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Administration prepares to present hybrid learning

By Madeline Lai
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

High school Principal Patricia Puglisi and middle school Principal Joanne Maino are working collaboratively to construct a plan for returning to a hybrid model in January, Puglisi said.

On December 1, Maino and Puglisi will present a detailed proposal to the School Committee that outlines the preparation needed for partial in-person, partial remote education, she said.

Maino said their plan includes dividing both the middle and high school into two cohorts each: a green and a white cohort.

According to the hybrid plan

sent out by administration, students with last names alphabetically between Adams and Jacobsen will be part of the green cohort, meeting on Tuesday and Wednesday in-person, and the rest of the student population with last names between Jobe and Zschau will meet in-person on

Thursdays and Fridays as part of the white cohort.

With only 13 students allowed in each classroom at a time due to social distancing guidelines, Maino said accommodating for classes that exceed the limit will require

overflow space in the building in the auditorium, with students rotating between in-class and overflow spaces to assure a fair

‘We are assigning seats in classrooms and in lunchrooms, and we are figuring out how to deal with cleaning down the desks after each class period or after lunch.’

- PATRICIA PUGLISI



COURTESY OF MARY BUCKLEY-HARMON

Photography teacher Caroline Epp and foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato model the logistics of the proposed “hyflex” system in a classroom with digital learning specialist Matt Tangney.

distribution.

Other logistical considerations such as situational issues of teachers being absent or everyday protocols for sanitization and spacing in classes are also being included in the plan, Puglisi said.

“We are assigning seats in classrooms and in lunchrooms,

and we are figuring out how to deal with cleaning down the desks after each class period or after lunch,” she said.

Puglisi said that among the many factors taken into consideration when planning for hybrid learning, working with both teachers and students’ families is

of equal importance.

“At the same time that we are doing all this planning, we are always working collaboratively with the teachers union to make sure that they are in agreement with our plans so that they feel supported and comfortable with

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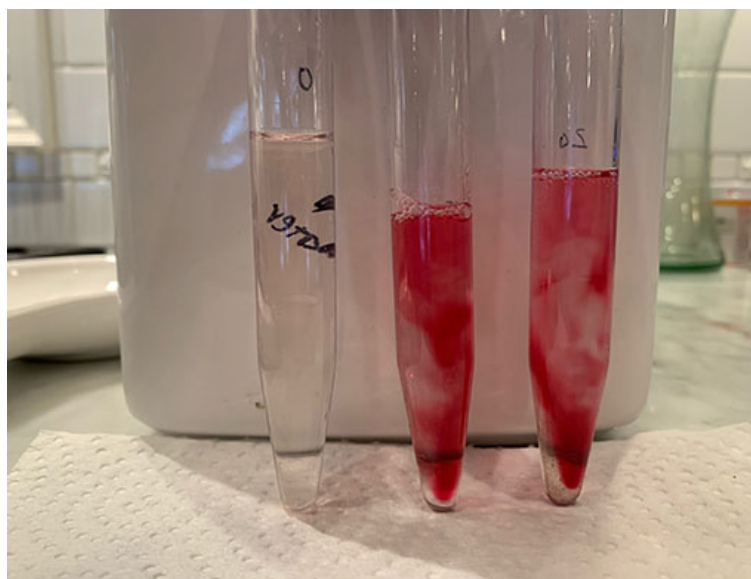
AP biology classes complete remote lab

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

AP biology classes completed a remote lab experiment to see how temperature and different solvents can affect a living cell’s membrane, science department chair and biology teacher Kristin Umile said.

Students needed very few materials to complete the lab remotely, which included a beet, a knife, and different liquids that could be found in a typical household to be used as solvents, Umile said. They used liquids like nail-polish remover, laundry detergent, vinegar, hydrogen peroxide, soap, or anything they could find in their house, she said.

Junior Alex Briggs said the first procedure of the lab was to cut a singular beet into three pieces for each trial and to put



COURTESY OF ALEX BRIGGS

AP biology students conducted a fully at-home lab where they used household liquids to study their effect on cell membranes.

them into three different tubes of water that had the student’s choices of temperature.

Junior Sami Turner said her group chose 40, 60, and 80 degrees Celsius, and they were able to use their refrigerator, freezer, or stove to reach these temperatures.

The other part of the procedure was to place the beets into the different random liquids to soak, to

see which would damage the beet

‘The lab was easy and fun to complete remotely, but it would have been interesting to see how other people’s experiments turned out.’

- ALEX BRIGGS

cells the most, Briggs said.

Umile said the objective of the lab was for students to see how exposing living cells to different conditions would disrupt the cell membrane of the beet, which would be measured through the darkness of the pigment in the beet that leaked out as a result.

Turner and Briggs both said the lab was not difficult to complete remotely because they already had access to most of the materials needed.

Turner said that normally while completing labs that take multiple days at school, people tend to touch and move things around which can affect the

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Students react to 2020 presidential election

By Madeline Lai
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Whether or not they are of voting age, students felt more inclined than ever to get involved in this year’s presidential election and highly anticipated the results of America’s vote, sophomore Grace Gerhardt said.

Senior Sylvie Oldeman said the election was difficult and mentally draining to endure because of the high stakes and elongated waiting period.

“I felt like I couldn’t focus on anything on election day and kept looking up ‘2020 election’ on Google all the time,” she said.

Gerhardt said the waiting period in between election day and when Biden was announced to be the projected winner was stressful due to the constant changes with state counts and the heightened suspense throughout the week.

“Watching the mail in ballots being counted last and flipping states like Georgia and Pennsylvania was so crazy... there was so much anticipation from the beginning through the end,” she said.

Freshman Bella Wright said

the media has played an interesting role in election coverage; some are acknowledging Biden’s projected victory, other sources and public figures are not.

“[Trump] won’t admit that he lost, so it is really weird for everyone in America because usually when a [candidate] loses, they are civil and accepting about it. I mean he’s known for his dramatic reactions, though, so I don’t think anyone was expecting a peaceful response,” she said.

Senior Sam Kenney said he was excited to be a first-time voter and contribute to the process.

“It was the first election I could vote in, and even though my vote doesn’t have a huge impact being in a solid blue state, it felt good to see my choice put in and win,” he said.

Wright said she is excited about the results of the election because of the increased freedoms she believes will be provided to certain groups in the U.S. under new leadership.

“Biden always talks about America being a place of possibility, and I think with him as president there is going to be so much more opportunity for minorities and marginalized groups in America,” she said.

Kenney said he hopes Biden will help America heal from the deep political divides it is currently facing.

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Peer mentors set up panels, reach out to students virtually

By Isabella DiPasquale
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Peer mentors are continuing to help the school community remotely by finding new ways to connect with students and keep them updated, peer mentors co-coordinator Lilly Coote said.

Coote said thus far, the mentors have been focusing on helping out with events, such as orientation, and reaching out to students who are new to the district in order to facilitate their transitions.

She said they plan to have the yearly College Homecoming panel, most likely via Zoom. This year, the panel will include students who attended virtual school due to the pandemic, as well as the typical variety of transfer students and those who took other paths.

Coote said she wants to help other students with the college process, as it was something that she struggled with herself, especially due to COVID.

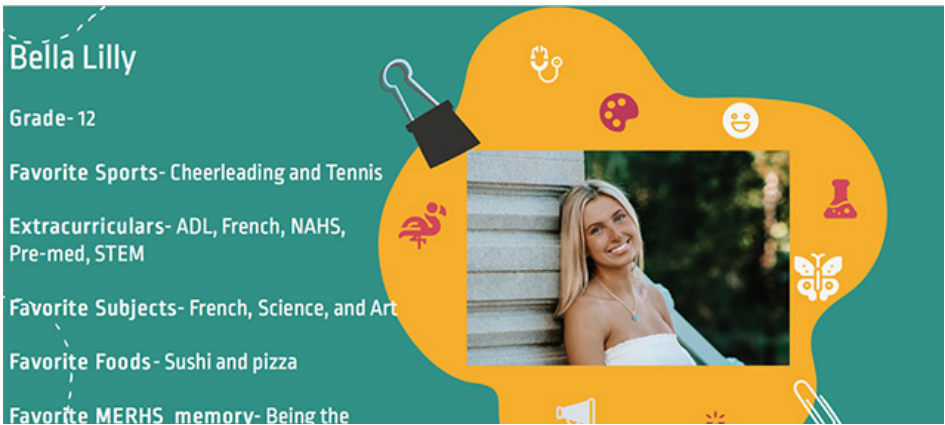
“Personally, I want to help a lot of the juniors who are in the same boat that I was. [I want to] give them advice and [try to] help them get started on the college application process before the summer,” she said.

Guidance counselor David Conwell said that because of COVID, the newer peer mentors were not able to receive the usual training. He said he hopes to complete some form of training in the future, most likely via Zoom; however, nothing is certain.

Conwell said he still wants the peer mentors to run events, such as the Week of Gratitude, and they want to reach out to middle school students, as well.

“[The peer mentors program has] always been about how to make the school community more positive, and that is still our goal, with an eye towards assisting underclassmen in so way, shape, or form,” he said.

Peer mentors co-coordinator Bella Lilly



COURTESY OF BELLA LILLY

Peer mentors wrote fun facts and interests on a slideshow to introduce themselves.

said they are working to convert their bulletin board to a virtual format. This board provides students with general information, fun facts, and ways to contact each of the mentors.

“Since the bulletin board is usually outside the guidance office, we needed to find a new way to get the information out to people, so we decided to create [a] PowerPoint,” Lilly said.

Lilly said she created a peer mentor Instagram where she posts reminders for events, videos, polls, and general informa-

tion that is sent in emails.

“We decided that kids our age don’t really check their emails as regularly as they do social media, so we thought [an Instagram account] would be the most effective way to reach them,” she said.

Due to the uncertainty of last year and the current remote learning model, the peer mentors will continue to accept new members throughout the year. If students are looking to join peer mentors, they can reach out to any of the guidance counselors to get an application, Conwell said.

National Honor Society inducts 41 juniors and seniors in virtual ceremony

By Jordie Cornfield
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Continuing induction traditions remotely, The National Honor Society held a virtual ceremony via Zoom on Nov. 12.

Due to health guidelines surrounding large gatherings, the induction ceremony was remote. However, the event still had a large attendance of around 130 people, including teachers, students, family, and friends.

The induction ceremony is a formal acceptance of new inductees into the National Honor Society. Vidula Plante, the National Honor Society’s current adviser, who is also a middle school teacher, said there were 41 new inductees this year.

Plante thinks it is necessary to continue programs like the National Honor Society, even during remote learning.



MADELINE LAI PHOTO

NHS officers, seniors president Jessie Miller, vice president Eden Mayer, secretary Sylvie Oldeman, community service director Olivia Turner, and communications director Madeline Lai met over Zoom to plan and discuss the virtual induction.

“We need to recognize students for excellence and continue providing them opportunities to demonstrate the values of scholarship, service, leadership, and character, even though they may demonstrate them differently during remote learning,” she said.

Students said continuing the National Honor Society adds normalcy to their otherwise abnormal school year.

“It’s important to keep the NHS going

because it provides some normalcy to the life of students,” junior and new inductee Gelsey McCue said.

The National Honor Society highlights the students’ commitment to the four pillars: scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

“It’s inspiring to see everyone try and uphold these values and to see students who are so driven and want to use service to do a greater good in the community,”

senior and NHS communications director Madeline Lai said.

Since new members could not walk across the stage, NHS officers had to figure out a new way to introduce them.

“NHS officers created a slideshow to honor each inductee when their names were called. Instead of being pinned, NHS inductees will pick up their pins at school on a later date,” Plante said.

The induction ceremony is not the only facet of The National Honor Society’s traditions that has moved online.

“We are using Google Classroom to communicate. The officers have some great ideas for remote community service opportunities. Due to difficulty with community service, required hours have been reduced or waived,” Plante said.

She also said that officers have had to adapt to this new way of remote learning, but this has not stopped them from developing new and innovative community service ideas.

“We talked about doing a pen pal program with senior citizens. We also talked about working with different clubs already at the school,” Lai said.

CONTINUATIONS

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returning to school,” she said.

Maino said she and Puglisi are also looking to nearby school districts that have already moved to a hybrid model to figure out what is and is not working logistically.

“One of the things we are learning from the data we are seeing from other schools is that schools are not showing to be super-spreaders for coronavirus. That doesn’t mean there’s no cases... but we’ve learned that [the cases are occurring] slower than we thought they would be,” she said.

Digital learning specialist Matt Tangney said he has been working with Puglisi and the school staff to figure out the technical side of conducting lessons with half of the class at home and half in the classroom.

“The plan that the principals and administrative folks have asked me to coordinate and figure out so far is a system called ‘hy-flex learning’... It is a model where some of the kids are in the classroom on Zoom and some of the kids are at home on Zoom at the same time,” he said.

Tangney said they are still experimenting with audio and feedback technicalities

to ensure that students both at home and in the building can communicate during discussions.

Puglisi said teachers will have the option to choose the set-up of their classrooms in terms of which students will be on separate Zoom calls and audio options in the classroom as well.

“Teachers have the autonomy to set up their in person classrooms in the way they see fits best for their class... We have explored headphones with microphones for all students as well as one surround sound microphone for the classroom,” she said.

History teacher Jessica Tran said there is a challenge for teachers to create a whole-class atmosphere when half of the students are at home on Zoom and half are in the classroom on Zoom.

“[Our professional development day] was an opening conversation to figure out what the obstacles are and to tackle them before we would move into hybrid,” she said.

Puglisi said while the school will be returning to partial in-school education, students will have the option to continue with fully remote learning if they choose to.

A non-binding survey was sent out to families last week on whether or not they are going to take part in the hybrid model

or the remote model, and it also asked if students will need transportation to school, she said.

Junior Emma Fitzgerald said she would rather continue with online learning even if the school transitioned to a hybrid model.

“It’s easier to work one on one with a teacher with hybrid, but I would still prefer to remain online because I enjoy getting more rest, being less stressed, and having more time to do work at home,” she said.

Senior Emma Francoeur said she is eager to move to a hybrid learning model, where she will have the chance to regain a sense of normalcy with school and enjoy her final days with her teachers in-person.

“I want to go back to hybrid because, as a senior, I only have three months left of school after January, and I want to use that time to be in the building and feel like a senior because we haven’t been able to do that yet this year at all,” she said.

Maino said the priority is to design a plan to accommodate potentially the entire population of both the middle and high school.

“We are building a plan with the expectation that all students will be coming back because at any time throughout the

process, a family that has chosen to stay remote may change their mind,” she said.

REMOTE LAB
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

results, but this is not a problem while completing the lab remotely because the students are in control and can keep it all in one place.

She said the topic of the lab was interesting to learn about and to experiment with.

Briggs also enjoyed completing the lab, even though she was not able to see the results of any of her classmates.

“The lab was easy and fun to complete remotely, but it would have been interesting to see how other people’s experiments turned out,” she said.

ELECTION
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The political climate is very black and white right now, whereas in the past there has been a gray area,” he said.

Oldeman said it has been a relief to conclude the election results and to see public figures she follows on social media reciprocating the joy she feels about Biden’s victory.

“The reaction to Biden’s win that we have seen in the media is exciting... that is the highlight of 2020 for me,” she said.

Students learn remotely, benefit from projects, assessments

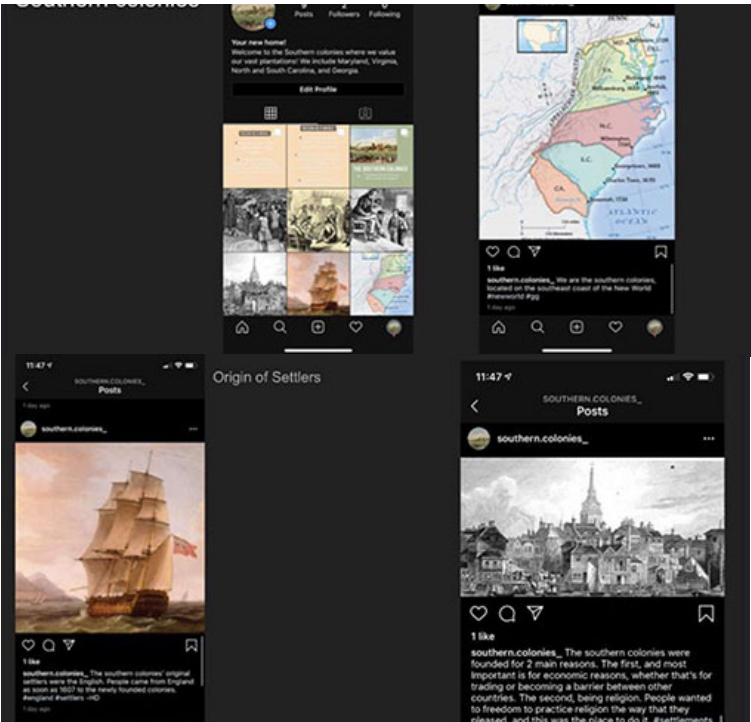
Teachers use activities to test students virtually, spark creativity

By Carson Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Teachers continue to utilize project-based assessments remotely to test students on material.

History teacher Jennifer Coleman assigned a project in her US History classes to assess their understanding of the three different regions of colonial British America: the New England, South, and Middle colonies, she said.

“They were placed into groups and made advertisements to try to entice people to emigrate to that region. Some of them created Instagram accounts, others made flyers or brochures. They then shared their advertise-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GWEN HANNAFIN

History teacher Jennifer Coleman assigned a history project to sophomores to enhance understanding and allow creativity.

ments in breakout rooms and compared and contrasted the colonies,” Coleman said.

She said she has done this assignment in previous years, and the main difference in do-

ing it remotely is the difficulty involved with keeping track of everyone.

“It is definitely harder for me as a teacher to keep track of what they are doing. When we do an assignment like this in person, everyone is in the same room, and it is easier to see what they are doing at the same time. However, on Zoom, I can only be in one breakout room at a time to make sure they are on task,” Coleman said.

Sophomore Paige Garlitz said this assignment was very helpful and deepened her understanding of the subject.

“It really benefited me and helped me understand the differences and similarities between each of the colonies by sharing our projects with others,” she said.

Math teacher Amanda Frithsen used a mini golf design project to calculate the angles and distance of different shots using trigonometry equations in her CP Precalculus class to help her students better understand the unit, she said.

“I wanted to find a project that could give the students the option to either be done using technology or on paper. This project allowed for some creativity, which I think is really fun to be able to do in math. I think it was a great way for the students to look at all of the things we had been doing in that unit come together,” Frithsen said.

Junior Maddy Curran said this project was very beneficial and was easy to understand while also being a slight challenge.

“This project helped me better understand the subject by applying everything we learned in the unit and putting it into one. We had to find all of the angles and the sides for each triangle, and using creativity with that helped me personalize my project to target things in the unit I may have struggled with,” she said.

Teachers find balance between work, parenting

By Carson Komishane
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Some teachers with young children are teaching remotely from home rather than from their classrooms in order to care for their children during the week. Depending on the school that they attend, their children are either online or hybrid.

Jessica Tran, a history and psychology teacher, has a 6-year-old daughter and a 10-year-old son whom she checks in on during the day due to her partner not having the option to work from home, she said.

“My presence at home with them, one kid who is remote and one who is hybrid, allows for [my] childcare system to be possible. I am also very fortunate because my kids are in first and fifth grade, and we can teach them how to navigate their technology, and all things considered,

they are pretty independent,” Tran said.

She said she loves being at home with her children, but there are some disadvantages and challenges when it comes to getting work done.

“Sometimes my kids are distracting. They might pop into the Zoom screen, so the multitasking of parenting and teaching simultaneously can be tricky. However, it would be much more difficult if my kids were younger, so this problem only happens occasionally, not frequently,” Tran said.

Erin Fortunato, a French and Spanish teacher, has a 4-year-old son with whom she stays home four out of the five school days, she said.

“At the end of the day, all I want to do is go and play with my kid. That can be really nice on a stressful day, to take a few minutes to play with him. It is

also nice to have him run in during the day, and I can hug him and just be with him to take me out of school mentality,” Fortunato said.

She said this opportunity to be with her son throughout the day is both an advantage and a disadvantage when she stays at home.

“In the home environment, it is challenging to get stuff done. On days that I am home, during my free block, I may not get as much done because I want to go spend time with him, so it’s tricky, but it is a nice way to decompress in this crazy environment,” Fortunato said.

English teacher Allison Krause has three young daughters, ages 5, 4, and 2. Her oldest daughter is currently attending kindergarten in person on Mondays and Tuesdays and is online from Wednesday to Friday, she said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLISON KRAUSE

English teacher Allison Krause works from home and is able to care for her three daughters while teaching classes remotely.

“If she needs help, staying home allows me to go help her and take care of her. Being able to be with my kids and help my daughter with her kindergarten work is an advantage,” Krause said.

She said one of the biggest struggles is staying focused on the tasks at hand and also trying to find a strategy to focus on work.

“I know a lot of students are probably feeling this way too, but it is difficult to distinguish between home and work, and that is currently what I am working on,” Krause said.

Class of 2021 expresses mixed feelings about being remote during senior year

By Caroline MacKinnon
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Facing the beginning of their senior year remotely, the Class of 2021 spoke about their mixed feelings.

Senior Dede Rodier said she has had chances to see her immediate friends, but she has missed out on seeing the whole grade.

“Not seeing my grade is upsetting. I mean, not being able to see the people you only see in school,” she said.

Not only will they be missing out on seeing each other in person, but the class of 2021 will also be missing out on events that typically occur during senior year.

Senior Anna Coyne said she is disappointed about missing out on things like Spirit Week, prom,

Senior Week, and pep rallies.

“I was excited to enter the gym during the pep rallies with my fellow classmates,” she said.

On the other hand, senior Emerson Kahle said he is not fazed about missing out on these events.

“I honestly couldn’t care less, personally. I’m not very excited for those things,” he said.

Senior activities are difficult to plan, but the senior class officers are trying to organize events while accommodating to COVID-19 regulations.

“It’s so hard to plan for something when you don’t know what you’re going to be able to do,” senior adviser Phyllis Musco said.

The officers have potential plans to bring the seniors



COURTESY OF ANNA COYNE

together, but nothing is definite yet, she said.

Musco said the class has put a deposit for the Crane Estate on Castle Hill in Ipswich for prom, and the class is circulating ideas for events without big crowds.

For graduation, nothing is yet decided, class president Jack Roberts said.

“We’re looking at doing a pretty massive parade at the end of the year with a float competition,” he said.

A senior class trip is unrealistic due to COVID-19 regulations, so the class officers don’t have anything planned, Roberts said.

For fundraising, the class is planning an online auction and a few raffles, he said.

“Everyone’s experience is going to be different, and we all have to live with that, but that doesn’t mean we can’t be adaptable and make it the best year possible,” Roberts said.

The college process is another significant part of senior year that the class of 2021 hasn’t experienced the same way as students in the past.

Senior Lilly Coote said she

has mixed feelings about the changes to the college application process.

The guidance department’s college boot camp was pushed to August, in-person tours were cancelled, and seeing college counselors has been hard, making the process more difficult, she said.

Rodier said the application process is easier, due to not having to put in test scores, and advises, “Make the most out of a bad situation and try to stay positive.”

As far as tips for fellow seniors, Coote said to use their free time, see their friends when they can, pay attention in class while staying organized, and try to relax during a virtual senior year.

‘I was excited to enter the gym during the pep rallies with my fellow classmates.’

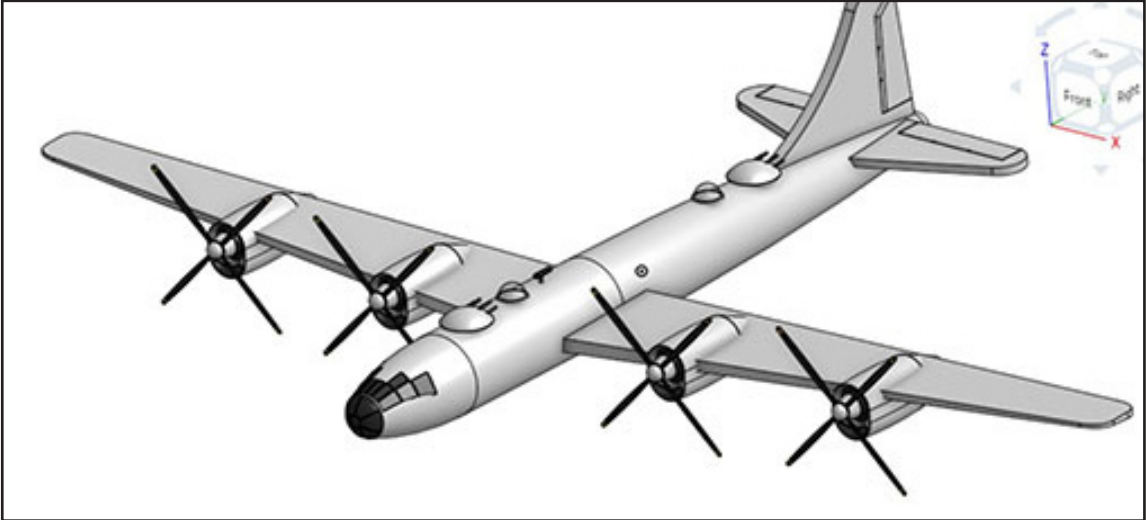
-ANNA COYNE

CAD class learns remotely with new Onshape program

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Engineering teacher Steve Cogger has adapted the CAD class to remote learning, incorporating new projects and a new version of the Onshape program. Despite remote learning, Cogger said he has been able to maintain the same level of teaching in his CAD class. “I started out with a lot of video labs to ensure early success, and now we have moved to more independent work and group projects without the video aid,” he said. Along with similarities in the curriculum, Cogger said students are still able to see their work come to life. “I was able to print fidget spinners for all of the students and give them out when we met on the field,” Cogger said. Despite the lack of interaction between people in the classroom, Cogger said this situation will actually better prepare students for real-world experiences with CAD. “In a way, what we are doing is actually a bit more realistic in terms of a global work environ-

ment. The analogy I’ve been using is Boeing, where they have design teams in a bunch of different cities, and the people are working through Zoom,” he said. In order to better teach the program, Cogger said he has worked personally with Onshape, an online CAD program, to better students’ understanding, as well as his own. Onshape allows students to automatically save their drafts and work together without installing anything, he said. “I’ve been working with Onshape on the side. I actually visited them before the pandemic, and I have sat in on presentations and learned a lot myself. They want to know how the program is working in a high school environment,” he said. This program has recently expanded to a wider range of students and schools, Cogger said. “Onshape Education Enterprise was originally targeted towards colleges, and they offered it to all high schools this year. I wish they would dial it down to a very basic model that is meant for a more professional environment,” he said.



COURTESY OF STEVE COGGER

Junior Colin Harrison used Onshape to design an aircraft model in his computer aided design class. This program has allowed students to take part in more collaborative and complex assignments.

Mark Cheli, the Senior Manager of Academic Experience at PTC, said his company works to facilitate the process of teaching CAD for educators and students. “We put more people into the education department for Onshape, and we are trying to make the experience of teaching the program smooth and clear for educators,” he said. In order to help teachers educate students more effectively, Cheli said Onshape has added a variety of helpful features.

“This year, we have added a ‘follow’ feature, so that students and teachers can navigate the program to view what their classmate is working on,” he said. In order to ensure the process is going smoothly, Cheli said Onshape has become more adaptive and responsive. “We are very feedback-driven. We create a new version of Onshape about every three weeks to address issues teachers have brought to our attention,” he said.

Junior Lydia Berger said the class is extremely useful beyond high school. “CAD can help in a lot of jobs and fields, and it can help students get part-time jobs in college,” she said. Berger said the course is enjoyable and fits well with remote learning. “I like the class a lot. When I joined the class, it was because it fit in my schedule, but it’s turning out to be really fun and interesting,” she said.

Donna McKay retires after 10 years in special education department

By Isabella DiPasuale
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Special education aide Donna McKay retired after working for 10 years at the high school but will stay on the staff part-time to assist during COVID-19. McKay said she taught at Essex Elementary for 16 years before coming to the high school. She said she has loved her job and finds the position to be incredibly rewarding. “To me [special education] is a very rewarding career because to be able to help a kid get through their [struggles] is just great,” she said. McKay said that throughout her time at the school, she got

to work with every department, helping her assigned group of students, as well as anyone else who needed assistance. “If somebody is struggling with something, and let’s face it, everybody has a hard time with something, to be able to help them get through it and feel better about themselves is probably the best part of it all,” she said. Special education teacher Jim Umile said he and McKay worked together to pilot the Bridge program, which was designed to help students reacclimate to school after being out for an extended period of time. The Academic Center now provides this service of support when needed, Umile said.

He said he and McKay were in charge of establishing expectations and setting up an environment that was comfortable for their students. Umile said that he is responsible for a caseload of students, and he relied on McKay to make sure everyone got help. McKay is instrumental in the lives of the students she works with and has affected generations of kids, Umile said. “The students always ran to her for help. Whether it was academic help, advice, emotional support, just to chat about the weekend. She is just such a kind, generous person that kids gravitated toward her all the time,” he said.



COURTESY OF DONNA MCKAY

Since her retirement this past year, Donna McKay has spent her extra time gardening and being with her family and grandkids.

McKay said she is still working part time in three classes due to COVID-19, but she is still enjoying the perks of retirement. She has been utilizing her time to work on her garden and spend time with her grandkids, she

said. “Because of our unprecedented situation, we are very lucky that she is going to hang on in a certain capacity with us. It will be a nice soft transition for her to go off to retirement,” Umile said.

Current Events Club strives to keep students informed

By Hadley Levendusky
INDEPENDENT STAFF

In order to give students a place to learn and talk about current events, sophomore Juliana Saunders and teacher Jessica Tran created the Current Events Club. Saunders said she has always been very interested in current events. “I think a lot of other people in our general age group are as well,” she said. Sophomore Lexi Hano is also interested in current events.



COURTESY OF JUIANNA SANDERS

The Current Events Club, founded by sophomore Juliana Saunders, meets with adviser Jessica Tran during U block.

“Especially this year, I think it is important to keep up with all types of current events,” she said. Tran became the adviser to the club when Saunders, her former student, reached out to her about

wanting to start the club. “I think it is incredibly important for students to be aware of what is going on in the world and to have a place to talk about these issues...whether they agree with each other or not, but to

have a place where they can discuss these issues that affect all of our lives, especially since their age is the future,” Tran said. Saunders posts updates on Google Classroom on events, and posts one general assignment for the week. The club meets via Zoom on Fridays during U block. At the meetings, students discuss facts of the events and their opinions. Then, they move forward and learn more about the events. Saunders posts most of the announcements, and Tran said, “She has really taken the lead. I really provide the space during the U block. I see my role as making sure that everyone is respectful of each other.” Right now, the club is focusing on the election and changes about it this year, Saunders said. “We are staying updated with

the election. Obviously, it is a lot different than it has been this year,” she said. With the club just starting this fall, everyone seems to be active with assignments, Saunders said. “It’s different because everyone actually wants to be there. I think our discussions are a lot more full than if we were forced to talk about them,” she said. There have been two meetings this fall. “So far, Juliana has done a great job posting interesting videos to watch or the agenda for what is going to be addressed,” Tran said. “It has been a great way to keep people’s interest up,” she said. Hano said the club has overall been very inclusive. “Sometimes on Zooms, I feel like it can get quiet, so these assignments have helped that,” she said.



This or that?

ISABELLA DIPASQUALE ILLUSTRATIONS



Whole Berry

Despite the comfort and satisfaction of jellied cranberry sauce, it has no place being compared to the homemade, classic, whole berry alternative. A Thanksgiving plate is incomplete without the sweet taste of cranberry residue leaking everywhere from the whole cranberries in the sauce. Jellied cranberry sauce has a smooth, almost unnerving texture, similar to the slickness of a slug; meanwhile, whole berry cranberry sauce has a nice feel and form because of the cranberries left in. Also, whole berry cranberry sauce is far superior when involved in making Thanksgiving sandwiches. While jellied cranberry sauce may fit nicely between the bread, it fails to allow the bread and other sandwich elements to soak up the essential cranberry flavor that soaks out of the whole berry sauce.

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Cranberry Sauce



Thanksgiving is not complete without the familiar texture of a fan favorite: jellied cranberry sauce. The friendly cranberry farmers at Ocean Spray outdid themselves with their tried and true cranberry jelly recipe. It's a sweet, succulent novelty, perfectly rounded with ridges from the sides of the classic can. Plus, nothing is more satisfying than breaking the suction seal with a knife and watching the sauce slide cleanly out of the can. The lucky family member that gets to slice it— well, they get to experience the satisfaction of feeling the knife glide through the gel. The slices fit nicely in those Thanksgiving sandwiches, which are the real star of the holiday when the leftovers come out on Friday.

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Smooth

Skinless mashed potatoes allow for the welcoming inclusion of all other tastes in the table spread and doesn't overstay its welcome in your teeth like its flakier relative.

When the table is filled with a variety of comforting food, mashed potatoes are the perfect vessel for flavor. Placing turkey, gravy, and stuffing in your plate makes the mashed potato unite its culinary boundaries and brings together your plate.

Unlike mashed potatoes with skin, the texture is much smoother and won't stay in your mouth when you go for a slice of pie later on. It's easy, soothing, and light--just the thing you need at a Thanksgiving feast.

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Mashed Potatoes



Perfectly smooth mashed potatoes are missing something: the complex, potatoey flavor achieved only by leaving the skin on. A small piece of potato skin in a forkful of mashed potatoes adds texture and intrigue to an otherwise boring bite. And don't forget: leaving the skin on the potatoes means less work in the kitchen. Potato peelers aren't entirely effective, either. They leave the mashed potato chef frustrated, rapidly lashing the peeler against the potato to no avail. Peeling the potatoes is a fate many wouldn't wish on their worst enemy. Save your relatives the trouble and suggest leaving the skin on this Thanksgiving. Your taste buds will thank you.

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Apple Pie

Apple pie holds a place at every Thanksgiving table right beside the turkey and potatoes due to its classic taste, its balancing flavor in the midst of a feast, and its timely relevance to the season.

The apple pie far outpaces its pumpkin cousin. It is a culinary classic, developed in 1381 from England, and has never fallen out of favor or diminished in flavor. The taste of gooey apple far better suits a hearty feast than the almost fruity, semi-starchy, nearly bland standard, pumpkin pie.

The time of Thanksgiving is perfect for an apple pie. Apple season has just come to a close, leaving many apples still waiting to be eaten. The comforting, fresh flavor they provide in a pie or tart gives good use to fruits that would normally be forgotten.

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Pie



Apple pie does not belong on the table on Thanksgiving. It characterizes the period of time leading up to Halloween, when people are apple picking and snow has not yet fallen. Its presence on Thanksgiving offends the sanctity of the holiday. Pumpkin pie, however, in all its rich, smooth, creamy glory, dominates the other pies at the Thanksgiving feast. In November, pumpkin pie overthrows apple pie's position as fan favorite, just in time to be in the spotlight for Thanksgiving. Its seasonal deliciousness, as well as the sense of comfort associated with the smell of pumpkin pie, makes it chief of Thanksgiving desserts.

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Pumpkin Pie

Turkey

When anyone thinks of Thanksgiving, their mind may wander to delicacies such as pumpkin pie, gravy, or even cranberry sauce; but eventually it will return to the centerpiece, the creme de la creme of the Thanksgiving meal: the turkey. The turkey has been associated with Thanksgiving since Governor William Bradford wrote about hunting for them in autumn of 1621. Veganism is a direct attack on the sanctity of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is rooted in the idea of pompous, grandiose portrayals of nourishment to celebrate the past year's blessings and harvest. To undercut such a sacred celebration with tofu or some other substitute should be criminal.

By Ryan Olivier-Meehan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Turkey



According to time.com, approximately 45 million turkeys are killed each year. This enormous number of slaughtered birds is completely unnecessary in order to enjoy Thanksgiving. There is no reason to take this much life in order to celebrate being grateful--in fact, it goes against the peaceful spirit of the holiday. Turkey is always far too much food, leaving the most wasteful leftovers. It is also the blandest of the Thanksgiving foods, unworthy of being featured as the primary Thanksgiving dish. There are many delicious vegan alternatives to turkey on Thanksgiving. Some examples include tofurkey (a tofu alternative), Tempeh Shepherd's Pie, and a dish called butternut squash vegducken, which is a vegetable version of turducken with squash, eggplant, and zucchini.

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Vegan

Changes to swim season due to COVID negatively affect athletic performance

By Emma Ketchum
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Due to COVID-19, the winter swim season is going to be very different than usual and is going to have a negative impact on the swimmer's performances. Athletic director Jordan Edgett said that although everything is unsure and not confirmed, the MIAA does have an idea of what the season would be like for swimmers. Overall practices would most likely be able to function properly, but the meets and competitions are the issues that would

negatively impact the swimmers. Although some meets will be able to happen in person, most of them would be virtual, meaning the two teams competing would complete the races on their own within a day of each other. Then the coaches and officials would send in the timed results to be compared with the other team's results, swim coach Amy Boyden said. Swim meets that are being run this way will cause the meet to be very quick, not allowing a lot of time to rest in between races for swimmers. But the most devastating component of virtual

meets is not physically having the competition racing side by side, to help increase the motivation of wanting to win. Not having that same motivation would most likely cause the times of the swimmers to be slower. "Although I always try my best, there is no doubt that having someone swim next to me pushes me to go faster because I want to beat them," junior Shea Furse said. The States and Sectionals competition meets have already been canceled by the MIAA, Edgett said. These competitions are a crucial part of the season for swimmers and are the events that make all the weeks of hard work worth it, so having them already be canceled is very frustrating and sad for the swimmers. "Those meets are the main reason I do high school swim



COURTESY OF OLIVIA GADO

The MIAA canceled States and Sectionals this year. Last year junior Shea Furse placed second in the MIAA state meet. because of the higher level of competition and being able to race against the fastest people in the league," Furse said. Having the meets being run like this is going to affect the number of people that are going to want to swim, especially given that the cost to participate will still be the same. If the swim season were to be switched to the spring, it would allow more time to brainstorm ideas to be able to have in-person meets instead of virtual, to have the States and Sectionals competitions take place, and to increase the number of people participating.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Climate change should be added to science curriculum

For over 30 years, the build-up of greenhouse gases and the long-term shift in regional climate patterns have been pressing issues in the world. Due to its global effects and benefits to students’ critical thinking as well as their problem-solving skills, climate change should be a topic that is better implemented in every school’s curriculum.

According to a 2016 study from the National Center for Science Education, climate change is most frequently discussed in earth science classes, which only 7% of high school students take, and of those classes, 71% of the teachers spent one or more classes addressing the topic. The median amount of time spent talking about climate change was 1.5 hours per school year.

Global climate change is arguably one of the most important modern issues. According to the UN Environment Programme,

if drastic changes aren’t made soon, the consequences will not only affect oceans and animals but also human lives.

“Rather than using [the phrase] ‘climate change,’ we should be using the phrase ‘climate chaos,’” said AP Environmental Science teacher Keith Hartan.

Despite how current and urgent the topic of climate change is, students are spending almost no time in school learning about it, which reflects how ill-prepared society will be when facing these consequences later.

Educating students about climate change has proven to be beneficial in improving their critical thinking and problem-solving skills according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

By evaluating a variety of real, current data and drawing

conclusions, students are better prepared to tackle issues head-on outside of the classroom.

“Having people prepared is a positive thing in the long run,” Green Team teacher Keith Gray said.

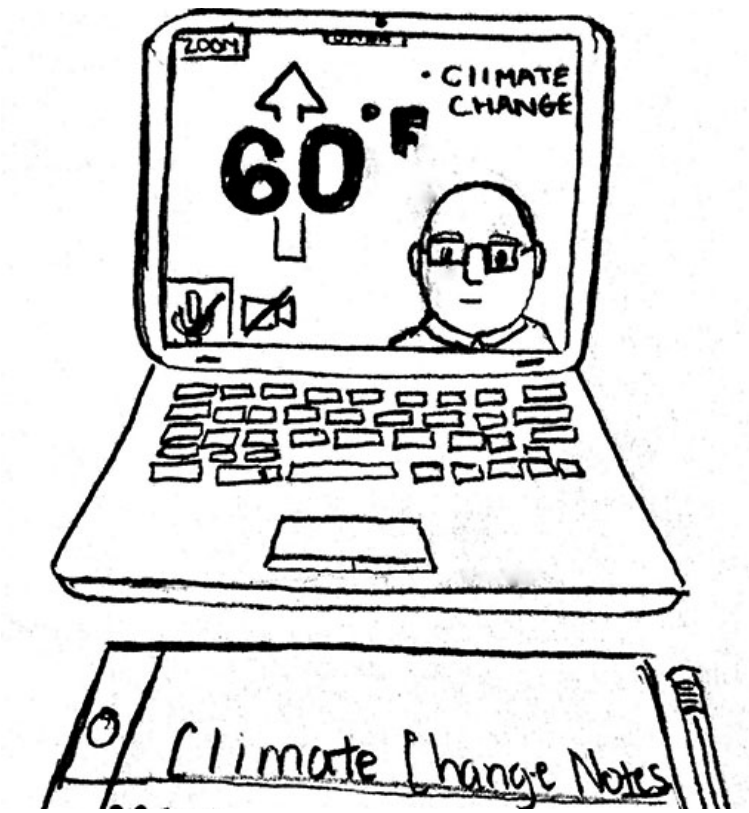
Gray said climate change is a recognized issue in many disciplines and will have an impact on every student.

Although this is true, implementing climate change into school curriculum is not simple because of how decentralized the American education system is. Districts and schools base their curriculum on state standards, and teachers base lesson plans upon district curriculum, which makes it difficult to implement new topics.

Another difficulty is that many don’t believe in climate change despite the amount of evidence supporting it.

According to a national survey conducted by Climate Change Communication, 54% of Americans don’t think that global warming is happening.

“I think it’s healthy to have conversations about both sides,” science department chair Kristen



ELI HEANUE ILLUSTRATION

Umile said.

However, she said it’s important for students to know that what they are learning is all based on facts and data.

Climate change and its global impacts are not going away

anytime soon. Although these overwhelming changes are happening at a rapid pace, there is still time to educate the future generations about a problem that will continue to impact them for the rest of their lives.

Biden must pack Supreme Court to restore judicial equilibrium

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Following former Vice President Joe Biden’s victory against incumbent President Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential election, a new possibility has emerged regarding the overwhelmingly conservative majority in the Supreme Court: court-packing.

Under the Trump administration, the confirmation of Justices Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett skewed the Supreme Court to a 6-3 conservative majority, calling the integrity of the system into question.

Many Democrats have advocated for “court packing,” a term that means adding seats to the existing number of Supreme Court justices, which has remained firmly at nine since 1869.

In an interview with Politico

in March of 2019, Vice President-elect Kamala Harris said, “We are on the verge of a crisis of confidence in the Supreme Court. We have to take this challenge head on, and everything is on the table to do that.”

Some fear the precedent court-packing could set, but the number of seats on the Supreme Court has ranged from six to 10 throughout history.

Historically, there have been several attempts to alter the number of seats on the Supreme Court. Notably, President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed a bill that would add one seat to the court for each sitting justice over the age of 70. This bill was unsuccessful and widely viewed as a political strategy rather than a reform of the court system.

At present, a pressing threat is the loss of public confidence in the ability of the Supreme Court to check the legislative body.



PIXABAY.COM

Public opinion of the Supreme Court has since devolved into the “crisis of confidence” Harris predicted.

After the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg in September, the Trump administration nominated conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the Supreme Court, an action widely regarded as hypocritical.

Following Justice Antonin Scalia’s death in 2016, the Republican Senate majority struck down President Barack Obama’s nomination, Merrick Garland,

arguing that the next president should make the nomination.

Modern politics has begun to trend toward weaponizing the court as a means to achieve political ends, abandoning the principle that a nonpartisan Supreme Court exists to interpret and uphold the U.S. Constitution.

Senate Democrats have spoken out in favor of court-packing as a last resort to maintain a nonpartisan bench.

“It’s about depoliticizing the Supreme Court,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., said to

Politico.

In July of 2019, Biden was vocal in his opposition to court packing, citing the potential for a partisan tug-of-war for Supreme Court seats in the future; however, since his presidential nomination, he has declined to comment on where he stands on the issue.

In an interview with “60 Minutes,” Biden said he will assemble a “bipartisan commission of scholars... and [he] will ask them to, over 180 days, to come back to [him] with recommendations as to how to reform the court system.”

A Democratic Senate majority would allow for the possibility of court-packing. Two Georgia Senate runoff races in January will determine the final Senate breakdown.

In order to restore public confidence in the delicate system of checks and balances that governs the United States, Biden must pack the Supreme Court to restore a balance of conservative and liberal-leaning justices.

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the
INDEPENDENT


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

Editorial space is available to all MERHS students, faculty, and community members. All submissions must be signed and put in the newspaper mailbox in the front office of MERHS. The Independent reserves the right not to print letters and to edit the content for clarity and length. While letters can be critical of an individual’s actions, they cannot slander or libel.

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

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

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Students find new ways to stay active during pandemic

Athletes exercise outside of school through club sports teams, physical fitness programs

By Amy Vytopilova
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Students said they have found many different ways to stay healthy and active besides

school sports throughout the pandemic to help maintain physical and mental health.

Although it can be hard to find ways to stay in shape, students have found their way around it.

Senior Dasa Hase plays sports outside of school.

“I play for NEFC, a club soccer team... we also do private lessons with shooting and technical work,” she said.

Hase said she is very active, so staying in shape is very important for her during the pandemic..

“It helps to get outside and do something active,” she said.

Sophomore Brennan Twombly has found many ways to stay fit while maintaining distance.

“I’ve been playing AAU basketball, and I’ve been going to the gym where I lift weights... we have been also having foot-

ball practices that are socially distanced with no shared equipment,” he said.

Staying active benefits Twombly’s daily life throughout remote schooling, he said.

“It’s important to me to stay active so I can cope with stress and release all my energy... just to



COURTESY OF DASA HASE

NEFC North Shore and West girls’ club soccer teams play in a soccer game, which NEFC North Shore won 5-2. Senior Dase Hase plays soccer for the NEFC North Shore team year-round.

stay in shape and be happy helps me,” he said.

Twombly said staying active is much different and more difficult than it was before the pandemic.

“My biggest challenge is the motivation because for football it’s not as much fun, and you can not really throw the ball... it’s harder to work out by myself

than with other people,” he said.

Staying healthy during the pandemic helps student athletes with their physical and mental health, Twombly said.

“Everyone should be in good shape and be healthy... it also has a lot to do mentally like if you’re active, you’re going to be a lot happier,” he said.

Sophomore Sam Athanas is

part of a program called Allied Strength in Gloucester which helps him stay active.

“Allied Strength is a physical fitness program where we work-out and do activities,” he said.

Athanas said that they maintain social distancing very well.

“There are lines that are six feet apart, and we wear masks,” he said.

Freshmen express mixed opinions about COVID-19 fall sports experience

By Wyeth Takayesu
INDEPENDENT STAFF

The freshmen’s first year in fall sports has come to a close; the season was met with mixed retrospection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The season itself was shorter than normal, ending November 10 and containing new rules for all sports to accommodate mandatory safety requirements laid by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletics Association.

“This year it’s been hard to get back in the groove of playing because of all the different rules we need to know compared to last year,” said freshman Sienna Crocker, a member of the JV girls’ soccer team.

Despite these changes, many



COURTESY OF LYDIA SCHWARTZ

On Nov. 2, the junior varsity girls’ soccer team beat Hamilton-Wenham 1-0 in their final game. Freshmen players said their first high school season went well despite changes due to COVID-19.

members of the teams noted that the season went well.

“[The fall season] has been really good this year, especially with online school where we

have to be online all day, so it’s good to get outside,” said freshman Emily Parkins, a member of the JV girls’ soccer team.

Freshman cross-country boys’

member Charles Latons said he had a positive experience.

“It was as good as it could’ve been, and certainly better than the two seasons I had during middle school,” Latons said.

However, moving to remote learning and transitioning from middle school to high school created more concerns than just spending time indoors for some players like freshman Logan Desouza, a member of the JV boys’ soccer team.

“With honors classes now and a new rule set for soccer, it’s a lot of adaptation at once. I enjoyed having the outlet to play, but at times it became stressful to manage,” Desouza said.

“Soccer is a great place to exercise, but finding the balance was hard at first.”

finding the balance was hard at first.”

Crocker also mentioned how soccer was changing how she did her schoolwork.

“When I go to practice, I can get out all of my energy so

‘It’s a lot of adaptation at once. I enjoyed having the outlet to play, but at times it became stressful to manage.’

-LOGAN DESOUBA

that when I get home, I’m focused and ready to do my assignments.”

Latons said this season forced him to trust his team and helped build their relationship.

He said he is excited for a more normal fall cross-country season next year.

“I had a lot of faith in my team that they’d be doing the right thing this year during these times,” Latons said. “I hope we’re back to normal next year for sure.”

Senior captain Will Kenney leaves lasting legacy for cross-country team

By Eli Heanue
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For the past five years, senior cross-country captain Will Kenney has had a major impact on the team as a runner, a leader, and a teammate, coach Steve Whittey said.

Whittey said Kenney will leave a lasting legacy for the cross-country team.

“He’s obviously had a big impact on the team as the best racer our school has had in a long time,” he said.

Kenney’s success running at the school is attributed to his strong character as a runner and a captain, Whittey said.

“He understands what he needs to do, he has a good work ethic, and he talks to other runners about how they race and what they can do to improve,” he said.

In the future, Whittey said Kenney will have great success as a runner.

“He’s definitely going to be an asset to virtually any team he is a part of,” Whittey said.

After the cross-country season, Kenney said he wants to work to

‘I’ve had a lot of fond memories running here--divisional meets, bus rides, meeting a bunch of people--I’m going to miss it, for sure.’

-WILL KENNEY

improve his high school times and work towards running in a post-secondary environment.

“I want to break my record for the mile. In terms of team success in college,

that varies a lot depending on where I go. For some schools, there are hopes of winning conference titles, and, for others, there are aspirations of going to Nationals,” he said.

Despite his hopes for running later in his life, Kenney said he will always remember his time running for the high school.

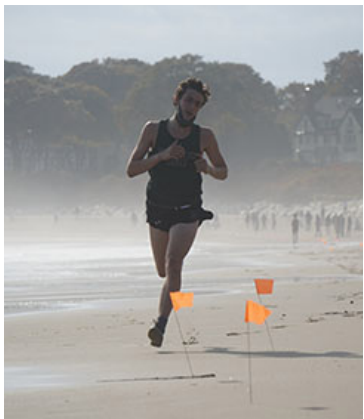
“I’ve had a lot of fond memories running here--divisional meets, bus rides, meeting a bunch of people--I’m going to miss it, for sure,” he said.

Kenney’s teammate, senior Josef Vytopil said Kenney has had a big impact on the team during his time running cross-country.

“Will is the major reason we have done well over the past few years. He has always been very good at running--one of the best, quite frankly,” he said.

Vytopil said Kenney has had an important role as both a leader and a runner on the cross-country team..

“He has been captain since our sophomore year, and he has al-



COURTESY OF MIKE KIRK

Cross-country captain senior Will Kenney said he is going to miss running for the high school team.

ways had a major impact. He has kept our team competitive, and he was always a natural leader, even before he was captain,” Vytopil said.

NAHS members create, share artwork remotely

Board leaders find new ways to get students more involved

By Ryan Olivier-Meehan
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Due to the continuous COVID-19 pandemic, the National Art Honor Society has been forced to adapt to a new online environment, art teacher and NAHS adviser Tamera Burns said.

NAHS functions as a community where students can share artwork and create art in response to a monthly prompt. Recently they have encountered several setbacks, but they are managing to continue to function while ensuring the safety and well-being of all involved, Burns said.

“We started the year late. We have typically always had our induction in October, so everything

is just taking a little bit longer,” she said

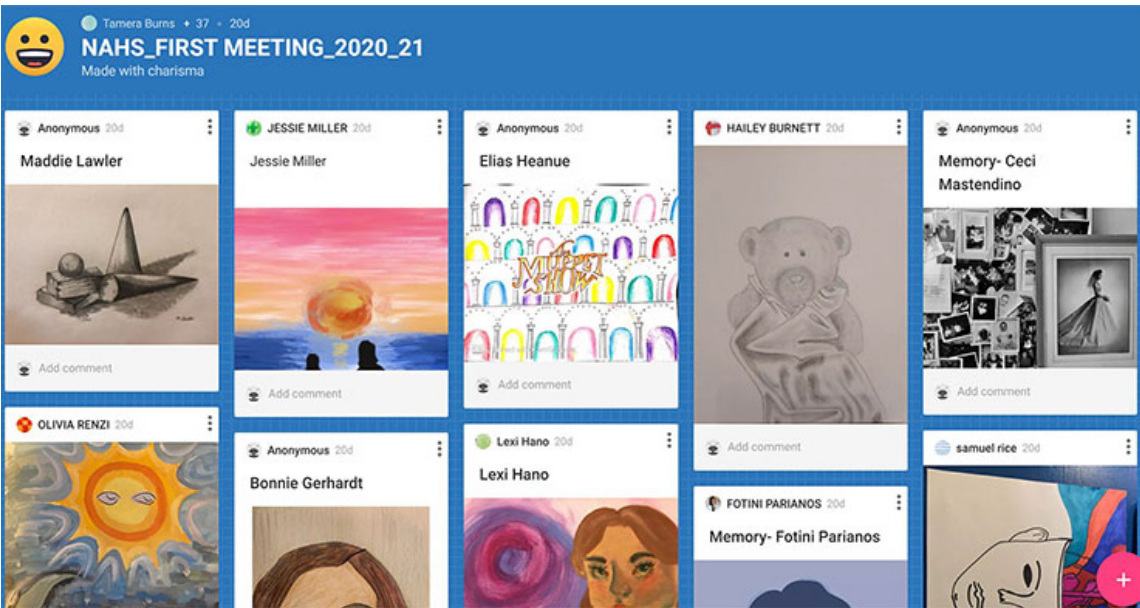
NAHS president Isabella DiPasquale said that the NAHS board is taking steps to make conferences more engaging to make up for the lack of in-person meetings and to give students more of an influence on what they are creating on a monthly basis.

“We’re trying harder to make sure that students get a say in what they’re creating. It’s already easy to be passive during online classes, so we want to make this a place for students to express themselves,” DiPasquale said.

This year’s members are now able to give suggestions and alternatives for prompts through Google forms, allowing them to have more control over what they’re doing, she said.

NAHS vice president Bella Lilly said the forced transition to the online setting has had a positive impact on the organization.

“Before this year, we were losing artwork, and going online seems like a better way to orga-



ISABELLA DIPASQUALE PHOTO

NAHS members use Padlet to share their work remotely. This year, students have the opportunity to suggest ideas for the monthly art prompts, giving them more of a say in the works that they create.

nize everything,” Lilly said.

Because of safety concerns, NAHS is unable to hold in-person fundraisers or even an induction for first-year students, but there have been multiple ideas on how to overcome these issues,

DiPasquale said.

“We’re hoping to have some form of induction to recognize new students, and hopefully at some point we’ll be able to have some socially distanced events if the weather is nicer,” she said.

Because of the inability to hold art shows and fundraise by selling art, NAHS plans to sell student-made pins, masks, and stickers that could be sold at sporting events or online to raise money, Burns said.

Photography classes adjust curriculum, discover benefits of remote learning

By Ema O’Neil
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Photography classes have had to make many changes to accommodate online learning. Despite the challenges, photography teacher Caroline Hunt Epp and her students said they have been able to find many benefits to remote classes.

Because she cannot meet with students, Epp said she decided to let them use their phones to take photos this year.

For her Photo 2 and AP classes, she discussed the pros and cons of using a phone or borrowing a camera from the school and gave both options to her students; however, her Photo 1 students are all currently using their phones.

“I actually like taking the pic-

tures on my phone because it’s always at easy access,” freshman Photo 1 student Liv Cahill said.

Epp said that providing her Photo 2 and AP classes with cameras and having her Photo 1 classes use their phones has been beneficial for both her and her students, and she is thinking about continuing this system after the pandemic has passed..

Another challenge that photography classes faced this year was accessing Photoshop. Junior AP photography student, Izzy Thurlow, said that she depended on Photoshop to bring her photos to the next level; however, both Epp and her students have been able to come up with many alternatives.

Epp said that they are currently working with a program called Photoppa.com which is

very similar to Photoshop and is web-based so all students can access it. Epp said that she spent one or two classes doing research discussing alternative Photoshop websites with her AP students.

Epp said she had to adjust her curriculum and teaching methods to accommodate online learning. One of her biggest changes has been implementing “fun Photoshop Friday.”

If her class meets on a Friday, she will give her students a certain theme and a certain amount of time to shoot and edit a picture that revolves around the theme. She then gives them a link to a Padlet where they can post their photos and comment on each other’s work.

“It’s a good way to get them away from their screen,” Epp said.



NATHAN KELLEHER PHOTO

Photography students can take photos using cameras or phones, and they can use a program called Photoppa.com to edit.

Thurlow said despite the negative aspects of an online photography class, attending the class remotely has provided her with many benefits that she didn’t have

when taking in person.

“I feel when we are in our own space, it is easier to come up with more creative and open ideas,” she said.

Ceramic classes learn remotely with substitute materials

By Hadley Levendusky
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Students and teachers are adapting to remote learning and its challenges in ceramic classes, art teacher Tamera Burns said.

To mirror ceramic classes at home, Burns said students were given materials at the in-person days in September. Burns said many materials are back ordered and on their way.

Ceramic students were given sketchbooks, chunky markers, nine pounds of clay in zip lock bags, and canvas to substitute for



COURTESY OF TAMERA BURNS

Ceramics student Chloé Lilly, a freshman, used materials she was given earlier in the year to create a ceramic clay piece from home.

ware boards. Students were also given instructions on how to create their own wire cutters using fishing line, she said.

Sophomore Finn Lawler said

cutting clay is a bit challenging without having a real wire cutter.

To show her students how to do assignments, Burns has a document camera where she can

demonstrate proper techniques in ceramics.

“It’s hard because a document camera puts everything upside down,” she said.

But, overall showing work on the document camera works remarkably well, Burns said. It gives students a break from computers and a chance to do something hands on.

Lawler agreed and said it is nice to have a break from being on the laptop.

Grading is being done similar to in-school class. Students photograph work and put it into Padlet.

“This allows students to be able to respond to each other and see different ways their classmates went about projects,” Burns said.

A downside to being remote is that students are not allowed to fire any greenware (unfired pottery), Burns said. The process of having

students bring in their artwork to the school for firing would be very complex to put together at the moment, she said.

With ceramic classes normally being a show and tell type of class, Burns said, “Not being able to give feedback all the time and show students certain ways to do things is definitely challenging.”

Burns said it’s harder to give on-the-spot feedback to all the students.

“I feel like I’m not able to give whole class feedback all the time,” she said.

Despite not getting feedback all the time, freshman Ella Chafe found a positive aspect to remote learning with art classes.

“I have the freedom to be creative on my own without being influenced by other people’s art,” she said.

Teachers’ Thanksgiving Recipe Corner: Fall Family Favorites

Erin Fortunato’s Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Bacon & Pecans

Each year, foreign language teacher Erin Fortunato makes a side of roasted Brussels sprouts with bacon and pecans to complement Thanksgiving dinner. Although they are a side dish, she said they are far from being an insignificant part of the meal. Fortunato said the Brussels sprouts have been one of her family’s favorite dishes since she first made them six years ago, when she began hosting Thanksgiving dinner at her house. She said her brother gifted her family a magazine subscription to Cook’s Illustrated, where she found the recipe. Fortunato said her brother is



a chef in St. Louis, Mo., where he hopes to soon open his own restaurant. “It’s always kind of like trying to live up to my brother’s [cooking] abilities,” she said. The Brussels sprouts are tender, succulent, and well-suited to compete with the creations of a professional chef. The nutty flavor of the chopped pecans melds with the hearty smokiness of the

bacon to create a decadent flavor combination and aroma. Fortunato said the Brussels sprouts are beloved by friends and family alike. “We had a neighbor come over who didn’t like Brussels sprouts and is now preaching about how I changed her view of Brussels sprouts,” she said. This could be a result of the clever cooking technique dictated by the recipe; the instructions say to cook the Brussels sprouts covered tightly with aluminum foil for the first 10 minutes, and then uncover the sprouts for the last 12 minutes to allow them to become crispy on the outside. The result: crispy, flaky leaves on the outside and a tender interior.

Roasted Brussels Sprouts with Bacon & Pecans

- 2 1/4 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
 - 3 tablespoons olive oil
 - 1 tablespoon water
 - Salt and pepper
 - 4 slices bacon
1. Adjust oven rack to upper-middle position and heat oven to 500 degrees. Toss Brussels sprouts, oil, water, 3/4 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper in large bowl until sprouts are coated. Transfer sprouts to rimmed baking sheet and arrange so cut sides are facing down.
 2. Cover sheet tightly with aluminum foil and roast for 10 minutes. Remove foil and continue to cook until Brussels sprouts are well browned and tender, 10 to 12 minutes longer.
 3. While Brussels sprouts roast, cook 4 slices bacon in 10-inch skillet over medium heat until crisp, 7 to 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer bacon to paper towel-lined plate and reserve 1 tablespoon bacon fat. Finely chop bacon. After transferring sprouts to platter, toss with 2 tablespoons olive oil, reserved bacon fat, chopped bacon, and 1/2 cup finely chopped toasted pecans. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and serve.

Beverly Low’s Turnip Casserole

Guidance counselor Beverly Low’s Finnish grandmother made turnip casserole each Thanksgiving. Low has continued the tradition and makes the casserole every year using a recipe that was passed down from her great-grandmother through four generations. Low said she remembers watching her grandmother make the turnip casserole in the kitchen at a young age, and she would help to prepare the ingredients. “The main part of it that I remember is peeling and cutting up the turnips,” she said.



Low said when she was young, her grandparents lived down the street, so her family would often eat Thanksgiving dinner at her grandparents’ house, and the family counted on her grandmother Aune to make the casserole. Low’s grandmother passed away when she was a junior in college, she said. Afterward, her mother continued to make the casserole until a few years ago when Low took it on. She said the casserole comes out slightly different each time she makes it. The taste depends on the size of the turnips used, the amount of sugar she decides to add each time, and the amount of butter used.

Grammy Hakkila’s Finnish Turnip Casserole (Lanttulaatikko)

- One turnip, about 6” – peeled and cut in quarters or smaller chunks
- One large egg – well beaten
- 1 to 1 1/2 tablespoon of sugar
- Two tablespoons of butter
- About 1/3 cup of milk
- Shallow casserole dish
- BREAD CRUMB TOPPING**
- Two tablespoons of butter (or a dash more if needed)
- About 1/3 cup of dry bread crumbs (seasoned is nice)
- Place turnip in a large pot with enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and reduce heat. Cook turnip until it’s soft with a fork touch – about 40 minutes. Drain and return to pot.

Mash it well. Use a hand masher – it’s okay to have small lumps. Add a little sugar and keep stirring/mashing. Stir/mash in the butter until it melts. Add the beaten egg and mix. Add milk gradually while stirring – it’s okay if it looks messy. Heat the oven to 350. Spoon the turnip mixture into the casserole. Melt some butter and stir in the bread crumbs. Sprinkle crumb mixture on top of turnip. Put in oven at 350 for about 45 minutes. Crumb topping should be just getting brown. Note: This casserole “rests well” and can be prepared in advance, refrigerated, and cooked the next day.

James Wallimann’s Potatoes au Gratin

History teacher James Wallimann makes potatoes au gratin for his family each Thanksgiving, carrying on a holiday tradition his mother started before she passed away. He said the potatoes are a long-standing family favorite, beloved by the eight to 12 family members that gather at his house on Thanksgiving. Wallimann said the dish holds sentimental value to his family because of his mother. “For me, it’s just a personal thing,” he said. “My mom passed away, and so we have some Thanksgiving and Christmas traditions that we’ve continued since she left us. [The potatoes] and a few other food items are really special to us because of that.” Wallimann said he has taken over making the potatoes au gratin because his family values the

act of sharing a meal. “We’re not Italian, but we grew up in a very Italian city in New York, and family and food and bringing people together is just such a huge part of my upbringing,” he said. Wallimann said the dish is always gone after the meal. It is easy to imagine how the pan would be empty at the end of the evening. The dish tastes like comfort, thin petals of potato layered between onions and a creamy bechamel sauce. The flavors of Gruyere and cheddar cheese are prominent but mild, warm, and rich. Wallimann said Thanksgiving would not be complete without the gratin. “It would definitely be a topic of conversation if it wasn’t on the table,” he said.



Potatoes au Gratin

- 8 ounces Gruyère or sharp cheddar cheese, or a combination
 - 3 pounds Yukon gold or red potatoes
 - 1 small yellow onion
 - 2 cloves garlic
 - 4 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon unsalted butter, divided
 - 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
 - 2 cups whole milk
1. Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 400°F. Coat a 9x13-inch baking dish with 1 tsp of the unsalted butter.
 2. Grate 8 ounces Gruyère or sharp cheddar cheese on the large hole of a box grater and set aside.
 3. Use a mandoline or a sharp chef’s to thinly slice 3 lbs Yukon gold or red potatoes into thin slices (no need to peel), doing your best to keep the potatoes slices stacked to make assembly faster. Halve and thinly slice 1 small yellow onion. Finely chop 2 garlic cloves.
 4. Place the remaining 4 tbsp butter and the garlic in a large saucepan over medium heat. Once the butter is melted, add 1/4 cup all-purpose flour, 1 tsp kosher salt, 1 tsp Dijon mustard, and 1/2 tsp black pepper. Whisk to combine and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add 2 cups whole milk and whisk vigorously until well-combined. Bring the mixture to a simmer, whisking occasionally. Remove from the heat, add the cheese, and whisk until mostly melted and smooth.
 5. Sprinkle the baking dish with about 2/3 of the sliced onions, arranging them in a single layer. Pour about 1 cup of the cheese sauce over the onions. Arrange the potatoes over the onions and cheese sauce. If you’ve kept them stacked, it is easy to fan them out into rows with the potatoes at an angle. Sprinkle the remaining onions over the potatoes, tucking them between rows if desired. Pour the remaining cheese sauce over the potatoes and spread into an even layer. Gently tap baking dish against the counter to settle the sauce.
 6. Bake uncovered until the top and edges are browned and crisp, and a knife inserted in the middle can easily slide through the potatoes, 60 to 75 minutes.
 7. Let the gratin cool for 10 minutes before scooping or slicing.
- Recipe sourced from thekitchn.com.*

lightly sweet with one and a half tablespoons of sugar, which may be preferable for those who appreciate a yam dish on Thanksgiving. Low said she brings the casserole to every Thanksgiving dinner she attends, and she also enjoys making it for Christmas and New Year’s Eve. The turnip casserole is surpris-

ingly airy and melts on the tongue. The seasoned bread crumbs add a pleasant texture to the top of each bite, and the turnip flavor is a comforting rendition of the classic, earthy taste of fall root vegetables.

By Olivia Turner
INDEPENDENT EDITOR