

the **INDEPENDENT**

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9/11 class takes trip to New York to visit memorials

Field trip provides understanding of class curriculum

By Hadley Levendusky  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

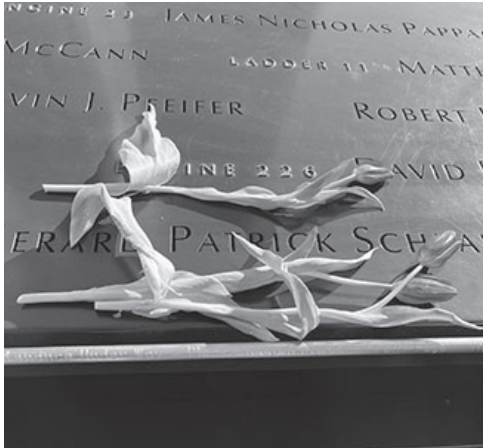
Students from the 9/11 and the War on Terror class visited the 9/11 Memorial in New York City. History teacher John Mullady, who teaches the 9/11 War on Terror class, has taken students on this field trip twice.

History teacher Jennifer Coleman, history teacher Lauren DuBois, academic center teacher Steve Padovani, and Mullady were the chaperones overseeing the 36 students who went on the field trip on Nov. 18.

The bus departed from the school at 5 a.m.

Going on the field trip, Mullady wanted the students to be able to comprehend more about the class material.

“I wanted students to get a better understanding of the personal and human toll of the attacks. I also wanted students to realize



COURTESY OF JENNIFER COLEMAN, JOHN MULLADY

Students visited the 9/11 memorial, and they placed flowers on victims’ names that they knew. The trip allowed John Mullady’s 9/11 and the War on Terror classes to learn more about the tragedy.

the size and scale of the attacks,” he said.

Once the students and chaperones arrived in New York, they had time to walk around the Memorial and Memory Garden, Mullady said.

“We gave students the names of people that I have a connection to or the town has a connection to, and we put flowers on their

names in the memorial,” he said.

After the memorial, students took a tour of the 9/11 Museum.

Students and faculty then got lunch and walked to Battery Park before returning on the bus back to school.

Overall, Mullady thought the trip went well.

“The students were very respectful ... from a chaperones

perspective it went very well,” he said.

Senior Riley Swerdloff, a member of the 9/11 and the War on Terror class, said she really gained knowledge from the field trip.

“Seeing all of the exhibits was so surreal, and it really put the attacks on 9/11 in depth,” Swerdloff said.

She said she was grateful for the opportunity to go on the trip.

“I learned so much more about what happened specifically throughout the attacks,” Swerdloff said.

Mullady said he is glad students enjoyed the trip but hopes to change the date of the field trip in the future.

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Juniors, seniors collectively plan first semi-formal winter dance

By Avabella Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

To make up for events lost to COVID-19, the senior and junior class officers are planning to have the first winter semi-formal dance.

Business teacher and senior class adviser Barrett Alston said the dance will be held on January 21 in the cafeteria from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. The class officers are planning to have food, a music playlist, and winter-themed decorations.

“The idea is the seniors already missed out on stuff during COVID, and we’re trying to make up for lost time, but this seems like something we can do yearly if it goes well,” Alston said.

He said the main challenge is

making the dance low in cost, due to prom already being expensive, but they still want to do their best to create a fun atmosphere for the students.

“It’s technically a fundraiser, but it’s more about trying to provide something for everyone to be together and have fun. That’s far more what it’s about than making money,” Alston said.

Senior class president Juliana Saunders said she had seen a demand for a dance from her classmates since they missed out



COURTESY OF JULIANA SAUNDERS  
The Classes of 2023 and 2024 are collaborating on a semi-formal dance in January.

on many special events during their freshman and sophomore years.

“We want to give the seniors a couple more good memories before they leave since we did miss out on two years of high school,” Saunders said.

She said both the senior and junior class officers are working on decorations, numbers, advertising, and chaperones but she does not believe the dance will be high maintenance.

Math teacher and junior class adviser Courtney Brown said the

dance will be called the “Snowball,” a name proposed by the senior class.

“Their hope was to have something for juniors and seniors to do together that is a small-scale dance ... a lot of schools do homecoming dances, and that’s not a tradition that we’ve had at the high school, so they are trying to start something new in the winter,” Brown said.

She said the juniors were lucky to host a semi-formal last year with the Class of 2025, and hopes that this year they will be able to spend more time and share a special event with the seniors.

Professional development day speakers focus on LGBTQ+ awareness, inclusivity

Presenters deliver impactful information

By Stella Straub  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Jeff Perrotti, the founding director of the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students, gave a presentation on LGBTQ+ awareness for the professional development day on Nov. 2, Principal Patricia Puglisi said.

Perrotti brought with him two guest speakers, said Gianna Baglioni, one of the advisers for the Gender and Sexuality Alliance club.

Guest speaker Landon Calahan, a transgender man, spoke on the sliding scale of gender identity and sexual orientation to better educate the staff on LGBTQ+ terms, she said.

The second speaker was the mother of a transitioning middle

schooler who spoke on her experience raising a transgender child, Baglioni said.

One of the videos shown during the presentation centered around Corey Johnson, an ex-high school student from Masconomet who came out as gay to his football team during his senior season, Puglisi said.

Two years later, a Masconomet history teacher had the courage to come out after Johnson had, she said.

“It’s important for us to always be open to learning and have people that are willing to share their lives with you so you can learn about their experiences,” Puglisi said.

Prior to the professional development day, Perrotti held a Zoom meeting with four student members of the GSA to better understand the support that currently

PRESENTATION, page 3

‘[I hope] that we really unlearn and relearn in the proper ways that we have to, so that we can make everyone feel safe and supported.’

-GIANNA BAGLIONI



# Speakers inform Science Team members about STEM careers

Marine biologists,  
theoretical physicist,  
biotechnologists present

By Summer Demeo  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Speakers from different fields in STEM have been coming to the high school as a part of the Science Team’s STEM Speaker Series that was first introduced last year.

The talks started in fall of 2021. Science Team adviser Kristin Umile said the series was introduced as a way to update what Science Team involved.

The Science Team meets every Tuesday. The first Tuesday of each month is to practice for a competition, the second Tuesday is a competition, and the third Tuesday is when speakers come in, she said.

“We decided it would be great to pull some speakers from the STEM community to come in and give real life experience in the

field or experience with how they got to where they are,” Umile said.

Science Team co-president junior Diego Sanson said there has been a very wide variety of speakers from many different fields.

Marine biologists, a theoretical physicist, and people in biotechnology are among the speakers.

A big part of finding speakers is also finding interesting professors and emailing them because there are so many of them in the area, he said.

Umile said many speakers are part of the community. Parents of students, friends of parents, and friends of faculty all have come in and discussed their field and their experiences.

Speakers also enjoy coming to the school.

“They love to come in and interact with the students. I think they are just excited in the STEM field to get the younger generation of science wannabes engaged, involved and excited,”

she said.

Science Team co-president senior Charlotte Lawrence said students have been able to get real experience in STEM through the series by getting internships with speakers that have come to the school.

Vice president junior Joanna Shan said the talks have become a favorite of many students on the team and that the talks provide a way for students to connect with people in professions they are interested in.

“It’s a lot more personal and realistic than just looking stuff up on Google. I think it opens up the possibility of other fields that you wouldn’t necessarily consider just by going through high school,” she said.

Umile said it is good for students to see the different pathways that people follow.

The speaker series is a way to show that everyone has a different journey to their career even if it isn’t a field they had started in.

“All these people come in with



COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE LAWRENCE

**Science Team members Amelia Costa and Kate Bappe interact with a touch tank of sea creatures at the STEM Speaker Series.**

such different backgrounds, and in the end they found their place, and I think it’s really reassuring to see that,” Sanson said.

## Service trip to Costa Rica inspires sophomore students to create Foreign Aid and Service Club

Club aims to spread awareness about helping those in need

By Amy Vytopilova  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Sophomores Hayden Spencer and Jarrett Croft are spreading awareness to the community about poverty around the globe by creating the Foreign Aid and Service Club.

The club is a large platform for people who are interested in helping those in need who donate, Spencer said.

Co-presidents, Spencer and Croft, traveled to Costa Rica for a service trip this summer where they helped those in need, Croft said.

“This summer, we both went on a service trip to Costa Rica,



COURTESY OF CHARLOTTE CROCKER

**Members of the Foreign Aid and Service Club hope to spread awareness about poverty in the world and help those in need.**

and we saw a lot of poverty. None of us really knew anything about it, so we decided to bring awareness because it’s not talked about

members.

“We encourage more students to join our club ... we post updates on our Instagram and have meetings weekly to brainstorm new fundraisers. We have organized two fundraisers and are planning a third,” he said.

The club will be selling bracelets at their next fundraiser to raise money and donate to those in need, Spencer said.

“We just ordered bracelets and hope to get them in before Christmas break ... we are going to be selling them for two dollars each to get more students involved,” he said.

Sophomore Megan Hurd, one of the first members to join the club, said the club has a great en-

vironment.

She said she hopes more students from various grades will join.

“I like that it’s a fun community that also values everyone’s opinions ... most of the students in the club are sophomores; it would be great to get more grades involved,” Hurd said.

Croft said he is very pleased with the way the club is turning out and is happy about all of the students who want to help.

“Going to Costa Rica really changed my perspective on how other people around the world live ... I am glad Hayden and I got to create this club and that so many students are interested,” he said.

**‘We encourage more students to join our club ... we post updates on our Instagram and have meetings weekly to brainstorm new fundraisers.’**

-HAYDEN SPENCER

## Foreign language teachers attend ACTFL conference

By Whitney Turner  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

High school foreign language teachers recently attended the annual conference of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, which was held in Boston this year.

The conference took place on Nov. 18.

“The ACTFL conference celebrates foreign language learning and instruction; it really strives to make teachers of foreign language better foreign language teachers,” Spanish teacher Robert

Bilsbury said.

Foreign language department chair Michelle Magaña said the experience began with a virtual speech from Chef José Andrés, founder of the World Central Kitchen.

“He emphasized the importance of learning languages because that is a way to communicate and create a connection with other people, so that was really a nice way to start the day off,” Magaña said.

Magaña said the department hoped to learn new teaching methods to apply to their class-

rooms.

“I think it was a great opportunity for people to recharge and learn a little bit more about their own instruction and how they can make improvements,” Magaña said.

The teachers each attended different workshops that focused on new teaching techniques and studying languages.

Foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato said she enjoyed learning about grading practices and updates to the French language.

“I personally was really excit-

**‘I think it was a great opportunity for people to recharge and learn a little bit more about their own instruction and how they can make improvements.’**

-MICHELLE MAGAÑA



WHITNEY TURNER PHOTO

**Head of foreign language Michelle Magaña attended the ACTFL conference in Boston.**

ed about moving away from old grades to ‘how kids are using the language’ grading, I loved that idea,” she said.

Bilsbury said a workshop that

resonated with him discussed ways to encourage students to use as much Spanish as possible, such as speaking activities using images.

“I’ve been actually using that since I got back from the conference, and I really love it,” Bilsbury said.

Magaña said she hoped the department would be able to collaborate with their newly acquired knowledge.

“It’s helpful if we can all go to different workshops and then come back and share what we learned,” she said.

The teachers agreed that this experience was beneficial and they hope to attend future conferences.

“It’s so awesome because there’s just a ton of positive energy about foreign language instruction,” Bilsbury said.



# DECA mock competition helps students prepare for Districts

District competition to take place early January at Endicott

By Phileine de Widt  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

To prepare for the Jan. 9 district competition, DECA held a mock competition with practice exams and role plays.

The competition took place in the cafeteria on Dec. 1. All DECA participants needed to be present, wearing professional business attire.

Students took a 50-question exam and presented a role play: a business scenario for which students must present a solution or idea. At the actual competition, students will have 100 questions instead of 50.

The role plays are presented to judges who, in this case, were

parents who volunteered, DECA adviser Barrett Alston said.

At Districts, the judges will also be people who volunteer, so this mimics the actual situation, he said.

Junior DECA officer Gabbi D’Andrea said the competition was a success.

“Everyone that was supposed to [come] ended up completing a role play and an exam, and we did it all in a timely manner,” she said.

**‘We can’t recreate the actual competition perfectly, but I think we managed to create a pretty unique environment.’**

-BARRETT ALSTON

There were some judges that did not show up, but D’Andrea said they were quickly able to fix it by rearranging

times and having Alston judge as well.

The DECA officers put in a lot of work to prepare for the event, she said.

“We had to find all the role



Junior DECA officers Gabbi D’Andrea, Ella Chafe, and senior Douglas Pratt helped plan a mock competition by printing out all exams, coordinating times, and finding role plays for students.

PHILEINE DE WIDT PHOTO

plays and exams and print them all out and then schedule everyone’s role plays. We met together at least once a week for the last month, and then the last week, we met pretty much every day,” D’Andrea said.

Alston thanked the officers for putting the event together and pulling it off.

“We can’t recreate the actual competition perfectly, but I think we managed to create a pretty unique environment,” he said.

Sophomore Emilia Kirkpatrick is new to DECA, and though she has practiced the role plays in class, this was her first time taking part in an organized competition, she said.

She said she found it was hard to concentrate in a big room with many people during the exam, but she knows now that for the actual competition she will need to focus on the key parts the question is asking and not getting distracted.

Overall, she thought the mock competition was helpful, specifically the role play, Kirkpatrick said.

“It was scary that [we] were presenting it in front of a judge rather than just [our] classmates, but I think it was good,” she said.

With the information from the exams and the feedback from the judges, Alston said he will form his lesson plans so that students are ready for the upcoming competition.

## Juniors win Powderpuff game against seniors

By Phileine de Widt  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After going into over-time, the juniors won 20-14 against the seniors in the annual Powderpuff game.

Though the game took place on Nov. 29, both teams started preparing earlier.

The junior team held their first practice on Nov. 23. The team was led by head coaches juniors Troy Flood, Stephen Martin, Henry Thurlow, and assistant coach Quinn Brady.

Junior captain Pippa Spingler said the first practice prepared the team well. The coaches set up a try-out situation, assigning people their positions.

“After finding out where we were playing, we ran plays the coaches had drawn up for us.



COURTESY OF JOHN MULLADY

Junior coaches Troy Flood, Stephen Martin, Henry Thurlow and assistant coach Quinn Brady celebrate with the junior players.

We were confident and got very hyped,” she said.

The senior team was led by senior coaches James Colbert, Cam Hubbard, Ben Hurd, Declan Kirk, Jesse Oliver, Henry Otterbein, Brennan Twombly and Danny Wood.

Though they did have practices, Oliver said his team was less prepared.

“The other team were try-hards. They put way too much time into it, so they could have their fluke win,” he said.

Being more prepared, Flood said, allowed the juniors to come out on top.

“The ladies had grit for sure. [They] wanted to come to the practice even more than the coaches, I think, which gave us good energy for the game,” he said.

From the start, the game was competitive, senior captain Ava Magnuson said, and there were some questionable calls that needed to be figured out by sophomore referees Sammy

Bothwell, Cian Brennock, and Carson Croft.

At the end of the game, with the score 14-14, both teams had one attempt to get a touchdown starting at the 25-yard line.

For the juniors, Caelie Patrick secured the touchdown, adding pressure to the seniors.

Giving it their final shot on the fourth down, the seniors made an incomplete pass.

After the juniors celebrated, a referee flag was on the ground, adding confusion.

Croft said he felt bad for the seniors, so he threw the flag; however, Bothwell said he saw offsides. After evaluation, the call was taken back, and the juniors were given the trophy.

At the end of the game, Patrick and junior captain Torrin Kirk

were named the offensive and defensive players of the game by the commentators Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury and social studies teacher John Mullady.

Both players scored individual touchdowns by running the ball well over 50 yards to the endzone, and Patrick also scored the game-winning touchdown.

In response to losing the Powderpuff game for a second year, since the current seniors fell to the 2023 seniors last year, Oliver still has hope.

“We’ll probably all reclass and take the victory next year,” he said.

Senior Calista Lai, who was unable to play due to injury, said the game was a great opportunity for team-bonding with peers.

**‘The ladies had grit for sure. [They] wanted to come to the practice even more than the coaches, I think, which gave us good energy for the game.’**

-TROY FLOOD

## CONTINUATIONS

### 9/11 VISIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
Many fall athletes were unable to participate in the field trip because of tournament games.

“We need to change when we go down so our talented athletes all get a chance to go [on the field trip],” he said.

### LGBT+ PRESENTATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1  
exists for LGBT+ students within the school, Baglioni said.

Senior and GSA president Wyeth Takayesu said the presentation was an opportunity to present

ideas and terminology the staff might not be accustomed to.

“We want people to acknowledge more than just our presence. We want them to acknowledge who we are, and acknowledging takes understanding, and to understand we need to educate,” he said.

Sophomore Joshua Cohen spoke to Perrotti about how English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton allowed his class to explore the possibility of Pip and Herbert from Charles Dickens’ “Great Expectations” having romantic feelings for each other, he said.

“Ms. Edgerton, rather than shutting it down, said, ‘Well actu-

ally, there might be.’ She showed us some articles that looked into queer studies in the novel, and that was very interesting,” he said.

Edgerton said it was impactful to hear how much it meant to the students.

“It was very nice to be reminded that those little things we do can have an impact,” she said.

Baglioni said the next step is to have awareness and acceptance carried on by the student body.

“[I hope] that we really unlearn and relearn in the proper ways that we have to, so that we can make everyone feel safe and supported,” she said.



WHITNEY TURNER PHOTO

In October, students voted the English department’s “Don’t Care Bears,” costumes as the winner of the annual faculty Halloween contest.



# Holiday Gift Ideas



Chris Glass

**Beat  
Headphones**  
Cost: \$200



BEATSBYDRE.COM



Anneliese Camp

**Black opium  
perfume**  
Cost: \$140



YSL.COM



Juliana Saunders

**Dior lip oil**  
Cost: \$38



DIOR.COM



Brian Rosen

**Freestyle  
Skis**  
Cost: \$400



CURATED.COM



Nate Gardner

**St. Croix  
Triumph Travel  
Fishing Rod**  
Cost: \$155



WALMART.COM



Lily Oliver

**Airpod  
pros**  
Cost: \$250



APPLE.COM



Brian Kelly

**PS5**  
Cost: \$500



PLAYSTATION.COM



Carson Croft

**iPhone 13**  
Cost: \$599-  
\$899



APPLE.COM

# Chess club expands membership, aims to host tournament in future

By Charlie Lations  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following its creation at the beginning of the school year, the Chess Club has grown rapidly in membership to 32 students and is looking to expand its activities in the future.

Currently, the club meets every Tuesday starting at 2:15 in the Learning Commons.

Junior and club co-president Troy Flood said he became interested in chess as a better alternative to mobile gaming as a solution to boredom.

“It’s almost like a workout for your brain ... instead of playing, like, a mobile game when you’re bored, I feel like it’s more beneficial to play something like chess,” he said.

Junior and co-president Stephen Martin said his interest in starting the club stemmed from his desire for a more organized setting for people to play chess.

“[My friends and I] wanted to learn how to play, but we didn’t know when to, so I kind of wanted to have a community thing,” he said.

Martin said he’s hopeful for the future of the club after seeing its growth in the past year and the presence of younger members.

Club adviser and history teacher Nicole Meuse said she’s been impressed by the



Chess Club members Troy Flood,Quinn Brady, Jan Vytopil, and Adrian Kuehnemund play chess in the library after school.

club members’ passion for chess. “I have never seen so many young people passionate about

chess, ever. They are probably the most energetic chess players I’ve ever seen – it’s not a quiet environment; they get into it,” she said.

Flood said that a goal he has for the club in the future is to secure funding and arrange a tournament for area

schools. “In the future I want to get some sort of grant or funding and maybe do a tournament, like externally: not just people in the school ... our goal is to get funding for it and get more people,” he said.

Martin said his favorite things about the club are winning and watching as the new members improve over time, learn new strategies, and win more games.

“Winning, putting people in checkmate – it’s really funny. But in all seriousness, I think that teaching the new guys how to play and using their skills to win is a really cool thing to see,” he said.

**‘In the future I want to get some sort of grant or funding and maybe do a tournament.’**

-TROY FLOOD

CHARLIE LATIONS PHOTO

# Juniors create landscaping business

By Caroline MacKinnon  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Juniors Erik Bischoff and Finn O’Hara run a landscaping business that offers varying services.

Bischoff said he and O’Hara came up with the idea for the business about a year ago.

“Finn and I were talking hypothetically in chemistry class about business ideas, and we came up with landscaping because we’ve been doing that for a while at our own houses,” he said.

At first, they only worked weekends and did mostly snow removal, but eventually they began landscaping during weekdays when the weather became warmer, Bischoff said.

Bischoff said they use lawnmowers, weedwackers, leaf blowers, snowblowers, and manual tools such as rakes.

“We do a lot of mowing and leaf blowing. We also do a lot of odd jobs. For example, I moved furniture once and planted bulbs. We adapt to what people ask us to do,” he said.

O’Hara said he and Bischoff



COURTESY OF FINN O’HARA

Juniors Finn O’Hara and Erik Bischoff hire people to work for them with their various jobs in their landscaping business.

hire people to work for them to help with their various jobs.

“We have a few friends that don’t work for us full-time, but we reach out to them when it’s a busy season like summer, and they let us know what their hours are,” he said.

O’Hara said the company does not have a name yet. He and Bischoff are still working on building their business.

“We do not have a name so far because this was our first summer, but it’s something that we are discussing at the moment because when we expand, we will want to add things like a name and new marketing items,” he said.

A typical work day starts around 8 a.m. when all workers meet at the job site. In the summer, more jobs typically are scheduled throughout the day, O’Hara said.

“Depending on how long each job takes, a day could end early afternoon around 2 or, for any workers up to it, later in the afternoon,” he said.

Bischoff and O’Hara hired junior Charlie Lations to work with them over the summer.

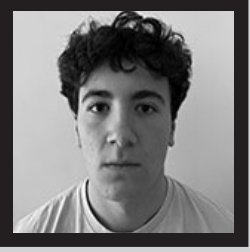
“When I worked with them, it was nice. They’re efficient and do a pretty good job overall. If I had my own lawn, I would probably call them,” Lations said.



**Freshman Zach Carvalho:**  
“My New Year’s resolution is to hit 250 on bench.”



**Freshman Cia Donahoe:**  
“To get good grades.”



**Sophomore Nicholas Brown:**  
“My New Year’s resolution is to be able to squat three plates for eight by the end of 2023.”



**Sophomore Sabine Cooper:**  
“To be more creative.”



## What is your New Year’s Resolution?



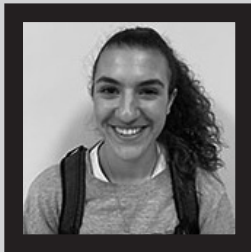
**Junior Finn O’Hara:**  
“My resolution is to drink a little bit of apple cider vinegar every day.”



**Junior Joanna Shan:**  
“My New Year’s resolution is to prioritize my mental health and get more sleep.”



**Senior Lucas Rodi:**  
“Probably to get my college stuff done.”



**Senior Kendall Newton:**  
“My New Year’s resolution is to go to bed earlier.”



# Robotics Team prepares for competition kickoff, teaches new members

VEX competition held to help develop, gain skills

By Avabella Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With an influx of new members, the Robotics Team is preparing for the Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) robotics competition season.

Senior captain Ella Warnock said they recently held a competition where they used robotic parts from the robotics company VEX. Members created miniature robots and competed against each other at the school.

She said the VEX competition helps develop skills that will transfer to the actual competition. Her favorite moment was seeing

a team build their entire robot by using two miniature plastic cans to pick up golf balls. Warnock said the day before the competition, the team realized their design did not work, so they taped two hands to their robot.

“I think [the team] got to experience a very scaled-down less stressful version of what our competitions are usually like,” she said.

Junior captain Ava Rizzico said the team will be traveling to New Hampshire on Jan. 7 for the official kickoff of the competition season. The team will start meeting every day for six to eight weeks in preparation.

Rizzico said they are rebuilding a mechanism from last year known as an “intake.” The robot will intake a basketball-sized ball and bring it over the edge of the robot to feed into a shooter.

Rizzico said the team building



COURTESY OF AVA RIZZICO

Members of the Robotics Team create their version of the VEX competition. Students used parts from the robotics company VEX to make their robots and compete against each other for practice.

the intake is one of their goals for the upcoming season and enjoys watching the new students learn.

“Our goal as captains is to build the team and create something sustainable for years to come,” Rizzico said.

French teacher and Robotics Team adviser Erin Fortunato said advising the team can be challenging since she did not have a

background in engineering, but it is also exciting to see how the students will collaborate at the competition.

“It’s really neat to sit down and watch kids I’ve only seen in language class work in this totally different way. They come up with neat ideas, and it’s cool to see them collaborate. It’s just an eye-opening experience,” Fortunato said.

There are also budgetary challenges due to significant competition costs such as registration and materials. Warnock said the team has held fundraisers and is working on ways to solve this issue.

“We also lacked a coach for a while, but now we have Ms. Fortunato as a coach, and she’s really helpful in keeping the team together,” she said.

# FIFA World Cup creates excitement among student body

By Alessia Omari  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Students have expressed excitement for the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

History teacher John Mullady has taken whatever time available to reinforce his students’ enjoyment of the World Cup.

“We did a game with all my classes where they picked a country at random, and if their country wins, they get a prize,” Mullady said. “I also try to stream the games during U-block.”

Sophomore Oliver Rodi said he is enthusiastic about supporting his favorite players.

“I know two people, Ronaldo and Messi,” Rodi said. “Even though they play on completely different teams, it’s fun to get excited over both.”

There has been a recent surge of enthusiasm towards the games from a surprising number of students, Mullady said.

“I think some kids who don’t typically watch soccer have been really enjoying it and have been getting caught up in the spirit of the contest,” Mullady said.

Sophomore Charlotte Grace said that she’s noticed that students watching the games have even interfered with her normal class periods.

“I’ll be doing my schoolwork like a good student, and I will see other students hiding their Chromebooks and phones in

their work so that they can watch the World Cup,” Grace said.

The unusual outcomes of the recent games may have also been a reason students find themselves to be interested, Rodi said.

“I’ve found myself rooting for Japan,” Rodi said. “They’ve typically been the underdogs, so watching them do surprisingly well this

year has definitely helped to get people more involved with the games.”

Many teachers in the building have influenced this collective surge of enthusiasm from the student body, Grace said.

“In my English class, my teacher put on the World Cup right after we had a quiz,” Grace said.

‘The World Cup is the biggest sporting event ever, and it’s hard not to get excited about it.’

-JOHN MULLADY



ALESSIA OMARI PHOTO

Students gather around a table in the cafeteria to watch the Brazil vs. Croatia game in the Quarter-finals of the World Cup.

The interest in the games and the overall reactions from the student body is to be expected, Mullady said.

“The World Cup is the biggest sporting event ever, and it’s hard not to get excited about it,” he said.

# Hornet mascot strikes debate

By Amy Vytopilova  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Currently, the school has two different Hornets as the mascot and a ME symbol representing the school, and students and staff have differing preferences.

An anatomically incorrect green and yellow Hornet, with a long nose like a mosquito is the official school mascot. Teams began using a different Hornet on their own uniforms, a green and black Hornet, which is favored by both athletes and coaches.

The yellow mosquito-hornet is the logo on the high school and Memorial School gymnasi-



A green mosquito-looking Hornet is currently the district’s mascot. Some sports teams use the Hornet on the right.

um floors and on the high school walls.

Principal Patricia Puglisi said that for the time being, the school will not be changing the mascot, but they hope to redesign the logo in the near future.

“The long term plan is that when we have to completely sand down the gym floor and can

replace the centerpiece, we will probably replace that with an ME and slowly look to phase out the Hornet,” Puglisi said.

Puglisi said that a 2017 athletic task force decided the community should be using one Hornet.

“The outcome of those conversations was we can’t have

two different Hornets. The ME is more the way that other schools are going in terms of what they’re putting on helmets and shirts,” she said.

Athletic director Cameron Molinare said the ME would be a strong logo to have, but it is up to the community to decide on the mascot.

“The ME is classy, timeless, and it’s a strong image as it combines Manchester and Essex ... I really like that concept. It’s cool to see both towns visually come together in a logo ... whatever we decide to use as an image as school, it should be something of strength, unity, and a bold symbol that shows us who we are,” Molinare said.

Boys’ soccer coach Robert Bilsbury said that he prefers to not have the current mosquito-

hornet placed on athletic uniforms, as it looks cartoonish and does not use the school colors.

Senior Declan Kirk said that he would rather have the smaller and more fierce looking Hornet as the school mascot.

“As an athlete who wears this uniform, I definitely prefer the newer Hornet, as the older one looks too much like a cartoon ... our school color is not yellow, so it does not make sense to have it as our logo,” Kirk said.

Bilsbury said that the logo should be the new Hornet, as it is a strong symbol of the community.

“I know we have the ME, but our mascot is a Hornet, and I think we need one on our uniforms that gives a sense of true Hornet pride that we want to come out with intensity,” he said.



# Greatest of All Time

Who is the better soccer player?

Messi

Mechi O’Neil

Lionel Messi, the Argentine soccer legend, has brought the sport of soccer to another level and has played a pivotal part in guiding his teams to numerous trophies, while also picking up many individual awards.

The question of who is better between Cristiano Ronaldo and Messi has dominated the minds of soccer fans everywhere for the past decade.

Many argue that Messi is simply a natural at the sport and hasn’t needed to work as hard as Ronaldo in order to become successful. This, however, can be proven wrong when looking at Messi’s early life.

According to an article from bleacherreport.com, Messi was diagnosed with a growth hormone deficiency at the age of 7.

When Messi was 13, he signed a contract with the FC Barcelona soccer club. This agreement was based on the fact that FC Barcelona would pay for his medical treatments.

Messi’s treatment consisted of injecting growth hormones into his legs, helping him grow.

Spanish teacher and boys’ soccer coach Robert Bilsbury said that Messi’s skills are unmatched when it comes to his ball control in tight spaces.

“When he is in traffic, he can quickly get through three defenders and make a pass to a teammate for a goal,” he said.

It’s difficult to ignore the statistics when comparing the two stars since Messi outshines Ronaldo in many categories.

According to FIFA World Cup Stats, Messi has scored 789 goals in 1000 games. On top of that, his assists tally stood at a staggering 348. All that was rewarded with an astonishing 41 career trophies. For Ronaldo, after 1,000 games, he had 725 goals, 216 assists, and 31 trophies.

Messi has also claimed the Ballon d’Or as the world’s best soccer player for a record seventh time in 2021, putting him two ahead of his rival, Ronaldo.

Not only does Messi showcase his creativity, agility, and natural talent but he is also a true team player. There are often situations in which multiple defenders converge on him, but instead of trying to beat them, which he can often do, he finds an open teammate who is in a better position. Ronaldo might be good, but Messi is the best in this regard.

Ronaldo

Phileine de Widt

When compared to Lionel Messi, Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo is the better player due to his talent, motivation and kindness.

As already known by the world, Ronaldo has insane skills that have allowed him to dominate the field since his debut as a 17-year-old in 2002.

Now, 20 years later at the age of 37, Ronaldo is still thriving as a player and making history. In the 2022 World Cup, Ronaldo became the first male soccer player to score at five different world cups.

According to the Messi vs. Ronaldo website, Ronaldo has scored 819 goals, which is more than Messi.

Ronaldo is also significantly faster than Messi, allowing him to swiftly proceed the ball forward or quickly get back on defense.

In a CBC article, writer Chris Bengel shares an interview with the greatest sprinter of all time, Usain Bolt, where Bolt comments on Ronaldo’s speed.

“Right now I definitely think he would be faster than me ... Ronaldo could run the 100-meter in less than 12 seconds,” Bolt said.

Ronaldo is a beast. In fact, famous Argentinian soccer player, Diego Maradonna once said, “Cristiano is a predator in front of the goal. Goalkeepers are scared of him ... They are not so scared of Messi ... because he doesn’t have the same power as Cristiano.”

In addition to his talent, Ronaldo has a great mindset.

In a 90 Minute article, writer Jamie Spencer shares Ronaldo’s former teammate Paul Pogba’s discussion on Ronaldo’s mentality.

“I see professional football players, many of whom are very professional, arrive early, do all the catching up and things like that. But there is someone who has been there every single day and hasn’t stopped. That’s Cristiano ... It’s his personality, he’s a winner, that’s for sure,” Pogba told the Muslim Money Guys podcast.

Further, Ronaldo has proven to be a good person off the field.

According to a Bleacher Report article by Sean Swaby, Cristiano was named the most charitable athlete.

“Ronaldo once donated \$83,000 to pay for a child’s brain surgery and used \$165,000 to fund a Portuguese cancer center,” Swaby wrote.

Ronaldo has incredible skills and qualities that make him stand out in the world, specifically in comparison to Messi.



ALESSIA OMARI ILLUSTRATION

## Corporations should be banned from using funds to lobby

Pharmaceutical profits should not be factored into government product decisions

By Gwendolyn Berger  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Corporate lobbyists from pharmaceutical companies should not be allowed to use money in their campaign efforts because it endangers the US. public’s health.

Pharmaceutical companies regularly engage in corporate lobbying in which they attempt to influence legislators that would affect their organization.

“The pharmaceutical industry spent nearly \$390 million on lobbying in 2021,” wrote Brooke Fox, author of a 2022 article called “Healthcare Companies Spent More on Lobbying Than Any Other Industry Last Year” for promarket.org.

A glaring example of the effects of this is Red 33 in the U.S. Red 33 and other synthetic colors are derived from petroleum and require a special label in the EU, wrote Barbara Woolsey, author

of the 2015 article “8 Ingredients Banned in Europe That Are Legal in the United States,” from thrillist.com.

Red 33 poses a risk, albeit low, of cancer, allergies, immunotoxicity, and developmental and reproductive toxicity. Pharmaceutical companies can still put it in their products because the Food and Drug Administration lists Red 33 as a safe additive for drugs and cosmetics, said drugs.com under “D&C Red No.33.”

Red 33 is only one among many examples of ingredients

legal in the U.S. that are illegal in other countries. For example, the food additive rGHB, is linked to breast, colon, and prostate cancer, Woolsey wrote.

Moreover, brominated vegetable oil is legal in the U.S. but it’s a flame retardant that scientists believe builds up fatty tissue and is linked to nerve disorders, she wrote.

These ingredients can be found in food and beauty/hygiene products in the U.S. despite being banned in multiple countries.

Interestingly enough, industry user fees from pharmaceutical companies pay 65% of the FDA budget for Human Drug regulatory

activities, reports fda.gov under “Fact Sheet: FDA at a Glance.”

The issue isn’t lobbying in itself, as that’s a healthy way for people to exercise their rights in

**The issue isn’t lobbying in itself, as that’s a healthy way for people to exercise their rights in a democracy. The issue is when corporations use money to influence governmental decisions.**

a democracy. The issue is when corporations use money to influence governmental decisions.

Money should not be allowed to factor into lobbying. It can be used to bribe politicians and lawmakers into making decisions and regulations that put the environment and public health at risk, undermining the integrity of the U.S. system of representative democracy.

“We had a hierarchy in my office in Congress. If you’re a lobbyist who never gave us money, I didn’t talk to you. If you’re a lobbyist who gave us money, I might talk to you,” said former congressman Mick Mulvaney at an American Bankers Association conference in Washington, according to the New York Times.

Statements such as these exemplify the role money plays in legislation and the advantage it gives lobbyists with funds versus those without. This creates an unfair system that needs to be altered.

Fortunately, banning corporations from lobbying with money is not illegal. A universal ban would be able to pass without violating any of the rights granted



FLICKR PHOTO

**Herbal Essences conditioners often contain harmful additives like Red 33 that can cause cancers despite being deemed safe for usage by the FDA due to corporate lobbying attempts.**

by the First Amendment.

Americans have the right to fair representation, which cannot be achieved if their elected representatives are being bribed by money and as a result are failing to protect the public from harmful ingredients.



STAFF EDITORIAL

Students should take action to limit waste during holidays

Students should work to limit their environmental impact this holiday season.

Garbage, food waste, electricity usage, and carbon emissions heighten during the holiday season, surging during the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day.

“Research shows that the amount of waste created during the holiday season ... increases between 25 and 43 percent,” the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control wrote in the article “Prevent Waste During the Holidays,” published on their website.

They warned that even though recycling also increases during this time, many non-recyclable goods such as ribbons, tissue paper, and glossy wrapping paper end up in recycling bins.

According to the article “Frequently Asked Questions: Holiday Waste Prevention” on

One surprising change to make is to opt for a real Christmas tree instead of an artificial one.

the website of the Stanford Recycling Center, “the extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage.”

Garbage isn’t the only type of waste that sees a surge during this season.

“The U.S. uses more electricity during December than some countries use all year,” the SC DHEC said.

There are many simple but effective solutions to limit holiday related waste without losing the spirit of the season.

LED lights are an accessible alternative to inefficient incandescent lighting, which uses a greater amount of energy.

Consider shopping locally, which will reduce unnecessary emissions, and buy gifts that are long lasting.

Students can also trade non-recyclable wrapping materials for reusable gift bags, paper products such as newspapers, or cloth bags and fabric wrapping



PXHERE.COM

Many non-recyclable materials, such as glossy wrapping paper, end up in landfills after the holidays.

that can be used year after year.

One surprising change to make is to opt for a real Christmas tree as opposed to an artificial one.

“Real trees help fight climate change, and even though your Christmas tree is cut down, you’re actually supporting for-

ests,” The Nature Conservancy wrote in their article titled “Real vs. Fake—Which Christmas tree is better for the environment?”

A majority of artificial trees are shipped to the U.S. from China, reported the U.S. Department of Commerce in their

article “U.S. Census Bureau Releases Key Statistics in Honor of the Holiday Season.”

This holiday season, students should remember to evaluate their choices and reduce their environmental footprint while there is still time.

FIFA should withdraw support for Qatar

By Wyeth Takayesu  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Qatar’s Treatment of LGBT+ fans during the FIFA 2022 World Cup has unveiled more issues of corporate corruption within FIFA surrounding its covering up of homophobic regulations that should not be tolerated.

Qatar criminalizes homosexuality by making public and private acts of homosexual punishable by imprisonment. Despite this, Qatar was selected in 2010 by FIFA to be the host country for the 2022 World Cup with the corporation’s full support.

As criticism over this choice has arisen, officials of FIFA have tried to calm fears over the treatment of LGBT+ fans at what should be an event for everyone everywhere.



ALESSIA OMARI ILLUSTRATION

Despite Qatar’s enforcement of openly homophobic legislation, FIFA continues to support the country during the World Cup.

In a public interview with ITV news, a British news broadcasting network on Nov. 16, FIFA Head of Fan Experience Gerdine Lindhout spoke about what fans can expect from the tournament.

“[LGBT+ fans] are welcome to express themselves. They are welcome to express their love for their partners. There is no risk; this is an official FIFA event and we would love to welcome them here,” Lindhout said.

This claim of acceptance by FIFA stands in stark contrast not only to Qatari law but also to past FIFA officials’ statements on the pushback.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino responded to the pushback against Qatar’s role in the 2022 World Cup in a Q&A conference on Nov. 19 but did not offer any planned actions to help LGBT+ fans coming to see the event.

Instead, Infantino defended

Qatar’s stance by accusing anybody who critiques Qatar’s policies of being a hypocrite.

“This moral lesson giving. [It is] one sided. It’s just hypocrisy ... You want to stay at home and say how bad they are, these Arabs, these Muslims, because it’s not allowed to be publicly gay. I believe it should be allowed. But it is a process” he said.

Nothing is above criticism, not least governmentally enforced homophobia backed by a multibillion dollar company through the use of coverups and fake morality. Other issues in other nations do not negate this corruption.

Unsuprisingly, the enforcement of homophobic regulations bled into the World Cup despite

FIFA’s assurances and Infantino’s shaming, leading to fans wearing a rainbow pattern on their clothes being targeted and detained for hours.

In an article written by Astha Rajvanshi on Nov. 22 for TIME Magazine titled “At the World Cup, Wearing a Rainbow Flag Could Get You in Trouble,” Rajvanshi shares the story of Grant Wahl, a journalist who was forced out of the stadium after refusing to remove a shirt bearing a rainbow on the front.

FIFA’s actions and statements are inexcusable because they support systemic discrimination. Making this corruption known and sharing the message that these actions cannot be tolerated can allow for the deeper conversation Infantino and FIFA as a whole seek to shut down.

Nothing is above criticism, not least governmentally-enforced homophobia backed by a mutibillion dollar company through the use of coverups and fake morality.

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INDEPENDENT

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

We welcome letters to the editor from MERHS students, faculty, and community members. All submissions must be signed. 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.

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GYMNASTICS



Lucy O'Flynn



Ava Fritsch

**Coach:** Chris Way  
**Members:** Lucy O'Flynn, Ava Fritsch, Aubrey Smith (not pictured)  
**Goals:** Work on new skills to compete with.  
**Player quotes:** "I joined the team in my freshman year, but everyone is at a different level. It's a mix. Some girls are just starting out, and others are trying to go to college for gymnastics."-Lucy O'Flynn  
"I'm looking forward to being able to see the environment and better prepare myself for when I go on the mat later this season."  
-Ava Fritsch

GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Calista Lai



Kendall Newton

**Coach:** Lauren DuBois  
**Captains:** Seniors Calista Lai and Kendall Newton  
**Record last year:** 6-16  
**Current record:** 1-1-0  
**Rival:** Georgetown, Triton  
**Goals:** Advance to the tournament and come together as a unit  
**Impact players:** Seniors Calista Lai and Phileine de Widt and Mechi O'Neil  
**Coach's quote:** "We have a lot of really strong players on the varsity squad this year, from a range of all grades."  
-Lauren DuBois  
**Captain's quotes:** "We have tried very hard to create a positive environment because I feel last year we did not achieve that and our record was not as great." -Calista Lai

BOYS' BASKETBALL



Brennan Twombly



Patrick Cronin



Sam Athanas



Eddie Chareas



Cade Furse

**Coach:** Tim St. Laurent  
**Captains:** Seniors Partick Cronin, Brennan Twombly, and Sam Athanas. Juniors Cade Furse and Eddie Chareas  
**Record last year:** 18-4  
**Current record:** 1-0-0  
**Rivals:** Georgetown, Burke, Randolph  
**Goals:** Advance far in the tournament, have a productive and fun season for both coaches and players  
**Impact players:** Captains, senior Ben Hurd  
**Coach's quote:** "The best part is we're returning six players who played a lot of minutes last year on a successful team. We're adding some variety as to how we do things and playing together as a team,"-Tim St. Laurent  
**Captain's quote:**"I'm looking forward to having a good time with the team and working together, having fun to win games." -Brennan Twombly

INDOOR TRACK

**Coach:** Nelson Desilvestre, Nicole Bembridge, Nick Valle  
**Captains:** Seniors Caroline MacKinnon and Jack Newton, juniors Finn O'Hara and Nate Gardner, sophomores Megan Hurd and Whitney Turner  
**Record last year:** 1-3-0 for boys' track, 0-4-0 for girl's track  
**Current record:** 0-1-0 for boys' track, 0-1-0 for girls's track  
**Rivals:** Hamilton-Wenham, Essex Tech  
**Goals:** Compete in CAL and strategize against opponents.  
**Impact players:** Captains, sophomore Sabine Cooper  
**Coach's quote:**""We have up- and- coming leaders, up- and- coming talent, and we have great talent that's already been here." -Nicole Bembridge  
**Captain's quote:** "We have a bunch of new kids on the team, and the first meet is kind of a trial, just to see where they stand and how they like the events that they're doing." -Megan Hurd



Caroline MacKinnon



Megan Hurd



Whitney Turner



Finn O'Hara



Jack Newton



Nate Gardner



BOYS’ HOCKEY

**Coach:** Kyle Nelson  
**Captain from ME:** Dougie Pratt  
**Record last year:** 8-12  
**Current record:** 1-2  
**Goals:** Beat Hamilton-Wenham, advance in league competition, host a home playoff game  
**Impact players:** Dougie Pratt (senior), Quinn Brady (junior)  
**Rival:** Hamilton-Wenham  
**Coach’s quote:** “Our experience this year is what’s really ... going to help us; we have a strong lineup.”  
-Kyle Nelson  
**Captain’s quote:** “We want to win the CAL, and I think that we have a good schedule and a good team to do that.”  
-Dougie Pratt



Finn Lawler



Jack Crompton



Dougie Pratt



TJ Brunner



Mark Pollock



Michael DeOreo

SWIMMING



Diego Sanson



Ava Magnuson



Erik Bischoff



Libby McKinnon

**Coach:** Caitlin Eramo  
**Captains:** Ava Magnuson, Libby McKinnon, Diego Sanson, and Erik Bischoff  
**Record last year:** 3-3  
**Current record:** 0-1  
**Goals:** Strategize strong relays, improve throughout the season  
**Impact players:** Sydney Hemme (freshman), Megan Graeter (freshman), Colin Conway (sophomore), Libby McKinnon (sophomore)  
**Coach’s quote:** “A lot of our swimmers are new, and the energy is almost a little bit higher than it was last year because there is so much new excitement for the sport.”  
-Caitlin Eramo  
**Captain’s quote:** “I think everyone’s goal is just to improve as much as possible throughout the course of the season.”  
-Diego Sanson

GIRLS’ HOCKEY

**Coach:** Brittany Smith  
**Captain from ME:** Lily Francoeur  
**Record last year:** 8-12  
**Current record:** 1-2  
**Goals:** Make it to the tournament, gain technical skills, motivate the team  
**Rival:** Gloucester  
**Coach’s quote:** “I want them to learn some life skills and hold them accountable for their mistakes.” -Brittany Smith  
**Captain’s quote:** “I want to help motivate the team outside of the ice and help communicate with the new girls because we have such a big roster this year.”  
-Lily Francoeur



Lily Francoeur

SKI TEAM



Lydia Schwartz

**Assistant Coach:** Jerry Murphy  
**Captain:** Lydia Schwartz  
**Record last year:** 2-10  
**Goals:** Enjoy the season, develop skiing skills, create team unity  
**Impact players:** Lydia Schwartz (senior), Grayson Crocker (junior), Sienna Crocker (junior), Aubrey Fritsch (sophomore), Maddie O’Grady (sophomore)  
**Coach’s quote:** “I want them to enjoy racing and develop good skills and have fun.” -Jerry Murphy  
**Captain’s quote:** “My goal is to have fun and bring together the team for next year.” -Lydia Schwartz



# Drama Club performs musical ‘Mamma Mia!’

Performers feel accomplished

By Ella Chafe  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After preparing since September, the Drama Club performed the musical “Mamma Mia!,” which features songs from the pop band ABBA.

The opening night performance was on Fri., Dec. 3, and additional shows were held on Sat., Dec. 4 and Sun., Dec 5.

Tyler Garofalo, a dance teacher at the elementary school and choreographer and director of the show, said the process began with learning all of the music. The cast then added the choreography, she said.

As they got closer to the production, the performers put the choreography and music together, and blocked out all of the scenes, Garofalo said.

She said that during tech week, which is the week before the crew incorporates live music, lights, microphones, and other equipment to the production for performance..

Garofalo said the production’s premiere was fantastic.

“From backstage, there were things that I could tell the audience was loving and things that I

could tell the actors were enjoying doing,” she said.

Garofalo said that there were a lot of chorus numbers that happened

offstage, which is specific to “Mamma Mia!.”

“For what seems to be a solo, there’s a lot of background music and harmonies,” she said.

Garofalo said the actors gathered around microphones so they could sing the harmonies and hear each other hit the notes.

Junior Natalie Brunner, who starred as Sophie, said that seeing the performance come together

‘From backstage, there were things that I could tell the audience was loving.’

-TYLER GAROFALO



COURTESY OF LONNA BRUNNER

Senior Lila Carpenter who played Ali, junior Natalie Brunner who starred as Sophie, and sophomore Alessia Omari who played Lisa performed “Honey, Honey,” the opening number of “Mamma Mia!”

made all of the long practices worth it.

She said her favorite part of the experience was getting to act alongside people she hadn’t performed with in a long time.

Junior Gabbi D’Andrea, who played the role of Tanya, said

there were a few unexpected circumstances, but the cast was able to overcome these and continue performing.

“One of the nights our bed broke, and during the other, the wheels weren’t locked, and it started rolling across the stage,”

she said.

D’Andrea said that the feeling of finishing the show was somewhat bittersweet for her.

“I feel very accomplished because I put a lot of work into the play and then presented it to a lot of people,” she said.

## Drama Club begins preparing for ‘Burglars, Bunglers, and Neighborhood Thieves’

By Wyeth Takayesu  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Members of the Drama Club have begun organizing this year’s performance for the Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild’s 90th Annual Drama Festival, aiming to utilize creativity and comedy to progress in the competition.

The selected show “Burglars, Bunglers, and Neighborhood Thieves,” by Daniel Munson, is a 25-minute, one-act comedy farce written for a cast of six. The story follows a team of burglars who aren’t quite what they seem, Drama Club adviser and director Gianna Baglioni said.

Baglioni selected the show because of the opportunities it offers for improvisation, creativ-

ity, and comedy in its 25-minute run time, which is much shorter in comparison to past shows ranging between 30 and 40 minutes, she said.

“I wanted this year to be more

about [the cast] in the sense that I really want [the cast] to take the reins in terms of creating a storyline ... This is a skeleton of a show; it doesn’t seem like there is much depth, so what can we do to make sure we’re adding depth?” Baglioni said.

Although the short run time of the show offers a chance for cast

and crew to build their own take on the script, it also poses a challenge to the actors who will have to create scenes and act them out to fill the empty time in the show, junior Josh Cohen said.

“It’ll definitely be difficult for us to get through since the script is so short, but I hope we can really make this fit together since there’s so many independent parts and spaces,” he said.

The show itself centers around deceit, as characters lie about their identities, causing another potential challenge as the actors work to maintain audience retention through improvised explanations, senior Annabel Smith said.

‘I really want the cast to take the reins in terms of creating a storyline.’

- GIANNA BAGLIONI



WYETH TAKAYESU PHOTO

Members of the Drama Club read over the 25-minute script for upcoming show “Burglars, Bunglers, and Neighborhood Thieves.”

“I think [the show] is very funny, and I like that there’s a lot of room for us to put our spin on it... the small cast and multilayered stories will be an interesting obstacle for us to overcome, though,” Smith said.

Auditions were held on Nov. 8, with the first rehearsal beginning on Dec. 9, giving the club just under three months to prepare for their first competition in the preliminary stage on March 4.

## Student groups perform at winter concert

By Hannah Davis  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After two years of pandemic restrictions, the concert choir, SoundWaves, and the concert and jazz bands performed in the annual winter concert on Dec. 15.

Two of the songs performed were original arrangements by choir director Allan MacTaylor, senior Annabel Smith and elementary school teacher Fiona Dooley.

“Last year even though we had our normal performance calendar and events, we still had masking and spacing issues to deal with.



COURTESY OF PATRICIA PUGLISI

The jazz band performed the opening theme song from popular television show “Cowboy Bebop” at this years winter concert.

This [was] our first year back with none of those,” band director Joe Janack said.

The students from the jazz band, directed by Janack,

performed “Tank” by Japanese composer Yoko Kanno, which is the theme song from the television show “Cowboy Bebop.”

After the jazz band, the concert

band, also directed by Janack, performed “Fragile” by Randall Standridge, “March and Dance of the Sugar-Plum Fairies” from “The Nutcracker,” “Of The Silent Night Begotten” by Matthew R. Putnam and “Wintertide,” also by Randall Standridge.

Senior Alexander Wolf, a member of the concert band and lead soloist of the jazz band, said he is extremely pleased with how the concert went for both bands.

“I’m really impressed by how well we came together for this,” he said.

The concert choir, led by MacTaylor, performed his original composition, “Bells,” “Glow” by Eric Whitacre “Throw Open Your Shutters” by Amy Bernon and “My Heart Is Offered Still to You” by Orlandus Lassus.

“Bells” was arranged by Mac-

Taylor for the choir. The concert was the first time it had been performed.

The SoundWaves, directed music teacher Fiona Dooley, performed “Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)” originally performed by Darlene Love and arranged by Dooley, “Last Christmas,” originally performed by WHAM! and arranged by Smith, “Carol of the Bells” by Mykola Leontovych and “Olivia” originally performed by One Direction, arranged by Dooley.

Smith, a member of both the choir and SoundWaves, said she is proud of the way the choir and SoundWaves were able to adapt after one of their section leaders was unable to perform due to illness.

“It shows how well we work together,” Smith said.



# Actor shines in Netflix’s new adaptation of ‘Addams Family’ ‘Wednesday’ breaks all-time viewing records

By Mechi O’Neil  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

“Wednesday,” a dark and compelling murder mystery, is Netflix’s newest hit due to a magnetic performance from actress Jenna Ortega.

According to Netflix, the Addams Family reboot was watched for 341 million hours in its debut by 50 million households, more than any other English language series on Netflix.

The Addams family first appeared as unnamed characters in a recurring New Yorker cartoon panel drawn by Charles Addams beginning in 1938. After a number of spin-offs in various

forms of media, the characters have become pop culture staples and have heavily influenced goth subculture.

The eight-episode Netflix series follows Wednesday as she attempts to solve a grisly murder that occurred in the woods outside of her new school, Nevermore Academy.

Wednesday, as good a character as she is, is not the best at solving mysteries, and points her finger at incorrect suspects a dozen times until the very last

minute of the season. The final explanation was predictable with clear clues that were easy to notice.

She also digs into the history of Jericho—the small town that hosts the school—and its founding father, Joseph Crackstone, a notorious witch-hunter who has a bloody connection to one of Wednesday’s ancestors.



NETFLIX.COM

In Netflix’s hit show “Wednesday,” up-and-coming actor Jenna Ortega plays Wednesday Addams, a troubled but compelling character who works to solve a murder that happened within her school grounds.

**Ortega’s interpretation of the stoic, morbid character is the main reason why the show works.**

Actors Catherine Zeta-Jones and Luis Guzmán feature largely in just one episode as Wednesday’s parents, Morticia and Gomez; the same goes for Fred Armisen who plays her Uncle Fester. Giving the show’s liveliest performance is Wednesday’s werewolf roommate, Enid,

played by Emma Meyers.

“Wednesday” is an okay show that is turned into a good one by an astonishing performance from Ortega. She has been on the verge of a major breakout role in the past few years with her performances in “You” Season 2, the new “Scream” movie and others.

Ortega’s interpretation of the stoic, morbid character is the main reason why the show works. Wednesday manages to be prickly, openly hostile, and unemotional while still being a compelling lead with enough humanity to make her a character that everyone roots for.

## Middle schoolers attend art night hosted by NAHS

By Gwendolyn Berger  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Middle schoolers were invited to a Holiday Art Night by the school’s National Art Honors Society chapter.

On Thursday, Dec. 8, the NAHS arranged a Holiday Art Night in the high school art room. All middle schoolers were invited to participate in holiday crafts with members of the NAHS; 10 middle schoolers attended.

The purpose of the Holiday Art Night was to encourage the younger students to explore the high school art program, the president of the NAHS, senior Lexi Hano said.

“Opening the program up to the middle schoolers is a great way to get more people interested



COURTESY OF LEXI HANO

NAHS students worked with art teacher Tamera Burns in organizing crafts and activities for middle schoolers on Dec. 8.

in art,” she said.

Hano emphasized the importance of bringing middle schoolers into the art room.

“It helps to make our art community a lot more welcoming,”

she said.

The middle schoolers could participate in a number of activities such as origami, snowflake-making, drawing, bracelet-making, cookie decorat-

ing, ornament-making, and even constructing marshmallow snowmen, Hano said.

The NAHS plans to support the arts in the school and community, said Vice President senior Jordie Cornfield.

“We want NAHS to have more of a presence in our community ... this year [we are] trying to become more involved in community service,” she said.

Members of the NAHS received volunteer hours for preparing stations, gathering supplies, or volunteering at the event itself, Cornfield said.

The NAHS treasurer senior Ella Warnock, who was responsible for setting up the stations and ordering materials, said the members of the NAHS were engaged in the event and excited to help.

“The participation from all of our members was really awesome,

almost the entire National Art Honors Society showed up,” she said.

Moreover, the middle schoolers seemed to have fun and enjoyed all the stations, Warnock said.

“I know the kids definitely had a lot of fun. At first they

were nervous because it was the high school, but the whole reason we did this was so that they

could be introduced to high school art,” she said.

By holding these events the NAHS can share the art community with the rest of the school, Warnock said.

“We have a really amazing art department ... with kids who do really amazing art ... I think it’s good for us to get out there,” she said.

**Members of the NAHS received volunteer hours for preparing stations.**

## Students join Memory Project, draw children around globe who are experiencing different hardships

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Students in art teacher Tamera Burns’ Portfolio and Studio Art classes have joined the Memory Project, drawing pictures of children from around the world who face many types of challenges.

“The students chose a photograph of the child they wanted to draw ... the picture contained their name, their age, what they hoped to be in their career, and three things about them that would be descriptive,” Burns said.

She said students used a dry media, colored pencil, and then followed tutorials on how

to create skin texture and skin tones. Burns said she paired it with learning how to use the grid system.

She said the project was chosen because it is important that students understand that the world is a big, but also small place, and we need to be aware that differences exist.

“It’s important because, as empathetic global citizens, it’s part of our ability to reach out and to learn more about other cultures,” said Burns.

The project was started by Ben Schumaker in 2004, with the goal to promote intercultural understanding and kindness between children around the world,

according to the Memory Project website.

Since it started, 300,000 youth in 55 countries have been involved in the school-based programs, according to the website.

“The project spoke to me as something that would give students a chance to learn about another part of the world,” art teacher Tamera Burns said.

She said the project is good for broadening awareness within students, and that it was well-received by students.

“I felt honored to participate and draw my person, since I know how impactful the drawings have been,” said Libby McKinnon, a sophomore in Burns’s



ISABELLE DONNELLAN VALADE PHOTO

Sophomore Libby McKinnon and senior Mason Moruzzi drew a young boy and girl from another part of the world in art class.

Portfolio Art class.

The drawings are hung up in the front hallway of the school, where they will stay until Jan. 10.

They will then be mailed to Wisconsin. From there, they will be sent to Nigeria, Burns said. She said it becomes a gift for the

children.

“[The goal is] to create a kinder world in which all youth see themselves in one another regardless of differences in their appearance, culture, religion, or circumstances,” according to the Memory Project website.