLA MITRANO PHOTO

The cross country teams strides out for 100 yards after running for 30 minutes during practice around Manchester.

Team captain senior Jay Whitten said the team is doing well, considering that it is mostly younger students.

“We have been doing a lot of bigger meets this year. It’s not just one-on-one teams--it’s tons of teams, I think CALs and Divisionals went well, and everyone is still bringing in a lot of energy

for the end of the season,” they said.

Whitten said they enjoyed watching the team improve from a captain’s perspective.

“It’s nice watching the team get better over the course of the season, really watching them improve. It’s been good!” Whitten said.

Golf team improved throughout season

By Amy Vytopilova
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With an overall record of 2-10, the golf team continued to improve as the season progressed.

The golf season ends earlier than other fall sports due to how dark it gets outside. The time to play the match is also limited, junior Mark Pollock said.

Head coach Hollis French said junior captain Sam Athanas is a



COURTESY OF HOLLIS FRENCH

Junior captain Sam Athanas putts the ball during a golf match.

key player who helped the team to an advantage.

“He was really great this season...he is definitely one of the

strongest players in the CAL,” French said.

French said the team’s record does not reflect on how hard they

worked this year.

“Despite our lower record, the team had a very strong season and worked very hard,” French said.

Athanas spoke about the teams’ new additions.

“We had a young team this year including two middle schoolers...we improved as the season went on, and everyone continued to get better,” he said.

The team lost a handful of seniors last year. Despite the losses the team had, two wins helped boost their record, said Athanas.

One of these wins was against Ipswich, a team they played twice, losing the first time and winning the second.

“We beat Ipswich 109-97... it was definitely one of the best scores we have had this season... it was good to win against them after,” Athanas said.

Pollock said he sees a lot of potential in the young team and is looking forward to next season.

“We lost a lot of seniors last year, which was tough, but the young players have a lot of talent and stepped it up this year, the team will be a lot closer next year which is exciting,” Pollock said.

The season ended October 12 at the Old Cape Ann Classic with a win against Ipswich and a loss against Rockport.

Television series ‘Squid Game’ ranked No.1 on Netflix in 94 countries

Popular show renewed for second season

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

“Squid Game,” the new Korean television series, has been growing extremely popular since its release on Sept. 17 and is currently ranked third on Netflix’s Top 10 in the U.S Today List.

This thriller series, created by South Korean film director and screen-writer Hwang Dong-hyuk, starts with a man who desperately needs money to provide for his mother, which eventually leads to his entrance into a series of deadly games in which the winner receives a large cash prize.

The main character along with 456 other debt-ridden players

are kidnapped and brought to an unknown location where the games take place. At first, the games seem harmless, as they are based off of games people often play throughout their childhood, such as Red Light, Green Light, however; after the first game, the players realize that if they lose or make a mistake, they will be executed. Only the last one alive will receive the cash prize.

This show is ideal for those who enjoy suspense, drama, and action, but viewer discretion is most certainly advised as this series is extremely gruesome and not suitable for children. “Squid Game” has gained numerous amounts of attention through social media, including 22.8 billion views of videos with #SquidGame on Tik Tok, accord-

The main character, along with 456 other debt-ridden players, compete in a series of deadly games for a large cash prize worth 45.6 billion won.



NETFLIX.COM

In Netflix’s hit show “Squid Game,” South Korean model HoYeon Jung plays Kang Sae-byeok, also known as player 067, a teenage North Korean defector who is living in Korea with her younger brother.

ing to NBC News.

Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarando says that the series is on track to be Netflix’s most successful non-English series ever and has received a 100% Rotten Tomatoes critic score.

In the first 28 days of the show’s release on Netflix, it was viewed by 142 million accounts,

breaking the record of “Bridgerton,” the previous record holder, according to CNET.

Only one season of the show was released, with nine episode lengths ranging from 32 minutes to one hour.

Recently, during an interview with the Associated Press, Dong-hyuk confirmed that there will be

a second season.

“There’s been so much pressure, so much demand, and so much love for a second season,” he said.

Dong-hyuk said he does not have well developed plans for season two, and that he is going to need help from other experienced writers and directors.

NAHS, Art Club create spaces for student expression

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following pandemic limitations, the National Arts Honors Society and the Art Club are rebuilding spaces for students to express themselves and share their work.

Having to move the clubs online last year, NAHS and Art Club adviser Tamera Burns said the spaces for artistic expression were affected by the changes.

“We had a lot of people who

weren’t invested in the clubs, and while they’re nice people, we had a lot of problems with coming to the digital meetings and aiding in our fund raisers,” Burns said.

Fund raisers are important to the club as they allow for more events and an expanded budget, as well as basic needs of the artists.

The inability to hold any fund raisers with strong turnouts was damaging, Burns said.

However, with a return to in-person schooling and a newly elected board for NAHS, both Art Club and the board members for NAHS are rebuilding spaces for student expression and planning out the year ahead.

“So far we’ve taken some

The clubs differentiate themselves from normal classes and give a place for students to find new perspectives, senior Julian Friends said.



COURTESY OF WYETH TAKAYESU

Sophomore Nicholas Curcuru works on a personal project while experimenting with watercolors and gouache during Art Club.

artworks to the Show Up and Shop senior event, but we’re also getting back into our member displays and hopefully events in the future,” senior and NAHS secretary Julian Friends said.

As more opportunities start to

arise for fund raisers, meetings, and future events, the clubs appear to have a bright future, Burns said.

“Now that we’re back in school, many students don’t know about what’s normally available or going on, so we’re really happy to see

many more dedicated new students as we navigate this year,” she said.

Friends added that the clubs differentiate themselves from normal classes and give a place for students to find new perspectives.

“We’re excited to once again provide that environment where you can find people who are interested in what you do and will give you more than just saying it looks good,” Friends said.

As the clubs begin to hold in-person meetings and welcome new students, members are discovering what the clubs can offer them.

“I’m not really sure what the club does quite yet,” junior and NAHS member Luca Capotosto said, “but it seems like a place for these artists from many different medias and skill levels to critique and collect these art pieces in one spot, which is a cool difference from our normal art classes.”

Former Masconomet teacher joins art department, taught elementary students

By Caroline MacKinnon
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Due to the resignation of a previous art teacher, Haley Stevens is now teaching ceramics and art lab part time.

She most recently worked at Masconomet Regional High School.

Stevens started her teaching career at the Glen Urquhart School in Beverly, Mas-

sachusetts.

“I did a lot of substitute teaching in the elementary. I also was a third grade teacher for just one year,” she said.

Stevens attended the Maryland Institute College of Art, then transferred to the Massachusetts Institute of Art and Design. She earned her bachelor’s degree in art and design and a concentration in art education at Salem State University,

‘She’s really helpful, and she’s always calm. She never freaks out...’

-SIENNA CROCKER

she said.

“I studied mostly the art classes at art school, and when I switched, I took education classes. I kind of got the best of both worlds by doing it that way,” she said.

Stevens is currently working on receiving her masters degree in education at Endicott College and will graduate in the spring, she said.

Stevens worked for three years at Masconomet, where she also attended high school.

Manchester Essex is small compared to what she is used to, she said, but Stephens likes the

environment and is adjusting to the class size.

“I’ve liked having a small class. There’s not a lot of students, so that’s great to get to know the kids really quick. It’s a good environment,” she said.

Art teacher Tamera Burns said Stevens is a good fit for the department because of her experience in art education.

“The only way you learn these jobs is to get into them and get some experience. She seems like she has a curious mind and picks things up really quickly,” she said.

Sophomore Sienna Crocker said Stevens is understanding as a teacher.

“She’s really helpful, and she’s always calm. She never freaks out if someone asks a really complicated question,” she said.



COURTESY OF HALEY STEVENS

Haley Stevens now teaches ceramics and art lab part time. She earned her bachelor’s degree in art and design. She is currently working on receiving her master’s degree in education at Endicott College.