

# The Blue and Gold



Malden High School  
Volume 111 Edition 5

maldenblueandgold.com

77 Salem Street  
April 2026

*Producing student journalism since 1915*

## STATE OF THE CITY

Malden's Annual State of the City: What's Going on Right Now, and What's Going to Happen?

Israa Howard  
Reporter

On March 18th 2026, Maldonians gathered at the Teen/Senior center in Malden to watch the annual State of the City. The State of the City is an event hosted every year where local officials discuss the condition their city is in, whether it is financially or recreationally. Speakers like Mayors, City Councilors, and Superintendents are among the most common at the events.

As Malden residents came pouring in, they were greeted and checked in by MTEC (Malden Teen Enrichment Center) employees. Stepping into the room, the environment welcomed Malden residents with food, music, and a hand shake with Malden's superintendent, Dr. Timothy Sippel.

Among the invited parties was Love4kids, a Malden High School club. Members volunteer with kids of all ages and more importantly have a partnership with Malden Reads every Wednesday in the school library for a Mini Writers Den with K-8 students. They were recognized as community partners by various speakers throughout the event.

"The environment was really nice. It was very formal. I felt as if I was part of the city and I felt like it was really a community based environment. We were all appreciating in different ways like for example Malden Reads and Love for Kids was definitely seen as a community-based organization so I was really grateful for that kind of environment," Senior President of Love4kids Eldana Abrhame expressed.

"The environment was very professional, and I thought that it was really interesting to be in an environment like that. And it allowed me to understand how to interact in places like that from a young age," Freshman Edom Abrhame, who also attended representing Love4kids, stated.

After the reception, Mayor Gary Christenson took to the stage and began to thank residents for attending and recognized elected city officials like City Councilor Peg Crowe, City Council President Amanda Linehan, City Councilor Ryan

*Continued on page 4*



The actors of Junior Varieties give a final appearance at the end of Act 2 as they dance and cheer. YEN NGUYEN

Yen Nguyen  
Head of Local

On one side of the stage were tough and bold bikers, and on the other were colorful and carefree surfers. The spirited turf war between the two rivals echoed throughout the entire auditorium, and for the first time in a long time, Malden High got a taste of summer as the first night of Junior Varieties on March 6th kicked off.

Back in January, the

class of 2027 had announced the theme of JVs to be "Teen Beach Movie", a comedic film that follows two modern-day teen surfers who teleport to a musical, "Wet-Side Story". The musical, a twist on 1961's "West Side Story," revolves around a heated rivalry between bikers and surfers. Trapped in the movie, the two protagonists, Mack and Brady, interfere with the plot and are forced to

fix the storyline so that they could return to their real lives.

In between all thirteen performances, acts in which students would act as bikers and surfers from the musical, would bring the story to the stage, entertain the audience, and introduce each set of performers. Student actors included Blue and Gold Managing Editor Alexia Lima, Head of Sports Evelyn Ruan, juniors Joan Diaz Vargas, Ivan Chen, Raquel Ferreira, Ema Xhindi, Aya Tafraoui, Yawen Zuo, Karlens Petition, and Ken Lin.

"I loved acting in JVs.

It was such a fun experience that I will always look back on," Ferreira, who played main character Mack, expressed.

### ACT 1:

The night began with the performance of Beabadoobee's indie-pop song "Beaches," performed by "The Shoelaces". With a cool teal light cast on the stage, the band led the instrumental as rhythm guitarist senior Audrey Nguyen supported, and their tunes tied together groovily with the

consistent drums from senior Sean Cochran. Junior singers Keira Celicourt and Jhillian Dumo gave a captivating, upbeat duet that stirred a spark in the crowd.

Dumo explained how they decided on Beaches because it met their criteria. "It was a popular song that people could sing along to, it was upbeat, not too repetitive," and "it just happened to match the theme of JVs."

Celicourt added, "Being able to say that I opened JVs made the whole experience really special, and I would defi-

*Continued on page 5*

Sophomore  
Jayden Gonzalez  
sprinting 4x400  
relay. EMILLY  
WEIHRAUCH



Article on page 14



Juniors Joan Diaz Vargas and Ivan Chen rocking out on stage to introduce Act 2. YEN NGUYEN

## NO KINGS PROTEST



Two Malden residents holding an American flag and "ICE KILLS" sign. KEVIN PRUM

Article on page 4



## BLUE & GOLD ART GALLERY

Article on page 9

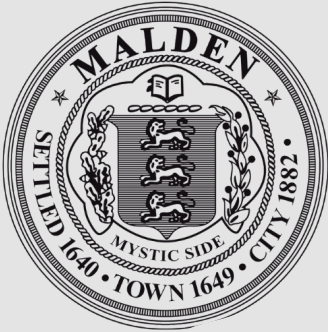


*Continued on page 4*

maldenblueandgold.com

# THE BLUE AND GOLD

77 Salem St.  
Malden, MA 02148



## Staff

**MANAGING EDITORS**  
CHELMIE HYPOLITE  
ALEXIA MACIEL LIMA

**HEADS OF SPORTS**  
AUNDREA OROZCO-CIFUENTES  
EVELYN RUAN

**HEADS OF LOCAL**  
YEN NGUYEN  
EMILLY DE FARIAS WEIHRAUCH

**HEAD COPY-EDITORS**  
ANNA BUI  
KYLE DANG  
ISRAA MALHOUNI  
FATIMA HUSAIN

**LEAD REPORTERS**  
ABYAN ALI  
VICTORIA DOMICIANO  
ELIJAH ETIENNE  
ALIANA LLOYD  
BEATRIZ OLIVEIRA  
FARRIS QRANFAL  
HASET TESFAW

**REPORTERS**  
VICTOR CORTEZ FUERTES  
MANNY PEREZ  
AFIF ALAKOUM  
ANTOINE ALCE  
MICHAEL CHACON  
DYLAN CHEN  
RIN CLOUGH  
ARIANA EDWARDS  
ADAM EL FATIHI  
SARAH ETIENNE  
JADAILEE GRATINI  
ANI GUILLAUME  
ISRAA HOWARD  
NYLA LIGON-CHAMBERS  
VANESSA NGUYEN  
KHKOLA NIAZI  
SAFA NIAZI  
AALIYAH NOWLAN  
HARMONIE ORTIZ  
KEVIN PRUM  
BILAL PSARLY  
JOANA TAVARES VASSAO  
KAYLA TURNER  
PRISCARLA VILLEFRANCHE  
WILLIAM YU

**ADVISOR**  
RYAN GALLAGHER

# LOST IN TRANSLATION

My entire life I've felt trapped outside my own DNA, barricaded from my own identity, and lost within my own genetic markers whose caps never seemed to match mine. I am Latina, but I've found myself stuck between the space of who I am, as a Salvadorian-American, who doesn't speak her native tongue.

For as long as I could remember, the phrase "no sabo" had been written across my head in sharpie, permanent and unremovable. In Hispanic culture a "no sabo" is defined as a person who cannot speak Spanish well, or at all, despite them being of Hispanic heritage. For most of my family it was a humorous joke—an icebreaker for the silence at family events. Though for me, it was the epitome of shame and humiliation that only reminded me of the disconnection I felt from my own identity. For a while I found myself lost between the person who I was and the person who I should be, wondering if I deserved to savor the taste of my own culture.

My inability to speak Spanish followed me like a ghost, lingering around my soul and my heart; it was a curse held under a permanent spell. For a while that's all I saw it as, a curse: a reason to blame my parents; a reason to blame myself. That is until I discovered a part of myself I had not unlocked before—a part of me that was fresh, enriching, and free. When I entered high school, I began to investigate my persistent insecurity. So I endeavored in my sorrow in the only way I knew how: listening to music. Though this time, I decided to listen to a new genre: reggaeton. In the past I had always heard Spanish music played around my house, but this time it was different. I chose to play it.

Over time, I began to surround myself with Spanish

music ranging from bachata to reggaeton and salsa. I started to study the lyrics, not just by listening to them, but immersing myself in them, feeling the power behind them. Soon enough through my music exploration, my vocabulary began to expand. Momentarily, I felt free, until many laughed at my attempts to sing and mocked the lyrics of my Hispanic heritage. "She really thinks she can escape being a no sabo now because she knows one song, what a joke," was something that I recalled overhearing. These words burned through my skin and down to my heart, tore my lungs to strings, and held a suffocating grip on my soul. My supporters—those who I was supposed to unite with and relate to—my greatest advocates, were only dragging me down.

"If my own community won't accept me, why should I keep trying?"

Those twelve words held a grip over me that was almost inevitably impossible to break. This dysphoria dragged me down for the majority of my life, keeping me hostage. Although the answer may not be simple, this phrase that lingered through my head brought me empowerment in ways I'd never expect. It brought me new perspectives. The longer this pondered on my mind the more I realized my loss in translation was never a missing DNA cap, it was only the path to my identity, a map to endeavor myself within my culture.

But culture is not about perfection; it is about connections, values, and love.

So, the next time I listened to a bachata song, I thought not of the brokenness within the lyrics I sang, but the intimacy I felt with Latin American music.

Loving my culture truly felt beautiful.

*Jenayah Moreno*

**PISA PIZZA**  
781-397-7777

133 Pearl Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
Joseph Crowley, Owner  
Cell: 617-943-7105  
joe@pisapizzamalden.com

"Love at First Slice"

www.PisaPizzaMalden.com See us on facebook

PS AND ALL MARKETING GROUP

Connecting You & Getting Things Done

Paul Solano 617.240.4130  
psandallmarketinggroup@gmail.com

**WHERE'S NEDLAM**

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

**DP Saigon Subs**  
(781) 990 - 5500  
310 Main Street, Malden, Ma 02148, United States

\$7.00 \$3.00 \$5.50 \$11.00 \$10.00

**Marie Hyppolite Family daycare**  
www.mariehyppolitefamilydaycare.com

Marie Hyppolite : 26 Home St Malden Ma, 02148  
Family Daycare : mariehyppolite@yahoo.com  
781-249-7963



**Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile**  
Delina Yohannes



**Editor-in-Chief**  
Chouaib Saidi



**Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile**  
Jacob Fuentes



**Editor-in-Chief of Print and Design**  
Jenayah Moreno



**Editor-in-Chief of Print and Social Media**  
Gabriela Parini Cordova

### Editorial Policy

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

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

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

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

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



## A Pledge to a New Allegiance

Manny Perez  
Reporter

“I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.” A pledge that used to be common to all children in the US, but what does it actually mean to “pledge your allegiance” in the United States?

The actual definition is to “make a formal, public promise of loyalty and devotion to the United States of America, its flag, and the republic’s principles of liberty and justice.” However, for many Malden High students, this is restrictive in terms of conformity to a flag, creating a new tradition different from what schools have been accustomed to.

“The pledge doesn’t mean much anymore,” senior Johnny Mei stated, and the reality is, it’s true. What was once so prominent in our early childhood is now no longer important for the majority of students.

The pledge was a staple in our morning announcements; it was our first introduction to “American pride.” “Back then, I used to treat it like it was important, but nowadays, it seems like that importance is gone,” Mei added.

This “importance” is not actually fading; it’s the mind leaping into a new sense of independence and beliefs. As we grow, our priorities and ideas grow as well. What we were once taught to proclaim finally starts to hold weight as we learn what the words actually mean. With this, our opinions change.

As we get older, we learn that we are no longer bound by others’ ideas and are finally able to produce ideas of our own. “As I’ve grown up and become my own person, my beliefs have changed along with me,” senior Fiona Youmell explained.

Ideas are what make each of us unique; it’s our ability to look at the world through a new lens that ultimately fuels a healthy society where everyone respects each other’s opinions. “I’ve begun to consider my own feelings and think more freely, especially with access to so many new viewpoints online and around me in my community,” Youmell proclaimed.

However, it’s not just a change in opinions and growing up, humans are also products of their environment and what occurs in society strongly reflects one’s views. With everything going on in America, it’s very easy to get overwhelmed in an ocean of deception.

“With the recent ICE deportations and the unjust killings highlighted

# THE EFFECT OF WALKOUTS at Malden High School



Aundrea Orozco-Cifuentes  
Head of Sports

Left to right: senior Moisha Howse, junior Isabella Pizziferri, and sophomore Minerva Davenport holding hand-made signs with custom slogans for the protest while junior Michael Cherry raises a fist in coordination. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

At Malden High School, students have organized walkouts in response to social movements that anger them. Many students participate in these walkouts to get their voices out there and hopefully, their messages heard.

There have been two walkouts this year, but these were not the first. Before this year, there was a walkout in 2024 for gun violence. The streets were flooded with student participants.

Since then, these walkouts have expanded beyond focusing on one issue. The student activism at Malden High continues to grow and evolve.

“Seeing how everyone can gather together and fight for the same cause despite anyone’s differences shows how united our community is,” junior Maya Pedraza who participated in both walkouts this year shared.

In February 2026, students organized another walkout protesting the actions of ICE, bringing attention to the fear and impact immigration enforcement has had on many families in the community and country.

During this protest, students marched together chanting, “Say it once. Say it twice. We will not put up with ICE.”

What made this walkout especially significant is how personal the issue was for many students. With such a diverse student body, many participants were directly affected or knew someone impacted. This made the walkout so much more than a political statement—it was a

reflection of their own lives.

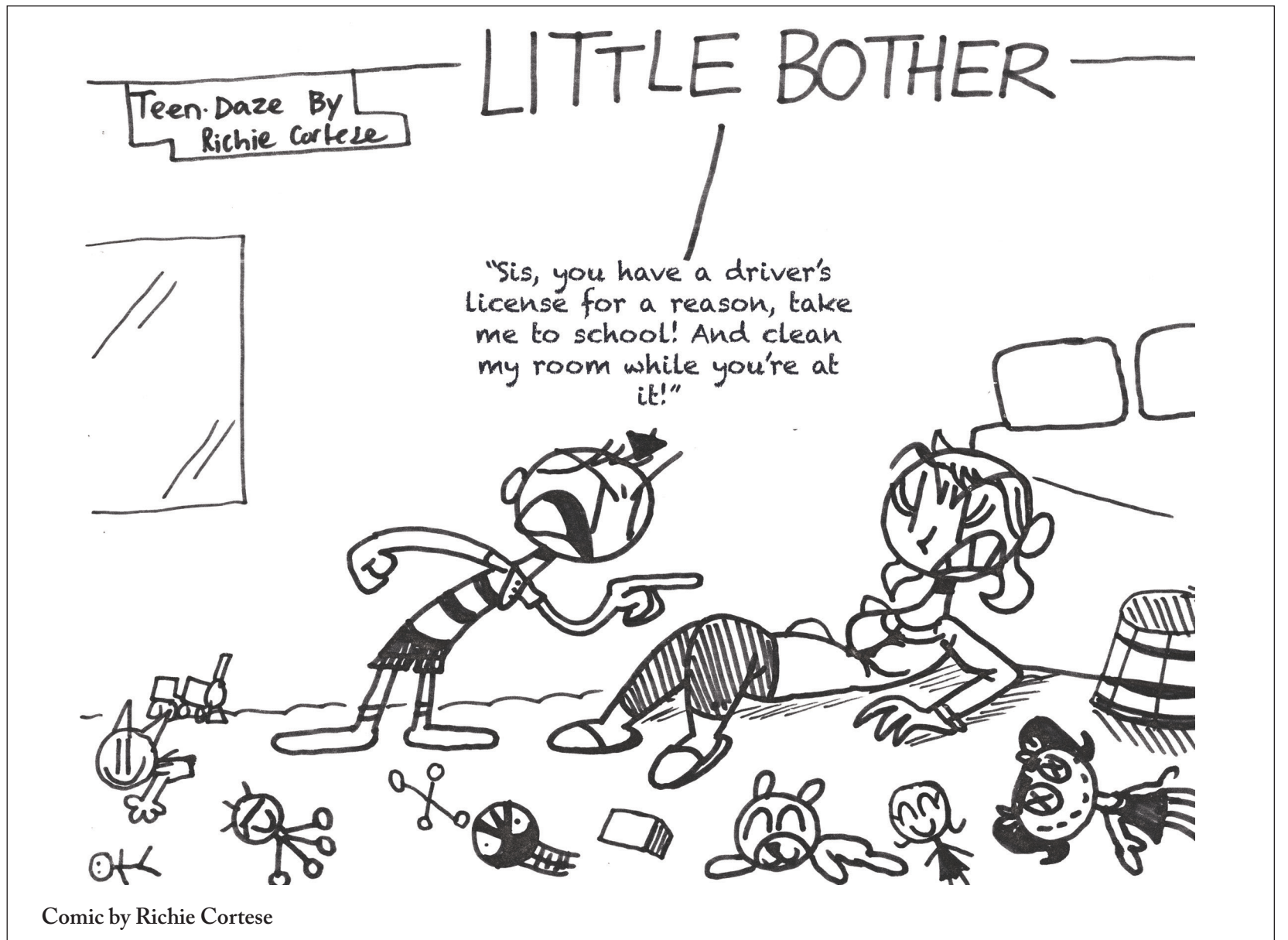
Students have also spoken out in support of Principal Chris Mastrangelo’s leave, demonstrating their support. Their support shows how activism is not only about national or global issues, but also about protecting their own school environment.

Now despite the effectiveness within the community allowing everyone to come together and make a stand, the question is if these walkouts were effective towards their purpose.

Analyzing the walkout for Principal Mastrangelo, the purpose of it was to take a stand against the non-renewal of Mastrangelo’s contract, which they believed was unjust. Michael Sabin has already been selected to succeed Mastrangelo’s position for the following school year, indicating the walkout did not fulfill its purpose of extending Mastrangelo’s contract.

In the February 2026 walkout protesting ICE, students aimed to bring attention to immigration enforcement and push for change. However ICE policies and actions continue unchanged, showing that while awareness may have been raised, no direct impact was made on the overall situation. Although the walkouts were meaningful to students, they were ineffective in producing the specific changes they were meant to accomplish.

In both cases, the issues students protested against remained the same, reinforcing the idea that awareness alone does not always lead to successful results.



Comic by Richie Cortese

in the Black Lives Matter movement, I think that the idea of ‘American Pride’ has changed; it’s difficult to have pride in a country so unjust,” Youmell highlighted.

This is a big reason why so many Americans view the pledge as a way of conforming to injustice; it’s their personal belief, shaped by their independence and by what

they see around them.

For some, it’s not a matter of conforming to anything; some see it as junior Cam’ron Crawford sees it, as “appreciation to honor veterans and people in the military.” Either way you lean, it is a unique perspective that positively fuels America, as your ideas matter.

Different ideas should not equal social divi-

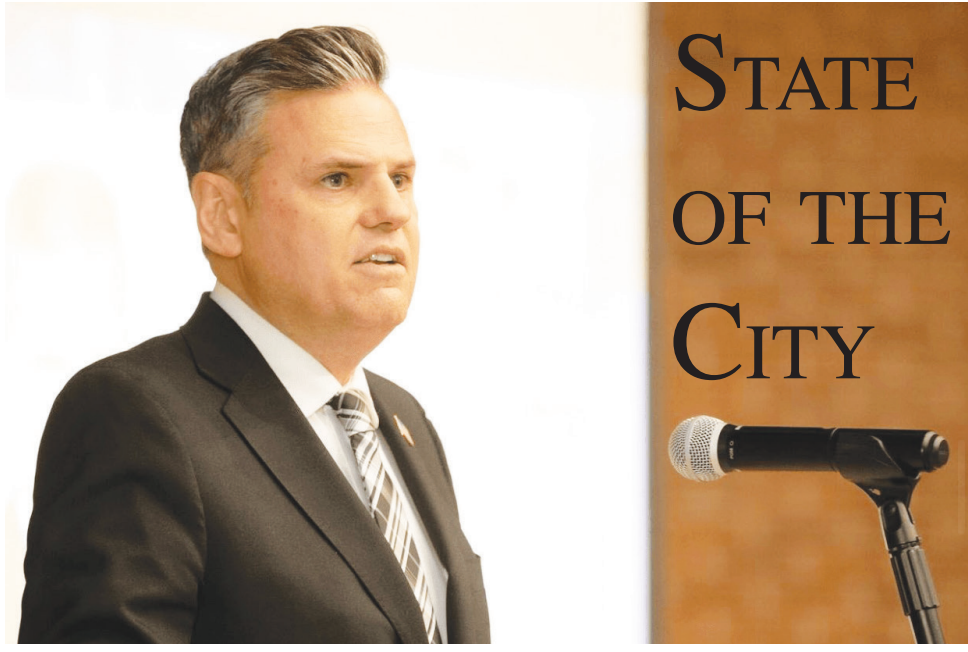
sions. Youmell noted that “no one in my class stands for the pledge, and at the beginning of the year, students seemed unsure whether they should stand.”

There’s an underlying sense of embarrassment people feel when everyone is not doing something together, so it often silences the person who is too afraid to be the odd

one out. This, unfortunately, causes a daunting division that the pledge should not create.

Instead, we should be there for one another and encourage people to either sit or stand during the pledge, showcasing that beyond our beliefs, we respect each other, ultimately fostering a community of diversity and opinions.

Although the pledge may never return, one thing that will forever last is our voices. More important than anything is the people’s ability to proclaim what they believe, so no matter what traditions come and go, allegiance to your voice should always be foremost.



Mayor Gary Christenson delivering the State of the City. Image from City of Malden's instagram page.

*Continued from front page*

O'Malley, and his family for being there to support him.

It was pointed out that it's no secret that Malden's budget is "under unprecedented pressure," as the Mayor voiced, which puts a strain on Malden residents. The Mayor spoke about Prop 2 1/2 which would raise property taxes on business owners. Malden residents will vote on this proposition on March 31st at all the K-8 schools. This was the first time in Malden's history that a tax override was set on a ballot for the community to vote on.

"I think that the mayor is doing the best for his city and he's just trying to balance everything out," emphasized freshman Meklit Daniel, who also represented Love4kids.

Senior Nour Howard recalled that she noticed signs saying "No Tax Override" in front of many houses on her way home from school.

Despite the efforts to fix Malden's budget, it was also mentioned how the city is trying to make Malden more affordable. Malden residents have benefited from a tax exemption which lowered their property taxes and a community electricity initiative that saved residents a combined 1.5 million dollars.

Towards the end of the Mayor's speech, he highlighted new projects to come such as a new 144 bed hospital, a \$500,000 grant from MassDOT for road safety, and a \$850,000 grant for repairs on the Malden Public Schools roofs.

What grabbed the most attention was when it was announced that Malden Police will not enforce federal laws in light of the ICE activity around the state. He called attention to the large immigrant population in Malden and how trust is important in a community like Malden's.

Next, City Clerk Carol Ann Desiderio was brought up to speak and began with appreciating the women who work with her in the clerk's office. Recently the clerk's office started to "chase down" and preserve some of Malden's oldest documents and digitizing them, Desiderio stated.

Daniel, representing Love4kids, thought that this action showed how much Desiderio really "cares and appreciates" her job.

It was also highlighted that when the 2025 government shutdown happened and people were having a hard time, the clerk's office coordinated a food drive where residents who came to vote could bring one food item and by the end of the voting period there was a total of 600 pounds of food donated.

After Desiderio exited the stage, the Mayor brought up Eric Rubin, who is the public facilities director. A main point he brought was that Malden obtained \$1.4 million in grants that was used throughout the city to execute upgrades upon different facilities and buildings.

Towards the end of Rubin's segment, he highlighted a major change at Malden High School Malden received a grant that allowed for the installation of solar thermal panels on the roof that will heat the swimming pool all year long.

As Rubin walked off the stage, the attendees eagerly waited for the next speaker, but what happened next was a little different. As people were looking around, Mark Linehan, with a microphone in hand began his address from the other side of the room.

Linehan had already pointed out that his job that night was to highlight community partners. He began with inter-

viewing Jodie Zalk from Malden Reads, who then shouted out Love4Kids senior co-presidents Abrhame and Sophia Chan. They all received applause from the crowd.

Linehan then moved onto interviewing Marcel Schwab about the successful farmers markets that took place last year.

Daniel thought that it is a very good idea to help others get their stuff out in the wild and was "shocked" that it was as successful.

"By the end of the season we reached about 500 attendees and 19 vendors," Schwab announced. Linehan eagerly made sure to establish that there were 500 attendees per week for 13 weeks.

City Council President Amanda Linehan, City Solicitor Alicia Mcneil, and Director of Strategic Planning and Community Development Alex Pratt, were some of the final speakers of the night. After their moments came Dr. Timothy Sippel's address about the Malden Public Schools.

He first began with honoring all of the school committee members, teachers, and alumni who had come to the State of the City. The superintendent also mentioned that one way he appreciates Malden is by finding a restaurant every Friday afternoon to eat with his wife.

"It's just a lovely community and we are so delighted to be here," Sippel expressed.

Sippel wanted to first establish all of the core values and goals at the district. He mentioned that in his first year he really wanted to make connections with students, teachers, and families. Sippel made a goal with the district to visit every single classroom and he ended up coming to over 400 classrooms in his first year as superintendent.

Freshman Edon Abrhame remembered seeing Sippel around the Linden STEAM Academy "all the time" last year.

Sippel also announced that in his tenure he wanted to ensure that all students had access to the same opportunities and programs. Now, all middle school students at the Malden Public Schools have the opportunity to participate in the Nature's Classroom overnight field trip camping program.

Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, many actions were taken to make things easier for parents and students. Sippel said he listened to the feedback from parents as he entered his new position as the district with the help of the tech department remodeled the outdated Malden Public Schools website and made it easier to navigate.

Sippel also spoke about the introduction of ParentSquare and StudentSquare in the summer. These platforms were included as part of Sippel's remodeling for parent and student outreach resources.

Towards the end of his speech, the crowd applauded heavily when Sippel announced that this was the first school year that schools were able to start fully staffed. He highlighted that schools function the best and most properly when they have enough staff to make that happen.

As for attending The State of the City, Daniel stated, "I would definitely go again as someone who wants to be more connected to the community. I also recommend it to others who want to stay tuned with all the things that are going on in the city. You definitely shouldn't let being a child stop you from getting into these situations, even if you feel a bit threatened by being in a serious room

# "NO KINGS" PROTEST IN BOSTON



A Boston resident holding signs saying "Let them eat Fascism" and "Keep your head while MAGA loses Theirs" while at protest. The "No Kings" movement led by liberal groups such as Mass 50501, Move on, and Indivisible. The movement aims to oppose the policies and affairs enacted by the Trump Administration. This latest March 28th protest has been reported to be the largest one yet, bringing together 8 Million people across 50 states. KEVIN PRUM.



ABOVE TO BELOW: Boston resident proudly holding a sign saying "No KINGS EST 1776" with an American flag attached while dressed as a soldier from the American Revolution era; Malden residents gather together proudly holding signs promoting peace and democracy for the No Kings protest near Malden City Hall. KEVIN PRUM



full of adults."

Finally, Sippel signed off saying that they are not done. There will be more development in Malden Public Schools in order to benefit the education and wellbeing of the students and families in

Malden.

The Mayor was brought back up and thanked guests for coming, and then residents everyone left the Teen/Senior center for the night knowing what was going on in their city.

### Stringing Up the New Year with the Acoustics Club

Antoine Alce  
Reporter

As the start of February brewed in, Malden High's Acoustic Club began their first meetings, which occur every Monday. The Acoustic Club is a student run club that introduces students to the basics of learning how to play guitar.

When it comes to learning guitar, there are multiple steps to learning how to play the right cords. With the Acoustics Club, students who previously joined the club came back to help teach newcomers that vary from all grades, ninth to twelfth.

"I worked with Cathen to create this club with hopes of creating and fostering a guitar community, where people who are new can come learn and enjoy a new community, and also for those who already play guitar, to just have a place where they can practice and help others as well," Vice President junior Angela Lam shared.

Lam and junior Cathen Fontanilla are the co-founders of this club, and formed a safe space for students who want to play guitar, learn different songs, and improve on their technique.

The Acoustics Club also helps students who want to refine their stringing and improve. Freshman Maria Diniz Martins shared what she hopes to achieve by the end of the school year in the Acoustics Club. "I hope to learn more, like the music theory for guitar and learn how to do more songs."

"I want to be able to look back and see achievements I've made with the guitar.

Even if it's not that much, I want enough progress to be proud of and to be able to confidently play the guitar," shared senior Anas Tiahi.

The club held their first meeting in Holland, third floor, on February 2nd. The club leaders, Lam and Fontanilla, introduced what the Acoustics Club is, what they plan on teaching throughout the rest of the school year, and the benefits of joining.

When holding their second meeting on the eleventh of February, the club began with everyone grabbing a guitar and forming a circle to play. Lam and Fontanilla shared tips to the members on which cords are needed to play "Riptide", then offered advice and feedback on how they did, as well as what they need to improve on.

"I hope that we can gain some loyal members or I hope that people are able to learn and enjoy this community, because the whole point of it is to create a welcoming community for people to go to," concluded Lam.

## CO '27 JUNIOR VARIETIES HITS THE STAGE



Members of the Fierce and The Fearless hyping up the crowd as they conclude their performance. YEN NGUYEN

*Continued from front page*

nitely do it all over again."

Following "The Shoelaces", were the iconic dance team "The Fierce and the Fearless", who previously performed at JVs last year. The group brought an unmatched energy to the stage and hyped up the audience with their bold dance moves.

The lead dancer and choreographer for the group, senior Nour Mossalam, explained how he was nervous about putting his choreography piece out there, as it was the routine that he created. Mossalam had also created the remix of hit songs that the group danced to, which included "Woman" by Doja Cat, "Not Like Us" by Kendrick Lamar, "One Dance" by Drake, and "EoO" by Bad Bunny.

Mossalam emphasized that his favorite parts of JVs were "definitely hyping the crowd up" and "giving the dancers on the team the moment to shine as well." He noted that they did "really amazing" and that he "loved every part of it."

The third act was performed by senior Jasmin Diaz Gomez, who had chosen to sing the romantically melancholic song "Bound to You", by Christina Aguilera as it was from her "favorite movie: Burlesque."

The audience watched intently as Gomez gave a passionate, heartfelt performance. By the end, the auditorium echoed with claps and cheers, which had eased "the nerve-wreck," that Gomez felt during her performance.

After the stunning solo by Gomez, the band "Wavelength" appeared on stage to give a rendition of "Shissou" by the LAST ALLIANCE, an early 2000s Japanese Rock song. Senior lead singer Katelynn Vo led the stage with her lively vocals, along with the high energy tunes provided by senior guitarists Nicholas Li, Josep Gaviria, and Sorin Mamouzette. Cochran made a reappearance and enhanced the punk-rock vibe of the song with the rapid striking of the drums.

Gaviria shared that "this performance was the most awesome," he'd ever had. "The stage was big enough for me to be free in my movements and fully enjoy playing the song and moment with my band."

From a fast-paced rock song to the classical piece "Piano Sonata No.16 in C Major, K545" by Mozart, senior Erica Littlejohn stunned the crowd with her magnificent piano solo. The piece had a complex and playful tune, in which Littlejohn displayed her dexterous skills on each note. This was not Littlejohn's first rodeo at JVs as she has performed the piano during her freshman and sophomore year as well.

Littlejohn expressed how she had chosen to "perform that particular Mozart piece," because it was the special piece that got her "accepted into the Adams School of Music and the Arts at Gordon College."

The newly founded band "Sea Foam" played the penultimate performance in the first act. Their performance featured the song "Back to Me" by The Marias, a mellow song centered around the yearning for a past relationship. The band had decided on that song as it came from The Marias' "Submarine", which has an oceanic vibe connected to beaches and sand.

Junior bass guitarist Krystalyn Vo described JVs "as being able to bring in the

community."

Concluding the first act was the synchronized dance group, "GALXC" made up of members from the high school's KPOP club. The dancers performed to a remix of popular Korean pop songs "Killin it Girl" by J-Hope and "FaSHioN" by Cortis. The group captivated the audience's attention as they showcased a passionate and lively choreography, created specifically to match the beats of songs while incorporating moves from Korean pop groups.

Sophomore Lillyanna Keogh mentioned that although "it was a bit nerve-wracking" because it was her first time performing for JVs, she was still "very excited," to display the groups' efforts and hard work on stage.

"Hearing the crowd go crazy after each performance was my favorite part," Keogh emphasized.

Junior Ryleigh Marrow shared: "I've been going to JVs since my freshman year, it's one of my favorite events during the school year. As one of the most popular school events at Malden High, it's an awesome way for people to express themselves and their interests."

#### ACT 2:

Introducing the second act was Malden High's Step Team, a beloved group that performs at JVs every year. With the members split into two groups,

surfers and bikers, they alternated turns to perform their own rhythmic routines. By creatively using their bodies as loud and powerful instruments, the Step Team promoted the school's spirit and brought a lively energy to the stage.

Towards the end of their performance, the separated members grouped together to perform a collective routine, which had the crowds in the audience cheer-louder.

Rolling in next were

LEFT TO RIGHT: Collage of JV performers: Raphael Sanchez Martinez, Joan Diaz Vargas, Alexia Lima, Lillyanna Keogh, Audrey Nguyen, and Jhillian Dumo. YEN NGUYEN

the Bald Ensemble, which included Malden High's band members. Despite only a few members actually being bald, all the members displayed a top-notch confidence and energy on stage. The performers were thoroughly coordinated, which made for a terrific and harmonious show. Their particular performance of the hit 1990s song "Everybody" by The Backstreet Boys led to a loud uproar in the crowd as everybody sang along.

In his way Blue and Gold Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile Jacob Fuentes gave an exceptionally heartfelt performance of "My Way" by Frank Sinatra. With a dark blue spotlight cast on him as he sang the iconic song, and the audience amazed at his singing, guests were compelled to shine an extra light on him. One by one, people turned on their phone lights and waved their arms side to side. As Fuentes sang the final chorus and vocal climax of the song, the crowd sang along with him, filling the entire auditorium with a triumphantly passionate resonance.

Sprouting up next was the band "The Turnips" who performed the upbeat, pop-rock song "Still into You" by Paramore. Leading singer Sarah Fontaim's vocals were clear and loud, fully capturing the energetic vibe of the song. The harmonious strum-

ming from senior guitarists Moon To and Nguyen sent vibrations to the crowd from the stage, with Cochran making his final appearance as the drummer and skillfully hitting every beat in the song.

Fontaim mentioned how it was her "first year performing with a band," highlighting that they "all got used to each other's flow very quickly and the chemistry was definitely there."

More than halfway through the second act, the band "Halfway Home", performed the alternative rock-song "Cranberry Chaser" by the Raccoon Road. Lead singer Matt Jason Chan led the

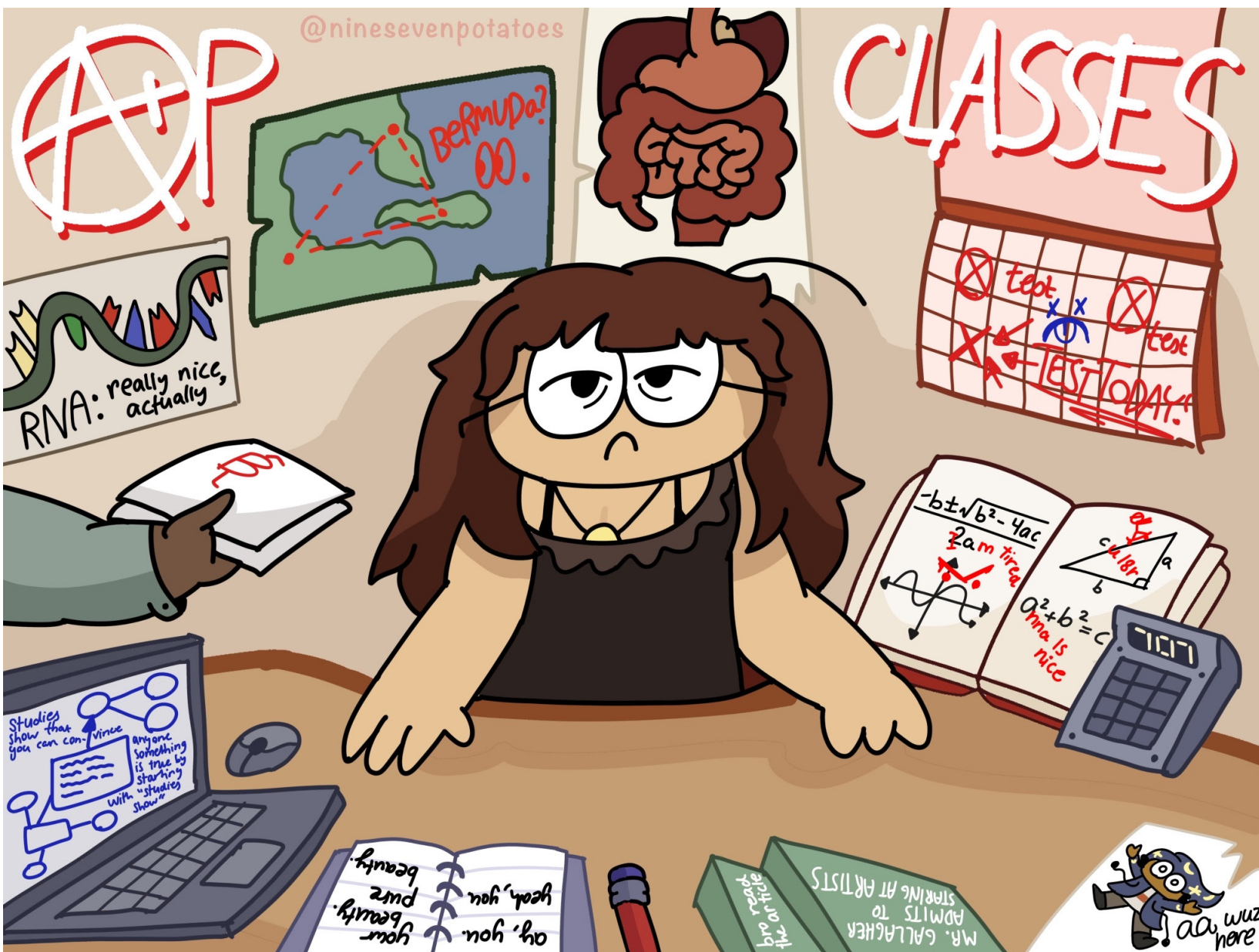
*Continued on page 6*



LEFT TO RIGHT: Kenny Diaz Osorio, Matt Chan, Christopher Arruda-Ciulla, and Raphael Sanchez, members of "Halfway Home" performing "Cranberry Chaser" by Raccoon Road. YEN NGUYEN

maldenblueandgold.com

# NAVIGATING AP CLASSES



Artwork by Abyan Ali

Anna Bui  
Head Copy Editor

As the final quarter of the school year nears, students begin to prepare and coordinate with their counselors to select their classes for the upcoming school year. When it comes to the difficulty of the courses, there is a variety which includes College Prep (CP), Honors, and Advanced Placement, which is “the most rigorous course,” Malden High School has to offer, according to principal Christopher Mastrangelo.

Many students typically hear about these classes from their friends and classmates. Word often spreads of the difficulty of the courses and the amount of workload and stress that they tend to give. This is due to the strict curriculum offered by the College Board. These classes move at a fast pace, and “the depth, the speed, the expectation of work from the students follows that progression,” continued Mastrangelo.

The pace at which these classes progress challenges students to keep up. AP courses mirror college-level courses, meaning teachers often move quickly through complex material. Falling behind can happen fast, and catching up requires lots of effort and discipline.

Compared to CP or even Honors classes, AP courses demand more reading, more as-

signments, and more independent studying. It is not uncommon for students to spend several hours outside of class each week simply trying to keep up.

Students find themselves developing time management skills in order to manage the workload. Sophomore Dylan Huang noted that a big challenge of AP courses is “balancing out the homework alongside other extracurriculars.”

Sophomore Sophia Zhang agreed with this sentiment. On top of sports, clubs, and student council activities, she finds herself “working later” than she wants to and “most of the time working until the deadline.”

These classes can often lead to high levels of stress and pressure on students. When paired with so many extracurriculars and personal responsibilities, Zhang believes it is best to “not take more AP courses than you think you can because that can lead to burnout really quickly.”

While there is no doubt AP courses can be hard on students, they also offer a number of benefits for students.

The biggest standout factor for students is the ability to prepare for college. Although Malden High offers Dual Enrollment courses, AP courses are another good

way to get students “prepared for college level classes,” claimed Brunelli counselor Amy Poulton.

Sophomore Liliana Lin believes that “an AP course is a great introduction to the workload of a college class. It’ll teach you time management and different skills for that class or subject.” Through AP courses, students are able to develop critical thinking, time management, and study skills that are essential for success in higher education.

The courses not only help students get used to college-level rigor, but can also offer “college credit” or can be used “in substitution for some classes in college,” shared history teacher Kurtis Scheer. Scoring high on AP exams can allow students to skip certain introductory courses in college, saving both time and tuition money.

Additionally, these courses allow students to explore their academic interests in depth. Whether it is biology, history, literature, or mathematics, if a student has “a real passion for whatever topic that it is,” they are able to “think a little bit more critically as it relates to complex topics,” in AP courses, added Scheer.

“If a student comes in here and got

*Continued on page 7*

## Sing Choi Kee Serenades Malden’s Appetite

Evelyn Ruan  
Head of Sports

Clinking glasses filled with milk tea, savory noodles, and a nostalgic atmosphere. The franchise restaurant Sing Choi Kee, which originated in the New York neighborhoods Flushing and West Nyack, had made its way to Malden. The new restaurant opened on January 30th of 2026.

Sing Choi Kee is a cha chaan teng, or a “tea restaurant” but also refers to a Hong Kong style cafe; a common cafe style in many places in China where the atmosphere and decorations are a retro or an eclectic theme, taking customers back into the past. Not only are the decorations part of the style but also the food, which has European but mainly British influence due to the colonization of China in the past. Cha chaan tengs were developed around the 1950s-60s as an affordable, accessible version of British-style cafes for local residents.

Upon its opening, it has already erupted in popularity among Malden citizens as the restaurant is filled with new and returning customers everyday. As you step into the restaurant, it is busy, bright and filled with bold colors, creating its fast paced environment, where each staff member is making sure that customers are enjoying their time.

Senior Moon To believes that the restaurant is a great addition to Malden, as it especially resonates with the many Chinese residents, adding that “it’s not like anything we have here...it’s a bright and refreshing place that is also convenient and right next to the high school.”

Although it is not a dish, To’s favorite item on the menu is the Hong Kong milk tea, saying that “it had a bold aroma and it wasn’t overpowered by milk, it was a very smooth drink.” She would recommend it for those who “aren’t big fans of boba milk tea or other boba chains” because of the “sweetness or milky flavor, since it’s super concentrated with the tea flavor.” She continued to add that the food is “hearty and versatile in itself, and it reminds me of home in Hong Kong!”

To mentioned that the interior of Sing Choi Kee reminds her of another cafe in Quincy called Bayao; “The interior is very similar in the way that it’s bright, and in your face, something that is interesting and it’s not dull at all.” Being heavily involved in social media and finding joy in taking photos, “having food that is fun but also appealing to the eye is something that I really like,” To ex-

*Continued on page 7*



LEFT TO RIGHT: Juniors Evelyn Ruan, Yawen Zuo, Aya Tafraoui, Ivan Chen, and Alexia Lima acting out a scene from “Teen Beach” movie at the start of Junior Varieties. YEN NGUYEN

*Continued from page 5*

stage with his enthusiastic dance moves and powerful singing as his bandmates supported his vocals with electrifying instrumentals.

Wrapping up this year’s JVs were the Afro-Caribbean dance group, who took up the spotlight as the 13th performance. The

members danced in perfect synchronization with one another. Big smiles, bright flower leis, and upbeat Afro-Caribbean pop music filled the stage as the audience cheered on the dancers. The dancers performed proudly while they showed off not just the hard work they put into their choreography, but

their cultural heritage.

Mamouzette, who was also featured in several other performances throughout JVs including the Afro-Caribbean group, described this year’s JVs as: “Memorable, chaotic, and eventful.”

## Sing Choi Kee

*Continued from page 6*

claimed.

Junior Ryan Huang had heard about its opening from classmates and encouraged him to try some of the items and felt “glad they opened in Malden Center.” Following up by mentioning it “gives fresh new tastes and treats for the community.” Huang’s favorite item on the menu was the sliced beef over rice with zao po vinegar soup, commenting how “it can really warm you up on a cold day,” and he recommends getting it.

After a busy day filled with tests, junior Henry Xue saw that Sing Choi Kee was open and decided to try it out. “I think it’s good to see more places like Sing Choi Kee opening up, because it gives our community more options and supports our diverse group.” He highlighted the uniqueness of the restaurant as he hasn’t “seen most of the dishes they serve offered anywhere else nearby.”

His favorite item on the menu is the ice cream pineapple bun because “of the hot and cold sensation you get after each bite,” and would advise ordering it.

Likewise, Huang also thought that the restaurant’s uniqueness of the cuisine, food combinations, and flavors “found in its menu makes it stand out compared to other restaurants.” He also enjoyed the ice cream pineapple bun and found it to be “a surprisingly good combination!”

Malden Catholic sophomore Emily Pham found out about Sing Choi Kee as her friend had recommended it to her. “I think it’s great that we have many small businesses opening in Malden, especially Asian cuisine.” Pham’s favorite item on the menu was the black pepper noodles and adds that the restaurant is “very friendly and welcoming towards teenagers.”

Junior Rosalyn Ruan found out about the place while walking by Malden Center and got excited because she “had previously tried the same restaurant back in New York” so she was “really hopeful about it.” Ruan stated that the restaurant’s environment is “very nice, it’s clean and pretty quick, I feel like it’s also an easy place for people who are trying it for the first time.” Her favorite item on the menu is the slippery eggs on rice dish with char siu (roasted pork).

“I enjoy having a place like Sing Choi Kee in Malden; it’s kind of a new aspect on cultural food while still being reminiscent to many students at Malden High with the old school Hong Kong aesthetic and dishes,” Ruan continued. Like others, she definitely “would recommend this to other students,” adding that the “menu and the options are easy to navigate and the overall experience isn’t overwhelming.”

## 7TH STREET BURGER: A SMASHING SUCCESS



Exterior of 7th Street Burger. ALEXIA LIMA

Alexia Lima  
Managing Editor

From the streets of New York City’s East Village to Boston’s very own Newbury Street, the new location of the beloved smashburger chain, 7th Street Burger, opened its doors on March 20th, fusing simplicity with a lively and retro atmosphere.

7th Street Burger was founded in 2021 with locations originally spanning across NYC and with popularity, eventually expanding to multiple locations in New Jersey and Washington DC. The announcement of a Newbury Street location created a buzz across social media with anticipation to try the famous smashburger.

The u-shaped restaurant elicits a vintage feel with red upholstered seating and glass soda bottles. Junior Isabella Pizziferri described it as a “50s diner vibe, it was super small and hard to find seating but overall clean and comfortable.” The simple menu consists of three food items: a regular cheeseburger, a double cheeseburger, and fries. Lines were out the door opening weekend as Bostonians brimmed with excitement over the burger joint’s introduction to the city, “The restaurant was full of people, all of them were looking forward to trying it,” junior Cam’ron Crawford noted.

This popularity spilled over into the first week, causing the restaurant to become overcrowded and “definitely overstimulating” due to there not having “a lot of seats” and “super long lines,” junior Aaliyah Ferreira shared.

However, the quality of the burger makes it worth the wait. A crispy potato bun surrounds the smashed patty accompanied by

grilled onions, american cheese, pickles, and house sauce. 7th Street Burger’s mission revolves around prioritizing top quality ingredients and authenticity in their recipes.

Students enjoyed the meal due to its low cost and rich flavor, Pizziferri expressed how “It’s a nice addition to Newbury Street and it was extremely affordable.”

In comparison to other burger joints in the city, Ferreira described how “It’s definitely smaller than a normal sized burger, someone compared it to a mini burger from McDonald’s which I could see. But it was good, and tasted much like a Shake Shack burger.”

Besides the quality of the food, the stellar customer service amidst the rush of opening week stood out to customers as a reason they would be returning. “The customer service was amazing, the cashier was very lively and definitely made the environment welcoming,” Crawford explained.

7th Street Burger’s staff goes above and beyond to deliver excellence in their service and preparation, remaining calm and building relationships with customers even when the restaurant is busy.

With a lively environment and exceptional service, 7th Street burger provides students with an affordable burger joint that is “different from other burger places around our area,” Crawford expressed.

To not miss out on, as Ferreira depicted, “food [that] is definitely top tier,” visit 267 Newbury Street for the ultimate smashburger experience.

## The Struggles, Benefits, and Successes of AP Classes

*Continued from page 6*

all A’s in CP classes, I want that student to take all honors classes the next year. You don’t want to just skate by. If you’re achieving at that level, then you need to go to the next level. It’s that piece about constantly evolving and challenging yourself academically,” stated Mastrangelo.

For students who are considering or already enrolled in AP courses, there are several strategies that others have used to help

them succeed.

The biggest piece of advice students tend to give is to avoid procrastination. Zhang emphasized the importance of being able to “space out your day to finish your work and also set aside time to study for tests and other assessments,” to succeed in classes while not exhausting yourself.

Others also noted the importance of a work-life balance. Students may load their schedules with AP courses, simply for the

GPA boost, increased challenges, or because of pressure from their peers. Due to this, Huang advised to “take the AP courses that interest you,” and to “find a balance between challenging yourself academically and having a fun high school experience.”

“While for some it may be a big jump, like anything in life, it requires initiative. You don’t know what you’re capable of until you try it,” Huang concluded.



LEFT TO RIGHT: A woman posing with "Cái quạt," a hand-painted Vietnamese fan with cherry blossoms on it; two friends posing after buying new "áo dài," a piece of traditional Vietnamese attire worn during special, formal events; and a vendor holding one of her calligraphy scrolls all posed behind a sign advertisement of the festival. YEN NGUYEN. On February 15th, New England’s largest annual Vietnamese Lunar New Year festival, Tet in Boston, was hosted at the Mannino Convention and Exhibition center in South Boston. The festival showcased various traditional food stalls, cultural activities, live music, lion dances, martial arts, and raffles. As families and Boston community members gathered to celebrate the year of the horse, the festival became a way of empowering cultural identity. YEN NGUYEN

# ROCK CLIMBING CLUB

# K-POP CLUB: KILLIN' IT WITH NEW 'FASHION'



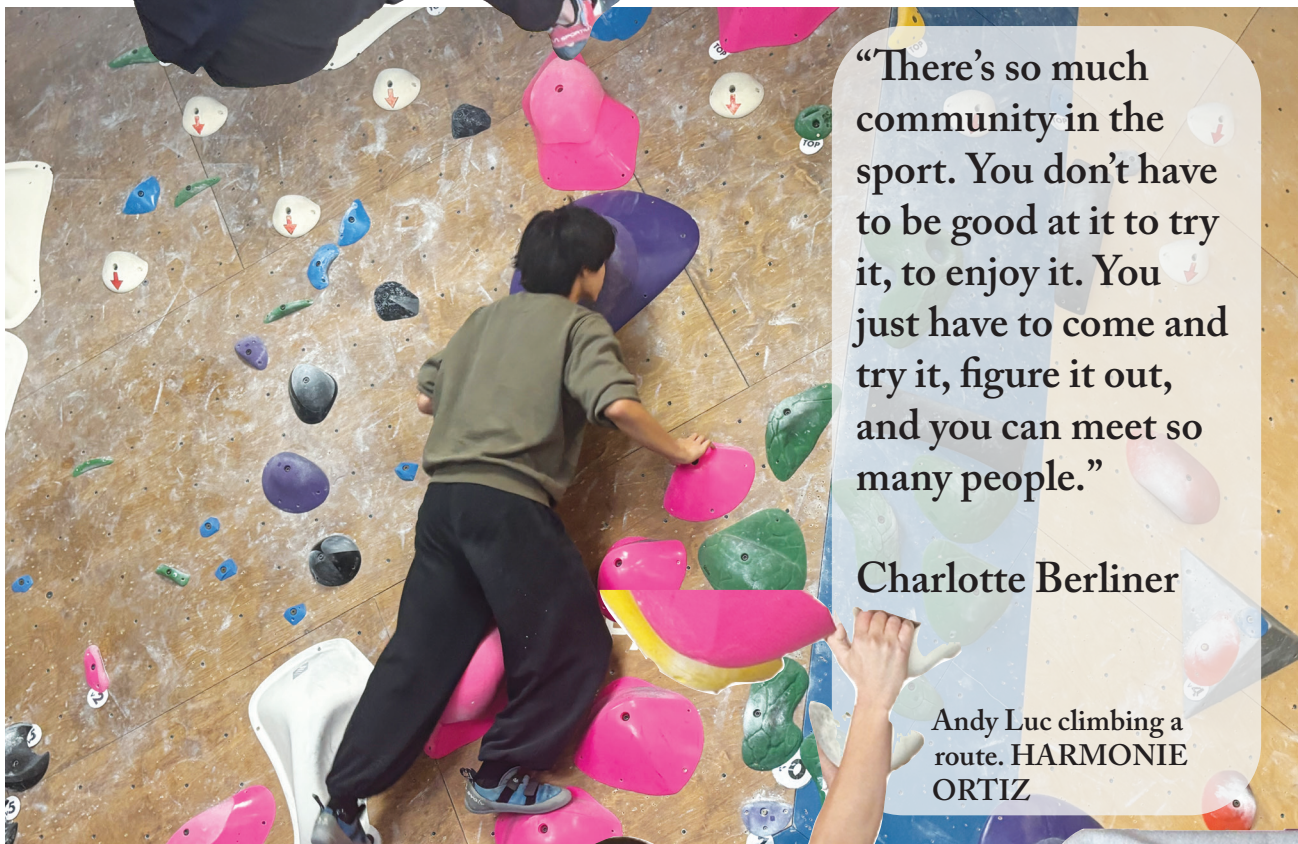
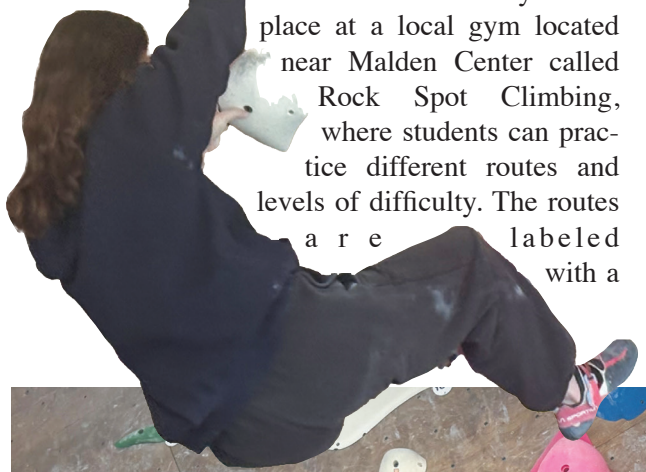
Rock Climbing Club posing for a picture before they begin their individual climbing routes. HARMONIE ORTIZ

Joana Vassao  
Reporter

Students at Malden High have many clubs to choose from, but one of the most unique and exciting ones is the Rock Climbing Club. The club gives students the chance to try something new, stay active, and spend time with friends outside of school.

Rock climbing might seem intimidating at first, but members say the club is welcome to everyone, even beginners. Junior Charlotte Berliner, the president of the club, explained what makes rock climbing so special. "There's so much community in the sport. You don't have to be good at it to try it, to enjoy it. You just have to come and try it, figure it out, and you can meet so many people."

The club usually takes place at a local gym located near Malden Center called Rock Spot Climbing, where students can practice different routes and levels of difficulty. The routes are labeled with a



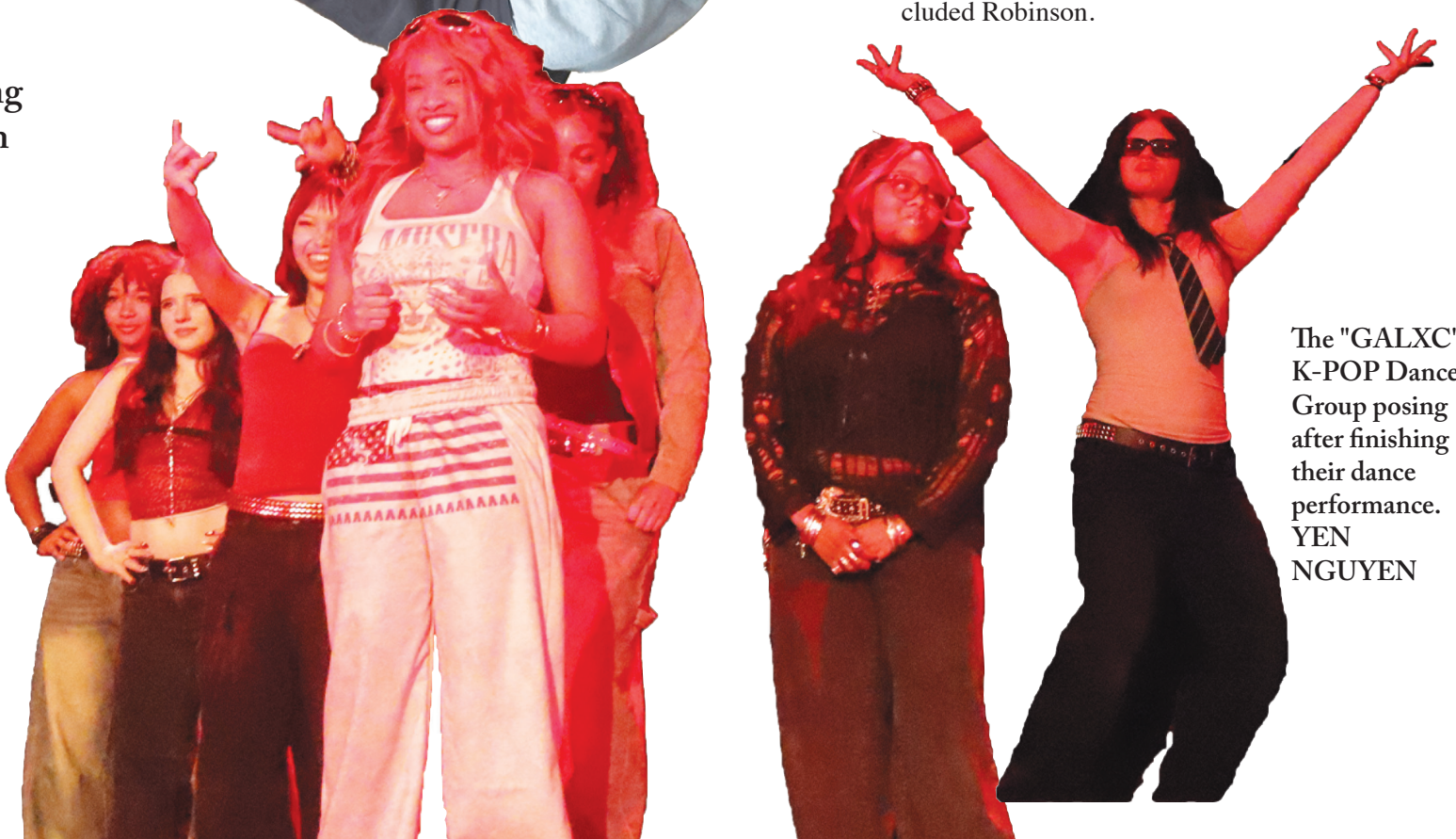
"There's so much community in the sport. You don't have to be good at it to try it, to enjoy it. You just have to come and try it, figure it out, and you can meet so many people."

Charlotte Berliner

Andy Luc climbing a route. HARMONIE ORTIZ

Yisen Feng climbs a route at the local rock climbing gym during a Rock Climbing Club meeting. HARMONIE ORTIZ

To watch:  
Conquering Heights with Malden High School's Rock Climbing Club on YouTube, scan the QR code:



The "GALXC" K-POP Dance Group posing after finishing their dance performance. YEN NGUYEN

Priscarla Villefranche  
Reporter

Music transcends genres—it falls into cultures from all across the globe. In the Western music industry, the largest and most influential music market internationally, breaking through can define an artist's career. By the 2010s, South Korean artists had not only entered the scene but had begun to dominate it.

K-Pop, short for Korean popular music, originated in South Korea and has become a global cultural phenomenon. Combining traditional Korean music and language with Western influences, K-Pop is characterized by its polished choreography, visually striking performances, and distinctive, colorful fashion—elements that appeal to its diverse global audience.

With the K-Pop club, the genre's global reach is apparent right here at Malden High School. This club is a welcoming space for students to connect with one another through their shared love of K-Pop.

Members can bond by learning choreography, discovering new music, and even sharing merchandise.

"It's nice to know that there's a safe space to share the love for the music with other people," shared senior president Christina Robinson.

The club was founded in 2019, with alumni Ki-ana Tse, Katelin Dzoung, and An Ho leading as officers. As mentioned in a previous article on the club, its goal was to create a "welcoming space for those interested or who want to be interested in K-Pop." In its early years, the club hosted various activities, including photocard trading and Random Play Dances. Since then, it has evolved into a dance club that performs choreography at the annual Junior Varieties.

This year, the club performed the fiery hip-hop single "Killin' It Girl" by j-hope and the rage rap anthem "FaSHioN" by CORTIS at the 86th annual Junior Varieties.

To prepare for the performance, the club has been practicing "almost every other day of the week," stated sophomore Sofie Rivera. During February break, the club would meet at MHS every day to practice.

In previous years, the club has always chosen to perform songs from girl groups. This year, however, they decided to switch it up and perform one from a boy group, as they're "a little bit more impactful" and known for their "harder choreography," explained Robinson. "We kind of wanted to take that step forward and challenge ourselves."

Through their performance, sophomore Lillyanna Keogh hopes to "reduce the stigma" that those who enjoy K-Pop are "weird."

"K-Pop already has this kind of stigma attached to it that it's too childish or it's not real music," added Robinson.

For the club members, K-Pop has made a large impact on their lives. "I took a lot of inspiration from K-Pop artists I've listened to, and that kind of helped me find my own style," explained Robinson. Rivera explained that it "helped me get closer to lots of people," like her sisters and friends. "I've been able to go down to concerts and events."

The club has evolved over the course of a few years, expanding to connect more fans through its music and choreography.

"The K-Pop club is definitely a space, not just for those who like to listen to music, but also those who dance and perform on stage," concluded Robinson.



An illustration by senior Moon To of a realistic portrait of a child and her parent being illuminated by the soft candlelight from the child's birthday cake; a ceramic cup of a cow made by senior Lauany Ferreira. FATIMA HUSAIN

Fatima Husain  
Copy Editor

Every spring, the city of Malden transforms into a living canvas. On April 3rd, the annual Blue and Gold Art Gallery, hosted by Malden High School at 350 Main Street, opened its doors to the public, inviting everyone to step into the world of student imagination.

The building is donated each year by a local supporter, where rows of paintings, portraits, and ceramics line its interior. Each art piece tells a story—whether it be of identity or community. Similarly, some works explore cultural heritage, while others capture everyday life through images of people, food, or animals. The diversity of art styles displayed that night mirrored the diversity of Malden itself.

“I’ve seen other countries and other cultures in the artwork, and it’s helped me learn. That is the whole point of life, and we tend to forget that because of the fast-paced world we live in,” voiced Mayor Gary Christenson.

Organized by Malden High’s art department, led by teachers Eli Shalan, Kristina Gilbert, Michaela Ilebode, Breanne Mahoney, Gina Yu, and Courtney Gould, the program spends months preparing for the show. Choosing which artwork to display is no easy task, especially when wanting to represent Malden’s community as a whole in one night, and realizing that for many students, this was their first experience seeing their art displayed publicly.

“Throughout the year, we are pulling artwork that we believe deserves recognition, while also honoring student requests for the gallery. A variety is selected from across the grades, although it tends to be junior and senior artwork heavy,” shared Shalan.

Beginning at 5:30 PM, visitors were welcome to help themselves to complimentary food and refreshments provided by Urban Grove Cafe and to tour the gallery. At the entrance, tables filled with varied ceramic works were exhibited, above which hung artwork on canvases.

“It’s nice to have a place to see everyone’s creation being presented, skills being shared, and different art styles being appreciated,” commented junior Trini Le.

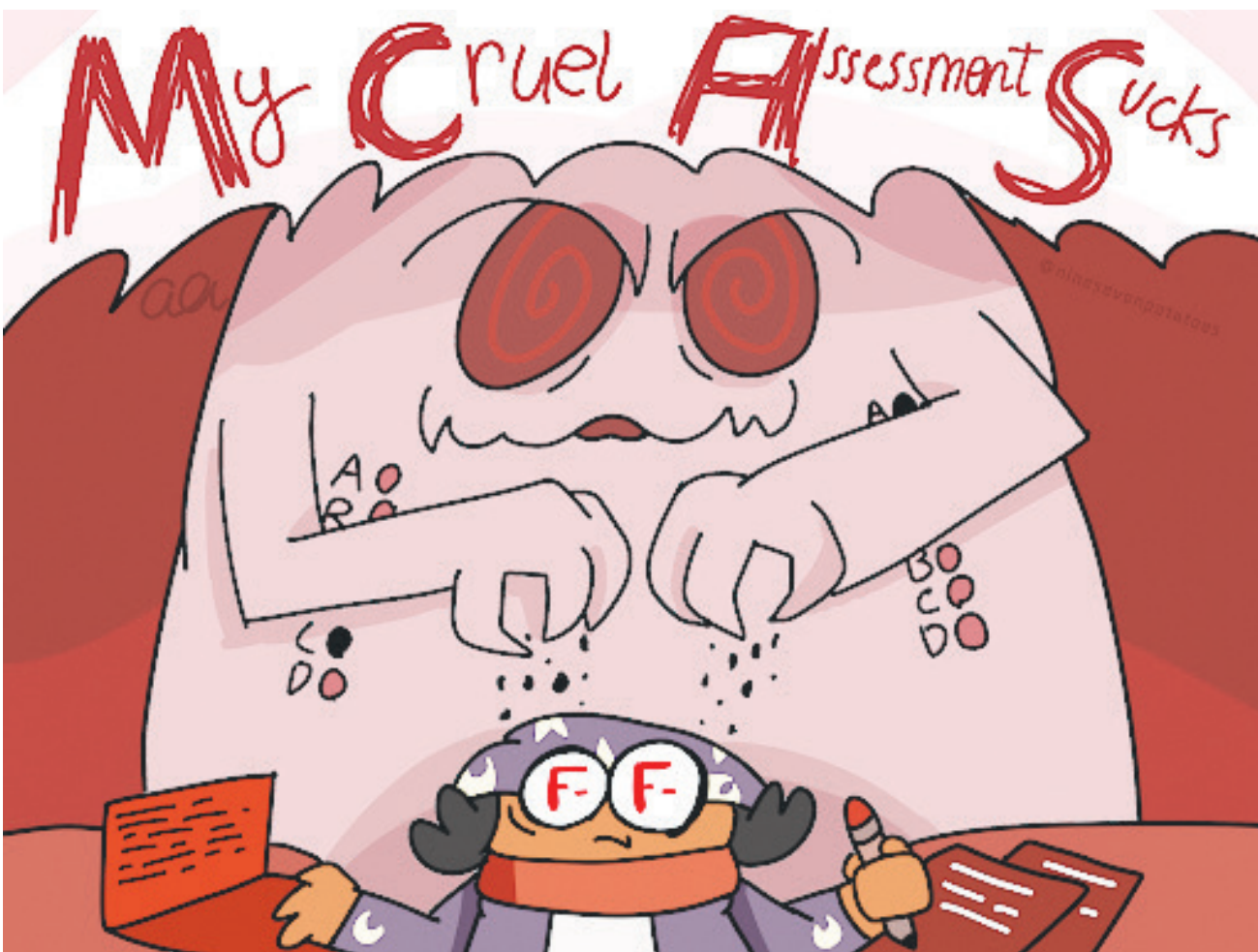
As you walked farther down the hall, the walls were decorated with self-portraits and portraits of famous celebrities. The impeccable line work, realism, and talent produced by Malden High students were evident. Continuing, artwork focused on nature, fantasy, and individualism could be observed and awed over. Finally, the gallery concluded with another ceramics exhibit at the end of the hall.

As more people had trickled in, Principal Chris Mastrangelo took the stage to appreciate the beauty of art and the hard work put in by Malden High students and teachers, calling the event “one of his highlights every year.”

Mastrangelo then handed the stage to Superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel, who reiterated the principal’s remarks and added his admiration of the art department, shouting out the Director of History and

*Continued on page 10*

## The Pressure of Performance



Graphic by Abyan Ali.

Priscarla Villefranche  
Reporter

Vanessa Nguyen  
Reporter

It’s finally that time of year: spring, a season characterized by blooming flowers and the vernal equinox. It’s a time we all

look forward to as it starts the countdown to summer break—but there’s just one catch.

As the second semester reaches its midpoint, exam season is approaching. Over the next two months, students across all levels, ranging from college prep (CP) to Ad-

vanced Placement (AP), will be taking exams. For freshmen and sophomores, MCAS testing will take place from March through June.

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is a set of statewide standardized tests for students

in grades 3 to 10. It is designed to evaluate student, school, and district performance compared to state learning standards. MCAS covers two main topics: English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, with additional tests in science for grades 9 and 10, along with Civ-

ics for eighth grade.

Standardized tests, such as the MCAS, are defined as “any test that’s administered, scored, or interpreted in a standard, predetermined manner.” These tests usually include multiple-choice and open-ended questions, either graded by automated scoring machines or by individuals. As standardized testing carries high-stake achievements, the importance of these assessments have provoked controversy.

“I don’t like [standardized testing],” voiced English teacher Anne Mooney. “But I also know that they are a reality,” she added.

Sophomore Lyra Heining believes that for many students, standardized testing “isn’t the best way to measure” their knowledge. “I think it causes a lot of unnecessary stress,” Heining added.

Exam season in general has had a significant impact on students across the state, with many feeling overwhelmed by the pressure and expectations

*Continued on page 10*

## NOT UP FOR DEBATE

Evelyn Ruan  
Head of Sports

On March 24th and March 25th, junior Modern World History classes partook in Model UN.

Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations conferences where students, in groups of two or three, represent a country that they either chose or were assigned to. They act as their nation’s leaders, or in other words, become delegates of a nation’s position in a global issue to discuss with others. This year’s topic was nuclear proliferation, which is the continued spread of nuclear weapons, technology and materials, to countries or organizations that do not possess them. In this simulation, students must participate in preparing and actively speak on their country’s position as it is part of the curriculum.

All sessions began with students entering the gallery to sign-in for attendance and to grab their placards that had their nation’s name on it. Behind the placard also had a list of sentence starters that students had to use. As they sat down and waited, Principal Christopher Mastrangelo delivered a brief speech on how MHS is lucky to have done something unique like Model UN, further explaining how some schools don’t have this enriching opportunity.

After Mastrangelo gave his speech, United Nations Association of Greater Boston’s director of teaching and learning, Shannon Coyle, introduced herself as the Chairperson of the event. Coyle walked students through how the simulation would work and what they would be specifically doing. Next, with her gavel, she banged on the table to start a roll call on all 47 countries that were present.

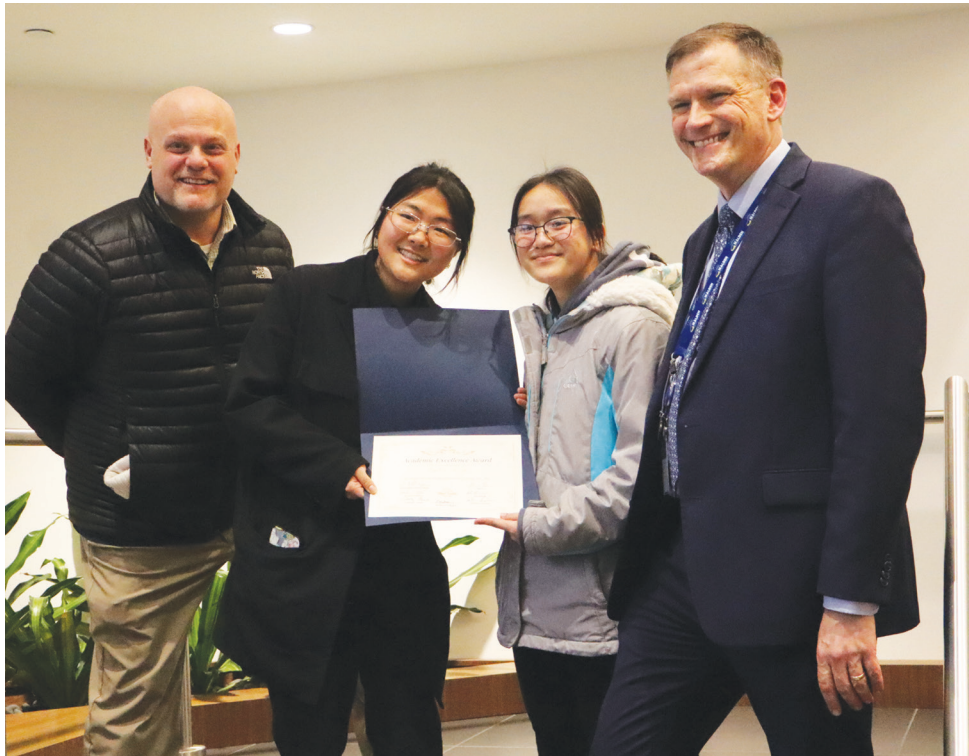
As the roll call wrapped up, Coyle asked the first group of students to do their opening speeches. In alphabetic order of countries, starting from Algeria and concluding with Vietnam, they had 1 minute to explain their country’s position on the global issue. The students’ speeches would go on for an hour and would end off with a 7-minute break before starting the next part of the simulation. During speeches, students had to take notes on each speech which would help them with creating alliances later on.

Junior Ella Boucher chose Russia because she felt that they were “a powerful country” and was interested in how to speak upon the topic as a representative of Russia. “I felt both excited for the fact [that] I can

*Continued on page 10*

maldeblueandgold.com

## Blue and Gold Art Gallery



Principal Christopher Mastrangelo, art teacher Gina Yu, and Superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel, posing with sophomore Sophia Zhang, the third-place winner of the Teen Immigrant and Perspective Competition. FATIMA HUSAIN

Continued from page 9

Art, Gerard Tannetta, in the process. “I don’t even know how to describe all the media used to create such magnificent artworks. All I can say is it’s stunning, provocative, and inspiring,” expressed Sippel.

Afterwards, an award was handed out to sophomore Sophia Zhang, who won third place in the Teen Perspectives on Immigration contest held annually by the Immigrant Learning Center in Malden. The contest invites students from Malden, Everett, and Medford public high schools to submit original work on the topic “How Immigration Benefits My Community.”

Zhang’s artwork illustrated a monarch butterfly flying toward King Protea flowers, paralleling the migration pattern with immigration. “I’m really into simplism and choosing to depict a story through flowers holds weight in and of itself, seeing as there is a language of flowers. The King Protea flower is known for its diversity and I intertwined Malden’s diversity by dedicating each petal to a different culture,” elaborated Zhang.

Witnessing Zhang’s accomplishment, Jessica Howard, her middle school art teacher from Beebe, shared how it is “an honor to be in her presence” and that Zhang’s “talent left her speechless.”

Galleries such as these emphasize art as an essential part of student life, offering them a way to express what words often cannot. Not only does it reflect emotion, identity, and creativity, but it also builds empathy by letting others see the world through someone else’s eyes. Placing them in a public setting only brings the community closer together

by allowing observers to consume stories else, stated senior Moon To.

Especially with a rise in AI art, the value of student art has never been more important. Human creativity carries depth and qualities that algorithms can imitate, but never truly represent. Artificial intelligence lacks the emotional connection that art is meant to inspire and be produced with, rendering the final product meaningless. Supporting student artists means defending the authenticity of human expression behind every brushstroke.

“Art is dying as a subject and as a way of expression—we have to bring it back to life,” To stressed.

However, defining and identifying the limitations of AI art is more difficult than it seems. For instance, digital art employs the use of several generative tools and algorithms to enhance images. The technology can be used for a variety of reasons to improve an artist’s work and will remain “prevalent” in digital work, claimed Yu. Yu believes the “language” used to describe AI art is “polarizing,” explaining how relative good can come from such programs, specifically in terms of accessibility.

“I went to an Adobe Conference in Boston last month, and I remember them heavily pushing generative AI to be integrated into digital softwares. At the time, I felt very mixed about the approach and thought ‘why do we need this?’ but then realized that some of the tools were extremely useful and fun to play around with,” added Yu.

In the end, the Blue and Gold Art Gallery stands as a reminder of what creativity can do for a community, and will continue to do if given a fighting chance.



A detailed painting of a knight riding to battle on a horse illustrated by senior Nyla Dos Santos. FATIMA HUSAIN

## MODEL UN

Continued from page 9

talk to others and see others from different classes, but nervous for our speech.”

Coyle then motioned for either a moderated caucus, which is a formal way for students to discuss, or an unmoderated caucus which is informal and allows for students to move freely, creating alliances or negotiations. Students with their raised placards that were called upon by the Chairperson, were able to pick an unmoderated or moderated caucus and discuss topics between nuclear waste, energy, workforce, disarmament, nuclear testing, and managing stockpiles. They were also allowed to pick the time to discuss and speak.

Students that were chosen had thirty seconds to speak if they were in favor of the topic.

To make it more formal, Coyle opened a speakers list which allowed delegates to request if they wanted to speak. After voicing their thoughts, Coyle concluded the moderated caucus and introduced the position statements.

Around the room, there were posters about deterrence, usage of nuclear weapons, total disarmament, using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, managing stockpiles, and non-proliferation. For 15 minutes, delegates would find a topic they supported and with others, would work together to write and create a position statement, to later present to the chair and others as a resolution to vote on.

Once the 15 minutes was up, each group went up to the microphone and presented their posters, trying to persuade others to agree with their position statements.

In order, deterrence went up explaining their focus on safety, security, and using weapons to intimidate others. Disarmament, split into 2 groups, both voiced how maintenance is expensive, has risks to the environment, destructive and stabilizes security for citizens as it threatens international peace. Nuclear energy was also split into 2 groups and highlighted how it allows everybody to work together, has low carbon and clean energy, and will help develop countries efficiently. The stockpile maintenance group focused on being careful with the usage of nuclear weapons. Lastly, non-proliferation wanted security, peace, stability, trust and to be able to develop.

The last part of Model UN was voting on which topic they wanted as a

resolution. Coyle summarized each topic and then started the voting. Jason Dutaille has always been interested in New Zealand which is why he chose to represent the country. He believed that Model UN would “be a good learning experience.” He continued to say, “I felt confident in my ability to form a resolution that would be passed by The Chair.”

Out of the 5 topics, deterrence with only 10 votes did not pass. With the success of the other topics passing the minimum of votes, delegates cheered. To conclude the event, a delegate motioned to adjourn in which the majority voted in favor of.

From experience, Coyle found confidence and being able to speak in front of people is a common challenge students face. “However, I really didn’t see a lot of that in this year’s simulation.”

History teacher Jonathan Copithorne, noticed that a common challenge was getting over the fear of public speaking, which is why he “spent so much time with the students ahead of time, practicing their speeches, so they know what they’re going to say, and they know kind of ahead of time they can plan ahead, especially when those nerves are starting to kick in.”

Adding that he hovered around the microphones “just in case anyone needs a little extra support.”

History Teacher leader, Kurtis Scheer “felt the students performed really well in terms of their research, their speaking, and their ability to come to a consensus and vote and pass a number of resolutions here to tackle some really difficult questions.”

Though he wished he talked a bit more, Petion learned “that it’s difficult to make a set agreement with so many people. It makes sense now why the UN is so complicated.” He added, “I was able to reflect the beliefs that my country held even if it was contrasting to mine.”

“Something you definitely can learn from this is how to be more out of your shell kind of because like the whole simulation was based on communication and understanding,” voiced Boucher.

“We’re not always going to agree on certain things, and countries are going to have different goals to try to achieve these two so, trying to figure out the best way to do it democratically and diplomatically is one of the big takeaways I think we’ll have from this whole thing,” concluded Scheer.

Above: Junior Gloria Alexis performs her opening speech. EVELYN RUAN

REFLECTING  
ON MCAS  
AND EXAMS  
STRESS

Continued from page 9

surrounding upcoming exams.

“When exam season comes around, I want to do the best I can. I really push myself and that causes me to overthink,” explained sophomore Taylor Alexander from Somerville High School.

Maintaining balance has also been a challenge for students. “It’s so difficult to balance social life and academic life while also preparing for these tests,” explained sophomore Sabrima Bhattarai, noting that regular classwork continues alongside the MCAS, which contributes to the stress.

Until 2024, Massachusetts students were required to pass the MCAS in order to receive a high school diploma. However, with the approval of MA Question 2, this requirement was repealed. Students are now expected to complete coursework certified by their local school districts and achieve state academic standards for these tests.

As the MCAS is no longer a graduation requirement, it has sparked debate over whether it is still necessary for students to take.

Malden High School has a mix of opinions: some believe that the test remains important, emphasizing that it measures students’ progress and abilities, while others argue that it has become unnecessary and outdated.

“I think removing this requirement demotivates a lot of students from even trying because it’s not tied to their ability to graduate,” explained Bhattarai.

Sophomore Gesselle Rodriguez Portillo believes that the MCAS is still necessary as students are “able to show” what they’ve “learned throughout the year” and the data can help to “reflect on the school itself.”

“It is still necessary to emphasize trying your best on it for students,” expressed Mooney. “It impacts how the state views our school,” added Mooney.

According to Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), statewide testing helps the state identify whether students are meeting basic learning standards and where to focus their efforts. It remains an important way to measure where students, schools, and districts stand across Massachusetts.

“I would encourage staff not to just totally dismiss the [MCAS] because it’s problematic, because that in and of itself is also problematic and could hurt students,” concluded Mooney.

## Ramadan's Effect on Malden High

Adam El Fatihi  
Reporter

Malden High School is known for its wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Ramadan is not the only thing being celebrated this February; Lunar New Year and Black History Month are also prominent within the month. This variety of different religious and cultural celebrations brings a sense of diversity and community, making the school feel like a miniature version of the whole world within the hallways.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a sacred period of fasting, prayer, and commemoration of the revelation of the Quran to the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). Ramadan is a way of self-discipline and empathy in which Muslims avoid food and drink from dawn to sunset, focusing instead on charity, communal devotion, and purifying their soul to be closer to God.

This year, Ramadan began on February 17th. The holiday is based on the phases of the moon and differs year-to-year. Once the moon is observed, the month of Ramadan officially commences. Muslims introduce Ramadan by gathering at the Mosque for special long-form night prayers called Taraweeh. For the next 29-30 days, Muslims abstain from foods and drinks from dawn to sunset.

"It only affected my energy, like feeling thirsty or hungry and making me feel sleepy, but other than that, there is really no change," said junior Imane Agoumad, who emphasized how the impact is felt by many Muslim students in the school.

Beyond the physical challenge of fasting mentioned, president of the Muslim Student Association, senior Yasser Belatrache noted that the month brings a deep sense of peace and reconnection with faith.

"Fasting is a challenge, but it's worth it for the connection that you get. It makes you feel closer to God and closer to the people around you," sophomore Ilias Azzelzouli proclaimed. Azzelzouli appreciates the value of fasting during Ramadan as well as being a part of the Muslim community. Azzelzouli mentioned that he likes to pray at the Mosque accompanied by his cousin. "Our local mosque is very welcoming. It really shows how the community comes together."

When it comes to school support during Ramadan, the feedback is mostly positive. "My teachers do a wonderful

# Eid Brings Culture and Community to Malden



Girls posing for photo wearing an abayas and Palestinian thobes. BILAL PSARLY

Bilal Psarly  
Reporter

After a month of fasting, prayer, and discipline during Ramadan, the Muslim community gathered this year at Medford High School to celebrate Eid with joy, color, and unity. Families arrived early in the morning wearing new clothes, greeting each other with warm smiles as "Eid Mubarak" echoed with children running around excitedly.

Eid marks the end of Ramadan, a month where Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset and focus on prayer, and self discipline. Eid is a time to give thanks, visit family, share meals, and celebrate together. Many cultures also have traditions like wearing new clothes, giving gifts, and elders giving "Eidi" (money) to children.

Imam Shuaib Abu Hamza from the Malden Islamic Center described Eid in one word: "happiness."

"It's a good job, a hard job. Allah gives us Eid to feel happiness after [Ramadan] like your paycheck is Eid." His message was simple: Eid is a moment to wake up the heart, feel close to God, and celebrate the blessings of the community.

This year's prayer brought together hundreds of Muslims from Malden and surrounding cities. The prayer hall at Medford High was filled with families from Afghanistan, Morocco, Libya, Yemen, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and many more backgrounds all in celebration of Eid.

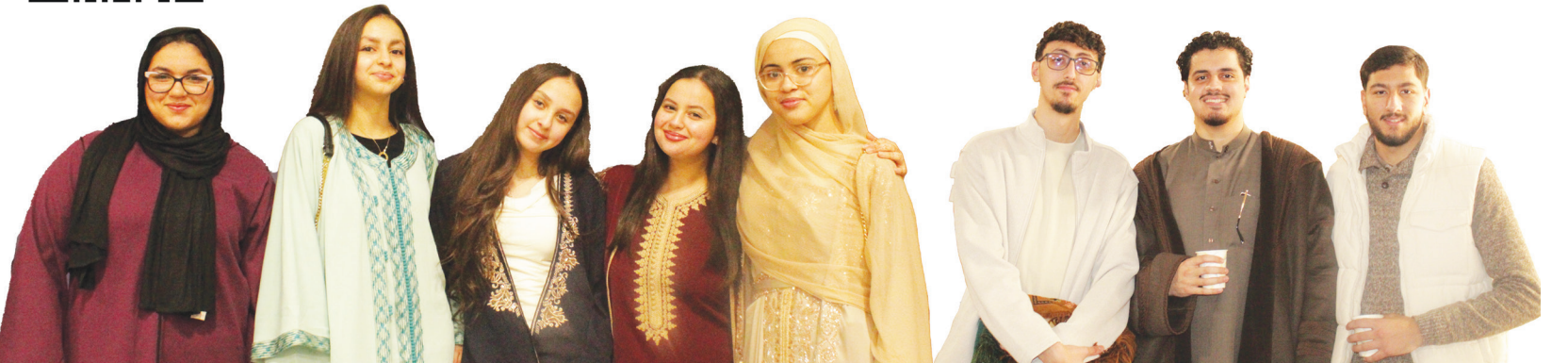
Children showed off their new outfits, parents greeted old friends, and everyone shared the same excitement of finally reaching this day. After the prayer, families visited each other's homes, exchanged food, and continued celebrating throughout the day.

Students from Malden shared how meaningful Eid is to them as it isn't just a holiday, but a cultural and spiritual moment shared among all Muslims.

Abdul, a student from Libya, said his favorite part of Eid is



Scan this QR code to see Safa Niazi's video on a local Eid celebration!



job of understanding the adjustments I need to be making during Ramadan. They have been doing a good job of understanding and communicating well," junior Iyad Doukkali concluded.

Since the removal of the prayer room, the school has been providing as much support as possible to students participating in Ramadan. "I feel like the removal of the prayer room was unnecessary, but they had to do it for a reason. Overall, the school has done a good job with everything." This has been shown throughout many examples, such as every house office being available to be used for

prayer, or students having the need to take a break during class.

"Whenever I want to go pray, I go to the Boyle house during lunch, and they are nice enough to let me pray there. I really appreciate how much the school helps," junior Imane Augomad said.

Her experience reflects on how staff members have been understanding and supportive of their students, even without a prayer room. Many students share similar experiences, noting that teachers and administrators have made an effort to be respectful and flexible during this time of the month.

Even though the re-

moval of the prayer room created some concerns for students going into Ramadan this year, the school's response has shown a willingness to help and meet students' needs in other ways. This type of support not only helps students but also shows that Malden High is a safe space, and that there is a sense of respect within the school community.

One of the other important parts of Ramadan that many people do not notice during the school day is how students begin and end their fasting. Before sunrise, Muslims wake up for a meal called suhoor, which helps them prepare for the day ahead.

"meeting up with family and friends and having a great time after working hard all Ramadan. It feels like a reward."

For many students, Eid is also a way to reconnect with their roots. Hamza explained, "I feel connected to my culture. As you can see, I'm wearing Libyan clothes... everyone feels connected to their culture."

Tradition also plays a big role here. Asel shared a unique family tradition: "Every Eid since I was a little kid, I would always crave Dunkin Donuts in the morning. So every Eid, me and my family always have to get donuts with a cup of coffee."

For some students, Eid is also a reminder to slow down and appreciate the moment. Rim offered advice to others: "Take the day and enjoy it. Spend time with your family, eat good food... you put in a lot of effort throughout the month, so take this day to really take a break and thank God."

Across cultures Eid is celebrated with new clothes, visiting relatives, sharing meals, giving Eidi (money) to kids, hosting guests, special foods and sweets, and community gatherings. Even though the traditions differ, the feeling is the same everywhere: joy, gratitude, and togetherness.

Malden High is known for its diversity, and celebrations like Eid highlight the importance of understanding and respecting different cultures.

By learning about the Eid, the school community can become more connected and supportive. It reminds everyone that Malden's strength comes from its various cultures coming together.

Whether through prayer, family traditions, or like simply enjoying the day, Malden's Muslim community showed that Eid is a moment of happiness shared across generations.

As Imam Shuaib said, Eid is a gift, a chance to feel joy after hard work, to reconnect with loved ones, and to celebrate the blessings of life.

"I usually wake up earlier than others so I can eat for suhoor, and I also pray in the morning. So because of this, my schedule changes," said Doukkali. After sunset, they break their fast with iftar. The typical way to break iftar for Muslims is dates and water, following the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. These moments are often shared with friends and family, making Ramadan not only an experience of the spirit but also a time of connection.

Ramadan also provides an opportunity for non-Muslim students and staff to learn more about Islam and their traditions. It can be as little as con-

versations, school discussions, or even as big as fasting for a few days to get a sense of how it feels. This increased awareness helps build that respect, which reflects the diverse environment Malden High School is known for.



Scan this QR code for a video of in-depth interviews about Ramadan!

maldeblueandgold.com

## Finding the Perfect Prom Dress

Haset Tesfaw  
Lead Reporter

For some people, prom season is just another event on their calendar. For a lot of the senior girls at Malden High School, it's their favorite season of the year. They start purchasing new shoes, accessories, makeup... and their prom dress! It might come to your surprise that it is not always as effortless as it seems to find the "perfect" dress.

Senior Olivia Sateriale created a private Instagram account @maldehigh26seniorprom for only seniors to follow. She had recognized both the stress and excitement that comes with prom season and wanted to create an account allowing girls to share the dresses they purchased with others in their grade.

When she shared a little bit about her experience looking for her dress she stated how it took a "little bit to find the one, but when I put my dress on I instantly knew I was bringing it home."

Sateriale explained she created this page for people to gain confidence in their dresses and for inspiration. She's always seen high school prom pages and couldn't wait to be able to be a part of one. "There were no pages being made, so I thought I'd take it into my own hands and make one."

Senior Ciara Freeman, who purchased her dress at Enchanted Quince & Bridal located at 75 Newbury St, Danvers Massachusetts, explained how it took her "the whole day from 12 pm to 7 pm," to find her dress.

Most girls agree that the process was definitely not a quick one. Despite the stress, Freeman explained how helpful social media was for her. "I think social media influences prom, and prom planning a lot because posting the theme and seeing other dresses definitely help you pick out a perfect dress for your prom. It helps you get ideas when going to shop for your dress."

Other students shared their similar experiences. Senior Mia Digregorio, who also purchased her dress from Lady Black Tie, described the experience as fun but slightly overwhelming due to the number of choices. "There were so many options to choose from and lots of colors to try on that you wouldn't even think you liked. I will say it was a little stressful having to cut down options to find the perfect dress, but other than that, very fun."

While social media can be a helpful tool for inspiration, it also might

# COLLECTORS "CATCH EM' ALL!"

## The Best Flippin' Card Show in Woburn



Participants and local card traders exploring different card stands at "The Best Flippin' Card Show" in Woburn. RIN CLOUGH

Rin Clough  
Reporter

Some people consider collecting to be just a hobby, while others consider it a dedicated lifestyle. On Saturday, March 21st, participants of all ages gathered their bags and headed to the Crowne Plaza in Woburn to attend "The Best Flippin' Card Show," an event for those who collect trading cards to purchase, invest, trade, and share their love for their interests.

Collectors walked around and browsed among a variety of vendors selling products, from Pokemon to Topps Sports Cards. It seemed impossible to find something that did not meet a niche interest. There were boxes of cards with different sizes and series, as well as graded trading cards, which are in plastic or glass cases that have been judged for the quality and condition.

Every vendor has their own specialty, for example, vendor Matt from Providence specializes in vintage sports cards, his inventory consisting of memorabilia from the early 1900s.

You may be thinking, how does one find all of these rare cards? Matt explained that he started collecting when he was young, and as time went on, he decided that he wanted to be a dealer. "I would just look online, look at shows, yard sales, Facebook Marketplace, anywhere I can."

The love for hobbies and fandoms are spread among everyone attending the event and are open for anyone to enjoy. But sometimes,

there is a downside, like misogyny.

Stephanie, a vendor, shared a taste of this. "A lot of people look at me and say, 'You're a girl. What do you know about cards?' They're very surprised when I'm knowledgeable with what I have here. I like the look of surprise on people's faces when I start talking to them about different products because no one expects it from me."

Looking across the millions of cards displayed, you might be wondering where to start, or what to collect. Matt advised that you "don't collect just because it's valuable, collect it because you like it." Stephanie agreed with this, specializing in her collection of Bo Bichette baseball cards. "I think if I started to collect more players, my whole collection would get out of control," she shared.

The Best Flippin' Card Show holds these shows monthly, called "monthly mixers," in the Crowne Plaza, with the next few dates being April 18th, May 16th, and June 14th, according to their website. They hold an Anti AI policy for vendors, and ensure all products are authentic. Parking is free, and the event is reachable through public transportation. Tickets can range from \$5-\$25 depending on the event.

You might just see shiny pieces of cardboard as a fad or worthless, when in reality cards can range from hundreds, thousands, and even millions of dollars. Why not come down every month to see if you can find something you like?



Vendor Matt from Providence holds up a vintage card in his inventory. RIN CLOUGH



Vendor Stephanie behind a case of Sports Trading Cards. RIN CLOUGH

## Join Our Community

We invite you to join our growing community of satisfied customers. Whether you're looking for the perfect towel set for your home or a thoughtful gift for a loved one, American Linenmark has something special, just for you. Thank you for choosing American Linenmark. We look forward to sharing the comfort and quality of Turkish linen with you.



**American Linenmark**  
Where every fiber speaks of luxury

lead to measuring yourself against others. Senior Alivia LaMarra pointed out that platforms like Instagram allow students to explore different styles and share their ideas, but also may increase the pressure to follow trends or expectations.

"It allows people to get ideas but also can cause people to compare themselves to others,

although seeing other dresses didn't influence my decision because my dress was exactly what I was looking for," LaMarra stated.

Senior Liana Ayala, who had purchased her dress in The Ultimate Prom and Bridal located at 130 Newbury St, Peabody, Massachusetts, had a slightly different experience than most.

She described it as very smooth, fun and quick. "It didn't take me long to find the dress I wanted because I came in knowing exactly what I wanted. I knew the color I was going to go for and the style of the dress that I wanted."

Her advice for others searching for their dress is simple: "Pick a dress that you like and don't

worry about what other people would think."

LaMarra encourages everyone to "try everything on even if it's not in your comfort zone because you'll never know if you love it until it's on."

"If any girl is struggling to find their dress, you shouldn't stress, there's still time and many places where a dress will

be perfect for you," Sateriale emphasized.

Every girl's experience is different. Some are long and stressful, while others feel efficient and smooth. However, the commonality for everybody will be the cherished lifetime memories, endless preparation, and one amazing night to celebrate the chaos of it all.

## Boxing Lessons at MTEC Pack a Punch

Ariana Edwardsen  
Reporter

Boxing is often generalized as a sport of aggression, but in reality, it is a disciplined practice that builds strength, focus, and resilience. At first glance, it might seem intimidating, however, after stepping into a boxing class, one would see the discipline it requires and the confidence it develops. Out of the many fitness options out there, boxing definitely stands out as an effective way to improve both physical and mental strength while also pushing oneself to improve.

For those who do not know, the Malden Teen Enrichment Center (MTEC) holds boxing classes every Friday from 3:30-5:00 p.m. The MTEC is located on 7 Washington Street in Malden.

If you attend one of these classes you can expect to be in a group with other kids and learn simple boxing techniques alongside training with others. Boxing gloves are provided for all participants, with students being able to spar with one another in order to further build their boxing skills in a collaborative environment.

One student, Christ-Herley Mentor shared that “the MTEC’s boxing classes have helped me with my reflexes, mental focus, and gave me a secure capability of self defense. I really think people should join the boxing classes, they won’t regret it.”

While boxing emphasizes individual technique, much of the training involves partnership and group exercises, which help students learn to give and receive feedback, share encouragement, and respect one another’s progress. These interactions strengthen social skills that can be applied beyond these classes and impact one’s everyday life.

An additional advantage of the classes is that they are free of cost, making them accessible for a wider range of students. Financial barriers can often prevent people from participating in structured fitness programs, but free classes ensure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit regardless of their situation. This accessibility encourages more students to stay active and engaged in a positive environment while building useful life skills.

Classes like these can help students find their passion for something that they may have never considered trying or would not have had the opportunity to. Junior Ava Lacasse stated she “start-



Victoria Domiciano  
Lead Reporter

Players from Brazil and France spread across the field during a tense moment of play, as both teams position themselves for control of the ball. JOANA VASSAO

On March 26th, 2026, Brazil and France faced off at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Massachusetts. It was not just another international soccer match, but a rare and unforgettable experience for fans in the stands. With a final score of 2-1 in favor of France, the game delivered intensity, standout performances, and an incredible crowd atmosphere.

For many students and local fans, the significance of the match went beyond the scoreboard. The desire among locals to attend the game was strong as it was seen as a “once in a lifetime opportunity” for many who “want to embark on the journey and be a part of Brazilian culture, regardless of the score,” explained Felipe Domiciano, a Brazilian supporter who attends Babson College. Sophomore Carlos Coimbra shared a similar sense of pride for supporting Brazil, noting he went to support his country “playing live for the first time.”

Despite France winning, much of the crowd’s energy came from Brazilian supporters. Expectations varied, from fans expecting France to win while still remaining loyal to their nationality. The match stayed competi-

tive throughout the game with Brazil managing to score and keep the game close. “What surprised me was how close Brazil got to winning,” Domiciano said. Coimbra, however, stated he was “expecting Brazil to win.”

The players on both sides brought high-level performances. France’s standout players included Michael Olise and Hugo Ekitike, while Brazil was led by Matheus Cunha and Raphinha. Their efforts fostered a fast pace match, and suspenseful outcome of the game where supporters were uncertain until the final minutes of who would win.

France secured a victory over Brazil with goals from Kylian Mbappé and Hugo Ekitike, while Bremer scored for Brazil. Despite Dayot Upamecano receiving a red card in the second half, France managed to stay persistent and win the match.

However, what truly defined the night was the atmosphere. Both Domiciano and Coimbra described it as “electric.” Recalling the chaos and excitement before Brazil scored, “there was a fight in the crowd, but then the focus shifted back to the game after noticing a potential goal,” Domiciano shared

when reflecting upon his most memorable moment.

“Attending the Brazil vs. France game felt unreal. Seeing the thousands of Brazilians with flags, jerseys, and overall support for their team was so comforting knowing we were all there for the same motives,” expressed senior Rebecca Santos from Revere High School.

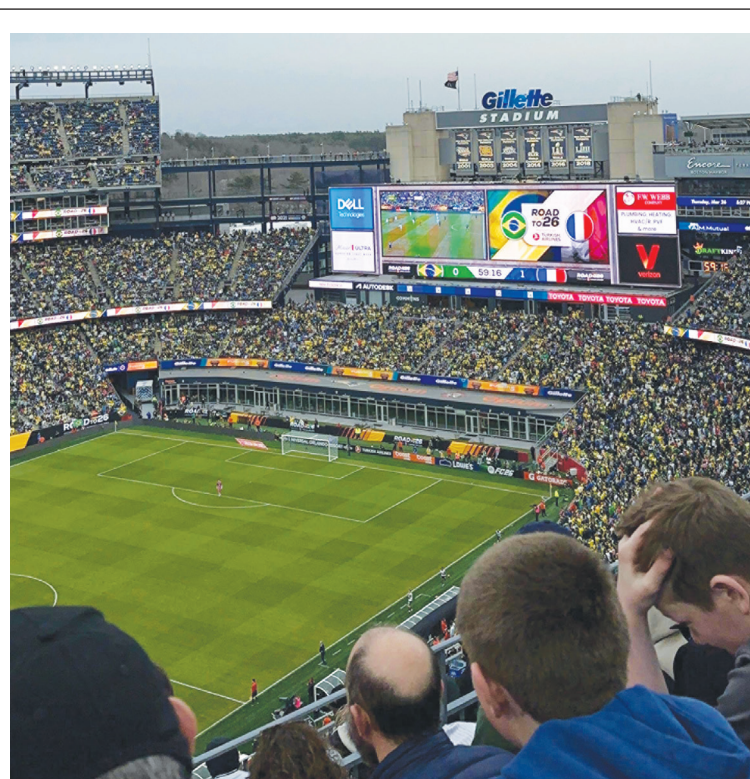
The intensity in the stands was thrilling and unexpected. Moments with “friends invading the field during the game” and “three fights between the fans” highlighted just how passionate the crowd was, sophomore Ronald Carvalho Fernandes said.

While France walked away with the win, the game left a lasting impression on those who attended. For Fernandes, the memory goes beyond the final score as “celebrating and experiencing the game first-hand with family and friends” was the biggest takeaway.

From national pride to unforgettable crowd moments, this Brazil vs. France match proved to be more than just a game, but also an experience that fans will never forget.



While Brazil and France players warm up on the field below, one supporter holds a sign reading “I believe Brazil never gives up,” showing strong team pride. JOANA VASSAO



Fans fill Gillette Stadium as Brazil and France face off in an international match, with a packed crowd and cloudy skies setting the scene for an intense game. JOANA VASSAO



Jay Ortiz reminding both students to envision their hit before making a move. ADAM EL FATIHI

ed taking these classes because I’ve always had an interest or passion for

boxing.” Lacasse would see videos of kids her age boxing as well Jay Ortiz,

the boxing instructor at the MTEC, “work with other adults and kids at

MauMau, so I thought I would try. Once I started boxing I really enjoyed it. I was actually good at it which surprised me.”

Overall these classes are a great opportunity for anyone who is or has been interested in boxing and wants to participate in classes. “I started the boxing classes last year around February because I’ve been interested in boxing since I was a child,” said Mentor.

The classes not only teach self defense strategies but also teach students how to be safe and prepare them for a situation where they might

need these skills. “These classes have taught me how to defend myself, get out of problems with people, and how to be safe. Jay and other instructors have taught me some new kicking techniques and ducking,” said Lacasse.

Through these classes, students build strength, endurance, and coordination, while also learning discipline, focus, and self-control. The structured environment that these classes provide encourages students while also helping them become more confident in their abilities over time.

## TRACK TEAM DOMINATES

### Track Runners Leave Opponents in the Dust as New Season Arrives

Emily Weihrauch  
Head of Local

After a winter season that was nothing short of brutally cold and filled with fiery potential, MacDonald Stadium welcomes Malden's Outdoor Track and Field team for yet another season full of energy and dedication.

The season officially began on March 16th, kicking off the season with a variety of new faces and determined returning players excited to create lasting memories, set new personal records, and bring the team to state championships. Just a few weeks later, runners and throwers would feel ready enough to make their debut or comeback this season in a meet against Lynn English.

The stadium was sunny with a blistering wind that washed confidence over the team. People huddled, began to make their way to the field to warm up, and wandered prior to the meet officially starting.

With all of the commotion occurring on the field, participants and families could see themselves over to the field house for a quick bite. Two bakesales were held—one hosted by the track team and one hosted by the student council for the Class of 2027, where the



Sophomore sprinter Mirka Kovacevic-Marinkovic jumps over her penultimate hurdle in the girls' 400m hurdle race. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

team sold homemade baked goods and the council sold savory snacks and drinks any athlete would crave after their event.

As always, the meet began with hurdle events proceeding first. Sophomore Mirka Kovacevic-Marinkovic started the meet with the 400m hurdle event, representing Malden; she finished in 1:18, leaving a 25.4 gap between her Lynn English opponent. Senior Logan Johnson also ran the 400m hurdles, finishing in 1:14.

Outdoor track tends to shine a light on field events, as they are major and center during these competitions. New and returning faces participated in high jump, long jump, and throwing events. They happen simultaneously with track events; blink and you might miss it.

Kovacevic-Marinkovic and freshman Taya Rubin-Wilson both represented Malden for the girls' high jump events. Representing the boys were sophomores Nathan Schonton, successfully jumping 5 feet and Raphael Kinuthia.

Being one of the few girls that competes in jumping events, Kovacevic-Marinkovic felt that overall,



Sprinter and high jumper freshman Taya Rubin-Wilson practices running from the left for her high jump event prior to the official starting. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

## Girls' Lacrosse Remains Positive

maldenblueandgold.com



Girls Lacrosse team gathering for a group circle while preparing to face their opponents. ANNA BUI

Anna Bui  
Head Copy Editor

As spring begins to bloom, Malden High's Girls' Lacrosse team have begun warming up for the challenging season ahead of them. After spending weeks practicing, the girls will use their skills on the field on April 7th, playing their second game of the season and facing the Northeast Metro Tech Knights.

The girls put up a strong fight from the moment they stepped on to the field until the moment the whistle blew to signal the end of the fourth quarter. The team managed to maintain "good field defense" and had a number of saves from senior goalie Audrey Nguyen, claimed head coach Devon Pattershall.

While defense had been the team's strongest aspect of the game, there were also notable improvements in offense that Pattershall has seen

over the course of games and practices. From the "great offense positioning" and the shots that junior Nyla Pierre scored, it is clear the girls are "already improving just from their first game." Despite the defense that the girls put up, the Knights ended up sweeping the game with a final score of 13-6. Although they lost, the team remained resilient. Looking forward, they plan to focus on improving the team's skill and cooperation to be able to win future games. Even with the "rough start," junior captain Frankie Marengi-Pellino believes that with time and practice, they could "win a few games."

With the outcomes of the past few games, the team did not turn their focus towards claiming the championship of the Greater Boston League (GBL), but instead fo-

cused on honing their skills and strengthening the girls' bonds. "It was very clear that this year will be focused on developing the team," claimed junior Amelia Berliner.

While the majority of the team is "brand new players," Pattershall has been impressed with the skills and "natural athleticism" that the girls have. She looks forward to growing these skills further to eventually be able to claim the GBL title in a couple years.

"It certainly is a building year for not just me, but everyone else on the team, but I know with more time and as the season continues to progress I'll feel more confident in my skills, and everyone else will too," shared junior captain Cat Nguyen.

Improvement is not all about skills though, as the coach and captains have highlighted

the importance of having a strong mentality on the field. Pattershall praised captains Nguyen and Marengi-Pellino for their ability to "promote a good mentality among the team" and foster a closer relationship between the girls.

Marengi-Pellino emphasized her excitement to "just be a good teammate, leader, and help make sports fun for the girls," while Nguyen voiced that "every girl has something to offer, and I want them to be able to know that!"

Although the team has not had a strong start, the girls are looking forward to strengthening their abilities and forming a connection to set them up for future wins.

"It's pretty early in the season to predict anything, but I can tell that it's going to be a great one," concludes Nguyen.



Left to right: Senior goalie Audrey Nguyen clears the ball after saving it while a Northeast player tries to intercept; Junior Amelia Berliner prepares to defend against other Northeast players. ANNA BUI



all of her events went "pretty well", and she's "excited to see what the rest of the season brings for high jump hurdles and sprinting events."

Malden's throwers found great success in their events, placing highly and landing many personal bests. For Javelin, Malden took first place, with junior Aya Tafraoui throwing 63 feet and 9 inches, and junior Joshua Mini throwing a whopping 120 feet. For boys' discus, all three Malden competitors threw anywhere from 65-120 feet, with Mini taking first place once again. For girls, 42-83 feet, with sophomore Neitsy Philome placing first. Last, but not least, for Shot Put, sophomore Julius Scott placed first for boys throwing 38 feet. Girls threw anywhere from 11-30 feet, with Philome placing first once more.

Taking off with the two-mile, senior Distance Captain Lincoln Boswell took off solo, instilling onlookers with a sense of awe as he persevered through arguably the most mentally tasking event in track for his fourth year, finishing in 11:53.

In a flash, 100m runners of all grades dashed down the track's straight, with freshman Khadijah Dagne and junior Akre running 11.6 and 11 seconds, respectively. Each competitor ran a tight race with no obvious gaps.

Following the 100m race, more distance folks made

their way to their event for the 1 mile. For boys, Evan Souders ran a 5:59 mile, coming in second place for the event but first for Malden. For girls, junior Distance Captain Keira Celicourt ran a 6:50 mile, winning the first place title for the mile.

Being a freshman in a new space, especially when it comes to high school sports can be difficult to navigate. To put yourself out there and run a difficult race is an achievement every 9th grader should value and be proud of themselves for. Freshman Tyler Ho ran the 1 mile for the first time in an Outdoor season, having an "all right start, but I got better over time." He finished with a great time of 6:40.

The 4x100m relay race followed the mile, an exciting event that blows away those on the edge of the field watching. Malden was a solo competitor, running 45.4, a personal best for the team. The girls finished in 53.5, acquiring first place and beating two Lynn English relay teams.

The hurdles were dragged back onto the track for the 100m hurdle race, where sophomore Lyra Heining and freshman Ruth Mekonnen both ran the event for the first time. The girls took first and second place, making times of 21.6 and 21.7, respectively.

Continued on page 16

# Bases, Bats, and Big Wins

## Malden High's Baseball Team Wraps Up Their First Game with a Win

## Malden and Lynn at Bat

Jacob Fuentes  
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile



Salem Charter Academy and Malden Tornadoes pose for a group photo to commemorate the moment. JOANA VASSAO

Harmonie Ortiz  
Reporter

Setting off the baseball season, Malden High School went head to head against Salem Charter Academy. Wiping out their competition, Malden's efforts left the score 12-0. This game showcased the many talented players of Malden.

Many players expressed how this had been an amazing game to start the season. The spirits were high and the future of the baseball team shined. In this game, junior Joshua Dionne ex-

pressed how "the practice paid off with everything coming together to help get a good first win of the season."

The starting innings created a lively game that filled the park with chants of "you got this!" and "you're a hitter!" Assistant Coach Philip Cook expressed how happy he was with the game play and how "bats came alive."

Starting in the first inning Malden came with a strong will to win. With great efforts from the team it was almost an immediate three outs. Only one runner was able to

advance to first base before soon getting caught stealing in a spectacular throwdown by sophomore catcher Joseph Ewing to sophomore second baseman Devin Milonopoulos. As it was Malden's turn to bat they started strong with being able to go through almost everyone in the line up, ending this inning with the score of 3-0.

Senior pitcher Ryan McMahon led innings two and three with six total strike outs. Cook expressed "Ryan had done really well," with many agreeing. McMahon stat-

ed that this is the best he's done in his high school career and how proud he felt.

As the game progressed, the hitting became prominent. Senior captain Jackson Tourkantonis highlighted how the team "came out aggressive with good at bats and solid contact," which helped solidify the win.

Innings five and six came and passed with senior captains, Billy Gavin and McMahon on the mound retaining a no hitter. With the combination of the dominant pitching and lively bats the team

dominated against Salem Charter leaving a huge gap of 12-0, eventually ending the game in the last inning left because of the gap of over 10 runs.

Head coach Steve Freker awarded Salem Charter Academy with a plaque for their efforts in playing Malden High and for showing a long term partnership where they kick off the baseball season. This ceremony gave honor to the head coach of Salem Charter and how he has helped in the growth of the two baseball programs.

On April 20th, the Malden Varsity Baseball team took swings against the 3-2 Lynn English Bulldogs, arriving at Pine Banks Park with a record of 6-2. Malden came in confident after earning a 16-4 win against East Boston. The Bulldogs started the first inning with a base hit, allowing them to have a runner on first base. This was the only successful play Lynn was able to earn in the first inning as Malden's shortstop Davante Layne was able to field a ground ball and catch a pop-up for the first two outs. The final out was made by third baseman Nicholas D'Anna.

Malden's success on offense began in the bottom of the first inning with a base hit by D'Anna on the first pitch. D'Anna then proceeded to steal second base, followed by Lynn's pitcher making an illegal motion with runners on base, known as a balk. The success continued as pitcher Ryan McMahon had a base hit. McMahon was also able to steal second base. Layne continued to have an effective performance as he hit a RBI triple, creating a 2-0 lead. Outfielder Thomas "TJ" Warren Jr. added to the lead with an RBI single. The first inning ended with a 3-0 lead.

After an inning without much action, Layne continued to contribute as he had another base hit and two more stolen bases. Warren walked and proceeded to steal second. Layne was able to cross home plate due to an RBI pop-up hit by first baseman Jaylen Rivera-Fuentes. Malden ended the third inning with a 5-0.

Although Lynn was able to score a run in the top of the fourth inning, Layne started the bottom of the inning with a double base hit. D'Anna also reached on an error due to a dropped pop-up. After Layne stole second base, McMahon hit an RBI single, increasing the score to 5-1. After another RBI single, Malden finished the fourth inning with a 6-1 lead. Lynn was able to score three runs, cutting the deficit down to 7-4. However, McMahon was able to close the game off by picking off a runner from first base.

After Malden was able to defeat Lynn English, coach Stephen Freker took time to congratulate the team on a great season so far, "When we look back, we're going to see this as the day that we got back on track. Is there a single team that scares you?" The team responded with one word, "No." The game ball was given to senior pitcher Billy Gavin who ended the game with eight strike-outs and two walks with six innings played.



Senior Ryan McMahon on the mound pitching the ball. JOANA VASSAO



Sophomore Jaylen Rivera Fuentes getting ready to hit the ball. HARMONIE ORTIZ



From left to right: sophomore Davante Layne, senior Ethan Nguyen, 7th grader Jennifer Exilhomme, sophomore Jayden McGuffie, junior Waleed Hussein, senior Audrey Nguyen, senior Logan Johnson, and junior Cathen Fontanilla.

maldenblueandgold.com

## Track Runners Leave Opponents in the Dust

*Continued from page 14*

The two mile has one major competitor for the most “grueling” race in track: the 400m race. Sufficient of one lap around Macdonald Stadium, the sprint breaks many runners because of the consistency required to be as fast as possible while keeping a stable pace, on top of saving enough energy to go all out at the end. The boys for Malden ran as one, with senior Raphael Sanchez Martinez taking first place for them with a time of 56.5.

Celicourt reflected that for her first home meet, she felt “really nervous but excited since it was the first one.” During the meet, there was confusion among events due to athletes that couldn’t participate last minute or were absent, leading to a commotion where some runners had more than one difficult event to run. Celicourt continued that she “had to run a lot of races so that was really nerve-racking, but we took pictures! We had a lot of fun and I brought food, so that was amazing.”

The 800m was next. Evan Souders finished first for Malden yet again, running in 2:45. His teammates ran times between 2:52-3:16, all demonstrating great determination. Junior Distance Captain Angela Lam finished in first place for the girls’ 800m race, finishing in 2:59.

Junior Ryan Huang returned to the track team for the first time since last year’s Outdoor season, he felt unconfident in his performance for the 800m. He expressed that “it was kind of cold that day and like the conditions weren’t that good for running. I felt like it wasn’t warm enough. When I ran, it really



Senior Distance Captain Lincoln Boswell returns to focus after receiving praise from supporters on the bleachers for finishing the second lap of the boys’ two mile race. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

hurt my legs, so it wasn’t my best performance.” Huang still did outstanding in his race, placing fourth with a time of 2:58.

For the girls’ 200m race, freshman Sabine Harrzagua finished first in 24.1 seconds, Heining in 25.4, and senior Christina Robinson-McCaskill in 25.7, all running personal bests with this being Harrzagua and Heining’s first times running the event.

Last but not least, the final event of the meet was the 4x400m relay. The boys once again ran without competition, finishing in 4 minutes and 27 seconds. The girls finished in first place with a gap of almost 20 seconds, finishing in 5 minutes and 4 seconds.

The meet brought great success for everyone involved. It was many newcomers’ first time in a chaotic space where they feel the adrenaline, smell the gunpowder, and breathe in a crisp, cold air before they put their bodies to their maximum. These experiences followed the team to their second meet on April 13th and their Mercury Games Invitational Meet on April 23rd that occurred over break.

Malden High’s Outdoor Track team will continue to grow and evolve as the season progresses and the meets near their end, allowing the team to have a fast start and finish strong.



Senior Sprinter Captain Yunus Youfsi rises as the official announces “get set” prior to the boys’ 400m race starting as an onlooker records. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

## Malden v. Medford Softball



Senior pitcher Haylee Seeley lowers her right shoulder as she releases a pitch. JACOB FUENTES

Jacob Fuentes  
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile

On April 8, 2026, the Malden High School Varsity Softball team matched up against the Medford Mustangs. Although it was more windy than the team would’ve liked, that didn’t stop Malden from trying their best.

The game started with Medford scoring three points off of a two-point RBI, a crucial offensive statistic credited to a batter when their plate appearance, such as a hit, walk, fielder’s choice, or fly ball, results in a teammate scoring a single followed by another one which led to another point. After a triple hit by sophomore Harmonie Ortiz, who is also a reporter for the Blue and Gold, the first inning ended with the Mustangs leading 3-0.

The Mustangs started the second inning with a ground-out toward first base that was picked up by senior first baseman Fiona Youmell. The top of the second inning ended the

same way, keeping the score 3-0. Unfortunately, Malden was unable to earn any points, ending the second inning.

The third inning began as Medford was able to put runners on first and third base following a line-drive single and another base hit. After second base was stolen, Medford hit a pop-up that was caught by senior Sania Chen, one of the newest additions to the roster. Head coach Rebecca Krigman cheered Chen on and said, “That’s the one you wanted. You’ve been waiting for that.”

This didn’t hinder Medford’s success on offense after an RBI double brought two more runners past home plate, bringing the score to 5-0. This was then followed by another great catch by Chen, securing the second out with the bases loaded. Medford was able to add three more to their lead with an RBI single, bringing runners to first and third base. The runner on third was able to

steal home plate and earn another point. With a pop-up hit to left field, and no offensive success, the third inning ended with a 9-0 lead for Medford.

Medford’s success on offense would continue leading into the fourth inning as the players were able to increase their lead to 15, after four hitters were walked and two bases were stolen. After trailing 20 points, Malden was able to avoid a shutout as senior Nour Jaayfer was able to hit a single and steal third base. Jaayfer was then able to cross home plate due to an RBI single from senior Hailey Seeley. The game ended with Malden losing 20-1.

Although this was not the result the team was hoping for, the team has a lot of potential and room for improvement. The team could use support from their community and are accepting donations. Anyone is welcome to support the team by checking out their Instagram page, @maldenhighsoftball.



Both teams walk single-file and tell each other “good game.” JACOB FUENTES