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Annual department Halloween competition continues

Students vote,
seniors trick-or-treat
during last block

By Phileine de Widt
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

To celebrate Halloween, teachers and seniors dressed up in costumes and participated in a traditional contest and trick-or-treating.

Annually, the departments compete against each other. This year's department costumes were literary genres (English), Expo markers, whiteboards, and an eraser (STEM and Special Education), "Home Alone" characters (social studies, academic center, and athletic director), "Bob's Burgers" characters (foreign language teachers Erin Fortunato and Robert Bilsbury), and getting their "ducks in a row" (school counseling).

After students voted through a Google form with pictures, the "Home Alone" ensemble won the competition.

History teacher Jennifer Michaud, dressed as Fuller McCallister, said, "I think this is the best work we ever put forward in this contest. We took it above and beyond this year."

Looking towards next year, she said, "[The social studies department is] looking forward to destroying the competition again."

Math teacher Lauren Woodcock dressed as a purple Expo marker for Halloween.

"I would love if we did a whole school theme where maybe teachers are minions, and Mrs. Sgroi is Gru or something that includes everybody," she said.

Seniors could also dress up this year as a senior privilege.

Senior Greta Gado came up with the added idea of in-school trick-or-treating for the class.

"The idea sparked as a way to make [Halloween] more of a memorable tradition and a way for the seniors to see all their teachers that they've had throughout the years," she said.

For 30 minutes during the last block of the day, seniors who



COURTESY OF LAUREN DUBOIS

For the annual faculty costume competition, the social studies department joined the academic center and the athletic director for a "Home Alone" group costume that won the student vote.

dressed up could leave their classroom and receive treats from faculty with their doors

open.

Like real-life trick-or-treating, teachers had bowls full of candy

and waited by their "front doors" to pass it out.

COSTUME CONTEST, page 3

Girls' flag football tournament excites students

By Mechi O'Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

This year's girls' flag football tournament, previously known as "Powderpuff," is now open to all grade levels and will be held tournament-style.

The event will take place on Nov. 22 on the high school turf, starting at 4:30 p.m.

The first game is the freshman against the juniors, the second is the seniors against the sophomores, and then the winners of both games play each other in the championship game, athletic director Cameron Molinare said.

The athletic department is dedicating the tournament to former player Anna Zerilli, who was the school's first female football player from 2015-2017, Molinare said.

"While brainstorming who to name [the tournament] after, I remembered that our football program used to have a very talented kicker on the team," she said.

Zerilli, a Rockport student, was a kicker for the Hornets for



INSTAGRAM/ TEAMJUNIORSPOWDERPUFF

The junior team for the girls' flag football tournament poses for a group photo after their first practice held on November 4.

three years before transferring to Proctor Academy. She will be attending the game at which an opening ceremony will honor her, Molinare said.

Although the tournament is later this month, teams have already started preparing.

Senior head coach Henry Thurlow said his team's first practice a couple of weeks ago went well.

"We're polishing up what we did wrong last year, which was mainly organization," he said.

The senior class, which won last year, is hoping to continue its streak and come out with another

win.

"I just can't make up a scenario in my head where we lose to any of the underclassmen," Thurlow said.

The juniors, however, are not going to make it easy for the seniors, junior Charlotte Crocker said.

"The juniors are going to take down the seniors no question. Even if it's rigged for the seniors to win, we will come out on top," she said.

Molinare said she has noticed the competitiveness among

FLAG FOOTBALL, page 3

Calculus project revolves around students cooking, baking foods

AP, honors classes turn recipes into problems

By Avabella Mitrano
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Math teacher Alicen Shaw assigned a culinary project that requires students to create their own problems for her Advanced Placement (AP) and honors calculus classes.

She said students were given a month to find a recipe and make a calculus problem out of every number in the recipe. They then had the choice to make the food for the class.

"Let's say that a recipe said we need three eggs. The student then needs to make a calculus problem that equals three," she said.

The grade is weighted out of 50 points, and the problems students created focused on both limits and derivatives in their projects since that is what they have covered content-wise, Shaw said.

"I did it last year, and the students seemed to enjoy it, so I figured I'd try it again this year. I think the students who really put a lot of time and energy into it had a stronger understanding of limits and derivatives after doing the project," she said.

She said her goal with the project was for students to gain a deeper understanding of the mathematics they were doing in class by reverse-engineering, wherein

students create problems they can solve.

Shaw said it can also be challenging for students to recognize that they can be creative in math, and she

hopes to place more emphasis on creativity in the future.

"Calculus is a challenging course, so these problems they are creating are very high-level problems ... but I think they are capable of the challenge. It's proof you can do hard things," Shaw said.

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Model UN club educates students about international issues

Members fundraise for children in need, discuss current events

By Bissy Mitrano
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Model United Nations is a new club that teaches students about how the United Nations (UN) works and about international diplomacies among other countries relating to the US, junior club president Charlie Langendorf said.

Model UN's primary objective is to educate students about countries and fundraise for people in need or unsupported programs, Langendorf said.

The club, which consists of

around 15 members, meets every three weeks, he said.

Model UN's meetings are becoming more consistent with the support of fundraisers and other club activities, Langendorf said.

He said he decided to bring the club to the high school after hearing that it was successful in other districts and because of his personal interest in foreign services.

So far, Model UN has held a fundraiser for the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), a charity dedicated to helping disadvantaged children or children in need.

'It is important to have a basic understanding of current events happening around the world.'

-JOANNA SHAN

The group collected a total of \$80, primarily by selling baked goods, junior club secretary Sam Heanue said.

The fundraiser was held at soccer and football games, Langendorf said.

Model UN often meets students' curiosity because the club "is something you hear a lot about but don't know a lot about," Sam Heanue said.

"I hear a lot of kids talking about it, and I have always been interested in it because I heard



BISSY MITRANO PHOTO

Junior president Charlie Langendorf conducted a meeting for the new Model United Nations club. They talked about climate change in different countries, preparing for a Model UN simulation.

GSA increases membership, works to expand awareness, acceptance of LGBTQ+ community

Club plans to release merchandise, create gender-neutral spaces

By Whitney Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With an influx of new members this year, the Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA) is hoping to increase awareness and acceptance of the club as well as the LGBTQ+ community, adviser and chorus teacher Ben Icenogle said.

Club treasurer senior Caroline Quinn said incoming freshmen make up a large portion of the club this year.

"Our group so far the last couple of years has been very small, so to have a large number of people interested and participating feels really good," she said.

This year, the group will be re-



WHITNEY TURNER PHOTO

Seniors Caroline Quinn and Ava Rizzico and sophomore Wren Shanks make plans for the year. The GSA meets every Monday.

leasing new merchandise for the public to buy, Icenogle said.

"We like it because it fundraises for the GSA and accomplishes the other goal of increasing awareness about GSA and about all of the issues we cover," he said.

Merchmaster senior Ava Rizzico said that though the club's merchandise last year was successful, many people found the hoodies too expensive. This year, merchandise will include smaller items such as socks, pins, and stickers, they said.

Last year was the first time the club released merchandise, so they have many improvements in mind, both relating to merchandise and other projects, said club investigator junior Josh Cohen.

As club investigator, he gathers information for the GSA, he said.

"We're sort of taking what we did last year, seeing what went well, and building off of it," Cohen said.

Another focus of the GSA this year will be working towards the creation of gender-neutral changing rooms, Rizzico said.

"We're working on trying to convert some spaces downstairs to gender-neutral locker rooms for transgender and nonbinary students and just people who feel more comfortable using that space because that doesn't exist,

and changing is a school requirement for gym class," they said.

Cohen said the club also plans to ask for input from the school community on what direction the GSA should take for the future.

"We've functioned as a safe space club; we've functioned as a more active group in the school when we got the gender-neutral bathrooms, and we are putting it out to the public asking what they want to see us do next," he said.

Rizzico said that they hope the GSA is able to bring more acceptance to the school community.

"Some people don't want to understand, and we can't help people who don't want to be helped, but if people maintain an open mind, we can educate them further on these issues," they said.

'We're working on trying to convert some spaces downstairs to gender-neutral locker rooms.'

-AVA RIZZICO

Debate team sends members, judges to compete at tournament

By Hannah Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Increased participation from younger students will help the Debate team grow this school year, junior co-captain Gwendolyn Berger said.

Junior Stella Straub is also a co-captain for the team. As co-captains, she and Berger help organize meetings, write cases that the team debates, and help younger students learn how to debate effectively, Straub said.

Debate coach emeritus Tim Averill, who first established a thriving Debate program at the

school, is continuing to volunteer to help the team grow and improve, Straub said.

The director of Debate, Nick Valle, has been a helpful addition to the team this year, Berger said.

Averill said having a larger team is helpful for students.

"When you have a lot of people debating, they all do research together, and they share ideas," he said.

The team sent three teams of debaters and three judges to the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League All Novice Speech and Debate Meet at Thayer Academy in Braintree, Massachusetts, on Oct 21, 2023.

Freshmen debate partners Bianca Torri and Logan Rushing were one of the teams that traveled to the tournament.

Torri said the tournament was a good first experience for new



HANNAH DAVIS PHOTO

Members of the Debate team met to discuss cases written by the captains and to teach the new students how to debate effectively.

debaters.

"There were a lot of people there willing to help," she said.

Straub said the tournament was helpful for students to learn more about how debate works.

"I think [the tournament] was good overall. I think our new [students] got a really good idea

of what the season is going to look like," she said.

Berger said one of the goals of the team is to raise money for transportation.

Straub said the team has a lot of forward momentum for the year and the season.

"I think we have a lot of good

new energy in the program ... we got a lot of new fresh ideas and enthusiasm about debate," she said.

Berger said she is looking forward to seeing the newer members grow and improve throughout the season.

"I'm really looking forward to seeing our [younger students] flourish. I think they're going to do a great job, and I'm hoping to grow the team," she said.

Straub said one of her goals for the season is to help the younger members of the team develop their debate skills and learn more about debating.

"I'd like to make sure that our [younger students] feel comfortable and supported throughout this entire season, and I want to make sure that they feel they can always turn to me and Gwen for help," she said.

Robotics Club teaches new members engineering techniques

Captains help facilitate learning with competition

By Gwendolyn Berger
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Captains of the Robotics Club organized a robot-building competition to induct new members, junior mechanical captain Cole Coté, said.

They said members have split into groups and are working on building their own robots with the help of the captains. The three captains are Coté, programming captain senior Ava Rizzico, and electrical captain senior Kate Bappe.

“The small-scale robot building we’re currently doing is mostly for the newer members to learn the engineering process

... they’re progressing very fast,” Coté said.

They said the team has a new adviser, digital learning specialist Matthew Tangney, and under his supervision, the team has been doing very well.

“He’s amazing. He’s very proactive, and he does have some knowledge about machinery, and he is also involved in the technology here, so that helps,” Coté said.

Previously, foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato had been the adviser, and she was also very helpful and invested, they said.

Coté said the Robotics Club is an important competitive club for STEM, with their first big competition, FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Engineering), starting in January.

“[Robotics] teaches kids ...

‘[The older students] are really running things, which I think is great, because it’s supposed to be about teamwork and leadership. If an adult comes in and tells them what to do, those things don’t happen as much.’

- MATTHEW TANGNEY



GWENDOLYN BERGER PHOTO

Middle-schoolers Asa Bardsley, Alec Rizzico, and freshman Thaddeus Bardsley collaborated on creating a small-scale robot to learn the engineering process for the robot-building competition.

skills such as the engineering process and gives [students] hands-on building experience, which is an amazing outlet for having fun,” they said.

Tangney said he was inspired to advise the Robotics Club after his own son, who attends a different school, had expressed interest in robotics.

“I thought joining on [as the adviser] was a good way to learn more about [robotics], and the team seemed like a really nice group of kids,” he said.

Tangney said although he fo-

cuses on showing teachers how to utilize technology, he is not trained in robotics or coding.

“[The older students] are really running things, which I think is great, because it’s supposed to be about teamwork and leadership. If an adult comes in and tells them what to do, those things don’t happen as much,” he said.

Tangney said he tries to answer questions when he can, and in the future, he hopes to grow his knowledge base to better assist the team.

Rizzico said Tangney has been very helpful with purchases they have to make, administration, and fixing technological problems.

Rizzico said that with a new adviser and members, they are excited to share their knowledge about robotics.

“My favorite part is the very beginning of the season when [the senior members] are teaching the younger members how to build a robot ... we’re like well, this is a wrench, this is a bolt, this is a nut, and here’s how you do it,” they said.

New part-time athletic trainers bring consistency, fill empty position

By Summer Demeo
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Two new part-time athletic trainers have been hired this year after the athletic department lacked a consistent trainer for the 2022-23 school year.

Brandon Mitchell and Johanna Sargent split their time at the school each week. Mitchell works on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and Sargent works on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Mitchell has been a certified athletic trainer for 16 years. He graduated from Boston University in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science in athletic training, he said.

He then worked as a graduate assistant at Michigan State Uni-



Athletic trainers Brandon Mitchell and Johanna Sargent both split their work time. Mitchell works on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays while Sargent works on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

versity where he earned his master’s degree in kinesiology with an emphasis in sports medicine.

After working as an athletic trainer for 10 years at the collegiate level, he assisted a spine surgeon for six years. Now he works at Coastal Orthopedics



SUMMER DEMEO PHOTOS

Associates where he collaborates with orthopedic surgeons, Mitchell said.

He wanted to come to the school to improve the quality of care given in the athletic program, and his ultimate goal is to treat all athletes, he said.

“I want to see everybody taken care of. It’s exciting to have the ability to come in using some of my knowledge and experience with setting up and growing sports medicine programs and being able to build medical resources,” Mitchell said.

Sargent previously worked as the athletic trainer at Andover High School for two years, she said.

She works with Mitchell at Coastal Orthopedics Associates as a medical assistant athletic trainer and also assists their orthopedic surgeons.

Sargent graduated from Lyndon State College in 2018 with a Bachelor of Science degree in exercise science. She then went to Merrimack College to earn her master’s degree in athletic training in 2020, she said.

She said she has enjoyed being an athletic trainer at a school again, especially in a smaller school than she had previously experienced.

“You get to know each of the

athletes really well, and you get to travel from season to season with them, and I think that’s really fun. At a bigger school, you don’t really get that,” Sargent said.

Athletic director Cameron Molinare said Mitchell and Sargent have gotten to know most of the student-athletes very quickly and have already been forming connections with the community.

In past years there hasn’t always been a strong level of trust between athletic trainers and students, she said, that is not the case this year.

Molinare said it has been helpful to have a male and a female athletic trainer to help make all student-athletes feel comfortable going to the trainer.

“Having people that are real-ible and knowledgable, having people with a ton of experience has made it so athletes are wanting to go into [the trainer’s room] for everything they have. We can catch injuries earlier and help prevent them,” Molinare said.

CONTINUATIONS

COSTUME CONTEST CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Senior Gabbi D’Andrea, who dressed as a ranch dressing bottle, said she felt “ecstatic.”

“I got so much candy. I love Halloween,” she said.

D’Andrea also mentioned her appreciation for the teacher costumes, giving an extra compliment to the “Home Alone” look.

FLAG FOOTBALL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

grades, especially the rivalry between the juniors and seniors.

“The excitement around it is really fun, and I’m excited for it,” she said.

Molinare hopes the tournament will become a tradition that happens every year on the day before Thanksgiving.

CALCULUS PROJECT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

She said she heard about the project from a colleague during their AP training and loved how excited students were about it.

“It’s really just something fun for them. Both classes have been working so hard, and it’s just a way to say okay, let’s take a deep breath, have some food, and look

at recipes,” Shaw said.

Senior Joanna Shan said she enjoyed the creative aspect of the project and thought that it was beneficial to her math understanding.

“The baking is my favorite part. I made a tiramisu crepe cake which was very exciting ... It wasn’t too hard, but it was challenging enough to make us think about things differently,” Shan said.

Although projects can be time-consuming, Shan said she thought they were given a good amount of time and hopes other projects are similar.

“It took me a little bit longer than a test, but it’s definitely more

fun. It’s worth it to me,” she said.

Senior Katherine Bappe said she thought the project was an interesting way to incorporate math with practical applications.

“I like that it adds something fun to doing math, and you’re not just groaning about doing some mundane problem. It makes it different from my everyday school assignment,” Bappe said.

Shaw said she hopes to incorporate more projects across all of her classes in the future.

“It allows students to be a bit more creative and think outside the box. I think it’s more fun, more applicable, and I get to learn more about what [students] are actually interested in,” Shaw said.



COURTESY OF ALICEN SHAW

Senior Joanna Shan created a tiramisu crepe recipe with AP calculus problems for her culinary assignment.

Morgan’s Message emphasizes mental health awareness

New chapter organizes dedication games every week

By Avabella Mitrano
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In order to spread awareness about mental health among athletes, senior Greta Gado created a school chapter of Morgan’s Message, a non-profit organization dedicated to Morgan Rodgers, a Duke University lacrosse player who committed suicide in 2019.

Gado said she brought the idea for a Morgan’s Message chapter at the school to athletic director Cameron Molinare, the club adviser

“Student-athlete mental health really resonated with me because of personal issues but also because I’ve been a part of the team environment of sports for a majority of my life, so I thought it would

be such a good idea to bring this to the school,” she said.

Gado said the leaders of the chapter are known as student ambassadors, which include seniors Pippa Spingler, Henry Thurlow, Quinn Brady, and Caelie Patrick. Student ambassadors lead meetings together and participate in sports.

Student ambassador senior Pippa Spingler said the chapter hosts meetings once a month where they focus on a specific mental health topic and discuss concerns openly with one another.

‘I think mental health is not widely recognized in our school ... so we wanted to make this an opportunity, not just for athletes.’

-PIPPA SPINGLER

“I think mental health is not widely recognized in our school ... so we wanted to make this an opportunity, not just for athletes, but for anyone who just wanted another

resource. We’re going to try to foster a comfortable environment,” Spingler said.

Gado said each athletic season



COURTESY OF CAMERON MOLINARE

The girls’ varsity soccer team poses in their Morgan’s Message T-shirts before their dedication game against Lynnfield. Each varsity sports team was given T-shirts to spread mental health awareness.

will have a week of dedication games, which are specific games dedicated to Morgan Rodgers. They are aimed to spread awareness to the community and fundraise for donations to the organization.

They made Morgan’s Message shirts for the soccer, football, field hockey, and football teams and are making a concerted effort to involve the coaches, she said.

“It’s hard not knowing how many fans are going to be there or how many people we can

reach ... but we’re getting the message out even if it’s just one person. Bringing more awareness and attention to mental health helps us so much,” Gado said.

Molinare said that since the club grew from 20 to 70 members, there is a clear need within the school community for students to seek out mental health resources.

“I think creating another resource for students to get together to not only see that they’re not alone through their struggles

but to have each other for support while they’re dealing with challenges is really important,” she said.

Molinare said she has always been passionate about mental health and has a goal of growing the chapter even further.

“We’ll be graduating our current student ambassadors, so we’ll have to transition to new student ambassadors and then make this a lasting program and maybe bring in some outside speakers too,” she said.

Foreign language teacher leads ghost tours in Salem

By Sabine Cooper
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato gives ghost tours in Salem at night with U.S Ghost Adventures.

Growing up, she was always interested in the history of the area, Fortunato said.

Her interest in Salem history and the Salem witch trials inspired her to start giving tours, she said.

Fortunato said the ghost tours allowed her to explore the history of the town further.

“I get to tell a lot of history and learn a lot more about [Salem],” she said.

In addition, there is a lot of

misinformation about the history of Salem, Fortunato said, which is another reason she started giving tours.

“I’m trying to make sure people have the correct information ... there are a lot of incorrect assumptions about either the witch trials themselves [or] the history of Salem,” she said.

Despite her history with theater and drama, Fortunato said the ghost tours are unlike anything she has done in the past.

French teacher Caroline Coshow said the tours are a good fit for Fortunato.

“She loves history, and she likes to communicate and talk to people,” Coshow said.

Fortunato hopes to continue

giving tours all year, she said, though not as frequently as in October, when she was giving tours up to four nights a week.

According to U.S Ghost Adventures, the tours, which include a guided walk through Salem, range anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes.

Even though fall is the most popular season, there is still a demand for tours in the early winter and spring, starting in March, Fortunato said.

Senior Kate Bappe said she attended a tour run by Fortunato on Oct. 21.

“It was nice to learn about the history and stuff I don’t know a lot about,” she said.

Bappe said she liked that Fortunato included some ghost stories along with the history.

“It was all very interesting, and I would go again,” she said said.



COURTESY OF ERIN FORTUNATO

Foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato poses for a photo in Salem when giving a ghost tour for U.S Ghost Adventures. The tours range from 60 to 90 minutes and include a guided walk.

English teachers update their senior electives

By Whitney Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Inspired by their personal interests, English teachers Daniel Koughan and Angie Rice have made changes to their senior English electives, they said.

Koughan created two new senior electives this year. One focuses on the Irish and French playwright Samuel Beckett and the other on the Coen brothers, American filmmakers.

The electives are during the second and third quarters.

Koughan said he was inspired to create a class about Beckett



WHITNEY TURNER PHOTO

Seniors in Angie Rice’s Memoir English elective listen to an audiobook from David Sedaris in class while taking notes.

because he has loved his work since he was in high school.

The class will read one of Beckett’s most famous plays, “Waiting for Godot,” as well as other more experimental and shorter plays, he said.

“That play broke every rule of theater that you could imagine being broken, even things like plot. It’s fair to say there is no plot, other than waiting for Godot,” Koughan said.

He said Beckett writes very

metaphorically and includes large philosophical ideas in his work.

“I don’t know how the students are going to respond. I love it, but ... it’s not for everybody. It’s dark and bizarre,” he said.

Senior Erik Bischoff said he enrolled in the class to learn about new perspectives.

“The reason I wanted to take it is because [the plays] didn’t really follow the normal conventions, and I wanted to see what exactly that entailed,” he said.

Koughan said his elective about the Coen brothers will involve watching approximately seven of their films, including “Fargo” and “No Country for Old Men.”

Koughan said he enjoys getting to create classes around topics that interest him.

“I think that’s one of the cool things about the senior elective courses – the teachers are teaching them because they want to teach them,” Koughan said.

Rice said she has updated her three-year-old, first-quarter Memoir elective by choosing a new book for students to read.

“This year, everyone reads ‘Born a Crime’ by Trevor Noah, about his childhood in apartheid South Africa. He is also a comedian, so there’s a lot of humor that is sprinkled throughout,” she said.

Her goal is to ensure that all of the media the students consume fits into the theme of “belonging,” Rice said.

Senior Ella Hammer said she enjoyed the way the class, as well as memoirs in general, highlight new perspectives.



COURTESY OF JULIE SGROI

Principal Julie Sgroi enjoys a hike in nature with her husband and two children, ages 9 and 10.

Science teacher William Novak naps with his daughter, Natasha Novak, age six.

Faculty members balance parenting, teaching roles

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Members of the faculty who balance their job with their parenting said they develop strategies to be their best at both roles. Social studies teacher John Mullady has three children ranging from 6 to 11 years old. He said he tries to complete his tasks while at school or at night.

“I just really try to get some work done here or while the kids are asleep so I can be involved with their sports and their clubs and just being around to help them out,” he said.

Science teacher William Novak, who has three children ranging from 5 to 11 years old, has a similar strategy.

“I have to be as efficient as possible during the school work day because I don’t have any free time when I get home,” he said.

Faculty agreed that maintaining schedules is helpful because of how busy they are.

“[My kids] do a lot of sports, so my typical day is coming home from school, getting unpacked, and shuttling them to activities, while at the same time trying to get dinner prepared and manage the household,” Novak said.

Science teacher Joshua Wladkowski, who has two children under 4 years old, said he sets boundaries for himself so he can alternate being fully dedicated to one role.

“I’ve made it a rule that once I leave here, I don’t do work. I can’t go around and do activities if I’m constantly thinking about my job,” he said.

Dean of Students Elisabeth Drinkwater also sets personal boundaries when balancing work

and raising her two children, ages 7 and 11.

“I try to have boundaries, like not checking my email when they’re awake, or when we all get home in the afternoon, I put my phone away so that I can really be with them,” she said.

Principal Julie Sgroi said having specific times dedicated to her family is important.

“I try very hard to have dinner as a family as often as we can. Dinner is kind of a big part of our day. We can talk then ... so I make a point to make that time

sacred,” said Sgroi, who has a 9- and a 10-year-old.

She said figuring out how to juggle the roles was difficult.

“I think it’s one of those things we just do as parents, and [we’re] always trying

to figure out how to do it better,” Sgroi said.

Sgroi said a big struggle she faces is dividing her time equally.

“I wish we could change the expectations on both sides, the expectations of being a parent and being everywhere at once, and the expectations of educators to always be in front of their classes,” Sgroi said.

English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton has two children, ages 6 and 8, and has similar difficulties.

“It always feels like I could be giving more attention to the place that I’m not giving it. But I think that the goal is to just be present in what I’m doing,” Edgerton said.

Edgerton said she faced challenges when her children were younger because a lot of daycares and preschools are expensive, or they don’t cover the entire time a parent needs.



COURTESY OF WILLIAM NOVAK

“A societal change that would help so many working parents is better childcare in the young years before elementary school starts, like some sort of universal childcare program,” she said.

Drinkwater said she also remembers having difficulty during this age period with everything she had to focus on.

“I really didn’t have a break because when they went to bed at night, that’s when I would correct papers, make a lesson plan, things like that. It was like you’re always just focused on something,” she said.

Novak said he had a different experience.

“When they were younger, I felt like I had more time, but now with the stage they’re at, I don’t have any extra time,” he said.

A common opinion among faculty is that working with other parents creates an environment in which they can support one another.

Having colleagues in similar roles provides opportunities to be part of a community, Drinkwater said.

“I think a lot of the staff are in the same position, and it’s necessary for people to understand and have empathy for what’s going on ... so it’s totally great to have that community of colleagues in the same position,” she said.

Faculty also said the administration is very aware of what parents need to do to support their children.

“If there’s an emergency and I have to leave or stay home, the people here are understanding about family,” Mullady said.

Faculty agreed that everyone in the school is considerate about teachers who need to take time off of work in order to take care of their children.

“The administration has been more than kind with me needing time off for my kids being sick. They’re very understanding about things like that, and they’re very understanding about parental leave,” Wladkowski said.



Freshman Shields Edgerton: “Bobby.”



Freshman Oliver Crowley: “Kyle.”



Sophomore Riley Mckinnon: “Tom.”



Sophomore Zac Carvalho: “Gobbles.”



What would you name your pet turkey?

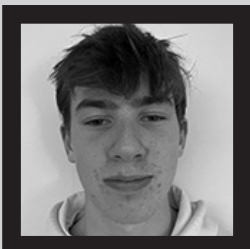
Junior Libby McKinnon: “Norman.”



Junior Cian Brennock: “Markus.”

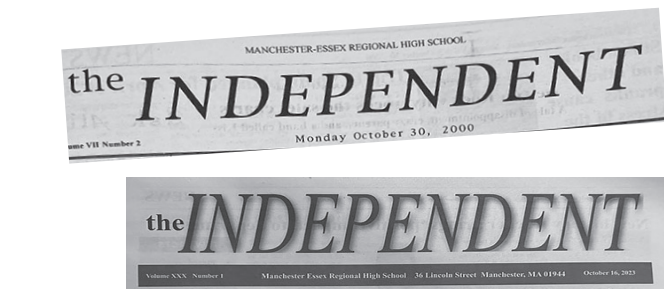


Senior Paul Coughlin: “Chicken.”



Senior Vivian Friends: “Vivian.”





Technological improvements impact The Independent

By Phileine de Widd
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Looking back through the 30 years of The Independent’s archives reveals the technologies that have advanced the journalism process and the paper.

In 1993, student Matthew Graves requested the creation of a school newspaper, which fostered the origin of The Independent, said Tim Averill, former English department chair and journalism adviser.

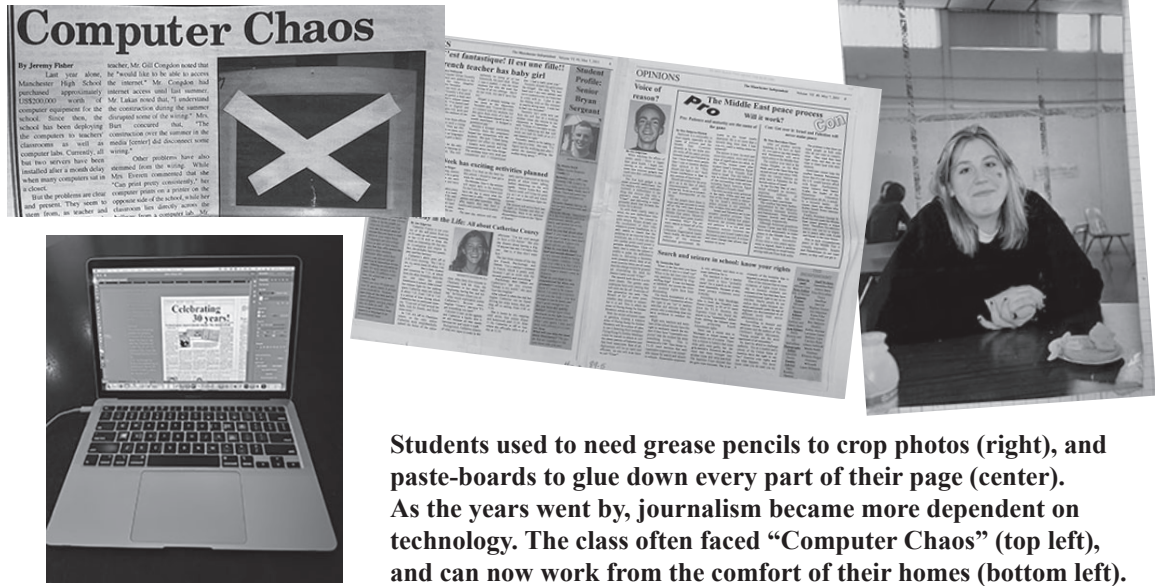
When Mary Buckley-Harmon, current journalism adviser and English teacher, was hired in 1997, Averill said he gladly turned the newspaper over to her as “she was brilliant.”

Articles would be printed out in columns and had to be pieced together and lined up with glue on a pasteboard, Buckley-Harmon said.

Photos were developed downtown, meaning nobody knew the outcome of the photo until then, she said. To shape out the height and width needed, students used grease pencils and pasted the photos to the place they wanted on the boards.

To lay out their pages, students used the program Publish It Easy.

Buckley-Harmon said after printing from their Macintosh Classic computers and pasting



Students used to need grease pencils to crop photos (right), and paste-boards to glue down every part of their page (center). As the years went by, journalism became more dependent on technology. The class often faced “Computer Chaos” (top left), and can now work from the comfort of their homes (bottom left).

all the work, she would proofread the entire paper, submit it to the principal for review, and then deliver it to the Salem Evening News, who printed the paper free of charge through their Newspapers in Education program.

Buckley-Harmon would then collect the printed issues the next day for distribution at the school.

In October 2000, the Salem Evening News took on the printing of the Lynn Daily Item and could no longer print The Independent. Buckley-Harmon found J&S Printing in Birmingham, Alabama, to print and mail the paper after she mailed them the paste-ups.

From 1997 to 2001, current English teacher Allison Krause was a journalism student and ultimately

editor-in-chief for Buckley-Harmon.

She described the journalism process as “primitive,” saying other than typing the article and laying out the page, “n o t h i n g was digital.” Especially with the layout process, which all had to be started on Mondays at 6:30 p.m., she said the work was difficult and long, sometimes lasting until after midnight.

“It was plagued by technical difficulties constantly, but we got it done,” Krause said.

After a switch to Quark for layout, the process became slightly more advanced. Instead of lining up words with glue, pages could be printed in full sheets.

‘You can’t be afraid to change things. It always ends up happening that once you make a change, it makes something easier.’

-MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON

Quark was the program used by most newspapers at the time, and it continuously offered updates, which eventually were no longer compatible with the school computers.

The school then switched to Adobe products, including Photoshop and InDesign, which the class still uses today. These programs, which can be downloaded on personal computers, allowed the class not only to continue working but also to successfully produce the paper during COVID and Zoom school, she said.

The class also switched from typing articles in WORD, which was once the only compatible program with Quark, to Google Docs, which allowed her and the students to edit online rather than on hard copies of articles.

Two years ago, though keeping the Adobe products, the school switched from VMware to Creative Cloud software, which allows students to work on their pages from home without having to wait for a lagging computer program to download.

Though in-person classes on Monday nights are still essential, being able to work on articles, edits, and pages throughout the week has been beyond beneficial to class timing and the overall success of the paper.

On experiencing the changes of the technology of The Independent over the years Buckley-Harmon said, “I realized you can’t be afraid to change things. It always ends up happening that once you make a change, it makes something easier. It makes it flow better.”

Years of reporting reveals changes in culture, traditions

By Libby Mulry
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For over 30 years, The Independent has documented the ever-changing school culture.

The school paper covered major school events, such as the regionalization of Manchester and Essex in 2000 and the building of the new school in 2009, and global events like the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

The joining of the two towns brought with it social divisions largely unseen today.

“Regionalization was a big deal when I was in high school, and now it isn’t really; it’s just accepted,” English teacher and former student Elizabeth Edgerton said.

Divisions also sprouted from homosexuality when “The Shared Heart,” an exhibition that displayed photos and perspectives of gay teenagers, visited the school library in 1999.

Editor Laura Rooney reported in “Shared Heart” opens local minds” for The Independent that residents “expressed concerns” that depictions of gay students and their experiences “were inappropriate.”

The first chapter of the Gay Straight Alliance formed at the school a year before, giving queer students a safe space, and in 2022 the Gender Sexuality Alliance continued its fight for under-



Over the years, The Independent published articles covering important topics like the Shared Heart exhibit and smoking in school.

represented students by hanging up all-gender restroom plaques around the school.

“I think it’s good to focus on the progress that we’ve made and in general. We’re far from perfect, but we’re much more accepting than we were back then,” said English teacher and previous editor-in-chief of The Independent, Allison Krause.

Another issue facing the school community in the late ‘90s was students smoking cigarettes in the bathrooms.

The cigarette problem of 1999 turned into the cough medicine usage and marijuana smoking of 2005, which then presented itself as the current vaping problem.

To deter substance abuse at the prom, the school recruited students from the drama department to recreate drunk driving accidents, said Krause, who was one of the actors.

“It’s a deterrent to try and get

kids to realize that your decisions can have major consequences,” she said.

This and other traditions have been lost to the past.

Humanities Week, where people in differing humanities professions would present to students, has not been held in years, Krause said.

“We had poetry slams, graffiti artists, and documentary filmmakers who were nominated for an Oscar,” she said.

Another tradition, the Haunted House, a fundraiser for the senior class, was discontinued with the construction of the new school in 2009, Edgerton said.

Some things continue to stay the same.



The parking restrictions of 2007 continue to harrow even the most apt student driver.

And the gambling problems of 2005 and 2022, in which male senior students played poker with money during class time, have striking parallels.

The school paper covered major school events, such as the regionalization of Manchester and Essex in 2000.

The fashion of the 2000s has also made a comeback. Some fads were thankfully lost to time, but the Birkenstock B o s t o n s , featured in

Amanda Johnson’s “What to buy” in 2006 have reappeared in trend cycles.

The foreign language department has experienced similar cycles.

The world language program was extended to kindergarten in

1998, but with budget cuts over the years, has not experienced similar reach since.

The foreign language trip was cancelled due to a travel ban in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, an Icelandic ash cloud, and the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which The Independent covered.

Over the past 30 years, the paper has won awards from student press organizations, including an All New England award from the New England Scholastic Press Association.

English teacher Mary Buckley-Harmon, who has advised the paper since 1997, said that throughout the changes of the school, the dedication of journalism students has stayed the same.

“My students want to be a force for good at their school and in the world, and that has kept me inspired and grateful throughout the 27 years that I have been teaching the class,” she said.

Former Student Speak: What is a memory you have from class? What do you do now? What skills did journalism teach you?

Charlie Davis, 2016, editor-in-chief



COURTESY OF CHARLIE DAVIS

“I will always remember the Valentine’s Day issue when I was a sophomore—all the guys on staff gave dating advice with our heads on little cupid’s!”

“I am currently in my last year of law school at BC, and I will be working at a law firm in Boston next year.”

“The journalism class and Ms. B-H taught me irreplaceable writing and editing skills that I use every day for all sorts of legal work!”



Charlie Davis, grade 10: “Run by her house every day.”

INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE

Oli Turner, 2021, editor-in-chief



COURTESY OF OLIVER TURNER

“The staff of The Independent cared so deeply about our work. Coming to college, I realized that not every high school paper holds itself to as high of a standard as The Independent does. I will always remember the passion Ms. B-H passed onto the staff of the newspaper and how much care she used when teaching us the most effective way to write, edit, and design. I carry all of those skills with me today, and in my role as managing editor at The Emory Wheel, I find myself teaching the style tips Ms. B-H taught me at The Independent. She used to tell us, ‘You would say ‘I said’ but never ‘said I’ to remind us of the proper format for dialogue tags: ‘Name said.’”

“I am a junior at Emory University in Atlanta, studying English & Creative Writing with a minor in Rhetoric, Writing, & Information Design. I am a managing editor at The Emory Wheel, Emory’s student-run independent newspaper, and my article “Notes from Underground Atlanta’s DIY arts scene” was published in Atlanta Magazine in September.”

“When I first joined the staff of The Emory Wheel, I was so grateful to Ms. B-H and The Independent for teaching me everything I knew about AP Style and InDesign layout. Those were crucial skills coming onto my college newspaper, and I found that knowing them so well gave me an advantage. There’s already so much to learn when you begin writing for a new newspaper, so knowing AP Style and InDesign checked that off the list! I was able to quickly progress to an editor position because of my skills from The Independent.”

Annelise Buzaid, 2009, editor-in-chief

“I have very fond memories of late layout nights in the library of the old school building and our end-of-year journalism celebration at the Fortune Palace. I also loved going into Boston for [The New England Scholastic Press] statewide journalism event. We were a bit intimidated by Newton South High School’s Denebola, but The Independent held its own and took home a few awards!”

“I’m the Sr. Director of Research at the Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. I do research focused on issues facing public education with a goal of informing education policy and practice decisions.”

“Skills I learned in journalism have an enormous impact on my career to this day. Every week, I lead interviews and focus groups with students, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to inform research projects. Journalism taught me how to ask questions in a way that lets people open up and tell their stories. Journalism also taught me to take complex information and make it digestible for a broad audience. That’s a critical skill in producing actionable research, which is our goal at the Rennie Center.”



COURTESY OF ANNELISE BUZAID

Maura Driscoll, 2011, opinion editor, columnist

“We were a tight-knit group during my years on the Independent (Journos Inferno), and we spent almost all of our time laughing. I made, and deepened, so many wonderful friendships ... some of whom remain my closest friends to this day. Ms. Buckley-Harmon created a welcoming, inquisitive and fun environment for us to challenge ourselves and explore our creativity. We often still reminisce on how much fun we all had together during journalism. Best class I ever took!”

“After many years as a member of Governor Charlie Baker’s press and communications team, I ... now lead media relations and external communications for Consigli Construction Co., Inc., a large construction management firm.”

“The skills I learned in journalism class are the best tools ... for success both inside and outside the classroom. As a direct result of my experience with the Independent, when I started college, I was offered an internship in Union College’s Office of Communications and Marketing ... The Independent laid the foundation for the skills and talent development that made me into the communications professional I am today, and I would have never been given the opportunity to travel all over Massachusetts with the Governor, calling press conferences, issuing on-the-record statements and pitching reporters, without the knowledge and passion for journalism that the Independent instilled in me. (Also, AP style is the most valuable skill you can ever learn!)”



COURTESY OF MAURA DRISCOLL

STAFF EDITORIAL

Social media news oversimplifies Israel-Palestine conflict

Though social media has undoubtedly changed the accessibility of news to the general public, this transition in the way current events are shared is not always positive. In more complex conflicts, such as the war between Israel and Palestine, getting news from social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, X, and others can be incredibly harmful.

A single post on social media isn't able to provide the same depth and background that a news article would. This can mislead viewers by eliminating the extensive history of the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

When the Balfour Declaration was issued by Britain in 1917, it promised a national homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, which was then under the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

As World War I came to a close, Palestine was placed under British authority by the League of Nations by a mandate, which some saw as a lack of regard for Palestinians already on the land.

After World War II and the Holocaust, Jewish people began to migrate to Palestine.

The first Israeli-Arab War began after Israel declared itself independent in 1948, and a series of conflicts has followed since then, continuing to the present.

However, the nature of social media does not encourage a deep understanding of the decades of disputes between these two nations. Rather, it promotes content

to be consumed at a rapid pace.

“Some [students at Washington University in St. Louis] said social media forced the oversimplification of what should be a more nuanced conversation,” Gabriella Borter and Joseph Ax

wrote in their 2023 article “Fearful and grieving, Gen Z Americans clash over Israel conflict” for Reuters.

The information that people are shown is more likely to align with the beliefs they already hold, which can reinforce a person's existing views.

Also, the process of sharing posts and videos on social media allows information to quickly reach audiences of millions.

History teacher Abigail Donnelly said posts on social media are not always accurate.

“You have all of these people



LATINOTIMES.ORG

Many pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian protests have taken place across the U.S. following the attack on Israel by Hamas. Social media has removed many nuances from discussions about the conflict.

weighing in without a whole bunch of information. Oftentimes, the first story that you hear becomes the story that you believe, even if evidence comes out later that might refute that,” she said.

Donnelly said one example of this was the hospital bombing in Gaza.

Initially, the New York Times attributed Israeli responsibility for the attack. However, they later released a note stating that their initial reports relied too heavily on claims from Hamas.

Subsequently, the New York Times published an editorial

stating that while much of the information around the hospital bombing is still unclear, it is unlikely that Israel was behind the attack.

However, the information had already been shared on Instagram. This means many people are still misinformed about the country or organization that bombed the Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza.

While there are benefits to getting news from social media, in conflicts such as that between Israel and Palestine, it is best to receive news in a way that allows for the intricacies of the informa-

tion to be conveyed properly.

Donnelly said that people must have enough information to make their own decisions and sort through information in a way that allows them to make good judgments about it.

“If your first response is over the top and emotional, you need to check that and investigate. Maybe your first response is appropriate, but maybe there is more that you need to check out,” she said.

Instead of turning to social media news, people should to find reliable sources from which to form their own opinions.

School should offer AP World History course

By Summer Demeo
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

AP World History: Modern should be introduced into the curriculum to help students reach the district's Vision of the Graduate and to increase their knowledge of the world beyond the United States.

Students are required to take three years of social studies, two of which are US History I & II. There is only one world history course offered, and only freshmen are able to take it.

After freshman year, there should be an additional opportunity for students to learn more

Skill	Description
1. Developments and Processes	Identify and explain historical developments and processes.
2. Sourcing and Situation	Analyze sourcing and situation of primary and secondary sources.
3. Claims and Evidence in Sources	Analyze arguments in primary and secondary sources.
4.Contextualization	Analyze the contexts of historical events, developments, or processes.
5.Making Connections	Using historical reasoning processes (comparison, causation, continuity and change), analyze patterns and connections between and among historical developments and processes.
6.Argumentation	Develop an argument.

APCENTRAL.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG

The College Board outlines the vital skills students could acquire through the AP World History course if the school offered it.

about the history of the world.

Unfortunately, another social studies elective would likely have to be cut to make a teacher available to teach the course, social studies department chair Lauren Dubois said.

She said the school has attempted to expand the curriculum beyond the U.S. with the

AP Comparative Government course.

The department also wants to offer electives to underclassmen and students not interested in AP classes, Dubois said

With enough student interest, AP World History could be taught, but it would be a difficult decision to cut another class in

order to accommodate it.

Adding the course, however, would help students achieve the Vision of the Graduate.

One of the pillars of the Vision of the Graduate is to be an “empathetic global citizen,” which includes accepting different cultures and beliefs and demonstrating awareness of current events.

Learning about world history puts current events in perspective and creates awareness.

According to the article “Why learn world history?” written by UCLA's World History For Us All program, the three key reasons to learn world history are knowing who we are, preparing to live in the world, and attaining cultural literacy on a world scale.

The article defines a global citizen as someone “who knows and cares about the history and contemporary affairs of all hu-

mankind, who can think, speak, and write about world issues and problems intelligently and confidently.”

AP World History would be an elective class, so students who want to build their knowledge of the world would benefit from the opportunity to take a higher-level world history course.

According to the National Geographic study, “US Adults’ Knowledge About the World,” on average, half of adults correctly answered questions regarding geography, foreign policy, and the role of the U.S. in the world.

The solution to this gap between Americans’ knowledge of the world starts in schools.

Having the opportunity to take the AP World History course would benefit students, not just in their current lives but their lives beyond high school.

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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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Girls’ soccer loses during state tournament round of 16

Upperclassmen remain proud of team’s performance, teamwork through season

By Hannah Davis
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After advancing to the round of 16 in the MIAA Division IV tournament, the girls’ soccer team lost to South Hadley 3-0 on Nov. 8.

Junior captain Ella Arntsen said the team played their hardest and worked together the whole game.

“We have gone through many highs and lows this season, but we have all stuck together,” she said.

The team ended their season with a record of 8-9-3.

They traveled to Monomoy for the state tournament round of 32 on Nov. 3, winning 3-0.

Junior goalkeeper Madi Cook was named a CAL First Team All-Star. Junior Libby Lawler and senior captain Mechi O’Neil were named CAL Second Team All-Stars.

Senior captain Pippa Spingler said she is happy with how

the team was able to overcome sickness and injury and improve together.

“Looking back, I’m proud to see the growth, not just of people starting, but even the people who weren’t starting,” she said.

Spingler said she is also proud of the team’s ability to commit to working hard on what they needed to improve on.

“We were able to recognize what we needed to work on and I think instead of it building and getting worse, we were able to face it and figure out ways to address it,” she said.

Senior captain Mackay Brooks said she is proud of how the team has gotten to know each other better throughout the season.

“We’ve grown more ourselves, and I feel like we have worked better together, and we have connected more with each other,” she said.

Spingler said junior Lily Stefanovich and Arntsen were always positive and helped bring the



COURTESY OF IZZY ZAGROBSKI
Senior Grayson Crocker controls the ball in a game against Georgetown. The Hornets tied 0-0.

team together, lift up players, and keep the team motivated in the right direction.

Head coach Christo Manginis said Spingler was an important part of the team this season. Her enthusiasm and team spirit helped lift up players.

“I think Pippa did a ton, both on and off the field. As a captain, she was definitely one of the big leaders on the team,” he said.

Looking forward, Arntsen is excited for the team to work

even harder next season and be consistent.

“We are losing some amazing players and we will need people to step up and I have no doubt that they will be able to,” she said.

Boys’ soccer reaches state tournament round of 32

Hampshire Regional beats Hornets 2-0 in first round

By Ella Chafe
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After being prepared not to qualify for the Division IV state tournament, the boys’ varsity soccer team qualified for the round of 32, where they were eliminated by Hampshire Regional, the No. 3 seed, on Sat., Nov. 4.

Head coach Robert Bilsbury said the team was the No. 35 seed for two weeks prior to the tournament. On Tues., Oct. 24, they came up short against

Georgetown, the No. 38 seed in Division V, losing 2-1 on Senior Night.

Bilsbury said this loss felt like the tournament was surely out of reach.

“We had an extra practice, but we were kind of prepared to be eliminated,” he said.

However, Bilsbury was informed that his team qualified for the tournament when a few CAL teams beat higher-ranked teams in the NEC, causing all members of the CAL to move up in the rankings.

They moved up to the No. 30 seed, advancing to the preliminary round, where they beat Tri-County RVT 4-1, who was the No. 35 seed.

In the round of 32, Bilsbury



O’CONNOR STUDIOS PHOTO
Junior Finn Birkeland prepares to pass the ball down the field in their game against Ipswich. The Hornets won the game 2-1.

said Hampshire Regional drew a penalty in the first 10 minutes of the game and was leading 1-0. After this, he said his team was dominating the game in the first 20 minutes of the second half, and they had several chances to score.

“We were like David and Goliath, taking down one of the top teams in the state,” Bilsbury said.

He said he is proud of the team, and he saw a lot of “heart and hustle,” especially in this final game of the season.

“Even though we were down 2-0, we were just crushing and playing awesome team soccer,”

Bilsbury said.

He said he is hopeful for the upcoming year, although he is losing five seniors.

“We have a decent-sized junior class coming up, and I think it gives us the idea of how we play our best, which is playing hard, playing physical, and playing together,” Bilsbury said.

Junior captain Sammy Bothwell said he was very surprised and happy that the team made the tournament.

He said his mindset going into these playoff games was to face one game at a time.

In the preliminary round against Tri-County RVT, senior captain Logan DeSouza said the team played their best soccer of the entire season.

“We went into that game and just lit up the score,” he said.

After their final game, Bothwell was named a CAL first-team All-Star, while junior Finn Birkeland was named second-team.

Football reaches state tournament

By Charles Lations
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After qualifying for the playoffs as the #15 seed, the Hornets football team fell in the first round to the Cohasset Skippers, 35-28.

Senior captain Troy Flood said he was happy with the team’s performance this season, citing the fact that their regular season record remained the same while the team moved up from Division VIII to Division VII.

“Going up a division and still making the playoffs, since [our opponents’] ratings are higher,



COURTESY OF ZAC CARVALHO
Junior Jarrett Croft tackles an opponent during a regular season game against Lynn Tech. The Hornets won the game 63-22.

was a really big deal for us,” he said.

Flood said he expected a challenging playoff environment because of the division change.

“Where we were at, it put us at the #15 seed, but I think the competition is a lot better, and ... [the] teams we were going to play in the playoffs [are] a lot better [than our opponents last season],” he said.

Head coach Joe Grimes named Flood and senior Quinn Brady as

players that stuck out to him in terms of creating team spirit.

“Quinn was a really nice addition to the team ... he really set a tone for those guys that ‘you don’t have an excuse’ – [he] didn’t play last year, [and] he jumped right in the mix ... he’s a role model; he just sets a tone for how I want all my younger [players] to be,” he said.

Senior captain Stephen Martin stood out for his play on the field this year, Grimes said.

“[Martin]’s had a tremendous

year, stats-wise. He missed the first game, but he’s put up eight-game numbers on a seven-game schedule,” he said.

Senior captain Henry Thurlow said his goals from the beginning of the season were mostly successful in terms of preparing the younger athletes for the future.

“I think [my goals] have been pretty much fulfilled ... my leadership role, and what I can do for the team to get the underclassmen ready for next year ... [the freshmen] are definitely prepared to lead themselves,” he said.

‘Going up a division and still making the playoffs, since [our opponents’] rating are higher, was a really big deal for us.’

- TROY FLOOD

Field hockey team wins CAL, advances to Division IV semifinal

Hornets beat Hopedale 5-0 in quarterfinals

By Sam Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After qualifying for the state tournament as the No. 2 seed, as of press time, the field hockey team is set to face Monomoy Regional High School, the No. 3 seed, in the Division IV semifinals on Wednesday, Nov. 15.

The match comes following a 5-0 win against Hopedale Jr.-Sr. High School on Nov. 10 in the state tournament quarterfinals.

If the team wins against Monomoy, they will advance to the state championship against the winner of the Uxbridge High School versus Sutton High School game.

The team finished the regular season as Cape Ann League

champions with an overall record of 14-1-3, going undefeated in the CAL.

After the win in the quarterfinals, senior captain Torrin Lee Kirk said the team is feeling energized.

“We can use that win as fuel. It really boosted our energy going into the next round and reaffirmed that all of our hard work throughout the season is paying off,” she said.

Senior captain Caelie Patrick said moving into the semifinals, the team is focused on maintaining a positive attitude, staying motivated, and supporting each other as the season continues on.

“We’re showing up for each other now, and we know that we have to put the effort in if we

want to go far and make it to the state championship,” she said.

Senior captains Patrick, Ella Chafe, Phileine de Widt, and Kirk have been putting in a lot of effort both on and off the field in order to lead the team through the tournament, head coach Courtney Brown said.

She said players have become more motivated going into the semifinals, despite confidence early in the tournament.

“Nerves are higher, and we definitely know that the end is near no matter what, but that’s been exciting us,” Brown said.

Certain players have been vital in the team’s motivation and success in recent games, she said.

“Torrin has really turned it on, and Abby Kent’s effort never wavers. They’ve really improved

‘We have to put the effort in if we want to go far and make it to the state championship.’

- CAELIE PATRICK



COURTESY OF VICKI DONNELLAN

Senior captains Phileine de Widt, Ella Chafe, Torrin Kirk, and Caelie Patrick celebrate with the Final Four trophy and banner.

lately,” Brown said.

She specifically mentioned Patrick as a standout player, winning CAL Player of the Year, along with Chafe and Kent, who both made first-team All-Stars, as well as de Widt and Kirk, who

made second-team All-Stars.

“It’s amazing to finally see [Patrick’s] hard work being acknowledged by the league,” Brown said.

Brown also won the CAL Coach of the Year award.

Individual runners qualify for cross-country All-State meet

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After their Divisionals meet on Nov. 11, girls’ and boys’ cross-country teams ended their seasons.

Senior captain Finn O’Hara and junior captain Sabine Cooper qualified individually for the state championship meet on Nov. 18, junior captain Whitney Turner said.

She said the girls’ team had many personal records set.

“I think [we] were happy with how we ran, even though we did not qualify for the state championship meet,” Turner said.

O’Hara, who won the Division 2C boys’ 5k, said the race was a good way to end the boys’ team’s season.

“The race went well, and everyone brought the energy that

we wanted. Whether people ran personal records or not, everybody gave it their all, and that’s what really matters,” he said

The boys’ team ended their regular season with a record of 3-1, and the girls’ team ended 2-2.

Boys’ and Girls’ captains, seniors Charlie Latons and O’Hara, juniors

‘Everybody gave it their all, and that’s what really matters.’

- FINN O’HARA

Cooper, Turner and Gloucester seniors Colby Rochford and Faith Castelluci have done well leading their teams, Whitley said.

“All of the captains have done a great job this year. They all have their uniqueness to them and add a lot to the team,” Whitley said.

Assistant coach Rachel Mitchell said junior Libby McKinnon brought enthusiasm to the girls’ team.

Turner said cross-country can be an individual sport, but they

all want each other to improve.

“We have a really great team environment. Everyone is very supportive of everyone else’s accomplishments,” she said.

The boys’ team also supported one another, O’Hara said.

Junior Henry Stevens brought good energy to the team and improved he said.

“We had a bunch of guys going out trying to do what they could for the team. I think that is shown through our record this season,” O’Hara said.

Golf team improves in season, sends individual to All-States

By Stella Straub
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Finishing its season with a record of 8-9, the golf team sent sophomore Gray West as an individual to the MIAA Division III North Sectionals Golf Tournament, head coach Bill Melvin said.

Melvin said West placed 21st out of 55 competitors and played very well.

Though the team missed

qualifying for the State Tournament by only one match, Melvin said that as a whole they showed great improvement, especially among the younger players.

“Guys that have never played golf before really came on and did great jobs this season. [I’m] really happy with where we’re going to be for the next two years,” he said.

Melvin said he particularly enjoyed the personalities on the team this year.

Melvin said sophomore Connor Dickson did a great job floating between the JV and varsity teams and that junior Jack Lawler was a supportive personality for the team.

Senior captain Lilly Brigham set a great example for what it takes to be a high school student-athlete, Melvin

‘They’re a bunch of live wires, and they really enjoy the game.’

- BILL MELVIN

said.

Brigham said she enjoyed that the team had a lot of fun this year and wasn’t too serious.

“I think everyone was just very excited to play,” she said.

The team won the Cape Ann Classic Tournament for the second year in a row, Brigham said.

West said he felt the team as a whole was able to get better throughout the season.

“We started in the 120 range for points, and then we ended around the 150s to 160s, so it was definitely great to see that improvement,” he said.

West said he was able to hit a lot of his personal goals this season and hopes to make it to the State Tournament finals individually next year.

Cheerleading team competes in first CAL competition as varsity sport

By Summer Demeo
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In its first year as an official varsity sport, the cheerleading team improved greatly and competed in its first Cape Ann League competition, coach Casey Economo said.

On Nov. 2 the team competed in the CAL Open, and while the outcome was not what they had hoped for, with the team placing 12th, it brought them closer

together, senior captain Caroline Doucette said.

She said the team will continue practicing until the Thanksgiving football game on Nov. 23.

The team has improved since last year and even more over the course of this season, gaining new skills and using more stunts in their routines, Doucette said.

She also said each individual has gotten better.

“I want every member of our team to know that the coaches

and captains see how much they’ve improved and how much hard work they’ve put into it,” she said.

Senior captain Allie Delaney said the team has been able to adapt this season when facing injuries or other setbacks impacting their routine.

She said she has enjoyed making connections on the team.

“The team has been my favorite part [of the season,] just seeing them every day and see-

ing the same familiar faces in the hallway,” Delaney said.

Along with a positive team environment, they were also better prepared this year than last year, she said. They began learning their routine in August and were able to do more advanced stunting.

Economo said the team made huge advancements in their stunting skills this season, building upon one of the foundational elements of cheerleading.

Juniors Audrey Smith, Maria Rising, and Elena Gangemi have helped contribute to the team spirit and bring positivity to the team, Economo said.

She said the captains and the rest of the seniors have played a major role in leading the team to where they are now.

“The seniors have put in a lot of time and effort, and the captains really stepped into a leadership role, and I’m super proud of them,” Economo said.

Music Honors Society plans fundraisers for club

Students hope to increase membership

By Gwendolyn Berger
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Members of the Music Honors Society are planning to rebuild and expand the music program, said junior treasurer Josh Cohen.

He said the Music Honors Society was founded last year and is part of the Music Honors Society. This organization, a program of the National Association for Music Education, focuses on creating future leaders in the music industry.

“I think it’s important to bring more visibility to the music programs ... we’re trying to build and expand the program with fundraiser events,” Cohen

said. He said the society is planning a number of activities that could hypothetically take place later in the year. Since the music program is organizing a trip to New York, the society wants to raise money to offset costs, Cohen said.

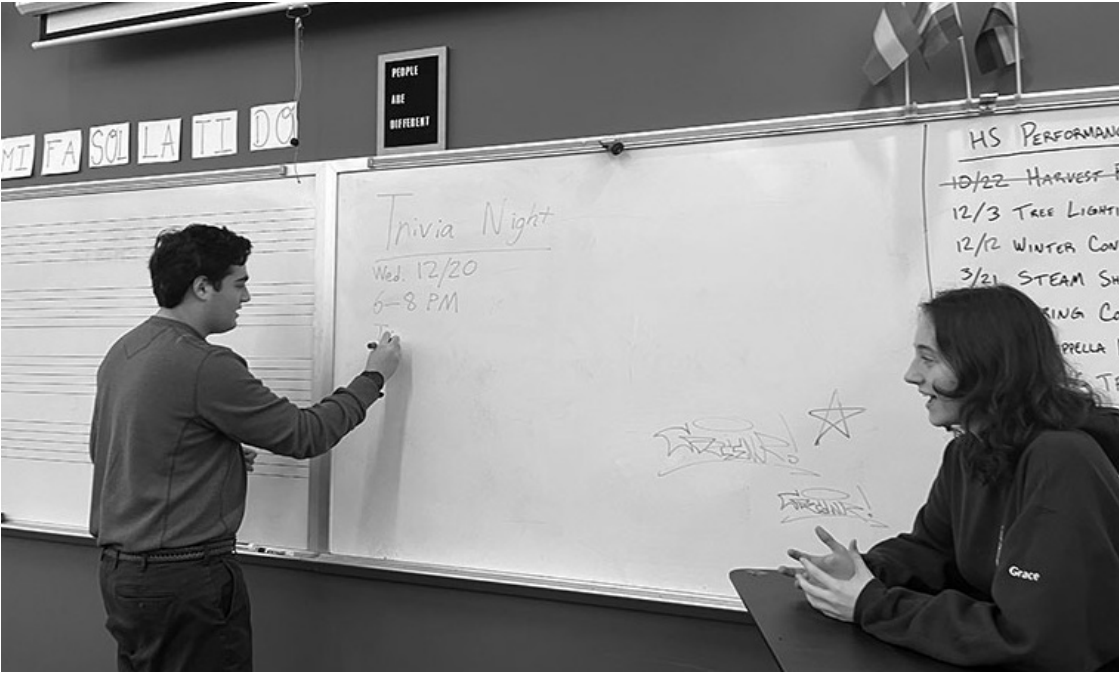
“We want to do a bingo trivia night and have also thought about doing a song-writing and logo-drawing competition,” he said.

Junior president Alessia Omari said they also plan on hosting a talent show unrelated to Spaulding Education Fund’s “Night of Stars.”

“We came up with the idea before we found out about ‘Night of Stars,’ but regardless we hope to put it on later in the year, and we think it’s going to be a super fun way to promote the stuff we do in our club,” Omari said.

‘I think it’s important to bring more visibility to the music programs.’

-JOSH COHEN



STELLA STRAUB PHOTO

Juniors Alessia Omari and Josh Cohen plan for an upcoming trivia night at an MHS meeting. Members are looking to grow and increase visibility for the school’s music program through events.

As president, Omari leads the club’s meetings, answers questions, and represents the club, she said. Omari said as president, she hopes to enhance membership because music is an outlet for people to express their

passions. “We want to prove that we’re here, we exist, and the music department is just as important as all the other clubs in the school,” she said.

Choral director and adviser Ben

Icenogle said the main purpose of the society is to help fund-raise for the music department and put on events.

“I think there’s a lot of desire amongst students for performance opportunities,” he said.

Freshman wins composition award at 2023 Austrian music festival

Student’s piece wins second place at competition

By Alessia Omari
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Piano player and classical composer freshman Tyler Cummins won a second place award for his piano composition, “Sonata in F Minor,” at the 2023 Golden Key Vienna Music Festival in Austria.

Cummins said he discovered the contest online and prepared for the competition through solo work as well as with the help of his composition teachers.

“I had spent many months composing the piano piece,

looking it over, and making sure it sounded the best it could,” Cummins said. “I learned how to compose better from teachers, and they helped give me ideas.”

Cummins’s ambition and initiative brings much-needed qualities to the school’s music department, Joseph Janack said.

“I’ve known him since 6th grade ... he brings leadership and just wants people around him to reach their potential, musically and otherwise,” he said.

Cummins said he’s created around 30 compositions since his early childhood.

“I started playing piano when I was 4 years old ... I’ve made pieces for piano, string quartets, a few pieces for a band, a symphony, and more recently, I made a piece for piano and clarinet,” he said.

Cummins’s aptitude for composing classical music and the amount of effort he puts into his passions is impressive for his age, Janack said.

“He is a very talented musician ... I know he worked very hard on the piece that he wrote,” he said. “It’s amazing for a person of any age, but for a freshman it’s

‘It’s amazing for a person of any age, but for a freshman it’s even more impressive.’

-JOSEPH JANACK



CUMMINS FAMILY PHOTO

Freshman and pianist Tyler Cummins received an award this summer at the 2023 Golden Key Vienna Music Festival in Austria.

even more impressive.” Freshman Maggie Whitman, who is working on a musical piece with Cummins for the Manchester-by-the-Sea Holiday Tree Lighting, said his talent and flexibility has

made the experience pleasant. “He changed his piece to match my voice the day we began. He’s insanely music-minded, and he’s very diligent with his practice,” she said.

NAHS inducts new members, gives awards

Certificates offered to new participants

By Mechi O’Neil
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New members of the National Art Honors Society will be formally accepted at the induction ceremony on Nov. 2 in the auditorium.

At the induction, the NAHS board reads a mission statement, which is to promote the arts within a school community, art teacher and adviser Tamara Burns said.



MECHI O’NEIL PHOTO

Artwork created by NAHS members was displayed in the main hallway. The club wants to increase community involvement.

“We want to provide opportunities for students to collaborate together over a shared interest,” she said.

At the NAHS monthly meet-

ings, members bring in art pieces based on the prompts they are given. Students’ art pieces will be on display at the ceremony for families to see, Burns said.

Members brought in art pertaining to the prompt “personal” at their first meeting.

NAHS is currently planning fundraisers to get members involved with the community, senior president Kate Bappe said.

“Each month, we are going to put out a bulletin with the art events and exhibits that are already happening locally,” she said.

In order to pay for the cords for graduating NAHS members, the group will have one fundraiser, Burns said.

“Sometimes when there is a band or chorus concert, they will ask people to provide refreshments, so we may do those sorts of

things,” she said. Junior secretary Aubrey Fritsch said they are working on making the chapter more community service-based.

“We already have some opportunities set up with the theater program, and we’re also planning on doing something in December for the holidays,” she said.

Sophomore Abby Kent said she values her participation in NAHS due to the creative liberties that it allows her to take in her artwork.

“[NAHS] allows me creative freedom in making something I can be proud of and I enjoy expanding my horizons,” she said.

‘[NAHS] allows me creative freedom in making something I can be proud of.’

-ABBY KENT

Plans for NYC band and chorus trip currently underway

By August Capotosto
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Planning has begun for an optional two-night band and chorus field trip to New York City on May 18-20.

“[This will be] an amazing opportunity for both groups to get out and perform at a different venue and experience the artistic lives of other cities to see how it compares to the North Shore ... as well as open up new pathways to possible artistic interests,” band teacher Joe Janack said.

Though the department has taken various day trips in years prior, this will be the first time the band and chorus will embark on an overnight trip together, he said.

Janack said trips in the past have not been frequent either,

meaning this will be the first music department trip for many band and chorus members.

The last time the band took a major trip was in March of 2017 to Philadelphia, he said.

Other than that, the band and chorus took day trips together into Boston to see the Boston Symphony Orchestra before the pandemic hit, chorus teacher Ben Icenogle said.

“Everyone is very excited about [the trip],” junior chorus student Joshua Cohen said.

Many aspects of the trip are still being decided, such as chaperones or specific activities, Janack said.

The band and chorus teachers are currently looking into shows and other productions that will be going on during their time there, he said.

“We hope to see some shows,



COURTESY OF JOE JANACK

The high school band performed at the football team’s Morgan’s Message Dedication Game on Oct. 6. The band is a class that meets during U-block and is heavily involved in school spirit activities.

‘Everyone is very excited about [the trip].’

-JOSH COHEN

‘Don’t Worry Darling’ relates to Dystopian Literature senior elective

By Ella Chafe
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students in the senior English elective Dystopian Literature should consider watching the thrilling “Don’t Worry Darling,” directed by Olivia Wilde.

The movie highlights key dystopian themes such as a lack of information and societal indoctrination. Students in the elective can see a parallel between the film and in-class works such as George Orwell’s novel “1984.”

“Don’t Worry Darling” has a



AMAZON PRIME

The two lead actors of the American psychological thriller film ‘Don’t Worry Darling’ are Harry Styles and Florence Pugh.

creative plot that keeps viewers engaged and on the edge of their seats the entire time.

The drama/thriller is set in

the 1950s and revolves around Alice (Florence Pugh), a housewife who starts questioning her seemingly perfect suburban life.

Her husband, Jack (Harry Styles), works for the mysterious Victory Project, where his work is kept a secret.

Throughout the movie, Alice becomes more suspicious, leading her to take dangerous risks to uncover the past.

Pugh’s emotional performance is captivating and wins the audience’s sympathy.

However, it is strange watching Styles in his role because he is best known as a pop singer. Although his performance doesn’t overly disappoint, an actor like Leonardo DiCaprio would play a better Jack.

Wilde creates suspense throughout the entire movie and presents commentary on the role of women, a common dystopian theme.

Alice must be the perfect housewife for Jack, so it’s frowned upon when she doesn’t want to have children. Students in the Dystopian Literature elective would also be able to see and discuss the connec-

tion between this idea and the novel “The Handmaid’s Tale” by Margaret Atwood.

Besides its rather mysterious tone and haunting feel, the movie is also very famous for its cast. It features the character Frank (Chris Pine), who is best known for his role as James T. Kirk in the Star Trek reboot film series.

Wilde was extremely creative behind the scenes, and she also proved incredibly impactful in her own role, which was as Bunny, Alice’s closest friend.

The movie was released on Netflix in September 2022 and won the Campari Passion for Film Award and the People’s Choice Award for Favorite Dramatic Movie.

Viewer discretion is advised, however, as “Don’t Worry Darling” has been rated R for sexuality, violent content, and language.

‘This Land is Inhospitable And So Are We’ presents strong lyricism with varying elements of wistfulness

Songwriter releases album after hiatus

By Alessia Omari
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Japanese-American singer-songwriter Mitsuki Laycock, known under the stage name of “Mitski,” explores music with a more calming sound compared to her previous projects on her seventh studio album, “This Land is Inhospitable And So Are We.”

The album was released on Sept. 15, 2023, after more than a year-long break from songwriting.

Mitski’s strength in music has always been her lyricism; her earlier tracks such as “Your Best American Girl,” and “I Bet

on Losing Dogs” have gained notoriety for their heartfelt, poetic lyrics.

The opening track to the album, “Bug Like an Angel,” incorporates a soft acoustic guitar abruptly punctuated by powerful group vocals in order to effectively set a warm, yet gut-wrenching tone for the rest of the album.

The song tells the story of a person finding destructive comfort in their alcoholism, with Mitski singing, “As I got older, I learned I’m a drinker / Sometimes, a drink feels like family.”

In the third track titled “Heaven,” Mitski describes a passionate relationship, using nature-related imagery, comparing herself to a “murmuring brook” and even a willow tree, all on top of a beautiful string instrumental.

The seventh track, “My Love All Mine” has gained immense

popularity on the social media platform TikTok, with about 367,000 videos having been posted using the song since the album was released.

Mitski describes her intense feelings of love using moon-related imagery. After asking to send her heart up to the moon, she sings, “So when I die which I must do / Could it shine down here with you?”

In an almost mantra-like chorus, Mitski repeats the verse, “My love, is mine all mine.” Mitski’s deep vocals paired with these lyrics related to feelings of longing create a song with a tone and feel that is haunting and distinct.

“I’m Your Man,” the final track in the album, is an incredibly moving song that utilizes reverb and echoey vocals, beautifully finishing off the album with references to Christianity and Ancient



WIKIPEDIA.ORG

Mitsuki Laycock releases the album ‘This Land is Inhospitable And So Are We’ after a year break from music and performing.

Greek mythology. “This Land is Inhospitable And So Are We” is an emotionally

charged, wistful album driven by its incredibly and deeply impactful lyrics.