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Community remembers English teacher Gloria Tanner

By Eli Heanue & Madeline Lai
INDEPENDENT EDITORS

Following her passing, former English and Drama teacher Gloria Tanner will be remembered by the school community for her passion and energy inside and outside the classroom, English department head Debra Isensee said.

Tanner taught English at Manchester-Essex for 27 years. She started as an eighth-grade teacher and eventually moved to the high school. She was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in December of 1996.

Despite her condition, Tanner continued to teach until 2019. Among her many contributions to the school community, Tanner will be especially known for her time leading the Drama Club. In 2011, she led the club to win first place in Dramafest for their performance of "The Complete History of America (Abridged)."

"Gloria was a powerhouse for creativity and enthusiasm, and I think that will be her legacy. She was our most creative teacher. She had this engaging energy and force to her," Isensee said.

Tanner was able to bring her

personal passions into the classroom to create a more enthusiastic atmosphere, she said.

"She loved baseball. When Ms. Puglisi gave us options for the senior electives, Gloria taught an entire class on baseball in literature. They would watch movies about baseball and read books about baseball. She actually came to one of my son's games in Ipswich with me," she said.

'She taught me a lot, but if I could use one word to describe her, it would be "bravery."'

- RICK BROWN

Along with her passion and enthusiasm within the classroom, Isensee said she had a very welcoming personality to other teachers.

"She was glamorous, energetic, and electric. I remember, when I first came to teach here, her and Tom brought me out for drinks. It was a tradition they had with new teachers, and I looked at them like they were rockstars," she said.

Math teacher Rick Brown said Tanner was one of his earliest friends at the school.

"She reached out, and I gravitated to her bravery and authenticity. She taught me a lot, but if I could use one word to describe her, it would be 'bravery.' She



COURTESY OF CAROLINE EPP

Former English teacher Gloria Tanner is remembered for her boldness and enthusiasm inside and outside of the classroom.

was never afraid to speak up, and you could always count on her to say what needed to be said," he said.

Tanner's bravery inspired everyone around her, Brown said.

"She had this laugh that comes right from the bottom of her gut, loudly and proudly. She was very bold, and her bravery was the most inspiring thing about her," he said.

Along with her outstanding bravery, Brown said Tanner always showed a unique authenticity and love for what she was doing.

"She radiated passion, and it was infectious. Being around her made everyone more enthu-

siastic. She was authentic. With Gloria, she was always true to herself," he said.

Inside the classroom, Brown said Tanner had a unique style of teaching that emphasized understanding through showing rather than telling.

"This environment on Zoom would not have worked for her. You cannot contain Gloria Tanner in a box," he said.

Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury said he immediately connected with Tanner when they met.

"Gloria is Cuban-American, so she spoke Spanish very well. I had her son Nick, and she wanted me to keep an extra eye out for



MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON PHOTO

Tanner dressed as Gloria Delgado-Pritchett from "Modern Family" for the 2018 faculty Halloween contest.

him. Getting to know her and seeing her teach was very inspiring. She had a way of engaging all of her students and creating impactful and life changing discussions," he said.

Tanner had interesting lesson plans that forced students to think

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Teachers confront new remote learning challenges with innovation

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the various challenges of remote learning, many teachers are approaching this school year differently to keep students engaged and productive.

Math department chair Dan Lundergan said there are certain advantages to using Zoom for teaching.

"The chat feature on Zoom can actually make answering questions easier than when we are in person. It lets us give feedback on each answer either later or in the moment, depending on what we're doing, and allows kids who are normally more reluctant to answer participate," he said.

Although there can be benefits to teaching over the Zoom platform, Lundergan said there are certain challenges teachers are still trying to overcome.

"We are definitely having trouble figuring out how to do test-

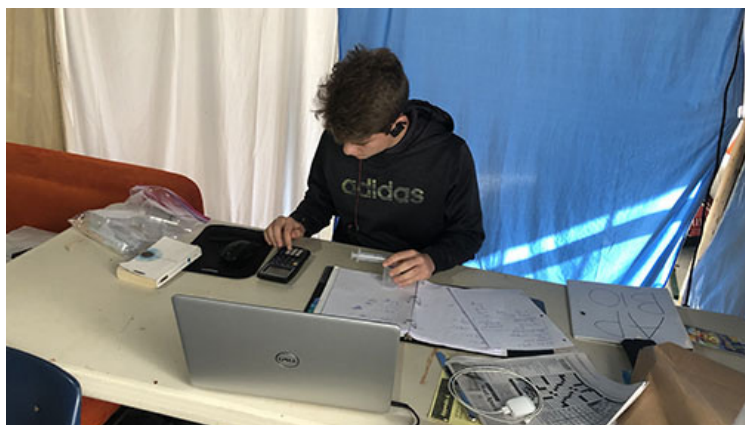
ing. We are going to have a department meeting soon to check in about ideas on testing, but for now the idea is setting up a webcam on the paper," he said.

Along with the difficulties with testing, science department chair Kristen Umile said there are challenges when it comes to physical labs.

"I know that everyone administered materials to students, whether it be for engineering classes, robotics classes, or others. I think that our goal is to incorporate hands-on lab experiences for kids. We still have to figure out what is best and safest," she said.

Although science teachers are trying their best to incorporate physical labs, Umile said certain classes have to keep their labs virtual.

"In classes like chemistry or anatomy, we can't have students mixing dangerous chemicals on



ELI HEANUE PHOTO

Senior Finn Carlson performs calculations for his biology lab.

their own or dissecting cats, so we will have to do some of our labs online," she said.

As well as confronting problems with physical projects, teachers are facing issues with observing students during class.

Foreign language department chair Michelle Magaña said there are obstacles with teachers' abilities to interact with students as if

they were in a classroom setting.

"Slowly, as we are practicing, we're realizing that we can still do a lot of things we used to do in a classroom setting, like separating the class into groups of two. The breakout rooms are cumbersome though, so I can't go from room to room as quickly as I'd like to go," she said.

Although there are many ob-

stacles with remote learning, Magaña said teachers are still trying to preserve relationships with their students and between the individuals in their classes.

"We can definitely keep that classroom environment where we have a community that is speaking and preserving the language," she said.

Other teachers are also trying to achieve the same level of community as in years prior.

English department chair Debra Isensee said she is trying to connect with students on a personal level like she would in an in-person environment.

"In class, it's just so easy to talk about things with students walking in and out of the room. Over Zoom, there just isn't that opportunity. At the end of classes, if we have three minutes or so, I like to ask my students silly personal questions to get to know them better," she said.

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New French teacher returns to New England

Wellesley graduate
taught in France,
N.C, and Washington, D.C.

By Hadley Levendusky
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Tiffany Pyen, the school’s new French teacher, recently moved to the Boston area. Due to the global pandemic, the school conducted teacher interviews online this year.

“It’s not always the easiest to find a French teacher, especially during a time with COVID-19,” Principal Patrica Puglisi said.

“[We are] definitely excited to have new young staff,” Puglisi said.

Pyen graduated in 2011 from Wellesley

College with majors in both French and international relations.

Pyen began teaching English in France in 2011, but more recently, she taught French at Durham Public Schools in North Carolina for grades nine through 12, she said.

During the past few years she taught social studies in D.C. public schools, she said.

Regarding her new school, Pyen said, “People were really kind and welcoming when I first walked in.”

Without being able to meet students in the building, Pyen said, “I had great interaction with staff when I first walked into the school.”

As for students, Pyen said, “They are engaged and completing all their work on

time.” She said this makes her really proud of her students, considering the pandemic and the challenges that come along with remote learning.

French II honors student Liv Cahill has enjoyed Pyen’s class.

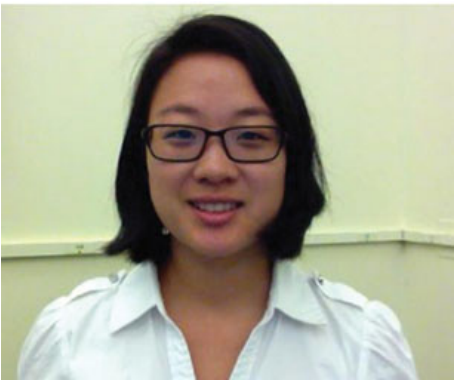
“I like how she has an organized lesson plan every day,” she said.

Pyen has previously taught in cities, and the location of this school is very different than her old school, she said.

“It is very relaxing, and there is not a lot of noise pollution or cars,” Pyen said.

She is very excited to enjoy the outdoors and go hiking around Manchester and Essex, she said.

Pyen has a Bernese mountain dog, whom she refers to as her best friend, she said, and they enjoy finding hiking spots in



COURTESY OF TIFFANY PYEN
French teacher Tiffany Pyen, most recently taught in Washington, D.C.

the area to swim at as well.

She said she is very excited to start exploring around Boston and to see new places.

Pyen is also thrilled to be able to make new friends in the area, she said.

Experienced teacher fills in as anatomy temporary substitute for Maria Burgess

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New anatomy teacher Catherine Erickson is filling in the position of Maria Burgess while she is on temporary leave.

While Burgess takes time off to take care of her mother, a long-term substitute teacher was needed to teach the anatomy and physiology classes, Burgess said.

Burgess said she misses teaching incredibly and will be happy to return on Nov. 23.

Erickson attended Salem State University where she majored in biology and minored in chemistry, and took her education classes after graduation, she said.

She has had 38 years of teaching experience at a variety of schools including

Haverhill, Newburyport, Chelsea, Notre Dame Cristo Rey in Lawrence, and a school in San Bernardino, California, she said.

She has taught many science classes, but chemistry is the class she has taught the most, Erickson said. She said she also really enjoys teaching AP Environmental Science.

Erickson said she has had a good first impression of the school community and said all the teachers have been very helpful and friendly during the transition to remote learning.

Burgess said it is challenging to make anatomy active during remote learning because the students do not have the same access to all of the equipment and materi-

als needed for the hands-on labs and activities at home, but Erickson is doing the very best she can with the situation she has been put into.

Burgess also teaches at Simmons University in the biology department, where she was able to learn more Zoom teaching techniques that could be helpful for Erickson as well, she said.

Erickson said remote learning has been a lot of trial and error, but she is getting used to using the Zoom platform.

Junior Gelsey McCue said Erickson is doing a “really good job” at making the class very collaborative because of her use of the breakout rooms feature, and she likes how in her class they are able to talk with their classmates like they normally would be able to at school.

McCue said Erickson is adjusting to remote learning well and has improved a lot since the very beginning of the year.



COURTESY OF CATHERINE ERICKSON
Catherine Erickson, with over 38 years of teaching experience, is covering Maria Burgess’s classes until Nov. 23.

CONTINUATIONS

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about and understand material rather than just being told information, Bilsbury said.

“When she taught Transcendentalism, she had her kids go out in the woods for a few hours. She wanted them to realize how uncomfortable it is to be alone with their own thoughts,” he said.

Science teacher Maria Burgess was one of Tanner’s closest friends inside and outside of school.

“One of my favorite memories with Gloria was a time we went to see a Red Sox game. She yelled so loud she couldn’t talk by the first inning, and every time she tried to say something, I would burst out laughing. We ended up ordering about six hot dogs, some nachos, and some peanuts, and it was just so much fun. After the game, we just sat in the car for 10 minutes to recover from such joy,” she said. “Ms. E, Gloria, and I have been doing brunches once a month together. I really appreciate that we got together and had this tradition and were able to see each other.”

Burgess said she remembers the inspiration and devotion Tanner showed through her teaching.

“When the consequences of cancer finally started overwhelming her, she had to take some time off. She asked me to go into the school and get a stack of ungraded papers from her classroom. I just remember the look on her face when she opened the huge bag of papers and sighed. Those papers were her students in a way, and that relief she got from them was so memorable,” she said.

Teaching assistant Liz Eichenberger was another one of Tanner’s closest friends.

“As a friend, she was just a lot of fun.



COURTESY OF ALLISON KRAUSE
Former English teacher Gloria Tanner hosted a 4 a.m. tea party at her house before school to watch the royal wedding in 2011. Her former students, now English teachers, Elizabeth Edgerton and Allison Krause attended along with English teacher Mary Buckley-Harmon. Krause said Tanner inspired her to participate in theatre when she was in high school.

We met because we were walking down a hallway, and she stopped and told me she liked my boots, and I said that I liked her boots, and that was it, friendship was formed,” she said.

Eichenberger said that in addition to being an amazing friend, Tanner was a very talented drama teacher.

“I was lucky enough to help her out with Dramafest from 2009 to 2012, and they actually won Dramafest during my eldest daughter’s junior year. She really influenced my daughter, and she ended up going to NYU to study the arts, and now she is pursuing acting.”

Chorus teacher Donna O’Neill said Tanner not only made a big impact in her own life and career, but also in the lives of every



INDEPENDENT ARCHIVES
Tanner celebrated the Drama Club’s 2011 first place win at Dramafest for “The Complete History of America (Abridged).” She led the club in addition to teaching.

one of her students.

“I’ve lost count of the number of students I’ve had over the past 12 years who haven’t stopped talking about [Tanner’s] classes or what tremendous difference she has made in their lives,” she said.

English teacher Allison Krause said when she was in high school, Tanner was her biggest role model and inspired her to pursue teaching.

“I remember one time during one of the musicals she directed we put on music

backstage... I remember she grabbed me and started dancing with me, and I felt so cool and special because I looked up to her so much. It was just a silly moment, but I was so thrilled by it,” she said.

English teacher Mary Buckley-Harmon said teachers are hoping to find a way to memorialize Tanner at the high school.

“Gloria loved her garden, so we would like to find a way to remember her on campus, using the natural surroundings,” she said.

Remembering Gloria Tanner

“I truly enjoyed my time working with her, and she was always ready to show me she cared about her students and wanted to help them. She was a good listener, a kind and caring colleague, and a genuine person... She will be missed and made a huge impact on so many of her students through the years...definitely a life well-lived!”

- DAVID CONWELL, ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR

“She was especially interested in reaching students who were struggling... She would go out of her way to connect with that student, to talk with them and understand them and their struggles. That ability to connect and work with every student, and every staff member as well, was what made her such a fantastic teacher, friend, and human being. She will be greatly missed by all that knew her.

- HOLLY BRABSON, ADJUSTMENT COUNSELOR

Students should practice wellness activities to cope with remote learning

Taking time out of the day to find a balance between school and personal life is important during pandemic

By Isabella DiPasquale
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

While COVID-19 has caused stress on mental health, there are many ways that students can maintain and improve their wellbeing.

According to Michigan Medicine, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in increased loneliness, stress, anxiety, and depression, particularly among students. Social isolation causes students to feel less connected to others and highlights the unknown, making them especially vulnerable to developing mental



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKAS SHAN

Senior Ryan Olivier Meehan does a puzzle to unwind in between classes and to alleviate his stress.

health concerns.

Due to remote learning, students are spending the majority of their day looking at screens. According to May Recreation, too much screen time can cause

problems with health, behavior, sleep, and academics.

Instead of spending free time on devices, students can try activities such as drawing, listening to music, meditating, going for a walk, playing with a pet, or reading a book.

According to Everfi, an organization that focuses on digital learning, it is important for maintaining mental health to prioritize the things that help us feel balanced. This could be exercise, reading, journaling, meditation, or spending time doing a hobby.

When working from home, it is easy to fall into an unhealthy balance between work and life, so creating a dedicated workspace can increase productivity and allow students to mentally create a difference between school and home, according to Everfi.

In addition to the more obvious health benefits to one’s physical health, movement and exercise can help improve and maintain mental health. This could mean anything from going for a run around town to taking a two-minute stretch break between classes.

It is essential to accept that things are going to be different. According to Everfi, setting small, realistic goals and expectations can allow students to feel more fulfilled and help to maintain mental health.

Students should remember that everyone is being affected by these uncertain times, and it is perfectly valid to be struggling. In dealing with mental health issues, reach out to a counselor, teacher, parent, or friend for support.

It is important to find a balance between maintaining a routine and changing it up. Creating a specific routine can help students to feel they have more control over their lives even in an uncertain time; however, it is also beneficial to add some new things to one’s agenda to avoid boredom and increase productivity.

Students adjust to challenges of remote learning

Approach remote learning with various setups, attitudes

By Madeline Lai
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Due to the pandemic, high school students are participating in full-time remote learning away from the school building.

Freshman Lily Francoeur said she misses in-person learning because of the social disconnect she feels now from the other students.

“I don’t personally like it because I’d rather be in school and be able to socialize with everyone,” she said.

Sophomore Paige Garlitz said it has been helpful having all of her materials in one place and not having to transport supplies back and forth from school.

“I am much more organized because I don’t have to worry about forgetting something at school. I have everything I need in front of me at all times, or it is 10 feet away in my bedroom,” she said.

‘Remote learning is not an ideal way of learning, but as the world around us is changing, we have to go with the flow and do the same.’

-COOPER O’BRIEN

Garlitz said she also misses interacting with her friends and classmates each day, even if it was outside the classroom or during breaks and transitions in the day.

“The best part about school is seeing your friends and talking to them in between classes and getting the chance to work collabora-

tively together... I miss seeing everyone,” she said.

Junior Chris Daly said while he enjoys the increased freedom of the online school schedule, communication with teachers has been more strenuous.

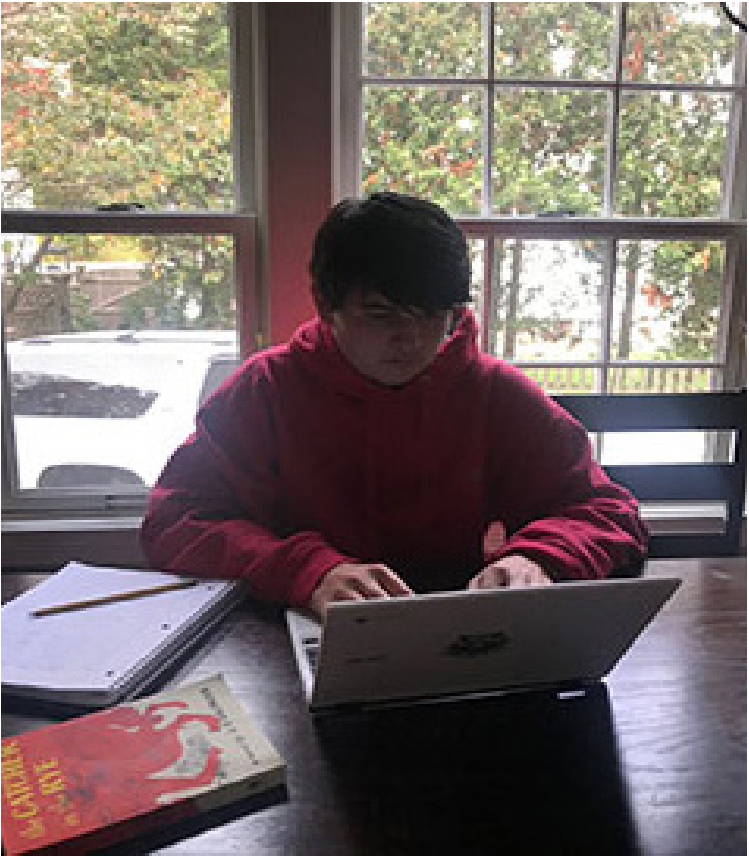
“I like certain aspects of remote learning... but there are some days where I wish I could just go into school to catch up and make sure my questions are being answered and check in,” he said.

Francoeur said communication with teachers over Zoom has worked well for her.

“U block has been really helpful with getting questions answered by teachers,” she said.

Senior Cooper O’Brien said remote learning has been a tough adjustment, but students can adapt to the circumstances.

“Remote learning is not an ideal way of learning, but as the world around us is changing, we have to go with the flow and do the same,” he said



COURTESY OF CHRIS DALY

Junior Chris Daly works on schoolwork in his home setup for remote learning. One of the major challenges of remote learning is the reduced level of communication with teachers, he said.

English department changes journaling guidelines in an effort to enhance a sense of community

By Ryan Olivier Meehan
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Along with the recent changes in how schooling is being approached, the English department has updated their guidelines for journaling in an effort to enhance the sense of community within the class. These changes have received mixed reviews from students, English department

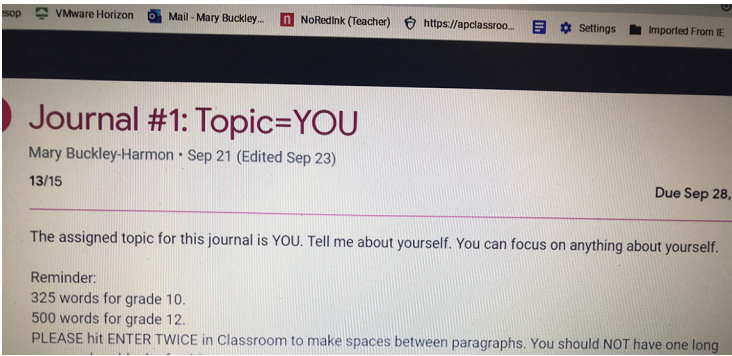
chair Debra Isensee said.

Under the new requirements, English teachers will assign an umbrella topic for students to write their journal about that week. This change allows for teachers to refer back to journal topics in class while also having the opportunity to learn about students, Isensee said.

“I want to keep my topics a little more open as it’s a great way to get to know my students,” she said.

‘It takes away the stress of having to come up with a topic, but you’re also being put in a box.’

-PIPPA COX-STAVROS



RYAN OLIVIER MEEHAN PHOTO

English teachers are giving specific prompts and making comments more personal in order to bring students closer.

Senior Pippa Cox-Stavros said the changes to journaling have been met with constructive criticism. “It takes away the stress of having to come up with a topic, but you’re also being put in a box,” she said. “I think it would be cool to have discussions on stuff talked about in journals.”

This change came after a

history of trouble with students reusing articles and repetition of topics, Isensee said.

“We were having trouble with plagiarism

Isensee said she believes there was good precedent for the changes made to journaling. “I had a group in the past that liked each other so much that

they made their own topic every week, and it really built a strong sense of community between those students,” she said.

The commenting or review feature of journaling has also undergone a rework to better instill a sense of community in the classroom, Isensee said.

“It felt like students were just making things up. Instead, we shifted to personal response like a personal connection,” Isensee said. Comments to journals now consist of only five sentences, which can be a criticism, connection, or comment regarding the journal she said.

Sophomore Christopher Siems said, “I like the changes in reviews. They seem more like organic responses rather than just adding ideas to meet a minimum word count. I feel like they’re genuine personal reactions.”

Students work summer jobs safely through the pandemic

Kids adapt to changes to jobs due to COVID-19, develop new work experience

By Carson Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Over the summer, many students have taken the opportunity to work. These jobs had to alter their normal procedures to stay safe during the pandemic.

Sophomore AJ Altieri said he worked at the Wingaersheek Beach concession stand in Gloucester

where the employees work different positions at the stand, such as being the cashier, cooking and preparing the food, and working at the takeout window.

“I have a good relationship with the other employees, and they are all around my age, which made working there very fun. I also liked being able to be independent by making my own money. The environment is very welcoming and enjoyable,” he said.

The working environment changed a good amount to stay safe from the virus, Altieri said.

“We had to wear masks and

gloves while serving customers, cleaned surfaces more often, provided extra condiments and utensils per request to avoid more hand-to-hand contact, the bathrooms were cleaned more often and the public showers were closed, he said.

Junior Alex Briggs said she worked at Myopia Hunt Club in Hamilton this summer as a lifeguard because she is a swimmer and loves being outside.

“I love this job because it is so much fun to hang out with friends my age all day and at the same time being able to be outside and enjoy the sun while I still could before summer ended.

One of my favorite parts was playing games with the kids and my coworkers in and out of the pool,” she said.

There were only a few things that changed about the lifeguarding position this year, Briggs said.

“Lifeguarding is pretty

spread out anyway, we just had to wear masks, clean everything more often, and make sure the kids were safely distancing unless they were family,” she said.

Junior Lynn Benali said she worked at the Ipswich Bay Yacht Club as a Junior Sailing Program instructor. She worked with other people around her age to teach young children how to sail,



Junior Lynn Benali said she spent her summer as an instructor at the Junior Sailing Program of the Ipswich Bay Yacht Club. Because of COVID-19, she said the camp has undergone many changes to ensure camper and staff safety. Sophomore AJ Altieri spent his summer working a concession stand.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LYNN BENALI AND HALEY ALTIERI

Benali said.

“Racing against my coworkers on our sailboats in the afternoons was by far the best part. I met a lot of new friends and people there, which was amazing. I adored this job because I was able to share my passion for sailing with younger sailors and helped them achieve their goals and make new ones,” she said.

There were multiple changes to the program due to the pandemic, including getting temperature checks, wearing masks at all times, students not being allowed to share food and drinks, and less people in each boat,

Benali said.

“Even with these alterations, the program was still such an amazing experience and I think the kids all had a fun time,” she said.

Senior Greta Dickson said she works at Captain Dusty’s in Manchester this summer as an ice cream scooper. She cleans, helps customers, and stocks the shop with supplies throughout her shifts, she said.

“The friendships I have made here are incredible and ones I will never forget. I have worked here for a few years, and it has been a great experience every

year,” she said.

There have been a few major differences in the job since the pandemic has started, such as only taking phone orders and app orders until the start of June, not allowing anyone except employees into the building, taking orders from the window, and not putting any ice cream in cones to avoid hand-to-hand contact, Dickson said.

“It was strange to adjust to the new process of the shop, but it works efficiently, especially since we had less business this year due to the lack of tourists,” she said.

Clubs, organizations create preliminary plans, hope to keep students engaged, involved during virtual learning

Club leaders work to keep members involved in their communities

By Izzy DiPasquale
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Club leaders said they are working to create unique approaches to ensure that students are getting the most out of organizations during remote learning.

Leaders said they have been utilizing technology such as Zoom and Google Classroom in order to connect with students, but some said they hope to incorporate social distance meetings if permitted.

President and founder of the Pre-med Club, junior Lukas Shan, said the main challenge with remote learning is trying

to find ways to engage members that differ from their regular classes.

Shan said that he is trying to replicate some of the activities that they would have done in their meetings pre-COVID. One of the main ways the club is staying active is by inviting guest speakers to share their advice and experience in a medical field with students via Zoom, he said.

“We want [Pre-med Club] to be a place where people can explore their interests in medicine

and discover new potential career paths,” he said.

Humanitarian League co-president Molly Moore said the club wants to continue educating the community about issues and hosting fundraisers.

“We really want to show that we, as a school, care, and we are using our power to help

others,” she said.

Moore said the club focuses on relevant issues and raises money and awareness, and donates supplies.

“With the pandemic happening, we will probably do something to help people who have lost their homes or jobs, the people who really need it most,” Moore said.

National Honor Society president Jessie Miller said the leaders want to continue with service but most likely with less rigid rules for members and more involvement of the community.

“It’s definitely not going to be the same. Hopefully, we can get some good volunteering opportunities for the members, and I think we are going to put it out to [all students] this year, not just NHS members,” Miller said.

Peer mentors adviser Beverly Low said last year the club implemented a bulletin board outside of guidance that gave students information about the mentors.

“We want to replicate [the board] in slides...so that students, particularly freshmen, can get to know the peer mentors,” Low said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKAS SHAN

Members of the Pre-med Club met over Zoom to listen to Dr. Andrea Torri in a meeting organized by Lukas Shan.

National Art Honor Society vice president Bella Lilly said she wants the club to act as an escape from typical remote learning.

“It’s gonna be a challenge doing meetings online, but we want to still have the social aspect and separate it from regular online classes,” she said.

She said she is trying to find creative ways to engage students and allow them to share their love of art.

“We want to try making the prompts more creative, maybe, but having students use materials they find at home or by letting them choose the topics,” Lilly said.

Athletics

Should the school continue to offer sports during the coronavirus?

Pro

Amy Vytopilova

School sports should be held during the pandemic as they are a very important part of the community, and many student athletes rely on sports as an escape to what is going on in the real world.

Athletic director Jordan Edgett said that staying healthy and fit is important throughout the remote school year.

“The physical component is obviously important for the health and wellness of students to continue to be active and live an active lifestyle...we don’t want kids to sit in front of a screen and get used to that and have that become a habit where they just sit in front of their phones, computers, or tablets without getting outside and doing something active,” he said.

Along with staying physically healthy, staying mentally healthy is just as important, Edgett said.

“The social and emotional aspect of it too... we’re obviously not in school, we’re not interacting nearly as much given the situation, but sports offer that component where we’re outside, we’re socializing... kids are interacting and getting the socialization they need,” he said.

Social distancing guidelines for fall sports are very straightforward and easy to follow, and the risk is very low. No student athletes have caught the virus from playing school sports, Edgett said.

“The guidelines are pretty strict... there are tons of people, doctors, and probably health officials that have their eyes on those documents and guidelines... they’re strict, they’re the way they are for a reason,” he said.

Athletes are taking every precaution to stay safe by following these guidelines and they are doing well with them.

Senior girls soccer captain Maddie Lawler said that there is no reason why students shouldn’t be playing.

“Looking back on last year when we missed our spring season... Those who missed their seasons were obviously devastated and to just take it away this season, there is no reason to... It would just be a horrible thing to do, and if the MIAA, which is probably one of the strictest organizations I have ever encountered, is allowing us to play, I think there’s no reason we shouldn’t be able to,” Lawler said.

Senior golf captain Charlie Gendron said parents and students have a choice to play or not if they think it’s unsafe.

“There’s a whole opt in thing...if you (as parents) or your children don’t think it’s safe to play, then don’t play... but it shouldn’t affect how other people view it,” he said.

The school should have sports for teens’ overall health and wellness to take time away from screens and allow social interaction while maintaining safely distanced.

Con

Eli Heanue

Sports should not take place during the Coronavirus pandemic because of their danger to the health of students and family members, as well as their decline in quality due to the safety measures regarding COVID-19.

During this quarantine, it does not make sense to hold sports while it is still unsafe to enter the building for actual school. Within sports, student athletes are in close contact with one another, and it becomes impossible to maintain a safe social distance of six feet.

For many athletes, the quality of sports has declined during the pandemic, as there have been adjustments made to ensure students’ safety. Athletic director Jordan Edgett said the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) has made many alterations to sports this year.

“Soccer and field hockey especially are a little bit different this year. For soccer, there are no headers, no throw-ins, and no defensive walls. In field hockey, it’s seven on seven, and there is no shoulder-to-shoulder contact,” he said.

Taking away close proximity plays from sports takes away from the collective experience and degrades the quality of play. Without the ability to come in contact with other players, sports become less competitive and engaging for students.

Senior Emerson Kahle said the soccer program has experienced many negative game-changing alterations.

“It’s definitely decreased the quality of play. It is much harder for me as a defensive player, because I’m not allowed to be as physical with other players. Also, it is difficult to play with masks on,” he said.

Along with the changes to the sports, there is a strong risk of contracting the Coronavirus across multiple communities. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), athletic teams that fall under the category of “Higher Risk” are groups that participate in “full competition between teams from the same local geographic area.” All teams playing against other schools fall under this category and should not be allowed to play.

Although the MIAA has put guidelines in place, and students and coaches are attempting to abide by the rules,

it occasionally becomes impossible to remain completely safe during competitions. In soccer, stealing a ball requires a certain degree of proximity. In cross country, in order to pass a runner on the opposing team, runners need to come into close contact with one another.

According to the CDC, “If organizations are not able to keep safety measures in place during competition (for example, keeping participants six feet apart at all times), they may consider limiting participation.”

Because of the nature of athletics, student athletes risk endangering their families and communities, and, especially for people with high-risk family members, the chance of contracting the virus is not worth participating in sports this year.



ELI HEANUE ILLUSTRATION

Pandemic leads to uncertainty regarding college admissions

By Ryan Olivier-Meehan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Nervousness and trepidation are ever-present during senior year, and considering the extraordinary circumstances of this year, these feelings are completely justified. As the college application process draws closer for many seniors, several questions still remain unanswered. For seniors and their families, the ongoing pandemic only serves to heighten these concerns.

Students must remain faithful in the process. The mechanics of applying to college won’t change that much, and common app applications and individual college-based applications still look very much the same, guidance counselor Beverly Low said.

While the process itself may remain solid, guidance counselor

David Conwell said that the pandemic will likely negatively impact those at or below the poverty line and even middle class families, as those families don’t have the financial freedom to commit to programs like early decision.

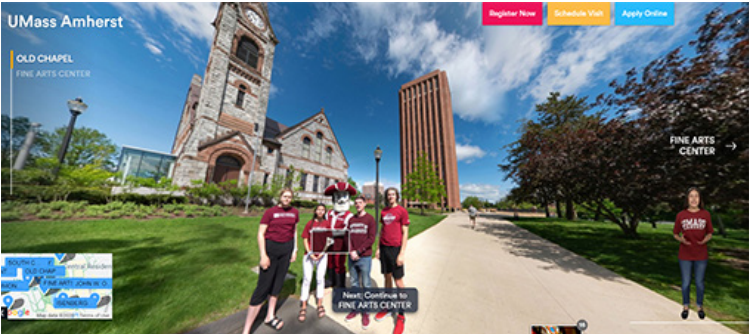
“Northeastern expects to accept 50% of their incoming freshmen through early decision, which is the highest ever,” Conwell said. This year’s trend towards early decision inherently puts families that aren’t financially independent in a more difficult position. “Early decision really sucks for them because their families can’t afford to commit to a school ahead of time,” he said.

As a result of the drop in revenue from housing or athletics, many small liberal arts schools across the country may struggle,

but larger universities will likely be fine, Conwell said. The pandemic’s impact on colleges may not be reflected in their financial aid packages, but difficult choices may be made in the short term to accommodate the revenue drop; such as cuts to extracurricular activities and nonessential frills. So while first year students may not see an increase in their tuition the quality of life around campus will see a drop as colleges recover financially.

“Without that revenue, larger schools may have to make some temporary difficult decisions about staffing and the life of the campus for a short period,” Low said.

The pandemic has had some positive impact on the admissions process. “It’s allowed a lot of colleges and universities that might not have otherwise sent a rep to Manchester-Essex to have meaningful conversations with students through Zoom,” Low said. Considering the incredible



RYAN OLIVIER-MEEHAN PHOTO

UMass Amherst offers virtual tours for perspective students.

strains that many colleges have been under regarding logistics of returning students to school, the resourcefulness of their coronavirus responses has been good to see.

Colleges and universities have also put several practices into place to accommodate those impacted by the Coronavirus. The College Board stated it “has asked colleges to extend deadlines for receiving test scores and to equally consider students for admission who are unable to take the test due to COVID-19.”

This has reflected how testing has been falling lower on the list of things they were concerned about, Low said.

“Different and a little less predictable” will serve to accurately describe this year, Conwell said.

While seniors this year will lose out on opportunities to visit colleges in person and lower income families will be at some disadvantage, if seniors remain confident in the application process and remain vigilant then COVID-19 will likely not cause too much trouble.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Students need at least one break during Zoom classes

Time off screens essential for mental health, online fatigue

Students should get small breaks during Zoom classes to take a few minutes to get up and stretch and to relax their eyes. As the year has picked up, some students find that they do not have as many breaks during their classes as they did at the beginning of the year.

Due to school starting later in the school year, some classes are a bit behind schedule, but a few minutes during class is necessary to give students time away from their screens.

Sophomore Gwen Hannafin said she does not get many stretch breaks, and her only time to have breaks is

briefly in between classes and during U block and lunch.

“Only one of my teachers gives us a stretch break, so I am in my chair in school for an hour or two straight most of the time. I think social breaks in break-out rooms could be a good idea because I think that was one of the most important aspects of school that we do not really get to experience now,” she said.

Junior Aidan Cunningham said he has breaks in some of his

classes, and in others he does not, but it depends on the day.

“The time of the breaks vary from a few minutes to a few seconds, but I think it is very important unless we are in the middle of learning a new

water,” he said.

Junior Samantha Rosen said she often gets headaches and needs a quick break from the screen.

“I think breaks from the screens are essential for getting through the day for both students and teachers. I find myself feeling much better after a class

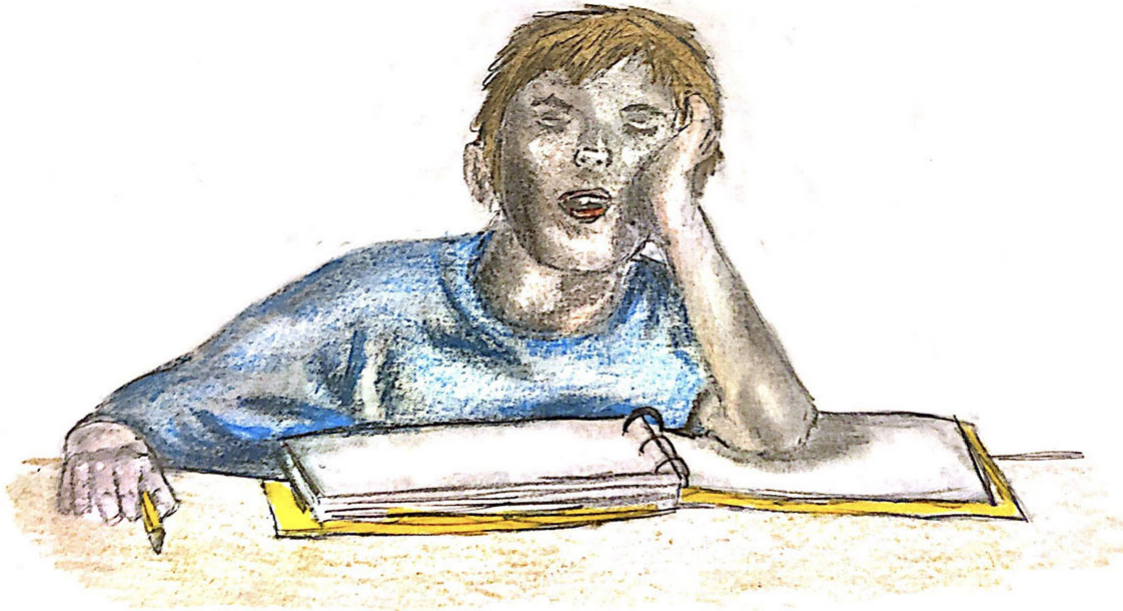
when I have a few minutes during it to relax my eyes and stretch,” she said.

Senior Maria Gargano said she has a good amount of breaks throughout her classes.

“Some of my teachers give us stretch breaks to get off the screen and take a few minutes, but I do not think I need more

breaks because the classes are only 50 minutes,” she said.

While some teachers remember to give breaks often, others do not. It is essential that both teachers and students are given at least one break per class to ensure that they can make it through the day with better mental and physical health.



ISABELLA DIPASQUALE ILLUSTRATION

‘I think breaks from the screens are essential for getting through the day for both students and teachers. I find myself feeling much better after a class when I have a few minutes during it to rest my eyes and stretch.’

-SAMANTHA ROSEN

concept. Other than that, I think we should have a small break to use the bathroom, stretch, or get



PIXABAY.COM

Incorporating a class about ethnic studies and race would bring about a cultural awareness in the school community and would foster an acceptance of the experiences of marginalized groups.

District should implement ethnic studies graduation requirement

By Olivia Turner

INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In order to better educate the student body about the experiences of marginalized groups, ethnic studies should be a graduation requirement.

According to the Department of Ethnic Studies at the Uni-

versity of California, Berkeley, “Ethnic studies is the critical and interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity, and indigeneity with a focus on the experiences and perspectives of people of color within and beyond the United States.”

In August, the Student Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) at MERSD published the results of a survey taken by 239 community members.

According to SCAR, “Approximately 68% of respondents disagreed... that the school district does an adequate job teaching about racism and discrimination.”

The survey results signify that the district needs to place inten-

tional focus on the inclusion of ethnic studies in the curriculum.

More and more colleges and universities have begun to mandate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement; however, some difficulties have arisen as these initiatives progress.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a bill on Aug. 17 that will require California State University (CSU) to mandate ethnic studies as a graduation requirement, but on Sept. 3, he vetoed a bill that would implement a high school requirement, citing a need for revision to the curriculum.

Due to controversy surrounding which groups are included in the curriculum, he wrote he is “directing staff in [his] administration to work... to ensure that the draft ethnic studies model curriculum achieves balance, fairness, and is inclusive of all communities.” States will need to agree on suitable curriculum content in order to create a high school mandate.

The dispute in California has

illuminated potential roadblocks in the implementation of ethnic studies at the state level, so it is more important than ever for individual schools to take steps on their own. It may take decades for legislation to pass in every state, and these studies are fundamental to the growth of communities and the entire nation.

If students are educated in ethnic studies, they will grow up with a cultural awareness that better equips them to interact with others and an understanding that helps to solve the world’s problems.

In “The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies: A Research Review,” CSU Professor Christine E. Sleeter writes, “Rather than being divisive, ethnic studies helps students to bridge differences that already exist in experiences and perspectives.”

The district must implement this curriculum now rather than waiting for ethnic studies to be mandated down the road.

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Sports teams find unique ways to build community during COVID-19 restrictions

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As the truncated fall athletics season begins amidst a global pandemic, sports teams said they are finding new ways to stay connected and build community while physically distancing and wearing masks.

Cross country coach Mark Dawson said the new distancing guidelines make social interaction more difficult because athletes have needed to start running in smaller groups to maintain their distance.

“Cross country is one of the few sports where it’s long periods of social interaction when groups of athletes go out on a run,” he said.

Senior cross country captain Anna Whitten said she and the other captains, seniors Oli Turner, Will Kenney, and Eli Heanue, are focusing on inclusion while staying physically distanced with masks.

“We’re making sure that

everyone is somewhat part of a running group, even if it does include masks on and staying six feet apart, on the other side of the street, or even in the middle of an empty but safe road,” she said.

Whitten said the captains are trying to make up for the decreased opportunity for social interaction by “going around and talking, asking people about their day, their high-lows, their favorite classes.”

Senior golf captain Sean O’Neill said there were not many significant changes to the golf itself, but the social interaction on the team was cut to a minimum this year.

“One of the big things we did in past years which we can’t do this year is just after matches waiting to watch the last group finish, just watching the last hole as a team,” O’Neill said, “so that’s something that we’re missing this year.”

Boys’ soccer coach Robert Bilsbury the team practices in pods, which are groups of no

more than 10 players. The pods stretch out, warm up, and do drills together, and at practices, the pods often compete against one another, he said.

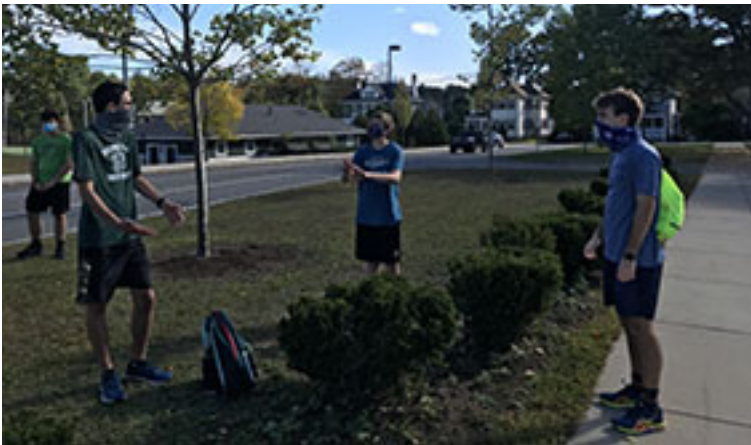
“Those pods might form a bit of an identity during the season,” Bilsbury said.

He said the four senior captains, Emerson Kahle, Finn Carlson, Tommy Bowen, and Jack Roberts, are each responsible for one of the four pods, which are each composed of both varsity and JV players.

“It’s kind of nice for those JV players to kind of feel the leadership of that captain and the older kids. There are freshmen that are with those captains, and those captains are really leaving a nice positive impact of team-first messaging for them,” Bilsbury said.

Field hockey coach Kara Crovo said the players have been loudly cheering each other on to build comradery on the team.

She said the team is planning to hold a virtual team dinner to



OLIVIA TURNER PHOTO

Cross country athletes junior Colin Harrison, junior Tucker Bothwell, and senior Tyler Erdmann get ready for the start of practice while social distancing.

replace in-person dinners, which helped to build community in previous years.

“I think that the players are able to see beyond the masks, and they have become the new normal, so we have been able to overcome that hurdle in regards to how we feel connected with one another,” Crovo said.

Girls’ soccer coach Luke Cosgrove said it was difficult for the team to miss out on preseason, where they would get to know

each other the best.

To build community, he said the athletes held pickup games with masks and social distancing guidelines before the season started in order to familiarize themselves with the new rules and get to know one another.

“I think the kids across all ages are okay with the rules because at least they get to play, and if it means that we don’t do as much fun stuff... they’re okay with it,” Cosgrove said.

Athletes make the most out of fall sports changes due to COVID-19

By Ema O’Neil
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Despite the many changes that fall sports have faced due to COVID-19, student-athletes are still finding ways to stay positive about their season.

The MIAA has had to make adjustments to several sports teams this year in order to accommodate social distancing guidelines and make sure all players stay safe. This resulted in many rule changes and some sports having to postpone their season.

One fall sport that is heavily impacted is field hockey. Accord-

ing to the MIAA rules, players must social distance when they can and wear masks if they are within 10 feet of another person. Each team can only have seven players on the field at a time instead of the normal 11. Senior captain Lily Athanas said that this new setup creates a lot more running.

The team has also had to practice differently. Athanas explained that they are practicing in cohorts with the same people to reduce spreading. She also said that the team has had to get used to not exchanging high fives or having huddles. “We’re just happy to



COURTESY OF ABBY LEVENDUSKY

Senior Lily Athanas protects the ball in a field hockey game against Georgetown, which the Hornets won 3-1.

play,” Athanas said.

Boys’ and girls’ soccer is another sport whose season looks different this fall due to the new COVID-19 restrictions. Along with the mandatory use of masks and social distancing, players cannot head the ball nor intentionally make body contact

with an opponent. If a player purposely touches another player, it results in an indirect kick. The MIAA has also eliminated throw-ins and replaced them with kick-ins.

“As a defender, the way I defend looks a lot different now,” said senior boys soccer captain,

Jack Roberts said.. He explained that since the rule changes, the boys have had to rethink a lot of their strategies for games.

Roberts said that despite this, the team has still been able to form a community. The players have been safely playing soccer together all summer, which has allowed them to become closer as a team.

Senior girls’ cross country captain, Oli Turner, said their team has been able to do the same by having socially distant conversations at practices.

The boys’ and girls’ cross country team’s biggest adjustment this year was having their home course switched from Cathedral Pines to Singing Beach. This was because they needed a starting line larger than 40 feet in order to follow social distancing guidelines. However, Turner has a positive outlook on the season and said, “We’re all just here to have fun and do our best.”

Football, Cheer seasons have a late start due to COVID

By Amy Vytopilova
INDEPENDENT STAFF

As a result of the pandemic, football and cheerleading seasons were switched to begin in mid February.

Due to the social distancing guidelines set by the MIAA, the football and cheer seasons switched in order to keep student athletes as safe as possible.

Senior starter Joe Daly said

that the snow will have both positive and negative impacts on the field.

“The snow will definitely change how we play, but I think it’ll be more fun because everyone wants to play in the snow,” he said.

One of the major negative impacts on the season will be the insufficient amount of time spent conditioning athletes, Daly said.

“I would say that the biggest obstacle is keeping everyone in shape...we don’t have any conditioning leading up to [the season],” he said.

Daly said that playing throughout the pandemic is a hazard.

“Every game is a risk...every sport is taking that risk by playing,” he said.

Captain Will Levendusky said he has mixed feelings about play-

ing football in the winter.

“I understand why [the season switched]...but it’s a lot more fun playing in the fall,” he said.

Levendusky said that with the COVID guidelines, their pre-season is different than before.

“The school blocked coach practices at this time...we have to get onto [conditioning] by ourselves,” he said.

Senior cheer captain Faith Burroughs said she is concerned about playing in the winter but is excited to still have a season.

“We were all really upset, but we kind of knew it was going to be switched because football is such a high contact sport...I am grateful that we even have a season,” she said.

Burroughs said she hopes that by switching the season to later in the year, it will be safer for

‘I understand why [the season switched]...but it’s a lot more fun playing in the fall .’

-WILL LEVENDUSKY



Football captain, senior Will Levendusky, said he has mixed feelings about playing in the winter.

student athletes to participate during the pandemic.

“It is a very risky situation, and hopefully putting [the season] back a few months will help,” she said.

Burroughs said that cheer routines will face some difficult challenges.

“Everybody will have an issue because you start with all your faces together,” she said

Burroughs said there is a lot of

uncertainty regarding the upcoming season.

“It’s all up in the air and we don’t really know what’s going on,” she said.

Music department adapts to online learning

Chorus, band plan virtual performances

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT STAFF

The music department has made many changes in order to adapt to the virtual environment. Both practices and performances had to be adjusted to follow guidelines and work around being online, choral director Donna O'Neill said.

"Sound Waves and Concert Choir have both started working online through Soundtrap for Education, and although it's much different from in-person, I'm very proud of their adaptability. They've been going strong through the virtual environment and keeping focused during classes," O'Neill said.

The band has been busy working towards online performance, said band director Joe Janack.

"Adjusting to the new format has been tricky, but everyone's doing their best within our rou-



WYETH TAKAYESU PHOTO

Members of the high school chorus meet via Zoom for a virtual rehearsal. Both the Concert Choir and Sound Waves have been finding ways to continue practicing, as well as opportunities to perform, all of which have been adjusted to follow the coronavirus guidelines.

tines and practices. We are hard at work putting together pieces for Veterans Day and remain hopeful for the future of this collaborative art," Janack said.

The Sound Waves have been invited to perform in an online version of this year's Acappellooza and plan to accept. They have finished their tryouts and

are excited for the chance to perform, O'Neill said.

The band is also working toward a virtual performance composed of 12 different schools. Sophomore and band member Damon Keenan said they'll be playing "Shipping up to Boston" and have begun working on the piece with all band members.

Both Janack and O'Neill said that the creative aspects of the class have been a great break from the stresses of the current times, and they are happy to be able to teach. However, they both notice the social losses of being alone.

Janack and O'Neill plan to host non-mandatory Zoom meetings during lunch for any students who

want to come in to chat or play music. Both teachers are excited to bring back their classroom's availability.

"Any and all are welcome to come in. Feel free to eat and get the social connections we miss online. We'll be glad to bring back the open doors of the music rooms," O'Neill said.

Students use arts, music to cope with pandemic anxiety, connect virtually

By Jordie Cornfield
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Students at Manchester-Essex are using creativity to ease their anxieties during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I am super stressed, and there are so many uncertainties, so... listening to or playing music calms those nerves," junior Sofia Sarmanian said.

Now is not the only time students have used music as a stress reliever in facets of their lives. Junior Charlie Weld said she has been making music for as long as she can remember.

"I think that music has been my saving grace... It has completely eased my anxiety. I've used music as a huge coping mechanism," Weld said. "If you

ever feel like you don't have anywhere to turn, turn to music. Turn to what you can create. There is always room for you to share your voice," she said.

Visual art is another method of self-expression that students have been utilizing.

"I find art as a good distraction for when I am sad or stressed. It's a good feeling when we can physically create something meaningful to ourselves," sophomore Lucia Wendell said.

Acting is another method that combines both the visual and auditory arts and serves as an escape from the coronavirus, sophomore Owen O'Leary said.

"When I feel stressed or upset, acting is definitely...comforting," said O'Leary, who is currently in a production of "The Addams

Family" at North Shore Children's Theater, where he plays the role of Gomez Addams.

In a quarantine production, actors wear masks and socially distance during their in-person rehearsals.

"The social distance part does affect the show because, in the world of the show, the coronavirus doesn't exist," O'Leary said.

O'Leary is one of five Manchester-Essex students, including Charlie Weld ('22), Lila Carpenter ('23), Sofia Sarmanian ('22), and Sylvie Oldeman ('21), who are currently in "The Addams Family."

Students have also been using the arts to connect virtually.

"You have people who are sharing their stories through music, and sometimes they align



COURTESY OF CHARLIE WELD

Junior Charlie Weld, who performs in musical theater, says that music has "been her saving grace" and eases her anxiety.

almost perfectly to yours. Suddenly you feel this connection to someone you don't even know. That is something that only music can do for people," Weld said.

Social media has allowed stu-

dents to stay connected in both their art and personal lives.

"I've been posting videos of my music on Instagram. That definitely connects me with other people," Oldeman said.

'Fantastic Mr. Fox' movie features dry humor, aesthetics

By Ema O'Neil
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Director Wes Anderson's attention to detail and dry humor makes the film "Fantastic Mr. Fox" both aesthetically enjoyable and funny.

Based on the 1970 children's novel by Roald Dahl, this stop-motion movie is about a fox who lives underground with his family. Every night, Mr. Fox steals food from three mean and

wealthy farmers. Eventually, they try to kill him by digging into the fox's home. However, the family and other animals living underground are able to outsmart the farmers and live safely again.

After Revolutions Studios bought the film rights in 2004, Anderson decided to sign on as director because he considers Dahl one of his heroes. After about two years of filming, he then started working on the characters' voices. Anderson said he would often go back to redo or add scenes. The cost of the film was about 40 million dollars and was released in 2009.

One aspect that is very prevalent in "Fantastic Mr. Fox" is the small details throughout the movie that make it very aestheti-



DISNEYPLUS.COM

Director Wes Anderson uses a thoughtful color scheme to create an aesthetic adaptation of Roald Dahl's "Fantastic Mr. Fox."

cally pleasing to viewers. Anderson makes a conscious effort to use vertical symmetry and central framing. This consistent style not

only makes the animal-based characters feel more human but also allows the viewer to appreciate the look of each scene.

Anderson also pays attention to the color palette throughout the film. In almost all of his films, he uses color schemes to evoke mood and tone.

As a cartoon, "Fantastic Mr. Fox" has a brighter and more saturated palette. However, at the end of the movie, Mr. Fox sees a mythic wolf. In this scene, the colors transition from bright and saturated to just black and white. This contrast signifies how important the wolf is.

Unlike many other children's movies, "Fantastic Mr. Fox" contains dry and ambiguously-styled humor. All of the characters are very mature and witty. This makes older audiences able to appreciate the comedic aspects of the film.