



# Hall Decorating: A Classic MHS Tradition

By: Kerry Weiland

The homecoming dance on Friday kick started the spirited celebrations for MHS's annual homecoming pep-rally. On Wednesday, November 26 students and staff excitedly came to school ready for competition. Each grade decorated their sections of the gym and hallways and were prepared for the various pep-rally games and activities.

The seniors and juniors were especially competitive. The class of 2015 seniors' theme was "Sail-Sway Seniors" while the juniors almost crashed their underwater theme with the famous SpongeBob inspired "Weenie Hut Juniors."

The seniors took their color, blue, and thought of the open seas, then took an idea, graduation, to conceive the theme of "Sailing to New Horizons." Ahoy! They tackled the lockers with waves, the upper walls with clouds and sailboats, and not to mention the life size anchors, lighthouse, and sailboats at the entrance of their hallway. Senior



whole underwater world. From cardboard cutouts (taller than lockers) of SpongeBob and Squidward's houses to colorful painted and pasted balloons and streamers the juniors definitely had a shot at beating the seniors, and Mrs. Kozić agrees. She gladly said, "Everyone worked as a team this year. The juniors, I love them, but next year we're coming



back strong."

Making way to the second floor, the sophomores gave us a taste of their sweet theme: "Srumdidliumptions." Also connecting to a popular icon, they took features from Willy Wonka and transformed their green hallway and gym. Their entrance had unique purple gates opening up to the candy-filled walls of lollipops and top hats that made students feel as if they were walking into the chocolate factory.

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Eric Dzenis thinks that this year "Specifically went great especially from the time consuming waves I made for the lockers." Even though he laughingly said that "There could have been more ladders Tuesday night, we came through in the end!"

Across the sea, the juniors welcomed us to Bikini Bottom. These upperclassmen were inspired by the yellow cartoon character, SpongeBob, and made their hallway into SpongeBob's



## Manasquan High School

The Blue & Gray

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# Seniors Enjoy Last Powderpuff Experience

By: Maggie Leddy

On December 1, the annual girl's Powderpuff game was played on the Vic Kubu Warrior field, marking an end to the final celebration of homecoming festivities. The favored seniors fell to the underdog juniors with a final score of 28-14.

The juniors made it clear early on that they were not messing around. With mandatory team practices, matching uniforms, coaching by current MHS football player Luke O'Shaughnessy, and specific plays, they proved to be a powerhouse on the field. The team was stacked with athletic ability and determination.



*Seniors huddle before a play.*



*Juniors celebrate a score!*

Coached by Mr. Battaglia, it was apparent that the seniors were sick with "senioritis" by the looks of their playing. However, the entire team seemed to agree on the fact that they were involved with the game to have fun with each other and not necessarily to win. Perhaps it was the final acceptance and realization of this being their last year together, but win or lose, they were happy to be out there on the field as one unit, something that maybe the juniors will feel next year.

Ironically, the game was interrupted during the second half by heavy rainfall making for a muddy field after previously being canceled last week due to what appeared to be the same "unplayable" field conditions. Girls were slipping and sliding all over the place, but continued to run out the

*Senior quarterback Shannon Walsh calls a play.*



clock. It was definitely a humorous sight to see.

Both teams shook hands at the final whistle and accepted their status with maturity and celebration. The seniors huddled together and took on their role as No. 2 and smiled for countless team pictures holding up the popular peace sign symbolizing their ranking. All while the juniors celebrated their victory by advertising the big win over social media. All in all it was an excellent way to wrap up this year's homecoming.

# Key Club Resumes Tradition of Holiday Helping

By: George Taboada

The Key Club is at it again this Holiday season, providing assistance to those less fortunate in our area.

Known for its volunteer work and fundraising in our local communities, MHS Key Club, run by Mrs. McKenzie and Mrs. Basaman, is always active, never hesitating to reach out to those in need.

One of their recent, and very successful, projects was the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. Key Club members were required to bring in 10 boxes or cans of food in order to feed the hungry. They also ran a collection day at Manasquan Elementary School.

"Families have a lot to look forward to this Thanksgiving," Brooke Mason said cheerfully when interviewed. Hundreds of non-perishable food items cover the desks and floors of our library, ready to go people in need of a great Thanksgiving dinner.

Other than Thanksgiving, Key Club also has a whole line up of Christmas community service to brighten the community's hectic holidays. Members helped out at the annual Christmas tree lighting on December 7

in Green Acres Park in Brielle, lifting the towns' holiday spirit. Another favorite is Key Club's hosting of Old Saint Nick, straight from the North Pole, at the Meet Santa event on December 13 and 20 from noon to 4 in the afternoon. And best of all, Key Club's Wish Tree helps numerous local children to receive presents for Christmas, that they might not otherwise receive.

Many faculty members, school clubs and students take a tag, shop for a child, and wrap the gifts, which Key Club officers deliver directly to homes.

Finally, the Key Club wreath sale was a recent hit. This annual fundraiser helps to raise much of the club's money for use throughout the year. Every year they are beautiful and easy to hang up on your door. This journalist has bought them before and can guarantee their quality.

So whether it is the holidays or any days throughout the year, Key Club members continually dedicate themselves to helping others in whatever ways possible.

*Food donations filled the library, and the Wish Tree stood tall, as two examples of Key Club's important activities this stime of year.*



# Annual Pep Rally Gets the Crowd Going

By: Logan Muir

On Wednesday November 26<sup>th</sup>, students from all grades gathered in the Manasquan High School gymnasium for the annual pep rally. This year's most exciting homecoming event included all the fun and competitive activities that get students up and jumping each year, including the tug-of-war, relay race, and Nerf football game.

As always, things got going right away. As students entered the gymnasium and joined their classmates in the decorated bleachers, the sounds of loud trumpets and booming drums set the perfect mood for the awesome events to come. Before the main events, team captains from fall sports such as tennis, soccer, and cross country got the chance to announce their teams' successes to the school, as well as acknowledging the players on each team.

Of course, football was the

main focus. The Manasquan Warrior football players waltzed into the gym under a bridge of cheerleaders' pom-poms while the Warrior's anthem was quietly but intensely being played by the band. Seniors were acknowledged first, as this was the last time they would experience a pep rally as a Warrior football player.

After a well-executed performance by the MHS cheerleading squad, the class competitions began. The competitions kicked off with the balloon-popping game and the always fun pie-eating contest. The real action began with the relay race.

For the relay race, students from each class worked together to complete an event consisting of a scooter run, a po-

tato sack race, a three-legged race, and a cartwheel race. The seniors completed all of the races first, taking first prize for that event.

What occurred next was the Nerf football game, which in the words of Mr. Harvey was "one of the best ever." There game was in no way lacking excitement, with several big plays occurring throughout the game. From the impressive endzone catch by Ryan Jensen to the tipped game-winning touchdown caught by Jamie Roland, the Nerf football game kept students up on their feet and cheering all game long. The seniors defeated the juniors in the student tournament, but ultimately lost to the teachers in the championship game.

Following the Nerf football game was the tug-of-war. In this battle of strength, the juniors pulled out the win against the rest of the classes, but just as the seniors lost to the teachers in Nerf football, the juniors fell short of total victory, suffering defeat against the teachers.

After all the activities were complete, Mr. Buss announced the winners and losers for all the Homecoming activities. For decorations, including the shirts, hallways, and bleachers, the seniors swept the wins for each. The overall rankings were freshmen and sophomores tied for third place, juniors in second place, and seniors taking the crown with first place.



**Band (top) and Seniors (above) showing their enthusiasm in the stands during the pep rally.**



# MHS Shakes the Dance Floor at Homecoming 2014

By: Nicholle Beese



The highly anticipated Homecoming dance was held on Friday, November 21 at Manasquan High School. It is surely burned into all of our heads as a night full of dancing, chaos, bruised feet, and good music.

Mrs. Onorato and the Yearbook committee came to the school early to prepare for the hundreds of kids who would be showing up for the dance. They set up tables with tons of snacks and they also made a backdrop for anyone who wanted to get their picture taken with their friends.

Dressed up and bubbling with excitement, the students of MHS stormed into the school and ran straight to the dance floor. The girls quickly kicked off their shoes and soon, the DJ was surrounded. He gladly accepted requests and did his best to keep everyone satisfied.



Song after song, the dance floor beamed

with hyper, happy teenagers. In no time, a mosh pit formed and people were either getting sucked in or were feeling brave enough to enter on their own. Although it got a bit rough for some people, if someone was knocked down, they got right back up. No one was ready to let anyone ruin their time!

Later on into the night came the announcement of the Homecoming Court. Harley Pilling and Sunny McKiever represented the freshmen class. Sophomores Olivia Chevance and Bruce Bogan claimed their spots on the court. Hannah Pringle and Kai Reynolds won the junior court. Lauren Johnson and Craig Miller enthusiastically accepted their places on the senior court. Finally, seniors Nicole D'Anton and Will Stewart were awarded with the titles of Homecoming King and Queen.

As the night came to an end, everyone was savoring their last few minutes with each other. The seniors were especially making the best of it. It was a bittersweet night for them – their last Homecoming dance.

Despite the fact that the dance did not go perfectly, MHS students definitely make the best of every situation. It was an enjoyable time and undoubtedly, a night we will never forget!



## Hall Decorating

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Across the hall, the first-time freshman decorators dealt with the color white and turned it into an out of the ordinary and fun monopoly game. Combining the words freshman and monopoly they called themselves "Froshopoloy." Entering the "start" to the game, the freshman made special attractions from surrounding towns as the stops in the game. Their biggest hit were the attractive Christmas lights.

From sailing into new horizons, to different monopoly stops around town, the winners for this year's hallway

# Spirit Week 2014 Finds Success!

By Keely Flood

Spirit week here at MHS is always a fun and exhilarating time from Monday all the way to Friday. Yes, it's the week before a four-day weekend and a day dedicated to stuffing yourself, but it's a teaser of all the Squan-filled festivities to be brought at the annual pep rally and Thanksgiving Day football game. Not only do students participate, but teachers also take part, which is what makes this week something to look forward to. It's true, MHS has some of the best school spirit a school has to offer!

## Monday: Crazy Hat Day

Pretty self-explanatory; wear the craziest hat you can find!



## Tuesday: Mix-Match Twins Day Find a buddy and dress alike!



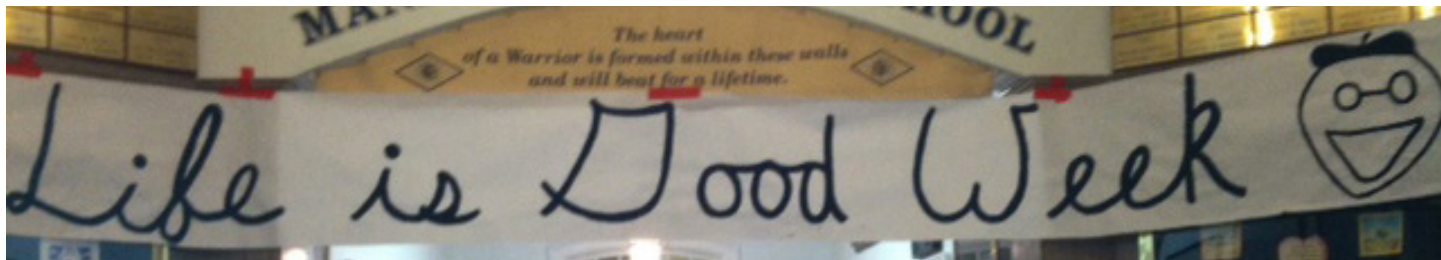
## Wednesday: Benny Day

Bring the bennies back to the shore and wear your most stereo-typical benny outfit!



# Manasquan High School Shines with Positivity During Life is Good Week!

By: Nicholle Beese



Life is Good wristbands sporting inspirational sayings were distributed by the club



Each year, the Life is Good club dedicates one week in December as Life is Good Week. The main message of the week is to spread positivity throughout Manasquan High School.

The Life is Good executive board and Ms. Apostolu put together activities for the week, keeping the annual Life is Good tradition alive. The executive board consists of President Logan Sabins, Vice President Jenn Alvarez, James McAlary, Darby Formichella, Johanna Keosseian, Gill Black, Ryan Jensen, Brian Comer, and Liz Clark. Each member contributes fabulously to the club and possesses optimism, which they radiate throughout our school.

Activities during the week included games in the cafeteria and auditorium, such as speed stacking, bingo, word searches, rock-paper-scissors contests, thumb wars, candy jar guessing, and a video game tournament. Additionally, people won prizes such as free cookies and candy for finding a ticket under their desk or completing a word search. Simple things like these have the ability to make someone's day a little brighter, which truly is the goal of the Life is Good club.

Lastly, the door decorating contest was held on Friday, December

12. Each homeroom had the opportunity to dazzle up their door in hopes of winning a bagel party for their class. This year's winner was Mrs. Martucci's homeroom. It has always been an enjoyable and favorite activity to partake in during Life is Good week.

Although the week usually concludes with Life is Good day, this year will be a tad bit different! Stay tuned for updates and announcements regarding the highly awaited event!



## THURSDAY: BIGGEST FAN DAY

Whether it be the MHS Warriors (McKenzie, left) or college and pro, MHS showed its team pride!



## Friday: Black-Out Day

Simple: All black, everything



Life is good.®

# MHS Academic Team Offers Home for Knowledgeable Competitors

By: Logan Muir

With the years at Manasquan High School seemingly going quicker and quicker as they progress, it's easy for students to get caught up in a variety of clubs and activities. There's something here for everyone at Manasquan High School with activities ranging from Ping-Pong Club to Mock Trial. Through all the hectic sign-ups for clubs, some students find their home on the Manasquan High School Academic Team.

The Academic Team is a club open to anyone looking to use their brains to compete against other schools in jeopardy-like competitions. You don't have to be an A-plus student to join the Academic Team, you just have to be interested in challenging others and yourself with your knowledge.

Led by Mrs. Crowning, the Academic Team is composed of about twenty members ranging from all different grade levels. According to Mrs. Crowning, who is in her tenth year running the club, the team is "very strong" this year. Furthermore, Mrs. Crowning stated she admires the variety

of the team this year since questions range from freshmen to senior topics.

Amidst all the members are veterans that are the heart and soul of the squad. Some of these "academic beasts" are seniors Liam Tobin and Kolbe Brennan. Although these veterans prove to be strong forces during the competitions, any one of the Academic Team members can step up at any given time. For example, Mrs. Crowning has been very impressed with freshmen Thomas Beaton, who has come up with some amazing answers during critical times this year so far.

So far this year, the Academic Team has competed in two events. One competition took place at Monsignor Donovan High School and the other at Biotechnology High School. The team has had respectable success so far, placing in the top half and top two-thirds at competitions.

A typical academic competi-

tion can last anywhere from four to six hours. During this time period, a competition typically hosts about three rounds, with one round containing two games and a lightning round. A game consists of a run-through of multiple categories containing questions of various difficulties. Each question can be worth anywhere from ten to fifty points, with harder questions worth more points. Categories can be anything from sports news to world history to mathematics.

A game is played in a back-and-forth style, where the two teams competing take turns picking a question of their choice. If the team picks a question they cannot answer, the opposing squad has a chance to answer correctly. If neither team can answer the question, no points are awarded to either team.

During a lightning round, each team takes turns answering as many questions as possible from one of two categories within a sixty-second time frame. The maximum amount of questions a team can get right per category is ten. However, each team has an opportunity to answer the questions that the other team missed.

The Academic Team is often overlooked as a club that is for smart straight-A students, but the truth is that there is something for everyone in the Academic Team. With such a variety of topics touching on all aspects of knowledge, anyone looking to tap in their brain and compete mentally should join the team!



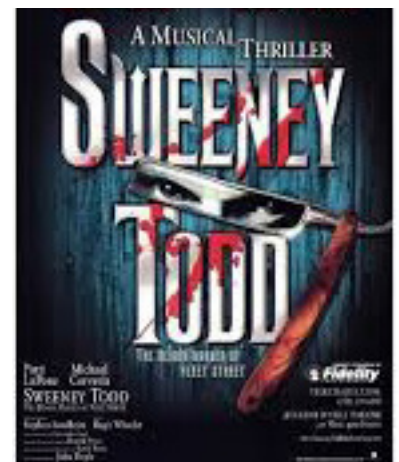
The Academic Team board outside Mrs. Crowning's room reads "We learn not for school but for life..."

## Drama Club Announces Spring Musical... Sweeney Todd

Senior JD Donohue headlines the cast of Sweeney Todd, the popular musical scheduled to be performed in the Jack Nicholson Theater here at Manasquan High School on March 26-28, 2015.

No stranger to the MHS stage, Donohue has held roles big and small since he was a sixth grader at Spring Lake Heights Elementary School. He is excited for the opportunity to be the lead in his final MHS production.

Sweeney Todd requires a large cast, leading Drama Club director Mr. Weisert to joke, "I don't know how we'll fit them all onstage." Yet this "ensemble" cast allows many members of Drama Club an opportunity to perform. So get ready for all your favorite MHS actors, ranging from freshman to seniors, to pull off the long awaited Sweeney Todd when the end of March rolls around a few months from now.





# The International Language: Ice Skating!

By: Sofia Kim

Monday November 17, 2014 marked the second Spanish and French Honors Society's ice skating night.

Howell ice world was open solely for participants of this event, making for a uniquely private MHS get-together. Roughly 120 skaters, from the tentative wall huggers to the Olympic status figure skaters shared an exciting night to raise money for Hispanic families in need this holiday season.

And what better way to kick off this merry season than giving what we can, with a few face-plants?

Spanish teacher and Spanish Honors Society Leader, Mrs. Eldridge remarked that "We love seeing the good and the bad skaters. And seeing the people who come out and ice skate for the

first time."

But don't let the prospect of wiping out and getting a taste of Howell's ice stop you from attending such a memorable night. You're bound to have a wonderful time supporting such a worthy cause. "I had a blast!" said Senior, John Russo. Senior Emily Woodfield agreed saying, "It was so much fun!"

And if movement with two knives attached to your feet fails, there's always hot chocolate as acknowledged by Senior, Annie Farragher, "I'm not very good at ice skating but the hot chocolate was delicious!"

Spanish and French Honor's Society



*Pictured left to right: Seniors Marianne Kenneally, Reed Melchionda and Chelsea Eareckson enjoyed a night at Howell Ice World.*

hopes to able to continue this festive tradition. So we'd advise you to dust off your skates, summon your courage, and get ready for next year.

# National Honors Society Writes Letters to Troops

By: Julia Valgenti

With the holiday season approaching, the caring and compassionate attitude of MHS is at an all-time high. There is no shortage of thoughtful students at MHS and a variety of charitable projects are popping up all over the school.

This December, the National Honor Society and History National Honor Society are coming together to organize a Letter to the Troops event at MHS.

They plan on working in collaboration with Operation Gratitude, an organization that annually sends 150,000 + care packages to currently deployed service members, new recruits, veterans and Wounded Warriors. Their letter writing program runs year round, but is especially popular, and appreciated, during the holiday season.

In their description of the program, Operation Gratitude suggests writers to keep their letters "positive and upbeat", while also adding a personal touch. This could involve tell-



ing the soldier a little about yourself, or thanking them for all they do. It is recommended to start the letters with "Dear Hero" or "Dear Brave One". Ultimately, the goal of the letters is to "bring a smile to a soldier's face" and to let them know there are people out there who care about and appreciate them.

All completed letters are sent to Operation Gratitude in California, where they will be screened and then sent out to the troops. Writers may choose to include a return address or email address to receive a response, and are suggested to only provide their first name.

# Strangers Invade Manasquan High School

Not only have these strange beings come to our school, but they refuse to leave! Occupying the back row of the auditorium for at least the last month has been the Kiss look-a-like pictured below (left), while the purple alien guy has set up shop in the library. And everyone has seen the faceless Heights stranger on the bench in center hall; in fact, rumor has it a few students have even fallen in love with him!



# Students Tackle Issues in the World

## The Blue & Gray Editorials

## Are You Sleep Deprived?

By: Maggie Leddy

As teenagers we fall victim to wanting to stay up late, but never wanting to get up early. At such an important age we need to get enough sleep because our bodies are still in the process of growing and adapting to our surrounding. However, it is something none of us seem to want to admit.

Sleep deprivation may not seem like a big deal, but it has serious consequences. Teens need optimal alertness throughout the day. Not having enough sleep can lead to difficulty concentrating, mood swings, and over-eating.

We live in a world where something constantly demands our attention. Whether it is school work, part-time jobs, social gatherings, extracurricular activities, or our phones and computers we are always busy. With all of these distractions, it is still important that we set aside enough time to sleep.



There are two main factors that affect how tired you feel. The first is how long it has been since your last sleep. Scientists call this the sleep-wake balance. If your body stays awake for too long, you will feel tired.

The second is the internal body clock. This clock controls the "circadian rhythms," which make you feel sleepy or alert during the day. However, the clock can get thrown off. Not listening to the body's clock at night and staying up late can alter your sleep schedule and make you feel more tired the next day in the middle of the after-

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## Senior Year Stress



By: Reed Melchionda

Senior year is the dream of every underclassmen. Everyone wants to be the "big dog" on campus. Students idolize and emulate the untouchable models who appear to run the school. They are the elders, the experienced, and the ones who have one last year to embrace the irreplaceable experiences of high school. You may want to be them, you think it is all fun and games, but you don't know the other side.

The months of October, November, and December are not the glorified, stress-free times "Senior Year" is made to be. With the burdensome weight of college looming around every corner, seniors feel that at every second there is another supplement to write, another college to consider, and another application to submit. With Common App, there's an endless number of questions and visits to the guidance office. There are some who may already be committed, or perhaps those who have their eye on a dream school that they know they'll get accepted into, but the majority are left in the dark. With approximately 4,168 colleges in the US alone, how is one supposed to find that perfect fit? Colleges begin to blur together—all with beautiful campuses, great academics, and vibrant social lives. With such similarities, how can one differentiate?



The college selection process is just the beginning. After one narrows down the endless possibilities to a solid five to ten viable options, the real work begins with filling out the applications. A college application is a chance to frame your entire academic, social, and extracurricular life into a document that will be skimmed over, at the most. Which activity you list first can make all the difference between a tearful rejection letter and a celebrated acceptance. Resumes have to be made, teachers selected for recommendations and truth-stressing becomes commonplace. You find ways to highlight yourself as a vital member to that one club you paid dues for, but

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# AP STUDIO ART PROVIDES CREATIVE FREEDOM TO FUTURE ARTISTS

By: Kerry Weiland



Sam Cunliffe, grade 12, mixed media.

Unlike most AP classes that we're familiar with, AP Studio Art is a hidden gateway for inspired artists who want to further their talents. Instead of AP classes where students tend to be loaded with books, papers, and must study for the final AP test at the end of the year, studio art is a class that doesn't follow this exact pattern.

This class is for talented artists

who will be eligible to earn college credits just as any other AP class, but instead of taking a test at the end of the year, students hand in a portfolio of their best work to College Board. College Board says that AP Studio Art students are asked to, "emphasize research, experimentation, discovery, inventive thinking and artmaking, critical analysis, and problem-solving," in their work.

The AP program consists of three different courses that a student can choose from to put together their portfolio in May. They are: 2-D design, 3-D design, and drawing. Whichever one is chosen, a portfolio of the same three sections for each course will be evaluated. The first section is "quality" which is the understanding of their course in concept, composition, and execution. "Concentration" is in depth exploration

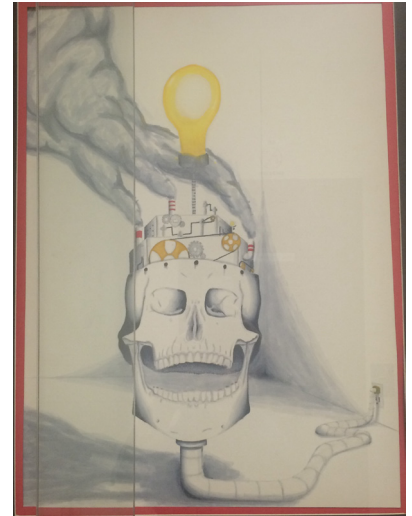
of their design concern, and "breadth" are works demonstrating the understanding of the design issue.

In the art room on Manasquan High School's second floor, lays a second block AP Studio Art class with a small total of just about eight students. Each student is given the same assignment by their teacher, Mrs. Cassi. However, each student's piece of work is entirely different.

Senior Ryan Coulson explained the reasoning for their unique works, saying that it is because they have the freedom to "use this medium, that angle, this view, you can add this, add that..." They can choose their choice of medium such as paint, drawing with any utensil, or multimedia.

College Board even writes in the portfolio introductions that students should be sure to "recognize that there is no preferred or unacceptable content or style." There are no multiple choice A, B, C, or D fill in the blank.

The students expressed their love for the class and the artistic freedom they are given. They do get caught up in assignments and stressed like most students in college-level classes, but they are furthering their careers and love what they are doing.



Ryan Coulson, grade 12, marker.

## Senior Stress

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never attended. Eventually, the tumultuous Common App is completed, and you believe you are ready to go; that is, until the supplements roll in.

One's grades, leadership opportunities, and honors are finite, there's no time to fill in the holes of the activities, grades, and honors you lack. The essays-the supplements-are the only item on the application in which we have complete control over-and that makes them terrifying. The application portrays your extracurricular and academic life, but the supplements are a chance to show who you are. You have told them *what* you do, but now it is time to show them *why*. To define and translate your entire personality into a story of less than 650 words. 16-17 years of life, emulated into one little prompt. Essays are proof-read, analyzed, and proof-read again: one sentence rewritten ten times until they sound perfect. A descriptive opening, a powerful story, and a broad, empowering ending statement. The pressure is on, and the spotlight is shining: three brief months that can determine one's entire future.

However, it is not all storm clouds. As December begins, many students are already receiving acceptance letters and rejoicing in the fact that they have options. Eventually the storm will pass for all seniors, and

## Sleep Deprived

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noon when you need to feel most alert.

So how do we beat this bad habit we seem to fall victim to? There are different ways we can ensure our body gets optimal hours of sleep. One is to avoid eating or drinking anything that contains caffeine at least 3 hours before going to bed. Another is to set a distinct bed time every night to make your body adapt to a regular sleep schedule. And finally, avoid using a laptop or cell phone before going to bed. The brightness on these devices offsets the brain and disrupts ability to fall asleep. Instead, try reading a book or magazine to put you into a sleepy mood.

So get in those PJ's and turn out the lights. Use your self-control to avoid hitting the "next episode" button on Netflix and stop scrolling down your Instagram and Twitter feeds. Climb into bed and let your busy body rest after a long day of work. Your body deserves it and it will thank you in the morning when you awake refreshed and ready to take on the day with alert and eager eyes!

the sunlight of senior year will radiate. Eventually, our future paths will be found, and we will know what next year brings. But, until that day comes, we will continue to lament in *Senior Year Stress*.

# Students Tackle

## The Blue & Gray Editorials

### Issues in the World

In the US today:

## Important Supreme Court Cases Coming Soon!

*The Supreme Court's agenda for the next year is swamped with major domestic issues. Here's what's going on and here's how their decisions may affect the US.*

By: George Taboada



- 1) On November 7, the Court agreed to hear yet another challenge to the Affordable Care Act. Opponents of ObamaCare have been trying to legally nullify it either through Congress or through lawsuits. All attempts have failed. However, this new attack poses a dire threat to government health care.  
The Affordable Care Act states that American citizens are able to access government subsidies when purchasing health care through exchanges "established by the state." Democrats who forged the bill assumed that each state would establish its own exchange rate. They were wrong. Twenty-seven states flat-out refused to set up rates to purchase ObamaCare. The administration got around this by establishing a federal exchange rate, something not outlined in the healthcare law.  
The Republicans are pressing that the federal government has no legal right to establish healthcare exchanges because the Affordable Care Act implicitly gives this power to the states. That may be so, however, so far 5 million Americans have already purchased health care through this exchange. If the Supreme Court strikes down the federal exchange, millions would be immediately stuck without insurance.
- 2) On November 6, the 6<sup>th</sup> district court upheld a state ban on gay marriage; it was the first federal court to ever do so. Four other district courts had already struck down similar laws. Thus this recent strike against the same-sex marriage movement has created a legal right that must immediately be resolved.  
The Supreme Court holds the responsibility of taking care of contradictory rulings in courts at the federal level. The conclusion that the Court produces, either to tear down or hold up the gay marriage bans, will make or break the same-sex marriage movement.
- 3) In 2012, Alabama Republicans dominated the state legislature, they redrew voting districts in order to increase their hold on elections. By doing so, they created African-American supermajority districts in which up to 70% of the population belong to the minority. African-American lawmakers in Alabama are suing the Republicans of discrimination. Republicans have defended themselves by claiming that they are only politically, not racially, motivated in reshaping the voting districts in Alabama. There is some truth to this as the Democrats had grouped African-Americans together for votes in the state no more than a decade earlier. However, the question shouldn't be whether the motivation was racial or political, but whether gerrymandering is moral and efficient all together.

In the World today:

## Handling Returning European Jihadists

By: George Taboada

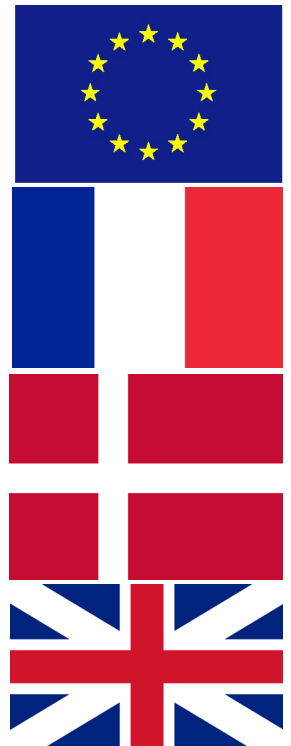
The European public was at first shocked to hear that many of their large Islamic minority left home to fight in Syria and Iraq, but then those fighters started to come home again. How governments in Europe deal with returning jihadists varies from country to country, but they can be divided into two camps.

The first is the heavy-handed countries such as France. The Republic of France has the largest Muslim population in Europe. Jihadists seeking recruits often focus on this nation. A new tactic has evolved that utilizes social media to enlist "nurses, doctors and other support to help the people." Instead, they are given guns or put to working for the rebel insurgency. When these recruits return, the French government does not treat them kindly. They are targeted with surveillance and are almost always arrested. The French police have sweeping legal powers and have been utilizing these privileges to search out returning jihadists.

The second camp is made up of countries such as Belgium and Denmark that utilize deradicalization programs in order to reintegrate jihadists back into European society. Of course the returning fighters are screened by the police and those who have committed crimes go to trial, but those who get past this screening are entitled to benefits. Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city, offers work, housing, education and therapy to returning jihadists. This policy also includes interventions by family members, doctors, teachers, clergy and psychologists.

The third group of European nations are those still deciding how they should process their jihadists. This group primarily includes the United Kingdom. There are an estimated 500-600 British citizens fighting in Iraq and Syria. While the administration of David Cameron (the prime minister) has promised to seize jihadist's passports and try them for treason, this hard-line treatment of returning fighters has been softening. Theresa May, Cameron's cabinet member for homeland security, has announced plans to put them through Channel: Britain's deradicalization program used for all their extremists from cult leaders to neo-Nazis. So despite its hard tactics, the United Kingdom's policy on jihadists is moving closer to the recovery camp in Europe.

It is too early in the conflicts that have drawn so many Muslim Europeans into jihad to tell which tactics will be effective. The tactics used by French police has been known to worsen ties between the French and their Arabic populations, however, the Danish concept that most jihadists can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into Western society is controversially idealistic. Also, the British need to find a preferable method in prosecuting returning fighters and stick with it instead of flip-flopping back and forth as they are doing now. Otherwise they're policies will be too weak to be effective. The European nations would do well in looking to ethnically heterogeneous countries such as the United States and Canada to integrate their growing Muslim minorities.



# Students Tackle Issues in the World

## The Blue & Gray Editorials

# MHS Says Goodbye to Midterms!

## What a Relief!

By: Maggie Leddy

In previous years at MHS, it seems like students are always preparing for the next big exam. Come November the kids have finally settled into a set routine, but then it is time to take first semester midterms. Trying to find papers from the first week of school, cramming to fit time to study, and memorizing vital information to make sure you get that A+ takes a lot of energy out of high school kids who are busy with other priorities and extracurricular activities.

With such a short amount of material to test the students on in the given three months, midterms seem useless and unnecessary. It makes more sense to wait until January to give the final exam on all material learned. It might seem like a lot at one time, but more often than not having more information on subjects makes it easier to understand the beginning steps better.

To prepare for a big exam every two months is too much for a high school student. This is why MHS has made the correct decision in eliminating all midterms from the 2014-2015 school year. Now students will only have to worry about the final exams at the end of each semester. So be sure to thank the administration for lifting some weight off your shoulders this year!

## Beware the Sleeping Giant

By: Julia Valgenti

Midterms are now a thing of the past! Many students at MHS breathed a sigh of relief at this news, knowing they would be spared from the stress of exams, at least until the end of the semester. But is the decision to only have final exams a blessing? Or perhaps a kiss of death?

At first, the news is overjoying. You realize that the stressing, the frantic note reviewing, and the late night cramming won't haunt you until the end of the semester. And anyway, two months of school is barely enough material to amount to the weight our midterm weighs in our overall grade, right? The school year begins and just as students settle into their classes, they're buried in flash cards, highlighters, notes, review sheets, and power point printouts. We barely have enough time to break in our new school shoes before we are crammed into classrooms for exams.

But although not obvious, the benefits of midterms far outweigh the momentary relief we have experienced this fall. In reality, midterms (not their absence) provide us relief.

Think about your grade, no midterms means one less factor to contribute to your final average. For those poor souls that earn bad grades on their final exams, they no longer have the possibility of a good midterm to outweigh the damage. So make sure you study for that final!

But prepare to study a lot more than usual. If you thought studying for midterms was overwhelming, the new and improved finals adds ten pages onto that previously five page review sheet. That's right, without the midterm to test you on the first half of the semester, finals are likely to into a bigger, badder beast than we remember them as. Seems the sanity the lack of midterms provides us in November is short lived, and amplified come January.

Relaxing at midterms is great, but it might mean more stress at finals!





## No Autotune Needed

Lake Street Dive is swinging their way into the spotlight with their jazzy roots

By: Logan Muir

While watching *The Colbert Report* for my nightly laughs and giggles, little did I know I would come across Lake Street Dive, a four-piece band out of Boston. Little did I know, this unlikely encounter would turn out to be one of my most fortunate music discoveries.

Lake Street Dive is best labeled as an indie jazz and soul band. Their retro jazzy rhythms make listeners want to swing their hips and dance endlessly.

LSD consists of members Rachel Price (lead vocal), Bridget Kearney (bass), Mike Olson (guitar, trumpet), and Mike Calabrese (drums). The band is undoubtedly driven by Price's powerful vocals. Her voice covers all keys and pitches and is easily one of the best heard in the music business in the past decade. With that said, her "supporting" cast is near perfection. They provide terrific melodies and beats that compliment Price's talent extremely well.

LSD's rise to stardom was ignited by a YouTube video of their cover

of "I Want You Back" by the Jackson 5. The video presents the band surrounding one microphone on a street corner in Brighton, Massachusetts performing the song in their own beautiful rendition. The video has 2 million views and counting.

Lake Street Dive released its third studio album *Bad Self Portraits* in February 2014 and has started to see more and more success. They are constantly selling out live shows not only across the United States, but around the world.

As for myself, I've experienced

one of their live concerts first hand. On November 15, I saw Lake Street Dive perform at Terminal 5 in Manhattan. From the moment they walked onto the stage, their presence demanded to be felt. With Price center stage, the band played two hours of fun and energetic tunes, leading to everyone clapping, dancing, and singing along. LSD did not need any lasers or fog machine to enhance their performance. Their raw energy and music brought the show to life itself.

*Bad Self Portraits* contains a myriad of special tunes. Tracks such as "You Go Down Smooth" and "Bobby Tanquary" forces listeners to get up out their seats and dance. Others such as "Just Ask" display the powerful range of Price's voice and the strength of the band's chemistry. One of LSD's key aspects is their well-executed harmonies.

Lake Street Dive is quickly rising to mainstream fame and it will be exciting to see what they have in store for the future.



Lake Street Dive pictured above from left to right: Mike Olson, Mike Calabrese, Rachel Price, and Bridget Kearney

# SENIOR-FOR-HIRE

By, Reed Melchionda



On Tuesday, November 25, Squan-A-Thon hosted Manasquan High School's first Senior-for-Hire Day.

A Senior-for-Hire Day can mean a multitude of things, but for MHS it was a chance for seniors to be bought, possibly humiliated, and dressed in a costume of their buyer's choice. Similar to Halloween, students found no trouble in finding creative and unique costumes to dress their peers in. Even though some buyers graciously allowed their friends to dress in onesies or as something as simple as a "thug," others ruthlessly forced their male peers to appear as Easter

Bunnies or even Prom Queens. Some comically played off of stereotypes by making non-athletic classmates dress as jocks and skaters as "Lilly Pulitzer Preps." Some even went as far as to design Christmas Tree and Pillsbury Dough-boy costumes.

Senior-for-Hire was ran by Squan-A-Thon's new Special Events Committee – a group designed to create unique fundraising ideas that raise money and excitement for the event. With each senior only costing \$5 and more than 80 seniors purchased, the day raised approximately \$400. Sydney Osso, a transfer from Howell High School, originally gave the idea to Mr. Battaglia and Mrs. McKenzie, the Squan-A-Thon sponsors: "It was a good way for Howell to raise money for its senior trip, so I figured it would be a great way to raise money for such a good cause like Squan-A-Thon." Sydney believed that Manasquan's recreation of this idea was a huge, and hilarious, success: "My favorite part is when the guys are forced to dress as girls: it's always so funny."

Even administration, who was at first skeptical of the idea behind the

concept of a Senior-for-Hire Day, was impressed by the outcome and productivity of the event. Mr. Clayton, the security guard, was able to see all the costumes wander throughout the halls and exclaimed, "I thought it was a pretty funny idea, after seeing all of the costumes. A few of the boys may have violated girl's dress code, but overall it worked out well."

In the future, perhaps more students will be open to Senior-for-Hire Day and will participate in the cause. In upcoming years, the Special Events Committee is even considering adding an auction in which seniors can be bid on. In terms of Squan-A-Thon, Mr. Battaglia and Mrs. McKenzie are proud of the event's turnout and have high hopes for future endeavors by the Special Events Committee.



# The Blue & Gray Book Review

## All the Light We Cannot See

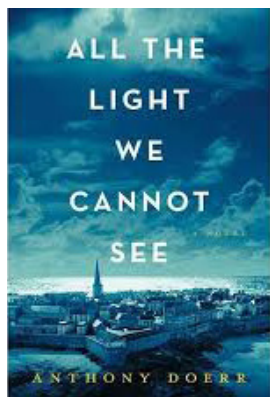
By: George Taboada

This book has been on the New York Times Bestsellers List for weeks, has been a finalist in the National Book award for fiction, and has propelled Doerr into the literary mainstream. This book, like a diamond, has small imperfections, but compensates fully with its beauty.

The story centers around two teenagers living in the World War II era. Marie-Laure Leblanc is the daughter of the locksmith for the National History Museum in Paris, France. She is blind, but strong-willed and full of fascination for the world around her. Werner Pfennig is a poor German orphan living in the western coal-mining region. Despite his humble roots, his intelligence is notable as he begins to fix his neighbor's radios for extra cash. The two stories at first seem untouched by the other, but as the war rolls around, one realizes how connected they actually are.

These two characters escape the typical archetypes and are fully their own entities, however, the fact that one is blind and the other can see tends to mess with one's perception in the novel. Because the point of view swaps between the two every chapter confused me. This is compounded by the fact that each chapter is very short. Often I had to stop and ask whether I should be seeing the events or not, and that interrupts the immersion. But this confusion was only a technicality; all of the characters are rich and well-developed. That's all one can ask for.

Where Doerr's novel truly shines



is his writing style. The title, *All the Light We Cannot See* says it all: a pure, brilliant text that fills the reader with awe and wonder. It's just wonderful to read. The style is like a crystal. Every word is exactly where

## An Insight into *Tuesdays with Morrie*

By: Reed Melchionda

There are stories that entertain, others that inform, and even some that sadden, but Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie* is one that inspires. The novel begins with a spotlight on Mitch Al-

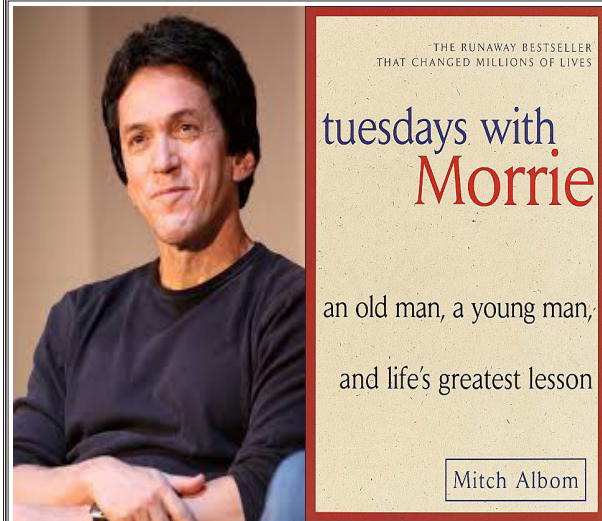
bom, a sports-writer who lives a rather unfulfilling life. Although in his early years he was a vibrant rebel who scorned following the masses, the greed of wealth slowly consumes him, turning him into a slave of the media. One night, after a long and tedious day of work, Mitch sees his former teacher, Morrie Schwartz, being featured on a late night talk

show, "The Nightline." He is giving a confession on what it is like to suffer from ALS. During his college years, Morrie was more than just a teacher to Mitch. Mitch took every class Morrie taught, just so he could listen to his wisdom. At graduation, he promised that he would keep in touch and write frequently. He never did. Now, as his old professor slowly passes away from ALS, Morrie decides to reconnect with him and prove that is never too late to amend a mistake in life. They begin to meet every Tuesday and revive the insightful conversations they once had back in Morrie's office at Brandeis University. Every Tuesday, Morrie becomes weaker and weaker, but his lessons be-

come more and more profound. Mitch begins to record their sessions, calling it their "last thesis." Mitch refuses to allow Morrie's dying words remain in the vicinity of their Tuesday meetings, and with these tapings, he wrote *Tuesdays with Morrie* in order to share Morrie's dying words with the world.

With only 192 pages, I consumed this novel in one sitting. From the first page, I was addicted. In a world that is dominated by materialism and an unquenchable desire

for wealth, it is easy to forget what truly matters. Morrie undermines the fallacy of materialistic wealth and portrays the necessity of meaningful friendships in living a truly fulfilling life. As humans, we feel as if we are infinite beings with an endless number of "next times." *Tuesdays with Morrie* opens your eyes to the fact that time is fleeting—we are only given one life with a limited number of days. Do you really want to spend them driven by inconsequential and meaningless desires or do you want to savor every moment? If you want to be inspired, if you want to hear the lessons of a dying man, and if you want to open your eyes to the world around you, this book is for you.



"You see, you closed your eyes. That was the difference. Sometimes you cannot believe what you see, you have to believe what you feel. And if you are ever going to have other people trust you, you must feel that you can trust them, too—even when you're in the dark. Even when you're falling."

it needs to be. Every character shines a light through the crystal to make the entire story glow. It is the most beautifully penned book I have ever read.

In the end, there's a reason why it's gaining this much acclaim. It's a World War II novel with every vice, every

vile Nazi marching down the streets of France and Germany. What sets it apart is the lens through which it looks at the era. All the evil is there, but it's written in such a clean, beautiful style that is not seen anywhere else. The experience is breathtaking. Go read it.





By: Sarah Spears

## How do I deal with pressure from my parents to be more like my siblings?

If you are feeling pressured by your parents (or by anyone else) into being something you're not, then there are a couple things that you can do. First of all, communication is key. There are probably reasons as to why you are feeling this way and they aren't that you suck or that your sibling is perfect. Rather, your parents may be forgetting that what is best for one person is not always best for another. If you feel uncomfortable because of the expectations that your parents are perpetuating, then you should talk to them about it. If you allow yourself to bottle up your feelings, it will only lead to

trouble. Your parents are there to listen and support you (it's okay to remind them of this); if they realize that their actions are hurting you, then perhaps things will change.

However, the blame doesn't just fall on your parents. If there is a problem, it may start internally. Again, I am in no way making any implications that you are inferior. There is nothing wrong with you; you may just not be thinking broadly enough.

A helpful suggestion when dealing with something like this is to remember that you are an individual. In fact, this world is made up of individuals. Your mom is one. Your dad. Your friends. Your siblings. Everyone. Even if you tried your hardest to be like your sibling, you would never be able to do it. The only person who you are is you. Think about all of the things that you love and that you have experienced. These things make you who you are. They are distinctive to you and only you; you should be proud of that. You are yourself, that's a greater gift than anything money can buy. You don't need to be like your brother or sister. If you begin to understand how unnecessary that pressure to be like someone else or to be "perfect" is, then it will go away. You have to believe in your own capabilities and create your own definition for success, even if it's not something you think others will approve of.

If you are looking for approval, that's something you have to find within yourself. Once you approve of who you are, then the rest will follow. Just be confident, you have a greater value to the world than you might understand right now.

## The "Cool Kids" of Echosmith Take on New York City

By: Nicholle Beese

We were greeted by the bitter cold as we stepped out of Penn Station and into the busy streets of New York City on Friday, November 14th. Excitedly, we took the subway to our destination, Webster Hall, and braced ourselves for the two hour wait in line. Only a few hours separated us from Echosmith!

Echosmith originated from Chino, California and was formed in 2009. The American indie pop band consists of four siblings. The youngest member, Graham (15), plays drums. The only female member of the group, Sydney (17), is the lead vocalist. Noah (18) plays bass and sings back-up vocals. The oldest member, Jamie (21), sings and plays guitar. They are best known for their hit song, "Cool Kids" which has undeniably been stuck in our heads since it has made its way to the radio.

Josie Millard is one of my best friends and has been my go-to girl when I hear about a concert I want to attend. She's always willing to go on an adventure and Echosmith was our adventure of the month.

Waiting for the doors to open is always the worst part about concerts. We grew colder by the minute. Anxious and freezing, we did whatever we could to stay warm and help the time pass. At one point, we saw the bassist wander into the street, practically unnoticed! Once the doors finally opened, we rushed inside. When we looked to our left, the drummer was walking up the other set of stairs. Eagerly, we ran up the stairs and into the Marlin Room so we could get a spot close to the stage.

Madi Diaz was the opening act and she got the crowd to wake up. As soon as Echosmith came on stage though, the crowd came alive. It is definitely an intense feeling when a band you love walks on stage, right in front of you, close enough to touch. They had so much fun, singing and dancing, interacting



*Sydney Sierota of Echosmith rocked Webster Hall in NYC with her bubbly personality and angelic voice.*

with the crowd, and demanding our voices to be heard over their own. To no one's surprise, they sang "Cool Kids" right before their encore. It was clear to see who came for that one song because every single person in that venue blurted out those lyrics like there was no tomorrow.

At the conclusion of the encore, Josie and I made our way back into the streets of New York City. We were freezing and tired and sore, but we both agreed that it was worth it. It always is.

Josie and I take on New York for back to back concerts in December. Yet another adventure awaits us that we shall embark on and attempt to survive.



## Christmas in Japan



By: Kerry Weiland

Meri Kurisumasu! Christmas in Japan is celebrated more as a day to spread happiness rather than a religious holiday since not many people are Christian. However Christmas cards and presents are still given and received along with the various other customs brought along from the US.

Unlike our decorations and sales that start in October, our long holiday vacation, and countdown to the breakthrough of Christmas morning, the Japanese also have their own traditions. Mr. Claus is known as *sansan* (Mr. Santa). Another Japanese gift bringer is *Hoteiosho*, a Japanese god of good fortune from Buddhism although it's not closely related to Christmas.

There is more emphasis on Christmas Eve rather than actual Christmas day. Christmas Eve resembles the American Valentine's Day. It is looked upon as a romantic night for couples who usually go out to dinner at a restau-

rant together, exchange gifts, and walk around looking at Christmas lights.

Since Christmas is not a national holiday in Japan, students do not get a vacation and classes are usually still held on the 25<sup>th</sup>. If parties are held they are mostly for kids where games, dancing, and of course food and desserts are offered. The most popular foods eaten are fried chicken and their signature sponge cake decorated with trees, flowers, and a figure of Santa.

During the holiday season, the Japanese New Year, or 'o shogatsu', is their time for vacation breaks.

This busy time is from December 31 to January 4<sup>th</sup>. This is the period when families get together to have a special meal, pray, and send greeting cards.



## Christmas in the Netherlands



By: Julia Valgenti



In America, children restlessly await Christmas morning, when they rush down the stairs and tear open their presents. But for children in the Netherlands, they wait in anticipation for December 5<sup>th</sup>, the day before St. Nicholas' day.

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, 'Sinterklaas' rides through the towns of Holland accompanied by his servants 'Zwarte Pieten', or Black Peters.

Dutch children are told that the Black Peters help Sinterklaas by keeping track of who is on the naughty and nice list. They are said to reward the good children with candy but punish and terrify those who are on the naughty list. Some stories even say good children will be rewarded with presents from Sinterklaas, but naughty children will be kidnapped in a sack and brought to Spain by Black Peter, and taught to be good.

The night of the 5<sup>th</sup>, children leave clogs or shoes out by the fireplace or on windowsills, hoping Sinterklaas will leave them candy or larger present in the morning. Other festivities are centered on the children and include scavenger hunts and surprise presents.



# DIY (Do It Yourself) Gifts



Amidst the holiday spirit of giving, it is easy to feel tangled up in price tags, stressed shoppers, and tight budgets. This year, instead of subjecting yourself to daunting store lines and monotonous holiday music, why not invest your time in do it yourself (DIY) gifts? In the spirit of macaroni necklaces and finger painted cards, DIY gifts allows you to really personalize gifts which in turn can create more meaningful and sentimental presents.

By: Sophia Kim

## Candy Sleighs



Summon your tetris skills and layer any assortment of candy for the sleigh's body then two candy canes for the runner.

## Open When Cards

"Open when" cards allow you to write personalized messages for various occasions for that person where one card won't cut it.



To ail those chapped lips mix together 2 tsp brown sugar, 1/2 tsp honey, 1 tsp olive oil and 1/4 tsp vanilla extract.

## Lip Scrub



Brown Sugar & Vanilla Lip Scrub

## Mason Jar Snow Globes

Glue desired objects to lid. Fill the jar with water and glitter. Then glue the lid to the jar shut.



## Hot Chocolate Kit



- Fill a bowl with warm water.
- Add drops of nail polish to the water and spread it out
- Dip your mug in the water.
- Pat mug dry with paper towel.
- Once you've achieved the look you want, let it sit for at least two hours.



Assemble together hot cocoa mix and an assortment of whichever dressing you desire.

## Money Balloons



If all else fails, you can always give money in a balloon.



# Squan Celebrates the Holiday Season



## By Nicholle Beese & Keely Flood



What is your favorite Christmas song?

Mackenzie Grogan: "'Silent Night' is my favorite. I've loved it since I was a kid."

Who is your favorite reindeer?

Phil Vorbach: "Rudolph because I like his nose."



What is your favorite Christmas movie?

Brian Comer: "I like 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas'."



What is your favorite holiday tradition?

Mia Pelly: "My family's Christmas Eve party every year."



What do you want most for Christmas?

Kolbe Brennan: "I want a car because I just got"

What is your New Year's resolution?

Sophie Vreeland: "I want to learn how to spin on my head."



What present are you most excited to receive on Christmas?

Lyndsey Starkey: "I'm most excited for my snowboard."



What was the highlight of your 2014?

Tommy Meyer: "I had my first Manasquan football experience."



What are you most excited to do this holiday break?

Joey Ostberg: "I'm excited for my Holmdel Holiday Tournament."





# Christmas Traditions Around the World

## Christmas Time in Australia!

By: Keely Flood



fooled, Australia may be located on a different hemisphere. But even 10,000 miles away from MHS and currently in its summer season, it's also "the most wonderful time of the year" 'down under'!

Christmas in Australia is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>, which may really be the difference you find between how we celebrate it here in America versus our mates over there. December weather-wise in Australia is far from anything considered typical in Jersey. Average temperatures can range from 17 degrees Celsius (63 degrees Fahrenheit) and 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). It gets so hot around this time of year in Australia that often massive bush fires occur across the country!

Just like Americans, Australians follow traditional holiday traditions such as hanging wreaths from doors, Christmas caroling on Christmas Eve, and decorating their homes and gardens with Christmas trees and holiday lights. Australians also decorate their houses with bunches of 'Christmas Bush', a native Australian tree with small green leaves and cream colored flowers. In summer the flowers turn a deep shiny red over a period of weeks.



In each State capital city there is a large Carols by Candlelight service. Famous Australian singers like The Wiggles, John Farnham, Anthony Warlow, Colin Gery, Niki Webster and many more help to sing the carols. These carol services, held in different cities, are broadcast on TV across Australia. There are also huge Christmas pageants in each state capital city, that are also broadcast across the country. Most towns and cities have festivals and parades. In some places, there is a fireworks display at the local park.



## Christmas in Sweden!



By: George Taboada

December 13 is the biggest holiday in Sweden during the Christmas season. St Lucia Day is nationally celebrated by electing girls to play St Lucia in choirs. She gets to wear a red sash around her waist and a crown of candles. She also goes around visiting local hospitals and old people's homes to sing and hand out "Pep-parkakor." There's even a national lottery held to have a girl officially be the St Lucia of all of Sweden.



Christmas Eve is also an important holiday. This is when the family dinners and get-togethers happen. They have julbord (a buffet) and eat cold fish, ham, along with other meats and an assortment of vegetables. To drink they typically have grogg (sweet mulled wine.) This is also when presents are exchanged.

The end of the Christmas season is January 13. This is when the Swedes take down their Christmas trees and eat any leftover cookies.

## Christmas Around MHS!

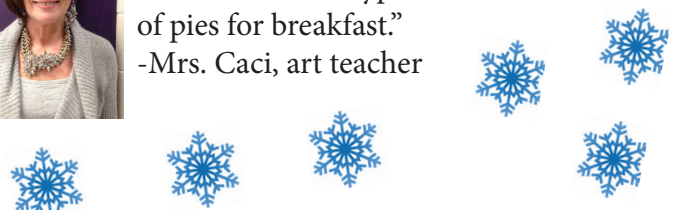
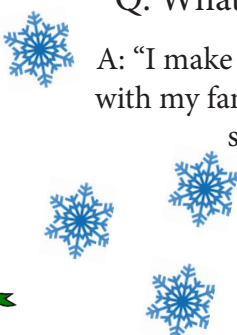


Q: What is your favorite Christmas tradition?

A: "I make a ginger bread house with my family!" -Logan Sabins, senior



A: "My mother used to make 8 different types of pies for breakfast." -Mrs. Caci, art teacher



By Sarah Spears

# Horoscopes

Page design: Mary Cavagnaro(class of '11)

Worried about changing horoscopes? Relax, the change only applies to anyone **born after the change year**. This means anyone born in 2011 or later will use the red dates. They also can have the newest sign!

**Aquarius**  
(January 20 -February 18)  
**(Feb. 16 – March 11)**

Throughout the month you will tend to be focusing on your personal relationships. Try to expand your horizons and meet new people, this may lead to possible romance. Not only that, but this month you may be able to feel your confidence rise to a whole new level! Make sure to take advantage of it, but try not to become too prideful!

**Aries**  
(Mar.21-Apr.19)  
**(April 18-May 13)**

Throughout the month of December, many doors are open to you. There are going to be many opportunities in your career, love, and life in general. So take advantage of it! This is your time to be the best you can be, and the stars are practically aligned for you to do so. Take some risks and work hard, you may get some nice rewards for doing so!

**Libra**  
(September 23 -October 22)  
**(Oct. 30 – Nov. 23)**

This month, things will come to fruition! You could be going on a trip or finishing up some school things. This is a chatty month for you and you may find yourself dealing in the business of others. Don't get too carried though! A new project or an expensive purchase might find its way into your life, and it's exactly where you want it to be!

**Sagittarius**  
(November 22 -December 21) **(Dec. 17 – Jan. 20)**

**Sagittarius**

The month of December is a lucky one for you! This month you will be focusing on yourself and on your relationships. Money is also bound to show up due to your hard work and positive energy! Towards the end of December, the month will take a turn for the serious and you will find that it might be time to be more mature and logical when approaching situations.

**Capricorn**  
(December 22 -January 19) **(Jan. 20 – Feb. 16)**

Try not to stress yourself this month! Take time for yourself and relax. If you are feeling a little under the weather, try to make more positive changes in your life as well as your daily routine. Half way through the month you will feel a little brighter so make sure to use that to your advantage! But although you are feeling good, make sure you deal with issues instead of hiding them away.

**Gemini**  
(May.21-Jun.20)  
**(June 21-July 20)**

This is a month for re-defining your stance on personal relationships and your individuality. Your feelings are going to clear to you, and this may be time for self-reflection. Spend time researching and figuring out the best course of action for the future. In work, try not to be too hard on yourself. This is a time to strengthen your relationships between yourself and others.

**Taurus**  
(Apr.20-May 20.)  
**(May 13-June 21)**

This month is a time for self-reflection and money management. If you are worried about money, keep an eye on your spending and strategically figure out what the best way of dealing with it is (this may turn out well in the long run). Feelings will arise this month, be sure to delve into them and relax. Be cautious of jealousy, it could cause setbacks to personal happiness.

**Virgo**  
(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)  
**(Sept. 16-Oct. 30)**

Throughout this month, there are many chances for a possible romance as well as some life style changes. Your home life could be changing in some way or work may be increasing. Take some time to reorganize and connect with yourself, it will be well worth it! Be attentive to opportunities for the future as well as your relationships with loved ones.

**Scorpio**  
(October 23 -November 21) **(Nov. 23 – Nov. 29)**

This month may bring some new limits and challenges to the table. Money may be tight so try not to make any risky spending decisions. However things could turn around with the right attitude, so try to put your best foot forward! Try to look deeply into what truly matters in your relationships and for you personally.

**Leo**  
(July 21-Aug. 22) **(Aug. 10-Sept. 16)**

Many opportunities arise this month! Not only is your creative side going full-throttle, but your personal relationships and social activities are as lively as ever! There will be a lot of work available as the month progresses, but also make sure to reflect on these past couple months to see if everything is where you want it to be for the future and for your life as of right now.

**Pisces**  
(February 19 -March 20) **(March 11– April 18)**

This month you will focus on your home life and harmonizing your relationships with friends. Offer your support where you can, but try not to overdo it! Your inner social butterfly will take over this month, increasing your social circles and social opportunities. If you put in the effort, you may be able to improve your reputation and status at work, so keep your eyes open for chances to do more!

**Cancer**  
(June 21-July 20) / **(July 20-Aug. 10)**

This is the month for rejuvenation! Take time alone for yourself and focus on cleaning everything out. This could range from reorganizing the house or taking a nice long bubble bath. Do whatever you need to do to feel refreshed and ready to spring back into action! This month, your relationships will improve as well as your sense of personal wellbeing, so take advantage of it!



# BLUE & GRAY SPORTS



## Girls Basketball Team Foresees a Season of Victories

Powerhouse squad looks to continue last year's success

By: Keely Flood

Everyone knows that the girls' basketball team here at MHS is something that shouldn't be messed with. This year's roster is hard to beat, consisting of seniors Courtney Hagaman, Molly Read, and Marina Mabrey; juniors Alex Kurtz and Gillian Black; sophomores Stella Clark, Addie Masonius, and Victoria Galvan; and freshmen Carly Geissler and Dara Mabrey. The girls are amped and ready for a competitive season full of victories.



According to the on-line roster, the girls play SJV in an away game on January 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30.) "I'm just excited to play with my team. Our main goal is to get to the TOC!" Based on the smiles and uplifting, positive attitude from Courtney during the interview, it's safe to say the girls aren't too worried about their competition

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**Stella Clark shooting a 3 pointer in a game last year, returns for her sophomore season.**

In a recent interview, senior Courtney Hagaman gave some insight of what the team is preparing for. When asked who she thought the team's biggest competitor will be, Hagaman responded, "I'd have to say SJV (Saint John Vianney) because they have a great matchup and it was an intense game last year." (Ac-

**Led by #23 Marina Mabrey, the Warriors hope to repeat last year's Shore Conference Championship.**



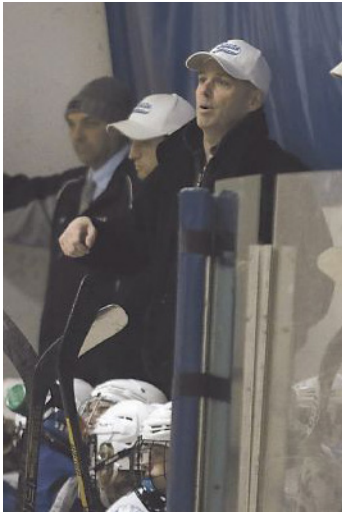
this upcoming season. Cheer the girls on at their first game (home) against Rumson-Fair Haven on December 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 in the gym. Good luck this season, ladies!



# BLUE & GRAY SPORTS



## 'Tis the Season for Puffy Layers, Fleece-lined Hats... and Speedos



### High Hopes for Hockey

By: Maggie Leddy

The MHS Varsity hockey team is excited to take on the 2014-2015 season with high hopes of exceeding their past achievements. This year the team is coached by former NHL player and Stanley Cup champion Jim Dowd. With such an experienced leader, the season looks promising.

Although the season has started on a rough patch with 3 losses and 1 win, you cannot ignore the difference in the way the team has presented themselves thus far. In a previous article written in [The Coast Star](#), it was reported that Dowd hoped to bring a new level of confidence to the team, and that is exactly what he is doing.

"We're looking to



### Swimmers seek to sustain success



Manasquan's swim team dove into the season with a new and strengthened vigor.

Both boys and girls have dominated on deck, winning against St. Rose and SJV thus far.

Their successes can be attributed to both individual dedication and the posi-

make a lot of progress this year," said senior captain Joe DeFeo. "I'm really looking forward to the rest of the season with such a great group of kids and a new coach."

There's no denying the desire to win that the Warriors have portrayed in

By: Sofia Kim

itive team atmosphere. Senior Caroline Bilotti comments that "we are really close this year and the spirit is very evident on the team. Whether you are a freshman or a senior the happiness is contagious. I love everyone on the team!"

Their season is promising with widespread talent and universal enthusiasm. The team has incoming freshman with potential such as Luke McDonald who is exceptional in his butterfly, as well as high-speed transfer stu-

dent from CBA, sophomore Liam Cuozzo. Not only are the boys speeding down their lanes, but the girls are also proving their gills. Colby Mallet and Sarah Brennan have demonstrated early agility as well as Kate Degnan who according to Caroline "is the team's 'dark horse' of the season"

The teams are optimistic about their upcoming competition. They are ready to claim their victory against big competition, Rumson-Fair Haven, who beat them by a mere three points last year. Other teams such as RBC better watch out for Manasquan's incoming intensity. The team this year is working and ready to take down the competition and earn an intimidating reputation for Manasquan.

December 12th marks their much anticipated meet against Wall. We are confident they will swim their way to the top!

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# BLUE & GRAY SPORTS



## Manasquan Boys and Girls Bowling hoping to keep success train rolling

By: Logan Muir

Under the excitement over basketball season lies one of Manasquan's most interesting sports: bowling.

Within these past few years, the Manasquan Girls and Boys Bowling Teams have seen much success. The girls' squad, led by Coach Tom Glenn, has won three consecutive state championships, an extremely impressive streak. Likewise, the boys' team has been making a name for themselves under Coach Alan Abraham.

The bowling season is already underway for both the girls and boys and both have seen early success. The girls' team has kicked off the season with an 14-2 record while the boys have a record of 21-0. Both teams hope to keep this winning trend going.

For the boys, senior Jack Cunningham has taken charge as the team captain. Cunningham provides a seasoned, dedicated leader for the team.

Junior Tyler Wolfe is expected to perform at a high-level this year alongside freshmen varsity starter Noah Zadwasky. Last year, Wolfe finished an impressive season with a Second Team All-South Jersey honoree.

Other notable players include seniors Dan Jahnsen, Joey Sigmund,

Michael Khammer, and John Moriarty. According to Moriarty, this year will be "taken to a whole new level." This seems to be true, as the boys already seem to have clinched the division title.



***Pictured above: Members of the Boys Bowling Team, led by last year's county champion Tyler Wolfe; below: the Girls Bowling Team hopes to follow in the footsteps of their successful predecessors, winners of three consecutive sectional state championships.***



For the girls, Coach Glenn hopes to lead the team to another state championship. With the 2011, 2012, and 2013 state championships under their belt, it will be tough for the girls to break this trend of success. The girls are in the driver's seat with their impressive record to win the division title once again, but several matches do lay ahead.

The girls' team is led by Jamie Walliker. With star bowlers such as Bryce Petracorro graduating last year, Walliker seems to be the leader of this tough girls' squad. Other key members include juniors Megan Bauter, Ella Luzzi, and Emily Neiberlien.

This past weekend, Wolfe, Walliker, and Bauter all competed in a singles tournament. All three made it past the first round while Walliker made it to the quarter finals, finishing seventh overall.

The Manasquan bowling teams are off to a fantastic start and it will be exciting to see how the season continues.

## Young Wrestlers Building a Foundation for Future Success

By: Julia Valgenti



The Warrior's wrestling season is set to open with their first tournament the Saturday before Christmas. They have been training hard to get ready for a strong showing.

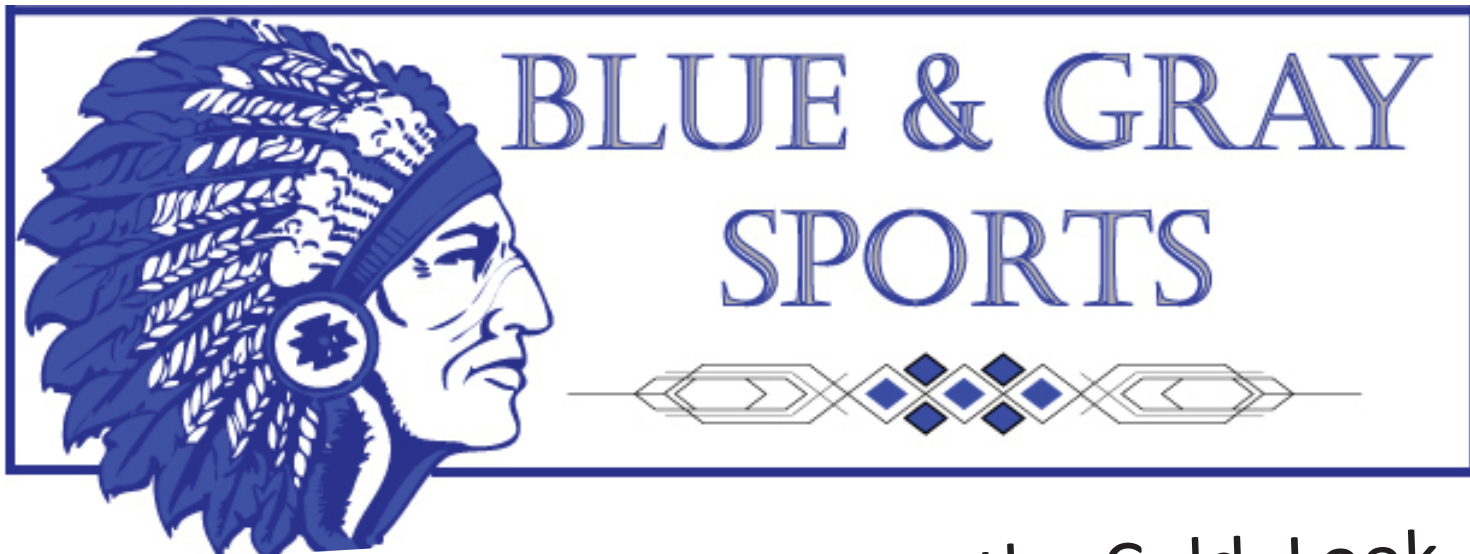
The Warriors will face Wall in their first home match on Wednesday January 7<sup>th</sup>. They can use some fan support so come out and cheer them on!

This year's team consists of seven upperclassmen and eighteen underclassmen. According to coach Voskian, the relatively 'young' team "looks good for the future to build off of." Among the plethora of underclassmen, two stand out from the rest. Sophomores Joey Ostberg and Frankie Faasan will be competing this year on the varsity team.

This season also promises success for senior Ben Meseroll who has held a two year winning record on varsity. Meseroll is expected to be a key member of the team in the upcoming season.

New to the team this year is sophomore Karla Muñoz, who is one of two girls on the team.

Overall, the warriors are ready to compete and "looking forward to a good competitive year".



## Winter Track Athletes Brave the Cold, Look Forward to Spring

By: Reed Melchionda

With the coming of the months of winter, comes the arrival of winter track. Even with the frigid outdoor bike path runs, and breath-stopping fartlicks, the coaches and athletes have high expectations for what the season will bring.

Differing from spring track, the meets are held in the Toms River "Bubble" and the Army Camp in New York City. The winter track season begins in early December and ends in earlier February, with the top-scoring runners advancing to states beginning in mid-February. As senior Liam Tobin, says, "winter track is different because it has no dual meets. It mostly focuses on individual progression and getting ready for spring track."

In respect to the boy's team, seniors Liam Tobin,

Craig Lapham, and Kyle McDermott have set high goals for themselves. Kyle McDermott, a distance runner, states, "For the distance team, we'd like to break the school record in the distance medley relay. Last year, we came within about 10 seconds from it in spring track, and I think we have what it takes to finally set a new goal."

Additionally, the girls are extremely motivated for the upcoming season. Senior Sydney Osso, junior Sophie Smith, and sophomore Grace Petrosini have been hurdle runners for over a year and have set their goal to beat the record for the 3 X 100 hurdle relay race. Sydney exclaimed that last year they were only three seconds away from beating the record, and believes that they have the skill to do it this year.

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## Team Chemistry the Key for Boys Basketball

By: Kerry Weiland



*Junior Ryan Jensen soars above the defense in a game last year.*

Get ready to fill the gym bleachers this winter season because MHS's varsity basketball team is looking to have a very talented and competitive team this year! From the Shore Conference to the state tournament, their "team chemistry" as Coach Bilodeau says, will hopefully push them to their fullest potential.

The team consists of both underclassmen and upperclassmen with a total of five seniors and returning experienced varsity juniors. The five seniors are Matt Paturzo, Luke O'Shaunessey, Aidan McMenaman, Liam McAlis-

ter, and the new addition, Kyle Bradshaw, who transferred this year from Howell and is looking to have a positive influence on the team.

A lot of the boys have played together enough, especially the seniors, to know how to run the court with each other. Coach Bilodeau has been the head coach for all four years these players have been wearing MHS basketball jerseys. With their connection both on and off the field, they're hoping for a successful record and memorable season.

The team knows that it will definitely be a lot different than last year's without players like Tommy Toole, Jack Fay, Luke Tausek, and John White, who all graduated. However, senior Matt Paturzo thinks that, "we have a lot of people ready to step into their shoes now that they're gone." They are determined to practice hard and play together as a team to have a very good year. Good luck boys!



# BLUE & GRAY SPORTS



## Warriors Football Stays Strong During Tough Second Half of Season

By: Logan Muir

The 2014 football season has officially come to a close. Going into the final half of the season with a 3-3 record, the football team, with hopes of obtaining a state championship, finished with an overall disappointing 3-7 record.

With all the talent and leadership surrounding the Warriors, this year's season came as a shock. No one expected an unsatisfactory record, especially the players. Senior Craig Miller stated "It's a letdown to leave after this season."

The Warriors showed flashes of greatness throughout the season. Among impact players included, senior running back James McAlarey who established himself as a strong, elusive runner while defensive players such as senior linebacker John Morris made himself a force to be reckoned with.

With many senior football players graduating this year, it's hard to imagine their places being filled on and off the field. However, one thing learned from this year is that there are many upcoming underclassmen who appear willing to fill the shoes of their predecessors. Some include sophomore Tommy Meyer, who got plenty of playing this time on varsity this year and freshmen quarterback Tommy Antonucci and running back Connor Morgan.

To top of an unfulfill-



ing season, the Warriors unfortunately lost at home in their final game against their archrival, the Wall Knights. Manasquan suffered a 21-14 loss to Wall, but the game was undoubtedly exciting throughout. While down 14-0 at halftime, Manasquan came back in a strong second half with two touchdowns. Although Manasquan showed resilience after a slow first half, the Warriors simply could not keep up with Wall's offense, which appeared to be in synch all game long.

Manasquan had a chance to tie the game with two minutes left on the clock, but the impressive drive was stopped short due to an untimely interception. Even though Manasquan ultimately lost the game, the players and coaches should all be proud. It was obvious every member of the team laid it all out on Vic Kubu Warrior Field that day.

Although the season did not go as planned, the Warriors played their hearts out this season. This was evident through several second half comebacks that Manasquan constructed throughout the season. For those group of men, the win-loss record is not the whole story. For seniors, they can move on knowing they are forever part of the Big Blue tradition. For underclassmen, they can start preparing for next season and more passionate and stronger than ever.

*Senior wide receiver Max Hawkins catching a touchdown to put the Warriors on the board.*





# Squan-a-gram

By: Kerry Weiland & Maggie Leddy



Freshman Tanner Caccavale catches a pass from his teammate at one of the last Friday night home football games. He already misses it and can't wait for next year's season as a sophomore!



Sophomore Alex Bennet posted this fun picture after homecoming with her friend Summer Farren in their dresses. They look like they had a blast!



Junior Patricia McKiever posted this on her college visit to Villanova! Junior year is hectic, but she seems to have the big picture and her goals in mind.



Senior Spencer Kurten shows off his unicycling skills in a short instagram video at the Manassquan Inlet. We don't know how he does it!



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