

# THE BLUE AND GOLD

maldenblueandgold.com

MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL  
Volume 107 Edition 3

77 SALEM STREET  
December 2021



## STAND OUT AGAINST ASIAN HATE PROTEST

Jessica Li  
Reporter

An image of Malden Ward 8 Councilor, Jadeane Sica, in a contentious costume from 2019 boiled to the surface. An exceeding number of affected Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community residents, alongside non-Asian allies, expressed reprehension, accusing Sica of yellowface and hypersexualization of Asian women.

While City Councilor Sica was President of City Council, she appeared in a photograph wearing a Halloween costume that perpetuates stereotypes of an Asian masseuse as a sex worker. In the photo, Councilor Sica is wearing an Asian conical hat, holding a bottle of massage lotion in her hand, and wearing a shirt that reads "Orchids of Asia," the name of the massage spa in Florida where New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft was arrested for soliciting prostitution. Councilor Sica's written message on the post stated, "Happy Halloween with a Happy Ending," explained Zane Crute, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) from the Mystic Valley Branch.

Under the belief that the apology Sica shared on her Facebook was inadequate for the harm caused, Marsha Managua from the NAACP said that, "there has been a growing movement of racially motivated

*Continued on pages 12-13.*

## Bathroom Blaze Sends MHS Into Frenzy

Carlos Aragon  
Editor-in-Chief of Print

Karen Rivera  
Managing Editor

Last month on Friday, December 10th, students were shocked to see a picture of a burning trash can floating around social media, eliciting a wide range of emotions from students, from disapproval, fear, and even laughter.

With just an hour in between both fires, students and faculty were in disbelief as all three floors of the Boyle house were filled with the scent of burnt plastic.

Principal at Malden High

School, Chris Mastrangelo expressed his concern over what happened Friday afternoon describing the event as "wildly disappointing" and "bold."

"That was a really dangerous thing, I've been doing this a long time and I've dealt with a lot of stuff. Mostly really good. The good stuff I've dealt with as a high school administrator outweighs the bad stuff but this is the first time I've dealt with this."

After students who witnessed the fire burning alerted adults in the building, Mastrangelo stated that the school "immediately contacted the fire department, and assessed

the safety of the situation...and immediately started trying to investigate who started it."

Students also shared their sentiments about the situation as "fear" and "disbelief" was a common feeling shared among them.

Senior, Micaela Henry expressed that upon hearing the news of the fires she was "really shocked" and felt "really unsafe in this school."

"We should not have to deal with literal fires in our school and when the alarms don't even go off how am I supposed to feel safe?"

*Continued on page 17.*

## 2021 WINTER INSTRUMENTALS CONCERT

Hadjar Yousfi  
Lead Reporter

Ashton Calixte  
Reporter

After lots of hard work and preparation, Malden High School hosted the much anticipated Instrumental Winter Band Concert on December 15th. It was directed by Erin O'Brien Mazza, Band Director at the school.

Excitement was bubbling in the air that night. Seats were filled with the families and friends of the performers.

Dressed in their best outfits, the performers headed onto the stage, introduced by Erin O'Brien Mazza.

*Continued on pages 6-7.*



A performance at the instrumentals concert. Photo by Brandon Wong.



Maldonians gather in solidarity with the AAPI community. Photo by Jessica Li.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Virtual Parent Teacher Conferences Held For First Quarter

Kaoutar Wakaf  
Head of Sports

Malden High School's parent-teacher conferences were originally held in the cafeteria. However, since the pandemic started, the school decided to virtually connect teachers and caregivers through Calendly and Google Meet. The first parent-teacher conference of the school year was held on November 18th.

Principal Christopher Mastrangelo said "we did it in this [virtual] format last year and the teachers loved it because parent-teacher nights can be a mess." He went on to say that "we have all these parents converging at the school at once, and I'm sitting there talking to Ms. Marquez, and there's twelve people behind me, so it creates a little stress for [her] and everybody else."

As a result, the school utilized this format last year through the app Calendly where each caregiver would be given seven minutes. Mastrangelo further added that the app enables the teacher to "know exactly which caregiver is coming in when, so it allows them to really be prepared." Due to the great feedback that was received and the strict policies around allowing people in the building, "we decided a long time ago to follow the same format," he said.

The teachers at MHS had mixed feelings about the format for the school's parent-teacher conferences, and the fact that teachers were required to come into school to join the virtual meetings. Neil Callahan, a Spanish teacher at MHS, liked this arrangement because "it worked out for [him]" and "it ended up helping [him] because [he] got lots of good work done."

Math teacher, Arielle McCoy, said she would have preferred having the choice to be within the school for the virtual conferences. "The benefit of being within the school allowed me to pull students' tests and look over them as I was talking to the parents" and she was able to give the parents more information.

She also added that having to come into the building just to get on a Google Meet didn't make much of a difference for her because she lives nearby, but she said she would have wanted to be comfortable at home since the conferences were from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM and she had to stay at school the whole day since she gets here around 6:45 AM to 7:00 AM on

## MEET THE BLUE AND GOLD



**Editor-in-Chief:**  
Julie Huynh '22



**Editor-in-Chief:**  
Lauren Mallett '22



**Editor-in-Chief of  
Print and Design:**  
Carlos Aragon '22



**Editor-in-Chief of  
Web and Mobile:**  
Lulu Harding '22



**Managing Editor:**  
Sandra Li '22



**Managing Editor:**  
Karen Rivera '22



**Managing Editor of  
Art and Photography:**  
Brandon Wong '22



**Class Advisor:**  
Ryan Gallagher



**Head of Sports:**  
Juliana Luong '23



**Head of Sports:**  
Kaoutar Wakaf '23



**Head Copy Editor:**  
Chaimaa Assli '23



**Head of Local:**  
Kayley Glavin '23



**Head of Local:**  
Krishany Marius '23

## Reporters

<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Nathan Dean '24	<b>Ashton Calixte '25</b>	<b>Dani Licon-Cruz '25</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Gabriel Fesehaie '23	<b>Fatima Dahbani '25</b>	<b>Joy Lugo Morales '25</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Courtney Fitzgerald '22	<b>Nora Hounain '25</b>	<b>Dorothy Michel '25</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Zachary Nedell '24	<b>Gabi Ilebode '22</b>	<b>Lily Nguyen '25</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Desiree Nong '23	<b>Mack Keating '25</b>	<b>Vanessa Ramos '24</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Daniel O'Toole '24	<b>Gianna Lally '25</b>	<b>Ruka Truong '25</b>
<b>Lead Photographer:</b> Liam O'Toole '22	<b>Sophie LeBlanc '25</b>	<b>Samara Valencia '25</b>
<b>Lead Reporter:</b> Hadjar Yousfi '24	<b>Jessica Li '25</b>	<b>Divina Wembi '23</b>

average, and she had to stay until 7:30 PM. For McCoy "that's a really, really long day."

Paul Degenkolb, a French teacher at MHS, expressed that he had a mixed reaction to the fact that teachers were required to come into school just to join the virtual meetings. Degenkolb explained that he did not mind coming in, but it was not convenient for some of his colleagues who live farther away or have children at home.

Rachel LeBlanc, an English teacher, said that besides some "shaky internet," the conference was fine. "If I have to come into school, I'd rather meet the parents in person because I don't think you can replicate that on a video call." She also remarked that she met with more parents than usual.

Callahan added that he would not mind having another opportunity for conferences. "I only got to speak with eight parents total and I have over 100 students. So if it were spread out over a few days, I think that would have been better." Since it was harder for some parents to attend, Callahan thinks that "having more days or having to be more

spread out would be a little more accessible."

McCoy shared similar views to Callahan. "Some parents were unable to meet with us in-person at night, because maybe they're on their way to work or they have other commitments, or they don't have access to internet connection or internet at all."

Degenkolb stated that "it would make more sense to do things differently" and thought that in the future, they "have to change the way [they] do conferences completely because the virtual works pretty well in terms of the quality of the discussion, but you can only have so many appointments in that small amount of time." And due to this, "a lot of the parents couldn't join."

To solve this issue, Degenkolb suggested changing the school calendar so that parent-teacher conferences are built into the calendar. This would allow parents to know in advance, and have enough time to make adjustments to their schedules in order to attend the meetings.

He added that the sole purpose of the conference days would be for

teachers to meet with parents, that way more parents would be able to participate.

Degenkolb also mentioned that "right now, [the parent-teacher conferences are] always rushed" because "every year, people say, 'we know this isn't ideal, but it's just the best we can do,'" however, he believes that it's not the best we can do.

Degenkolb expressed that "we could actually . . . come up with a plan," but "the problem is that most of the teachers have these ideas, we just don't have any power."



Spanish teacher Neil Callahan on a Google Meet. Photo by Kaoutar Wakaf.

# Senior Class and Girls Volleyball Team Co-Host Tournament

Karen Rivera  
Managing Editor

Malden High School's Class of 2022 student council has been hosting numerous fundraisers for their senior year. From Krispy Kreme sales to car washes, they have done it all, but their most recent fundraiser was one like no other.

The Class of 2022 placed sign-up sheets all over the school, advertising their upcoming 2021 6V6 volleyball tournament.

The tournament was open to students of all playing levels, and no knowledge of volleyball was needed. All they needed was a team and the determination to compete in various rounds of mini volleyball games in hopes of taking home a win.

Class of 2022 activities coordinator, Tivian Nguyen, said that the idea came to mind because the rest of the student council thought it would be "fun" and it would be an event that "everyone could enjoy both participating in and watching."

If you missed the volleyball season, the tournament was the place to be on November 17th to catch a glimpse of familiar faces of Malden High School's girls volleyball team playing amongst the eight teams competing in the event.

The teams were mixed with players of various skill levels, and athletes from every sport coming together to "have some fun" and "win it all."

Students were allowed to come up with the names of their teams, and got really creative with them. The teams participating in the tournament were Milk Men, Goombas, Greyhounds, Sausage Party, Keira & Friends, Zone 6, Bongo Cult and Team Zoe.



Lauren Mallett.

The gym had two games of volleyball going on at the same time, where each team tried to be the first to score 25 points. The winning team of that set then progressed to the next round and cycled through every team up, until only two remained where they battled it out for the win in the finale.

Senior Kingson Chen expressed that his team Kiera and Friends were "feeling good." Chen further stated that they were "playing against people that are new to the game, but it's fun!"

Kiera and Friends' hopes were high as they stated that "of course we think we can win," and went on to win their first set against Team Zoe.

There was some healthy competition on the court, encouraging the participants to fight harder to make it to the finals. A common name brought up amongst the teams was Chen and his team.

Senior Ivan Tao stated that their "biggest rival is Kingson Chen," but appeared to be confident in his team making it to the finals.

Tao was on team Greyhounds along with Girls varsity volleyball senior captain Riley Strano, Sophomore James Jose, and Juniors Yuki Yang, Darryn Ho and Meryem Hakkaoui.

Hakkaoui also expressed that Chen was their biggest competition on the court since he was "hitting pretty hard," but this did not stop the Greyhounds from trying their best.

Hakkaoui shared that her team was "doing great" as they were continuing to "talk to one another, continuing to support one another, and helping each other." She added that "if one of us makes a mistake we don't beat each other down, we help each other and we give each other positive feedback."

The Greyhounds determination carried them through seven rounds taking them to the semi-finals, all while becoming a threat for other teams in the tournament.

Senior Jason Ong stated that Goomba's biggest rivals were "the Greyhounds" after taking "an awkward loss."

The student section also seemed to be having a good time, bouncing back from watching each game going on in the court. Senior Julia Nguyen expressed that watching the tournament was "really fun" but "it's really difficult trying to switch from one side of the court to the other, but it keeps it very active and I think it's just really cool see-

ing everyone, especially people who don't get to play a lot or kids from basketball get to play volleyball."

Nguyen also stated that she thought it was a "really good idea, especially because volleyball is not a big sport in a lot of schools, but at Malden High it's maybe the biggest sport here and it's really great to see."

Senior Nam Doan who was volunteering at the event shared the same sentiment stating that the tournament was "going well, I'm seeing a lot of faces...I think it's a really good idea."

It was a great turnout for the Class of 2022, and the teams received a lot of support from the student section as they watched all of the athletes having some fun, and getting competitive.

Senior Marla Candido, who is on the girls varsity volleyball team, expressed how ecstatic she was because "a lot of people came and I didn't expect that many people to come so I'm excited."

After various rounds of the tournament, an unexpected threat came for the rest of the teams on the court. Sophomore Victor Desouza stated that their "biggest rival right now is team Milk Men for sure."

After seven rounds it came down to team Milk Men, and team Goomba, but only one team would leave the gym as winners.

Very early on in the tournament, Senior Cyril Jeramie, a member of the Milk Men team stated that their "goal is to win," and sure enough their team made it to the top and won it all.



Senior Jason Ong performing a jump serve. Photo by Brandon Wong

# THE FINISH LINE

## An Endless Marathon



Wait. Stop. Let's run it back. After all, Halloween was just yesterday, right?

Right?

Nope. In the blink of an eye, the clocks have turned and all of a sudden, it's December 22nd and college applications are due in a little over a week. I still need to fill out the FAFSA and take the driving test I told my dad I would take over two months ago.

How did I get here?

I still remember March of 2020 like it was last week. We had been crunching to finish the March 2020 edition of the paper, staying after every day. The Dunkin runs, the cups of coffee we drank, the hours spent sitting at the desktops, I remember it all vividly. I had gone broke during the week, so the Editor-in-Chief at the time actually covered my bus ride home. I remember being careful to not touch anything on the bus unless I absolutely

had to.

Most of all, I remember that I was so excited for my birthday. Sweet 16, am I right?

March 13th, our two week vacation began.

Coming back over a year later, I was so excited. I still spoke with friends during the online era, but it wasn't the same as seeing them in real life. However, the joy I felt at finally hanging out with friends was short lived.

The work piled on so fast.

At first, it was slightly manageable. I didn't mind staying up till 11:00 once or twice a week. Then 11:00 became 12:00, and I stopped caring after 1:00.

Was it healthy? No. Was I getting my work done? Yes.

I even dropped AP Research, because I knew I wouldn't be able to juggle a whole research project on top of 2 more AP classes, Blue and Gold, and the mock trial competition. For the record, AP Research is the only class I've ever dropped in my entire high school career.

And all this for what? What am I trying to prove, and to whom? I've always challenged myself and pushed the boundaries of my brain in past years, so what changed that everythings dialed up to 11 this year?

I can't answer that question, at least not now. I tell myself that as soon as I reach a certain point, as soon as I finish this assignment or hit that benchmark, everything will get better, and easier. But that's not true. It never gets easier.

You just have to learn to accept it, because something else will come up. The marathon lasts forever, you might see a finish line, but it never gets closer; there's always another stretch to run through.

I told myself, once college applications are submitted, it'll all be fine, I'll have more free time. But I still feel a heavy burden? Why? Because I was lying to myself, college applications were one of the many things I had on my mind; they were the most important, so I equated them to my cause of stress, when they weren't at all that difficult or time consuming; deadlines are just scary, I guess.

And what's next? Graduation? After graduation comes college, which means having to pick a major, which means figuring out my entire life in the next two years. And after that? I have to get a job that pays enough to let me live, and pay off rent, student loans, bills, etc. And don't even get me started on a family. I don't even know how I'm going to support myself, let alone other people.

So what's the end goal? Retirement? I don't even know if I'm going to make it past 65 with the way the world is going, so let's not get ahead of ourselves.

I know that so far, this has just sounded like a total pessimistic rant, and I agree, which is surprising. I consider myself a generally optimistic, joyful, and goofy person, so seeing this splash of burnout and exhaustion coming from my head onto the screen is quite jarring, and

sad. But, I will end on a happy note.

The marathon never ends, but that doesn't mean you have to keep running. It's not like someone is chasing you 24/7 (and if someone IS, you should definitely get that sorted out), you can always take a break. So value the little moments, the time you spend at the rest stops with friends and family, because everyone is in this race together. Through the trials I've faced this past year, I've learned to value the time I spend with friends and family even more. Soak up every bit of joy you can take, because the thought that maybe tomorrow, you can go out and get some food with friends, or you can spend time with your siblings, those are the thoughts that keep you going when the finish line seems so far away.

Carlos Aragon  
Editor-in-Chief of Print

## Follow Us on Social Media!



@theblueandgold  
@\_humansofmhs



@MHSBlueandGold



@maldenblueandgold



The Blue and Gold



The Malden  
Blue and Gold

See if you  
can find  
the hidden  
Nedlam  
in this issue  
of the  
paper!

### Editorial Policy

*The Blue and Gold* is an open forum for student expression. It is produced by students for the school and the community. The views presented in this paper are not necessarily those of the advisor or the school administration. The views presented in the editorials are those of the editors-in-chief or guests. The goal of *The Blue and Gold* is to inform and entertain students as well as the community regarding issues that we feel are important.

We strongly encourage readers to respond to material printed in the form of signed letters to the editors. No libelous, malicious, defamatory, obscene, or unsigned material will be printed. *The Blue and Gold* reserves the right to edit the letters. Names may be withheld upon request. Not all letters will be printed.

Although *The Blue and Gold* appreciates the support of advertisers, we may refuse any advertisement that violates the above policy or that promotes products questionable to student use.

Any correspondence concerning this publication should be directed to Mr. Ryan Gallagher's room in J387 or to his mailbox in the main office.

The Blue and Gold  
c/o Malden High School  
77 Salem Street  
Malden, MA 02148

# DO SENIORS STILL HAVE PRIVILEGES?

Courtney Fitzgerald  
Lead Reporter

Senior privileges: leaving school early, going off-campus for lunch, special parking. These are things high school students look forward to the moment they enter the building for the first time. The last official class to have any senior privileges at Malden High was the class of 2017. Of course, that was four years ago and things have changed.

For instance, everyone has lived through a pandemic and students essentially got a year off from the typical rules of the building. For the 2020-2021 school year, nothing except for the mask policy put in place by the state had to be strictly enforced. This year, while still trying to reintroduce students back into a full-time work environment, Principal Christopher Mastrangelo hopes to keep things as laid back as possible and even re-introduced some senior privileges.

Jenkins House principal Jayson Payeur explained that senior privileges were initially taken away because “in past years many students, besides seniors, were leaving the building” and the administration had concerns for [their] safety. As of the first day of this school year, September 1st, 2021, seniors, as well as juniors were granted the ability to come in late to school and leave early when they have a direct study for their first period or last period of that day. Payeur hopes that the seniors will follow the rules set in place, like signing in and out when they enter and leave the school late or early.

Payeur also mentioned that “seniors seem to be doing the right thing,” and he is hopeful that this trend will continue. He added that the staff has done a good job in communicating their concerns to house principals when a student is not following the rules properly.

Students, on the other hand, are not so fond of these senior privileges. A recent survey posted on the Class of 2022 Instagram account revealed 33.3% percent of students who answered were unsure if senior privileges were a thing being taken advantage of, and the other 66.7% percent said these privileges were not being taken advantage of. Senior Aiden Thompson added on to his response stating, “we barely have senior privileges as is, so what even is being taken advantage of?”

A privilege that was taken away from seniors was the ability to leave the campus, without getting in a car, and go to the local shops and food places during their lunch period. Thompson spoke out about this, and stated that he personally finds it “dumb” because the lunch-

rooms are already “crowded as is.” He questioned that with “Covid still around, wouldn’t it make more sense for kids to leave the school so there are not as many kids in the cafe all at one time?” Thompson concluded that a privilege he would like to have as a senior would be to leave campus for lunch but to also “be respected in the school” by the teachers and the staff.

Nathan Murillo, another senior at Malden High, mentioned knowing that senior privileges are “something our school used to have more of,” but that “now we only have one privilege,” referring to the ability to leave early and come in late. Murillo stated that the ability to come in late

them. To earn these privileges, Mallett noted, the student needed to be in “good conduct with the school and have decent grades.” Students who had privileges were given a stamp in their agenda books that “acted as a pass” for them when they were using it. Mallett also believes that the privileges “were not a permanent thing,” and could be taken away if the student no longer had good grades or was no longer in good conduct.

Mallett also talked about an “AP study,” given to AP students, where “students used the time how they saw fit.” She noted that back then, the seniors “got more freedom,” and her favorite privilege from that time

the power to take away these privileges at any time should they deem it necessary.” Recalling her senior year, Gilbert mentioned that “some of the more problematic students, they never saw the senior privileges a day in their life. . .they refused to conduct themselves in a professional or respectful manner during their time at MHS.”

She highlighted a positive to the privileges, mentioning that the seniors “loved them, being confined to a building for years with no real crossover into the ‘real world’ was awful.” Gilbert added that the privileges they earned gave them a little taste of what college life might be like. She noted that personally for her, she “loved being able to leave early if I had a study block at the end of the day.” With her busy schedule playing soccer all four years at MHS, the 50-minute break at the end of her day to go home and eat before practice was “hugely beneficial.”

Gilbert went on to add that “as with any privilege or resource there will always be those few that try and ruin it for the rest and sadly in this case it seems they have succeeded.” Thinking back, she noted that it was mainly “underclassmen who tried to trick the system,” and that for the most part “the seniors all knew the procedures and that they had to get permission to leave, but underclassmen didn’t and then got caught.”

Gilbert expressed that she is “sad these privileges are gone, but in these past couple years during Covid, I don’t think it’s smart to bring them back quite yet.” She further explained that the seniors this year spent an entire year becoming very “lax about their learning.” She brought up her own teaching experiences, noting that students in her classes “try and watch full-on movies or makeup tutorials during class as I’m giving instructions. These are not behaviors we can reward.” Gilbert believes that a year or two to get students back on track and focus on their futures again is needed before senior privileges can be back in full swing.

As the year progresses, whether or not more privileges will be granted to the seniors is still a mystery. For now, seniors are only able to come in late during days where they have a direct study first period, as long as they check into their house office by 9:10 am. They are also able to leave campus early if their last period is a direct study, meaning they can sign out in their house offices at 12:45 pm. If a student has a teacher absent for those classes, first or last period, this privilege does not apply to them, they would still need to report to their assigned room by the time those periods began to be marked present and in class.



Students used to be able to leave the building to have lunch nearby. Photo by Carlos Aragon.

has been really beneficial to him because he is “able to get a little more much-needed sleep in the morning.” He elaborated on this statement, adding that his “30 extra minutes of sleep really is God sent,” and that he wishes “the school implemented more things that benefit the students.” In contrast to Murillo’s view on leaving early and coming in late, senior Ariana Peguero said that she believes it is “only good for people who decided to not have a full schedule.” Thompson added on to this point, stating that the privilege is “nice but it is really nothing crazy.”

So what were senior privileges like before they were taken away? Class of 2016 alumna of Malden High School, and first-year history teacher at MHS, Haley Mallett, recounted the senior privileges she had when she was in school. With Dana Brown as the principal (2003-2017), Mallett recalled senior privileges being an established and understood system.

Back then, privileges were not given to every senior but instead given to those who had earned

was “being able to leave campus to get food.”

As for people taking advantage of these privileges, Mallett believes there are “always issues with things like this,” such as students who did not have privileges “[deciding] they had them” and leaving the campus when they were not supposed to, but she also recalled that “for the most part if you had the privileges you would come back,” so there was never anything “too concerning.” Mallett left off stating that she believes senior privileges are “a good thing to have,” but thinks “students need to respect the rules” in order to have them.

Another Malden High alumna from the Class of 2016, art teacher Kristina Gilbert, expressed that Principal Brown “felt it was important to incentivize those who were doing their work,” as well as those “who were going above and beyond academically.” She also elaborated that the privileges “gave students who may not have been on that path a model and a goal to work towards.”

She emphasized that “the house principals and principal held

maldenblueandgold.com

# 2021 WINTER INSTRUMENTALS CONCERT

*Continued from page 1.*

The show itself was broken into multiple parts, the Small Ensemble performed first, followed by Concert Band, Jazz Band, and the Wind Ensemble.

Senior Kayleen Denis, a member of the Wind Ensemble, had mixed feelings before she stepped on stage. "Like any performance, I felt anxious going into it, but because I've been performing for so long, it's like second nature to me," Denis said.

Senior Donald Ford, Vice-President of the Band, also felt worried about going on stage at first. However, he knew that he would always be nervous getting onto the stage, but once on stage, he stopped "caring about what other people [thought] and just [went] with the flow."

Once on stage, everyone seemed to ease into place, and felt more comfortable as they performed their music. Since the band also performs at pep rally, parades and football games, "the real concert prep happens once we get back from Thanksgiving break, so we have to work fast and hard," Mazza explained.

Obviously with limited time, it proved difficult, with other things such as academics, work and family-related things everyone had to keep up with.

Denis explained that it definitely took some adjusting to get back into the swing of things. There is a difference between being a part of an in-person band as opposed to practicing at home during the height of the pandemic. Thankfully, they were able to polish up their act as the concert approached.

Mazza worked incredibly hard with the students to ensure they did well during the concert. "It is super rewarding to see all of our hard work over the last few months come together in such an exciting way," she stated.

Towards the beginning of the year,

the idea of having the concert was difficult. Due to COVID, many students had not played in a while and were far behind in terms of their skills. "All of my freshmen and sophomore students came in this year with the playing ability of a 6th and 7th graders," Mazza explained.

She then had to make the decision whether to play simpler music, or to really push everyone. Mazza decided to push the students to work harder, which proved to give great results. Senior and Band President Mica Avellan felt that they "rehearsed like crazy, [... going] down into the depths of the music."

Senior Melissa Calixte, another performer, expressed that the process of preparation was difficult with the "constant practice time both individually

and with the group. Learning the rhythms and working on intonation with other instruments." Though the hardest part for her was being able to synchronize with everyone else performing.

Many people came to support their loved ones, like senior Mackenzie Smith, who came to support her boyfriend Shai Cohen. Her favorite part was the sing-along where she sang loud and proud.

Zaryah Golini, another person who came to watch the show, "loved watching the Grinch, when he stole the star from the tree." The Grinch, also known as Junior Catherine Santos, ran around the auditorium and stole the star from atop the tree, then hugged Mazza during the performance of How the Grinch Stole Christmas.

After this long awaited concert, it is safe to say that the hard work of the students paid off. Mazza and her students have all worked hard to put on this show and were excited to finally see it all together. "Thank you everyone for supporting the band, we've never had that large of a turn out for a concert," Avellan expressed her gratitude to all those who came out to show their love to them.



All photos by Brandon Wong.

[maldenblueandgold.com](http://maldenblueandgold.com)



All photos by Brandon Wong.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Malden Hosts Third Annual Menorah Lighting at City Hall

Kayley Glavin  
Head of Local

November 28th marked the first day of Hanukkah, and with that came the Menorah Lighting at City Hall in Malden. Though this is the third year the lighting has been held, this was the first year the city could truly organize it the way they saw fit, Lori Ardai, one of the advisors explained. The Lighting was held on Sunday, Dec. 5th with Rabbi Sruli Baron as the religious leader and speaker.

Jewish Educator, Jessica Slavin Connelly, came up with the idea for the event after attending the Wakefield Menorah Lighting that Rabbi Baron spoke at in 2019. She also wanted to give her son Owen an option to learn more about Jewish culture and just "get out there" after he told her this was something he wanted. Connelly told Baron she wanted to do something similar in Malden.

Since there were still two days remaining of Hanukkah, Baron knew they could figure something out. For the last two days, they did the Lighting in Malden, starting the tradition.

The advisers held the event in 2020, in-person and on Facebook

live, at the height of the pandemic. For safety restrictions, the event only had about 20 to 25 people, including the City of Malden Staff. Connelly was happy to see no Covid restrictions this year in terms of numbers.

Councilor at Large, Karen Colon Hayes, was invited by Ardai to help out with the event. "[She] is a community organizer at heart." Hayes explained that her favorite part of the event was the "community feel and the people singing." She expressed her gratitude towards the planning group for making the event "so welcoming" with a focus on "community building." Overall, she found the event very "beautiful" and was happy to have been given the opportunity to learn the dreidel for the first time. The dreidel is a 4-sided children's toy that is marked with Hebrew letters, traditionally played at Jewish events.

Marilyn Andrews, special education advocate, expanded on how good it was to be outside with so many different people from different backgrounds again. She said she makes it a point to always help with volunteering when she can, and this was a great opportunity to do so. Andrews was glad the event was blessed with a Rabbi, who made the event special for everyone, regardless of their knowledge of Jewish culture and was very "compassionate."

Andrews' husband and sons, who are Jewish, have exposed her to its traditions, so she wanted to share them with others. Connelly and Ardai started the event three years ago and then invited Andrews to work alongside themselves, seeing as that Ardai and Connelly are good friends. She was very thankful they were able to expand the event this year and bring more publicity, describing it as a "people's event." Connelly estimated between 100 and 120 people attended in-person. She added that

since they also advertised online, there were many more than that.

Connelly said she moved to Malden for its diversity and sizable Jewish population. She added that it was delightful to see multiple groups of people "blending in" and enjoying themselves.

Andrews was personally touched by Mayor Gary Christenson after the first year because he had bought the Menorah last year and this year, making sure it was lit on all eight nights of Hanukkah. She touched on how this made her feel good and was extremely thankful for his dedication.

Maria Luise, the special assistant to Mayor Christenson, has been attending the lighting since it started. Luise said she loves that it brings the community together and gives people a chance to "learn Hanukkah traditions" as well as that is what the holiday is "really about." Luise had mentioned to Andrews how she had noticed people singing along and even knowing the words very well.

This was because Connelly was great enough to create song sheets, Andrews explained.

Members of the community, Tina Weldai and Eric Rubin also joined Connelly, Ardai, Luise, and Andrews as coordinators. They had been working since early October to make this event run as smoothly as possible.

Connelly said she wanted to plan the event because Jewish hate crimes have increased by a devastating 50 percent. Planning the event was important to her because she strives to live in a city that welcomes diversity.

Connelly added that she wanted to highlight Malden's growing Jewish community, as well as spread a message of hope and freedom since those are the universal messages of Hanukkah. Overall, she was shocked yet happy that so many people showed up. For her, it meant a lot.

Connelly also runs the Malden Young Families Facebook group with a close friend. Initially, she no-

ted that there were no community groups and thought it was time to start one.

Adam Weldai, School Committee member, explained he did help plan the event, but not to the extent of the woman who started it. "I love being able to see something like this for our kids." Weldai voiced he wished something like this existed for him as a young Jewish boy. He believed the event truly does "represent how many cultures and ethnicities there are." He is glad that Malden is "another step towards being a place where everyone is represented."

Public Facilities Director Rubin has been a part of this event for the past three years. He explained that he and his team covered the facility side of things, such as making sure the plaza was good to go, power was working and that chairs and tables were set up. He added that there was a huge Jewish population in Malden at one time, and it was nice to keep the tradition alive. Rubin said that Malden has continued to try to keep everyone involved and recognize everyone. Overall, he was very delighted with the event and the planning committee.

Mayor Christenson thanked organizers Ardai, Connelly, Tracy O'Connor, Andrews, Weldai, Rubin, and Luise for their successful efforts in making this event so beautiful. "Their efforts showed as we had different faiths, different cultures, and different ethnicities all coming together to celebrate Hanukkah and remind ourselves that despite the challenges we face, the light will always dispel the darkness which in turn reminds us that there is hope. It meant everything to me. From community spirit to the message of hope, I couldn't be prouder."

Connelly's "hope for next year is that we can also have celebrations for other holidays like Kwanzaa, Solstice, etc."

If any Malden High students who celebrate Kwanzaa are interested in helping organize an event, email [jessicaslavinconnelly@gmail.com](mailto:jessicaslavinconnelly@gmail.com).



People singing and clapping to traditional songs. Photo by Juliana Luong.



The Malden community gathers around listening to Rabbi Sruli Baron sing. Photo by Juliana Luong.



Sruli Baron singing traditional Jewish songs. Photo by Juliana Luong.

# Santa Claus Takes a Trip to Pine Banks

Carlos Aragon  
Editor-in-Chief of Print

Ashton Calixte  
Reporter

If you have been living in Malden for years now, you have most likely heard Santa shouting ho-ho-ho and the jolly Christmas music playing while kids run to get their picture taken and get candy from one of Santa's helpers.

This year Santa Claus took time out of his busy schedule at the North Pole to visit one of his headquarters at Pine Banks Park on Saturday, December 18th from 2-6 PM. This was Santa's 72nd annual trip to see the children of Malden and Melrose.

Santa waited for the children at Pine Banks. Malden Councillor-At-Large Debbie DeMaria stated, "As you drive or walk into the park, there is an adorable 'hut' which is where Santa sits as he greets his visitors."

Park Superintendent Kevin Benner along with the Pine Bank's elves prepared Santa's office and decorated the park with magnificent and beautiful lights. Ward 4 Councillor Ryan O'Malley stated that he was "excited to see Santa again this year, and looking forward to a productive 2022 here in Malden. I am most excited about increasing open space along the Malden River

and Spot Pond Brook." Malden Councillor Barbara Murphy and Santa's helpers from Ward 5 served hot chocolate and cookies to the kids and parents.

Murphy stated that the event was started many years ago by one of the original Superintendents of Pine Banks Park, Mr. Burgess. "On Christmas, he would open up the house and have people in, and have food, and have children come and see Santa."

Unfortunately, the event started to die off over the years, so Pine Banks called Murphy to help them. For the past 11 years, Ward 5 has been helping Pine Banks to promote the event.

Volunteer and School Council Member Adam Weldai stated that the people at Pine Banks plan the event and coordinate with Murphy in order to bring food and drinks. "Santa happens no matter what, but we want to at least bring food and drinks and some community down to celebrate together."

While Murphy stated that the rain did impact the turnout, the event was still quite lively. "From 20 [minutes before] 2:00pm, people were in line, it wasn't raining then and people were waiting in line to show up."

Santa himself had a few words to say about the event. "It's always

good to come to Malden, it is one of my favorite cities, this is a great tradition coming to Pine Banks. We just want health and happiness for

all our residents of Malden and for them to be safe against the pandemic, and we will all enjoy the holiday season."



The Christmas decorations in front of Santa's house. Photo by Carlos Aragon.



Santa Claus inflatables in front of Santa's house. Photo by Carlos Aragon.

## 'TIS THE SEASON FOR A WINTER FESTIVAL

Kaoutar Wakaf  
Head of Sports

This year, the City of Malden hosted its first Winter Festival, attracting artists and customers from all around to Pleasant Street. The festival took place on Dec. 4th, from 12PM-4PM and featured nearly 50 artists' tables displaying handmade crafts, gifts, cards, jewelry, and baked goods. Restaurants downtown served hot chocolate and winter cocktails, and the Malden Public Library held its first indoor book sale since the pandemic began.

According to Malden's Strategy and Business Development Officer Kevin Duffy, there were 55 tents set up and most vendors expressed that "they had a good day selling. One even commented that she nearly sold out of her stuff so it was a very easy pack up."

Duffy added that despite having a successful festival, it "was not as big as the Summer Festivals, but that makes sense since at our high point, the Summer Festivals had 89 vendors as well as more entertainment." Over the past summer, Malden had hosted the Summer Festivals every other Saturday, featuring new vendors and entertainment each time.

"I attended the summer festivals and they were really fun, so I came back. I was a little hesitant though because [it was] so cold, but I was glad I came," said Janet Steele, owner of Pooks Purses.

Malden High School alumna Maya Hayes is the owner of Made By Maya. She said she sells a lot of "crochet, macramé, and crystal items," as well as a lot of children's toys because she teaches toddlers. She decided to attend the winter festival because she loves the holidays and wanted to share all the pieces she made.

The owner of Lyku Designs, who is from Everett, heard about the event through her daughter who lives in Malden. She added that the City of Malden has been "really helpful because they provided a tent and table which makes it easier for artists to get out there and sell their artwork, and it brings new sellers to the market."

Junior Asmae Sekhri said she enjoyed attending the festival and shopping from local businesses despite the cold weather because the goods were original, and it is always great to support small businesses.

All in all, both business owners and customers enjoyed the festival. Duffy added that "it accomplished

Mayor Gary Christenson's goals of bringing customers back to our downtown to support our businesses and to give our residents an outdoor activity to enjoy themselves safely." He believes that "for our first Winter Festival, I think it was a great success in that we learned how to provide the infrastructure and how to manage the activities. Going forward, I see these growing as more members of our community take part and help make them bigger and better!"



A snowman made out of balloons walks around Pleasant Street. Photo by Kaoutar Wakaf.



Christmas carolers singing. Photo by Kaoutar Wakaf.

maldenblueandgold.com

# 2021 Winter Choral Arts Concert

Carlos Aragon  
Editor-in-Chief of Print

Lulu Harding  
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile Apps

With the coming of the holiday season, the Malden High Choral Arts Society recently held its first annual Winter Concert since 2019, as it was held digitally last year.



Junior Alyssa Littlejohn accompanying Mixed Chorus during Japanese Snow Song (Yuki). Photo by Brandon Wong.

The concert was divided into three sections, Mixed Chorus, Madrigal Singers, and the Concert Choir, with each section performing a variety of different holiday-themed songs.

Concert Choir Singer and Senior Krista Micalizzi stated that one of the biggest challenges this year was wearing masks during the concert. "Everyone was getting frustrated because we couldn't be loud enough, or some people couldn't hear." Choir Director Todd Cole

agreed that wearing masks definitely an adjustment for all of the singers. "The masks eat up consonants, and when you're singing, you're singing stories, so the audience can lose a lot of those stories if they can't understand the words," he explained. Figuring out how to "get the stories to the audience given this barrier" was the biggest challenge for the choir overall.

In addition to wearing masks, Micalizzi said that the song "Silent Night" was slightly challenging since it had been so long since they had performed it. "I think we were able to pull through in the end with Silent Night," she concluded. "It was something we all remembered and were able to click with."

In the weeks leading up to the concert, the choir was planning on singing the song "8 Days of Light", however, the song didn't make the show in the end. Cole explained that "8 Days of Light" is about 15 pages long, and overall "a really challenging, difficult piece of music." Micalizzi also added that "we had to speak Hebrew in the beginning, and that was definitely difficult for us to remember," along with concerns involving time constraints.

Concert Choir Singer and Senior Lucas Williams stated that he felt as though the buildup to the concert was much more nerve-racking than the actual concert itself. "Obviously there were times during the concert where I felt nervous because I had to make sure I had my parts right so my section could hear me... but the only nervousness I saw in other people were memorizing parts, like

'Oh Holy Night', or the pitch we had to sing for certain songs."

While some of the choir singers were somewhat nervous before the concert, Cole mentioned that "If anything, I noticed an excitement that we actually get to perform again for an audience." The choir at Malden High had not performed at an in-person concert in almost two years, and much of their nervousness also translated to a visible excitement. "It brings me so much joy...it's what we do, it's what we rehearse, it's our whole purpose, and they were so excited we get to do a winter concert this year."

Williams had his shining moment during his solo for "Saw Through Ships." Williams stated that he was glad he could have a solo as "you're typically not chosen for them if you're not a senior," and "even though it was really short I was really happy that I did it before I left for college."

Senior Concert Choir and Madrigals Singer Mateus Flaherty has been in choir for two years, and was excited to finally be able to do his first solo as well for "The Chanukah Song: We Are Lights" along with Senior Concert Choir Yusra Tafaroui. He didn't find many of the songs difficult in terms of preparing for the concert, and instead found that his "solo was definitely the most difficult part." Although he was nervous beforehand, he was "proud of the whole concert" and says it all came together in the end.

Flaherty agreed that everyone was also "excited" the entire time while performing, including himself. Cole further explained that this year, "I did not notice nerves

so much, not even with my ninth graders. I think that they were so prepared that they were excited to do it."

During the concert, Cole described that there was so much to do building up to it that "I am so concentrated on not [messing] anything up because it's a big responsibility." Along with his main job of leading the choir overall through conducting and queuing people, he was also able to join the Madrigals Singers in their performance of "Fum Fum Fum" and "Carol of the Bells". Looking back, the concert is "always a blur" to him, and "suddenly it's Thursday morning and I'm cleaning and moving risers back to my room, and I always say 'where did those three days go?'"

"I was really proud of the kids," Cole concluded. "I think that they did a wonderful job, especially coming off of a year of almost no choral singing." Although it went by fast, all of the songs came together beautifully in the end, resulting in a successful night for everyone.



Choral teacher Todd Cole conducting Madrigals. Photo by Brandon Wong.



Choral teacher Todd Cole conducting Mixed Chorus. Photo by Brandon Wong.



Concert Choir performing O'Holy Night with alumni. Photo by Brandon Wong.

[maldenblueandgold.com](http://maldenblueandgold.com)



All photos by Brandon Wong and Carlos Aragon.

maldenblueandgold.com

# “WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE ARE HURTING!”

*Continued from page 1.*

violence towards Malden’s approximately 22% Asian American population. By not addressing hate-filled comments on social media, by not taking responsibility for explaining to Malden community members why her and her husband’s costumes were harmful, and by not formally apologizing for the harm caused, Councilor Sica has failed to fulfill her moral duties as the city leader.”

This led to a protest that happened at 2:00 PM on December 11th, on Pleasant Street. Malden and Boston activists alike gathered to condemn the recirculated images revealing Councilor Sica’s “harmful, racist, and ignorant” appropriation of Asian identity, as well as her refusal to make a direct apology.

“We’d rather be with our family, out there shopping, staying home in a warm house, spending time [doing] something that we enjoy, but we are here! We are here because we are hurting...not because we think this is fun—to lose a December afternoon hour so that we can be here just to be at a standout—no! We are here because we believe in respect and dignity and what is right for our young ones,” emphasized Mai Du, a MHS graduate, Malden business owner and longtime community advocate.

Co-sponsored by a number of local, POC-led organizations—namely, Mystic Valley Branch of NAACP (MVBNAACP), Decolonize Our Museums (DOM), Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition (GMAACC), Malden

Community Organizing for Racial Equity (MaldenCORE), Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC), and Asian Coalition MA (ACMA)—the rally kicked off with addresses from various speakers.

“As Asian youth, women, transgender, intersex, gender non-conforming folks, and elders, our histories and experiences have already been invisibilized and mocked our whole lives. For Councilor Sica to mock Asian sex workers in her photo is a violent act that perpetuates harmful narratives against our community. Our Asian sex workers are not caricatures for your Halloween costume or your humor! This isn’t funny,” remarked a GMAACC member. She continued, “our youth, especially our young women, should not see themselves represented and mocked in this way by an elected official of our town. This is racial violence!”

At this, and speeches ensuing, the crowd erupted into resonant shouts and plaudits that filled City Hall with distinguished noise. Brazen, protesters chanted:

“What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!”

“大声说话，团结起来，为胜利而战!”: “Speak louder, unite, fight for victory!”

“The people, united, will never be defeated!”

“我们的人民承诺谴责暴力!”: “Our people promise to condemn violence!”

“Show me what democracy looks like! This is what democracy looks like!”

“Hey, hey, whoa, whoa! Councilor Sica has got to go!”

“We will not be intimidated!”  
“Hey, hey, ho, ho! This racist councilor has got to go!”

“Sica, say sorry!”

“No, that is not an apology!”

“We are not small!”

“Get your facts straight!”

“Way too long!”

“Sica, you failed!”

“Don’t have what it takes!”

“Educate yourself!”

“Lead with courage!”

Addressing Sica, Du continued to criticize, “this has never been about using race to weaponize or using race to try to get you to resign... we were just hoping that our elected official for the good city of Malden has some good sense in her—potential leadership!...And yet, you failed [us, Sica]!”

Cheering among the sea of vocal activists was an instrumentalist and University of Massachusetts Boston freshman, Thomas Tran. Having helped organize the event, he stated, “it’s December. It’s cold as hell. And, we could be doing something so much better with our time, but we’re all out here. We’re all fighting for the same cause.”

MHS alumnus, creator of the Stand Out Against Anti-Asian Hate Literature and attendee of the protest, Billy Zeng echoed this, saying, “today shows we’re not small” and “there is power in numbers.” Zeng followed, “as a Ward 8 constituent myself, it was very disappointing, to be honest... especially as a first generation American... [I think as a leader]—she is struggling to start leading and actually taking consideration of [her] constituents.”

It is for this reason that the

MVBNAACP condemns “Councilor Sica’s costume and her subsequent lack of an apology in the strongest of possible terms and implore action to be taken by Mayor Christenson and City Council members to condemn racially motivated violence, apologize for Councilor Sica’s costume that mocked and dehumanized female Asian immigrant women, pressure Councilor Sica to resign or remove from her city council duties and her role, and institute an accountability system for all elected officials,” Crute concluded, “Sica’s resignation would be the first step towards reconciliation and healing the profound harm that has been caused to the AAPI community and to Maldonians at large.”

Councilor Sica did offer an apology through a statement on Facebook which the protesters found inadequate.

“Enough is enough. It is time for us to be heard. It is time for us to be seen. It is time for us to be empowered to take action. We cannot do it alone! Get involved! This is how we build power.”

“We demand for authentic commitment, work and results from institutions and all organizations for a city that embraces racial equity, including the Mayor of Malden, Gary Christenson, who declares racism a public emergency in Malden. We demand to do what is right, to not enable the power of racism. We do not play with people’s lives!”

The Our Revolution Malden’s petition can be found on Change.org under the name “Call for Malden City Council President Sica to Resign.”



Activist Amber Ying uses her voice, helping “Stop AAPI Hate.” Photo by Jessica Li.



Protesters of all ages, including children, demonstrate in support of the AAPI community. Photo by Jessica Li.



Children showing their opposition to Asian hate. Photo by Jessica Li.



An activist uses their voice, helping “Stop AAPI Hate.” Photo by Jessica Li.

# ANTI-ASIAN HATE ACTIVISTS DEMAND RACIAL JUSTICE IN MALDEN



All photos by Jessica Li.

maldenblueandgold.com

# A NEW PAGE OF THE BEST BUDDIES ORGANIZATION COMES TO MALDEN

Lily Nguyen  
Reporter

With an extensive network of chapters throughout the world—all establishing opportunities of “one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development and inclusive living” that Best Buddies pinned on the board—the organization had recently explored a new avenue leading to Malden High School.

Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization circumnavigating the globe with a mission to unite, educate others and break the barriers that isolate the roughly 200 million individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs).

Paved by teacher Patricia Laidley, she is hoping to foster inclusivity among the student body with the implementation of Best Buddies. Hosted as a club in Flex block, members and students in the PACE Program, a program seeking to aid those with IDD, are able to prosper long-term relationships through fun bonding activities—becoming best buddies, as one would put it.

Founded by activist Anthony Shriver, his works among other Best Buddies members enables those with disabilities to experience the opportunities once assumed limited to non-disabled individuals.

During its 32 years of establishment, the organization has developed a sizable profile of global ambassadors, including NFL quarterback Tom Brady and supermodel Cindy Crawford, to name a few. They have also hosted a number of events, from their annual Friendship Walk to cycling marathons that have raised money to enrich the organization’s essential programs.

“All students,” Laidley emphasized, “have an opportunity to be together.” As Best Buddies interacts with students in the PACE Program,

“you can no longer see the barrier between people with and without disabilities; you just see young adults having fun, and that’s what makes this opportunity so wonderful.”

When it is time for Joy block, her classroom is brimming with much excitement and enthusiasm among club members and students. Among these activities include arts and crafts, thoroughly enjoyed by students as they amuse themselves with vibrant stickers, glitter and googly eyes.

Throughout the seasons, sprang forth from these materials and creativity were eerie Halloween pumpkins that brought a ghostly ambiance to the classroom, then fes-

tive wreaths that etched delighted smiles on the faces of family members and friends.

And just recently, Best Buddies members traveled by foot to the Malden Public Schools central office, where they engaged with Pace students in holiday door-decorating. A colorful display of paper snowflakes, snowmen and trees sparked delight from Superintendent Ligia Noriega-Murphy among other school administrators of the office.

Among the club members crafting these colorful creations is Senior Erick Rodriguez-Portillo, who shared how joining the club provided an opportunity to “help students in the PACE Program feel like any other person” and “just be

a cool guy.” While working with his buddy, he expressed, “there’s just a soft happiness with seeing them have a good time. It’s always a really nice feeling.”

Concurring with Rodriguez-Portillo’s thoughts was Senior Sarah Schneider, another dedicated member of Best Buddies. When working with her buddy from the Pace Program, “I feed off of their happiness. It’s especially great how we can become their friends, greet each other in the hallways, and develop a strong friendship that goes beyond arts and crafts in Ms. Laidley’s classroom.”

And even more special to Schneider were the smiles she and her buddy shared as they worked on their art projects—a special kind of warmth emanating behind their masks.

As for building the club to its fullest potential, Laidley envisions donating the students’ arts and crafts projects to the community to raise money for future initiatives.

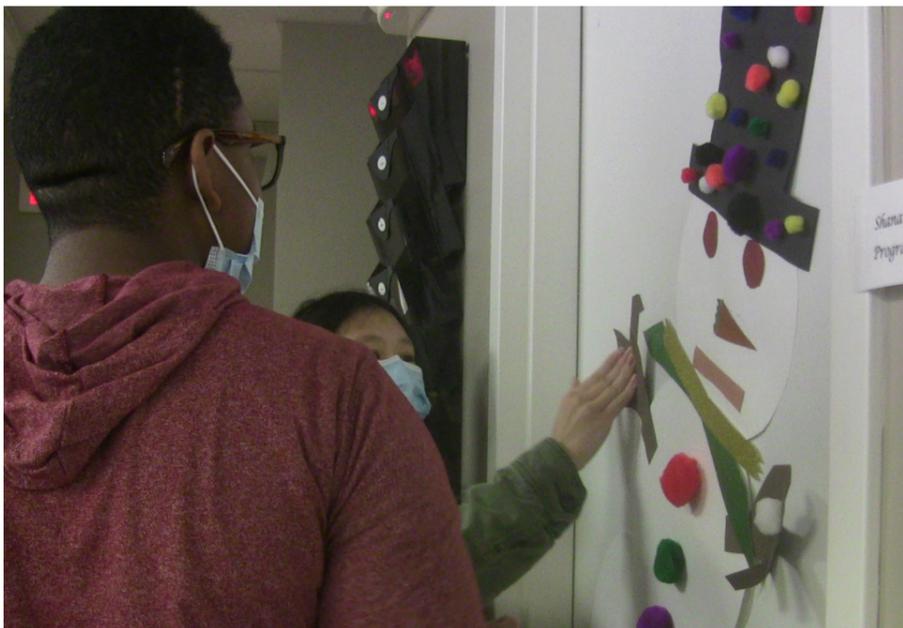
Furthermore, her goals of “implementing even more after school activities and getting more students involved” are high with ambition for the club’s development.

Despite all of this, what is stressed in Best Buddies’ mission is to “put it out of business.” The organization envisions a world where people with IDD can thrive in equitable schools, workplaces and communities where opportunities run limitless. Laidley reiterates this mission statement, noting the importance of growing a “deeper bond among club members and students” and, overall, prospering a “sense of community at Malden High.”

If you enjoy arts and crafts, want to be a best buddy and, most importantly, are driven to establish inclusivity among the student body at Malden High—please reach out to Ms. Laidley in room B328!



The Best Buddies logo, a colorful portrayal of inclusion and friendship, designed by artist Keith Haring. Photo via Best Buddies.



Members of the Best Buddies organization decorating a door with a snowman. Photo by Lily Nguyen.



A snowman decoration made by members of the Best Buddies organization. Photo by Lily Nguyen.

# CLASS OF 2022 ANNOUNCES PROM VENUE

Lulu Harding  
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile  
Apps

Recently, the Class of 2022 student council announced via their Instagram that this year's senior prom will be held at Boston Park Plaza.

Class President and Editor-in-Chief of the Blue and Gold, Julie Huynh, said that the process of reserving a venue for prom started off a little late due to adjusting to the school year. "In the beginning, we didn't even know if we would be able to have prom, if we were going to be back in person, to fundraise, to do all of those things just because everything was up in the air," she explained. Although they had a bit of a late start in terms of searching for a venue, after they got started, the process only took a couple of weeks.

When searching for the venue, Class Secretary Christelle Jean explained how the student council created a system for the process to go smoothly. Each member of the student council created a "pool of potential places," and over the next two weeks, they visited each, debated, and ran through the process of elimination.

Jean said that capacity and finding a venue that would be able to hold the senior class was a big factor in the final decision.

Originally, members of the student council were looking at different venues all over the Boston area. Huynh mentioned that she really wanted to hold prom at the Museum of Science, "but unfortunately when we went to visit it was completely out of our budget." However, when they discovered Boston Park Plaza, they loved it and ultimately decided it was the best place for the class.

"Boston Park Plaza was overall just a really gorgeous place which was the initial attraction," Jean explained. It was also close and accessible enough so that "transportation

wouldn't be an issue for most of the student body." She also added that "it didn't hurt that it was also great for pictures."

"When we revealed the venue on our Instagram people really liked it, so hopefully that prompts a lot of people to buy prom tickets," Huynh said.

Additionally, class social media coordinator and Editor-in-Chief of the Blue and Gold Lauren Mallett described that along with it being very elegant, there are a lot of "customizable things" that Boston Park Plaza offers. Along with there being various different catering options, "you can do things like changing the lights in the ballroom to different colors...it just felt very welcoming."

Huynh mentioned that the student council has recently booked the DJ for prom. Along with being very flexible with the types of music he plays, he has a system in place where seniors can request songs from their phones during the event.

The DJ also comes with a photo booth, which Mallett says that she is excited about because "there are customizable photo strips to have the event name, you can get multiple copies of them in full color, and it comes with props."

After hearing about Boston Park Plaza being the venue, the senior class is very excited about the upcoming prom.

Senior Reem Bouachra said that she thinks that Boston Park Plaza is "really pretty and sophisticated." Senior Mateus Flaherty also said that he is really excited about prom being in Boston since it "opens up a lot of opportunities for celebrating our senior year and hanging out after prom."

"I think I speak for a lot of seniors when I say senior year has been super stressful," Jean explained. "I just want to have fun with all my friends together one more night before we all head off our separate ways."

Along with the venue being "obviously very beautiful," Senior Yusra Tafraoui is grateful that the class is "going to have a proper ending to our high school experience" after having lost almost two years due to Covid-19. She is also really excited to see everyone together again, and "being able to dress up is also something to look forward to."

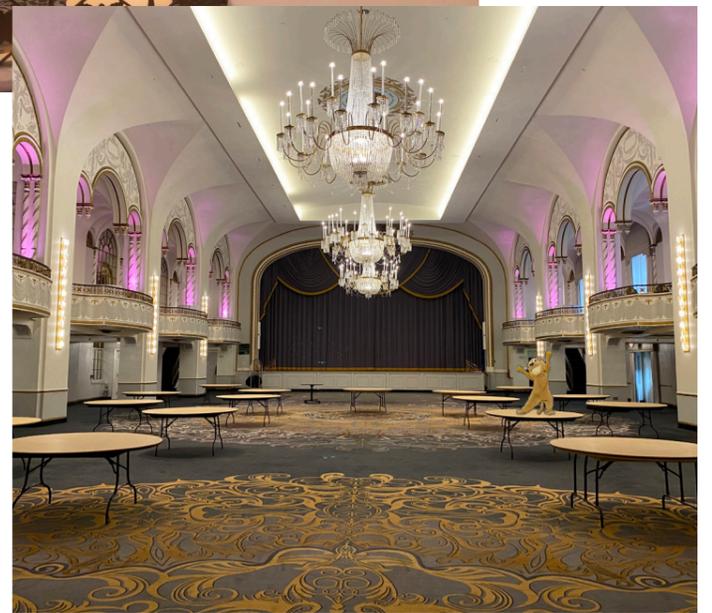
Tafraoui is especially looking forward to prom since she is going to be turning 18 the same day. "That is definitely going to be very interesting," she noted.

The Class of 2022's prom will be on Friday, May 27th, time TBA. As of now, tickets are between \$80-

90, although Mallett emphasized that "this is definitely not the final price." The best way for the price of the tickets to be lowered is for everyone to participate in the fundraisers the Class of 2022 is holding. They are currently trying to do at least one fundraiser a month, if not more.

"It's going to be really exciting. I hope a lot of people show up and continue to support our class with fundraisers because I know it's going to be a really great event," Huynh concluded.

For more updates about prom and other events, follow the Class of 2022 on Instagram, @maldenco22.



Boston Park Plaza. Photos submitted by the Class of 2022 student council.



Members of the Class of 2022 at the 2021 Pep Rally. Photo by Jessica Li.



Boston Park Plaza. Photo submitted by the Class of 2022 student council.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Italian Class Takes a Trip to Eataly Boston

Sophie LeBlanc  
Reporter

An educational and mouth-watering field trip took place earlier this month in the Prudential Center; high-level Italian language learners at Malden High School embarked on a journey to Eataly in Boston.

Eataly is an Italian marketplace that features an array of cafes, counters and even has a restaurant that many locals and tourists enjoy. Eataly is big on traditional marketing, so all of the food you could buy or eat there has received certification as authentic food from Italy. There are locations all over the world, including Brazil, Japan, Korea, Turkey, and of course, Italy.

The trip took place on December 8th and lasted for a large portion of the day. The students left the school at 9:45 in the morning and later returned at 2:45 in the afternoon.

The two Italian teachers at Malden High School, Giuseppe Formato and Fredy Rodriguez-Diaz, are very passionate about Italian language and culture, and this trip was a great way to show that to their students through food and demonstrations. As teachers, they “try to expose students to different materials such as media or music.” Rodriguez explains. In their Italian III class, “students are currently learning about food and the role of food in the culture, which pushed [them] to seek this opportunity.”

Once the students got to the market, various activities followed. The class was taken to various food stands, where they tasted authen-

tic Italian food such as mozzarella cheese and Margarita pizza. They were also given cannolis, which was sophomore Alejandra Fernandez’s favorite part.

She explains how when she went with her family, “it was just to eat at the restaurant” but with the class, they “went all around the market and gained a whole new experience.”

The two teachers came into contact with the Consulate General of Italy in Boston prior to the trip, and their office of education agreed to fund the field trip entirely. Normally, each student would have to pay 15 dollars to attend. “When we were offered this, we were very happy” Formato expressed, “As long as we got the okay from the school, we would be doing something that nobody else is doing, not only [at Malden High] but in all schools.”

Rodriguez had been to Eataly prior to the trip, but not just the Boston location. They had visited the location in Bologna, which is much bigger and grander than the Boston location. They got the chance to even make pasta by hand, and “it was an amazing experience,” they stated. “Having done it before, it’s something that I feel like [the students] would learn so much from.”

Once it was all over, Fernandez remarked that “it was amazing and something you’d only experience once in a lifetime.” All and all, this experience is definitely something remember for a long time, and they got to experience true Italian culture. That all the students and staff will remember for a long time, and they got to experience true Italian culture.



Italian students taste cannolis. Photo submitted by Prof. Rodriguez and Dr. Formato.

**Fernandez remarked that “it was amazing and something you’d only experience once in a lifetime.”**



The Italian students and teachers stand in front of the Eataly entrance. Photo submitted by Prof. Rodriguez and Dr. Formato.



Students learn how to make pasta. Photo submitted by Prof. Rodriguez and Dr. Formato.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Bathroom Blaze Sends MHS Into Frenzy

Continued from page 1.

Senior Sammi Nie also expressed a similar concern stating she was “a little bit worried that there was no fire alarm going off... that’s not safe.”

Principal Mastrangelo stated that the fire department “assessed the situation” and were “not surprised that the fire alarms didn’t go off...because [the bathrooms] didn’t get smokey enough.”

Senior Adriann Monahan-Dasilva voiced her disbelief with the events of the fires stating that she “thought it was a joke at first.”

Upon seeing the pictures of the burning trashcans on social media, Monahan-Dasilva was “shocked because I don’t understand the purpose, I don’t understand the intent, I don’t understand the goal, it just didn’t make sense.”

“Is this who we are? Like I don’t get it, what was it for? I want to know, Monahan-Dasilva stated.

Principal Mastrangelo feels as if “a vast majority of the students are getting the message but too many aren’t and they don’t think outside

themselves”

Senior Leslie Rodriguez expressed her frustration with all that has been going on this year, “It’s a new year, let’s leave that childish stuff behind. Whoever did it is not being considerate of the thousands of other kids in this school.”

Despite all of the controversy that construed from the bathroom fires, some students and faculty were able to find the light amongst the chaos.

Principal Mastrangelo found it “uplifting” that “students saw what was happening and went and got adults, and in both situations, both fires were contained to the barrel and extinguished relatively quickly.”

An affirmations account was made earlier in the year by an anonymous user that is seemingly a student at Malden High School. After the photos of the bathroom fires hit social media, they made a post that became popular amongst the student body landing them with 493+ likes.

Many students found the page, and their post “humorous” and as a

break from all of the negative emotions that came from the incident.

Senior Ronaldo Nguyen stated that personally he was “amused by all the memes that came from [the fire]... I wasn’t like “oh my gosh I’m in danger” it was actually pretty funny.”

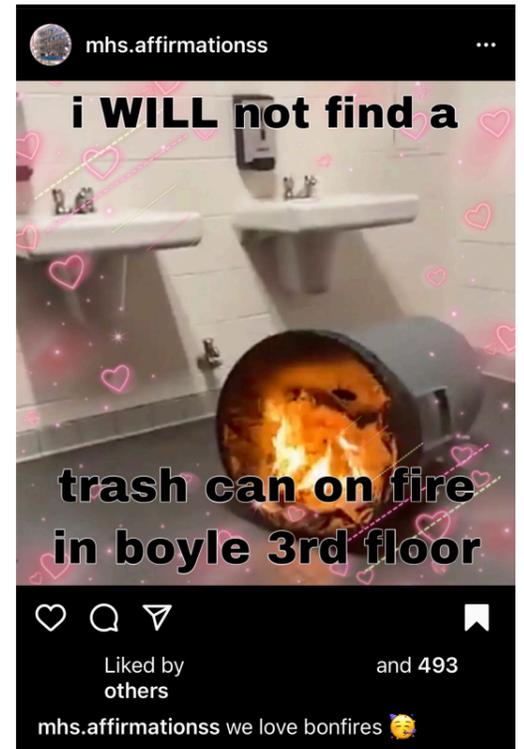
Despite feeling “concerned” and “scared” about what had happened earlier, Senior Olivia Donahue found the page “funny.” Donahue expressed that she thinks “it highlights a lot of struggles that students have daily at Malden High School.”

Seniors Marcos Ruiz and Krista Micalizzi shared similar feelings stating that they “love the page” and find it “very funny.”

Micalizzi left a message for the anonymous user behind the humorous and light-hearted posts; “I love you whoever you are.”

Although we cannot report on the students behind this incident Principal Mastrangelo made one thing clear stating

that, “this is our school, we, adults and students collectively need to take ownership of this. If you see something that’s dangerous you need to say something.”



Viral post regarding MHS bathroom fires. Photo via @mhs.affirmationss on Instagram.

## TUFTS UNIVERSITY HOSTS YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Chaimaa Assli  
Head Copy Editor

Tufts University sponsored the Youth Civic Leadership Conference for high school students from all over Massachusetts to learn more about civic leadership. This event was held on Saturday, December 4th from 10 AM to 4:30 PM in the multi-purpose Curtis room on the Tufts campus.

The conference started off by participating in an action civics workshop to learn about civics, government and advocacy. Guest speakers Danielle Mulligan, Danny McLaughlin and Willie Burnley Jr. were there to inform students about the topic.

From there, the youth leaders broke off into groups to create action projects addressing community issues ranging from homelessness to voting rights, and they would later present these projects in front of their peers and community members.

The event was advertised as a “fun and engaging day of working with civically-minded peers and learning how to be a civic leader.”

Students from Tufts gave a presentation to open up the event. They talked about topics such as the legislative approach, electoral approach and the grassroots approach. They also discussed different ways to make a change in a community such as non-systematic and systematic change. “Follow your passions around being a part of the community,” Burnley advised students. He sees how much student voice is be-

ing left out and wants that to change. He believes that it is important that students “find a cause and also the space that is supporting [them] and the practice.”

McLaughlin said that the way he prioritizes issues is that he tries to look at the themes of the issues that young people have and see which ones should be prioritized. McLaughlin likes “seeing young people civically engaged,” and he

wants people to find ways to come together and respect each other’s perspectives.

Mulligan “sees which issue ignites,” and starts off local with the youth problems. She said that “there might be fewer resources but it could be more accessible.” “Make sure you keep having conversations with the local government,” said Mulligan. She believes that students should always start off in their city or their neighborhood because it is a platform that they “have and deserve to step into to make the community better.”

After the guest speakers introduced themselves and answered questions the students attending had, everyone was given pizza for the lunch break. When lunch was over, the students broke off into four different groups for their project topics. The four topics they got to choose from were racial equity, sustainability, voting rights and homelessness. Each of the groups presented their given topic to everyone attending. The event was closed off with a reflection and a closing statement.



The guest speakers inform the high school students on civic leadership. Photo by Chaimaa Assli

maldenblueandgold.com

# Malden Hosts Virtual Diversity & Equity Meetings

Sandra Li  
Managing Editor

The Malden Public Schools administration held two separate Virtual Diversity & Equity meetings in the months of November and December. With hopes of engaging the community in the work towards equity, the administration provided information to attendees over the steps in moving forward.

Laryssa Doherty, the Assistant superintendent of Diversity & Equity, explained how the goal of the community meeting was to gather and assess information from the community in order to present where the city is in their process of learning.

For the month of November, the meeting was to present ideas and plans to attendees. And in December, "it was a little bit more of a check in of what we've worked on," said Doherty. "We want to make sure that we're hearing from everyone, before we take bold action on anything so we're not moving so fast, but voices are lost in that communication."

She expressed that it is not necessarily that the city is missing something, but rather it gives an opportunity to hear more in depth about quickly moving on with ideas that have been already discussed.

During the meeting, the administration presented a timeline from October 2021 through August 2022 that consisted of the work that the city plans on implementing which includes: defining equity for the district, presenting drafts to the school committee and adopting all handbooks and code of conduct.

With one of the very first steps being to define equity, Doherty mentioned how there will be four committees, each one working on the four themes provided by the meetings: the Equity Team, Code of Conduct, Student Handbook and Caregiver Handbook. Each committee consisting of parents, caregivers and students. For the equity team specifically, it would be to establish a shared definition of what equity is and then supporting that aspect of the equity audit through a third party. As a result, Doherty shared that the administration is waiting for the state to release the funding in hopes of announcing the proposal.

Doherty wishes that by April vacation, the administration and the committees will have all of the components in a place where it can be voted upon by the school committee. And then in June, there will be new policies set in place for the upcoming school year.

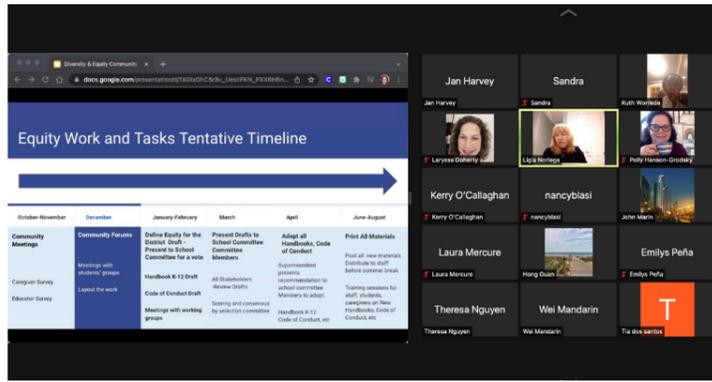
MHS alumni, Billy Zeng, was one of the attendees in the meeting. Having been consistently involved in community engagement, Zeng attended the meeting in learning more about what the Superintendents and

Assistant Superintendent were doing towards this topic. "I have not seen this work being done in Malden before and I thought it was wonderful how they decided

to have community meetings to engage community members," he said. Moreover, Zeng added that "I wanted to make sure that the work the Central Office was doing was meaningful and engaging in an effective way."

He recounted Superintendent Ligia Noriega-Murphy saying that students would be reached out to directly and the student governments established across the middle schools would be represented.

In terms of what the city needs to work on with diversity and equity, Zeng strongly believes that both Malden and the administration "has lots of work ahead of themselves both within the school system and outside of the school system," especially towards city government and the community. Zeng specifically noted the school system where he believes that more administrators need to examine closely the backgrounds of students whether that be race, ethnicity, sexuality or so-



Screenshot of the Zoom meeting.

cioeconomic to evaluate the service that they have available to students.

Now being a first-year college student, Zeng reflected back on his time at MHS where he thought about how the school could have provided him with a better college preparation experience. "COVID-19 has exacerbated the disparities that exist between different communities," he continued saying that "I feel strongly that MHS needs to take this into account and better serve their students, specifically with mental health services." As a result, it would help in providing "a more equitable school environment where students can have a better school experience."

To Zeng his own definition of equity is a "set of conditions that allows all individuals in a society to reach their potential, dreams, and aspirations," where it allows for "individuals to socially move upwards without being discriminated against by an oppressive system."

# Swim Flex Block

Mack Keating  
Reporter

Malden High School's flex block system is on its rotation, starting on January third. Every rotation brings new opportunities for students to try new things, and this flex block is no different. Run by gym teachers Mark Gagnon and Mary-Jo Urquhart in the school's pool, is a swimming flex block.

Run during both enrichment and joy, students have the opportunity to "play organized games, learn to swim, and just have some fun," according to Gagnon. He elaborated that this is a "recreational swim: kids can play organized games, learn to swim, and just have some fun." Both teachers can be found around the poolside during this flex, keeping students safe yet entertained.

Instead of the usual lap lanes, the pool is divided in half during this block. Students have the option to stand up in the shallow half of the pool and can be seen throwing around footballs and other pool toys, or even just hanging around with friends. On the other side of the pool, the deep end has competitive starting blocks for students to dive off of, and students are most commonly seen racing, diving off together, and other more competitive activities. Other equipment, such as pool noodles and flippers, can be found on both sides of the pool, for all to enjoy.

During flex cycle four, many students tried out this block. Freshman Marie Cheng was one of those students, and spent the periods swimming with her friends. She explained that she had a lot of fun, especially since she got to "hang out with [her] friends and practice for the swim team," which she is currently trying out for. While she "might not sign up again," she declared that "it was fun to hang out with friends and practice for swim." If she weren't trying out for the swim team she commented that she "would do it again, but that's a lot of swimming in one day." Her friends in the block seemed to share the same sentiment, as they were also signing up for the swim team. Many students found this block to be a great way to chill out between classes and a good destressor.

Teachers have come up with many different ideas for flex blocks, each cycle filled with creativity. This block is a perfect example of that: it runs through both enrichment and joy and manages to include both of those in its designated time by teaching swim and letting kids take a break from school to hang out with their friends. Next flex cycle, any students looking to get a slow workout in, hang out with their friends, or splash around in the pool for a while, this block would be an excellent choice.

**Virtual Community Meetings on Equity & Diversity**

Malden Public Schools will host a series of virtual community meetings on equity and diversity.

In these meetings, we want to hear from the community about the steps Malden Public Schools has taken to support diversity and equity, as well as identify next steps for the district. Please join us!

<b>NOVEMBER 15</b>	<b>DECEMBER 13</b>
<b>10 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</b>	<b>10 a.m. &amp; 6 p.m.</b>

The ZOOM links will be sent via email on the day of each event and posted on the district's website at [maldenps.org](http://maldenps.org).

**Questions?** Contact [equity@maldenps.org](mailto:equity@maldenps.org).

Screenshot of flyer taken from Malden Public Schools Twitter.

# POETRY OUT LOUD

Ashton Calixte  
Reporter

Get ready because for the 15th year Malden High School is participating in the nationwide Poetry Out Loud Contest.

The teacher leader for the English department, Yaharia Marquez, said, "All students in grades 9-12 participate—it's the only common assessment we have in the school for all of our students."

POL is about memorizing a poem and expressing yourself while performing. Poetry Out Loud also enhances speaking, listening, reading, critical thinking skills and confidence so at the end students will be learning something new.

Classroom competitions usually take place in English classrooms the week before Winter break.

"Poetry Out Loud was always like a refreshing break before Christmas. It was like a break from regular English. I remember that I used to get anxious about performing my poem in front of the entire class but teachers made accommodations for kids with stage fright. Personally I don't love it or hate it," Kayleen Denis stated.

The semi-finals will be held in the auditorium on January 6th and 7th. Each period's winners of each class will compete against each other. The Malden High School Poetry Out Loud finals will be held in the auditorium on January 27th during period 2—this will be for winners of the semi-finals.

Marquez announced that "Poetry Out Loud will also include a teacher competition—the winner of that will receive the David Holland award as a way of continuing the legacy of former MHS teacher, David Holland, who always marvelously recited a poem during our Poetry Out Loud Finals."

David Holland was a Special Education and History teacher at Malden High School and sadly passed away in July of 2016. He is known for often performing during the finals of the Poetry Out Loud competition. Malden High School continues to remember him and his contributions to Poetry Out Loud.

Each student at Malden High will first choose a poem they want to recite from the Poetry Out Loud website.

"Choosing the poems is my favorite part because it is really interesting seeing all of the different works from different people and choosing one poem is hard because there are five others that I love." Junior Kelly Le stated.

Students then analyze their poems and start memorizing them. For the recitation, it is important to incorporate the meaning of the poem, be present, show an understanding of the poem through controlled tones and facial expressions and recite the poem in a way that demonstrates one's understanding of it. Students are graded based on their physical presentation, their understanding of the poem and how prepared they are.

# Key Club Sends Out Cards as the Holiday Season Approaches

Sophie LeBlanc  
Reporter

With the holiday season upon us, it is important that everyone feels respected and appreciated, including the faculty across all of the Malden Public Schools. The Malden High School Key Club showed staff the importance of respect this Thanksgiving, as they sent out 900 creative cards made by all of the members. Senior Maggie Yick, who is the president of the club, stated that the cards went to all the teachers and all the faculty and all of the members were required to make 10 cards.

The Key Club is "an organization that volunteers around the community," Yick explained, which is spread around New England. It is hosted "in high schools, and some colleges depending on where you are." Secretary and senior, Sharon Pan, revealed that they "usually just go on volunteer walks" and this is the first event that they had held "themselves instead of going out to an event that was hosted by other people."

Yick chose to send out the cards mainly because as a senior, she's "been through a lot," and had noticed "that some students are treating faculty kind of terribly."

She expressed that this made her "upset" considering how "Thanksgiving is all about giving and being appreciative." Club member Chloe Chen expressed how "it added more holiday spirit," and she was glad to "bring it to other people." With this ongoing problem, Pan explained how the officers "took the opportunity to give students a chance to express their love and gratitude for schools."

Chen had mixed feelings about the experience as a whole, explaining how at first, she "wasn't excited because it felt like they were just giving us homework" but once the project concluded she "enjoyed it" overall. She emphasized that "she wouldn't have done it if [she] wasn't forced to." Pan highlighted how they "did commit time to make the cards, but it was worth it because during COVID-19 or school in general, teachers don't get much appreciation."

The club officers chose to make the project "very broad and vague" because they know the members "have clubs and other stuff to do," Yick emphasized. The members can "do it at home if they want to or they can do it in the club right here." All and all, the Key Club is doing a great job at showing their support for the hardworking staff across Malden.

# Bread of Life Hosts Annual Thanksgiving Dinner

Nora Hounain  
Reporter

The Bread of Life held its annual "Don't Be Alone on Thanksgiving Day" dinner event in Malden High School's cafeteria on Thanksgiving day.

Gabriella Stelmack, Bread of Life's executive producer, said the event was organized in the early 1990s "for people who would be alone, for [the] elderly, people who were living alone, and people who are homeless and are on the street."

"It was an idea that we [had] because normally year-round, we have a congregate meal and a sit-down meal for [everyone]," Stelmack said. "That's how Bread of Life started."

"The holiday meal was to do something special on the holiday and I think one of the main reasons we started it was because Mystic Valley Elder Services had approached us about doing deliveries to their consumers because they don't have Meals on Wheels," Stelmack added. So now, they have a version of

Meals on Wheels, a frozen dinner prepared and packaged the night before Thanksgiving. The idea is that on Thanksgiving Day, they get a visit from someone personally delivering a home-cooked meal.

"We had years of people who just wanted to not feel alone and wanted to sit and meet neighbors," Stelmack said. "People here would

come with somebody for their delicious meal with all the fixings, so it's just neighbor helping neighbor."

"During the pandemic, we knew no one could get together and I think that's why we had such a good turnout. I'd say the turnout was good or better than it has been in some years before the pandemic," said Stelmack. In previous years,

Bread of Life delivered up to 500 Thanksgiving meals. This year, Stelmack said they delivered 702. She added that "I think people were saying some people still wanted to avoid contact, older people with pre existing medical conditions," and as a result, "they wanted to have the meal delivered instead of going out," which is "why we did 200 more than usual."

Siblings Piper and Simon Nichlos served food and helped clean up the tables for Bread of Life. The meals came with turkey, carrots, peas, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, stuffing, gravy, cranberry sauce and a bread roll.

"We think it seemed cool, especially because we don't really have a super big Thanksgiving tradition in our family," they said. "So we're here with our family and it's a nice activity to do with your family, helping out, giving back to your community, and being thankful."

To learn more about the Bread of Life and what they do, visit <http://www.breadoflifemalden.org/>



Mayor Gary Christenson and Gabriella Stelmack. Photo via Mayor Christenson's twitter page.



Volunteers working to prepare the Thanksgiving feast. Photo via Bread of Life's twitter page.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Indoor Track Season Preview

Dani Licon-Cruz  
Reporter

Malden High's indoor track team gets ready for the coming season. Despite missing a season last year due to COVID-19, the team hopes to make up for lost time.

This year's senior captains, Leslie Rodriguez and Marcos Ruiz, are excited to make up for the time lost due to COVID-19. Ruiz expressed that he wants to see "the team get better."

Rodriguez further supported this sentiment saying she wants everyone on the team "to get to a point where they are proud of themselves."

Coach Marc Ferrara has been coaching for three years and this is his first year as head coach. He mentioned that this year's indoor track team has "a lot of talented individu-

als."

Coach Michel-Le Meranda contrasted this by saying, "it is really hard to gauge [them] with only two weeks of practice." However, it is safe to say that both coaches have an optimistic outlook for their team this year. Coach Ferrara mentioned that his goal was to "build up a new Malden High School track team."

"Coming off the COVID year and missing our last indoor season, my hope is to really build up the athletes that I have," said Coach Ferrara. He truly intends to "build a strong track team like [Malden High School] had in the past."

Seniors Alyson Kwong and Kayla Montana, who are participants of indoor track, agreed that COVID-19 had a big effect on them. Kwong said that she hopes they "get that same experience back" from pre-COVID.

"For [the coaches] to be able to pick up after the mess that happened last year, it's just so good," said Kwong. "They work so hard to make sure that we're doing our job but they also kind of give us a sense of independence."

Montina mentioned that the coaches do a great job of "showing support" and that they care about everyone, even outside of their running, throwing and or jumping.

Freshman Lovely Gerochi said that the captains also do a great job and "help [them] with warm-ups and stretching."

The track team has been working really hard, according to Rodriguez who stated that "people are showing up every day, they're doing the workouts, they're doing what they need to do [and] they're asking questions."

Ruiz agreed that everyone is

showing tremendous effort. He believes that the team's progress is going really well and they keep striving to improve.

Rodriguez and Ruiz want more than just a strong track team, they hope to build a family. Rodriguez said that she wants the underclassman to "make friendships... come back" and "be the next ones to lead."

Ruiz further hopes "they learn that they have a team in track," and that "if they push themselves, good things are going to come from it."

Of course, as Coach Meranda stated, "it would be great to win a GBL title" but, they intend to get more than just triumph out of this winter season. This year's team will continue to push past their limits and improve, but also be there for each other and create a familial atmosphere.



Captain Leslie Rodriguez running the 600-meter race. Photo by Carlos Aragon.



Jelani Garret performing the high jump. Photo by Carlos Aragon.



Captain Marcos Ruiz running the 2 mile run. Photo by Carlos Aragon.

## SPRINTING INTO NEW INDOOR TRACK SEASON

Carlos Aragon  
Editor-in-Chief of Print

Sandra Li  
Managing Editor

After coming back from last year's season, Malden High's Indoor Track team is eager and ready to begin their season with a strong start. The team held a meet on Wednesday, December 15th at the Salemwood School where they went against Medford. Despite the girls team losing, the boys team was able to beat Medford.

Senior captain Marcos Ruiz feels that after coming back from the pandemic, he sees that "all of the highs were tied with the lows." Although the team got off on a rocky start, Ruiz is still "proud of the entire team" because reflecting back on the COVID-19 season, he believes that they were able to "come back to regularity" and they will "have a good season regardless."

Ruiz personally felt that he did well and was glad that they won because it "was a nice way to see our season start." He believes that "a lot of the things we need to fix are not personal or running wise," rather it is "simply just working on setting things up," as well as the "mental

battle of being able to stay strong" even when the other team comes in.

Coach Marc Ferrara believed that the meet ultimately went well. However like any team, "we need to work on to ensure we perform at our best each and every time." He added that he looks forward to "seeing the athletes grow" and "develop in their specific event." Ferrara wants to especially "develop as a team" and improve each day as it is "important to understand your athletes and know their limitations."

Senior Aiden Thompson, who participated in the shot put, sees this season as one of "new opportunities... and a whole new team with a lot of promise." Thompson felt that although he could have performed better, overall as a team they were able to collectively show everyone their potential.

Sophomore Sami Judy expressed that the meet had both its highs and lows. One being that the team needs to be more organized in terms of the placement of athletes in different events. Judy hopes that in upcoming meets, she would be able to beat her score each time.

Freshman Gordon Zeng participated in the two mile run and he explained that he felt nervous "as

it was my very first track season." "Though, I made it through my event, especially with help from the supportive upperclassmen," he said.

Senior captain Leslie Rodriguez described how it was her first time running the 600-meter race. "I was surprised to see my time improve by more than 30 seconds." Despite being nervous from the scene of new athletes, Rodriguez is "proud of them and they all did well."

She stressed that as a captain, she hopes to "support anyone that needs help" because Rodriguez recognizes that "it is not an easy sport." It could be "finding ways to manage their time" or if "someone needs help with their event," Rodriguez expressed that she would like to be there for her teammates.

With many more meets coming up in the season, there is much anticipation for the track team to show off their skills.



Sophomore Rolando Mejia (left) and freshman Joshua Arevalo (right) running the 55 yard dash. Photo by Carlos Aragon.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Girls Basketball Dunks into New Season with Confidence

Krishany Marius  
Head of Local

As the cold starts to roll in, winter sports begin.

The girls basketball team strives for their title to win the Greater Boston League (GBL) and make it to States. The team has been through a lot with Covid hitting their season and forcing them to wear masks, making it difficult to play the sport.

Last year, the season was shortened to ten games instead of 20 and they were unable to play a full schedule.

Though it has been difficult, that does not stop the girls from continuing to hustle and work hard this season. Some of these girls have not played since freshman year. "It's my first year on varsity, I am excited to see how much I grow," said Adriana Velasco, a junior who is returning to the team. For her, it feels nerve-racking because there can be a lot of pressure put on them.

Some of the girls are returning players. Co-captain Senior Yasmine Alayan hopes that the girls "pick up the learning pace a little bit" and there are a lot of young players on the team. She has "already seen progress" and thinks that the team will catch up pretty quickly. Their defense looks good and the team seems to be catching up conditioning-wise.

Scott Marino, who is the girls' varsity head coach, is pushing the

team and wants them out there as quickly as possible and is assured when it comes to winning this year, and that includes the GBL title. "That banner is to the center of the court so that everyone that comes into this gym finds out we won the GBL title," he said. Marino wants the girls to try their hardest this year and wants them to compete at the highest level. He is expecting them "to gain and grow every single day" so that they're competing to win a state championship.

The team feels the same way when it comes to winning the title and making it to States. "The team has worked so hard over the summer and dedicated their practices," Maritza Ramos-Perez, a junior on the varsity team, said. Perez is confident

about winning and feels that the team could work on communication more when it comes to interacting on the court.

Alayan said "We are trying to correct it through communication, playing hard on defense and not having meltdowns on the court." She wants the team to stay on task when it comes to playing games and keeping up with their practices. Like when the team messes up, Alayan does not want them to stay stuck on something, she wants them to get over it and move on, to keep playing instead of letting it affect you on the court.

Although the team may have its ups and downs, that does not stop them from being optimistic towards their goals and for the team

and having support for one another. "Positive hopes, because if you think of the doubts that's where all the bad happens," Nyandeng Yak, a junior on the varsity team, said. She feels like it is best not to be negative when it comes to playing this year. "You don't want to doubt yourself and all you want to do is progress."

The team knows what they want. "We're all just going after the same goals and are willing to make the sacrifices this season and are ready for what is to come for us," Velasco said.



Junior Maritza Ramos-Perez dribbles through the opposing Lynn-English team. Photo by Nathan Dean.

## THE BOYS BASKETBALL VARSITY TEAM HAVE NO DOUBTS THIS SEASON

Krishany Marius  
Head of Local

Get ready to cheer on the boys' varsity basketball team as they make their return to the court with excitement and confidence. "They've really worked hard and it's starting

to come together," said Don Nally, who is the boys' varsity basketball coach. He is really looking forward to this year, having a full schedule, and getting back to normal despite COVID-19.

Though that has not stopped the boys from trying to work hard

in terms of this season, Aiden Tham, a junior, said "we have a whole new team" and talked about the lack of returning players this year. Tham believes that the team is really good, "we're a little oversized, but we're really skilled." The boys have great chemistry with one another and many of them are friends with one another.

The team has high expectations for one another. "All I know is when we get on that court [we will] dominate," Demarco Ross, a junior, said. The team does not believe that there are any doubts or obstacles that are going to stop them from winning this season. They have been together playing for a long time. When they practice, it shows that they're getting prepared for their games, and every day they work hard and try to compete. "The boys are really looking forward to it and I think they're up for the challenge," Coach Nally says.

Some players do believe that there is still progress that needs to be made before they compete for the GBL title. "We've got to work on consistency, coming to practice ev-

ery day," Bell said. He thinks that if they do that then they will be good and the team will not have to worry about their performances throughout the season.

Jonald Joseph, a Junior on the team, said "we definitely got to work on people not being injured," as it can affect the team itself and how they play this year.

It may be difficult for the students to balance both school and a sport. The team practices right after school so the boys have plenty of time to go home, do their work, and take care of their responsibilities. Coach Nally would also love for the team to make the state tournament.

The team believes that this year is really important for them to play because it is their year to prove everyone wrong. They even admit it themselves that, "the years before were pretty bad and this season is going to be a lot better," Bell said. He continued, "everyone [is] looking down on us and thinks we [are not] good enough. They are wrong so we are going to have to prove that."



Senior Luke Zubrzycki blocking the ball from Medford. Photo by Desiree Nong.

maldenblueandgold.com

# The Swim Clinic Returns to Malden High School

Juliana Luong  
Head of Sports



Collage by Nathan Dean. Photos from The Blue and Gold archives.

The Swim Clinic was started 11 years ago by Malden High School's Swim Team Coach, Jessica Bisson.

The clinic is open to everyone spanning from four-month-olds to adults. With the number of different people of different ages, the level of experience in the water varies. However, Bisson added the "main purpose of [the] swim clinic is to increase a persons comfort level in the water."

Although mentoring the swim clinic and coaching the swim team are two different things, Bisson stated that "both are very rewarding in their own way." The swim team also assists in teaching during the clinic. Swim team captain, Tony Giech described that teaching people in the swim clinic who have no experience in the water is "challenging" and "... harder to teach them techniques... since they might be overwhelmed by their fear of the water." Nonetheless, Giech helps the uneasiness by helping direct focus to "breathing and body position...because those are the two most important things in swimming."

While some of the people attending the clinic are inexperienced, there is room for experienced swimmers as well. Bisson says with experienced swimmers the focus is about improving the "technique of all 4 strokes, turns, and dives (starts)." Sarah Oliveira, swim team captain, stated that she also helps swimmers "improve strength, stamina, and technique." With the help of the swim team, all levels of swimming are able to improve regardless if it's the first step in the water or the hundredth.

The COVID-19 pandemic



Collage by Nathan Dean. Photos from The Blue and Gold archives.

caused an inability to host the swim clinic until now and it being brought back has made people reminisce and continue creating more memories. Oliveira described that kids remembering their instructors and familiar faces makes the experience "bittersweet to be starting [her] final year of swim and getting to work with swimmers for the last time." Giech explained that being able to do it again and "continue sharing [his] love of swimming with others" is "memorable enough."

Advising the swim clinic for so long as well as the Malden High School swim team, Bisson has had many memories, especially with mentoring kids younger who had eventually joined the swim team

when they attended Malden High School. Bisson remembered that "one swimmer [she] had, came to swim clinic for years to work on his stroke technique and he was so excited to join the MHS swim team when he got to high school. During this swimmer's senior year, he became a captain and led the team well. He managed to come in first in the 100-yard butterfly at States."

Bisson described this memory as one of her most "rewarding moments [she] has experienced so far as a coach and a swim clinic instructor."

Malden High School Principal, Chris Mastrangelo, added that this clinic is "a great opportunity for [the] kids and mentors."

## MEDFORD/MALDEN GIRLS HOCKEY TEAM STARTS OFF SEASON WITH A 2-2 RECORD

Courtney Fitzgerald  
Lead Reporter

Winter is upon us and with that cold weather comes the Medford/Malden Girls Ice Hockey season. Beginning with tryouts on November 29th from 5-6PM as well as November 30th from 4-5PM, the Medford/Malden girls came back swinging.

Starting their season off on December 9th, the team headed off to Marblehead where they lost in a 0-3 burnout. Six days later, they headed back home to the Loconte rink in Medford. The team played against Masconomet Regional and came out with a 2-0 win, scoring their first goal with only seconds remaining in the first period. Three days after that, they headed out on the road to Gloucester where they came out on-top in a close 2-1 game. The season is projected to last into February of

the new year.

Senior captain Keena Swanson noted that "the way we play the game has not changed due to Covid."

"Sure, masks, absences due to worries of being unwell, tests and other obstacles are hard to deal with and get in the way. As long as our players test negative and we're all well, the game goes on," she added. Swanson is hopeful that the team can make it to States this year, but expressed that "what's more important is that everyone has fun and enjoys their time on the team and on the ice."

Swanson has been playing hockey with the Medford/Malden team all four years she has been at Malden High. She mentioned that "the opportunity to play on the team, skate during practices that help me develop my skills and work with my teammates," has been what

keeps her playing the game. She also noted that "this year we have been fortunate to have many skilled players on the team."

Overall, the team is holding

a 2-2 series this season. Their next game is on Wednesday, January 5th, 2022. It is an away game against Winthrop High School.



Medford/Malden Player attempting to steal the puck. Photo by Courtney Fitzgerald.

maldenblueandgold.com

# MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL DIVES INTO NEW SWIM SEASON

Hadjar Yousfi  
Lead Reporter

For the past two years, the Malden High Swim Team has worked hard to overcome the difficulties that came with the pandemic. This year, the sport has almost returned to its pre-pandemic state, and the team dived in on an eager note.

Coach John Parcellini, who has been coaching swimming on and off for the past 20 years, is “looking forward to a great year.” It seems that the rest of the team shares his excitement, including Head Coach Jessica Bisson, who “feels awesome, [and loves] being back.”

With many seniors having graduated last year, the team was left bare. However, after successful tryouts, Bisson is confident they will be able “to build the team and get a good connection going.” This year, they do have a handful of new swimmers who are not as accustomed to swimming on a team, so many of them feel it is quite the adjustment.

As practices return to the usual five days a week, as opposed to last year when it was only three, swimmers are trying hard to get used to

it. Senior Abby Tang finds it “hard readjusting to having meets in person again.”

Some new swimmers are adjusting, like Marie Cheng, a freshman who feels that being on the team is “challenging but fun.” She also feels it is a huge struggle to try to keep up with the others, who might be more experienced than her.

Bisson is well aware of the struggles they may face this year since all of their captains, seniors Molly Sewell, Tony Giech, Sarah Oliveira and Tang had not had a regular season since 2019. Oliveira described this drastic difference as a “little bit of an adjustment,” but something that they would work hard to improve on for the sake of the team.

For now though, the captains feel as normal as ever. They want to work with the team and to become a tightly knit community. Oliveira hopes they will be able to branch out of their immediate friend groups and “foster a community of swimmers.”

Parcellini also is looking forward to “getting to know the athletes, talking to them about their

life experiences and future goals,” because without feeling like a team, it is truly impossible to work well together. As Oliviera stated, “it’s more than just swimming, I think it’s about friendship and bonds.”

As for their overall goals for the season, everyone seems to have something in mind. Sophomore Joao Victor Santos, who is new to the team, wants to “become proud of [himself] for what [he’s] doing.” Sewell has some personal records that she hopes “can get better dur-

ing my senior year.”

When it comes to team goals however, everyone seems to have their mind set on one thing. By working hard Parcellini expects “them to repeat [their] GBL champs.” They also are hoping to have a few sectionals or state qualifiers.

Though it seems difficult now, the MHS Swim Team is incredibly excited to work together to form a great team bond over the love of swimming.



Senior Captain Abby Tang kicking in streamline position. Photo by Hadjar Yousfi.

## Swim Meet Against Revere

Zachary Nedell  
Lead Reporter

After their first meet on Tuesday, December 14, the swim team came back extremely strong on Thursday, December 16 when going up against their strongest competition, Revere. The meet started out with the 200-yard medley relay. Malden was able to swim first and third but unfortunately, the lane 5 relay team was disqualified, leaving the score 10-4 Malden.

During the 200 yard freestyle, Malden was able to pull ahead and snag first and second place, leaving Revere in the dust. Afterward, Malden had twice as many points as



Senior Captain Molly Sewell swimming breast stroke. Photo by Hadjar Yousfi.

Revere did, leading 20-10. Next up was the 200 yard individual medley with Revere. After a decisive swim, Revere had acquired first, second, and fifth place with Malden only scoring points for third and fourth place. This event allowed Revere to catch up to Malden with only 4 points separating Revere from Malden’s score of 25.

After the momentary fall, Malden was ready to come back in the 50-yard freestyle. After an extremely close race, junior Liam Bloom was able to beat Revere, winning Malden first place. However, Revere was not far behind and got second, tied with Malden for fourth. Malden was able to get fifth, securing a few more points.

The swim teams also completed two extra unofficial races, both of which were 50-yard freestyles. In heat two and three, Malden lost a few of the lap races. The coaches pulled them aside after the race to motivate them to really push for that fifth. Malden was able to pull ahead after that.

With the coach’s encouragement fresh in the athletes’ heads, Malden started the 100 fly. It was a tough race with Malden starting out in the lead, but Revere overtook them early on and gained a massive lead. Revere got first place, but Malden could outscore them if their competition got first but not second, third, and fourth. With this strategy

in their heads, Malden may have lost the battle but won the war, outscoring Revere 9-7.

Now that the strategy worked, Malden became confident in their abilities for the 100-yard freestyle. When junior Nathan Nguyen started to pull ahead, Malden’s victory was certain. They received first, third, and fourth, again outscoring Revere 11-5. By now Malden had a gigantic lead of 53-42, but only the coaches knew.

The 500-yard freestyle was the longest and quite possibly the hardest race in the meet. Not only does one have to swim fast enough to win, but they have to conserve enough energy to complete 10 laps. When the athletes were off, Revere started to get ahead. Although they couldn’t gain the lead Malden still earned second, third, and fourth place, outscoring Revere yet again 9-7.

Again, Malden’s skill was proven. With the teams set, Malden got on their marks for the 200-yard freestyle relay. Malden battled back and forth with Revere in the beginning. However, at the last second, Malden pulled ahead and grabbed first, third, and an unfortunate sixth place. Malden solidified their lead 72-52.

During the 100-yard backstroke, Nguyen won first place and left everyone in the dust. While Revere stole second and fourth,

Malden got third and fifth. With the second-to-last race approaching and the results looming, Malden trusted their senior captain Tony Giech to get first place. Malden retained the lead 10-6.

With the 100-yard breaststroke underway, Giech started the race against Revere. Giech won, with Malden scoring third and fourth, respectively. With the meet close to its end, Revere tried to make a comeback with the final race, the 400-yard free relay.

Revere knew they had one more chance to catch up, but Malden wasn’t going to let them win so easily. Malden and Revere battled during the first lap, but when Revere started to pull ahead, the outcome was obvious.

After Revere won the last race, the room was buzzing with anticipation as everyone awaited the results. When an official announced the scores, Malden went crazy.

With a victory of 93-75, Malden prepared to go home satisfied. The coaches said they were glad to improve from their last meet, while the captains were extremely happy with their team. “I was crying the entire half of our meets because I am so proud of our team,” Sarah Oliveira, the senior captain said. “They [pushed] very, very, very well. I could not be prouder to be a part of the Malden High School swim team.”

maldenblueandgold.com

# OPINION: THE FUTURE OF CO-ED FIELD HOCKEY

Mack Keating  
Reporter

I have always included athletics in my life, bouncing from sport to sport as I grew up. When I aged into Malden High School, I worried about not having a team to play on, due to recently coming out as trans non-binary. Although, I was over the moon when I found out that co-ed sports were offered.

When I came out in eighth grade, people adjusted well to my name change and the use of new pronouns. I was thankful to have a mostly smooth transition and will forever be grateful to my teachers and peers who helped me throughout my journey and accepted me for who I am. At the start of the ninth grade, I joined Malden High School's co-ed field hockey team. My teammates were wonderful and immediately accepting when I told them I use they/them pronouns. I could not have wished for a better

team.

This feeling came to a screeching halt a few weeks ago when I heard that the team would be gender-segregated in the following years. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) decided that in the coming years, field hockey would no longer have co-ed teams. This decision was due to the fact that some thought it was "unfair to girls" who had been playing for years, were now "being dominated by boys." For Malden, this statistic is not true, and we actually had the opposite happen to us; we had shutout games against all-girls teams, even losing games 10-0. When we played against co-ed teams, though, we found that the games were equally matched. Malden played against Everett three times, and ended up perfectly matched with one win, loss, and tie. Our record against Revere, another co-ed team, was two wins in our favor and one loss. The team played

fifteen games total, six of those being against co-ed teams, and our final record was 7-1-7. We placed perfectly in the middle, and there was no co-ed team that placed above us. Yet somehow our team has been labelled "unfair to play against because we have an advantage."

Throughout my life, I have been pushed into labels of being a girl and other wrong terminology. It is not a great experience to have your identity constantly undermined. I understand why the decision was made to separate into multiple teams, but making this decision, I am once again being forced into labels that do not define me. I would love to continue playing field hockey, but I don't think it is worth lying to myself and others just to play a high school sport.

While MIAA's decision may have good intentions, it has left me feeling ostracized and unwanted. Every step forward seems to be two steps backwards. The decision was

made so girls would have a fair chance, and not have to play against boys. But in doing so, transgender and nonbinary students have lost a division to play in that gives them a fair chance.

If students want to waive one year of gym classes at Malden High School, they have to compete in two varsity or junior varsity sports in one year. If field hockey stops being co-ed, the only options left will be gymnastics and wrestling, both being winter sports. This means that in future years, transgender and non-binary students will not have the same opportunities as other students. I cannot speak for all transgender students, but personally those sports would make me uncomfortable to compete in for a multitude of reasons. Gymnastics and wrestling are not the most trans-friendly sports, both have form-fitting uniforms that would exemplify the body that students feel do not belong to them. Gymnastics is also run by rules designed for girls, and wrestling competes under rules designed for boys, meaning they are still not truly co-ed.

When making the decision, it is as though transgender students are once again forgotten about. The decision is about making a fair game for girls, making sure boys do not injure girls, and creating a safe environment for players. In making this change the safe environment for gender non-conforming students is being taken away. There are already so few safe spaces for transgender youth, and yet the ones we do have are being pulled away.

While MIAA may think they are protecting girls with this decision, it has been a damaging one to many. This was done in hopes of equality, but more evidence points to the contrary. One day, I believe a fair and level playing field can be made for all students and players, but this is not how it will happen.



Download the Saturn  
Scheduling App!



maldenblueandgold.com

Malden High School  
Volume 107 Edition 3