

The Blue and Gold



Malden High School
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Producing student journalism since 1915

Uprising for Mastrangelo's Last Chapter

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Acts of resistance can come in many forms of protest: boycotts, strikes, sit-ins, and many more. Why are protests necessary? Well, to put it shortly, they derive from a multitude of reasons, usually being reasons of discontent and anger, that allow those involved to actively vocalize their problems.

Malden is far from unfamiliar with the scene of protesting, as dating back to just a little over three years ago, on October 17, 2022, teachers from all over the city gathered to voice their concerns, one of which was low pay.

Following an official announcement from Malden's superintendent, Dr. Timothy Sippel, it was announced that Malden High's current principal, Christopher Mastrangelo, would not have his contract renewed, allowing him to work one more year to reach his full retirement. On December 1st, an Instagram account by the username @maldenhighwalksout came to light, giving publicity to student concerns about unjust treatment, as well as advocating for the voices of Malden's student body.

Since then, junior Amelia Berliner has revealed herself to be behind the account's ownership, alongside senior Fiona Youmell.

Berliner explained why she started the account, describing how Mastrangelo has helped her and many students throughout his career. "I have personally worked with Mr. Mastrangelo on many occasions, whether that is through student council, sports, or events; each time he has provided opportunities for suc-

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CLASH ROYALE TAKES OVER MALDEN HIGH



Artwork drawn by ABYAN ALI

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Concert Choir Winter Concert



Choral Arts director Todd Cole directing the Mixed Chorus through their performance of the song "Kindle the Candles tonight" by Linda Marcus. JACOB FUENTES

Jacob Fuentes
Editor-in-Chief of Web

As Malden High School students prepared for winter break, the instrumental and choral art programs prepared to showcase the hard work they have demonstrated over the first se-

mester of the year. On December 17th, 2025, the choral arts program, directed by Todd Cole, presented their work during their annual winter concert. The concert did not consist of only Christmas music, it also included pieces honoring Hanukkah.

The show began after the lights in the Jenkins Auditorium dimmed and soon members of Concert Choir began to walk down the aisles with fake candles while they sang "Silent Night" as Cole directed while he stood on the stage lit by a spotlight. This piece focuses on the

calmness and tranquility of Jesus Christ's birth as he is accompanied by his mother, The Virgin Mary, and his father, Saint Joseph.

This peaceful performance by Concert Choir was a soothing transition into the next group: Mixed Chorus, a group

that Cole described as "a wonderfully hard working group of singers... combined of two different periods."

These two class periods had not performed together until the dress rehearsal that happened only the night before the

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Annual Winter Instrumental Concert Warms the Night

Chelmie Hyppolite
Managing Editor

With the various eye-catching music electives at Malden High School, such as the Rock & Alternative Ensemble class and the Piano & Guitar class, Lauren Foley, who has been teaching at Malden High School for almost four years, is a key piece of the instrumental music program.

One thing in common within the instrumental

music program is their participation in the annual Winter Instrumental Concert, which was hosted December 11th in the Jenkins Auditorium, warming the audience with an array of unique performances.

To participate in the concert students must ask Foley for approval or you must be a part of Rock Ensembles, Concert Band, or Wind Ensembles, as "performing is a requirement for the three classes involved," Foley shared.

Just like any other major arts or musical event, a vast amount of preparation must occur. "We usually start preparing for the concert towards the end of October/start of November. We work on the music in class and then we have a dress rehearsal



Lauren Foley receiving flowers from trombone player senior Lincoln Boswell. CHELMIE HYPOLITE

the night before the concert," added Foley.

To start the concert off, several students participating in the Rock Ensembles class performed in their respective groups. The mix of guitars, vo-

cal, basses, piano, and drums demonstrated each group's intense practice and distinctive tastes. The songs performed ranged from "See You Again" by Tyler the Creator and Kali Uchis to "All of Me"

by Michael Buble, all of which received intense support and love from the audience.

Senior Nicholas Li shared his desire to have

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FROM TEXTBOOKS TO TECH: OUR EXPERIENCE AT THE MIT MUSEUM



Sophomore Lyra Heining listening to the MIT D-Labs recordings of different social problems and the proposed solutions to it. ISRAA MALHOUNI

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MALDEN BOYS BASKETBALL FIRES UP AGAINST CHELSEA



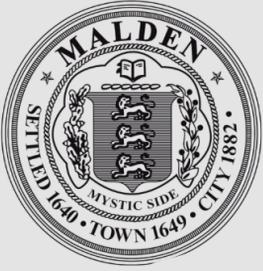
Sophomore Allen Deris sizing up defender, before making a move to the basket in order to score. MANNY PEREZ

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DO WELL, BE WELL ; DOING RIGHT BY MASTRANGELO

The Editorial Staff

What does it mean to be a principal? A principal is someone who acts from a foundation of courage, leads with a passionate heart, and has unwavering care for every single student and staff member that steps into their building. A principal is not driven by fear or the winds of intimidation, as they act as a protector to the faculty and students that make up the living and breathing ecosystem that is a school. Principal is the title that Christopher Mastrangelo has rightfully earned through his endeavours as a person of authority, as well as a person who creates a safe space for students, staff members, and family members in Malden.

Mastrangelo served 18 years at Malden High School, shepherding the school through the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic, and working tirelessly to get the school back on track through both academics and culture. After all of that, he was informed the day before Thanksgiving that his contract would not be renewed. Mastrangelo followed up with an e-mail to the Malden High staff informing them of the decision. This caused an unsettled environment at Malden High School, as he was only one year away from retirement.

As an act of civil disobedience, students conducted a peaceful walkout, with support from the Malden Educator Association (MEA), to protest this decision approved by the current Superintendent, Dr. Timothy Sippel. A petition in favor of a new, one-year contract for Mastrangelo was signed with almost 800 signatures from the Malden community. This is a demonstration of the sheer impact that was felt throughout the city as their values were disregarded, watching a devoted member of their community be treated so disrespectfully.

The core values of journalism lie in the silent pledge one must take before fully committing to the duty of serving the community. It is essential that journalists provide their audience with media that is ethical, truthful, and most importantly, compassionate through displays of humanity. A similar pledge is taken when one decides to step into the principal position. The environment that Mastrangelo fosters at Malden High is built upon this unspoken promise, with such values being highlighted during the school committee meeting by junior Frankie Marengi-Pellino, who confidently affirmed that “the principal I know and love taught us to stand up for those who need it, rally around those you love, and call out what’s wrong—and this is wrong.”

The past four years of our careers as journalists have taught us a multitude of lessons that have molded us into where we are today. The biggest one yet has been how it is our responsibility to maintain grit even through times of adversity in search of truth. We acknowledge the gravity of the situation, but we remain loyal to our duty to report with integrity, accuracy, and fairness even when it is difficult. As devastated as we are to say goodbye to Mastrangelo, we are confident in the immense

impact that he has had on us and the Malden community and in doing so, we hope to carry on his legacy and let the world know the impact that our principal has had on our community.

Throughout history the press has watched and reported on the government’s actions calling out their fallacies and acted as an additional check on governmental power. Our position as journalists has remained the same since the 18th century allowing us to hold accountability to the leaders who shape our country, our city, and schools. We have made sure the full story was told to the best of our ability regarding Mastrangelo’s contract. Journalism does not only impact the transparency of our articles, but makes better leaders as we bring to light actions that normally could go unnoticed and have great ramifications. It often can simplify complex topics so the general public can truly understand what is taking place. Then the leaders have to be consistent.

Despite the effort, this demonstration did not affect the Superintendent’s decision. Dr. Sippel made it evidently clear that his decision was set in stone after a series of Parent and Student Square posts were sent regarding the non-renewal of principal Mastrangelo’s contract.

Richard Tivnan, a social studies teacher at Malden High for 17 years, shared his voice regarding the situation with Mastrangelo at the school committee meeting’s open forum on December 8th, 2025. “I want to take you back to December 2017. A week before our winter break, the then-principal announced by email that he would not be returning to the school after vacation. The shock in the building was immediate. The students and staff were left feeling uncertain and unstable. Our school felt rudderless. That same afternoon, Chris was asked to step in to be interim principal. He didn’t hesitate. He simply said yes because the school needed him.”

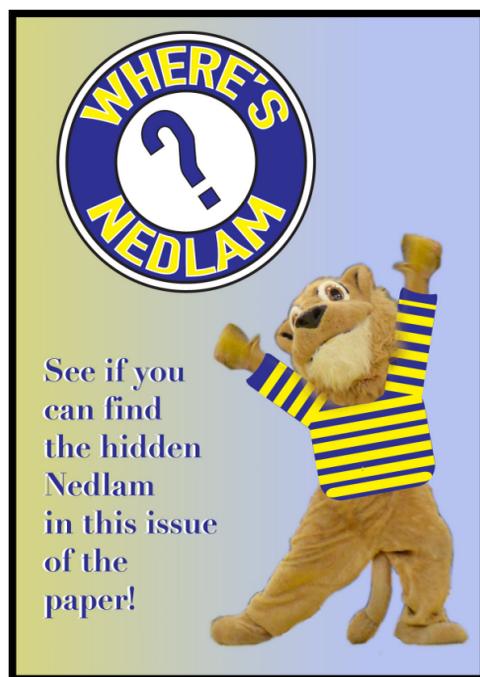
We, the editors of The Blue and Gold, cannot turn a blind eye to Mastrangelo’s contract non-renewal when they actively contradict our values. It is contrary to the impact that we strive to have on the community every day, transparency. The public still has not been given a reason for this decision.

Transparency is a key factor that was lacking throughout this entire process of termination. Transparency for staff, for students, for parents, and for Malden. We all felt shut out by this decision, and our question of “why is this happening?” will seemingly never be answered. We have been told that it’s inappropriate and outside of the bounds of legality, leaving the environment unsettled and continually searching for answers that are unobtainable.

As a community we have felt unheard and been disheartened to know that no matter our efforts, not even a thought could be put back into the decision that was made. We continue to pledge that we will hold the powers that govern us accountable for their actions and shed light on actions that affect our entire community. If there had been any transparency about the decision or a concern for the timing, knowing the history of Malden High School principalship, the community would not have felt so disrespected and hurt by what happened. There was no regard for the Malden community and felt like a business deal more than a shift in leadership.

We hope that reconciliation and restoration can be brought into Malden as the change in leadership is ever evolving.

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

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Clash Royale Takes Over Malden High

The Effect and Process of Playing Games During School

Aundrea Cifuentes
Head of Sports

Sometimes classwork can be boring and feel like it's neverending, but as a teenager, it's common to find something to pass the time. Whether you want to play games on your Chromebook, your phone, or even a board game, there's always something available. One game in particular has been on the rise at Malden High School: Clash Royale.

Clash Royale is a real-time multiplayer strategy game combining elements of tower defense, collectible card defense, and a multiplayer online battle arena. Players gather and enhance cards that depict troops, spells, and defensive buildings to battle opponents in quick three minute duels, aimed at destroying enemy towers. The game was launched globally on March 2nd, 2016, marking Supercell's first spin-off of Clash of Clans.

With students getting bored during class, this game has quickly become a go-to. The games have a short play time, allowing anyone to get a quick match in during the limited free time that students may have between assignments or even passing periods.

"At least once a day during my classes I hear the Clash Royale opening sound during assignments," junior Camila Ramas highlighted. Sophomore Hannah Coggswell stated that these students will "pause their assignments just to get a quick match in," both agreeing that this can be somewhat annoying.

Sophomore Giovanna Gomes explained her opinion, "I usually get in a match almost every class when I'm bored and I'll play against my friends sometimes in a 1v1. It just takes up my time when I don't want to finish the assignment right away or when I have free time."

Most teachers believe non-educational video games such as Clash Royale can often be distracting, as they take away from students' attention and concentration. Brunelli principal, Jean Ewald Charles, shared his frustration over it interfering with students' education.

Chemistry teacher Katherine Haskell believes "if they play the game during an appropriate time when school work is over, I have no problem with it, and as long as it doesn't take away from their work."

Games in general for students can be a lot to handle when they prioritize their game over their work, but if a student can find the balance between handling a little freedom to go on their phones and still getting their work completed, it can teach responsibility and self-control rather than becoming a distraction.

Floods Overwhelm Vietnam



Yen Nguyen
Head of Local

Hanoi - after the rain. HAITHANH, photo taken from Wikimedia Commons.

Climate change is a major factor in severe droughts and substantial heavy floods in various parts of the world. As climate change continues to inflict major changes on our environment, its impact directly contributes to the frequency and severity of these floods; one country in particular, currently facing these destructive floods is the Southeast Asian country of Vietnam.

As of late October 2025, continuous rainfall has caused many floods and mudslides all throughout Vietnam; the most severely impacted areas are across Central Vietnam. Dak Lak province—where the floods are heaviest—has seen over 60 people meet their fates due to drowning. Other prevalent deaths have occurred in the provinces of Khanh Hoa, Gia Lai, Lam Dong, Quang Tri, and Da Nang.

According to the BBC, nearly 186,000 homes were destroyed across the entire country, "at least 90 people have died," a dozen more are missing, and at least three million livestock were swept away. "Offi-

cial estimates there has been hundreds of millions of pounds worth of damage." The damage inflicted on Vietnam's land and citizens is massive, where, on top of the loss of many lives, environmental contamination proved to be a rising issue, along with agricultural wreckage and severe destruction to major infrastructures.

The floods have caused extensive damage to several roads, drainage systems, and bridges, such as the Phu Thien suspension bridge in Lam Dong province. Junior President of Malden High School's Vietnamese Student Association, Ly Nguyen voiced, "This isn't the first time that Central Vietnamese people have experienced this. Rebuilding isn't easy and won't guarantee to be like before."

This is not the first harsh flood that Vietnam has endured this year. However, the impact this time around is worse and it's become a nationwide climate crisis that's unraveling faster than the nation can prepare for. According to the New York Times, "Vietnam has faced 14 typhoons

this year. Five was the average a few decades ago."

The accumulation of relentless floods influenced by consistent typhoons in Vietnam "has caused an estimated 85 trillion dong (\$3.2 billion) of economic losses this year so far," according to Bloomberg.

Sophomore Alexis Lee, who has family in Da Nang, expressed that she is mostly concerned about her family's well-being. "A lot of their property was destroyed, and parts of their house were heavily flooded and damaged."

The submergence of thousands of homes has also raised concerns for domestic and sanitation issues: overcrowding in insufficient evacuation centers, contaminated water, and a lack of clean water for cooking and cleaning. The accumulated rainwater flowing throughout the streets of Vietnam has made it incredibly difficult for citizens to get around. It has also resulted in rampant

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COMMUNITY THOUGHTS ON MALDEN HIGH START TIME

Ding Ding! By 7:45 A.M., the Malden High School hallways are wide awake; backpacks swooshing, friends chit-chatting, and the smell of freshly-made Dunkin' fills the halls as students rush to first period. Some students appear ready to learn, while others seem like they've hit the snooze button quite a few times, already dreading the long day ahead.

For many students, the early start time is not only an inconvenience but also a key factor that sets the tone for the rest of the day. Some students feel that their mornings are rushed and that the things they can accomplish before school begins are limited.

"I can't do a lot of things in the morning because there just isn't enough time," said senior Avani Chhetiri. "Sometimes I wish I could review for a test or quiz before school, but the bus schedule doesn't allow it," she continued.

Sophomore Lillyanna Keogh expressed her concern with arriving at school in an orderly fashion, having to "get used" to leaving her house earlier. "I don't live very close to school, so oftentimes if I leave the house just a few minutes late, I end up tardy," Keogh explained.

Beyond rushed mornings, exhaustion also follows students into classrooms and after-school activities. "Feeling exhausted makes it harder to keep up with homework and other responsibilities," sophomore Harley Cadeau voiced.

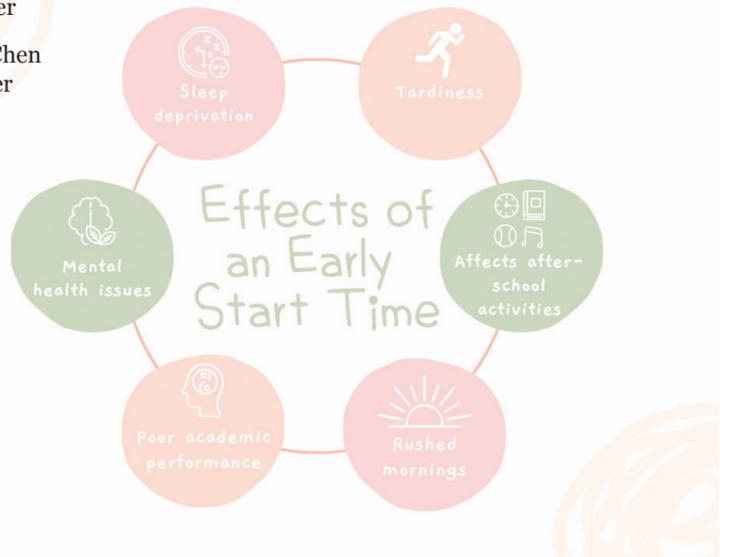
In senior Ethan Chen's eyes, the early start time is another "reason why students may fall behind on assignments." Chen points out that with some of his AP classes, he often stays up late completing assignments, "limiting" the sleep he gets.

"I believe that certain poor-scoring assessments and easily avoidable mistakes I have made resulted from such a lack of adequate sleep," Chen expressed.

In recent years, the debate over school start times has received significant national attention. According to the Centers for

Priscarla Villefranche
Reporter

Dylan Chen
Reporter



Graphic presenting the effects of an early start time. PRISCARLA VILLEFRANCHE

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), chronic sleep deprivation harms students, especially high schoolers, and can increase the risk of academic struggle and mental health issues, such as depression.

Research also shows that earlier start times don't sync with the changing circadian rhythms that students experience. The circadian rhythm is the natural cycle of physical, mental, and behavioral changes that the body goes through in a 24-hour cycle. It influences important functions in the body, most notably: our sleep patterns. During puberty, teenagers begin to experience a natural shift in circadian rhythms, making it difficult for them to fall asleep before 11 P.M. As a result, an increase in homework and hormonal changes, sleep deprivation becomes common.

"Teenagers naturally don't get tired until later in the evening," stated English teacher Anne Mooney. "The data says high schools should start later and K-8 schools should start earlier, but personally, I kind of like an earlier start time," Mooney added.

Additionally, chemistry teacher John Frigo believes that the current start time here at Malden High benefits students. "I think it should be even earlier," Frigo declared, advocating for the removal of

homeroom and that classes should start at exactly 7:45 A.M.

On the other hand, U.S. History teacher Courtney Braz empathizes with students' opinions but also acknowledges the importance of balance. "I do think it's a little bit too early to start at 7:45, but I definitely would not sacrifice coming in later to leave much later."

Some might argue that students' habits play a role in waking up late. Brunelli House Principal Jean Ewald Charles suggested that it's not a matter of time, but rather "learning to adjust, knowing how to wake up at the right time, and creating a schedule," which is recommended for students.

Clearly, the time school begins at Malden High has sparked a variety of perspectives, with students arguing over its negative effects and educators emphasizing its positives.

"I can see how it prepares students with time management and instructs them to follow a routine," shared Keogh, adding on how "it gets pretty draining after a while."

"If we wanted to get a [start] time based on students' needs, there would have to be a lot that would change," concluded Charles.

Malden Speaks Out: A Warm Solace to Mastrangelo

STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND TEACHERS SPEAK OUT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING IN SUPPORT OF PRINCIPAL

Kyle Dang
Copy Editor

Emilly Weihrach
Copy Editor

On December 8th, at 6:00 PM, a school committee meeting was hosted after students collectively participated in a scheduled walkout earlier that morning. Credited to junior Amelia Berliner as the protest organizer, the act of protest addressed principal Chris Mastrangelo's non-renewal of his contract. Lasting roughly 40-50 minutes, students made their way to 215 Pleasant Street, holding up signs and chanting phrases in support of Mastrangelo. This action was met with a substantial turnout at the committee meeting later that evening, as various teachers and students volunteered to publicly speak about their concerns.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, the committee made it clear that each speaker was permitted an allotted time of three minutes to ensure equal, yet ample time between each person.

In the circumstances that someone could not attend in-person, a Zoom meeting was held for people to raise their hands digitally and get their points across.

Students

The meeting began with student concerns and was opened by senior Thomas Conti, who laid the stage for what was to come. He briefly introduced himself, his role as a student, and his speech's purpose. Conti passionately explained how Mastrangelo does best at supporting the school's environment, and not extending his contract would "hinder free thought and expression in this school and this city," by undermining their power as higher-ups.

Directly following Conti was sophomore JJ Scott, who intro-

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AN UPRISING FOR MASTRANGELO'S LAST CHAPTER



Students holding up signs within the crowd reading "1 City, 1 School, 1 More Year", and "17 Years of Dedication > One Sudden Decision." EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

Continued from front page

cess." She continued on her stance, voicing: "I may not know him too well, but what I do know is he deserves much better than this."

Youmell added, "We both felt really motivated to stand up for our principal." Both Youmell and Berliner had hopes in showing both appreciation for Mastrangelo and voicing student concerns to Sippel.

The account's first post was met with positive reception from students, which Berliner noted there were "51,636 views by the day of the protest, and 533 shares."

The attention that the news of the walkout had garnered through social media had reached students "pretty much the day it got announced" sophomore Minerva Davenport, a participant of the walkout claimed.

"We were proud that so many voices were heard, people made signs and chants, and it was nice to see our huge school united over our principal. I hope this walkout encourages students to stay engaged with what is happening in our city and use their voice for the greater good," stated Youmell.

On the 8th of December, this marked the day of the official walkout. Together, all four grades gathered during the 6th enrichment period, leaving through the main office doors. After the group had corralled, they would head towards Pleasant Street, where the City Hall was located. Streets were controlled by several police officers, barricading crosswalks and preventing vehicular entry.

After the students arrived at the City Hall, waves of shouting came

out of the crowd, and several chants erupted as students waved their posterboards, signaling their appreciation towards Mastrangelo.

As the crowd began to form, senior Juninho Victor appeared to take charge of the student body, commanding and leading the group.

With Victor's leadership, the crowd of students began marching towards the City Hall building itself. This plan was quickly shut down, as officers became instantly aware of the situation, blocking the doors from student entry.

Many had begun to split off into smaller groups, hoping to amplify their voices for maximum reach.

Lasting well over 40 minutes, high school staff began to intervene with the rally, as students began to become a large

hindrance to local businesses. Adults began to escort students back to the school building, dissipating the protest.

Despite the protest's short-lived expectancy, the walkout organizer, Berliner, explained how it had exceeded her expectations.

"I walked out of the school to see hundreds of people walking together down to City Hall. To me, this didn't just show how much Malden High values Mr. Mastrangelo, it also showed us how unified Malden High can be, and how, as a community, we can really do great things if we put our mind to it," stated Berliner.

The day after, a school committee meeting was held, which allowed students to volunteer to give a speech, outlining their expectations.

Junior Frankie Marengi, one of the

student speakers, shared: "I felt I could accurately represent the student body and the majority opinion because I really don't mind voicing my opinions regardless of the outcome. I'm not afraid to receive backlash, and I know I can articulate it in a straightforward way that leaves space for discussion. It's incredibly disrespectful and shows how MPS employees and students can expect to be treated. It shows how undervalued and taken for granted he is."

Overall, this gave high schoolers a learning experience. Protests aren't a lighthearted topic; the ability to have protests in the modern world is highly valued and shouldn't be overlooked. It pushes forward freedom of speech and the need to advocate for yourself and anyone you care about in times of injustice.

FLOODS OVERWHELM VIETNAM, CREATE DESTRUCTION



Houses built out over the canals. The delta floods for 3-4 months a year and the water rises to at least the 2nd storey so these stilts are absolutely necessary and a common feature of most buildings on the water. MCKAY SAVAGE, photo taken from Wikimedia Commons.

Continued from page 3

power outages, further reducing people's access to resources. These issues expose residents to higher risks of getting bacterial diseases.

"I have some family in Da Nang. The last time we got in contact with them, they told us everything was destroyed. Books, photos, furniture, and vehicles were either damaged or swept away. I

can't even begin to imagine how they're feeling," Junior Dylan Pham from Malden Catholic explained.

Vietnam, along with many other Southeast Asian countries, is more vulnerable to floods and typhoons due to its geography, including low-lying coastal regions and extensive coastlines. As mentioned by the BBC, "scientists say

that Vietnam has been left more exposed to extreme weather events by human-driven climate change," which is the primary cause for stronger, more frequent typhoons.

Despite the overwhelming abundance of flooding and destruction, citizens remain strong and determined to help each other in this tragedy. Police and military resources are being as-

sembled and deployed to several areas that have been severely impacted. With many roads submerged, helicopters have been stationed in multiple locations to evacuate residents and drop aid supplies, including support packages, food, and clean water. Even residents in drier areas are organizing to help however they can; metro stations are establishing collection sites in

which piles of food and clothing are sent to assist those farther north and lacking resources.

The efforts of Vietnamese citizens in countering the natural crisis reflects the country's determination and strong unity during a tremendous hardship. As they push through, the nation is hopeful in their recovery from this catastrophe.

Glimpse into the Cityside

Kyle Dang
Copy Editor

In the bustling city of Boston, Massachusetts, everywhere you look, there are glimpses of cars zooming past, commotion left and right, and towering buildings reaching for the sky. In Back Bay, Boston, an area renowned for its tourism, shopping centers, and recreational potential, is the street of Newbury.

Often referred to as just “Newbury,” maybe you have heard of the street from a classmate, while scrolling through Instagram stories, or having gone yourself. As mentioned in previous Blue & Gold articles, Newbury Street is home to renowned attractions such as Blank Street Coffee and Memory Shop. What makes this seemingly ordinary street such a popular landmark for commoners and foreigners alike?

Described as an eight-block shopping center, Newbury is known for its wide range of apparel, from high-end designer stores, such as Rolex, to comfy, casual wear, like Uniqlo. In addition to being an ideal location for clothes and accessories, its dining district is well known for offering meals of great sophistication to more affordable fast foods. However, if clothing and food are not exactly your preference, many other stores focus on random collectibles and memorabilia—such as Newbury Comics and MoreFun.

Freshman Katherine Jones expressed how she likes Muji for “the cute stationery.” Sophomores Meybelin Guadron and Hana Wanas expressed how they frequent Memory Shop because of the “wide variety of photo-booths,” and the potential to “make memories.” Sophomore Vicky Ye described Newbury Comics as a place for “all the manga and the little trinkets.”

Junior Sofia Evoras mentioned how, due to the wide range of stores, “you can find things to your specific interest,” while also opening up the possibility of “finding new things each time.” For example, Malden High School alumna Manal Aboukhalil mentioned how stores like Muji, Tao’s, and Newbury Comics allow her to “get stationary, makeup, and other cute items” all while being in one area.

Additionally, junior Krystalyn Vo noted how on Sundays, “they don’t allow cars” through the street, which many businesses see as an opportunity to host giveaways for free items, which she found to be enjoyable.

Evidently, the street is known for its wide se-

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Malden Exits Poetry Out Loud



Host, Yahaira Marquez, hands Lyra Heining and Ash Mejia Serna their trophies for winning the poetry recitation contest. CHOUAIB SAIDI

Alexia Lima
Managing Editor

In a community where diversity is celebrated, the exploration and acknowledgement of different experiences and voices is always the top priority; within Malden High’s annual participation in the Poetry Out Loud (POL) competition, the mission of emphasizing diverse voices through poetry recitation holds no exception. Therefore, amidst policy changes that were deemed detrimental to Malden’s mission, the English department decided to withdraw from participating in the national POL competition this year.

Originating as an optional activity, during her time as the English Department’s Teacher Leader 18 years ago, Jennifer Clapp facilitated the transition to a schoolwide competition that would embed poetry recitation within the English curriculum and require annual participation throughout all grades.

Years of devotion to the organization resulted in Malden becoming the “poster child” for POL. Clapp explained as she shared how dating back to “since the contest was invented, it might even have started the first year they had it, we have been doing it for 20 years.”

Current English De-

partment Teacher Leader Yahaira Márquez described the purpose of making POL participation mandatory within the curriculum, “We wanted to have a different type of assessment for students to show their understanding of texts, not merely through their writing but within the domain of speaking and listening through their recitation as well.”

To honor the 250th anniversary of the country, the POL 2025-2026 program has been adapted to solely focus on poems that encompass American history, culture, and identity. In addition, the Poetry Foundation that formerly supplied the rights

to the variety of poems on the POL website pulled away from their role this year, resulting in only poems part of the public domain to be available within the competition. An author’s work is in the public domain 70 years after their death due to their copyright expiring.

These new restrictions within the organization’s poetry selection led to the English department’s ultimate decision to withdraw Malden’s participation, Márquez emphasized how the policy changes and suppression of diversity “did not sit right with us.”

“I agree with the decision that we made as

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Group photo of Skate Club attendees at the first event of the year on December 5th. Photo submitted by Gino Spadafora

In the wake of the winter’s first flurries, the Malden High Skate Club officially commenced their first month of gatherings in Boston the past December. New and recurring members made the trip to Boston to participate in a fun and festive activity as anticipation built for the holiday season.

The club, founded in 2023 by past Editors-in-Chief for The Blue and Gold Ryan Coggsell and Bo Stead, returned in December with new senior officers Gino Spadafora and Joseph Alayane, as well as sophomore Hannah Coggsell taking leadership of the club. The club announced they would be hosting three skates for the month; the first two occurring at Steriti Memorial Rink on December 5th and December

12th, and the third, unfortunately being cancelled due to concerns about costs, at Boston’s Frog Pond.

The club saw changes in its locations this year, holding all meetings for the rest of the season at Steriti Rink. In previous years, the club would switch between meetings at Flynn Rink in Medford and Steriti. This change reduced costs for skaters, as Flynn Rink charges a \$5 entry fee alongside a \$5 rental fee for skates. This change is also more convenient transportation-wise, as the rink is a seven minute walk from North Station, which can be accessed through taking the train at the Malden Center station.

“I don’t mind the events being held in Boston rather than Medford since taking the train there is really simple, but

I think it would be nice to switch it up every now and then,” expressed junior Angela Lam, who returned to the Skate Club after joining last year.

“We’re happy with the turnout this year, we hope to keep the enthusiasm going and get new people to join,” shared Alayane, who is Co-President of the club alongside Spadafora.

For its third year now, the club has continued to foster an environment in which people can try out an activity for the first time with their friends, develop a new hobby, learn a new skill, or reignite their enjoyment for ice skating.

“It’s super fun. I get to learn how to ice skate with my friends; I wasn’t very good at the beginning of the year and now I am okay at it,” said junior Aya Tfraoui, who ex-

pressed that her motivation for going to the gatherings was to continue to develop her ice skating ability.

The club, despite seeing less attendance in recent meetings, still provides an opportunity for students to meet outside of school for an engaging activity that “brings everyone together and gives us a sense of belonging” according to Marengi. “Nobody really knows how to skate. Struggling with your friends and enjoying those silly moments makes it the most fun,” she continued.

As the winter season progresses in light of one of Boston’s coldest winters, the club continues to evoke a welcoming atmosphere for those of all different skill levels and a fun time to spend with friends for its members.

Support for Mastrangelo at School Committee Open Forum

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duced himself as a student advocate and member of the Speech and Debate team, and expressed his discontent with the upcoming changes in the school. Scott made the point that “change is inevitable,” but it is not fair to cut Mastrangelo’s job short, and instead, the committee should “help ease the transition and ensure the best interest for the student body.”

Sophomore Minerva Davenport alluded to the past with her great-grandfather, Cecil Calvin Busby, who had previously worked at Malden High, leaving a great impact on the school’s community.

“Mr. Mastrangelo has managed to make the same impact my great-grandfather had all those years ago. I have had friends and family who attended Malden High while Mr. Mastrangelo worked here in his 17 years, and they all said the same thing: that he was the best and he was worth coming back for,” Davenport remarked.

Junior Frankie Marengi-Pellino’s powerful statement praised Mastrangelo for supporting and uplifting the school’s diversity. She continued to counter superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel’s own words, essentially stating he does not know enough about the school’s environment to truly make a change “for the better.”

In a similar fashion, seniors Juninho Victor, Moisha Howse, and junior Zia Maxwell recalled their journey throughout Malden High, reinforcing the ideas of how Mastrangelo was able to keep up with his job in encouraging everyone, upholding his empathy and compassion.

Mauro Mendes, a junior, expressed his past growing up in Beebe. “I was always sent to the office a lot. The vice principal there was really kind and helped me go through it; she always saw me all the time. She always helped me through and helped me get through it. That’s the type of principal Mastrangelo is.”

Teachers

After a round of student advocacy, the teachers took to the podium, starting with Chris Giordano, the teacher leader of the math department, who attended the commit-

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GLIMPSE INTO THE CITYSIDE

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lection of stores, appealing to Boston's diverse demographic. As if the street alone is not enough, Newbury borders the Boston Public Library, Hynes Convention Center, Prudential Center, and Copley Place, resulting in constant occupation in the Back Bay area.

In comparison to the humble town of Malden, known for its local family-run stores and overall mundane atmosphere, Boston stands out as a nice getaway for some excitement and adrenaline.

Many Maldonians—such as Vo—emphasized Back Bay to be “easily accessible through train.” From Malden Center, taking the orange line inbound via Forest Hills will easily commute to Back Bay, taking roughly 20-30 minutes. Not only is Newbury Street convenient, but sophomore Hana Wanas also highlighted how the commute to Boston is, overall, quite short.

Although busy crowds and hectic streets may not be your appeal, who knows, perhaps you could find yourself in a nearby store or restaurant, enjoying everything Newbury Street has to offer.

Co' 2028 Student Council Reflects on Their Journey

Haset Tesfaw
Lead Reporter

Vice President Sabri-ma Bhattarai claims for this school year she is “committed to making it a memorable experience for our grade. The student council and I have been planning a variety of events that we believe will improve our school community and foster engagement among our peers.”

The class of 2028 aspires to make this year a success by raising money through “fun and engaging events,” President Julius Scott said.

Reflecting on last year, Bhattarai explained how they organized two major events: their Harlem Wizards Basketball game and the Spring Barbecue.

“We recognized that there may have been some challenges with students accessing information, so we plan to address this by promoting our meetings through social media and on our Google Classroom,” Bhattarai added. In addition, she hopes that this year they are able to improve their communication.

Other than the lack

Local News

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MALDEN HIGH'S DIVERSITY SHINES



Fatima Husain
Copy Editor

President Reva Upadhayay asking new club members about social concerns they would be interested in discussing at future club meetings. FATIMA

HUSAIN

Malden High, often recognized as one of the most diverse high schools in Massachusetts, continues to expand its cultural circle. With dozens of students from different communities already establishing various clubs, another voice now rises through the South Asian Student Association (SASA).

The club, founded by junior Reva Upadhayay, began from her realization that while many South Asian students attend Malden High, representation was lacking. She explained that it was not until her sophomore year that she fully comprehended how “deeply community is valued in South Asian culture,” and how necessary it is for students who may hesitate to seek it out themselves.

Sophomore Wafia Saruwar expressed how this club serves as a cornerstone for South Asian youths who grew up without “seeing people who look like them, celebrate the same ideas, or speak the same language.”

Starting the club required courage, and for a long time, Upadhayay wrestled with self-doubt, questioning whether students would show up or if the idea would succeed. She admitted that pushing past those “what ifs” was the hardest part, but ultimately the most rewarding.

The encouragement of a faculty member has been the key to the club's start: English teacher Jasleen

Anand. Upadhayay credits Anand as a “support system” who encouraged her to move forward even when she “backed out a few times.” Having a South Asian heritage herself, Anand has been able to connect with students in meaningful ways. This led Upadhayay to choose Anand as the club's advisor, because without her guidance, SASA would not exist.

The club's mission centers on creating a safe space where South Asian culture can be celebrated and shared without the influence of media stereotypes. One of its central goals is to challenge the stereotypes that often follow South Asian students in school and beyond. Too often, these students are reduced to certain characteristics, seen as only academically driven or bound by rigid traditions. Even stereotypes that may be considered positive, such as being deemed intellectually gifted, can still deliver harm by creating unrealistic expectations.

These stereotypes go hand-in-hand with how mainstream media shapes perspectives. Hollywood has historically portrayed South Asian characters as sidekicks, comic relief, or background characters, rarely giving them complex or leading roles. These limited portrayals reinforce prejudice and

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Poetry Contest Policy Changes

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a department because what we value here is being able to have students select stories, voices, poets, and perspectives that are in line with their lived experiences or even show them perspectives they are not used to,” English teacher Tia Buonfiglio echoed the harms the reduction in poem diversity could have caused students.

Not only is the organization's emphasis on American identity limiting students from exploring their own identities and experiences, but it is actively suppressing contemporary voices by only including poets in the public domain.

Clapp declared that celebrating modern voices is “how we learn who America is today. Yes, there's valuable poetry in the past, but historians and poets sort of view the past as a foreign country. For people to find things they connect with, we need contemporary voices as well as the voices of the past.”

Malden High's English Department educators refused to allow individuality to be suppressed as diversity stands as a vital pillar in the school's community. “One thing we work on continuously within our classrooms and the curriculum is making sure that content is representative of our students and their experiences. We wanted to ensure that the differences we see in our community are also reflected in the texts...in the poetry,” Márquez detailed.

This outpour of concern over the integrity of student participation in POL by teachers was received warmly by many students, as they agreed with the administrative decision to withdraw from the competition in efforts of highlighting diverse views.

“Poetry at its core is the expression of ideas that cannot simply be said with words, poetry is the raw emotion and feeling of being held down and breaking free, so for poems that have shaped the world to be removed simply due to their association with policy that is discriminatory in nature is disgusting—I think they made the right and only decision they could,” senior and 2025 POL Massachusetts State Finalist Thomas Conti expressed.

Despite withdrawing from the POL competition, the English de-

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BLACK STUDENT UNION BRINGS UNITY



Kayla Turner
Reporter

From left to right: BSU advisor Richard Voltaire, president Venusia Teklu, vice president Wongel Yohannes. Posing for a picture. KAYLA TURNER

At Malden High School, known for its diverse community of students and teachers, it is no surprise that students have formed bonds with one another, creating clubs to share and express similar views. The Black Student Union (BSU), led by junior president Venusia Teklu, “brings community to MHS.”

Due to the departure of Michel-Le Meranda, the club's previous advisor, Richard Voltaire has stepped up in the role of the club's new advisor. Voltaire stated that it offers a “really good opportunity” for him to “help out in a way and to elevate a club.” Voltaire strives to make a “mark and to inspire people” quite similar to him.

The group previously held their meetings in Meranda's room, and has now relocated to the Student Study Center (SSC) in classroom H102.

BSU held its first meeting on November 30th, 2022. Earlier that year, Malden High alumnus Meklit Abel thought of the idea to start a Black Student Union at Malden High, which eventually became a club to “create a safe space for Black students in Malden High to talk about issues that are usually stigmatized and looked down upon,” as stated in a previously written article. Teklu corroborated Abel's concept

of engagement, Bhattarai described the atmosphere as “electric,” and explained how “the entire experience was not only exciting but also a good

way to prepare” for her future responsibilities as Vice President.

Class Advisor Shannon Votaw agreed that they want to get more

of giving a space for students to be seen, supported, and be proud of who they are.

Senior Sorin Mamourette shared, “BSU gives an open space to discuss big issues and the opportunity to have your voice be heard. It's a great way to strengthen the Black community within the school.”

“The main purpose of a Black Student Union is honestly to uplift Black students and educate the school and also create a space where we can talk about our experiences, celebrate culture, and push for positive change,” added Teklu. The BSU assists students to learn more about things they “used to never really think about, from how colorism affects our community to systemic racism dealt with in the workplace. We cover a lot, and I think that it's something that's beneficial to all. You don't need to be Black to learn or hear about these things at our meetings,” which vice president, junior Wongel Yohannes, elaborated.

“If people want to find a place to grow and be themselves and learn about their culture or just be a part of something meaningful, I say BSU is where you need to be,” expressed Teklu.

Yohannes hopes this year, BSU sees “a bunch of new faces” and hopes to “hear and learn about ideas from different perspectives.”

students “involved, engaged, and helping out their class. It was a little slow trying to get people to join the classroom [last year], and it was especial-

ly hard to do so without officers. But for the most part, last year went pretty well, for a freshman class.”

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Poetry Contest
Policy Changes

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partment decided to continue poetry recitation schoolwide because the practice has left an indelible influence on students' perceptions of themselves and each other.

Clapp highlighted how "in a diverse high school like ours where kids take all kinds of different paths and tracks, there's few truly shared experiences that everyone in the high school has and I think it's a valuable one."

Junior Ema Xhindi exclaimed how "reciting poetry, while anxiety inducing, is a good way to practice public speaking with the welcoming idea that 'everyone has to do this and not just me' in the classroom, instilling that the recitation might not be that bad and therefore making it easier for kids to speak out loud."

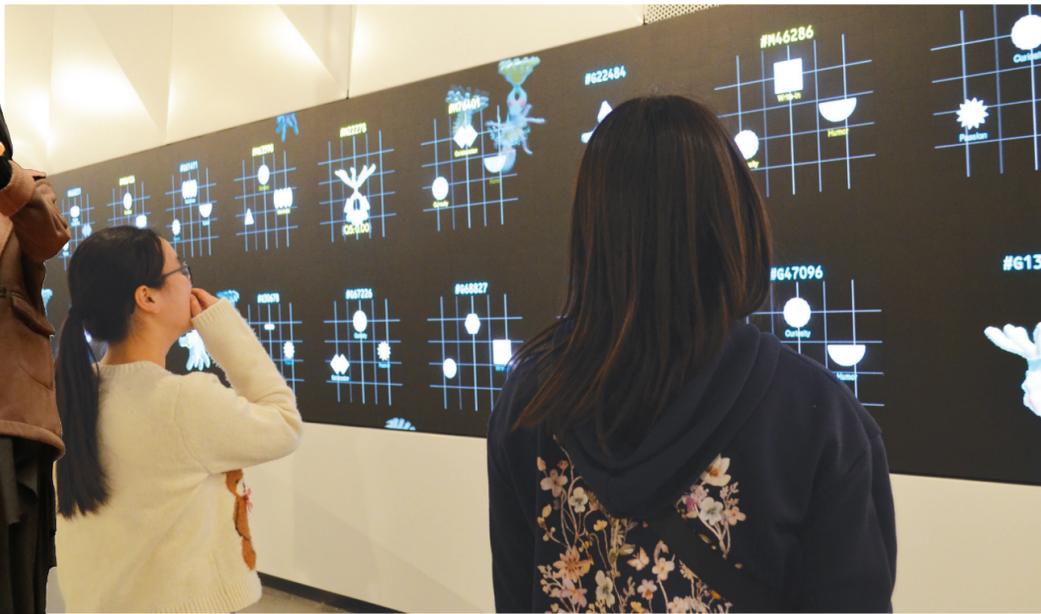
The purpose of the competition is for students to grow an appreciation for poetry recitation, not only for the community it builds among them, but for the confidence it fosters in them. Instead of focusing on the competitive aspect of recitation, POL introduced the intricacies of poetry to students and allowed them to interpret it for themselves.

"Like any form of public speaking, it encourages growth; the ability to be open and honest in your emotions with an audience, to get on a stage and share your words, which is why I hope that MHS begins to allow more diversity in the poems since it is distancing itself from the competition, let people share their own work if they have any, or that one poem that really resonates with them, it's not about competition; it never was. It was about understanding the complexities of this form of emotional medium and allowing anyone to fall in love with it," Conti illustrated.

The English Department shared their concerns over the policy changes with the Huntington Theater Company, Massachusetts's sponsor of POL, and 'they assured us that they are currently doing what they can to get rights to other poems, so hopefully next year they'll have a richer variety,' Márquez added."

As for the future of poetry recitation at MHS, teachers will continue embracing students expressing themselves creatively while keeping the beloved tradition in the

AP SEMINAR TO MIT MUSEUM



Sophomores Sophia Zhang and Sophie Tran looking for their kiosks made by the interactive model called "The Window." ISRAA MALHOUNI

Fatima Husain

Israa Malhouni
Copy Editor

Learning does not always happen behind a desk. Surrounded by numerous interactive exhibits and technology, our field trip to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Museum focused less on observing displays and more on critical thinking.

The day began buzzing with energy, as the train filled with excited AP Seminar students as they made their way to MIT. Jumping on the Orange Line from Malden Center to Forest Hills, we walked to Downtown Crossing to switch onto the Red Line at Alewife Station to reach the Kendall/MIT Station.

Once we arrived at the museum, we were separated into groups and escorted into the Makers Hub, where

aspect of AP Seminar.

Our exploration began with a tour of Essential MIT: a gallery dedicated to digital media, technology, space, and innovation, catering to societal improvement by sharing the stories of individuals from around the world. From pursuing "sanitary difference" in Gujarat, India, to highlighting the importance of "biomass cooking" in Uganda to prevent smoke inhalation, to creating the "SurgiBox solution" for first aid, the MIT D-Labs in the exhibit illustrated how the university-based program works with people around the world to develop and advance collaborative approaches and practical solutions to global poverty challenges.

As we took in groundbreaking projects of biotech and space, we moved into an area with dimmed lights called "Lighten Up! On Biology and Time" in the Henri A. Termeer Gallery. By far the most in-



From left to right: Sophomores Ayusha Shrestha, Ruby Neith Forbes, Sofie Rivera, and Sabrima Bhattarai focusing on the high-speed photography to capture the water droplet on their design. FATIMA HUSAIN

we performed a hands-on lab using 3D pens. Each group had the choice to create a structure designed to repel or adhere water, depending on the experiment. Roles were assigned within each table—the designer, photographer, technician, and light operator, so that each group member would play a part.

Once we finished creating our designs, our instructor, and also the Manager of Science Education, Dora Bever, used a high-speed camera to record water interacting with the 3D structures, capturing each droplet as it was either absorbed or adhered to the plant's surfaces. Watching the process unfold on video brought the experiment to life in a way that reading about it in class never could.

After seeing our 3D creations in action, the excitement continued to brew. Each exhibit we visited afterward was built on the same sense of curiosity and hands-on learning, making it clear that the MIT Museum was designed to challenge the way we think about science and innovation, while engaging the research

teresting and beautiful, Lighten Up! focused on how circadian rhythms affect our dreams, perception, and health by creating a sensory environment.

Featuring 15 international artists, the gallery includes works that let you sleep in a color-changing bed, witness the impact of light, and listen to Artist Liliane Lijn (2023) installing her voice into a head-shaped sculpture to evoke dreams in the Sweet Solar Dreams II, offering a journey into rhythm, sleep, and consciousness.

The calm and soothing effect helped further appreciate the art by emphasizing the colors and lights of the installations and sculptures against the dark backdrop, especially with Helga Schmid's Circadian Dreams (2019-2020), representing the body's 24-hour cycle with the circular bed and curtains, changing colors depending on the stage it is meant to depict.

As soon as we left the dimly lit room, we were

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Support for
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tee meeting via Zoom. He began by recognizing Mastrangelo's impact throughout the school in small and big ways. Giordano would go on to explain how Mastrangelo assisted him since 2010, acting as a helping hand for 16 years.

He would act defensively on behalf of Mastrangelo, asking if the school board could easily strip his job, what would it mean for the teachers?

As Giordano stepped down, History teacher Richard Tivnan stepped forward to the podium, voicing collectively for the school how "the shock in the building was immediate" and "the students and staff were left feeling uncertain and unstable."

Contributing to the community's thoughts, teacher leader of the ELL department, Jennifer McCabe, spoke for many parents of multilingual learners, who agreed that Mastrangelo created a "safe haven" for the students.

ELL teacher Jessica Gold Boots would step onto the stage to amplify student voices by asserting that, "when teenagers organize in mass to defend an educator, it's perhaps a sign that the adults in the room should stop and listen."

Continuing with instances of Mastrangelo's positive influence, Joseph Luongo, who retired back in 2024, recollected his difficult, yet light-hearted memories of the pandemic, where coming out of it was a "very difficult time," yet, despite the hardships, Mastrangelo persevered in pushing everyone back on track and rebuilding post-pandemic.

PACE teacher Rebecca Griffith-Allen shared similar thoughts to Marenghi-Pellino in aiding those who are less fortunate, referencing how no one is hungry, or how everyone is given a coat, which is due to Mastrangelo's "leadership and his support of educators and student-driven priorities."

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curriculum.

"You know that adrenaline you get when the teacher keeps calling names and it gets closer to yours? I'll miss that because I always felt like I just have to go up and do it. I'm able to put my best performance out there and it's something that I'm proud of at the

end of the day," senior Leica Naceus stated.

Whether returning to the POL organization or not, winter will remain a celebratory time where the school unites under a passion for poetry. "It wouldn't feel like December without POL," Márquez concluded.



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Glamour Pals Crafts Bonds with Art

Israa Malhouni
Copy Editor

Making a difference does not always require a big event; in this case, all it required was a classroom, crayons, cards, and a club.

On December 11th, Malden High's Glamour Pals members gathered in Mr. DiBenedetto's room BR487 to make holiday cards to connect with senior citizens. "Something as simple as making cards tells them that they are not alone," expressed president Rosalyn Ruan. She shared that many people do not acknowledge how much isolation can affect older adults, which is why small gestures like handwritten cards can have such a significant impact. PR officer Evelyn Ruan, added that the cards purpose was to "brighten their day."

Throughout the meeting, the atmosphere in the classroom was described as peaceful and welcoming, allowing members to work on their cards while talking with each other. Ruan noted that there was enough time for the members to create their cards while socializing. Sophomore Vinh Pham shared that his favorite part of the activity was writing the messages because of how it felt more personal and heartfelt considering someone would actually read them. The relaxed setting helped turn the meeting into a warm shared experience as opposed to a typical club meeting.

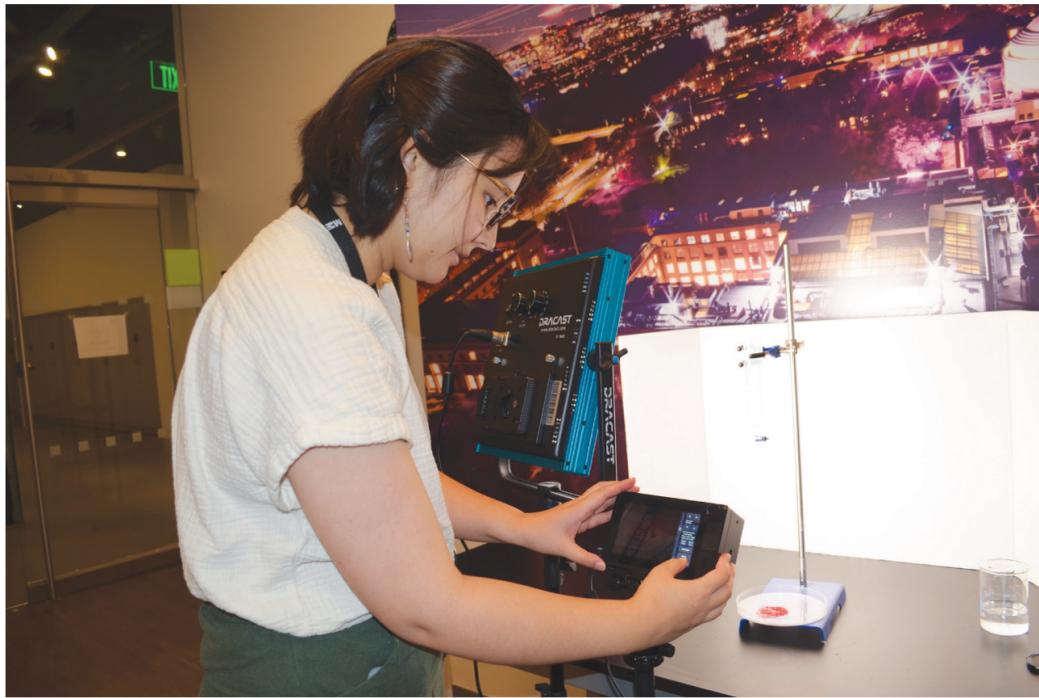
Treasurer Meybelin Guadron explained that service to seniors is a core part of the club because elder isolation is a prominent issue. The event helped some of the newer members develop a better understanding of the club's goals and how simple actions still make significant differences.

In addition to the emotional impact, the meeting served as preparation for future events with local senior citizens. President Ruan shared that the cards will help strengthen the Glamour Pal's connection with upcoming visits. She explained that the cards act as a small introduction, helping the seniors and students feel connected to one another before meeting in person. Despite scheduling challenges earlier in the year, the meeting brought members together around a shared goal.

Through a simple club activity, Glamour Pals demonstrated how acts of kindness can create meaningful connections. By making holiday cards, the club not only worked toward reducing elder isolation, but also strengthened its own sense of community.

Glamour Pals continues to remind seniors that they are noticed, valued, and cared for.

AP SEMINAR TO MIT MUSEUM



MIT Museum's Manager of Science Education Dora Bever demonstrating how to use the high-speed camera to capture the water droplets on student designs. FATIMA HUSAIN

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greeted by stairs that led to a mini-exhibit dedicated to Arthur Ganson, who began creating kinetic sculptures in 1977 and has been featured in numerous galleries and museums throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Next came the Cosmograph by DESIGN EARTH in the Martin J. and Eleanor C. Gruber Gallery, blurring the line between fact and fantasy, encouraging reflection on the promises of the New Space Age and its frontier for space exploration.

Following the curve of the hall, we reached one of the most fascinating parts of the museum, AI: Mind The Gap. The gallery was very versatile, shifting from displaying robotic innovations to a robot called Jibo to having various philosophical questions related to the technology,

such as who gets to decide the truth online, or if AI should have the power it does in today's society. Near the back, there was a game based on identifying real vs fake videos and images, and students had a great time interacting with it.

The most attention was paid to Jibo, who held eloquent conversations with the speaker and easily switched from one student to another, and the poem generator, where AI and an individual could compose a poetic piece before submitting it into a realm where thousands of others existed. As our poem was processed, we could see it moving up the screen's arch and over our heads, joining the other literary works.

Continuing down the hall came the exhibitions: MIT Collects and the Monsters of the Deep: Between Imagination and Science. MIT Collects is

an ongoing display based on storytelling through artifacts, with each section using objects to narrate MIT's history and research culture. Not only does this illustrate the institution's contributions in the field, but it also connects past innovations with current ones.

The Monsters of the Deep briefly transported us to an art gallery, where we were surrounded by enclosed walls covered with sea creatures on vintage paper, framed. The exhibit portrays how people tried to understand mysterious sea creatures in the 16th to 19th centuries, depicting how whales and other marine animals were once imagined as terrifying monsters, but gradually recognized as real mammals through careful studies, underlining the connection between science and imagination.

The final two areas

toured were Made to Measure—a glass wall containing tools and instruments humans have used to quantify the world, including something as simple as the ruler—and Future Type, presenting how artists and designers use computer code as a creative medium.

While education often focuses on answers, our experience highlighted something different: the most valuable part of the visit was not what we saw, but what we were encouraged to question. As we left the museum to take the train back to Malden, we found ourselves looking beyond surface-level information, assumptions, and biases; instead, we were ready to put our thinking caps on and ponder the possibilities hidden within each display.

SOUTH ASIAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION SHINES AT MALDEN HIGH



Fatima Husain
Copy Editor

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leave students feeling uncomfortable in their own skin. Even TV shows or movies with a prominent South Asian character will build the storyline around unrelatable topics, causing the character to be disliked among the community it was meant to represent.

SASA members believe that by discussing these depictions openly, they can highlight the importance of accurate characterization and inspire pride in their heritage. "It's about representation, community, and pride, whether you identify as South Asian or are simply

curious and supportive," voiced Upadhayay. Student members are already voicing how important SASA feels to them. Sophomore treasurer Satvinder Sidhu noted that there is still "not enough South Asian representation" in Malden High or the wider community. Sidhu went on to describe the club as a powerful way to enhance the school with a diverse culture while increasing awareness.

Looking ahead, the club hopes to host two



major events this year: an awareness session in collaboration with other cultural clubs to highlight shared issues, and a cultural night showcasing traditions, food, music, and performances. These events aim to honor heritage and broaden the school community's social sphere.

"Our school is so diverse that we should make the most of it by sharing cultures, traditions, and history to ensure everyone is better educated," believes soph-

omore Tanvir Singh, the SASA club's secretary.

Though still new, SASA is already becoming a vital space for students to embrace identity and build solidarity. Upadhayay hopes the club will continue long after she graduates, ensuring that South Asian voices remain heard and valued at Malden High.

The club meets every other Monday at 2:30 PM in room J363. For more information, follow their Instagram @maldenhs.sasa and join their Google

Co' 2028 Student Council Reflects

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In order to get more of the student body involved, the Class of 2028 decided to break from the usual structure of class meetings and try a new approach. "To try and bring as many people as possible in, we're having class meetings and inviting people other than officers in," with the goal of including "more of the sophomore class in the planning and implementation of our events," class advisor Kristen Kirby explained.

The class of 2028 has already had a successful concession stand, as well as a bake sale this year. Soon they will have their main event; the winter dance, which they're still planning.

"We haven't selected a date for it yet, because Valentine's day is the Saturday after we leave for break so we have to figure out if they want it to be Valentine's day themed or more winter themed in January," Votaw stated.

For their future events, Treasurer Sophia Zhang plans to "accurately keep track of all finances and ensure we maximize profit from all of our events." She, along with the rest of the council, intend to take any opportunity they get to raise money for their class. They also hope to collaborate with the student councils from other grades and support them as well.

The council greatly appreciates advisors' Kirby and Votaw for their successes, saying that they are both "very supportive, knowledgeable, and creative. Having served as class advisors before, they have helped all council members learn, grow, and actively participate," Scott expressed.

"Whenever our class presents new ideas, they wholeheartedly invest their time and energy to facilitate and organize the event. Mrs. Votaw and Mrs. Kirby consistently foster an encouraging environment that guides us in making informed decisions for the benefit of the class," Bhattarai added.

Event coordinator Vanessa Pham mentioned that "without their help, we wouldn't have had such successful events."

Both Votaw and Kirby are confident that they have a strong council and are content with everything they have accomplished so far.

Kirby expressed that "everyone has their own specific roles, but even outside of that, everyone pitches in when things need to happen and they're very willing and eager to help. They always come with a lot of ideas, are always excited, and want good things for the class."

Malden Warms Hearts with Winter Coat Drive

Anna Bui
Head Copy Editor

As winter comes, the days become shorter and the temperature drops. To fight the freezing temperatures, people start to bundle themselves up in layers of clothing. Many people have recognized the need for warm clothing, especially for those who may not have access to it. For this reason, communities often come together to provide to those in need, organizing donations like the “Merry Malden” Christmas Drive from 2021.

The project was led by juniors Redson Melo De Oliveira and Anna Cecilia Nascimento, who worked together to collect coats and other winter clothing. After gathering a significant amount of donations, they began to distribute them from the main office.

Oliveira explained that he was motivated to start the project after seeing the number of people who experienced struggle and “cannot buy clothes like this.” Nascimento added that one of the most important reasons for the drive was to see people happy, even if they were being given “the minimum.” The pair hoped their efforts would be able to make a meaningful difference for students during the harsh winter.

The initial planning process began with discussions between Oliveira and Nascimento, who both shared the same inspirations to move forward with their ideas. Once approval was given to run the drive, their project officially began.

Prior to the start of the drive, the two set up donation boxes near entrances and high-traffic areas, such as the main office and gym, to make it easy for students and staff to donate. The accessibility and attention of the boxes contributed to their goal of getting “the maximum amount of clothes” to hand out, shared Nascimento.

Both students expressed interest in continuing the project again in the following years. Looking at the progress they have made so far, they’ve begun to plan how to make a bigger success in the future. By “putting more boxes,” and “planning more early,” Oliveira has high hopes for creating a stronger impact for students through small but important actions.

CHOIR SHARES MEANINGFUL STORIES



Continued from front page

Senior Daniel Flores joins Mixed Chorus as they sing “Betelehemu.” JACOB FUENTES

concert. The group began by performing “Sweet Silent Night” by Andy Beck. As seen by the title, this piece explores a similar theme of the tranquility of Christmas by maintaining a slow tempo and soft dynamic but avoids focusing on the birth of Jesus Christ, presenting a similar feeling that is not directly tied to religion.

The group then transitioned to a less somber piece, “Jingle, Jingle, Jingle,” a piece arranged by Greg Giplin. While the last two pieces contemplated the calmness and religious aspect of Christmas, this next one was faster and told the story of Santa Claus on Christmas as he rides around in his sleigh and his bells “jingle jingle jingle.”

The Mixed Chorus then switched to the Nigerian Carol, “Betelehemu,” which was also arranged by Andy Beck and translates to Bethlehem—the birthplace of Jesus Christ. This carol was sung in Yoruba, a language spoken by nearly 50 million people in West Africa. Throughout their performance, the Mixed Chorus swayed from side-to-side and clapped rhythmically while accompanied by seniors Kenny Wong, Daniel Flores, Bass Section Leader Matt Jason Chan, and Christopher Arruda-Ciulla who played percussion alongside freshmen Simon Nyoike and Ernest Chen.

As Mixed Chorus

came to their two final pieces of the night, the group transitioned to a softer piece, “Kindle the Candles Tonight” by Linda Marcus and Ruth Elaine Schram while accompanied by senior Erica Littlejohn on piano. This Hanukkah piece described the holiday’s traditions and the importance of lighting the candles on the Menorah.

The group ended their performance with a lively piece, “The Holiday Tango” by Greg Giplin. This theatrical tango piece captures the excitement of the holidays as people complete their shopping and observe sleigh bells. During this piece, the Mixed Chorus was joined by two teachers who danced along to the song.

The spotlight was then shone on the Madrigal Singers, a group of nine upperclassmen who began a performance of “Silver Bells” arranged by Mac Huff. This piece captured the comfort felt from snowy streets, happy children, and the sound of silver bells.

This calm and nurturing environment then became a source of haunting in their next piece “Covenry Carol” by Darmon Meader. This piece tells the biblical story of King Herod’s orders to murder all male infants in Bethlehem. This piece is written from the perspective of a grieving mother after she fears that her son will face the same fate that many other infants did.

The Madrigal singers then began a different lullaby, “Lullaby, My Liking” by Shaw. While this lullaby may sound similar to the previous one, they present drastically different themes. Rather than expressing an attitude of mourning, this lullaby is sung with joy as it is about the birth of Jesus Christ.

This performance included solos performed by senior Ash Mejia Serna, junior Jack Colantuoni, a duet by seniors Katelynn Vo and Moisha Howse, and a solo by senior Kail Boswell. After performing their next piece, “Fum, Fum, Fum” arranged by Parker/Shaw, the group performed their final piece, “Carol of the Bells” arranged by Wilhousky.

Finally, the Concert Choir took the stage to perform seven final songs, beginning with, “Somewhere in My Memory,” arranged by Mark Hayes. This soft piece from the movie “Home Alone” moves the audience to a place of nostalgia as many have grown up with the joy of being surrounded by loved ones.

Their next piece “Y’mei Hachanukah,” arranged by Robert Applebaum, entered the theme of enjoying the festivities of Hanukkah with family and loved ones. The song mentions certain traditional holiday foods such as Levivot and Sufganiyot.

The group transitioned back to Christmas with a performance of “Jubilate Deo” by Sonja Poorman. This piece is a call to joy and invites people to acknowledge and praise God.

The group then switched languages with their performance of “Feliz Navidad,” a Christmas piece that wishes a prosperous year and happiness toward the audience.

One of the challenges for some of the singers was singing in different languages. “For other languages, we typically review the song with Mr. Cole to make sure our pronunciation was right,” noted Boswell.

After their performance of “Borukh Ate, Zingt Der Tate,” and “I Saw Three Ships,” the Concert Choir finished the night with their traditional performance of “O, Holy Night” in which alumni from past years returned to the stage to sing and be directed by Cole one more time.

“I knew what I was doing from my experience before, which allowed me to help other people make sure they did the right thing,” reflected Boswell.

The audience left the Jenkins Auditorium that night with the warmth of the holiday spirit in their hearts after being serenaded by the instrumental and choral arts programs, an experience that will remain a highlight of the holiday season for attendees and performers alike.

WorkSmart Program Provides Safe Space

Beatriz Oliveira
Lead Reporter

High School is the last step before students are pushed into making life-changing decisions as fresh young adults. A process like this can be stressful which is why the local Malden YWCA came in collaboration with Malden High School to create the WorkSmart program. WorkSmart allows for underprivileged juniors and seniors to have an opportunity to explore their career identity.

In their weekly meetings, as WorkSmart’s manager, Cassandra LeBrun prepares workshops that help members connect deeper with themselves and what they hope to achieve in the future. “The main mission for WorkSmart is to help students to actually understand who they are so that they can get to a place of loving what they want to do and have longevity in their careers and even in college,” shared LeBrun.

Before working at the YWCA, LeBrun worked as Assistant Director of Recruitment and Employer Engagement at Northeastern University. Even though LeBrun enjoyed her work at Northeastern, she slowly realized that she preferred working one-on-one with students. She commented that she’s “very community oriented and driven” and because of that, “this role had the best of both worlds,” where she still got to connect with employees as well as students.

Not only does LeBrun manage the program, but Malden High counselor Kristy Magras also helps coordinate and recruit eligible students to participate. For three years now, Magras has been connecting with students and helping them build skills “beyond the classroom” which “helps them be successful in life.”

“I think that Malden High School is great at getting our students through high school and into college, but there’s a piece of it that is missing about, ‘what do we do after we graduate?’” noted Magras.

So far, the WorkSmart program has provided many students with internship and volunteer opportunities. For example, senior Leica Naceus wants to go into the medical industry when she graduates and with this program she was introduced to the Winchester Hospital program. “I get to work at a hospital, work with patients, bring things to doctors and everything and that actual connection building between me and Winchester is one hundred percent

Cash Drop Creates Family Feud on the Streets

Gabriela Parini
Cordova
Editor and Chief of
Social Meida and Print

RIIINNGGGG! The last bell of the day goes off and students dart out of their classes to greet their friends and go home. Finally being able to hold their phones again, only to check social media and see a \$500 cash drop right outside of the school.

Students raced to the Malden Public Library, swerving through afternoon traffic and passerby as they rustled through



the bushes hoping to be the lucky winner. Within a minute the money had been swooped up by a follower of the @findthecashbos account.

“My friend started running in the Jenkins

hallway and I was asking her ‘why are we running?’ but she said ‘just follow me’ and I was really unsure if I should follow her or not. I ended up following her and we just saw a bunch of people

going to the Malden Public Library,” senior Avani Chhetri explained.

Alex Giallanella is part of Win It Entertainment, he is the advertiser.

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Malden Cash Drop

Continued from page 9

ing manager and one of the videographers for the @findthecashbos account that posts cash drops every week. They are usually held on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. "This page was started up a year ago and it's already done so well with over 260,000 followers, but I've been working with them since April and we've done a ton of drops together. Just giving back to the community inspired me." He continued, "I know everyone loves cash, everyone loves winning things...It's like Family Feud on the street. Who wouldn't like it?"

Unbelievably, this is not new to the area, as there have been past drops in Malden. On September 8th of 2025, there had been a \$500 cash drop outside of the United States Post Office hidden in some rocks by the crosswalk separating Mountain Avenue and Dartmouth Street. This drop was won by a Malden High School student and the

The Boston area is not the only place to have been propagated by these cash accounts as they have also hit New York, Tennessee, Washington, North Carolina, Texas, California, Florida, amongst other states, even going outside of the United States into Toronto, Canada. This cash drop sensation has taken over and gone nearly nationwide.

High adrenaline is always profound in the communities when these cash drops are revealed. People check their feeds and reload their pages at the allotted time they are to be posted, then they race to the exact location, hoping to beat out over 269,000 other followers also waiting for the money.

Chhetri also mentioned, "It was chaotic with a lot of people running around...We got to the place where the cash was and there were a bunch of people around right in front of the bushes outside the library."

Some people are drawn away from participating due to the fact that the clips of people searching for money that's already been taken gets posted to their account. After the money is found Giallanella continues recording to catch the reactions of people barely missing the cash drop, posting them alongside the winner to their page.

These accounts began to pop onto people's feeds in early 2025 but slowly gained more and more traction as the amount of money increased. @findthecashbos had initial-

Annual Winter Instrumental Concert



Lauren Foley receiving flowers from Trombone player Senior Lincoln Boswell. CHELMIE HYPOLITE

Continued from page 11

joined the Rock Ensembles class earlier, as he had previous experience performing in a band during Junior Varieties. "I found out about this course my Junior year after my bandmates from Junior Varieties encouraged me to join their class. This would be my first time participating in a class like this," Li noted.

Once all of the Rock Ensemble bands finished performing, the Concert Band took the stage, switching the atmosphere from a modern one to a traditional one. Their performance of "Holiday Wish" by Randall Standridge filled the audience with Christmas warmth, preparing them for the next holiday themed performances.

Next, Foley briefly introduced the next per-

formers, the Bald Ensemble, making sure the audience realized that the band is purely student-run. Their performance of "A Rollicking Hanukkah" by Randall Standridge, which was conducted by Senior Matt Jason Chen, truly highlighted just how much passion the student-run band has.

Last, the Wind Ensemble performed Snow on Snow by Megan Vinther

and their annual closing piece: "A Christmas Festival" by Leroy Anderson, where they performed with Santa hats on. While performing "A Christmas Festival," multiple seniors had the chance to go up to the front and conduct the band for some time while Foley joined the band playing her native flute.

To end the concert, the seniors showcased their appreciation towards Fo-

ley as senior Lincoln Boswell spoke about how much Foley has helped him grow as a musician while gifting her flowers. Once the concert ended the audience was extremely enthusiastic and talkative, going to show the success of the night. "We put in a lot of work into it and I think it shows," junior Atticus Smith, a Rock Ensembles performer, concluded.



From left to right: Senior Dagny Boswell playing the clarinet, Senior Dennis Liu playing the trumpet, Junior Anniyah Azhar playing the flute, and Senior Lincoln Boswell playing the trombone during the Wind Ensemble performance of "Snow on Snow" by Megan Vinther. CHELMIE HYPOLITE



From left to right: JAR bandmates Junior Jason Dutaille singing, Junior Amanda Souza playing the Guitar, and Senior Nico Sedan playing the bass during their performance of "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" by The Beatles. CHELMIE HYPOLITE

ly started with \$50, then increased to \$60, then \$100, and \$250, up until they reached the \$500 and \$1,000 drops that they were able to achieve today.

Many of the accounts are able to give so much cash away to these communities due to their sponsors. From all the attention their accounts have gained, they have been able to attract businesses and people to sponsor their drops and give them more money to give away.

Giallanella explained, "Our current main advertiser is our legal partner Audai Cote and his Instagram tag is @injurymoney. He did so well with us, he went from 5,000 followers to 50,000 followers in a few months and he loved it so much

he decided to do a drop with us every week."

Cote is able to gain followers due to the fact that he posts the general area in which the cash drop will occur. His account is private, so to see the drop each week, users have to follow him in order to keep up with his posts.

"He committed to giving \$24,000 to give back to the Boston community. He gets a lot out of that from publicity and he gets a lot of business. Soon everyone in Boston is going to know him. So if anyone wants to build a name or build their business in Boston, this is definitely one of the top things to work with," Giallanella added.

However, Giallanella does not only work with

Win It Entertainment. When he is not filming and posting cash drops, he is working in Lowell "at Saint Paul's soup kitchen as a board of director," where they "feed over 100 less fortunate people everyday. Every Tuesday we give out 2,500 pounds from the food bank to the public there in the greater Lowell area." He goes on to say, "I love to give back to people and it's such an honor to give back to people. I wish I could do this every day."

These cash drops mean more to him than just some game for the people in the Boston area. The impact on the community is what he loves to see every time he does one of these drops. "Sometimes you just pray for things like these.

Sometimes you just pray to the Lord like 'Hey I need abundance in my life' and sometimes you just become the abundance. I prayed for this kind of opportunity and it just fell on my lap and now I'm happy to be a part of this company, it's fast growing."

As the account grows bigger, there becomes more opportunities for the cash drops to be given back to the communities. As of right now, Malden won't see another cash drop for a couple of months while every other city gets their turn at this treasure hunt.

With the accounts rapid success, they have already met many of their goals since starting up. Their next goal "is to get to a million followers by next year or half a mil-

lion, that would be amazing, and get some more exclusive advertisers... if I can get an exclusive advertiser for real estate, maybe a restaurant, I'd be able to do this every day," Giallanella explained.

Giving back to the community is principal to these cash drops and brings the community together in a city-wide hunt for cash. "It's good that they do this for the community because it can help a lot of people in need," Chhetri stated. Students, adults, kids, and teachers can all engage in these drops as they are're not exclusive. The posts are open to the public and as long as users stay updated, they can go to every drop and hopefully get lucky, claiming the cash prize for that day.

Support for
Mastrangelo at
School Committee
Open Forum

Continued from page 7

Librarian Stephen Nedell, who was the final speaker of that night's "public comment," relayed his son's opinion, alum Zachary Nedell, and how both shared similar views in being there for Mastrangelo and his contract. Stephen Nedell would conclude by praising students for their ability to take on tremendous roles in speaking up for what they thought was right.



Parents

Lastly, parents were allotted time to voice their concerns as well. Isabelle Delacruz remarked that as a parent, she believes it should be Mastrangelo's right to finish with dignity. She underlined how it is hypocritical to promise to "provide 18 years of care", only to go and disregard that rule entirely for educators. Delacruz believes that if they do not care about their educators, it reflects how they would treat children.

Another parent, Janine Cogswell, shared how Mastrangelo "empowers" students, and given that he is a huge motivating factor in students' lives, it would be wrong to remove him before his full 18 years.

Many Maldonians have expressed great dissatisfaction with Sippel's choice. Not only have teachers banded together to support Mastrangelo, but it is also evident in student voice and actions, as well as the parents of those who spoke out.

Concluding the walkout and meeting, Sippel sent out new statements regarding Mastrangelo's retirement, sharing that he will continue with his plans. A series of surveys has been sent out to the Malden community, and student listening sessions have been hosted in the school cafeteria. Since then, Sippel has already selected a handful of potential candidates who he deems fit the role and characteristics of what Maldonians have expressed.

MTEC GOES WICKED

A TRIP DOWN THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD TO WATCH WICKED: FOR GOOD BRINGS MHS STUDENTS TO THE THEATER



Ariana Edwardson
Reporter

At AMC theaters in Assembly Row posing for photo with Wicked 2 cardboard cutout in the back. Photo submitted by Malden Teen Enrichment Center

The smell of popcorn hitting you the second you walk in, people whispering "I can't believe that just happened," and holding your breath during an intense scene are just a few things that you could have experienced if you went to the Malden Teen Enrichment Center (MTEC) field trip on November 26th to watch "Wicked: For Good", the sequel to "Wicked" which released in 2024.

Those participating in the field trip had to sign up prior for the event at the MTEC, located at 7 Washington St. Malden. This is often a key hang out spot after school for students, as they provide food, quiet spaces, and an array of activities for students to participate in before heading home.

Before the field trip took place, a screening of "Wicked" was provided on Monday, November 24th, so that everyone going to see the second movie could watch the first one if they had not already seen it.

Sophomore Cortez Thou elaborated on his thoughts while watching both movies, "I saw that Elphaba was mistreated and people didn't like her. It was more like how she ended up becoming friends with Glinda and set things up for the second movie, but I feel like the first Wicked had way more drama than the second."

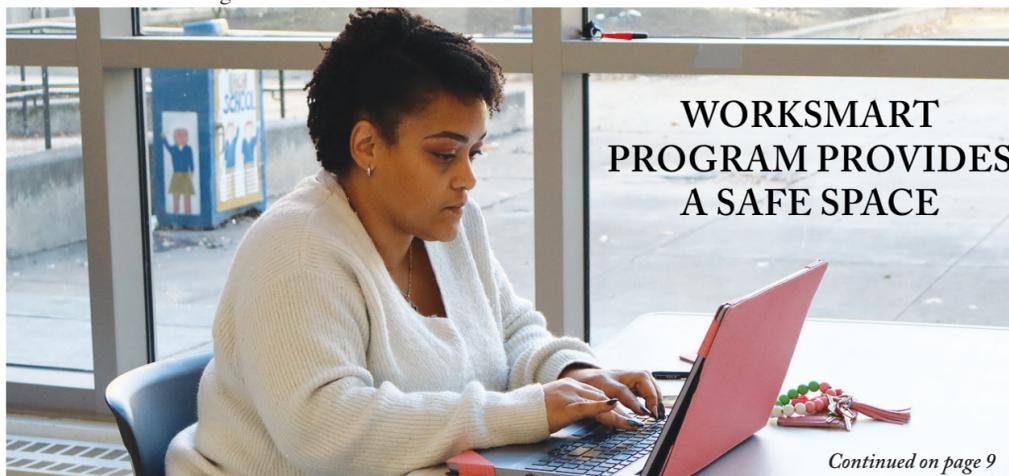
On the day of the field trip, MTEC provided participants with a ride to AMC Theaters at Assembly Row. As you entered the establishment, there were promotional cardboard cut outs of Glinda and Elphaba, the main characters of the Wicked series, allowing students to have the opportunity to take pictures. Before going to sit down and watch the movie, most people ran over to the food area to buy snacks and drinks. Snacks are essential, especially when the movie is two hours long.

What makes a trip like this so unique is that it establishes connections through entertainment. Going to the theaters is already fun on its own, but being able to see the movie with a group of friends adds value to the experience. The whole group reacts together, laughs together, and gasps together; the experience becomes more memorable rather than watching it alone. Field trips like this offer opportunities not just to see a movie, but to strengthen bonds and friendships, as well as creating shared memories that people will talk about long after the movie ends.

It's a great way to meet new people too; you might find out you have the same favorite character as someone you barely knew before. You could find yourself discussing the different themes that appear throughout the movie. You might even see the movie through someone else's eyes just by hearing their take on something you interpreted differently. These moments create a connection in a way that only a shared experience can.

In addition, "Wicked: For Good" combines storytelling, music, and performance which serves as a reminder of how powerful creativity can be. Experiencing it on a big screen with a group encourages everyone to think about filmmaking, theater, and storytelling with new appreciation.

Whether you are a long time fan of the Wicked series or new to the story, getting the opportunity to go with friends to the theater is a great experience that hopefully more people can be a part of in the future by utilizing the resources at MTEC. It's a blend of excitement, creativity, and connection that will leave you with something to remember even after the final scene fades to black.



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WorkSmart coordinator Kristy Magras at Malden High working on her computer in the Gallery. BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA

going to be beneficial later on in my life and much more," explained Naceus.

To provide such wonderful opportunities, WorkSmart has tight funding in collaboration with MassHire, meaning that to apply there's a specific criteria you need to fit. Magras shared that she hopes that students "utilize every opportunity that's given to them, because it's a program that is only offered to a select group of students. Again, these are things that would be beneficial to all students, but based on the grant funding, we can only approve a barrier." Although WorkSmart focuses on building your individual career identity, many students as well as staff

learn valuable lessons in their time. "I learned that you should start thinking about your future even if you're not totally sure about what you want to do, simply writing it out or thinking about it helps to think about it to prepare you even better," mentioned junior Keira Celicourt.

"I learned so much from them, and they make me so proud, because I think they also taught me to go for it as well. Just even at my age, seeing them, that's exactly how I was," emphasized LeBrun, "I was doing all those things, but seeing seeing them now, do those things now, and how they show up for themselves in these workshops, I'm just like, 'wow,'" she continued.



WorkSmart members having a conversation before the workshop. BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA



(Left to right) Kristy Magras and Cassandra LeBrun talking about the WorkSmart program. BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA

The Effects of Senioritis

Beatriz Oliveira
Lead Reporter

It's the middle of your senior year, and you just got accepted into college. What now? You still have a semester left of homework, quizzes, tests, and classwork to complete, but what's the point? You wonder to yourself, "Should I just stop trying?"

"Senioritis is exactly what it sounds like. When you catch a case of the cold, you feel groggy, tired, and unmotivated. Basically, the same thing as becoming a senior. You know that high school is almost over, so many people find it hard to be motivated to keep trying," explained senior president Linh Do.

Although it might seem humorous or trivial, senioritis can come from many different unseen causes. "I think there's a lot going on in a lot of these kids' lives," shared social studies teacher Richard Tivnan. "Sometimes it's hard; school work is hard for them. They struggle," he continued.

"I can remember, as a senior in high school myself, my physics teacher talking to all of us and saying senioritis is not an excuse. You know, 'senioritis is not real. It's just another word for lazy,'" commented science teacher Julie Grillon.

The term itself faces criticism as people misrepresent its intended meaning, or use it as an excuse to not get work done, when senioritis is more about how difficult it can be to uphold your motivation throughout all four years of high school. It is true you should never stop trying, but not enough people talk about how draining that can truly be.

Unfortunately, the effects of senioritis aren't exclusive to seniors; underclassmen are also affected. "I've seen variations of 'senioritis' in underclassmen with losing momentum to do work, too," said senior Sorin Mamouzette. "I think it's a domino effect in a way; if you see multiple of your friends slowly stop doing their work, you'll most likely fall into that slump without realizing it."

Take your senior year as a time to reflect on your past performance; although it might be stressful, it's imperative that you keep going. You've made it this far, and there are people counting on you to finish your education. Whenever you're feeling down, unmotivated, or stressed, remind yourself that in a couple of months it will be you who's walking down that graduation stage.

maldenblueandgold.com

MHS Literary Society Speaks through Art

Yen Nguyen
Head of Local

Art can be made from anything: paper, pen, paint, molding clay, cameras, or even spray paint. It comes in several forms and connects people by fostering understanding, emotions, and inspiration. All individuals have the extraordinary ability to create art using their imagination and thoughts; without art, the world would be a dull place. Malden High's Literary Society club strives to a spread art and get students to express themselves freely using art.

The Oracle is the second oldest literary magazine run by high school students throughout the entire country. Every year, the Literary Society curates an intriguing collection of student art work and personal writing to be incorporated into the oracle, work such as: poems, short stories, paintings, photographs.

While later in the school year, the club focuses on gathering artwork and literary pieces to include in the Oracle, their activities vary every meeting. "A typical meeting might include a fun writing activity, sharing of personal writing projects, and planning fundraisers and other events," English teacher Nierika Nims shared.

"The Literary Society is about encouraging people to send in and allow us to hopefully publish their works, giving us a glimpse into the personal experiences here at Malden High," junior Marisa Mantilla remarked.

A lot of artists may struggle with sharing their artwork, whether it is because there's difficulty in finding ways to get it out to people, the fear of judgement and criticism, or even the worries of being misunderstood. To combat the issue, members of the club seek to help artists edit their pieces, offering constructive feedback, ensuring that the work submitted is the best it can be.

"The Oracle is a great way to help people who are nervous to share what they have with other people," junior Jazzy Montes claims. One of the club's biggest priorities is to help "elevate those who may not have an outlet they can find in their writings, or too shy to publish," Mantilla added.

Sophomore Valeria Licon Cruz, who submitted several poems

Malden's Old Town Trolley Experience



Connor Long leaning in to engage the passengers during an interactive moment on the tour. FARRIS QRANFAL

Manny Perez
Reporter

Just around the corner from Malden's iconic MacDonald Stadium you will find an immersive form of travelling never seen before, located on 129 Commercial Street. Malden's Old Town Trolley system offers a unique sightseeing experience, as it not only provides tours, but also shares stories along the way. By operating on buses and in theatre sets around Boston, Old Town Trolley Tours offer tours through creative storytelling that keeps their audiences engaged.

Malden High School students, led by business teacher Kelle Griffin, were privileged to receive a personal tour. Upon arrival at Old Town Trolleys, the group was warmly welcomed, along with two boxes of doughnuts and refreshing bottled water. After settling into their seats, Tim Carr, General Manager of Old Town Trolleys, met with

Farris Qranfal
Reporter

the students to explain what their day would look like and to present facts about the company, while allowing them to ask questions about the trolleys and the system they operate. With stomachs full and anticipation building, students were then taken to the warehouse, where they were presented with the different buses, test themes, and the company's construction side. Old Town Trolleys prioritizes the experience, ensuring each tour is a success, starting in the warehouse. Steven Johnson, manager of Ghosts and Gravestones in Boston, emphasized this, proclaiming, "People pay good money for the tours; they come to a city because they want to have an experience."

An experience is precisely what these lucky students received as they began boarding the orange-and-green bus. Once settled, Johnson in-

troduced his tour actors for this trip: Connor Long and Flip Flycop. Flycop is a veteran in this business, having been brought onto the team in 2021 after COVID.

Long was intrigued by such different forms of acting, which drew him into the business. "Acting on a trolley on a tour like this, there is no fourth wall. The audience and you are together in the same room," Long noted. The versatility within sightseeing and acting is incredible, and what Old Town Trolleys do so well.

Being an actor for these buses is not for the weak and requires you to put on a happy, energetic face no matter the occasion. "Not everyone has that kind of energy, so you have to really make sure that the person that you're hiring for the job can bring that even when they're having a tough day," Johnson explained. With this tour having the intention to educate, there was not a set theme. Instead, Johnson wanted

everyone to experience different themes, allowing the actors to treat it as a rehearsal. The first, and Old Town Trolleys' most popular one: Ghosts. This theme creates a creepy environment, often performed at night, with the actors in full costume. Each stop on the tour has unique props and setups to immerse the audience and build a special story.

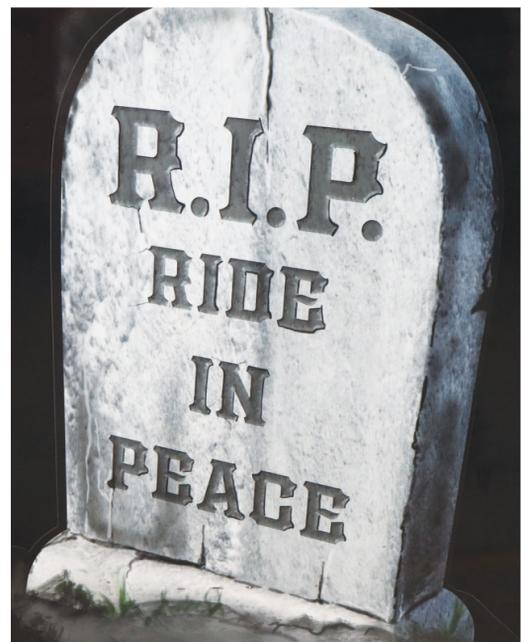
These unique themes and actors caught the eyes of Sophomore Jamal Hakkaoui, believing they "made it interesting having different themes like Christmas or horror stories for Halloween." After the Ghost theme, the actors flipped the narrative to showcase the Christmas theme. They would sing and point out key buildings with deep Christmas backgrounds.

After all this exceptional acting, laughing, and learning, Johnson decided it was time to hit the brakes and grab a bite to eat; however, this did not stop the actors from doing what they do best:

performing! On the way to Faneuil Hall, Flycop knew the area like a pro, pointing out key spots with deep Boston meaning.

Now full for the second time on this trip, the students reentered the bus, where Johnson took the time to educate them. Junior Juan Caballero learned the impact of failure, stating, "Success doesn't come overnight, and most of the time success comes after failure." This was about the numerous shortcomings Johnson's team faced before finally succeeding and perfecting the Ghost theme.

All good things must come to an end, unfortunately. However, the experiences of learning how Old Town Trolleys work and gaining real-life skills made the field trip a huge success and gave these students a day to remember. "We want to make sure that everyone gets their questions answered and that they're having fun," Johnson concluded.



From left to right: Steven Johnson, Manager of Ghosts and Gravestones, speaking to the passengers inside the trolley during the city tour of Boston; a tombstone engraved with "R.I.P. — Ride in Peace," displayed as decoration for the Ghost-themed trolley. FARRIS QRANFAL

to the oracle in the 2025 edition, shared that "they were the first pieces I've ever submitted for others to read and enjoy." Eager to have them published, she proclaimed that if "any of my writing can help those people feel

seen and help them get a voice, I will be happy."

The publication of the Oracle every year contributes to making Malden High a more colorful environment in which students feel free to express themselves through their

art. When people read and observe the artwork submitted by others, it may spark an inspiration and confidence within them they otherwise might not have found.

"Writing is a powerful tool for self-expression—it

is good for us and good for our world—and the Literary Society is a safe and supportive environment to grow as writers and people," Nims concluded.

The Literary Society meets every Thursday

after school in Nims' classroom at Br478. For more information about the Literary Society or regarding how to submit art pieces, email Nims at nnims@maldenps.org, or join the classroom using the code: xy32tx30.



MALDEN BOYS' BASKETBALL FIRES UP AGAINST CHELSEA

Manny Perez
Reporter

Senior forward Colin Okoth laying the ball up with a defender on the left. FARRIS QRANFAL

It is basketball season, MHS! A match of grit, aggression, and focus would be put to the test, as Malden was looking for their first win of the season, in front of their home crowd. The Chelsea Red Devils were no slackers, as they came into this matchup 2-0 and the best team in the GBL. However, this did not faze the Malden Tornados; instead, it allowed them to step up.

The national anthem played as the crowd settled into place. The teams warmed up, before the opening whistle officially

began the game. Chelsea wasted no time getting points on the board. They came out firing, and it looked as if Malden had no response, as their shots weren't falling, and the team morale slowly decreased. This caused a 4-0 Chelsea lead with 5 minutes left in the first quarter.

However, all it took was one play to propel the team and get the crowd riled up. As Chelsea advanced the ball, sophomore Shawn Sekema came flying down with them and had a huge block, getting the crowd

on their feet, and shifting the tone of the game significantly. "Hitting those big time threes and getting blocks bring the intensity of the game up and bring the energy up completely, which affects us positively on the court," Sekema shared. Following this momentum change, number 11, senior Colin Okoth secured the first 2 points for Malden, making the score 4-2 with 4 minutes left in the first quarter.

The momentum did not stop after Chelsea scored another bucket. Malden responded with

a quick 4-0 run, leading with 7-6 with a little over 3 minutes left in the first quarter. After exchanging some buckets, Malden found themselves only down two at the end of the first, with Okoth hitting a massive 3-pointer that got everyone fired up. Although down, Malden had the energy!

To start the second quarter, Chelsea took the lead, extending the score very quickly to 19-12, 5 minutes left in the second quarter. Malden was losing that spark, due to missed shots and uncoordinated plays, ultimate-

ly forcing Coach Nally to take a timeout and regroup. Malden came back out, yet lacked their original energy; however, their defense was superb, advancing the score 21-16, with 2 minutes left in the half, only down by 5. A couple of buckets for Chelsea then followed, making the score 25-17 at halftime, Chelsea up.

Senior Ryan McMahon was taking this score personally, as with the start of the 3rd quarter, he sparked a 3 from deep and got the crowd going nuts! This 3 built a lot of momentum for Malden,

as number 1, sophomore Allen Deris followed with his own 3, all while playing incredible defense to then make the score 26-25 with 6 minutes left in the third quarter, forcing Chelsea to take a timeout.

Deris then opened with a fast layup, to give Malden the lead fresh off the timeout! However, for Golden Tornados fans, this would be the end of their comeback, as Chelsea took over in both the third and fourth quarters. Malden tried to battle their way out of it, but too many missed shots and blown layups which made it almost impossible to regain any sort of momentum. Malden made a little run at the end, but not enough to help them win. Chelsea ended up winning the game 60-49.

This loss now made the Golden Tornados 0-3, and the Devils, 3-0. This was not a time for Malden fans to hang their heads. The team played great, and there were a lot of positives to be said about the game, but also a lot of things for improvement. It was an amazing challenge, and Malden was not shy to compete with the best! "The teams' number 1 priority moving forward is to move a step closer every game to getting into the state tournament, which requires at least 10 wins," Sekema concluded.

GIRLS' BASKETBALL VICTORY AGAINST EVERETT



Senior Guard Sophia Rodrigues raises her right arm as she tries to guard an incoming Everett offensive player. CHELMIE HYPOLITE

Chelmie Hypolite
Managing Editor

Ending the 24-25 season with a record of 11-9 and heading to the MIAA State Tournament for the 4th season in a row, the Girls' Basketball team is going into the new season with an even greater amount of focus and determination. Led by Senior captains Madison Cook, Olivia Rodrigues and Junior captain Manicha Exilhomme, the team went into their first home game against Everett on December 17th with an immense amount of energy.

To prepare for the season, various off-season practices were hosted where the girls could come in, train, and scrimmage against one another. Exilhomme was one of the many girls who participated in off-season practices, noting that she also prepared for the season with "prayer and a couple AAU games in the fall," illuminating the amount of focus geared towards this season.

Last year, the Girls' Basketball team was able to make it to the state tournament which was a very memorable moment for Cook. A common goal shared amongst the team is to make it to States once again in hopes of "progress[ing] further," "win GBL and progress farther," shared Cook.

The game against Everett was a highly anticipated one. Coach Scott Marino, entering his 10th season coaching the Girls Varsity Basketball team, noted that "playing Everett in Game One was a great test" for the team.

Once the game started, the coaches, players, and crowd could quickly tell that this was going to be intense, - as neither team showed any signs of slowing down. Within the 1st quarter, Malden's communication was extremely clear as they had the ball for the majority of the quarter and would steal the ball from Everett whenever there was a chance.

Exilhomme quickly demonstrated her skills as she powered through to the hoop multiple times consistently making "and-one's" as Everett fouled. As Cook and Rodrigues skillfully brought the ball up the court past defenders, senior Jaziarra Antoine was a key player alongside Exilhomme near the court as she drove the ball near the hoop to take shots causing Everett to foul. With Everett's continuous fouling, Antoine was able to score foul shots which helped Malden keep a far lead, ending the 1st quarter with a 17-9 lead.

During the second quarter the intensity of the game quickly rose as Everett began playing at an even faster rate. Once again Exilhomme forced through a defender, showcasing her power, as she scored another two-points for Malden. Notably, Exilhomme's power allowed her to get many rebounds. She either tried her best to put the ball back up hoping to gain a foul from a defender, or she passed it out to an open teammate. With Everett's tight defense, passing was something Malden used to open up gaps, which proved successful as Antoine scored

two-points from mid-range due to a distracted defender and Cook who was able to do the same after getting a pass from Antoine.

However, Everett's tough defense allowed them to steal the ball from Malden multiple times. With steals they quickly wasted no time rushing the ball for a lay up despite Malden trying their best to chase the ball back. With the end of the 2nd quarter, 23-21 in favor of Malden, players from both teams realized just how close this game could be.

Just as the 3rd quarter began Exilhomme scored the first point with a layup, raising excitement in the stands and among the Malden coaches. With countless amounts of "jumpballs" due to the increased intensity, the ball was on both sides of the court evenly, which illuminated just how hard each team was playing. Malden's defense was clearly visible as they were able to cause hesitancy within their opponents and get rebounds allowing them to advance further. Despite the fierce energy that was laid out on the court, neither team showed any signs of slowing down; yet, Malden continued to stay in a tight 36-31 lead.

The 4th quarter consisted of even more back and forth between the teams as the ball continued to get stolen, either from bad passes or shooting mistakes. At this point the crowd began to feel the intensity as they screamed or stomped their feet as either team was shooting foul shots. Yet, despite the eagerness of Everett, Malden successfully managed to keep their lead throughout the quarter, ending the game 44-39. "We were able to dictate the tempo of the game by neutralizing Everett's two best players," mentioned Marino.

Despite the win, the Malden girls acknowledged that they definitely could've played better, "but our defense was there," Cook highlighted. Antoine contributed 12 points and 14 rebounds. She plans to win by a larger amount against Everett next game.

"I feel like this is a great team and I feel like we all have a big part. We're a very strong team, especially defensively," Antoine highlighted.

Exilhomme was one of the prime players this game, erupting with a career-high 30 points and 17 rebounds. "The game went well in terms of us winning but there were a lot of mistakes my team and I made that didn't end up costing us, but could have," noted Exilhomme.

With this heart stopping season opener, Malden's determination is not to be doubted. "I feel this season is going to positively progress, we have a lot of potential on the team and so many opportunities to become great," concluded Exilhomme.



The cheer team cheers with their arm raised and a pompom in hand. EVELYN RUAN

Evelyn Ruan
Head of Sports

As winter sports shift into the middle of the season, MHS cheer-leading team reflects on their early accomplishments, continuing to bring energy to the sidelines of Malden High during basketball games. Their energy increases school spirit and helps them set their minds on upcoming goals before the winter season officially ends.

What makes winter cheer differ from fall cheer is not just the fact that it takes place in the gym instead of the stadium. What's also different is having to do different routines, having new

members on the team, and especially having to prepare for cheer competitions, which puts extra pressure or even excitement. To prepare the team for the season, coach Brianna Silva-Couture mentioned doing "conditioning and open communication about the struggles of the winter season."

The cheer team continued to stride with captains senior Claudia Hernandez Escobar and senior Taliyah Lauture, and two new captains, senior Patricia Mukasa and Junior Reva Upadhayay, for the winter season. "Being captain has been no more different than being on the team. I still

see myself just like everyone else, just with some more responsibilities. I am still figuring things out and understanding them along the way." Upadhayay added, "I feel grateful that I have been given this opportunity to help the team. Cheer is definitely not a one-man thing; we have a strong group of girls, as well as other captains."

Being captain had its highs and lows. Hernandez Escobar mentioned that as a captain, "you really have to know exactly what you want in every decision you make, regardless of what's going on around you," which can be difficult. However, working together

with the team, being able to lead everyone together for a game, and teaching everyone routines has been Lauture's favorite thing as captain, as she just loves "building a bond with everyone who comes onto the team."

Going into the middle of the season so far, freshman Ruth Mekonnen mentioned "this season has helped me to learn new skills and perfect old ones. As this [is] my first season on the team, I am a bit nervous about my skill level but hopeful for a chance to improve," as well as commenting how she felt "proud" to learn a more powerful back handspring as the season continues.

Captain Upadhayay felt that "this new season has gone well, [and] we

have made a lot of progress in just a short amount of time,' which makes her excited for their upcoming competitions. Likewise, Junior Wongel Yohannes feels excited with how this season has gone, and looks forward to spending the rest of the season with her friends. She also added, "my goals for this season are to work on stunting."

"I'm excited to compete, and I just want peace and tranquility... [the] season can be really brutal, and it can be really hard," commented Coach Silva-Couture, who also wanted to bring home a GBL trophy when the team competes.

Most team members' common goals are to work on stunts, routines, team bonding and prepare

for competition. As a senior and a captain, Mukasa's goal is "to make a lot of memories and have fun to the fullest before it ends. She's looking forward to her "senior night as it's something I've looked forward to since my freshman year." Mukasa also adds that she feels excited but also a little sad since the season is coming to an end really fast and doesn't want it to end.

Though there can be difficulties throughout the season such as balancing school and extracurriculars, "I hope by the end of the season, we can be all united and for games and for competition as well," concluded Captain Lauture.



Senior captain Taliyah Lauture being thrown in the air before the next quarter. EVELYN RUAN



BOYS' BASKETBALL FALLS TO LYNN ENGLISH

Manny Perez
Reporter

Senior guard Chase Bolling dribbling the ball between his legs, scanning the court for the next potential play. FARRIS QRANFAL

Malden and Lynn English is a heated rivalry, not just because of the competition, but because of the stakes. This was Malden's 9th game, officially making them halfway through the season. As stated by sophomore Shawn Sekema in a previous article, Malden must win 10 games to make the state tournament. Currently sitting at 6-2 before the game, pressure was mounting, and a desperate win was needed for the Tornados.

The game started off swinging for the Tornados, going on a fast run, starting the game off with an early lead. Senior Colin Okoth played a major role in this lead as his significant three-pointer allowed Malden to have a score of ten, followed by a steal and layup from senior Ryan McMahon.

Resulting in a score of 12-4, with 5:55 minutes left in the 1st quarter. At this pace, Malden was looking to crush a school record. However, in any basketball game, no matter the level, it is clear that things can change at any moment; one big play is all it takes. It's about who can control the pace and hold on to that spark the longest.

Lynn English, decided to take action, making their layups and scoring three's, exposing Malden's defense. After another three from Lynn, they managed to crawl back, leading to a score of 14-10 with 4:16 left in the first quarter. You could feel the atmosphere and tension rising. After each big play from either team, some sort of taunting would happen. This got the crowd riled and hyped, seeing who would

clap back with a better play.

For Malden, it was their senior Kaua Dias, block after block, Malden's big man was putting in absolute work. "Every time someone goes up with me I take it personal, if the other player does score on me that means that I need to get better so it won't happen again," Dias explained. Pairing Dias's defense with the leadership from McMahon, and Okoth still putting up threes, Malden was looking extremely dominant. This dominance was clearly established by the score, as by the end of the first quarter Malden was up 24-20. "I just try my hardest to find the open man and get all my teammates involved with the game at all times," McMahon proclaimed.

At the start of the sec-

ond quarter, sophomore Jason Minervini demonstrated his presence on the team, stepping up and hitting a huge three, maintaining the momentum on Malden's side. This was quickly followed by a massive block by Dias again. Malden had the energy, passion, and leadership, and was in complete control of the game, 33-20, with 5:34 left in the quarter. However, Lynn was feisty and refused to go down without a fight. Lynn English ended up going on a 13-0 run, scoring 13 points straight without letting Malden get a single point. Dias, however, put a stop to this 13-0 run by scoring a layup, making the score 42-35, English up at the end of second quarter. "Coach John McGlynn helped me a lot, and now I'm more confident when I get the ball and I know



Golden Tornados Basketball team huddling up during a time-out. FARRIS QRANFAL

that none of my opponents can stop me so I just take my time and go get a bucket," Dias shared.

By the time the third quarter started, the pressure was intense. The ball traveled back and forth between each team; the momentum seemed to sway between both teams as each tried their best to stay on top. Senior Chase Bolling ended the quarter with a big three, making the score 55-54, English up only by a point at the end of the third quarter. Bolling, the team's reliable shooter and scorer, showcased his importance to the team as he didn't fold under pressure throughout the game and continued to make big plays.

Finally, the fourth quarter began; people were on the edge of their seats, immersing themselves into the game as the tense atmosphere took over the gym, each player putting all of their focus into this moment. Each team exchanged buckets; again, Bolling came through for Malden, hitting a huge three-pointer, cutting the lead down

to 65-63 with left in the 4th. Dias got fouled and stepped up to the line with confidence. Dias managed to make the first foul throw yet missed the second. Despite this Malden's determination allowed them to successfully box-out Lynn English players and get the rebound, keeping the ball on their side.

This possession was what Malden needed, a quick bucket. However, Malden struggled to score making the score 68-64 in favor of Lynn, with 1:45 left in the game. Malden's struggle after Bolling's three caused them to come up short and lose the match 74-65, dropping to 2-7. This game was Malden's; they had everything going for them, yet Lynn seemed to want it more. Malden is only halfway through the season, and can come back and win just enough games to make States.

"We just need to work more on talking and developing individually and slowly more and more as a team to have a shot," McMahon shared.

maldenblueandgold.com

Track Shows Their Speed

Sarah Etienne
Harmonie Ortiz
Kevin Prum
Michael Chacon
Rin Clough
Afif Alakoum

Reporters

Ready, set, boom! The gun went off, and everyone dashed down their lanes to be the first past the line. Held at Tufts University's Gantcher Family Sports and Convocation Center in Medford, on January 7th, this track meet displayed the talent of the team's underclassmen and highlighted the improvement they have made throughout the season.

Each person had a different talent, whether it was shot put, long jump, or a race to see who finishes first. These events had different heats, which are levels that typically match competitors with others with a similar ability.

The bus ride there consisted of nothing but motivation as members hyped each other up. As the coaches handed out numbers and jerseys, everyone got ready and prepared for the meet. The people going into their first meet were shaking off the first-time nerves and enjoying the bus ride with their friends.

The first event to set off the meet was the Boys' 55-meter dash. There were many participants, but a few stood out, placing first, second, and even third. Freshman Francis Chang placed third in his heat but first for Malden, reaching a time of 7.3 seconds.

"This was my first time running the 55-meter, and after finishing, I felt really good," said Chang. For him, this was a fun and exciting experience.

Not only was Chang upstanding, but so were the other athletes representing Malden, such as sophomore Jackie He, who placed first in his heat. Beside them were sophomores Tenzin Thamchoe and William Yu, who is also a reporter for the Blue and Gold, who both placed second in their heat. Both Yu and Thamchoe scored a time of 7.6 seconds.

Next was the Girls' 55-meter, where sophomore Vanessa Pham placed first in her heat, leaving the other girls in her dust. Alongside Pham was Ruby Neith Forbes who secured second place. This was considered "a way for the freshman and sophomore to try new things" and "put themselves out there," expressed Coach Meghan McCormick.

As the race continued the team took into account what they could work on going

MALDEN WRESTLERS BATTLE EXCEL ACADEMY

Ismail Elbahlawan after winning his match.
HASET TESFAW



Haset Tesfaw
Reporter

With their heads in the game, the wrestlers stepped on the mat ready to face Excel Academy on January 8th. The room filled with the sound of sneakers squeaking, as they began to warm up for their matches ahead.

The meet started off 2-0 with Excel Academy in the lead. Malden was struggling to find their rhythm, as small mistakes

made it difficult for them to regain control during their matches.

"I feel like I did good, but not good enough, as I got pinned in the 2nd period. In the future, I want to work on getting out when I get put on my back," Senior Cristofer Hernandez Romero explained. "I need to practice even harder and improve my skills. It's only my second year of wres-

ting, so I'm trying to get better each day."

The first win by Malden was by Junior Hassan Aljiboury, who admitted that despite him winning, "wrestling someone that felt weaker and smaller than me just didn't feel like it was a fair match up."

"That day before my match I thought about the techniques and strategies my coaches had taught me

to fix my mistakes from my previous matches," Aljiboury added. "I'm happy with how I did, but maybe in the future I can work on hand placements and get the pin faster." The match continued with three more wins for Malden, the last win being from Senior Ismail Elbahlawan, which ended the match 21-60.

Elbahlawan reflected on his performance. "I'm

proud of how I did. I really wanted to finish this meet strong. Unfortunately, we lost, but we've been working hard, and we'll continue to improve as a team."

"I plan to practice more and harder, as well as show more support to my teammates and put more time out of practice into making my skills better," Aljiboury emphasized.

JIM PECKHAM WRESTLING TOURNAMENT



Senior Captain Ismail Elbahlawan showing strength by holding his opponent down and attempting to score points. CHOUAIB SAIDI



Jeffrey Vaquerano attempts to pin his opponent from Plymouth North at the Jim Peckham Invitational Tournament. CHOUAIB SAIDI

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Malden High School Golden Tornadoes track runners running a track event. KEVIN PRUM



Malden High School Golden Tornadoes track runners running a track event. KEVIN PRUM

forward into their next race, as this meet gave the underclassmen a chance to gain experience and see the enjoyment that track gives.

Sophomore Alexis Lee, who also participated in the Girls' 55-meter dash and shot put, reflected on how this experience has enlightened her and helped her discover

areas that she wishes to improve. "I just feel like I need to be more focused and driven to start on time and quickly."

While the races continued, the Malden girls dominated the competition at shot put. Sophomore Neitsy Philome quickly spun, moving her feet swiftly, powering energy in her arm to

dash the ball as far as she could. She successfully took top scores through all 3 times, scoring 24 feet 11 inches as her furthest distance at the meet. "I could have been more aggressive," said Philome about her experience. Coach Shataeya Smith agreed but also emphasized "they did really well and I'm excited for

what's to come."

Next was the long jump. The long jump event is where someone runs as fast as they can to get the momentum to leap a great distance. Chang prevailed and placed first with an impressive distance of 5.09 meters, jumping ahead of the competition.

Finally, came the

4x400 meter relay, where a team of four participants raced to get the baton to their partners. The boys placed third, facing a fierce competition. In this lineup was freshman Tyler Ho and sophomores Thamchoe, Mokhtar Goucem, and Antoine Alce, who is also a reporter for the Blue and Gold.

GYMNASTICS FALLS TO MEDFORD



Golden Tornadoes Gymnastics team lines up for a photo after their competition against Medford. EVELYN RUAN

Evelyn Ruan
Head of Sports

Competing against Medford High School on January 13th, the Malden High gymnastics team brought determination and teamwork into all of the events in their first meet of the season.

Upon entering Medford High's gymnastics room, there was no doubt that the team was nervous. Sophomore Mackenzie Hartin, who began the sport when she was younger, but had briefly paused until now, stated how "before the events started" she was anxious "given it was the first meet of the season." Despite her nervousness, her teammates and coaches were supportive and en-

ple are able to compete at a time, each person is scored out of ten, and the final score of the event takes only the top four scorers.

As each team finished stretching and practicing, both teams went off to compete in their first event, with Malden on the uneven bars. Hartin competed first and started off strong with a score of 5.2.

Next was freshman Taya Rubin-Wilson who excitedly joined upon finding out that Malden High had a gymnastics team, scoring 5.3. After Rubin-Wilson, it was sophomore Phalangecia Jean Charles with 5.5 and lastly, junior captain Sofia Vargas who scored 6.3. Malden ended their first event with a final score of 22.30.

"Before competing in each event, I always get

Leconte similarly scored a 5.0, followed by Jean Charles who scored 6.15, and finally Vargas brought up the final score of 24.85 with a 7.8.

The third event was a floor exercise which focused not only on each gymnast's techniques and skills, but also their artistry. First up was sophomore Alyssa Lynch, whose song was a mash-up of different Disney songs. Lynch chose this song because she "liked the change in beat, and how altogether it was super upbeat."

Next, Jean Charles performed the song "Talk Dirty To Me" by Jason Derulo. She picked the song because it matched her personality. Rubin-Wilson performed next with a Michael Jackson themed performance with the song "Thriller".

the score of the floor exercise as 25.40.

The final event for Malden was the balance beam, which is one of the more difficult events due to the beam being narrow, needing core strength, precise control, but mainly requiring a strong mental focus. On the balance beam, gymnasts perform a series of leaps, jumps, turns, a form of acrobatics, and dance elements while maintaining balance.

On the beam were freshmen Vanessa Huang and Maria Diniz, sophomores Larielle Leconte, Arielle Leconte, Jean Charles, and Vargas. The team scored 25.40, however, Malden unfortunately lost to Medford with the final score of 103.90-87.95.

Despite the loss, Vargas voiced, "I think this was a really good first meet for the team to experience what competition is like and get comfortable with all their routines, even if we didn't win." Moving forward for the rest of the season, she hopes to gain more skills on the uneven bars and on the floor exercise.

Jean mentioned how the new season has been amazing, due to the unwavering support from her teammates. "My goal for this season is definitely to improve my flexibility. It's something that I definitely need to acquire more skills."

Though Hartin aims to be more consistent on the uneven bars event, she shared that the bars are still her favorite as they challenge her to be more precise. Ultimately wanting to grow as a gymnast, she hopes "to contribute to the team's success by improving scores and helping teammates."

Nicholson praised the team for their performances despite their nervousness and loss, concluding that their goal of the season is to improve their score from the previous meet. "We look at what we did well on all of the events and what each athlete can improve on to increase their score. Small adjustments can make a huge difference. If each athlete can improve their score, even by a tenth of a point, we will score higher," he elaborated.



Sophomore Phalangecia Jean Charles does a gymnastics salute as the judge calls her name on her turn on the vault event. EVELYN RUAN



Sophomore Phalangecia Jean Charles pushes herself up to swing on the uneven bars, creating momentum to do a hip circle. EVELYN RUAN



Sophomore Larielle Leconte doing a heel-stretch on her turn on the balance beam. EVELYN RUAN



Freshman Skaina Jean doing a straddle jump in her floor routine event. EVELYN RUAN

couraged her along the way.

This year, the gymnastics team welcomed many new faces. Although various new members had never competed before, Coach Michael Nicholson started off the season by evaluating what the team knows and does not know, deciding to begin with the fundamentals of gymnastics such as "cartwheels and forward rolls," and focusing on "jumps and turns as well as keeping bodies straight and toe pointed," shared Nicholson.

In their first meet, there were a total of four events that the team participated in, consisting of vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise. In each event, around four to six peo-

really nervous that the worst possible situation could happen. However, after a few deep breaths to calm me down and words of encouragement from the team to hype me up, I usually feel more ready to compete," explained Vargas who has been doing gymnastics since she was nine years old.

The team's next event was the vault, during which each gymnast sprinted down a runway, jumped onto a springboard, dived onto a vault table, and then performed either flips or straddles on it before landing on a soft mat.

The first person to perform was sophomore Saphirha Depeine who scored 5.0. Rubin-Wilson followed her with a 5.0, sophomore Arielle

The next two gymnasts who competed in the floor exercise were Hartin, who performed to the song "Roses" by The Chainsmokers, and freshman Skaina Jean performed the song "Breakin' Dishes" by Rihanna, mentioning, "I had many songs to choose, but my coach advised me to choose something upbeat and hard since it best fit my style."

Although this was Jean's only event she competed in, she commented how her favorite is the vault. "It's over quickly, and you get two tries. Not only that but, they only take in count your best attempt." The last person to compete in the floor exercise was Vargas who performed "Dance to It", finalizing



Track Athletes doing routine stretching (High knees). KEVIN PRUM



Sophomore Cheng-you Cheng (Francis) doing 55 meter with other athletes, placing 3rd place in his heat with a 7.2 Second time. KEVIN PRUM