

The Blue and Gold

maldenblueandgold.com

Malden High School
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Sophie LeBlanc, Natalie Keating, and Addison McWayne starring in Mamma Mia. JESSICA LI

Jaslie Fang
Reporter

Jessica Li
Managing Editor

Malden High School’s Play Production closed out January with a bang, leaving audiences dazzled by their rendition of “Mamma Mia.” The show, which ran from January 19th to the 20th, was a resounding success. Advisor and

Director Ariana Messana’s decision to retain the original version of the play proved to be the right choice. With phenomenal vocals, incredible dance numbers, and humorous moments, audiences were captivated from start to finish despite the unforeseen setbacks faced.

On a picture-perfect Greek island, bride-to-be Sophie secretly invites three of her mother’s exes, hoping one is her father to her wed-

ding. As the story unfolds, Sophie navigates love and identity while Donna, her mother, rediscovers herself.

Junior Natalie Keating, who took on the role of Donna, described her character as “complex, flawed, loving, relatable, and well-intentioned,” and provided some insight into the challenges faced before the show. “For the last week, I actually

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LUNAR NEW YEAR



Dancers perform at the Lunar New Year Event. Photo submitted by the Chinese Culture Connection, taken by SQZ_ Image. Article on page 12.

Girls’ Basketball Dominates Lynn English Girls' Basketball Team Finishes the Season Strong on the Way to the State Tournament

Aundrea Orozco-Cifuentes
Reporter

The crowd at the Finn Gym was extremely riled up throughout the Girls’ Basketball game and went out with a win in their last GBL contest. They qualified for the MIAA State Tournament for the 3rd consecutive year, winning 59-50 against the Lynn English Bulldogs on February 8th.

This season was a major improvement for the Tornados considering the history between Lynn English and Malden. Before this season, it was a losing streak for the Tornados against the Bulldogs, but after their first game against those same Bulldogs this season, Malden was able to tally a win on the road.

In the first quarter, the game kicked off with a strong start for Malden. Junior Amanda Fowke and senior Victoria Gammon scored the first baskets of the game. That alone set off the tone for the rest of the quarter. Following that, there was an impressive three-pointer from junior Kimberly Tropnas. Lynn English kept up a commendable defense, but they couldn’t get through Malden’s relentless offensive machine.

There were some moments when the Bulldogs landed some difficult shots in, but Malden kept up good defense throughout the quarter, making sure they did not surpass their points. Tropnas had a very significant presence on defense throughout the entire season and this game was a clear example of

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Angelina Colon dribbling down the court. SHUYI CHEN

Malden High Students and Teachers Weigh in on Advisory

Jessica Li
Managing Editor

With Malden High welcoming the renewal of the Advisory program in the 2023-2024 school year, mixed opinions about its establishment have risen as the first semester comes to an end.

At the start of the year, students were assigned to a specific staff member to whom they would report every Gold day, excluding once every two weeks, on Wednesdays, when students would partake in “Joy” block.

For this Advisory period, teachers are provided with slideshows on social-emotional learning topics to present, while students are expected to participate in designated activities, including responding to writing prompts and playing interactive games with their peers.

“I understand that it was a ton of work, and I’m very thankful for all of the staff that worked on it and made it a reality.”

-- Richard Tivnan

As it progressed, academic advising would also take place several times throughout the year, intentionally adjacent to the release of progress reports and report cards. Educators are to meet one-on-one with students to provide guidance about their grades and help them make early interventions.

When the idea was first brought up in a meeting last year to fulfill accreditation requirements, English teacher Jennifer Clapp, who had observed several advisories at other schools, explained that the policy itself was a proven and valuable opportunity to foster connections between students and their communities.

“The value of it has really not been questioned,” she remarked.

Given its credibility, Malden High has attempted the program in the past. Previously, groups of students were significantly larger, ranging from 20 to 30 per teacher, and meetings were less frequent—factors which Clapp noted had demonstrated a need for clearer direction and structure.

It was hoped that, in this revised format, building a more consistent routine with smaller class sizes would improve the ability of

students to bond with each other and staff.

Ideally, the Advisory committee wanted to introduce it in the spring of last year, “so that kids could actually have a say in who they might be interested in having as an advisor because when you bring it in as a new program, that’s usually a better way to do it,” Clapp anticipated. Since approval of the schedule came late in the year, though, this could not happen.

Still, the committee sought to focus their efforts on student needs. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Clapp observed a decline in sociability: “A lot of people kind of lost or stopped developing those interpersonal skills... and we weren’t treating each other well.” She explained that this trend was consistent with annual YouthTruth surveys, conducted to determine the satisfaction and needs within a school: “Most students felt like the teachers treated them with respect, but most students didn’t feel like the teachers were treated with respect, which was kind of an interesting thing. But also, if you don’t know people, it’s hard to respect them.”

In an effort to tackle the issues

highlighted by the surveys, the committee decided that the primary focus of the program would be community connection building, making good decisions, and working well with other people, as well as establishing a formal process in which all students would be known well by an adult in the building—not just academically, but as people.

Taking inspiration from resources through Wayfinder and observing the national standards for social-emotional learning, the committee worked over the summer to lay out lesson plans that would be ready for the first day of school.

History and law teacher Richard Tivnan praised the efforts of the committee, “I understand that it was

MEET THE BLUE AND GOLD



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Students participate in a recurring procedure during Advisory, in which they sit in an enclosed circle and share their responses to certain questions, tailored to the curriculum. JESSICA LI

a ton of work, and I'm very thankful for all of the staff that worked on it and made it a reality."

Similarly, all interviewees recognized the intentions of the program and acknowledged its significance.

Yet in spite of its high ambitions and thoughtful curriculum, the Advisory block has garnered varying opinions on its effectiveness by both students and staff, most notably on a lack of participation, enforcement, and student choice.

"Advisory has the potential to be a positive addition," sophomore Thomas Conti stated, "However, how it's being run at its current moment just doesn't satisfy the needs of any form of positive youth development." Conti went on to describe that "it feels very loose, very disorganized, and even the teachers who do it seem as though they don't really care that much."

Tivnan, who shared a similar sentiment to Conti, expressed, "I understand the idea behind it." However, he believes the program would be more effective with more natural conversation drivers, as he assesses that "the reason people aren't doing it is because it just seems ... not authentic."

Junior Dante Federico shared similar thoughts. While he understood the intentions of the program were to create a comfortable environment for students to commu-

"A lot of people aren't necessarily comfortable or want to share their feelings and you're kind of forced that upon you as it's a part of the day... you need that higher level of trust and connection that you can't really get with people you may not necessarily want to talk to."

-- Dante Federico

nicate with one another, "a lot of people aren't necessarily comfortable or want to share their feelings and you're kind of forced that upon you as it's a part of the day... you need that higher level of trust and connection that you can't really get with people you may not necessarily want to talk to."

Senior Felipe Sathler corroborated what the others stated, "it's very awkward and most people don't want to get up and usually when we're going around in a circle, a lot of people—a good five to seven kids—pass every time."

Despite the initial objective of fostering meaningful relationships between students, several expressed that they felt more connected in the previous system. Junior Beverly Tong spoke on this, explaining, "it was just a lot more fun and I feel like I did really get to do what I actually wanted and I got to hang out with the people that I like, which im-



Students answer reflection prompts posted on their classroom board during Advisory. JESSICA LI

proved my attitude and my mood the rest of the day. And now that we got rid of it, things are more dull... we don't really talk; it's completely silent in that class."

"Students are supposed to have someone that they are able to go to, yet they aren't able to choose that teacher, which I think doesn't sit right with me... and sometimes it would be a lot more beneficial, especially with the changes to Enrichment, just to have a period of time where students can work on themselves, whether it be work or whether it be other more social aspects," Conti continued.

Explaining what he thought would be a more viable and successful solution, Conti described, "I think letting students pick their teachers is one that is incredibly important... I think the teacher would know the students the best and know what they enjoy doing or what they can do to better themselves instead of relying on a basic slide deck, which doesn't truly explore any individual ideas."

It also appears to be a common agreement that not only are some students' Advisory classes uncomfortable, but that they prefer having time to work on their assignments and select specific Enrichment and Joy sessions, an option they were given last year. Tong continued, "I can't really focus as much because I haven't gotten time to just rest. Joy and Enrichment—it was not only a time to rest, but... when we had things for JVs we would practice; I would practice band, I would practice my hobbies, I would draw, I [would] do a lot of things."

"I think if Advisory was just a free study, it'd be better," Sathler remarked.

Federico shared similar thoughts, "I think a restructuring would be good, where kids can go to a teacher if they need help from that teacher, and there's more flexibility and you're not locked into talking about your feelings. It's kind of hard when it's 10 in the morning; not a lot of people want to talk."

In response to these opinions, Principal Christopher Mastrangelo

described, "We actually had a conversation about this during my advisory today, and some of the kids said the same thing. I think both schedules bring with it limitations and positives. I think it's up to us to now kind of listen, to look at both and create maybe a third version that meets both sides."

Regarding the lack of uniformity among Advisory classes, Conti also commented that he thinks the unequal enforcement "creates distress among students. I also think that it is unfair. You'll see certain students have this extra period to do work or have really meaningful conversations with their friends, and then you'll have these other teachers who are more strict and you won't have that opportunity," he continued, highlighting a lack of meaningful interactions between students across different Advisories.

"As far as teachers not doing it, I think a lack of consistency is not great. If we're going to do it, we [all] might as well do it," Tivnan maintained.

"Everybody needs to be on board and do it the same way. That's a professional responsibility."

-- Christopher Mastrangelo

"Everybody needs to be on board and do it the same way. That's a professional responsibility," Mastrangelo stated.

For science teacher Julie Grillon, Advisory had been moving relatively smoothly, and she enjoyed regularly meeting and staying with one group of students for the duration of the year.

Grillon, who described that she knows several students and teachers who have described a varying degree of participation, still believes that in comparison to last year, "there's a little more accountability. Especially [with] having Joy every other day, kids really didn't go to that and they really didn't go to Enrichment." She explained that she was sure there are also students in the hallways during Advisory, "but it doesn't seem to be as many kids walking by my door as they did during Enrichment."

It seems that the amount of students in the hallway varies between houses and floors. In stark contrast to Grillon's observations, Tivnan reported that this year, "the halls seem worse to me... it's this constant flow of people going by here."

Federico mirrored these thoughts. "This year is pretty bad because you have kids not wanting to participate... I mean, a lot of this [is because] we're understaffed... and [staff members] have their own advisories," he noted. "Last year we probably had way more teachers patrolling the hallways. I walk in Boyle [on the] second [and] third floor and it's chaotic."

His class being on the third floor of Boyle, Tivnan criticized the lack of enforcement: "I just think it's too lenient. There's no real consequence. If you didn't go to Advisory and Joy and you knew that you would have an hour detention after school every time you skipped it, and you're going to lose credit, maybe they would come. But most kids, they're not getting those consequences."

Despite their differing opinions on its success, Tivnan and Grillon both agreed that "it's nice to get to meet other kids that [they] wouldn't necessarily have or don't have in class," as Grillon stated.

Both teachers also spoke positively about meeting with students

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Freshman Weiqi Du writing his response. JESSICA LI

A New Superintendent: *What Do We Want?*

On Jan. 8, at the first School Board meeting of the year, the City of Malden announced that they would not be renewing the contract of Superintendent Dr. Ligia Noriega-Murphy come its expiration on June 30. The School Committee came to this decision in a privately held meeting. All committee members declined to comment on this decision.

In the announcement on the City of Malden news site, Mayor Gary Christenson praised Superintendent Noriega-Murphy for her “contributions to education in Malden, and the professional approach she has brought to the role,” and acknowledged that being a superintendent for such a large district is “best described as demanding.”

Since Noriega-Murphy’s start in July of 2021 Noriega-Murphy oversaw the transition from online learning back to in-person learning after the COVID-19 pandemic and an increase in student population of nearly 10% from 5,770 to 6,313 students. Unwavered by these potential pitfalls, Noriega-Murphy made significant strides toward improving the central administration and school system as a whole.

However, with the prospect of a search for a new superintendent now looming, the question arises: what are we looking for?

Although hiring the right superintendent for the job is a long and arduous process that can not easily be “solved” with a quick checklist, there are a few main qualities the School Committee and others involved in the hiring process should consider. For the student body, teachers, and families of Malden the traits we hope to see in any new superintendent are involvement, communication, and open-mindedness.

Firstly, involvement. This means attending events, visiting schools, giving speeches, and otherwise just being visible to the community. Doing so provides opportunities for the superintendent to meet with and get to know the people affected by their decisions (and vice-versa). These interactions are what allow a superintendent to understand their community and make the best possible decisions for them.

When talking about these interactions, it is also important to mention trust. A friendly conversation can do a lot to ease tensions and worries; it reminds everyone that we’re all human. This is a large reason why Mayor Gary Christenson has been so successful. His friendly and chipper attitude never fails to make you feel welcomed and understood. In addition, he frequently attends events, can be spotted walking around Malden, and is always available to chat. A new superintendent could learn a lot from our mayor.

Secondly, the Malden Education Association cited a lack of communication between teachers and central administration as a major

issue and significant reason for their vote of no confidence against the superintendent in 2022. In the future, teachers, families, and students should be well-informed of all major happenings in the school system. This could start with weekly emails, robocalls, or other more frequent announcements.

The people affected by decisions made by a superintendent deserve to understand the school system’s decisions. Potential candidates should express detailed plans to keep the community updated with accurate and timely information. In addition, given the City of Malden’s diverse nature, the superintendent should translate their materials into several of the community’s most spoken languages.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the new superintendent should not only consider but frequently seek the views, opinions, and advice of students, teachers, and families. Including the community in these decisions will ensure that the needs and desires of all are best met. However, these opinions and ideas may be different from or even oppose the superintendent’s plans, but a good superintendent sees and learns from all perspectives to do what is best for the community. For this reason, open-mindedness and the ability to see problems from multiple perspectives should be a key quality the search committee looks for when making their decision.

In an online announcement, the City of Malden said that the search process will include “the assistance of outside support.” However, it should be made more clear about what exactly this entails. A board of volunteers has already been established to help oversee the hiring process.

During the last superintendent search, students participated in Zoom calls with candidates and provided feedback and opinions. Hopefully, this opportunity will be available again in this upcoming search.

Finally, here are some questions the committee should consider regarding the qualities mentioned above:

- How do you plan to involve students, teachers, and families in the decision-making process?
- How do you plan to communicate to students, teachers, and families?
- How do you react when faced with opposing opinions?

Nathan Dean

Editor-in-Chief of Print and Design

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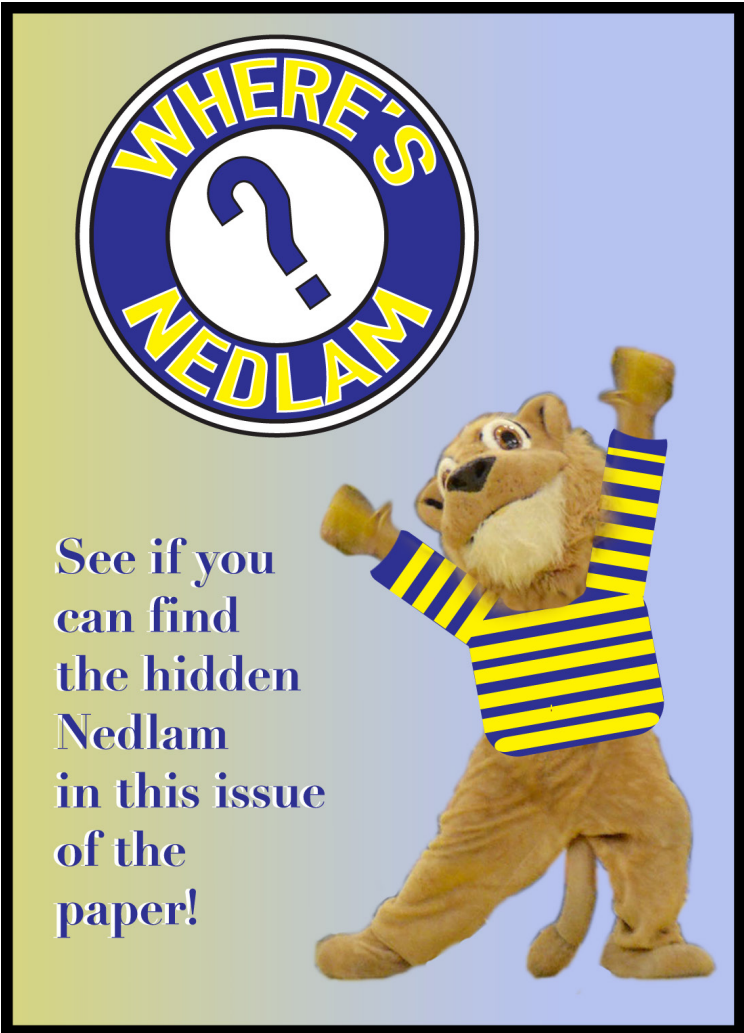
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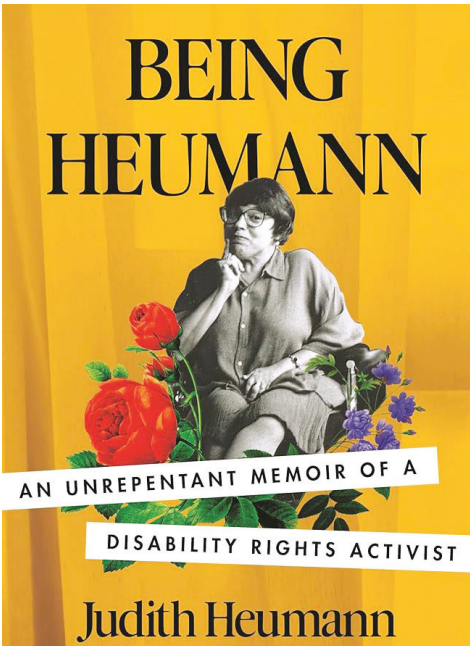
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The Blue and Gold
c/o Malden High School
77 Salem Street
Malden, MA 02148

The Malden Reads Book of the Year

Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist



Mack Keating
Head Copy Editor

Every year, Malden Reads decides on a new Book of the Year in mid-January. This year, on January 16th, 2024's book of the year was announced: *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist* by co-authors Judith Heumann and Kristen Joiner.

The book depicts Heumann's life as a disabled woman in America and as an activist for women and disabled Americans. "From fighting to attend grade school after being described as a 'fire hazard' to later winning a lawsuit against the New York City school system for denying her a teacher's license because of her paralysis, Judy's actions set a precedent that fundamentally improved rights for disabled people," Heumann's official website describes.

Part of the reason this book was selected was the timing. Jodie Zalk — co-facilitator and coordinator of Malden Reads, as well as co-founder — was on the committee that chose *Being Heumann* this year, and one aspect that made her lean more towards this book was the fact that Heumann passed away last March. "It felt like a tribute to her," Zalk professed.

"We have been hearing about the work of the Malden Disability Commission, so we started looking into the theme of focusing on disability awareness," she continued. Her initial reaction to the book was, "Wow, this is so powerful," and the committee all "felt really strongly

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Book of the Year Debuts

Malden Reads Turns a Page on New Year With Season 14 Kickoff Event

Daniel O'Toole
Editor-in-Chief

Walking into the cozy Malden Public Library on the night of January 25th, Malden Reads celebrated the kickoff of their 14th season and the reveal of their book of the year, *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist* by Judith Heumann and Kristen Joiner.

The night opened down the hall in the meeting room where complimentary food and drinks were served to those in attendance, which included many recognizable faces such as Superintendent Ligia Noriega-Murphy, former City Councillor Neal Anderson, and Mayor Gary Christenson.

During the first hour of the event from 6 pm to 7 pm, attendees were able to tour around tables in the main room of the library that featured different organizations and authors from Malden, many of which pertain to disability activism or call upon different issues in Malden and the Greater Boston area. In the background amongst all the conversations sat local musical artist Chris Ver Voort who provided some entertainment for the night.

As the night progressed, attendees were guided back into the meeting room to hear from a collection of panelists that was composed of Malden High's Transition Coordinator, Kelli Collomb, 2004 Malden High graduate and disabled athlete James Norris, and dancer Laura Sanchez.

"Why haven't I heard about this before? Why isn't this being recorded in history for how important they are to all of us?" voiced Collomb as she talked about the questions that many students and peers have asked her after reading Heumann's memoir. Collomb makes a fantastic point in bringing these questions to light as we are constantly taught about the work and effort that many



Left to right: Karen Lynch and Karen Phillips talking to attendees representing the Massachusetts Senior Action Council. NATHAN DEAN

activists contributed to this country, but when it comes to disability activism and activists, the makers of these textbooks and curricula conveniently leave them out.

Collomb then talked about the unethical and horrifying history surrounding Eugenics in the U.S. and how it related to her own personal experiences while growing up in pursuing her education. "[The school] wanted to send me out because I had a disability. They didn't want me because I was 'broken,'" said Collomb. While Collomb still was able to attend school, it didn't come with extreme setbacks and discrimination from her peers.

This, however, led her to discover Judith Heumann's story and how she and many others fought for their rights. "That's the type of activism we need in this world. That's the type of activism that will create change," spoke Collomb about her appreciation for Heumann.

At the end of her segment, Collomb left the audience with a note that can apply to not only disability activism but all other injustices around people and in the world. "We can all notice what is going on around us, but it's how we act and respond that shows to everyone how we can make a change."

As Collomb was applauded for her inspiring words, the microphone was passed along to James Norris. A Malden resident for all of his life, Norris grew up in a transitioning world that was opening up to disabled people more, but many issues still persist such as accessibility in places such as Malden Center which forced him to take a longer trip over to Oak Grove in order to board the Orange Line. Over the pandemic, Norris was inspired by his fitness trainer to start the Instagram account @handi_capable_fitness, which Norris would use to track his fitness recovery. Since then, the page has become a platform for other disabled athletes to be featured on and share their workouts with others.

Norris has also utilized his platform to raise awareness at Boston Children's Hospital, the same hospital he was originally treated at while growing up, as he helps support a 5k walk for children with disabilities. "They paved the way for me, so now it's my turn to take the torch and educate the future for a better tomorrow. The fight for equality and representation is not over," said Norris when talking about his appreciation for activists like

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Left to right: Desi Forte and Sam Gomez supporting Teach Disability History. NATHAN DEAN

The American Repertory Theater

Gabriela Parini Cordova
Lead Reporter

The American Repertory Theater (ART) has given Malden High School students the chance to enjoy some of their new plays and musicals as well as create new experiences for the next five months with their new program.

Jennifer Clapp, an English teacher at Malden High School, is hosting the program with Jean Jones, a math teacher. Clapp explained that "this program is brand new this year. It was something that the ART just started doing; it's the first year it existed."

"It was actually a grant that Leanne DeRosa and Gerard Tannetta applied for last year; and then when Derosa left this year, Tannetta asked if I would take on the organizing side of it because I used to be a theater teacher and I kind of know how everything works in the district. Even though it would usually be a drama teacher doing it, we decided with Ariana Messina being brand new this year that we would give her a break on that stuff," said Clapp.

They are both excited to begin the program as "it's just an amazing opportunity to get to go see really high quality, really expensive theater for nothing," Clapp said.

"To get the VIP treatment with the before and after workshops, and the bus, and dinner, and the workshop at the theater, and you get to see these shows that are pretty expensive to go to at night...it's a really great opportunity to get to see something that I'm excited about for me personally, not just for the students but I think it's awesome," explained Clapp.

Clapp and Jones both share a love for theater despite the differences between their respective subjects they teach. "I love theater! Even though I'm a math teacher, at my previous job I was an English language arts theater teacher and, historically, I've always enjoyed theater. So, for me the chance to see it for free is really cool," described Jones.

Clapp also explained her theater journey as she "was a drama teacher for ten years. I created Play Production [at Malden High School]; it's always been a big part of my life at Malden High School so even if I can't do it full time, being able to support it and make sure that kids were getting lots of opportunities. That's really important to me."

Students were informed of this program through their English

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Culture of MHS Staff

School Policies and Their Effects on Student and Staff Relationships

Delina Yohannes
Lead Reporter

When it comes to relationships between students and teachers, there seems to be some sort of built-in stigma set in place causing a lack of communication and respect between the two.

Disagreements upon school policies, miscommunication, and the lack of consideration for each other are commonly presented factors for this stigma. However, the surface barely needs to be scratched to realize that the tension between the two is rather systematic than casual, and fueled by strict bathroom policies, a crackdown on hallway wandering, and direct studies.

At the start of the 2023-2024 school year, after closely observing the behaviors in the bathroom as well as hallways, staff and administration came to an agreement to close all bathrooms in the school with the exception of the Boyle House bathrooms.

It has now been about three months since this was implemented and although there has been lots of feedback and controversy about it, primarily from students, it would be a lie to say that it has not brought any change. "I thought it was quite a harsh reaction at first, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't work...we have a very social bathroom scene here but there's definitely been an improvement due to the limited bathrooms," said Mitch Gaynor, a student support officer here at Malden High.

While on the topic of social bathrooms, since there is limited access to bathrooms, close monitoring of who enters and exits the bathroom during times when bathroom use is relatively high was another action made by the administration.

Art teacher Melissa Sullivan is currently one of the bathroom monitors during period seven. "...I don't see the other periods, but from hearing others talk it seems like the first and last periods are the busiest times in the bathrooms," she said. While teaching almost every period, Sullivan emphasized, "In my personal classes I do see that there are less students out for longer periods of time."

Not only are bathroom monitors driving rifts between students and staff, the changing hallway culture, and teachers' attempts to control it are causing issues for some students, too.

For select students, having the freedom to wander the hallways helps them maintain a sense of peace. As put by freshman Imane Agoumad: "Sometimes just taking a lap around to really just clear my thoughts helps so much with re-focusing and carrying on with my day."

A big part of Gaynor's daily work is to observe students' be-



Melissa Sullivan monitoring outside of the bathrooms. DELINA YOHANNES

haviors in the hallway. "Since the bathrooms have shut down, the culture of the hallways did change as students didn't have as many excuses to be out and about." Gaynor further explained how the less crowded hallways during class allowed students to open up to him as to why they were not where they were supposed to be.

"It gives me an opportunity to connect more and figure out why exactly students are skipping class, like if it were stuff at home, issues with a class, an absent teacher, etc," Gaynor said.

Oftentimes students who are seen out of class while classes are in session are simply told to return to where they need to be without any further questioning as to why they really are not in class. Gaynor, as well as other staff members, emphasize how the hallways being less crowded allowed for connections to be made with students where some students truthfully expressed their absence in class along with alternate factors behind that absence.

Aside from personal or academic concerns being a reason behind students wandering the halls, the simple fact that a majority of students at Malden High have either had one or currently have a direct study on their schedule is another big factor. Directed studies are essentially a free period and are the result of the number of classes offered at Malden High not being enough compared to the student enrollment.

"There's been lots of new families join the Malden community from other countries as well as lots of students that are coming back from charter schools, private schools, etc. which has increased our student body by a lot...as for teachers, when you compare Malden High School to other schools, I feel as if we've always had room for more [teachers]," said Principal Christopher Mastrangelo.

It is obvious that, if possible, directed studies would be removed to ensure students are having class every period and gaining as many required credits as possible in a school year. Brenda Darisse, a soph-

omore at Malden High, described her experience with direct studies as, "unnecessary and not useful because you're not doing anything." She continued, "If I had another one I would definitely switch out of it as I think it's not good to have unless you're maybe a senior who almost has all your credits."

"If teenagers are given 80 minutes of class time with their friends, completing work isn't something that they'll prioritize...or when kids have absent teachers for long periods of time and end up not feeling like they have a real class for however long their teacher is out for... it's just not fair for them," emphasized Gaynor, who continued to highlight how a great deal of the factors behind what's getting in between students and their teacher is beyond either of their control.

Although hiring new teachers to fill in those direct studies is also beyond the school's control as there are factors such as a city-wide budget that must limit this possibility, if possible, staff members are more than ready to propose their ideas.

"I would love to expand our language offerings, I'd love to add Portuguese, Mandarin, Arabic, etc," said Mastrangelo. Gaynor also added how to possibly incorporate, "a school store, or students hosting joys for activities or concepts that they're passionate about. I think that'd be an awesome way of engaging students as well as building that sense of community in this school, mostly between students and staff."

Regardless of all the possibilities and reforms that could be made to this school if it was obtainable, one thing that is in our control is protecting the relationship between students and staff no matter what policies or changes come about. When asked about the relationship between students and teachers, Mastrangelo describes it as, "a work in progress...the pandemic definitely played a big role in the divide between us and it's something that we're slowly but surely working on. So far, however, I'd say that we're starting to really like each other again."

Malden's 84th Annual JV's Preview

Hadjar Yousfi
Editor-in-Chief

A Look into the Preparation of the Class of 2025's Plans

This year, the junior class will be hosting the 84th Junior Varieties (JVs). With lots of excitement, the student council—with the support of class advisors Courtney Braz and Robert Grinnell—has begun to plan for JVs.

With the aim of hosting their largest fundraiser of the year on March 15th and 16th, the class already hosted auditions in mid-December. Now, with a nearly finalized lineup, they have officially announced their theme to be "Late Night with Barbie."

When deciding on this theme, the council was stuck on two main

ideas. Saniah Charles, Vice President for the Class of 2025, explained that they "had wanted to do 'Barbie' and some had wanted to do 'late night,' so we had a vote and everything and it was still a tie—until our wonderful advisor Ms. Braz had the idea to mix the two to then be late night with Barbie."

Braz explained that they "were going back and forth with the decision." However, after giving it much thought, she proposed the idea of, "What if it was a late-night show that was hosted by Barbie?"

Grinnell explained that Barbie was a great idea as it is incredibly popular right now, as well as the fact that it "has a great storyline behind it."

JV Coordinator for the class of 2025, Bertha Jean Louis, thought the idea was very creative and fit the theme as JVs is hosted in the evening, giving it the perfect setting.

Now with a cast figured out, they have begun to prepare for JVs. Louis explained, "We are working with our crew members and cast and figuring out the scripts."

Charles added to this, emphasizing that now that they have all of their acts, they want to "get a headstart on our script. We're also just constantly pushing out ideas to promote and make this year's show look really amazing!"



Social Media Coordinator Jessica Li, Secretary Sarah Pham, Treasurer Kevin Lin, Vice President Saniah Charles, President Christina Anasthal, JV Coordinator Jennifer Slawson, Volunteer Coordinator Julianna Lin, Social Media Coordinator Jaslie Fang, and JV Coordinator Bertha Jean Louis. JESSICA LI

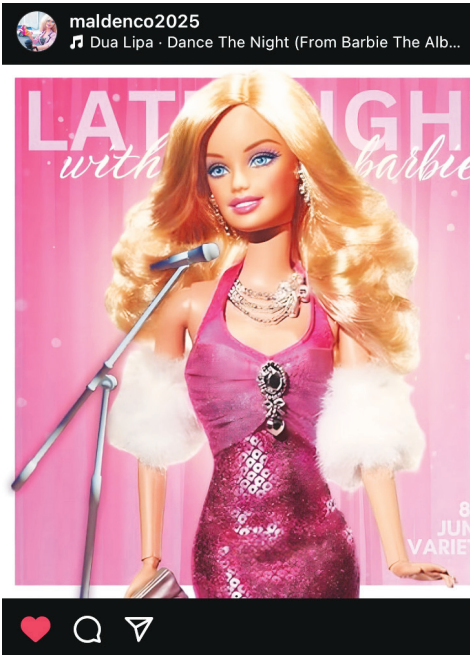
March may still be far in the future, but they have been working hard to prepare for a great show. At this point in their preparation they are working on their script, figuring out sponsors, and working out the kinks of the individual performances to make them fit their theme.

In fact, they already have a great assortment of cast members, including five Barbies and two Kens who will act as hosts for the show. Braz explained that they have a variety of different acts including singing, dancing, piano, the Step Team, the Afro Caribbean Dance Team, a rap group, and so much more to look forward to.

Grinnell explained that the process has been quite smooth so

far. "We have a lot of people who have a lot of experience in last years' JVs, both when it comes to the acts and also on the crew ends of things," he said. This allowed them to get things started right away instead of spending a lot of time figuring out what they needed to do.

Ultimately, the council is excited and ready to host a great JVs this upcoming March. "I love my council, and doing a big event like this will be a huge help for prom and other senior year activities," Secretary Sarah Pham said. "Once we start practicing and organizing in the auditorium, it'll be nice to see all of our hard work visible and together."



Malden High Students and Teachers Weigh in on Advisory

Continued from page 3

one-on-one during academic advising, as Tivnan thought it was beneficial to prepare and guide students. Grillon also applied what she learned during academic advising—about why kids have been struggling in certain classes and what goes on in the rest of the building—back to her classroom, implementing her own support policies and recommendations based on what her Advisory students shared with her.

"I think looking forward to next year, getting some student input and feedback would be great," Grillon suggested. She noted that as the year went on, it seemed that students had been getting more and more stressed with their grades, causing less participation compared to the start of the year.

"A lot of times they're working... just making it meaningful to them would probably help with participation," corroborating with what Conti had stated earlier.

When asked what he thought could be improved, Tivnan suggested reducing the program's frequency. "Having 90 minutes every other day essentially, for a lot of kids to have an excuse to not go to class and have them roam the halls, it's not good."

Spanish teacher Diane Brookes

also commented, "it is beneficial, it is effective," but, similar to Tivnan, she pointed out that the program's frequency can cause it to lose its appeal and effectiveness.

Tivnan proposed having students come in once a week for half an hour after Morning Meeting to check in and have a circle focused on just one question.

In terms of improvement, Tong suggested involving more student choice, corroborating on the statements of the other students: "Maybe bring the old system back to saying why make it into something better and something where we can actually choose some—more student choice... but I do understand and recognize that the last system was very disorganized."

In response to the varying judgments received by the program, Mastrangelo reflected, "I think it's new and it's different. And of course, there's going to be some things that are less than ideal and less than perfect. But I think that the overall philosophy and message is going really well. It's new, so we're still trying... We're currently looking at what we can improve, what we could change, what we could add, what we can eliminate to make it better."

The new curriculum is in the

planning stages for the 2024-2025 school year in hopes of building on the skills already developed this year.

Though "it's too early to say," Mastrangelo described that the advisory committee is considering modifying the length of Advisory, as well as its frequency. "We're looking at all aspects. We're looking at the survey results from the kids, and we're listening to see if we can kind of frame and set up for next year to make it even better."

Regarding future goals, the committee aspires to introduce a service component that would incorporate long-term projects; Advisory groups would be able to decide on something they would like to pursue, including taking a field

trip, creating a fundraiser, or fulfilling some other service project. The committee also looks to implement college and career planning lessons for upperclassmen.

"We are serving the students multiple times during the year to get your feedback so that we can make adjustments," Clapp shared. At the end of each quarter, a survey will be distributed to gauge opinions on Advisory.

"The team looks at it—the advisory team—to get the feeling. I was reading through some of the reactions already today, and then we tried to compile what consensus is, and what some of the suggestions are, and we try to figure if there's a way that we can adjust," Mastrangelo explained.





Continued from the front page

had laryngitis, so I could not even talk--let alone speak--and I did not get my voice back until opening night." Keating explained that in order to regain her voice, she drank about 20 cups of water a day, refilling her water bottle and drinking several cups of tea with honey daily. "I even bought a humidifier and used it every night when I [went to] sleep," she stated.

Senior James Song, playing the role of Sophie's fiancé, Sky, mentioned another obstacle the crew was confronted with: "We could only start building the set in early January."

In spite of these setbacks, Advisor and Director Messana remained confident in the cast and crew, believing they would successfully bring everything together—a faith that would prove to be true. Senior Emma Spignese-Smolinsky, who played Sophie, Donna's care-free daughter, highlighted a sense of community among the cast by emphasizing, "I mention this in every interview, but genuinely, the community is the driving force. Our love for each other is what made this show possible."

This strong chemistry was seen throughout the entire production. Senior Brian Vences embodies the character of Sam Carmichael who is Donna's divorced ex who later becomes her husband by the end of the production. "Natalie and I are really good friends. We've been waiting to have a duet together that we can sing, so that was definitely fun," Vences shared, highlighting the chemistry that fueled their performance of "SOS", his favorite song in the show.

Moreover, Song added on by mentioning a close relationship with his guys. This remark referred to the dynamic between Sky's friends, Pepper (sophomore Kail Boswell) and Eddie (senior and The Blue and Gold Lead Reporter, Zachary Nedell), contributing to the overall sense of connection and collaboration among the cast.

However, this collaboration and chemistry extended backstage with the crew, an often overlooked group deserving of more recognition than they typically receive. Lovely Anne Gerochi, the Costumes Lead, and a member of the Marketing Team, expressed her pride in everyone involved, stating, "I'm really proud of everyone in the cast and crew because we all worked really hard to put on such a good show two days in a row, especially with a bunch of complications and worries on our mind ... Techies running around and being kind of understaffed in a sense. But we pulled through and succeeded."

In addition to the outstanding performances, the cast fondly reminisce over amusing and unforgettable rehearsal moments. Vences recalled a time when he and other cast members walked out at the wrong moment, finding themselves in the middle of the stage. The realization struck simultaneously, prompting a quick and comical retreat backstage. On a different note, Keating shared a humorous incident where she and music director as well as sound engineer Todd Cole coincidentally opened a door at the same time, approaching from opposite sides. This led to Cole playfully screaming in Keating's face for "30 seconds, way longer than he needed to just because he thought it would be funny."

Building on the chemistry forged during rehearsals, the cast and crew were asked about their favorite songs and costumes. Keating singled out Donna's "Super Trouper" outfit as her favorite costume in the entire show, unlike Gerochi who said her favorite outfit had to be Donna's classic overalls which she described as "timeless."

Keating revealed that "The Winner Takes It All" held a special place as her favorite song—a melody she had been singing since the age of ten. Spignese-Smolinsky, on the other hand, pointed to "Thank You For The Music" as her favorite song, a performance in which she collaborated with Vences, Heitor

Soares (portraying Harry Bright, one of Donna's exes), and Liam Gallagher (playing Bill Anderson, another of Donna's exes). Adding to these responses, Song shared that his favorite number was "Lay All Your Love On Me," expressing, "it's fun having the boys behind me just acting funny."

So, what should the audience take away from this production of Mamma Mia? Messana noted, "I hope the audience takes away the message of never giving up. Despite numerous obstacles that could have halted our show, the fact that everyone collaborated to make it happen demonstrates that anything is possible."

Adding a personal note to the audience, Vences shared, "This applies to whatever you aspire to do. If something looks enjoyable and you're curious to try it, go for

it. The worst that could happen is you might not enjoy it, and you can choose not to pursue it further. For instance, I used to dislike theater, thinking it was stupid. However, a good friend suggested I could be a good actor, leading me to join Play-Pro, and now it has become one of my favorite things."

"Mamma Mia" might be over, but the memories from Malden's incredible production will remain like a catchy ABBA tune. To the graduating seniors, the curtain may have closed on this chapter, but the melody of their dedication and passion will linger. Following these intense months, both the cast and crew deserve a well-earned and much-needed rest.

To keep up with Malden's Play Production, their Instagram can be found at @mhsplaypro.



Tanya, Donna, and Rosie make an entrance at the courtyard in Act 1, Scene 6 as the crowd awaits their performance to "Super Trouper". JESSICA LI

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SUMMER VIBES IN COLD WINTER, MAMMA MIA BROUGHT TO THE MALDONIAN MASSES



From top to bottom, left to right: Sophie (played by senior Emma Spignese-Smolinsky) reads Donna’s diary aloud to her friends, Ali (junior Kimberlee Smith) and Lisa (junior Ashlyn Cullity) in Act 1, Scene 1 at the beach, joyful as she learns about the time her mother spent with Sam Carmichael, Bill Anderson, and Harry Bright, any of which could be her father; Donna (played by junior Natalie Keating) and Sam (played by senior Brian Vences) in the courtyard in Act 2, Scene 2, as Sam sings “S.O.S” to her, reminiscing their past love; Bill Anderson (played by sophomore Liam Gallagher) and Harry Bright (played by junior Heitor Soares), strum the guitar; Sam sings about his feelings for Donna; Donna in the courtyard in Act 1, Scene 2, singing “Money, Money, Money,” a song which reflects her monetary struggle and desire for financial freedom in the play; Donna surrounded by her friends, Tanya Chesham-Leigh (played by junior Sophie LeBlanc) and Rosie Mulligan (played by junior Addison McWayne), who attempt to comfort her after her encounter with the three ex-boyfriends; Tanya and Pepper (played by sophomore Kail Boswell) conclude their dancing with a pose; Sophie’s soon-to-be husband, Sky Rymand (played by senior James Song), is carried away by his friends for his bachelor party; In Donna’s room, Harry and Donna reminisce over old photos and items shared in their previous relationship. JESSICA LI

Nominations and Basic Information: MHSAA 6th Hall of Fame Banquet



Ryan Coggsell
Editor-In-Chief of Web and Mobile

Later this year, the Malden High School Alumni Association (MHSAA) is hosting its sixth Hall of Fame Banquet to honor notable alumni. The event was last held in 2022 after a four-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the five previous banquets, the Hall of Fame class has grown to 37 members. Some notable names include former Van Halen frontman Gary Cherone, former Governor John A. Volpe, and former Mayor Richard C. Howard.

The banquet will be held on Friday, May 3rd, 2024 at Anthony’s of Malden. The time has not yet been determined, but it will be released in the April issue.

Nominations for the Hall of Fame are open right now, both inside Malden High School’s main office and on the MHSAA website. These forms are due by February 28th, so there is only about a month left to nominate candidates!

All nomination forms should be sent to:

MHSAA, Inc.
PO Box 47
Malden, MA 02148

This exciting event is a great reunion for many Malden High School alumni and a great chance for younger students to meet those who walked the halls before them.

While not much information has been announced yet, our April edition will include more details. This will include pricing, where to buy tickets, and most importantly the new inductees.

If you have any questions, you can find the association on multiple platforms, listed below:

Facebook: Malden High Alumni

X: @maldenhighalum
Email: maldenhighalumni@yahoo.com

Phone: (781) - 397 - 6051

The A.R.T.

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teachers and could sign up through a Google Form linked in the classroom. Those who were accepted would have their first meeting together on November 15th in the form of a joy block. These first few joy blocks consisted of watching the 2002 film "Real Women Have Curves," which would be the first musical the ART program would be showing to the students.

After the students finished the movie, Leah Harris and Vahdat Yaganeh, the two ART program advisors, came to Malden High School to do some workshops with the students on November 29th.

Harris is the artistic associate and community at ART, and Yaganeh there is the learning lead Theater. Harris describes her love for this program because "it was the first program that kind of gave me a job after I graduated college which was important and it was the program that really started my career so it means a lot to me and I think the opportunity to bridge my career and the humanities is really important especially at a time like this so that mix feels really necessary right now."

Yaganeh added that he "personally also loves the opportunity of bringing theater to a community and making it accessible for more students." He also mentioned that "this is the first time I'm working with this program with Leah so one I am very curious to learn more about that but also I love theater, it's my passion, and finding different ways to use theater to apply in our real lives it's something that is very meaningful to me with this program."

Clapp also explained her theater journey as she "was a drama teacher for ten years. I created Play Production [at Malden High School]; it's always been a big part of my life at Malden High School so even if I can't do it full time, being able to support it and make sure that kids were getting lots of opportunities. That's really important to me."

Students were informed of this program through their English teachers and could sign up through a Google Form linked in the classroom. Those who were accepted would have their first meeting together on November 15th in the form of a joy block. These first few joy blocks consisted of watching the 2002 film "Real Women Have Curves," which would be the first musical the ART program would be showing to the students.

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Harris is the artistic associate and community at ART, and

Heumann who fought for disabled people like himself. If you wish to learn more about HandiCapable Fitness, the link to the organization's website can be found here.

While she may not be disabled herself, the next speaker, Laura Sanchez, has still fought and endured the hardships of ableism. Sanchez has supported her daughter after there was an accident at her birth, but in an effort to utilize her experiences to better the world, she has started to offer support to others in Malden. "I started to use my own trauma and pain to help others process their own feelings and experiences so they don't have to endure all the pain I had to alone."

"I am now ready to fight for the rights of my daughter and for all others who are battling disabilities so I can create a better future for her and for others," concluded Sanchez.

After all the other speakers had gone, the floor was opened up to award-winning musician Santon. Coming over from St. Petersburg, Russia in 1991, Santon graduated from Berklee School of Music and has released two albums despite being completely blind from birth.

Many Key Club members were present at the event as Club President Nicholas Duggan wanted to share this experience with the community. "This event is so important because it brings the community together towards reading such impactful stories like Heumann's and being able to volunteer helps spread the word and enriches the lives of so many people in Malden," said Duggan.

Duggan's favorite part about the entire event was the opportunity to help different parts of the community mingle and share stories with each other. "I think everyone has a different perspective that they're giving, like the Friends of The Malden River who educates people about the environment," noted Duggan. He continued, "I feel like each group in each little facet of the community has their own thing to bring, so I feel like having so many of them in the community just makes it even stronger."

Senior Jelani Tah echoed similar sentiments to Duggan but added in his appreciation for volunteering at the library as he frequently visited throughout his childhood. "The

library is a great place and it really offers not only a place where you can escape but also a place where you can find a community, and the library has helped out the city in so many ways that when I heard about the opportunity, I knew I would help out," said Tah.

Tah's biggest takeaway from the event was being able to learn about an issue that doesn't always get the attention it deserves. "Learning about how different people are impacted by disabilities is really important and I've been seeing over the years how the dialogue has improved. I think that's really important as someone who's proud of various speaking activities and clubs, I see the points of dialogue and creating meaningful change," concluded Tah.

"Being able to witness Santon's beautiful performance was something I won't forget for a while. For him to perform the way he does with his condition is amazing," said junior Marc Naceus.

Naceus left with a message of how people should realize that even though some people may suffer

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MHS Class of 2004 Alumnus James Norris talks about his Handicapable Fitness program for disabled athletes. DANIEL O'TOOLE

Yaganeh there is the learning lead Theater. Harris describes her love for this program because "it was the first program that kind of gave me a job after I graduated college which was important and it was the program that really started my career so it means a lot to me and I think the opportunity to bridge my career and the humanities is really important especially at a time like this so that mix feels really necessary right now."

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"this is the first time I'm working with this program with Leah so one I am very curious to learn more about that but also I love theater, it's my passion, and finding different ways to use theater to apply in our real lives it's something that is very meaningful to me with this program."

Harris and Yaganeh introduced deeper ideas and activities in order to help students understand the musical "Real Women Have Curves" and the story of Ana Garcia. They got to experience some of her thoughts, feelings, and emotions that will be portrayed in the musical as well as getting to connect with her

story. Junior Derek Lam, one of the students who participated in these activities stated that "they helped me see deeper into myself because they made me realize how hard it is to become someone you are."

Many students agreed with the sentiments expressed by Lam. "The activities helped me come out of my comfort zone since everyone was doing them, it made me not feel alone," Lam added.

"I personally prefer individual work, but during the activities, I was able to talk to people I don't normally talk to and connect with them," said Junior Neyonca Honore. She was also able to see deeper into



Musician Chris Ver Voort performs for event attendees. NATHAN DEAN

Continued from page 10
from disabilities or other conditions, that doesn't make them any less special or unique from the rest of the world. "I feel like you shouldn't let any disabilities or anything that you like get in the way of exposing

yourself. You should live life to the fullest no matter what you should. If you can't live as diverse because of societal pressures or something like that, you need to reach a point where it's you fight until you're able to."



Left to right: Malden High Key Club Voulenteers Nicholas Duggan, Marc Naceus, Jelani Tah, Julianna Lin, and Raphael Orcino pose inside the lobby of the library. DANIEL O'TOOLE

herself as the "activities did help me understand and connect to Ana because they were all focused on her struggles and how she was trying to tell her mom about her dreams of going to college while being dragged down and forced to work for her sister because 'that's what family does,'" said Honore.
Lam's favorite activity was the bean bag activity as it helped him to "realize how hard it was for Ana to juggle school and work at the same time but also having the stress of trying to be the perfect daughter for her mom."
"I think ultimately, we hope that these plays and the activities

and the workshops help students form a better sense of self meaning you know who they are in relationship to their school communities, at home, their communities at large, I hope that we're able to, through all the workshops that we're doing and the conversations, that you're able to build a muscle for empathy but also a better sense of self and who you are in life," said Harris.
Clapp also explained that she hopes students "both get a chance to see themselves on stage in some representation. I feel like it's a good and interesting group of plays that is going to have a little something for everybody but I also hope they

The Malden Reads Book of the Year

Continued from page 5

about this book" leading to its ultimate title of Book of the Year.
It is not a quick process to choose the book, however. The committee started looking through books at the end of spring, gathering opinions from the community. "It takes a good couple of months to get our top five book selection." Due to the large piles of books Malden Reads is suggested, it required an extensive amount of time to read and discuss everything.
This amassed size is due partially to the lax criteria for suggested books. "When we put out our initial call for book suggestions, we say it should be widely available, not a part of a series... but then beyond that, we take almost any book." All suggestions come from the community; someone in Malden initially suggested the book chosen every year.
"When we started, Harry Potter was super popular, but we didn't want to suggest books that needed another book to be read first," she further explained. The goal was to get people to read more books, so putting further expectations and restrictions was not helpful towards their goal.

Although numerous books were suggested to the committee, the finalists included "Being Heumann," "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus, and "The Cooking Gene" by Michael Twitty.
"Lessons in Chemistry" is a realistic fiction novel, following chemist Elizabeth Zott battling sexism and the patriarchy all while trying to make enough money for herself and her daughter. Garmus's book was chosen as Barnes & Noble's book of the year in 2022 and was adapted as a TV show on Apple TV+.
The Cooking Gene was Zalk's favorite book from the selection. Akin to Being Heumann, Twitty's book tells the life of a historic change-maker. Twitty is a chef who traveled to the southern states of the US to "learn about his family history. Because he's a chef, he wanted to do some cooking like people who were enslaved on plantations." As a

Black, gay, and Jewish chef, Twitty was able to pull several types of history into his dishes.
Zalk enjoyed this book because it gave her a side of history she was not used to seeing. "You hear a lot about how people happened to come to this country, and how things were cooked in different types of history. It was a type of history I hadn't had before."

This same logic came to selecting "Being Heumann" as Book of the Year. The book tells the story of how America came to be as accessible as it is. While it is certainly not fully accessible yet, when Heumann was growing up as a wheelchair user, "there were no ramps or curb cuts yet," Zalk detailed. "She had a friend just across the street, but it was impossible for her family to actually get her wheelchair there."
In 2023, the Book of the Year was They Called Us Enemy by George Takei. The graphic novel follows Takei in Japanese internment camps during World War Two, and his conflict between his faith in American democracy and the creation of the internment camps he was forced into.

Reading "Being Heumann," Zalk immediately thought, "How can we not know about her already?" Looking back at the books that made it as finalists, they all followed the theme of "focusing on awareness." Whether it's Zott's fight with the patriarchy, Twitty's family history in slavery, Takei's struggle with American justice, or Heumann's battle for disability rights, the Malden Reads committee's goal was to tell a story from a new perspective.

On Wednesday, February 28th, Malden Reads is hosting a movie screening at the Malden Public Library, entitled Crip Camp. "Crip Camp talks about camp experience for people with disabilities," Zalk advocated. The documentary shows the behind-the-scenes of a summer camp for teens with disabilities during the 1970's, and how its alumni sparked the revolution for disability activism. For anyone unable to attend the viewing, the movie is available on Netflix.

come out feeling like they had a window into a world they didn't know, something different."
"Even if it's just the world of people in Cambridge who go to plays at night, that might be a whole different experience for a lot of different people...hopefully they'll feel like they can continue to see shows even when it's not supported by the school or supported by the ART like 'Yeah I could just go see a play on a Friday night,' and it doesn't have to be a field trip, it doesn't have to be an exercise, it could just be a Friday night out," Clapp said.
Jones also added that she wants "students to take away the fact that

theater can enrich our lives more than we think. It's not just about music, it's not just about acting, but there's a lot of storylines that can reflect our current lives and a lot of times there are characters that can reflect either our lives or the lives of the people around us. So I think seeing theater can help people to understand humanity and learn about people in a better way than everyday interactions can."
The ART program had its first showing of "Real Women Have Curves" on December 12th and it was nothing like anyone was expecting. Students and staff alike were amazed at the performance.



The performers, crew, and Chinese Culture Connection standing together before intermission, showcasing the new dragon stamp. Photo submitted by the Chinese Culture Connection, taken by SQZ_Image.

Jaslie Fang
Reporter

The 15th annual Lunar New Year celebration, hosted by the Chinese Culture Connection (CCC), took place at Malden High School. Lunar New Year, also referred to as Chinese New Year or the Spring Festival, is a significant traditional festival celebrated by various East and Southeast Asian countries. Marking the commencement of the lunar calendar year, it stands as a celebration of culture.

Each year corresponds with one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac, with the previous year being the Year of the Rabbit. This year, commencing on February 10th, the Lunar New Year will honor the Year of the Dragon, described as “an embodiment of potent vitality, auspiciousness, charm, and bravery,” according to the Chinese Culture Connection’s website.

Established in 1985 in Reading and later relocating to Malden in 1999, the Chinese Culture Connection is a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the Chinese community of the Greater Boston Area. Offering an array of programs and events, the Chinese Culture Connection aims to foster cultural appreciation and deepen an understanding of Chinese heritage.

The festivities kicked off at 1:00 PM with the Lunar New Year fair, offering attendees the chance to enjoy lantern riddles with family and friends, get spring couplets penned by a calligraphy expert for good luck, and capture memories in the festival-themed photo area. Other exhibits shown at the fair include Boston University’s Chinese Traditional Clothing Club which had club members donning the traditional Chinese attire, hanfu. As explained by the Chinese Culture Connection, the “goal was to craft a diverse program that would resonate with people of all ages and backgrounds, while honoring the traditions of the

Lunar New Year festivities.” In addition to these attractions, there was also a raffle event where attendees had the opportunity to win various prizes, adding an extra layer of excitement and engagement to the celebration.

By 1:30 PM, Jenkins Auditorium—adorned with Chinese lanterns hanging above—hosted the festive performance, showcasing a total of 22 acts presented by 19 talented groups. The performances listed encompassed the entirety of the event’s lineup, featuring Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy’s lion dance, demonstrations of New England WUSHU Academy’s Chinese martial art skills, a live performance by “Starry Night Band,” a captivating dai dance by CJT Dream Dance, an incredible kunqu opera performance by Ruoqiu Tao, a traditional dance by Mingshan Guo, an acapella performance by Boston University’s One Voice (also known as Kol Echad, a solo performance by David Liu), a melodious ensemble by Berklee’s Chinese Traditional Music Club, a showcase of traditional martial arts by Oom Yung Doe New England, a soulful guitar ensemble by the MAP Family Learning Center, and a beautiful bow and string ensemble.

The star of the performances, the Wah Lum Kung Fu & Tai Chi Academy’s lion dance, is always met with excitement every year. This year, things were just as thrilling—the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as the lions’ stomps reverberated throughout the auditorium. Their graceful motions and powerful strides sparked a rush of adrenaline among the audience. This age-old tradition is believed to bring blessings and ward off negativity. Watching the performance, onlookers couldn’t help but feel the wonder wash over them.

One student in attendance at the event, junior Yuying Chen, expressed her enjoyment of the Chinese Traditional Music Club’s performance at Berklee and appreciated the inclusion of a raffle event and the

evident effort put into the performances. However, Chen pointed out the occasional “screeching sounds” from the performers’ microphones, calling for improvements in this aspect for future events.

The celebration also included a special unveiling. Every year, the United States Postal Service (USPS) releases a new Lunar New Year stamp corresponding to one of the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. This year, the new stamp, resembling a dragon, was unveiled during the celebration’s intermission by the Chinese Culture Connection, Mayor Gary Christenson (who was fitted in the attire of the God of Good Fortune), and Bill Collins—the Manager of Malden’s Post Office at the U.S. Postal Service.

Yet, these performances and festivities posed considerable challenges. The Chinese Culture Connection provided insight into the planning process, stating, “The 15th Annual Malden Lunar New Year Celebration was a true team effort. We started earlier than ever, beginning with brainstorming, organizing, and coordinating among various stakeholders such as performers, sponsors, vendors, volunteers, and supporters.”

Another of the challenges faced

in planning this event was “the amount of coordination of schedules and logistics months before and during the event day,” as stated by the Chinese Culture Connection. This is further reverberated by Key Club’s Historian, Julianna Lin. Lin went on to explain that Malden High’s Key Club was approached to do crew for the event despite having a lack of experience, however, they managed to pull through and communicated behind the scenes which shined in the performances.

The extensive effort invested in meticulously organizing this event was evident in both the fair and performances. However, it could not have been possible without the support of the community. As a final note, the Chinese Culture Connection “would like to express their gratitude to all the individuals and organizations who have contributed to making this year’s Lunar New Year Celebration a memorable and meaningful event,” and wishes for attendees to leave with a sense of “unity, diversity, and cultural heritage” from the festivities.

To reach out to the Chinese Culture Connection, you can find them on Instagram under the handle @chinesecultureconnection or explore their website.



Lion costume walking around the Jenkins Auditorium, greeting guests. Photo from the Instagram page @chinesecultureconnection.

FROM LOCKDOWNS TO PRESENT DAY A HISTORY OF MHS TV

Zachary Nedell
Lead Reporter



From left to right: staff Heitor Soares, Dominic Nesta, and Beatriz Santos.
ZACHARY NEDELL

In the bustling halls of Malden High, amidst the flurry of textbooks and chatter, exists a place of creativity and innovation—the High School’s Media Club. Within this dynamic space, students and teachers are not just passive consumers of media but vibrant creators, shaping narratives, capturing moments, and amplifying voices.

From producing captivating interviews to learning the tools of the trade, the Media Club serves as a joy block of expression, fostering collaboration, imagination, and a profound appreciation for the power of information in the digital age.

Teacher and club advisor, James Valente, started up this club around the creation of Joy Blocks as a whole at Malden High. Within, students have the opportunity to learn about the production, creation, and social aspects of media and what it takes to make a school-wide broadcast.

“The club has given us more leeway to do the things that we can’t do during class, which has been what we wanted to do,” Valente remarked. He then went into detail about how the whole idea was created. Back when lockdown restrictions were starting to be relaxed, Malden High adopted a new schedule in place of the waterfall schedule. As such, the media club no longer needed to do the morning announcements. However, Valente was approached by Heitor Soares, who brought up the idea of making the club more video-based and working during the newly introduced joyblocks.

With the idea implemented, Valente sought to create the club itself but he was worried about student participation. “We thought there’d be three or four kids to sign up and ended up being like 25 kids that wanted to be involved!”

However, nowadays with the changed schedule the club can suffer from shortages or overages of personnel.

“We’ve got sometimes when we’re overstaffed and sometimes when we’re understaffed based on what’s going on.” Valente continued saying “Heitor [Soares], who’s involved in play production or Jack-

son Gordon, who’s involved with the travel club joy block. Some days we have 12 students, sometimes we have eight, and sometimes we have 20,” Valente described.

After the idea was fleshed out, the club began to come up with ideas for their broadcasts, with the center focus being “Talk with a Tornado” where the crew would spend the segment interviewing a student or faculty member and bringing the moment to classrooms across the school.

Heitor Soares, a junior, talked about his process for scheduling interviews, detailing how he would find a candidate, run them by Valente, ask the interviewee if they would like to be on the show, runs the interview questions by them, and then films the episode. However, he stated, “I like improvising questions and stuff because that’s where you get most of the genuine answers from people.” He continued, shifting to how the joy block has affected him saying, “I get recognized a lot and people know me for my interviews. The club also helps me get more comfortable behind the camera and doing something that I really enjoy!”

Valente then began talking about his role from the creation of the club to the present day.

“At first, I was very hands-on because I wanted the kids to be able to see the kind of quality that we were looking for. Right now I’m almost hands-off in regard to the fact that I don’t have to touch the board.” Valente continued saying, “I don’t have to set up the cameras, they understand all the framing angles, they understand the lighting, they understand the editing scheme, and they understand what we’re doing for the score.” At the moment, Valente’s job as an advisor is to provide challenges, use his connections to get whatever the club needs, and provide the occasional on-set support.

“I want these kids to be able to learn on the bare minimum because if they are ever put in a

situation where they’re handed the bare minimum, they’re not going to feel like ‘I can’t get this done.’ They know they can get it done. They’ve worked at that level. I think that’s the best way to do it.”

Valente went on to mention how the growth that the students have made this year was tremendous. “It’s not very easy, but that’s because they’ve been through the valley. They’re at a peak now because they’re getting good at it and they feel confident with it.” Valente finished his thoughts by saying how, “Sitting in front of a camera with the lights on and recognizing that you’re going to interview someone face to face, kids need it.”

Senior James Jose commented further, “At first I was really scared of it because as he said, the fear of being on camera and people know-

but I enjoy it. I think editing is probably my favorite thing to do.”

Senior Beatriz Santos gave a rundown of the process for making the average episode of MHS TV. She begins by saying how the lights and cameras need to be set up to make the host and interviewee presentable, and to make sure the teleprompter is ready to go. Filming begins as soon as the stage manager confirms every station is ready to go.

Once filming is wrapped, it is placed into a file and sent to the editing team who go over the recording, fixing and cutting certain bits until they have created a video that is ready to be sent out to the public. Although this process seems simple, it often can take longer than three hours on average just to wrap up the editing not including the necessary time to upload the file which can



Dominic Nesta records Heitor Soares and James Jose for the latest episode of MHS TV. ZACHARY NEDELL

ing me and seeing me posted around the internet, it’s nerve-wracking at first. But after doing it, and interviewing the people, I ended up finding out that it is really fun and talking to these people is fun. Even the mistakes that I make on camera. I feel like those are very crucial steps to take and to get better at this.”

Dominic Nesta, another senior, described the editing process of the show, detailing how the process can be extremely calm or overly frantic depending on the results of the filming.

“For example, the coloring on the most recent one we did was a bit messed up so I had to play around that a bit. But sometimes editing can get bad if you are missing something or the file gets corrupted or if the audio gets cut out, and you have to somehow salvage it which I’ve had to do often

take another hour.

Although the process is long, every member enjoys it. However, the club faces difficulties in finding the time for it as Santos described, “I think our biggest issue is that it takes us so long to come back to another Joy block because it’s a two-week cycle. We have so much time to prepare that we’re just kind of waiting until we can finally get in production and start doing stuff.”

All in all, the team considers itself a family as they have become incredibly close due to the trials and tribulations they have faced together. Nesta mentioned that “we’re kind of all a family now.” He continued, detailing how much this club has impacted him saying, “I kind of live in this room now. I’ll sleep, I’ll eat and I’ll work in here all day.”

Jose continued, “I think that the Media Club brings us like people closer together it kind of feels like we’re gonna have a big working family and I think that’s important, especially in a school environment.”

Students who are looking for an innovative, challenging, and extremely worthwhile experience, should consider signing up for the MHS TV joy block at the beginning of the fourth quarter.



Dominic Nesta manning the cameras. ZACHARY NEDELL

Mindful Minds of Malden High

Mindful Minds and Goodies Club Makes its Mark on Malden High after a Successful First Meeting

Jessica Li
Managing Editor

“Imagine we just had a club where we can be after school with our friends and eat and destress,” stated Perzia Justice, vice president of the new Mindful Minds and Goodies Club (MMG) at Malden High.

Witnessing the pressures faced by teenagers in their academic and extracurricular pursuits, the founders of MMG sought to provide a space in which students could relieve themselves of their stress by participating in enjoyable activities and spending time with friends.

Zeina Khatib, president and founder of the club, headed its commencement. She described that the process was generally quick, with the idea dating back only a few months. Shortly after getting approval from Principal Christopher Mastrangelo, officers created an Instagram, Google Classroom, Google Forms, as well as put up flyers and shared the idea with their friends.

Advisor Molly Crellin, explained her support for the club, “I feel strongly that it’s a really important thing for students to take care of mindfulness and care for themselves.”

“I know people our age are struggling with mental health especially because of school and stuff like that. So I was like, I’m going to



Left to right: vice president Perzia Justice, president Zeina Khatib, Justin Yip, and social media coordinator Anais Perez. JESSICA LI

a mental health check-in, time dedicated to getting to know everyone in the club, and a popular activity for relaxation—slime-making.

The idea stemmed from the officers’ personal enjoyment of making slime and Khatib’s goal of celebrating the start of the club “with a bang.”

Members of the club received glue, shaving cream, laundry detergent, and food dye to create their own unique slime. They also got the opportunity to snack on a variety of gummy bears, chips, and chicken from Wingstop.

Through an RSVP that they had put out weeks before, officers only anticipated a small group of people attending and were shocked to see the actual turnout as the classroom was filled with students.

The unexpected number of students initially became a source of stress as there seemed to be a shortage of supplies for everyone to participate. “I’m just blessed that we had enough to feed everybody, with the amount of people that are in [here],” Justice reflected.

Senior Tyler Edmond, who discovered the club through his friendship with Khatib, spoke of his love for the club, “I’m having so much fun. It’s very relaxing; it made me take my mind off of school.” Edmond described that this week had been stressful for him, “but taking some time off and just enjoying the activities that are provided here—it really sets the relief off for me.”

Similarly, senior Alexander Rodrigues who joined to “de-stress from all the senior year stuff like getting into colleges, accepting colleges, [and] overall classes,” praised the club’s effectiveness in relieving stress. “The first event was really fun. It’s making me think about how when I was little I used to love making slime. So being able to do that after having an anatomy quiz, was very helpful and soothing,” Rodrigues said.

Sophomore Linh Do also

shared, “I think mental health matters and people should be more aware of it...and I also really wanted to make slime. I think it’s great because I made really fun slime.”

Sophomore Oscar Luc, who heard about the club through friends and on Instagram, shared this sentiment, “I think it’s really fun... I’m making my nice slime and I’m having fun with my friends and I’m laughing a lot.”

With a bake sale on the way to raise more money for the club, MMG hopes to branch out and eventually host outdoor activities, including field trips that are “different than

these usual clubs that you don’t see daily,” Justice described.

The club’s ultimate goal is its impact and preservation. “When we graduate, we still want to keep this club going,” Khatib remarked.

“And we want them to do the same things that we do—make sure that snacks are provided [and] make sure [members are] getting the same activities that we’re doing,” Justice added.

MMG’s next meeting is on March 1st and involves yet another creative tool for de-stressing, waffle-making.



Sophomore Oscar Luc poses for a picture. JESSICA LI

do something about it and start a club,” Khatib stated.

Expanding on her decision to be vice president of the club, Justice shared, “I know for me, especially when it comes to school, I just have a hard time keeping track of my classes. And I’m always home, trying to do my homework [and] finish stuff. So having a time at school where I can actually be with my friends and not have to worry really gained my attention.”

To spread mental awareness and foster “a place where we can all just come together and discuss emotions,” the club hosted its first meeting after school on February 9th in Crellin’s classroom, J264.

The first meeting consisted of



Seniors Alexandra Rodrigues and Tyler Edmond enjoying their food while conversing. JESSICA LI



Students talking and eating Wingstop before they make slime. JESSICA LI

Ping Pong Club Plays in States

Nathan Dean
Editor-in-Chief of Print and Design

On January 21st, the American Youth Table Tennis Organization (AYTTO) held a state-wide tournament for Massachusetts high schools. The competition, which was held at Boston Table Tennis Club in Medford, featured 12 high school teams and two middle school teams, with three or four players each. The participating schools included: Westford Academy, Westwood High School, Winchester High School, GANN Academy, Springfield High School, Newton South High School, North Quincy High School, Fusion High School (a team of players from a variety of high schools), Blanchard Middle School, Lexington Middle School, with Lexington High School and Malden High School having enough players to field two teams each.

The competition would be split into two groups of seven, with the top two teams from each group moving onto a semi-final

knock-out-style bracket. During the group stage, each team would play against all six opposing teams. Matches between two teams would be best of five games. Games would be played best of three sets, with each set being first to 11 points and win by two points. Three points would be awarded to each match's winner and one point to the loser to determine team ranking in the groups.

Having seven players, the

The competition would begin shortly after 9:00 after each team had warmed up. Unfortunately, both Malden teams would lose all of their matches against other schools, however, the blue team came up victorious against the gold team when both Malden teams faced off.

The gold team refused to go down without a fight, however. In their first game, junior Sofi Le would upset senior Cheryl Joe Pidakala in an extremely close two-set game with both sets going into "sudden death". Le would win the first set 15-13 and the second set 12-10. Next, the gold team's Kevin Lin would face Captain Archer Ou. Ou would quickly bring the game to a 7-0 lead, but Lin refused to give up. Lin would claw back the victor with 10 straight points to win 11-8. Lin, now with the momentum, would take the lead in the second set 6-3.

This time, however, no comeback would be made and Lin would take the win 11-7.

Now facing a 2-0 game lead, the blue team would need to win their next three games against the gold team to win the match. The first step would be for Archer Ou and Cheryl Joe Pidakala to win their doubles

match against Kwan Wu Li and Kevin Lin. Li and Lin would take the first set in a hard-fought 13-11, but Ou and Pidakala were hard set on winning the match. Now more warmed up, Ou and Pidakala would take the second and third sets 11-9 and 11-4.

Now, the match was in the



The Gold Team poses for a picture after their first match; from left to right: Kwan Wo Li, Sofi Le, Philip Li, Kevin Lin. NATHAN DEAN

Gagnon, "they showed a lot of improvement." Gagnon also pointed out the difference in experience between the teams, "a lot of [the opposing players] have been training for four or five years." He also added that Malden can't practice as much as other teams, "I talked to a kid who trains between 20 and 25 hours a week... all we have is our ping pong room for a few days a week."

Ou echoed these sentiments, "We're learning still, but since this is our first year competing we're actually making progress." He also mentioned his hopes for upcoming years, "I'm looking for future generations to be

able to get better than us and get on par with the [other schools]."

Pidakala thought the competition went well, "I'm glad we all had fun and had a good time. I'm really proud of the team," adding, "Overall, great tournament. Huge respect to Jasper [AYTTO Massachusetts Coordinator]

and Mr. Gagnon." Looking to next year Pidakala expressed belief that the team will continue to improve.



From left to right: Archer Ou and Cheryl Joe Pidakala in their doubles match against the fusion team. NATHAN DEAN

Malden club decided to split into two teams Malden High School 1 and Malden High School 2, which they also referred to as blue team and gold team respectively. The blue team consisted of the more senior members of the club Captain Archer Ou, Captain Cheryl Joe Pidakala, and Jason Chen. Kevin Lin, Kwan Wu Li, Sofi Le, and Philip Li made up the gold team.

hands of Jason Chen, who would need to win matches against Philip Li and Kwan Wu Li to win the match. Chen, not one to back down from a challenge, would sweep both opponents in two set games.

Despite the poor performance in the group stage, the club was happy with their results. "I thought we played a lot better than last time," added Club Advisor Mark



Cheryl Joe Pidakala makes a backhand shot in a singles match. NATHAN DEAN

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Class of 2026 Celebrates Valentines day With a New Approach to Showing Love

Delina Yohannes
Lead Reporter

As the day of love comes back around, the Class of 2026 seizes the opportunity to host their 3rd holiday-themed fundraiser for all students and staff of Malden High.

Typically for Valentine's Day, sweet treats, flowers, and store-bought items are the main gifts that are given. To change things up, the Class of 2026 came with a new approach to celebrating this day around the school.

On February 8th, handmade pipe cleaners that were made into flowers were available for pre-orders that would later be distributed on the 13th. A singular flower was \$6 and a bouquet was \$12.

With the versatility of the pipe cleaners and the creativity of the Class of 2026 council, they were able to provide students and staff with a more sentimental rather than traditional Valentine's Day gift.

"They're cute to give to your friends, yourself, and they can be kept to be cherished for as long as you'd like," said Treasurer Oscar Luc, who further explained how gifting your loved ones something that was carefully made and can be kept as a keepsake is "honestly more heart-felt than something store-bought."

President Eldana Abrhame described this fundraiser as "a unique event for [students] to participate in that we came up with for the Valentine season that was thought of out of the box. The main goal was not only to profit but also to bring together the students of our class to support one another and to use this event as a simple but powerful gesture for one another."

The crafted flowers were made from an array of colors and sculpted into many different shapes and sizes, offering those who were interested in purchasing many different options. "They're very heartfelt and look like they took lots of time to make... they're perfect for this loving season," said sophomore Ahmed Moukara, who did not purchase any flowers but soon regretted it after seeing how they positively impacted those who did purchase them.

Although the idea of making all pipe cleaner flowers by hand turned out to be great and successful, the council was met with quite some challenges during the brainstorming and execution process. With the council being fairly new and inexperienced with last-minute organizing of a fundraiser, having confidence in their fundraiser was something they struggled to gain at first.

"We've had some doubts about the project...but I definitely think



Chelmie Hyppolite
Reporter

Meriam Bouchtout
Reporter

On February 14th, the choir students at Malden High went from class to class singing to their peers. This event has been a tradition since the late 2000s. The choir students had been rehearsing for the event since last month though they had been listening to songs since December. They performed two lovely songs and everyone had a lot of fun. This event is unique and serves as a creative way to fundraise.

Todd Cole, the advisor for this event, had selected the songs that were performed for this event. Among the songs are the classic and lovely "Earth Angel" and Cole's personal favorite "The Still of the Night". He believed these songs would be suitable for the occasion and would be a great experience for the student performers. "I figured, why reinvent the wheel if it works," Cole explained.

The idea for the fundraiser was originally proposed by a student who attended Malden High in the late 2000s. The student suggested that the choir should perform singing serenades, as it would be a

that even if nothing comes out of this fundraiser it'll be a good experience for us and the council to learn a lot from this... we still have a lot to learn and to take away from our experiences," said Luc, who has lots of hope for their future moving forward.

Since pre-orders were due on February 8th by the end of the day and were to be distributed by the 13th, this left the council only 5 days to make all the flower bouquets for all those who ordered. To many, this would bring an abundance of stress due to the complex task with a short time frame, but to the Class of 2026 council members, this was another opportunity to build their already strong communication and teamwork skills.

"Communication has been something that we have built even before the elections. I am eternally grateful for the councils' communication skills whether through in-person meetups or talking through group chats, we have built

A choir group serenades freshman Yingyan Xia. MERIAM BOUCHTOUT

profitable venture that would also benefit the community. "We've got to do singing serenades because it is pure profit, it's singing and we're doing something good for the community," one student stated.

Cole decided to give it a try, and it turned out to be a huge success. However, due to the unpredictable weather, the serenades had to be canceled on many occasions in past years. Fortunately, this year they managed to get the serenades up and running again.

After spending weeks preparing for the event, the students formed their quartets and were ready to perform.

"Some people are naturally going to be embarrassed when they get a serenade, some people are going to be excited. It's usually a range of emotions," junior Natalie Keating explained. She couldn't have been more correct, throughout the building these reactions were exactly as said.

Jasmin Diaz Gomez, one of the lead singers in a quartet, shared her experience, saying, "I was very nervous because I was the lead of my quartet but I was also excited." This seemed to be very common among the students performing, as it isn't

easy performing in front of your peers.

The students were able to connect as well. It's easy to practice alone but in front of people, it can be challenging. "I think the most memorable part was while we were singing and I looked at my quartet and we all had reassuring looks on our faces and we just got comfortable singing together," Gomez explained.

Students had various opinions, many seemed to enjoy the songs while others thought it was funny. "We got a lot of laughs when we would come into classes people seemed to really enjoy the performances," said Esther Howse.

Some students commented that the event was embarrassing and a waste of time, but Gomez disagreed. "I would gladly do it again. I mean, other people find it embarrassing, but to me, it truly is fun." The wide range of emotions is what makes the event so entertaining.

While all the other Valentine's fundraisers were beautifully put together, the serenades were outstanding. It is certainly one for the books as it was so memorable. The talented students did a fantastic job and impressed Malden High.



Sophomore Destiny Leon holds a handmade bouquet of pipe cleaner flowers. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

MTEC Hosts Badminton Tournament

Haset Tesfaw
Lead Reporter

“Personally, I think that it’s important to have a nice, healthy level of competition amongst people,” Jay Ortiz, who hosts the badminton tournaments at the Malden Teen Enrichment Center (MTEC), stated.

MTEC has been hosting badminton and ping-pong tournaments since last year but had to take a small pause because they had other things going on at the time. Since it has been brought back up, people have seemed to really enjoy them.

“We ideally try to get them going at least once or twice a month but it varies depending on the season. Right now it’s winter so kids don’t always come out because they don’t want to walk too far, so sometimes we don’t get to have that opportunity but we’ve been kicking it back into gear,” Ortiz said.

The rules to the game on 2/2/24 were: “First to 11 if both teams are tied 10-10, then it’d be first to 15. After every two serves, we switch to the other team and then your team would just switch placements. So whoever served, let’s say player 1 served, after the next 2 points are earned, whether it was on your team or their team, they switch, so now player 2 serves, and player 1 stays in the back. But at that point, it would switch to the other team, so we’re just kind of mixing and matching to see who’s best at being at the front and who’s best at being at the back,” Ortiz explained.

The teams were chosen in a way that everyone would get a chance to play against each other. They played in a rotation so that this would be possible.

“We started off with just three teams so rather than just having a three-match set I wanted team 1 to go against team 2, and then team 1 would go against 3, that way they got a chance to go against both teams. After that team 2 would go against team 3, that way they also got a chance to go against both



From left to right: A teammate in team 6 running to hit the birdie to the other side; One of the players running to hit the birdie. HASET TESFAW

teams, and then from that point on whatever team wasn’t doing so well, I wanted to give them a chance to play again,” Ortiz stated.

Ortiz started off the game by putting on some upbeat music to get everyone motivated. The game between teams 1 and 2 was very suspenseful, as they tied 10-10 which meant that the first to 15 would be the winner.

After team 1 was announced the winner, everyone continued to play in a rotation so that everyone could get a turn.

Ortiz also focused on making the teams based on skill so that it would be completely fair for everyone. “We try our best to make it so that the people who are playing together are of varying skill levels or at the very least if they are a level above, they know how to tone it down so that other people can get their chance to play,” he explained.

“The tournaments are really fun. It’s pretty fair because the teams are based on skill level so I thought that was nice,” Tempest Chen, one of the players, said.

Unfortunately, Ortiz was not aware that the day they booked the

event was the same day as the GBL meet for those in track, so some of the kids were forced to back out. “Even though we didn’t have as many teams as we wanted we still got a pretty good turnout and everyone got the chance to play more than once so even if they lost it wasn’t like they were completely out of the match.”

“We always try to make sure that nothing is ever a single elimination, so if someone happens to lose whether it’s because they fought someone who was really good or they just didn’t know how to play very well, we try and give them at least two or three more chances to get back in the game,” he continued.

At the end, they handed out snacks for the prizes and blizzard bags for kids to take on their way out. “We normally give them out when the weather’s not doing so well, but we’re actually going to be turning them into a weekend type of bag so the kids get a chance to bring some food home. Whether they have some food at home or not doesn’t necessarily matter, but they have at least a chance to get some extra food on top of that,” Ortiz explained.

They also added gloves or hats in some of the bags so that if the kids got too cold they would have something to wear, and food to eat.

The teen center hopes to have tournaments going on every month, but not just badminton tournaments. “There are people who are really good at the physical stuff like baseball, football, pool, ping-pong, etc., but we also want to give the chance to kids who are not so physically capable,” Ortiz said, “Whether it’s because they don’t really want to play the games or maybe they’re a little anxious or uncomfortable playing in front of other people, we want to give them the ability to play different games like Fifa, 2K, or even smash bros.”

Ortiz then continued to explain how almost everyone can play in ping-pong or badminton tournaments since it has a pretty low skill ceiling when it comes to starting off.

“Those games are usually the easiest to get people to start with, plus we can do things like 2 V 2’s, so you can always pick a friend and even if you and your friend are bad, you have the opportunity to play against each other, have some fun, and learn along the way.”

Many players who came were returning players, those who attended for more practice, or just to have some fun with friends. “This isn’t my first time playing badminton. I play casually,” Chen said.

“We tend to always see new faces whenever we see the tournaments going but we also see returning faces which is great,” Ortiz stated.

The Malden Teen Center is open from 2:30 to 8:00 and strongly encourages you to come by and check it out. “If you guys haven’t come by to the teen center please do come by, we serve food every single day. Everything about us is free, so come in, sign a quick membership form, get yourself a card, and after that, you only have to sign in once every time you come in and that’s it,” Ortiz finished.



From left to right: Teams 3 and 4 playing against each other; One of the teammates in team 5 jumping up to hit the birdie. HASET TESFAW

JOYCE ZHOU GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND

Hadjar Yousfi
Editor-in-Chief

This year, the swim team at Malden High School has gone above and beyond, resulting in them placing first place in the Greater Boston League (GBL). At the head of the team is swim captain Joyce Zhou, who helped to lead the team to this great accomplishment.

Zhou joined the swim team during her freshman year, which was the year that the team's season was pushed back due to remote learning. From the very beginning, Zhou has proved that she is passionate and determined to succeed.

Not only is she a great swimmer who simply enjoys the feeling of being in the water, "You're just floating, you feel relaxed," Zhou explained. But she is also a powerful person who loves to support those around her, and in turn feels supported by her teammates, "I really like how I'm freely allowed to express myself around my teammates."

"She's very dedicated to the team, goes to every practice, every swim clinic, and she ALWAYS tries her best," co-captain Larissa Granja said. Since joining the team sophomore year, Granja has played a vital role in leading the team alongside Zhou.

"Joyce is one of the kindest people I know, since the first time I met her sophomore year. As a leader, she is willing to help anyone and everyone. Doesn't matter what it is, but she'll help them," Granja said.

Zhou has done her best for the past few years to grow as both a person and leader. Her efforts have proved fruitful as she has become someone that people look up to on the team. "Acknowledge everyone, don't leave anyone out, even if you are not close with them, or they do not have that welcoming aura. Just talk to everyone because if you are a leader you have to know who is on your team," Zhou said explaining her mindset when it comes to leadership.

For the past four years, Zhou has done her best to support and form strong bonds with the other members of the team. "She tries to

always make sure everyone is accounted for and no one is left behind or in the dark," co-captain Joao Victor Santos explained.

Zhou emphasized that she wants to make sure that her teammates know that they "can come up to me when they need anything." Zhou further emphasized the importance of understanding those around her and how their lives differ from her own.

Zhou — who has dedicated much of her time outside of school to swimming, including being a lifeguard and helping to run the MHS Saturday Swim Clinics — has proved invaluable to Coach Jessica Bisson. Bisson explained that she is always prepared to "jump in to help others."



Senior captains from left to right, Joyce Zhou, Larissa Retamero Granja, and Joao Victor Santos posing for a photo. Photo submitted by Joyce Zhou.

During Swim Clinics she has proved herself to be a patient and kind person who has the ability to help anyone. Having been working with Zhou for the last four years, Bisson is proud to see her enter this new stage in her life. "She just needs to realize her potential," emphasized Bisson. She cannot wait to see what Zhou accomplishes and wishes her the "best of luck."

"I just want [my teammates] to know that coach Bisson always wants the best for us, even though she is very strict about attendance and keeping up with the practice and workouts it's always gonna come back to you about how hard you were working in practice, even if you're struggling," said Zhou.



The Malden High swim team posing for a picture with their rubber ducks before a meet. Photo submitted by Joyce Zhou.



Malden Freshman defenseman Tommy Cronin scans the ice looking to keep the puck in offensive side. SHUYI CHEN



Malden Senior Captain Jacky Summers travels down the ice with the puck looking to make his first goal of the season. SHUYI CHEN



REMM Hockey celebrates after a score by Everetts Jacob Cantone helping allowing a 3 point lead in the 2nd half. SHUYI CHEN



Malden Senior Captain Jake Simpson travels down the ice looking to score. SHUYI CHEN

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REMM SENIORS SKATE INTO FINAL GAMES OF HIGH SCHOOL CAREERS

Bo Stead
Head of Sports

With the Class of 2024 graduating, the Malden portion of the REMM hockey team marks a bittersweet milestone. Three of the five players on the team who attend Malden High School are graduating this year bringing up many questions about the future of hockey for Malden High as after this year, there are only two players (Tommy Cronin, Class of 2027 & David Perez, Class of 2027) left on the varsity roster.

Often with sports, we forget that players are much more than what they do out on the field and in this case, the ice.

An overlooked portion of youth sports is the role of parents. The guardians of young athletes are often there every step of the way whether it be transportation to practices and games, or helping them train. Parents become just as connected to the sport as their children and form bonds with the parents of their child's teammates.

JAKE SIMPSON

Jake Simpson is a four-year veteran and captain of the REMM team. He has dedicated 14 years of his life to his love of hockey. Simpson is a dual-sport athlete, playing on both the hockey and baseball teams at Malden High.

For his entire career playing with REMM, he was one of the most crucial offensive weapons the team had and was a force putting pucks on the net. Simpson, as a captain of the team, leads both with his play and demeanor on the ice.

Simpson is the best player on the team and has led this team all year. The former offensive player of the year weighed in on his high school hockey career ending. Hockey being such a heavily team-based sport, Simpson remarked that he learned a lot of "leadership skills", and with team chemistry being so crucial Simpson also mentioned, that "molding with new kids on new teams" was such a huge part of playing hockey.

Simpson recalled his favorite memory in the sport, "we won a gold medal in a Canadian tournament as the only team from America there", although Simpson was not on the REMM team at this time, he

still highlighted it as his "best moment".

Jake's Mother, Erin Simpson is Jake's biggest supporter starting with "It has been quite the ride for Jake and us.". She is also "forever grateful" for the memories Jake has made through his hockey career. She is thankful that Jake has "played alongside some of these kids since he was five years old" and for the "mentors he has gained."

In youth athletes, coaches are such big difference-makers and role models for younger athletes. Simpson has had several coaches and his mother is thankful for every one of them. She commented that Jake has had some "amazing coaches through the years". Playing a high school sport teaches young athletes many lessons which can translate to everyday life, she remarked "Learning how to lose and win graciously are things he can take with him the rest of his life."

JOHN 'JACKY' SUMMERS

Jacky, who is also a 4-year veteran for team REMM and who has also played hockey for 14 years will be playing his final games as a high school athlete very soon. His father, Deano Summers who is a well-known Malden resident and has coached in the Babe Ruth League for decades had some comments about his son playing in his final season. Deano Summers stated "The last game of the season will be very sad" he is thankful for having the "pleasure to watch them play the game they love" through the years. Jacky will be the Summers family's second player to go through four years of hockey and graduate, with their oldest son, Nick Summers having graduated in 2021 and is currently attending Bentley University.

Jacky Summers did not have one favorite moment of his career, he simply said "My best experience was playing with some of my best friends through the years." which is a common theme between each of these teammates. Summers also recognized that he also learned some important skills by playing hockey, he believes he learned how to "handle adversity and how to bounce back from that." Looking back on his many years of hockey,

Summers noted his favorite part about it was when he was younger on travel teams that he created some of the "best moments ever in hotels" with his teams.

Jacky's father Deano, ended by noting "Independent thinking is no longer the way of the world" and he is grateful that "Jacky has learned to work in a team environment".

AARON AL-MARAYATI

Perhaps with one of the most inspiring stories in Massachusetts High School hockey, Aaron Al-Marayati is the team's goalie who splits time each game. Aaron is legally blind, with a condition called Stargardt disease which has degraded his vision over time.

Aaron, who has played hockey since the age of eight, overall is grateful for his opportunity to play hockey and believes that team sports have helped him learn to "cooperate with others" and "be supportive" of teammates when they are having a rough time. Aaron has even had a news story about him by both the Boston Globe and CBS local news; if you wish to see this you can find it here.

Overall, Al-Marayati has shown so much dedication having to hurdle his condition and be a competitive goalie, he remarked "While I have had some extra challenges as a direct result of my vision, such as seeing the puck at a distance, I think that it has made me become both a better goalie and a better athlete to compensate. I think the biggest challenge has been with the preconceptions that other people have of what I can and can't do or with how well I can perform"

Aaron's father, Ghazi Al-Marayati is very proud of how far his son has come. He noted that his son has "had a passion for the game since the first time he was on skates, and was determined to become a goaltender from the time he was just five years old and watched the Bruins win the Stanley Cup.". He also thanked Aaron's goaltending coaches, Mike Geragosian and Scott Barchard who have both "not only believed in and supported him" but also helped him "develop and apply specific techniques and approaches to maximize his abilities."



Malden Senior Captain Jake Simpson sprints down the ice with the puck.
SHUYI CHEN

Ghazi Al-Marayati has a strong feeling that Aaron finds joy in "Overcoming judgments and proving them wrong" when people have preconceptions about his vision. He has also been an extremely supportive and helpful parent for Aaron and his athletic career stating, "We received MIAA approval to use a communication system, with an earpiece that Aaron wears under his mask" This lets Aaron and his father "Identify the location of the puck and properly align himself, especially when the puck is at a distance". Off of the ice he has helped Aaron with "steady and consistent support, instilling a strong work ethic, and making sure he has access to the best goaltending coaching around."

His father hopes that Aaron will coach hockey in the future and play recreationally.

Aaron next fall, will be attending Union College where he will be majoring in Mechanical Engineering, playing club hockey, and throwing the javelin and discus for the Track & Field team.

Overall, these three will be dearly missed by the REMM hockey community and remembered for their four years of contribution to the team. We wish them the best of luck as they graduate and move on to the next chapters of their lives.

REMM HOCKEY WINS SENIOR NIGHT

Season Comes to a Close for Three Malden High School Seniors

Ryan Coggswell
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile

For most of the Revere/Everett/Malden/Mystic Valley (REMM) ice hockey team, this is just another season coming to a close. For three Malden seniors, the door is closing on their hockey careers.

Jake Simpson, John “Jacky” Summers, and Aaron Al-Marayati are their names. Since their “mites” days playing with the Malden/East Boston youth program, the three have worked hard to get to the top level; Simpson and Summers are now team captains.

Al-Marayati has been forced to fight through some extra challenges; he has Stargardt disease, which has progressively deteriorated his vision since his early childhood, and is legally blind. Still, he has adapted and competed to earn the position as goaltender in several games for a varsity high school team.



Left to Right: Malden Senior Goaltender Aaron Al-Marayati and his family; Malden Senior Jake Simpson with his family; Malden Senior John Summers with his family. SHUYI CHEN

The three seniors were honored on January 27 against Lynn in which the team won their fifth game of the season by a score of 5-2. Within

the matchup was plenty of conflict; these two hard-nosed teams have struggled this season and fought for another victory.

Each senior from all four schools brought their family out onto the ice before the game for a picture. The ceremony was bittersweet for many people who are watching their child play their last few games of hockey.

Al-Marayati was the netminder for the night. Summers nearly scored just a minute and a half in; REMM dominated the first period of play, in which tempers began to flare. The team netted two goals in the frame, both from Mystic Valley’s Riley Constantine, one of which came off a deflected shot from Simpson.

Lynn gained some steam in the second period, earning some more chances and opportunities early. They did earn themselves a trip to the penalty box after responding to a REMM hit with a punch. However, REMM did not capitalize on the opportunity and Lynn put one in the back of the net shortly after.

In a wild event, the fire alarms within the rink went off but play did not cease. Through the flashing lights, two consecutive REMM shots caught iron but did not find the goal. Lynn countered the opportunity and found a breakaway in which they tied the game. A scuffle ensued shortly after, but that only fueled Revere’s Matt LaCroix goal that just barely crossed the line. The period came to an end with REMM leading 3-2.

The third period went similarly to the first as REMM began to take charge again; Lynn’s struggles with discipline continued to hurt them as they found themselves shorthanded for long periods of time. With just under six minutes left, Simpson scored a rebound goal to extend the lead. Thirteen seconds later, Everett senior Jacob Cantone scored in the slot after a pass from Mystic Valley’s senior Lukas Deguirre.

“I was so happy to score on senior night,” Simpson exclaimed. “I wanted to rip my celebration in

Continued on page 21



The team stands on the blue line for the national anthem. SHUYI CHEN



REMM and Northeast hockey players off to the races toward the puck. RYAN COGGSWELL

REMM Hockey

Continued from page 20

front of the stands.” He also said that REMM “should have won by more” and were the “better team.”

Lynn racked up a few more penalties before a massive hit from Summers. Players charged at Summers, who held his ground. A fight broke out and multiple players threw punches on both sides. After the referees finally separated the two sides, they decided to run the clock out with 2 minutes left. In doing so, REMM secured a 5-2 senior night victory.

“Jacky is an anchor on our defense,” said Head Coach Craig Richards. “He had two kids from the other team jump on his back at the end and instead of fighting back, he just held his ground. That takes a lot.”

Al-Marayati earned what would be his final high school victory. “Aaron is one of the toughest kids I know,” Richards proclaimed. He left it at that; although there is plenty more to say, that line defines his journey well.

Boiling tempers culminating in a fight is an epitome of this hockey season for REMM, who have had a tumultuous journey with some ups and plenty of downs. Still, the season did not officially end until mid February. One of the games was a rivalry matchup with Northeast Metro Tech at home; it was bound to be a hot-tempered game with two schools that know each other so well, similarly to the Lynn contest. Although REMM had been eliminated from postseason tournament contention, the fire was still there to try and pick up at least one more win before their season wrapped up.

Northeast started strong in the first period, taking a lot of time on attack and puck possession. That was until the penalties started flowing in, a sign of things to come. Revere’s Frankie Annunziata took an illegal hit to the head, drawing a major cross-checking penalty that would give the team five minutes on the power play. Deguirre found the net for the game’s first goal, ending the period.

The second period was strong for Northeast until they ran into another penalty. Annunziata got drilled high again for the second major penalty of the game, a rare occurrence. A five minute penalty ensued, minimizing any chance for REMM to concede a goal. Northeast’s Erich Schulz tied the game in the closing minutes.

Finally, in the beginning stages of the third period, Mystic Valley senior Liam Thompson fired a hard shot low of Northeast goaltender William Baker’s left pad. The puck bounced to Cantone who fired it high into the net to take the lead. For the remainder of the period, Northeast continued to rack up penalties and put themselves at a disadvantage. The clock wound down and REMM took a 2-1 rivalry victory.

GIRLS BASKETBALL vs. REVERE

Golden Tornadoes Fall to Patriots in Back-and-Forth Contest

Aundrea Orozco-Cifuentes
Reporter



Kimberly Tropnas attempts a layup. AUNDREA OROZCO-CIFUENTES



Left to Right: Amanda Fowke attempts a layup, drawing a foul; Angelina Colon looks to pass inside to Victoria Gammon. AUNDREA OROZCO-CIFUENTES

Malden High’s girls’ varsity basketball team lost 39-36 to Revere on January 25th in a nail-biter. Unfortunately, though the score was close, this game would have determined their place for the GBL title.

In the first quarter, the Tornadoes started aggressive and played as a team not only in their actions, but also mentally. There were some shots blocked by Revere, but Malden quickly recovered and got some baskets in. Though there were some turnovers, the players did not give up and continued to hit the opportunities they could find.

Junior Ina Tolete hit a three-pointer that put the first point on the scoreboard for Malden and throughout the first quarter, the team communicated well resulting in Malden keeping good defense and ending the quarter up 6-4.

The team entered the second quarter with a two-point lead. However, towards the end, they lost their streak after Revere’s comeback. Despite this, the Tornadoes kept a good defense throughout. Junior Amanda Fowke caught multiple offensive rebounds, allowing her to score layups for her team. The girls were able to maintain good defense throughout this quarter, allowing them to finish

with a score of 13-13.

During halftime, Head Coach Scott Marino gave the team a good pep talk to motivate the players. “I felt really under pressure during the talk, but it also motivated me to keep on going because one of my dreams for our team is to win the GBL title,” spoke team captain Angelina Colon.

During the third quarter, the team struggled as it became a battle for the lead against Revere now that the score was neck and neck, with both teams constantly dropping down and then climbing back up.

The third quarter held many highlight-worthy moments including when junior Kimberly Tropnas drove the ball coast-to-coast and drew a foul. Senior captain Victoria Gammon would keep this energy up as she would burn her defenders on the way to the basket and capitalize on fast break opportunities.

Heading into the fourth quarter, Malden still held their own against

the Patriots. Tropnas enforced aggressive defense that kept the gap between them and Revere close.

The five starters: Gammon, Fowke, Tolete, Colon, and Tropnas, used their 2-3 zone defense to the best of their ability, forcing Revere to only get inside shots. Malden still led up to this point, but Revere came back in the end, concluding a game that went down to the wire.

Although Malden went out with a loss during the game that qualified their GBL standings, their defense showcased their dedication and skills as a team which has since propelled them to an appearance in the State tournament, marking the third year in a row that they’ve qualified for the postseason.

Revere would go on to win the GBL title in a tie with Lynn Classical, a story that could have gone differently had this game swung in the other direction.

REMM would go on to lose the final two games of their season to Bedford and East/West Bridgewater, finishing with a 6-13-1 record.

Richards emphasized further the drive the team shares: “No mat-

ter what happens with these guys, they don’t quit. They don’t know what quit means.” It was this quality that enabled the team to fight so hard in their final games against Lynn and Northeast despite being

out of playoff contention.

Despite the difficulties that the team experienced this year, there were memories made that the players, coaches, and fans will never forget.



Malden girls' basketball team, with coach Scott Marino, pose for an end of the season photo. NATHAN DEAN

Continued from page 1

one of those games. Gammon would also pitch in intimidating defense that would allow her to consistently grab steals from her opponents.

Malden displayed strong, swift passing, solid defense, and quick rebounds, keeping the pressure on Lynn English. The quarter ended with a score of 21-19 in favor of Malden. This had the crowd riled up and the energy was extremely potent.

The Tornados launched into the second quarter with major determination. Within the first couple minutes sophomore Madison Cook made four consecutive layups with another shot fired home by junior Ina Tolete. Cook continued to heat up after an impressive steal and converting a tough transition bucket.

There were a couple of times the Bulldogs started to catch up to Malden's score, but Malden did not take it lightly and started to bulk up their defense on all levels with more plays being made by Tropnas and Cook. The second quarter concluded with Malden leading 34-26 as the two teams headed into halftime.

During halftime, head coach Scott Marino gave an inspiring pep talk that got into the girls' heads. Senior Jamila Said said, "This is my final home game as a senior and I think this was the moment that inspired me the most to keep my head in the game." Senior captain Angelina Colon echoed a similar sentiment, noting how, "With this also being my last home game as a senior this makes me extremely hyped and proud and I can't wait to see where this takes us."

"I feel like Marino putting so much of his faith in us made me want to play my heart out the rest of the game," added Cook.

Going back into the game during the third quarter, Malden started off hot, getting right into the defense, but Lynn English was us-

ing this aggressiveness to grab some steals. Even having multiple open layups, they weren't able to convert. Malden was quick to tee up with the defense and kept tighter control of the ball while closing up more passing lanes on defense making it nearly impossible for the Bulldogs to get a clean pass off. The third quarter concluded with Malden outscoring Lynn English 19-8, extending the score to 53-34.

Within the first few seconds of the fourth quarter, Gammon made a sharp cut to the basket and dropped in a layup. Cook kept up solid defense and was swiping at almost every pass from the Bulldogs. Sophomore Jaziarra Antoine was able to clean the glass efficiently to close out the game, but Lynn English wouldn't go away and continued to make a run. The Bulldogs' effort would soon fall short as the Tornados toughened up after a timeout and the game would end 59-50.

This was a major improvement from their last home game as they were able to keep their heads up to finish the game despite Lynn English's comeback. The entire team had plenty of praise for each other, highlighting their ability to thwart the Bulldogs' offensive game plan. "Amanda [Fowke] had a really good defensive possession with back-to-back blocks and so did Madison with back-to-back steals," commented Said.

A lot of the energy sprouted from Gammon's leadership on the court and being able to keep the players and fans in the game. "Tori deserves recognition for this game with the way she finished on the boards and her aggressiveness on defense. It kept Lynn on their toes. She had had the whole audience riled up."

The team would later fall to King Phillip in the preliminary round of the tournament, ending a great season.



Victoria Gammon celebrating senior night with her family. NATHAN DEAN

Domenica Giordano
R e a l t o r

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Approaching the two-decade mark in her career, Domenica Giordano has come to realize that experience is the finest teacher. An agent with Century 21 North East, she has navigated up and down markets, recessions, booms and everything in between. An independent



BOYS' BASKETBALL SWEEP BY TIDE

Senior captain Ezechiel “Zeke” Noelsaint jogs down court to help setup the offense. THOMAS TIERNEY

Elijah Etienne
Lead Reporter

Thomas Tierney
Reporter

Chouaib Saidi
Lead Reporter

On January 11th, Malden and Everett fans packed the bleachers of Malden High’s Finn Gym in anticipation of the second annual Boys’ Basketball matchup of the season. Their first game this season ended in Everett defeating Malden 59-52. Malden tried to get a game on the Tide before the end of the campaign, but after a slow start they could not overcome and fell short in a 54-40 defeat.

Before the first Malden and Everett game of the 2022-2023 season, Malden had not beaten Everett since 2014. It had been 13 consecutive games over eight years of Everett beating Malden until the infamous streak was snapped in December 2022.

Despite the losses, the rivalry has always been a spectacle to look forward to on the schedule. “Since I’ve been here, we haven’t beaten them for several years. We played them twice a year, and struggled, until last year we beat them at home, which was pretty awesome,” said Assistant Coach Dan Jurkowski.

“We’re rivals in lots of sports, and the best part about any rivalry

is how excited the fans get on both sides. The gym is always packed both ways, so even though we lost a lot of games, being a part of our rivalry was fun and exciting. Obviously, we wish we had a few more wins to go along and help, but they’re always exciting games and the crowd is always into it, which makes it more fun,” Jurkowski added.

In December 2022, Malden won on their home turf, beating Everett 59-46, although since that game, Malden has taken three straight losses to the Crimson Tide.

The hype going into these games is often unmeasurable, but senior captain Ezechiel Noelsaint chooses to keep a cool head. “Honestly for me, it’s just another game against another team because at the end of the day, they go to school just like I do, they play for their school team just like I do, and they play to win just like any player should. When you look at it like that, they’re just students just like me.”

From the end of last season to the beginning of the current season, Malden’s roster has experienced a real shake-up. Malden lost many notable seniors and impactful players to the team; this prompted Noelsaint to take a far bigger role on the court. “Going into the last game, I approached it with the mindset of, this a whole new team from last year. We don’t have Justin [Bell] to knock down shots, Jonald [Joseph]

to lock down the paint, or Peyton [Carron] and his court vision. All that responsibility is on me since I have the most experience on this varsity team and I’ve been here the longest,” said Noelsaint.

Before the most recent game, Malden’s lineup suffered two major blows. Sophomore guard Ethan Phejarasai and junior guard Jose Ferreira were both inactive for Malden, giving Malden a major disadvantage before the start of the game. “We were a little shorthanded this game. We didn’t have Jose, I don’t think Ethan played either, so we didn’t have Ethan, we didn’t have Jose, a couple of our starters, so we were a little undermanned, but our [mantra is] always the next guy up. The kids that we did have on the floor who were available to play, gave everything they had; they played all 32 minutes, and it was a close game. It was back and forth, and we were proud of the kids for how they played,” explained Jurkowski.

“A lot of it for us honestly is just who’s available, who’s healthy, who goes to practice, who’s not sick, who’s feeling well. Unfortunately, we’ve had a bunch of games where there’s been lineup changes. It’s difficult to have consistent play and consistent starts in games because we don’t know who’s gonna be available to play. We have Zeke, Zeke’s available every game. He’s our senior captain, he wouldn’t miss anything. We know we’re going to have Zeke; he’s kind of the rock of the team, and then we kind of try to fit the pieces around him on who’s available,” said Jurkowski.

To start the game, Everett challenged Malden early utilizing a press, and some zone throughout the first quarter, and Malden didn’t have much of an answer for it. “We had an extremely slow start and we were down by a lot early in the game. We eventually got into our rhythm and started scoring but with the hole we dug ourselves into early on, as much as we tried, we couldn’t get out,” said Noelsaint.

“I think we started a little bit slow offensively. We came out and

just didn’t hit shots. I don’t know if we were nervous because of the big crowd or if it was because we had some different guys playing. It took a bit of an adjustment to get used to who was on the floor,” added Jurkowski.

The second quarter brought about a resurgence in Malden, they were able to battle back and make the difference single digits by half, 24-16, however, the third quarter went just about as well as the first. Everett came out of the half blazing, going on a good run. Malden tried hitting them with a 2-3 zone, but it did little to stop Everett’s offense. The end of the quarter would see Malden again down double digits, 42-25.

In the fourth quarter, Malden was able to rally and have a good period but the scoreboard was not showing much of a difference. Both teams went shot for shot most of the quarter. Malden outscored Everett in the fourth, 15-12 but it wasn’t enough to make much of a dent in the situation they entered the fourth in. The final was 54-40, giving Everett the victory.

“I think if we had a game before Everett to prepare without having Ethan and Jose, it would’ve helped a little bit, but you know, the schedule is what it is. The kids who had to show up and play, did. We got into a rhythm in the second half. We just ran out of time at the end,” explained Jurkowski.

Following the loss to Everett, Malden has a 5-7 record after wins against Somerville and Chelsea and losses to Melrose, Lynn Classical, and Revere.

“Our backs are up against the wall right now. We don’t have a lot of room for error. The goal is to qualify for States, so we have to win ten games. We have to win five out of our last five games. The boys know that it starts at Somerville, we have to go to Somerville and win. Every game we approach, we have to have the mindset that if we lose the season’s possibly over. Just got to take every game like it’s our last game,” said Jurkowski.



Sophomore DeShawn Bunch playing defense with Malden’s five. CHOUAIB SAIDI



Scan this QR code to watch reporters Gilles Ndagha, Vicotria Domiciano, Emily Weihrach, and Caroline Santos' video on the Track team's meet on January 10th.



Scan this QR code to watch reporter Evelyn Ruan's video recap on the Gymnastic team's meet against Medford on January 4th.



Scan this QR code to listen to reporters Chelmie Hyppolite and Meriam Bouchtout interview new girls' soccer captain Ameila Berliner.

