

# the **INDEPENDENT**

Volume XXX Number 6

Manchester Essex Regional High School 36 Lincoln Street Manchester, MA 01944

April 8, 2024

## STEAM showcase grows in size, scale in second year

Event includes interactive activities, real-world situations

By Avabella Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Students in grades K-12 and local organizations presented educational exhibits at the district's Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and Art (STEAM) fair on March 27 at the high school.

Science and math department chair Kristin Umile said there were 27 student exhibits and 27 organization exhibits, which was double the amount compared to last year's event.

Since there were more exhibits this year, the event took place in both the gym and the cafeteria.

Almost every exhibit contained an interactive element such as creating LED headbands or writing science poetry, she said.

Other notable exhibits included the Essex Shipbuilding Museum, the band and chorus performance, and stuffed bears created by kin-

dergarteners, Umile said.

"I love how there were opportunities for everybody to learn something, whether it was a 3-year-old all the way up to a grown adult," she said.

Umile said she began planning for the event in early September and appreciated how many people were willing to give their time to present at the event.

"I got a lot of great feedback from students, from teachers, from other faculty members, and from community people, so I think it was a success," she said.

A new addition this year was the Butter "UR" biscuit food truck, which gave 10 percent of proceeds, over \$2,000, back to the STEAM showcase, Umile said.

Due to the popularity of the food truck, the school only spent \$200 on the truck itself because of the amount of money they received from the proceeds, she said.

Umile said she believed the event taught students invaluable presentation skills and allowed



COURTESY OF KRISTIN UMILE

The second annual STEAM showcase included booths from local businesses and organizations as well as presentations from school-based clubs, and performances by the band and Soundwaves.

the community to engage in experiential learning.

"A forensics student could

be teaching a fifth-grader about fingerprinting and also having a conversation with a grown adult.

So I thought it was neat that you had to change how you spoke STEAM SHOWCASE, page 3

## 10th-grade history, English classes collaborate for slavery unit

By Mechi O'Neil  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

As part of the English and history classes interdisciplinary unit on American slavery, sophomores viewed the 2013 film "12 Years a Slave," on March 13.

The movie focuses on the slave narrative of Solomon Northup, a free Black man who was kidnapped and sold into slavery.

History teacher Jennifer Coleman said the objective of showing the film to the students is to help them empathize with the lived experiences of enslaved people in the United States in the 19th century.

"The students read slave narratives in class, but visually showing them the experiences of enslaved people is significantly more impactful than just having them read those excerpts," she said.

Students handled the material in a very mature way, English teacher Allison Krause said.

"I was really proud of the students because it is a hard film to



FLICKR.COM/ALATELEFR

On March 13, the sophomore class watched "12 Years a Slave" as part of a joint unit on slavery in English and history classes.

watch," she said.

The English department assigns students to read slave narratives and watch documentaries, English department head Debra Isensee said.

"We read an excerpt from Frederick Douglass' slave narrative, among many others, and the unit culminates by watching the film," she said.

In their history classes, students trace the history and experiences of enslaved people from their first arrival in Jamestown in 1619 to to the edge of the Civil War, Coleman said.

"We look at how the government addressed the issue of slavery, the lived experiences of

enslaved people in the American South, but also free African Americans in the North and South as well," she said.

Krause said she gave a survey to her students after viewing the film, asking for their thoughts and opinions.

"Out of the 46 responses, every single student ranked the film as being very impactful, and that just confirms that, as difficult as the movie is to watch, it's extremely valuable in humanizing slavery," she said.

Sophomore Abby Kent said watching the movie was incredibly eye-opening.

"The film brought a whole new SLAVERY UNIT, page 3

## Seniors prepare SCORE projects, internships for fourth quarter

Program offers work experience to students

By Bissy Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

During quarter four, seniors participate in a program known as Senior Choice of Related Experience (SCORE) to fulfill graduation requirements.

Senior Lily Pilaud said the seniors participate in internships, projects, or activities relevant to their interests and intended area of study.

SCORE adviser Nicole O'Rourke said honors and college preparatory classes

will end on April 5, the end of third quarter, and SCORE projects will begin April 8.

SCORE acts as a bridge to future college and workforce plans, replacing school, she said.

Students have a certain amount of hours that need to be completed to fulfill their SCORE require-

ments, depending on the project they choose, O'Rourke said.

Every AP course a student takes deducts five hours from their requirement, she said.

Pilaud is doing an apprenticeship under a horticulturalist Maureen Duncan, studying native wildlife in Massachusetts, she said.

She plans to double major in environmental science and business analytics.

Her SCORE activities include planting flowers and researching their origin and impact in different environments, Pilaud said.

Senior Gavin Davis's

SCORE project is not a traditional internship. He is participating in the American Rocketry competition, he said.

The competition challenges participants to use an engineering design process to create a rocket to carry an egg to a specific

SCORE PROJECTS, page 3

News

Features

Opinion

Arts

College acceptance  
-page 2

Prom preview  
-page 4

Fall vs. spring sports  
-page 7

Spring concert  
-page 11



# Seniors make postgraduate plans, decisions for future routes

Students decide on college, new paths

By Ella Chafe  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

With the May 1 deadline for college decisions approaching, seniors are finalizing their post-graduation plans.

Senior Liv Cahill said she will major in environmental science at the University of Saint Andrews in Scotland.

Cahill said she planned on staying in the U.S. for school, so she only applied to those schools initially. Her mother encouraged her to apply to Saint Andrews, and she applied the night of the deadline.

"I did not expect to get in at all, so I was so excited and freaking out," Cahill said.

She said this was an opportunity she couldn't pass up, especially given the unique travel opportunities Scotland has to offer.

Cahill also said she is excited

to become a part of traditions within the school.

"Their traditions are very different from a lot of the other schools I applied to, and I'm still learning about them, but it sounds like a very tight-knit community," she said.

Senior Cade Furse will continue his basketball and academic careers by doing a postgraduate year at Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire.

He said his goal is to get looked at by colleges for basketball so he can continue playing at the collegiate level. He is interested in playing in the New England Small College Athletic Conference or in the Patriot League.

"The thing that is great about a postgraduate year is that it gives you a lot of options," he said.

Senior Quinn Brady will be attending Tulane University in New Orleans.

Brady said he traveled to the campus two weeks before the decisions came out and spoke to an admissions officer, which helped



FLICKR.COM



COURTESY OF QUINN BRADY



COURTESY OF CADE FURSE

Seniors Liv Cahill, Quinn Brady, and Cade Furse made their postgraduate plans to continue their academic careers at University of Saint Andrews, Tulane University, and Phillips Exeter Academy.

his application.

He said he wants to study in the business school and hopes to own a business after college.

Brady said he is most excited about meeting the students at Tulane.

"I feel like the students re-

ally resonate with me, and I got a sense of what the students were like when I visited, and I loved it," he said.

## Freshmen attend 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' during field trip to North Shore Music Theater

Shakespeare play engages students, includes humor

By Isabelle Donnellan Valade  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

In preparation for reading "Romeo and Juliet," freshmen attended "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the North Shore Music Theater (NSMT), English teacher Angie Rice said.

Going to the play on March 7 was a way for students to engage with Shakespeare before reading the play, English teacher Elizabeth Edgerton said.

The Friends of the Manchester Essex Performing Arts gave a \$1,000 grant to help pay for transportation and tickets, but the students still had to pay \$10 each to pay what the grant didn't cover,



COURTESY OF ELIZABETH EDGERTON

Chase Spencer, Conrad Garfield, Turner Valeo, Lucas Sanson, and the rest of the freshman class saw the play "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the North Shore Music Theater on March 7.

Edgerton said.

"I think that the cost of transportation might be prohibitive in the future, but I hope that we can

also see that this is an important opportunity for kids," she said.

Rice said she hopes to get help from the community for future

trips.

"We're hoping that next year ... we can go again. I think post-COVID, it's important because we didn't go out for so long. It's good to get out into the world," she said.

Rice said watching plays is important.

"The characters coming to life helps to understand the theme, character, plot, and language. At first, the language feels foreign, but as you get used to it, the story comes alive," she said.

Freshman Maggie Whitman said the performers engaged the audience.

"It's tricky to make a Shakespeare play interesting for a younger audience, but I think they did a really good job. They included some more modern humor while still keeping it true to

the actual script," Whitman said. Edgerton said she appreciated the production style.

"This company runs it the old style, how Shakespeare would have, which is doubling and tripling of the actors. The cast was about nine people, and each person played two or three characters," Edgerton said. Rice said she was proud that they went and said she

appreciated the cast.

"I think it's important for the students to understand that there are people for whom this is their craft, their life, and they take it seriously, [and] even if some of the students don't love the language or the literature, it was cool to show them something that might be different than what they might go to on their own," she said.

**'It's tricky to make a Shakespeare play interesting for a younger audience, but I think they did a really good job.'**

-MAGGIE WHITMAN

## SCAR attends Connections Conference

By Gwendolyn Berger  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Student Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) attended the annual Connections Conference at Sutton High School last month.

Sutton High School's SCAR organizes the conference every year, SCAR adviser and English teacher Allison Krause said. SCAR highlights the importance of learning the history of oppression, amplifying oppressed voices, and standing for justice, she said.

Over 50 high schools come and participate in workshops and listen to the two keynote speak-

ers every year, Krause said. This year the conference took place on March 15.

"The workshops provide students with opportunities to learn about a different culture, plan their own journey in diversity, equity, and inclusion, and so much more," she said.

Leader of SCAR, junior Lily Stefanovich, said the club was founded at the school in 2019 and has about 40 members. The club meets to discuss social justice issues and holds fundraisers and events every year, including attending the Connections Conference, she said.

"The Connections Conference has always been so amazing, and I think everyone that has gone can say that they've learned a lot," Stefanovich said.

SCAR leader, junior Henry Stevens said he went to the con-



COURTESY OF ALLISON KRAUSE

Members of the Student Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) attended the Connections Conference at Sutton High School. Students attended workshops and listened to speakers.

ference for the first time this year. He attended two workshops: "Puerto Ricans: Second Class American Citizens?" and

"Through Different Eyes: Embracing the Power of Perspective."

"I learned about the constitu-

tional limbo that all Puerto Rican American citizens find themselves in ... they have citizenship but are not afforded the same rights as citizens of the mainland," Stevens said.

He said one example was that Puerto Ricans cannot vote for president. Stevens said he learned a lot and felt the community at the conference was very accepting.

"The environment was super cool. Everyone was really nice and welcoming," he said.

Stevens said he felt inspired by the second keynote speaker, Kai Shappley, a transgender girl who moved from Texas after strict legislation, such as the "bathroom ban" bill passed.

"She transitioned at 5 and spoke out in court at age 10 against some of the bathroom ban bills. She was very well-spoken," he said.



# Robotics Team participates in Reading, Revere competitions

## Team advances to Alliance round during Regionals

By Ella Chafe  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

After their Regional performances at Reading High School and Revere High School, the Robotics Team was looking to

advance to the District Championship from April 3 to 6 in Springfield, Mass, but fell short of qualifying.

Adviser Matthew Tangney said there were 37

schools at the competition in Reading on March 16, and each school was randomly placed on a team with two other schools to compete together.

The goal of this competition was to race the robot on the field, pick up rings, and shoot them into a goal, he said. Then, the robot had to climb onto a chain and lift itself off the ground, Tangney said.

The team was notified of this challenge in January, and they worked to accomplish this in their meetings, he said.

They placed 12th and advanced to the Alliance round, a play-off round, on March 17.

Tangney said he is amazed by the students and impressed by their ability to work together.

“It is very much a student-run group, and after this past competition, I’m extra impressed because a lot of the other teams aren’t very student-run,” he said.

Senior captain Kate Bappe said

**‘It is very much a student-run group, and after this past competition, I’m extra impressed because a lot of other teams aren’t very student-run.’**

-MATTHEW TANGNEY



COURTESY OF MATTHEW TANGNEY

**Robotics Team members attended their first regional competition at Reading High School on March 16. The team worked with two other schools and placed 12th out of 37 teams overall.**

the team did well at their past competition in Revere on March 23, where they placed 11 out of 36.

“We had a lot of good rounds where we were scoring a lot of points, and overall I think our robot did really well,” she said.

Bappe said that if the team moved onto the District Cham-

pionship and placed in the top 20, they would have advanced to the World Competition in Dallas, Texas from April 23 to May 3.

Senior Aiden Brown said he is proud of the team’s performance at the competition in Revere, as they made it to the Alliance selection for the second time.

He said the team was elimi-

nated after two rounds, and was hoping they would gain enough ranking points to advance to the District Championship.

After receiving the final decision regarding their rank points, the team placed 99th overall where they needed to be 96th to qualify for the District Championship, Tangney said.

## Manchester, Essex will vote on new budget this spring

By Gwendolyn Berger  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Manchester and Essex will be voting to approve the new school budget in May and June, Principal Julie Sgroi said.

Last year, funding issues arose when the budget didn’t pass in Essex.

Superintendent Pam Beaudoin said one of the main issues was that enrollment by Manchester students decreased while enrollment by Essex students remained

stable.

“The way the [budget] formula works [is that] there’s an enrollment portion of it. So, Essex, even though it has stayed the same size, has grown its portion of responsibility,” she said.

School Committee chair Theresa Whitman said Essex was paying a larger bill than Manchester, and the budget was also larger last year because the School Committee was trying to stop supplementing the budget with money from the district reservoirs.

“Last year, we decided to stop taking money from our reservoirs because it’s just not the best practice,” she said.

The budget increase was set to be above the 2.5 percent tax increase that towns can implement

each year, so Essex had to vote for an override, which failed, Whitman said.

She said after Essex voted against the override, the district had to supplement the budget with money from the reservoirs for another year.

Whitman said that although the reserves are being utilized this year, the school’s finances are healthy.

This year, the budget has been much smoother, Beaudoin said.

She said she was directed to preserve the school’s programs and have no designated cuts in the budget.

“This year has been a relatively smooth budget process. We landed with a 2.9 percent increase, and we are getting some new positions and making a few

reductions ... but we’re really just reorganizing,” she said.

Beaudoin said the school created a math coach and English language arts coach position for the elementary schools to bridge learning gaps identified from COVID-19.

The budget also has a section dedicated to new contracts for paraprofessionals, Whitman said.

**‘This year has been a relatively smooth budget process. We landed with a 2.9 percent increase, and we are getting some new positions and making a few reductions ... but we’re really just reorganizing.’**

-THERESA WHITMAN

She said paraprofessionals are teaching assistants without professional licenses, like those who trail students, work in special education programs, and assist elementary school teachers.

“We have a tentative agreement ... which is great because [the district] couldn’t work without them,” Whitman said.

## CONTINUATIONS

### STEAM SHOWCASE

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** depending on who you were talking to,” she said.

Director of curriculum and instructional technology Heather Leonard said she assisted Umile in the initial stages of planning by helping expand the fair to include elementary students.

“I was really impressed with the turnout and the community engagement and how great people did with stopping to ask questions ... it was pretty awesome,” Leonard said.

She said the STEAM fair aligns with the district’s curriculum goals of applying learning in the classroom to real-world situations.

“[Students] are sharing their learning with others ... they’re making connections beyond just their class. It’s not just high school math; it’s how does high school math connect with real-world situations,” Leonard said.

Principal Julie Sgroi said she attended the STEAM fair last year and noticed how many more exhibits and people were there this year.

“I thought it was an amazing evening, and I really don’t know how Ms. Umile put it all together, but she did, and she did it for the community and for the students. It was unbelievable,” Sgroi said.

Freshman Maggie Whitman, who sang with the chorus, The SoundWaves, and ran the CAD and robotics class table, said she enjoyed interacting with different types of people.

“I really enjoyed talking to some of my old teachers and seeing how some of the really little kids got excited learning about the different things,” Whitman said.

The robotics class table had a small robot that followed a line and The SoundWaves performed songs such as “Another Believer,” she said.

“[Next year] I want to present something with Python or

mechanical design ... I want to go into biomedical engineering, so this all definitely helps me,” Whitman said.

Umile said that she hopes to have another STEAM fair next year that is similar in size.

“What was really neat is that other faculty members within our school district were already reaching out after asking if they could set up a table with their kids or with their students next year,” she said.

### ‘12 YEARS A SLAVE’

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** perspective to what we had already learned in class about slavery,” she said.

Kent said the interdisciplinary slavery unit was especially interesting.

“Learning about slavery in both classes gave me a better understanding of our history,” she said.

### SCORE PROJECTS

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** This program was discovered

by his friend who had a strong interest in rockets, he said.

Seniors have different opinions about the SCORE program.

“I like that seniors are able to go out and do something during the last quarter, especially since senioritis is such a big thing. I think it is nice that seniors are able to explore their interests more specifically before going off to college,” Davis said.

Senior Avary Gangemi is working as an assistant account manager and training to be a retail representative for Northeast Food Marketing, she said.

Gangemi chose this project due to prior experience in the food industry, and she is hoping this project will allow her to learn more, she said.

Gangemi said she is very excited to have time out of school to have more real-life experiences.

“SCORE is a good experience for students to go into the workforce at a young age for a short amount of time,” she said.



AVABELLA MITRANO PHOTO

**Sophomore Cia Donohoe and freshman Anne Stevens held a snake at an exhibit during the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Showcase on March 27 at the high school.**



# Senior class officers work to finalize prom preparations

Prom dress  
Instagram proves  
exciting for students

By Bissy Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

Senior class officers and adviser Courtney Brown have been working to create the junior and senior prom, scheduled for May 23 at 6:00 p.m. at the Willowdale Estate in Topsfield.

Seniors are not required to buy prom tickets as long as class dues are paid in full.

Juniors are required to pay \$95, Brown said. Tickets will be sold throughout April, she said.

The planning of prom starts at the beginning of high school.

“As class officer, prom is one of the events you keep in the back of your mind from the beginning,” senior class officer Phileine de Widt said.

Students have held fundraisers over the past four years to

raise money for senior activities, especially for prom, she said.

Class officers have been actively planning since their junior year, but they have been raising money to fund the prom over the last four years, de Widt said.

Senior class officers toured different venues and chose the Willowdale Estate for its beauty and perfect size, de Widt said.

Officers are planning activities that will be held throughout the senior prom, such as a photo booth, DJ, outdoor activities, and buffet-style food, Brown said.

The menu is undecided, but the class officers will choose the menu in early May once the number of attendees is finalized, de Widt said.

If the weather becomes cold, the estate has a tent that can be heated for the students to stay comfortable outside, she said.

The prom is staying traditional with this year’s photos taken at Tuks Point and students arriving on school buses, similar to previ-



DARLENE FOLEY/FLICKR

**This year’s prom will be at the Willowdale Estate in Topsfield at 6:00 p.m. on May 23. Tickets are \$95 for juniors and free for seniors. The estate has a heated tent for the dining and dancing.**

ous years, de Widt said.

After the location was shared with students, they were excited to attend.

“The location for the prom is really pretty,” senior Lucy O’Flynn said.

De Widt has also been running an Instagram account where stu-

dents can post their prom attire, specifically dresses, she said.

O’Flynn said she already picked her dress for prom and posted it on Instagram.

A fun aspect of prom for students is finding out what others may be wearing before picking their attire, de Widt said.

Senior class officers are excited to see the culmination of their plans.

“Prom has been something [the officers and I] were always working towards, so now it’s very bittersweet and exciting to see it become the present moment,” de Widt said.

## Math Team wins all regular season meets, advances

By Phileine de Widt  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

For the first time in school history, the Math Team attended the annual state competition and qualified for the New England Meet.

On April 4, the Massachusetts Association of Mathematics Leagues (MAML) state competition was split between two locations. The team went to Winchester High School and placed 4th out of six teams in the small division.

On April 6, the team discovered they qualified for the New England Association of Mathematics Leagues (NEAML) Competition, which will be held in Canton High School on April



LAUREN WOODCOCK PHOTO

**The Math Team went to Crumbl Cookie after their last regular season meet. They are now preparing for the New England meet.**

26.

In their regular season, the Math Team went undefeated, winning all six meets.

Math teacher and adviser Lauren Woodcock, who began advising the team last year, said this year has been much more successful in part due to senior captain Joanna Shan.

“Joanna had asked if we could

switch things up, so this year, people had to earn their spots, which definitely made us way more competitive,” she said.

Shan said this year she was also making solution guides that allow mathletes to see step-by-step solutions instead of just an answer key.

The state competition differed from regular meets in that

the team could only bring six regulars, instead of 10, and no alternates.

Woodcock said the six mathletes were seniors Shan, Finn O’Hara, and Charlie Virden; junior Jack Cummins; and freshmen Tyler Cummins and Peter Langendorf.

“All players scored points, but Jack and Tyler were high scorers,” she said.

Throughout the season, Shan said Tyler Cummins has been a strong teammate.

“He’s better at math than anyone I’ve ever met, and it’s honestly so impressive to see how he approaches problems. We were definitely lucky to have him,” she said.

Senior Finn O’Hara said he was very excited at the state

competition.

“It ended up being a fantastic experience ... and we were so happy when we got the news that we secured the wild card position,” he said.

The Math Team meets every Thursday after school and will

continue to do so to prepare for the New England Meet, where they will compete against schools from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

As with the state competition, they can only bring six regulars.

Woodcock said she is proud of the year the team has had so far.

“I am hoping we can continue the momentum next year and have another undefeated season,” she said.

**‘I am hoping we can continue the momentum next year.’**

-LAUREN WOODCOCK

## New senior elective focuses on race, diverse perspectives

By Avabella Mitrano  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

English teacher Allison Krause will teach a new senior quarter elective titled “Literature of Oppression and Resistance in Black America” next year.

Krause said the class will study how literature can be used as a tool to both dehumanize and uplift minority populations, with a specific focus on African Americans.

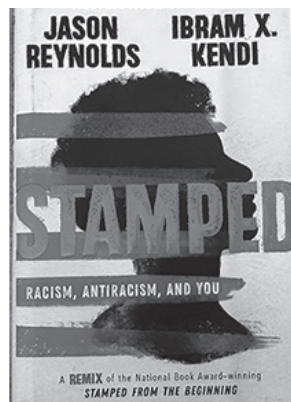
The class will begin by studying how racism was reflected and disseminated in literature and then move toward how literature can be used as a force for good in the present day.

“We’re going to look at every-

thing from the way the Bible was used in the justification of slavery all the way up through today and how poetry and speeches are used to create change,” Krause said.

Students will read the book “Stamped” by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi as a foundational text that will serve as a basis for understanding the history behind racism and provide context for other readings such as abolitionist essays, slave narratives, and poetry, Krause said.

“It’s important for students to recognize patterns and themes in the way literature can be used to dehumanize people through diction ... but then I also want to put the emphasis on the way lit-



AVABELLA MITRANO PHOTO

**English teacher Allison Krause will teach the senior elective “Literature of Oppression and Resistance in Black America.”**

erature can be used as a powerful tool for good,” Krause said.

She said she plans to make the class discussion-based and wants to add a creative element by allowing students to write a piece

that advocates for social justice.

“I’ve been trying to learn a lot around issues of the Black experience in America and systemic racism and was inspired to teach this new course,” Krause said.

As the current Student Coalition Against Racism (SCAR) adviser, Krause said she wants to provide more opportunities for students to hear from diverse voices.

“I hope that the class becomes a space where students feel that they can have hard conversations around the topic of race. When students leave the class, I want them to understand the power that they have as individuals,” she said.

English department chair Debra Isensee said she believes Krause’s class will add more diverse perspectives to the senior English electives.

“We read a bunch of dead white guys as part of American literature as they’re the ones who typically write the stories, so this is a great chance to highlight the other voices and add more diversity,” Isensee said.

She said the course allows students who are interested in the racially diverse literature they read during sophomore year to dive deeper into systemic topics.

Junior Charlotte Crocker, who signed up for the elective, said she’s excited to be learning more about the history behind slavery.

“I liked how in my [sophomore] English class we learned about that, so I figured that I’d probably like this class as well,” she said.

Krause said the class is full with 20 students signed up. It will be offered at honors and college preparatory levels.





INDEPENDENT ARCHIVE PHOTO

Director of school counseling Beverly Low (left) dresses up as Carla from the sitcom “Cheers” with other department members for Halloween in 2018.

Low holds a snake at the K-12 STEAM Showcase in the high school gymnasium on March 30, 2024.

# Beverly Low, director of school counseling, plans to retire after 10 years at school



COURTESY OF BEVERLY LOW

By Alessia Omari  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Director of school counseling Beverly Low plans on retiring this school year after having worked at the school since 2014, she said.

Low said that prior to working at the school, she was the dean of first-year students at Colgate University in New York. She worked there for 13 years, beginning in 2001 and ending in 2014.

“I had spent 27 years of my life working on college campuses and universities, so when I started working here in 2014, it became clear to me that they were looking for someone who could build and cultivate relationships with students,” she said.

Low said her first year was mostly a blur, consisting of making as many connections as she could with students.

“I just remember asking a lot of questions and meeting with as many students as possible,” she said. “This district has very high expectations for its staff and students, and I learned that very quickly.”

School counselor David Conwell, who has worked with Low for seven years, said she has brought a positive energy to the school environment.

“She’s a great leader who’s also a people person with such an outgoing and extroverted personality,” he said.

Conwell said Low’s capability

to form and keep lasting connections has been useful in her field of work.

“You [can] mention some random little college in Ohio, and she’ll [say], ‘Oh! I know the director over there!’” he said. “She always [knows] people from all walks of life.”

Low said that her extroverted personality has allowed her to have many positive interactions with students throughout the school.

“I love being out in the hall and talking to students,” she said.

Junior Timothy Wonson, who has had Low as his school counselor since his freshman year of high school, said that every interaction he’s had with her has been a positive one.

“I’ve had to go to her every now and then for academic stuff, and she’s always been super understanding and helpful,” Wonson said.

Low’s work has helped build strong connections between parents and the school staff, Conwell said.

“She used to run a parent panel, where parents could talk to her about the college process. It was

very impressive,” he said.

Low said that she is most proud of the collaborative working relationships that she has been able to cultivate during the time she has worked at the high school, such as the connections she has helped form with business organizations in the local area.

“We have a great relationship with the greater Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, and I’ve worked diligently to make sure that [school counseling] has the tools to do their jobs,” she said. Principal Julie Sgroi said that working with Low has helped her integrate into the school community during her first year working here.

“She was very helpful in the beginning [for me] as a new principal. She let me know about the things that happen at the school, and what’s different,” she said. “She was very accommodating with making sure I was up to speed on how the counseling office works, and she’s been helpful with any sort of planning,” she said.

Principal Julie Sgroi said that the school is posting for a new director of school counseling for the upcoming fall.

“We will hopefully get some great candidates that will make this school a better place, just as Ms. Low did,” she said.

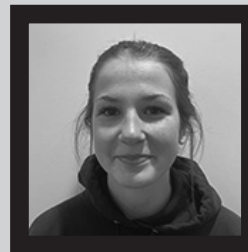
During retirement, Low said that she plans to play golf and visit friends around the country.

**‘You [can] mention some random little college in Ohio, and she’ll [say], ‘Oh! I know the director over there! ... She always [knows] people from all walks of life.’**

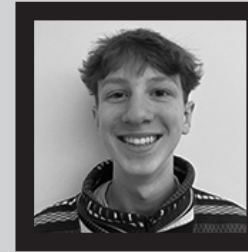
-DAVID CONWELL

**‘She was very helpful in the beginning [for me] as a new principal. She let me know about the things that happen at the school, and what’s different.’**

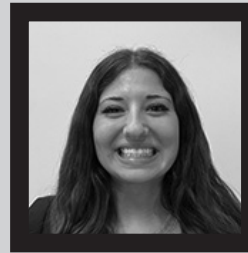
-JULIE SGROI



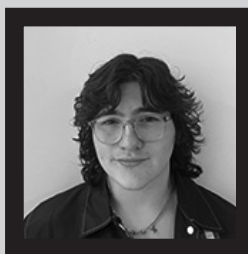
**Freshman Maggie Olsen:**  
“Replacing someone’s shampoo with Nair.”



**Freshman Nikos Sadler-Andreou:**  
“Saran wrap on a door frame so someone gets stuck trying to walk through.”



**Sophomore Arielle Stafford:**  
“Filling a bunch of Oreos with toothpaste.”

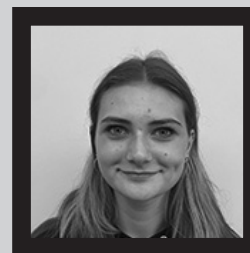


**Sophomore Zac Carvalho:**  
“Essentially, you hire a bunch of paid actors to befriend someone over time and convince them it’s real. Then you break it to them and terrify them.”

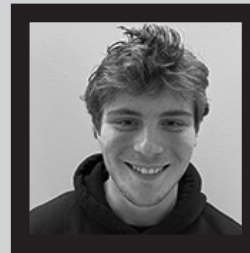


## What is the best April Fool’s Prank?

**Junior Avery Dott:**  
“Covering an onion in caramel and saying it’s an apple.”



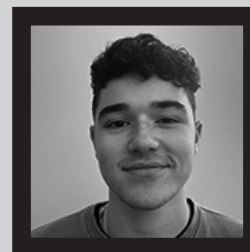
**Junior Robert Silverstein:**  
“Saran wrap on the toilet seat.”



**Senior Kate Bappe**  
“In third grade, Dexter Woodman brought in a bunch of cut-out brown E’s in Tupperware and asked everyone if they wanted ‘brownies.’”



**Senior Logan Desouza:**  
“I take water and fill it with a bunch of hot sauce until it looks like iced tea, and then I tell my brother it’s tea.”





# Class officers plan for Senior Week, add new activities

White water rafting trip set as new overnight class trip

By August Capotosto  
INDEPENDENT STAFF

After four years of fundraising and planning, the senior class officers released the itinerary for their end-of-the-year Senior Week activities.

Senior class officers aimed to add their twist onto standing traditions, senior class president Phileine de Widt said.

“There are some events that we kept the same, such as the Tuck’s Point family dinner,” she said.

De Widt said that this year, the senior class trip will be an overnight white water rafting

excursion in Maine instead of the Six Flags trip that classes have done in the past.

“I like that we’re staying overnight. I think that extra time will make the trip more fun,” senior Morgan Laspesa said.

De Widt said that the idea of having a “senior sleepover” a few nights before graduation was something the class officers knew that they wanted early on in planning.

**‘It’s exciting and heartwarming that this week that we’ve been working so hard towards is finally coming.’**

-PHILEINE DE WIDT

“Enjoying each other’s company by a campfire seems like the perfect goodbye,” she said.

While the white water rafting trip is the main senior class

event, class officers also worked to plan other events such as Baccalaureate, a class brunch, and senior pranks, senior class

adviser Courtney Brown said.

For commencement speakers, the senior class voted for two teachers to address their grade.

Social studies teacher Jennifer Coleman will speak at Baccalaureate and Spanish teacher Robert Bilsbury will speak at graduation.

The senior class has been raising funds since their freshman year, de Widt said.

All of those funds are aimed at Senior Week, she said.

The class auction raised roughly \$25,000, Brown said.

“The auction was organized by a group of wonderful parents who we are so thankful for,” de Widt said.

All the senior events combined will cost nearly \$50,000, Brown said.

The class officers raised most of their money from class dues, prom tickets, and around a fourth of their funds have come from small fundraisers, she said.

Students are looking forward to Senior Week, de Widt said.

MON 5/20	AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS   7PM
THURS 5/23	PROM AT WILLOWDALE   6-10PM TUCK’S POINT PHOTOS 3-4:30PM CHECK IN @ MEMORIAL 5PM
SUN 5/26	*OPTIONAL* RED SOX GAME   1:35PM
MON 5/27	TUCK’S POINT FAMILY DINNER   5-7PM
TUES 5/28	RECORDS PICK UP   9-11AM SENIOR TRIP DEPARTURE   1PM
WED 5/29	WHITE WATER RAFTING THE FORKS, ME HOME @ 8PM
THURS 5/30	REHEARSAL   9AM BACCALAUREATE   6PM
FRI 5/31	REHEARSAL   9AM ELEMENTARY WALK   11:15AM GRADUATION   4PM

COURTESY OF PHILEINE DE WIDT

The senior class officers are keeping some traditional events in their Senior Week itinerary, as well as adding some new activities.

“It’s exciting and heartwarming that this week that we’ve

been working so hard towards is finally coming,” she said.

## Juniors to participate in wilderness expeditions

By Hannah Davis  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Juniors Emilia Kirkpatrick and Libby McKinnon are going on backpacking trips through Alaska and Wyoming this summer.

The trips are run through the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS), a company that specializes in wilderness expeditions for all ages.

NOLS offers expeditions and courses on wilderness medicine and leaving no trace. The organization was founded in 1965 and now offers expeditions and courses to people from all over the world.

Participants in expeditions can

choose trips from one week to a year.

Both Kirkpatrick and McKinnon have gone on similar trips in the past.

Kirkpatrick said she chose NOLS because she wanted to challenge herself and step outside her comfort zone.

“[NOLS] focuses on being in the outdoors, gaining leadership skills, and being able to be comfortable in the outdoors,” she said.

McKinnon is looking forward to

learning survival skills and how to be independent through the expedition.

“You’re living just with your backpack and doing all the skills that [the expedition] is teaching



COURTESY OF EMILIA KIRKPATRICK

Junior Emilia Kirkpatrick, who hiked in Norway last year, will go to Alaska this summer. Junior Libby McKinnon will go to Wyoming.

you, and you’re supposed to come out of it with a sense of confidence going into the year,” she said.

Kirkpatrick will be backpacking through Alaska for 30 days

and hiking about 100 miles with other 16- and 17-year-olds.

“I won’t know anybody doing [the trip], so I’m going to meet all new kids,” she said.

Kirkpatrick said she loves

going to new places and having new experiences, which drove her to participate in the expedition this summer.

“I pretty much fell in love with traveling, meeting new people, and pushing myself outside of my comfort zone,” she said.

McKinnon will be backpacking through Wyoming from July 1 to July 19. Like Kirkpatrick, McKinnon will learn survival skills and how to protect the environment, she said.

“I cannot wait to disconnect from technology and life and be in nature, meet new people, and learn new things,” she said.

McKinnon took a different trip last year to the British Virgin Islands and is looking forward to trying something new this summer, she said.

To prepare for the trip this summer, McKinnon is practicing exercising at high elevations.

“When I go for runs or do something on a treadmill, I try to focus on my breathing and try to lower the pressure in my head,” she said.

## NHS reaches out to community, elects new officers

By Charles Lations  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New officers have been elected for the school’s National Honors Society (NHS) chapter, and the group has held several community-focused volunteering activities in recent weeks.

Senior community service director Kate Bappe said the chapter has recently sent volunteers to the Open Door food pantry in Gloucester and to the second annual STEAM night.

“We just helped [at the Open Door] – everybody had a different job, some people helped



CHARLES LATIONS PHOTO

Following officer elections, the current and newly elected National Honors Society officers co-led the chapter’s April meeting.

[serve] the community meals, some people cleaned up the loading dock, some people split bunches of bananas, some people sorted donations,” she said.

Bappe said the chapter also

held a Thrift Drive, where students had the opportunity to donate clothing and other items, which would then be donated to Beverly Bootstraps.

She said these events were chosen because of the local

availability and ease of access for the chapter’s members.

“We know that [the Open Door and STEAM Night can] take groups of volunteers, so it’s easy to organize a big event,” Bappe said.

The chapter also had elections on March 12 for a new slate of officers to take over next year.

The current and new officers co-led the chapter meeting following the elections.

Juniors Josh Cohen, Charlie Rubens, Milo Zeltzer, Atticus Smith, and Fiona Flynn were voted in as president, vice president, secretary, community service director, and communications director, respectively.

Junior and newly-elected president Josh Cohen said he’s looking forward to growing the club next year because he has

many plans for what to do with the chapter.

“I was thinking to myself, if I was running NHS, how would I do it, what would I like ... I kind of want to be at the forefront of that,” he said.

Cohen said one of his ideas was to create a running list that would be consistently updated of scholarships and volunteer opportunities in the local community that all members had access to.

Chapter adviser Mary Lumsden said she’s looking forward to seeing what the new officer team can bring to the chapter next year.

“I think they’re very energetic, I think they have good ideas, and I think they gave very good speeches – for voting purposes, it was tough to decide,” she said.



# Sports Seasons

Is the fall better than the spring for athletics?

**Pro**

**Sabine Cooper**

Fall sports are better than spring sports because they bring out the school spirit that helps to kick off the new school year and allow students to succeed academically.

With the start of a school year, many students feel overwhelmed and unsure of how to make friends and connect to the school environment.

Sports is one way students can find a community, especially starting at the beginning of the year before friend groups have been established.

Winter and spring sports occur several months after the start of school, making them less efficient for making friends, whereas fall sports occur at a more convenient time.

Another benefit of fall sports is the higher enrollment across most fall sports.

The increased participation is due to more standardized tests and academic pressure in the winter and spring seasons, causing many students to quit athletics to focus on academics, according to an article by Next College Student Athlete.

Participation also peaks in the fall because of the better and more enjoyable weather.

Sports in the winter and spring are often cold and dampened by precipitation.

Due to the lower enrollment in sports in the later seasons, students find it more difficult to connect with their broader school community.

Additionally, more engagement with sporting events also occurs in the fall.

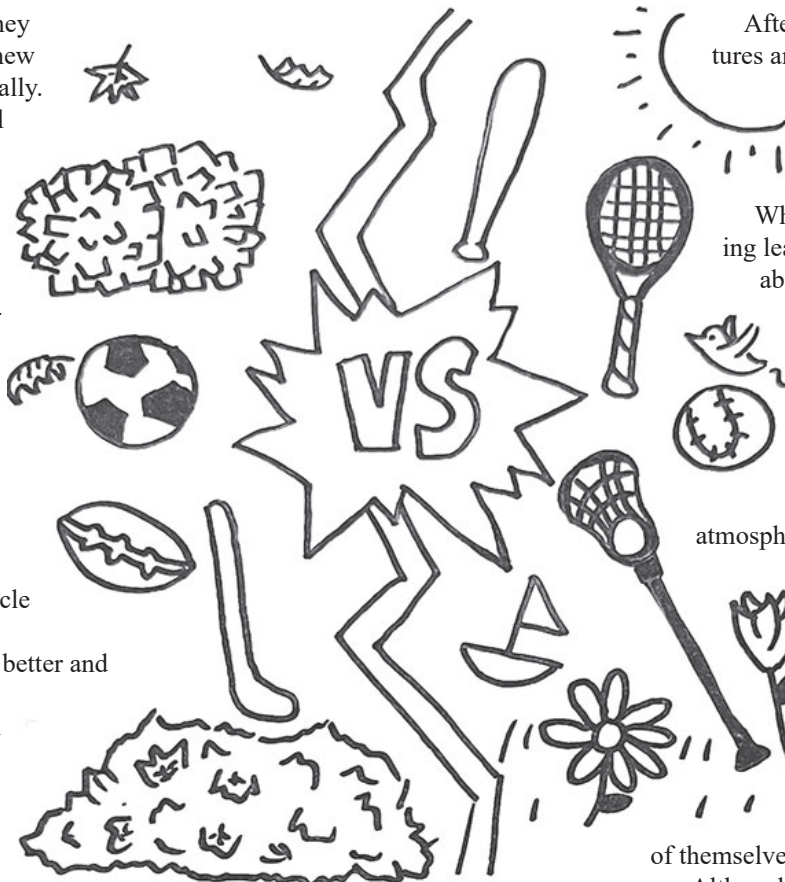
For example, traditional fall events are the football games and pep rallies, which engage a large part of the student body, including the band, cheerleaders, and fans.

Football games are an integral part of the fall season that leaves students with memories and excitement that are not experienced to the same extent in the spring season, according to the University of Michigan.

The active involvement that fall sports bring makes them better for engaging and encouraging students to be involved in athletics.

In terms of academics, fall sports are also more beneficial because of the routine and discipline that they build early in the year.

By starting sports early in the year, such as in the fall, students develop good routines and habits that they can carry throughout the year, improving their social connections and academic performance.



**Con**

**Mechi O'Neil**

After a long, cold winter, spring brings warmer temperatures and longer days, making it the best and most enjoyable season to play sports in.

Depending on the weather conditions, students can have very different opinions about their respective sport.

While fall brings crisp air and the vibrant hues of changing leaves, it also brings colder temperatures and unpredictable conditions. In contrast, the spring season ushers in milder weather, with the sun shining bright and temperatures rising, creating the perfect environment for outdoor activities.

Whether you're on the lacrosse field, the tennis court, the baseball or softball field, or the track, competing under the warmth of the spring sun is truly invigorating. It is a large contrast to the brisk atmosphere of fall.

In fact, according to [www.morrispsych.com](http://www.morrispsych.com), as the amount of sunlight increases during spring, depressed moods lessen.

When athletes are happy, they are more likely to be enthusiastic about training and competing. This enthusiasm fuels their drive to push themselves harder, set ambitious goals, and persist through challenges. This not only brings team success, but also allows players to be the best versions

of themselves.

Although spring may be an especially difficult time in school with final exams and projects, going outside in the warmth and playing your sport after a long, hard day of school is the best remedy for stress.

Sports are much more enjoyable when you can use them to forget about anything stressful happening in your life.

The spring season also offers a wide variety of sports that the fall season fails to do. Fall sports tend to be dominated by traditional American favorites like football and soccer, leaving little room for alternative pursuits.

The spring season brings a sense of inclusivity and community, allowing athletes of all backgrounds and abilities to thrive without being hindered by one dominating sport.

From the joy of competing under the warm sun to the mental and physical benefits of athletic participation, spring emerges as the superior season for sports enthusiasts to thrive and find fulfillment.

## F1 will survive dominant periods such as Max Verstappen's reign

Viewership peaks despite moments of individual control

By Charles Lations  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Formula One driver Max

Verstappen, who drives for Red Bull Racing, has won the last three World Drivers' Championships in commanding fashion, but this dominance does not hurt the sport as much as many people are thinking.

Verstappen's run is arguably the most dominant of any driver in the history of F1.

Last season, he recorded the highest single-season win rate of all time by winning 19 of the 22 races for a total percentage of 86.36%, according to the BBC article "F1: Drivers who dominated in a single season."

However, as impressive as his three consecutive championships may be, they are hardly unusual

**The success of F1 is not dependent on a variety of winners but ... on the athletic feats displayed by the drivers as they push their cars to the absolute limit in search of any advantage possible.**

in the history of Formula One.

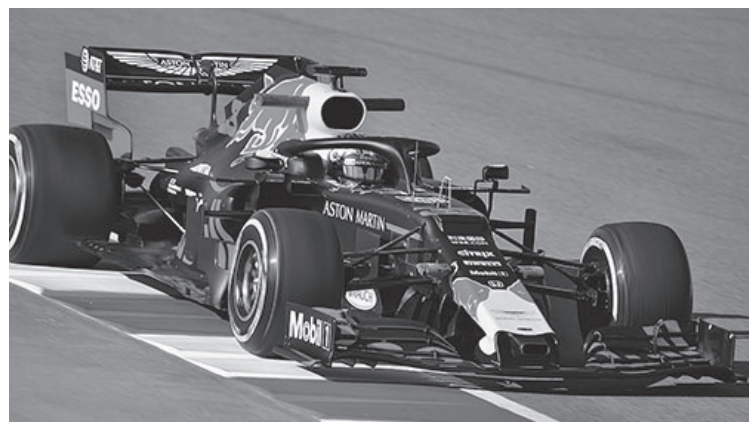
Sebastian Vettel, Max Verstappen's predecessor at Red Bull, won four consecutive championships from 2010-2013, a feat equaled by Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton from 2017-2020,

according to the official Formula One results archive.

Not only did Formula One



DARIAPOLONIA/WIKIMEDIACOMMONS



ALBERTO-G-ROVI/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

**Max Verstappen, a Dutch Formula 1 driver for Red Bull Racing, has been dominating the race track and leaderboards for the past few years. Though this continuous individual success is seemingly boring to fans, F1 has continued to profit from increasing TV viewership. Verstappen's victorious run mirrors that of past drivers and proves not to hurt the sport of racing as commonly thought.**

survive these periods of extreme dominance by only one driver, but it actually thrived during them.

According to data from the Statista research department, the sport's TV viewership steadily increased during Mercedes' dominant run from 2014-2020. In that period a Mercedes driver won the championship every single year.

This viewership peaked in 2019, the third year of Lewis Hamilton's four-in-a-row cham-

pionship streak and the year that saw him win his sixth world championship.

The success of F1 is not dependent on a variety of winners but, instead, on the athletic feats displayed by the drivers as they push their cars to the absolute limit in search of any advantage possible.

Cracks may already be showing in Verstappen's dominant run, as at the Australian Grand Prix on March 24, he suffered a brake failure and did not finish

the race for the first time since 2022.

Much of his dominance was supported by a car that, for the last three years, has seemed to be invincible, so mechanical issues are a sign that things could finally be changing at Red Bull Racing.

Verstappen's dominance may frustrate many fans in the moment, but it ultimately will not be destructive or even particularly unusual in the long-term for Formula One.



## STAFF EDITORIAL

## Sole microwave creates cafeteria frustration, causes wait

More microwaves should be added to the cafeteria to reduce wait times and allow students to enjoy their meals.

With the current microwave, students can wait up to 10 minutes in line on busy days, which is one-third of the lunch

period. This leaves them with an insufficient amount of time to eat their lunch and socialize with friends.

Senior Amelia Costa said another microwave would be highly beneficial and make lunch more enjoyable.

"I think there have been at least eight people in front of me before, and if each person is heating their food for two minutes, you won't be able to eat for a while," Costa said.

This math works out to over half of the lunch block spent waiting in line for the microwave.

More microwaves would also

ease students' stress, so they don't have to rush to finish their lunch or worry about being late for class.

The current system also cuts into a student's ability to focus in class, senior Diego Sanson said.

"I'm sometimes late to class

because I'm finishing my lunch, or I'm eating my lunch in class, so the wait for the microwave is taking away from learning time," he said.

It's also uncomfortable for students

to stand in line waiting for the microwave.

"How awkward is it to stand there in front of the whole lunch room and wait for 10 minutes?" Sanson said.

According to the second-semester lunch schedule, there is an average of 194 students in each lunch block across the seven-day schedule. One microwave is not suitable or sanitary to accommodate this many

**More microwaves would also ease students' stress, so they don't have to rush to finish their lunch or worry about being late for class.**



ELLA CHAFE PHOTO

**Students can wait for long periods of time during their lunch block for their turn to use the microwave. Because of this, students have to rush to eat and get to class on time, which causes stress.**

students.

"It's gross. There's food going everywhere, and there isn't proper microwave etiquette," Sanson said.

Facility manager, Jason Waldron said the process of obtaining another microwave is simple and involves a discussion with

Principal Julie Sgroi to determine if there is a need for another one.

"If we feel that it is needed and necessary, then that's the steps we will take," he said.

Sgroi said she is aware of the student's concern with the microwave.

She said she will evaluate

and discuss the situation with Waldron to see if additional microwaves are feasible at the moment.

Since the average cost of a microwave is only \$55, the school should consider buying one to ease students' worries and give them more time to eat.

## Female friends give women sense of identity

By Libby Mulry  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Women need female friendships to maintain the parts of themselves that are neglected.

Female friends give women a sense of community lost to many in these increasingly individualistic times.

As a greater emphasis is placed on women working and an equal emphasis is placed on women having children, it can become challenging to balance the two.

As work and children shrink one's social circles, it can become harder to forge a community.

On TikTok, user @Becca. Loveless discussed the reality of "no support" parents or mothers.

"We run ourselves ragged trying to fill the emotional,



LIBBY MULRY PHOTO

**Decades-long friends Karin Carroll, Liz Mulry, Clemmy Smith, and Jessie Yurwitz, gather to celebrate big life occasions with each other.**

physical, play, developmental, and stimulation needs of our children, whereas before that was the work of the whole community," Loveless said.

Female friendships and relationships are integral to the development of society, as they dictate the level of support children receive.

When my mother was at work, her friends would drive my sister and me home. They would come over to play with us as my mother took a moment to herself.

Then my grandmother would feed me and drop me off at school the next morning.

This gave my mother a moment to breathe and gave me the opportunity to play and interact with a greater community of people.

Female relatives and friends do not just support women where childcare is concerned. They give women the space to act like themselves instead of as wives or mothers.

"I have my friends, therefore I am," actor and activist Jane Fonda said in conversation with TEDtalk.

Female friendships, best friends, or as my mother calls them her "girlfriends," reflect what we love most about ourselves back at us.

When my mother is with her friends, she is the best version of herself with her wide smile and

laughing eyes.

Sometimes they may bring us to gossip, but this too has proven to be good for the formation of lasting relationships as it helps many know who to socialize with.

According to research conducted by the University of Maryland, "Gossip is good at disseminating information about people's reputations, which can help recipients of these tips connect with cooperative people while avoiding selfish ones."

Female friendships are formed through gossip and constancy, but they are increasingly hard to maintain as women experience a lack of time and space.

Spaces must be available for women, especially young women with children, to gather.

Women, at the same time, must make a concerted effort to create these formative relationships.

There must be a balance between what one has to do and what one gets to do like being with the people you love.

**Faculty Adviser**  
Mary Buckley-Harmon

**Editors-in-chief**  
Phileine de Widt  
Charles Lations

**News Editors**  
Avabella Mitrano  
Mechi O'Neil

**Features Editors**  
Ella Chafe  
Stella Straub  
Whitney Turner

the  
**INDEPENDENT**

**Manchester-Essex Regional High School**  
36 Lincoln St, Manchester MA 01944  
978-526-4412 newspaper@mersd.org  
online at <https://www.mersd.org/domain/702>

**Opinion Editor**  
Libby Mulry

**Sports Editors**  
Isabelle Donnellan Valade  
Summer Demeo

**Arts Editors**  
Gwen Berger  
Hannah Davis  
Alessia Omari

**Independent Staff**  
August Capotosto  
Sabine Cooper  
Sam Heanue  
Bissy Mitrano

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.



## BOYS' LACROSSE

**Coach:** Jon Siderwicz  
**Captains:** Seniors Henry Thurlow, Mac Edgerton, Quinn Brady  
**Record last year:** 15-5  
**Current record:** 1-1  
**Goals:** Beat Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich, win the Cape Ann League title  
**Rivals:** Lynnfield, Hamilton-Wenham, Ipswich  
**Impact players:** Seniors Henry Thurlow, Mac Edgerton, Quinn Brady; juniors Hayden Spencer, Jarrett Croft; sophomores Jack McCavanagh, Connor Dickson.  
**Coach's quote:** "The team's been trying their hardest, and it's showing. I'm excited to see how they play against other teams." -Jon Siderwicz  
**Captain's quote:** "We want to be No. 1; we don't want to share it with anyone."  
 -Mac Edgerton



Henry Thurlow



Mac Edgerton



Quinn Brady

## GIRLS' LACROSSE

**Coach:** Nan Gorton  
**Captains:** Seniors Mechi O'Neil, Ella Chafe  
**Record last year:** 6-5  
**Current record:** 2-1  
**Goals:** Win state championship, look to what's ahead, focus on team over record  
**Rivals:** Ipswich, Marblehead, Hamilton Wenham  
**Impact players:** Seniors Lucy O'Flynn, Gabbi D'Andrea; junior Brigid Carovillano.  
**Coach's quote:** "I want to look back at who we are as a team more than our record; and if we do that, our record will be strong." -Nan Gorton  
**Captain's quote:** "Our short-term goal this season is to focus on the games that we have in front of us to be successful" -Mechi O'Neil



Mechi O'Neil



Ella Chafe

## SAILING

**Coach:** Anthony Leggett  
**Captains:** Senior Ian Carlin, junior Cole Coté  
**Record last year:** 4-3  
**Current record:** 0-0  
**Goals:** Experience racing, teach basics of sailing, improve team racing  
**Rivals:** Marblehead High School, St. John's Preparatory School, Landmark School  
**Impact players:** Senior Ian Carlin, junior Cole Coté; freshmen James Donohoe, Max Deery  
**Coach's quote:** "I know what [the players'] strengths and weaknesses are, and I'm getting right to the heart of getting them back up to the top competitors" -Anthony Leggett  
**Captain's quote:** "Our goal this year is mostly teaching the newer players, because this year we've had a large influx of new people; it will just be very important to teach them all the basics of sailing and just get them inspired to race" -Cole Coté



Ian Carlin



Cole Coté

## OUTDOOR TRACK

**Coach:** David Coleman  
**Captains:** Seniors Finn O'Hara (distance) and Nate Gardner (sprints and jumps); junior Megan Hurd (sprints and jumps)  
**Record last year:** 5-2 (girls), 4-3 (boys)  
**Current record:** 1-0  
**Goals:** Win Lynch Division, do well in state relays, Divisionals, Invitationals  
**Rival:** Danvers  
**Impact players:** Seniors Charlie Lations, Nate Gardner; juniors Henry Stevens, Sabine Cooper  
**Coach's quote:** "My number one priority is to get them to work together and to make each other better. It's an individual sport but it's also a team sport so to kind of build that up." -David Coleman  
**Captain's quote:** "We want to do well at Divisionals and State relays ...and [focus on] team building, bridging the gap between the two teams, and just becoming better friends." -Finn O'Hara



Nate Gardner



Finn O'Hara



Megan Hurd



## BASEBALL

**Coach:** James Weed  
**Captains:** Seniors Troy Flood, Matthew McKenna  
**Record last year:** 7-14  
**Current record:** 0-2  
**Rivals:** Hamilton-Wenham, Georgetown, Rockport  
**Goals:** To trust the process, be there for each other, do well in the Cape Ann League, go far in the playoffs  
**Impact players:** Seniors Troy Flood, Matthew McKenna, freshman Connor St. Laurent  
**Coach's quote:** "They understand what it takes to get to our end goal, which is always to get as far as we can in the playoffs, but also to do a good job in the [Cape Ann League] this year." -James Weed  
**Captain's quote:** "Whether it's school or baseball or whatever [we're] going through, [we want to work on] having the mentality that nothing's impossible. Fighting back and working harder is a good answer to when bad things present themselves." -Troy Flood



Troy Flood



Matthew McKenna

## SOFTBALL

**Coach:** Frank Sarro  
**Captains:** Seniors Celia Mann, Morgan Laspesa  
**Record last year:** 7-12  
**Current record:** 2-0  
**Rival:** Ipswich  
**Goals:** To compete against all teams, earn high seed in tournament, strengthen defense  
**Impact players:** Seniors Celia Mann, Morgan Laspesa; sophomores Abby Aiello, Anna Gardner, Penelope Riggs  
**Coach's quote:** "We're still a relatively young team, but now these players have a year of experience under their belt. That means a lot." -Frank Sarro  
**Captain's quote:** "We all are really committed to being a team, and we all want to play. We're not just there to say we play a sport; we're there because we love the sport. So passion is our biggest strength." -Morgan Laspesa



Celia Mann



Morgan Laspesa

## GIRLS' TENNIS

**Coach:** Barrett Alston  
**Captains:** Seniors Grayson Crocker, Sienna Crocker  
**Record last year:** 16-6  
**Current record:** 3-1  
**Rivals:** Hamilton-Wenham, Lynnfield, Masconomet  
**Goals:** To win state championship  
**Impact players:** Seniors Grayson Crocker, Sienna Crocker, Emily Parkins, Mackay Brooks; junior Nina Zalosh; sophomore Grace Scarbrough; freshman Sarah Cort  
**Coach's quote:** "The Crockers are amazing captains, and our lineup is very deep as well as talented across the entire starting seven" -Barrett Alston  
**Captain's quote:** "We have a lot of talent and a lot of strong players along the starting lineup, which we hope will allow us to win some tougher matches" -Grayson Crocker



Grayson Crocker



Sienna Crocker

## BOYS' TENNIS

**Coach:** Robert Bilsbury  
**Captains:** Seniors Jan Vytopil, Sander Breuker, Charlie Virden; junior Jack Cummins  
**Record last year:** 14-7  
**Current Record:** 2-1  
**Rivals:** Hamilton-Wenham, Lynnfield  
**Goals:** To have a growth mindset, work hard in practice, improve their game  
**Impact Players:** Seniors Jan Vytopil, Sander Breuker, Charlie Virden; junior Jack Cummins  
**Coach's quote:** "It really can help a lot if we're all cheering ... and getting behind the players that are playing at that moment. That can really be the difference in these close competitions." -Robert Bilsbury  
**Captain's quote:** "I think my favorite part about the team is when it's time to be serious, we can kind of walk in and really focus, but otherwise it's just a lot of fun." -Jan Vytopil



Jan Vytopil



Charlie Virden



Sander Breuker



Jack Cummins



# Band, chorus perform in annual spring concert

Music students learn new pieces, arrangements

By Summer Demeo  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Band and chorus worked hard this year to put on the annual spring concert, challenging themselves with new arrangements, chorus director Ben Icenogle said.

He said the concert featured the chorus, Soundwaves, jazz band, and concert band.

Band director Joe Janack said he enjoyed the performances and music selection from each group.

"I was really pumped for the music that we were doing both in jazz band and concert band. I think overall, all four groups did a really great job showcasing

our strengths and really putting a cohesive concert together," he said.

The chorus performed the songs "Show Me Love" by Hundred Waters, "Down to the River to Pray," "Can't Catch Me Now" by Olivia Rodrigo, and "Touch the Sky" by Julie Fowlis, Icenogle said.

Chorus member junior Charlotte Donellan Valade said she was happy with their performance at the concert.

"I think it went well ... We've improved a lot since the winter concert, and I feel like we put out what we wanted to," she said.

**'I was really pumped for the music that we were doing both in jazz band and concert band.'**

-JOE JANACK

Icenogle said Soundwaves performed "Feather" by

Sabrina Carpenter, "Another Believer" by Rufus Wainwright, "Take a Walk" by Passion Pit, and a mashup of "My Way" and "That's Life" by Frank Sinatra, which they have been working on since the beginning of the



SUMMER DEMEO PHOTO

The Soundwaves performed five songs at the annual spring concert on April 4, 2024. The acapella group had spent multiple months preparing each musical arrangement prior to the performance.

school year. The group also tried new motion choreography.

Donnellan Valade said she enjoyed their performance.

"It was fun to see [the Soundwaves] because I've only seen them perform two different

songs, so it was fun to see their whole setlist," she said.

Janack said the jazz band performed two songs with vocalists on them, which is something new for the group.

Senior Caroline Quinn sang

"Cry Me a River" by Arthur Hamilton with the jazz band, and Soundwaves performed the theme song for "Perry the Platypus" with the group, arranged by sophomore Luke Chrzanowski.

## Art students earn recognition at art show; NAHS elects four new officers, sets goals

Students display experiences through creative work

By Whitney Turner  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

New National Art Honors Society (NAHS) officers were elected in recent weeks, and students in the art department were recognized for their work at the Sixth Essex District Congressional High School Art Show.

The NAHS elections were held on March 14, art teacher and adviser Tamera Burns said.

Junior Hayden Remington was elected as president, junior Maddie O'Grady as vice president, junior Libby McKinnon as treasurer, and junior Isabelle

Donnellan Valade as secretary.

Remington said she served this past year as the junior representative to the officers.

"I'm feeling excited ... having an insight to how being an officer works; I feel like I'm kind of prepared," Remington said.

Her goals for next year include organizing more fundraisers and increasing advertisements for events. She said she also would like to increase the presence of art in the school.

"As someone who loves art a lot, I want to keep [interest in art] going ... I want to show that art plays an important role in peoples' education," Remington said.

Burns said fundraisers are necessary to raise funds for membership in the national organization

and buy graduation cords. She said activity in the club is dictated by the members and officers.

"It's one of those things where if the energy of the club is high, then they will do more things," she said.

Burns also discussed the two students who received recognition at the Sixth Essex District Congressional High School Art Show on March 16 in Beverly.

Sophomore Miles Takayesu said he received a "Best of School" award for his piece titled "Unity," which depicts Takayesu painting fences, representing how the world views him from the outside.

Takayesu said his art was about modifying one's personality to fit in with other people. He was glad to earn an award, despite not hav-



COURTESY OF TAMERA BURNS

Junior Henry Swerdloff's drawing was recognized at the Sixth Essex District Congressional High School Art Show on March 16.

ing anticipated it.

"Seeing my name was pretty surprising, but it does definitely feel nice to get recognition outside of teachers and students," he said.

Junior Henry Swerdloff received

an honorable mention for his drawing titled "We All Love Poppa Marvin."

He attended the competition's art show with his family where he viewed his artwork, he said.



PRINTERAL PHOTO

Childish Gambino's third album, "Awaken, My Love!," is a departure from Gambino's previous work. The album features a blend of soul and classic rock to create a unique sound. In the first week following its release, the album sold 72,000 copies.

## 'Awaken, My Love!' incorporates elements of R&B, classic rock

By Sam Heanue  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Childish Gambino's third album, "Awaken, My Love!" released on Dec. 2, 2016, features a unique sound that forms the artist's best work.

The combination of psychedelic soul and fewer vocals significantly departs from his previous work. His first two albums focused on hip-hop and were inspired by George Clinton's band, Funkadelic.

"I always loved Funkadelic; it was one of my favorite bands. Especially 'Maggot Brain,' one of my favorite albums ever," Gambino said in a 2017 interview with

Amoeba Records.

"Maggot Brain" inspired the slow, heavy rhythm consistent throughout the album and the cover art, which features Kenyan model Giannina Oteto in a beaded headdress.

This art became controversial in 2023 when Oteto accused the artist of failing to pay residual checks promised to her and photographer Ibra Ake.

"Awaken, My Love!" takes further inspiration from the R&B group the Isley Brothers, another of Gambino's favorite artists. In the interview, Gambino said he based several tracks on songs by the group.

Listeners of the album have

described the music as a blend of soul and classic rock, resembling the hits of Pink Floyd and other popular rock bands from the 1980s.

The combination of heavy rhythms and experimental aspects gives the album its unique sound, incorporating screams, chants, and vibrations.

Gambino's album contributed to a small resurgence in the popularity of R&B music in 2016, following a 20% decrease in its place on the Billboard Top 100 from 2008 to 2016.

Within the first week following its release, the album sold 72,000 copies, quickly becoming his most

popular studio album ever. In 2018, it was certified platinum after selling 1 million copies worldwide.

Earning Gambino critical ac-

**'Experimental aspects gives the album its unique sound, incorporating screams, chants, and vibrations.'**

claim, "Red-bone," the most popular track off the album, won the Grammy for Best Traditional R&B Performance. The track describes a

man's attempts to run away with a woman, and it contains many of the album's most experimental techniques.

Other popular songs on the album have over 500 million streams on platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music.



# ‘Wonka’ incorporates too many forced elements into plot

Fails to embrace sense of magic, imagination

By Stella Straub  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

While the 2023 movie musical “Wonka” has its heartfelt moments, the film lacks the quintessential Willy Wonka kookiness and eccentricity that Gene Wilder brought to the 1971 version of “Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory.”

This movie was produced by Village Roadshow Pictures, The Roald Dahl Story Company, and Heyday Films, and distributed under Warner Brothers Pictures.

The film is directed by Paul King, with characters based off of Roald Dahl’s novel “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.”

“Wonka” takes place prior to the events in Dahl’s story and is

set in a small town in Europe in the late 1920s.

Unfortunately, the entire film is painfully incongruous with Dahl’s novel and instead takes a path of its own.

Willy Wonka (Timothée Chalamet) is an aspiring chocolatier and inventor looking to make a fortune by setting up his own chocolate store in The Galeries Gourmet, which is a building that is home to many chocolate shops in the town.

Anticipating his success and in need of a place to stay, Wonka signs a contract with Mrs. Scrubbit (Olivia Colman) for a room at her hotel, and,

due to his illiteracy, neglects to read the fine print, which puts him into indebted work under Mrs. Scrubbit for an exorbitant amount of time.

Working in Mrs. Scrubbit’s launderette, Wonka befriends an orphan named Noodle (Calah Lane), and together they scheme



JOBBA.FR

“Wonka,” an adaptation of Roald Dahl’s novel “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” was released in December 2023. The film stars Timothée Chalamet and takes a unique twist on the original storyline.

up a plan to get free, which is consistently foiled by the town’s rival chocolatiers, who are hoping to maintain their chocolate monopoly.

Unfortunately, all sense of whimsy and magic feels forced. The inordinate quantity of bright colors and over-the-top sets gives the viewer a sugar rush that

crashes minutes into the film. With a watered-down, exhausted plot, the film lacks any substance.

However, the costume and set design were marvelously done, and from Wonka’s whimsical outfit to his chocolate shop, the entertaining imagery made the rest of the film palatable.

Character development began in

a hurry and finished even faster, with forced friendships and rushed “emotional” reunions that left most conversations in the movie feeling counterfeit.

A film supposedly centered around wonder and whimsy falls into the pile of another tasteless corporate product that lacks individuality.

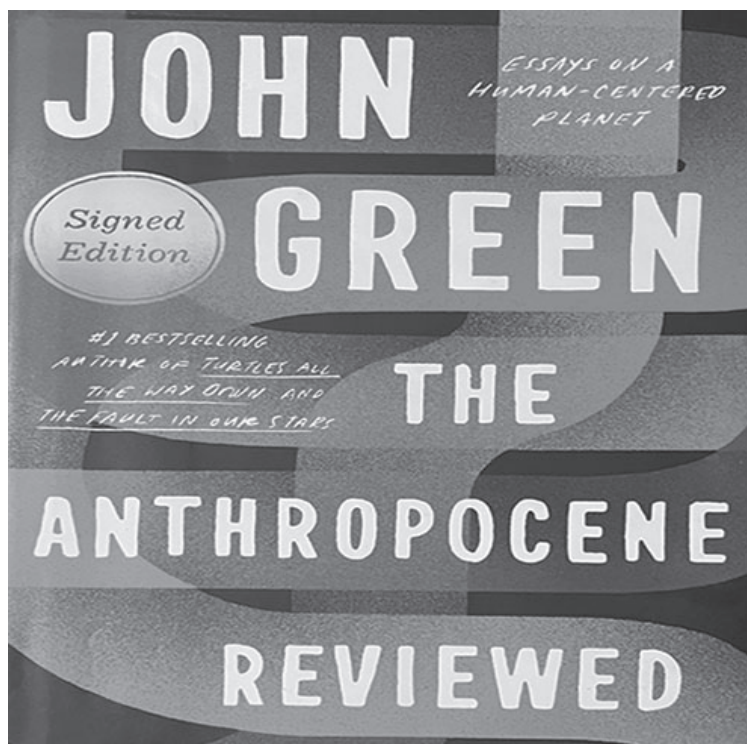
‘The Anthropocene Reviewed’ explores human experiences

By Libby Mulry  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

Acclaimed author and content creator John Green released his first collection of essays titled “The Anthropocene Reviewed: Essays on a Human-Centered Planet” in the middle of COVID lockdowns.

According to National Geographic, “The Anthropocene Epoch is an unofficial unit of geologic time, used to describe the most recent period in Earth’s history when human activity started to have a significant impact on the planet’s climate and ecosystems.”

Readers are brought together through Green’s telling of these human activities within the backdrop of the natural world. Which



LIBBY MULRY PHOTO

John Green wrote a collection of essays called “The Anthropocene Reviewed” where he discusses human experiences like COVID.

range from being startled by wild geese to starting over in life after death, even when it seems too late.

These shared experiences contrast with the lockdowns in which Green was writing them.

Green writes about the COVID pandemic while living in it, and his testimony to the times seems incredibly lasting. It’s as if his words will one day exist next to history textbooks about COVID.

He inserts himself into the current of history by giving his account of Halley’s Comet, and we too, for as long as we are reading, become a part of that moment.

In “Scratch ‘n’ sniff stickers,” Green recounts to his readers the history and science behind scratching and then sniffing.

Within the same pages, he tells a story of his childhood. Green describes how he was pushed down, hit, bullied, and would come home every day to the same, safe, scratch ‘n’ sniff stickers.

He gives importance to the smallest of things, like the scratch ‘n’ sniff stickers. And in doing this, Green gives readers the opportunity to see the world differently, with fresher eyes. Life becomes overflowing with goodness and beauty, no matter

how small something can be.

He describes this beauty in the opening lines of his book.

“To fall in love with the world is to look up at the night sky and feel your mind swim before the beauty and the distance of the stars, it is to hold your children while they cry, to watch as the sycamore trees leaf out in June,” Green writes.

Overall, his beautiful writing reels the audience in, making these essays undoubtedly worth the read.

‘One Day’ Netflix adaptation presents heartwarming message about appreciating present, living in moment

By Phileine de Widd  
INDEPENDENT EDITOR

“One Day,” a tragic yet beautiful Netflix series released Feb. 8, 2024, is a must-watch for those who can handle a good and lasting cry.

The story follows Emma “Em” Morley (Ambika Mod) and Dexter “Dex” Mayhew (Leo Woodall) every July 15, St. Swithin’s Day, from their first meeting at their University of Edinburgh graduation party in 1987 to 2007.

Em and Dex continuously shift between the labels of strangers, friends, and lovers, causing extreme viewer frustration.

As their relationship builds and falls, the many side characters, such as Em’s best friend Tilly (Amber Grappy), her boyfriend Ian (Johnny Weldon), and Dex’s father-in-law Lionel (Toby Stephens), offer comedic relief.

Though new as a series, the tragic love story is based on the best-selling 2009 novel written by David Nicholls and was previously adapted into a movie in 2011.

Netflix released the show in 14 episodes, making the transitions between years easy to follow. Each episode is about 30 minutes or just short enough to start the highly desired next episode with-

out feeling guilty..

Mod and Woodall display strong on-screen chemistry, which translates perfectly to the characters.

Throughout the 20 years, Dex and Em show striking differences through their status, wealth, and desires, taking the meaning of “opposites attract” to a new level.

They share opposing goals in life: Dex wants to become rich and famous, while Em intends to make a change. As they spend these 20 years together and separate, they both reach their goals—Dex too soon and Em too late.

If viewers are unfamiliar with the previous “One Day” works,



NETFLIX.COM

“One Day” is a recently released romance that incorporates humor and drama. The show stars Ambika Mod and Leo Woodall.

the series will shock them with both boosts of joy and tears when least expected.

“One Day” illustrates to viewers the unpredictability of life and the

value of appreciating what and who is in front of us.

Due to language, nudity, sex, and smoking, the series is rated TV-MA.