

'Chicago' razzle dazzles audiences

by Esha Kataria '20

On Friday, Feb. 24, at 2:00 p.m., KO's cast for the winter musical performed "Chicago," a tale of murder, treachery, and infidelity, that captured the attention of the entire school and took students on a journey following two protagonists, Roxy and Velma, in their pursuit for fame after getting away with murder.

Also hosting shows on Saturday, Feb. 25, at 7:00 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 26, at 2:00 p.m., KO's theater department told a story that grapples with the role of media in American society, capitalizing on the corruption of the criminal justice system.

Theater Director Kyle Reynolds wrote a message about the major themes in the production as part of the Director's Notes displayed in the pamphlets handed out before the musical. "Throughout the story, the media twists and turns the story to favor the greatest impact of a headline," he wrote. "In turn the media fuels each character's desperate

call for attention, publicity, and fame, which only promotes more deception, murder, and trickery."

Mr. Reynolds said that the cast had been preparing since the first week of December, and the results of their hard work were phenomenal. "It was great, a real showcase of the amount of work that has gone into the production," he said.

Mr. Reynolds was the director and choreographer of the show, in charge of all the character analysis, blocking, and staging. "I wanted to do something that was a true triple threat, a combination of dancing, acting, and singing," he said. "The highlights of it for me was the music and the dancing, which all came together at the end."

Senior Olivia Coxon, who played a part in the "Cell Block Tango," said that she was proud of the entire cast. "We accomplished a lot, more than I would have ever thought of when Mr. Reynolds first told us about his ideas."

Junior Remy McCoy, who played the lead of Roxy in the show, said she agreed that their



Senior Katie Brough, junior Remy McCoy, and senior Emma Kate Johansen perform Chicago for the audience in Roberts Theater. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

hard work paid off. "Everyone really stepped up and gave it their best," she said. "As rehearsals went on, we got really close as a cast, and everyone was super supportive of one another."

Sophomore Olivia Pear was part of the "Cell Block Tango," and she said that the show was a success.

"Mr. Reynolds has done a really good job of taking a really popular show and adapting it for high schoolers," she said. "My favorite part was, by far, the dancing."

Sophomore Snehaa Ram performed in the ensemble and said she agreed that the cast was very talented and ambitious.

"I wasn't sure if we could pull it off at first since the choreography was super intense, but as we came closer to tech week, we saw everything come full circle, and the set and costumes looked amazing," she said.

Olivia Coxon said that she got to make a lot of friends through the musical. "I love meeting new people. Every year there is a different vibe, and I love that."

Sophomore Sadie Margolis said she agreed that she loved working as a team with her peers. "'Chicago' is such a big production with so many elements, and it really just came to life by the end," she said. "I loved putting a smile on people's faces, and I want the community to know that everyone can sing and dance and act. My favorite part was performing the 'Cell Block Tango' because we had a special energy that created such a fierce environment."

Junior Maggie Eberle said she agreed that the production came together seamlessly,

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Mock Trial advances to quarter-finals

by Aidan O'Loughlin '20

This past month, the Kingswood Oxford Mock Trial team, the Legal Wyverns, won trial after trial, and worked their way to the semi-finals. On Friday, Feb. 8, the Legal Wyverns participated in the second round of the Mock Trial Competition at Quinnipiac Law School. They were placed in a preliminary trial by random draw after winning their regional round earlier in the year.

After winning their preliminary trial, they then competed in the next trial of the competition on the same day. A victory in this round placed KO in the final eight teams in Connecticut. Then on Friday, Feb. 22, the Legal

Wyverns participated in the semi-finals and yet again won their trial.

In the second round of the competition, both sides of the Legal Wyverns teams competed. In the morning, the Legal Wyverns

plaintiff side, was comprised of seniors Mia Seymour and Mike Autorino, juniors James Ravalese and Alyssa Pilecki, sophomore Caitlin Budzik, and freshman Will Wells. They went



KO Legal Wyverns smile after a victory. Photo by Jacqueline Pisani.

up against Immaculate School and won a definitive victory.

Then the team moved on to the next trial. The Legal Wyverns Defense, comprised of senior Tom Betts, junior Aidan O'Loughlin, sophomores Kyle Frankel and Risha Ranjan, and freshmen Pat Schwab and Caroline Boardman, went up against Xavier High School and yet again won by a wide margin.

The victories in these trials marked the farthest that the Legal Wyverns have ever been in the Mock Trial competition. "I think going into Quinnipiac we knew that we had a really strong chance," Mia said. "I think there was a lot of nerves, but both teams performed so incredibly well, and it was great

that we both got to compete."

In the next trial the team's plaintiffs were up against Westhill High School in the quarter finals. "I felt really good going into the quarter finals," James said. "We had practiced a lot and I think we were very prepared."

The rest of the team shared James' sentiment. "We were all super excited, as we had never made it that far," Mia said, "so I didn't know what to expect. We knew that the level of competition would be unlike all the teams we had seen before, so we had to be on our A game and go into the trial ready to support each other."

The quarter finals at Middle-

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KO blood drive saves lives

by Casey Qi '19

On Monday, Feb. 25, KO hosted the Warren Baird Memorial Blood Drive, where volunteers from the community came and donated blood to save lives in Soby Gym from 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Dean of Students William Gilyard said that the blood drive was named after Warren Baird, who was, among other things, the chair of the English department and the advisor for the KO News. Mr. Gilyard said

“I think this event is meaningful as it enables people to help save lives, it really does make a difference and it truly embodies KO’s motto of caring beyond self.”

—Mr. Gilyard

that Mr. Baird was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder and passed away in 2000. “This annual event is in remembrance of Warren Baird and honors all the contributions he made to KO,” Mr. Gilyard said.

Mr. Gilyard said that students



Students and faculty wait to donate blood at the annual Warren Baird Memorial Blood Drive in the Soby Gym. Red Cross volunteers help with the logistics. Photo by Emma Kate Johansen '19.

volunteered to be chairs and that two senior chairs and two junior chairs are randomly selected. He said that this year’s junior chairs—Ethan Brown and Cai Kuivila—were picked on Friday, Feb. 8.

Mr. Gilyard said that the blood drive also gives people outside of the KO community a platform to donate blood. “KO is hosting the blood drive, but it is not restricted to KO,” Mr. Gilyard said. “In fact, most of the donors are from the outer community because you have to be more than 17 to donate blood.”

Mr. Gilyard explained that the junior and senior chairs and other KO volunteers helped to organize the event.

Senior chair Amy Mistri said that her

obligations as a chair were to make announcements during the assemblies and get sign-ups for time slots during lunch periods, which usually starts three weeks before the event. She also handed out papers to assist the professionals from the American Red Cross in making sure that all the donors fit their requirements on the day of the blood drive.

Senior Emma Kate Johansen, the other chair, added that the chairs also met with the Red Cross representative, Daniel Huntington, two times before the event to plan the propaganda strategies and ways to make it most effective.

Mr. Gilyard said that one pint of blood has the potential to save three people’s lives. He also mentioned that the school

provides snacks such as power bars, fruit, and water for the donors after they donate blood, which the chairs help to distribute.

“I think this event is meaningful as it enables people to help save lives,” Mr. Gilyard said. “And even though people may not realize how important it is to donate blood, it really does make a difference and it truly embodies KO’s motto of caring beyond self.”

Many students agreed with Mr. Gilyard and decided to donate. “I felt that it was my moral duty to give some blood,” senior Benjamin Small said. “There are a lot of people that need blood, and one person’s donation could be the difference between life and death. So, I think it is important, if you are able to, to donate blood. The experience was a little nerve racking, but it was fine once they started. I was mostly worried about feeling light-headed afterwards, but that didn’t end up being a problem.”

Embodying the same selflessness, Amy said that she became involved in being a chair her junior year, after hearing about it during her freshman and sophomore year. “The best thing about it is being involved and trying to help out as much as I can,” Amy said, “and it is really rewarding when you read stories about how people have been helped by pints of blood.”

Emma Kate expressed similar sentiments. “My mom often donates to the Red Cross, and though I wasn’t eligible, I wanted to help,” Emma Kate said. “That’s why I signed up to be a chair. And it has been a great experience: it’s always nice to see how many people supported the good cause and I am excited to do that again.”

Seniors join Cum Laude Society

by Esha Kataria '20

On Monday, Feb. 25, at 6:00 p.m., the recipients of the Cum Laude honor and their families attended a ceremony and dinner, where the students received their pins and certificates, and listened to alumni speaker Ryan Cronin '98.

The Cum Laude Society is a private school society that recognizes the top 20 percent of the graduating class and has strict guidelines in terms of citizenship and academic honor. It is equivalent to the National Honors Society in public schools and Phi Beta Kappa in universities.

President of the Cum Laude chapter at KO Brenda Semmelrock said the dinner is a moment of celebration. “It’s a time to gather in honor of these student who have worked hard and long, and it gives the opportunity for faculty to be with them along with their parents,” she said.

Officer of the Cum Laude chapter at KO, Director of Academic Planning Carolyn McKee said that the selection criteria is very thorough. “The four pillars they focus on are academic excellence, moral sense and scholarship, dignity and truth, and citizenship.”

Officer Ron Monroe said that when the committee nominates students for the award, they take into account their academic record as well as their citizenship record. “It’s a distinction that involves sustained academic excellence, as well as a citizenship component,” he said. “As for the dinner, it is celebratory of their achievements and is for their parents and them.”

Ms. McKee said that the night begins with a reception in the library where students receive a membership booklet and their Cum Laude pin, and then they move to the



New members pictured smiling and excited after officially being inducted into the Kingswood Oxford Chapter of the National Cum Laude Society on Monday, Feb. 25. Photo by Jackie Pisani.

cafeteria for dinner. During dessert, there is always a guest speaker who is an alum, and speaks about their life in relation to KO.

This year, Mrs. Semmelrock said she invited Ryan Cronin '98 to speak to the students. “Ryan is someone who loves KO,” she said. “He was here for his reunion, and I see him at different sporting events. It’s nice for our inductees to hear from an alum who worked as hard as them and was committed to sports and other activities and how they can use those skills in college and beyond.”

Mr. Cronin said that with his speech he wanted to talk about some of the key things that he took from KO and also convey gratitude to everyone who helped him get there. “I do remember being inducted into Cum Laude, and it made me feel really proud to be part of that group,” he said. “I want them to reflect on their hard work and be grateful, knowing they could not have done it alone, without their

teachers, who had faith in their potential.”

Furthermore, Mr. Cronin talked about how to carry the idea of humility in their day-to-day lives. “Being a leader who is humble and who can listen to others is the true path to leadership,” he said.

Mr. Cronin now works as an ESL teacher at Whiting Lane School in West Hartford and is currently attending UConn to pursue administration and education, with hopes of becoming an elementary school principal. “I frequently think back to KO and how I am employing those skills I learned to help kids,” he said. “I am able to do them skillfully because of the rigor of KO’s learning.”

Mr. Monroe said he loved hearing what Mr. Cronin had to say. “It is an interesting window of life after KO through someone who has already been there, and it’s a very nice part of the evening,” he said.

Students said they agreed that it was an enjoyable night and it was a moment

for reflection. “It’s great to be recognized for our hard work,” senior Ananya Alleyne said. “Mr. Cronin’s speech overall was really good and encouraging; he focused on taking the time to reflect, look forward, and appreciate how well KO has set us up for success.”

Senior Jason Meizels said that the dinner was a great opportunity to connect with peers, teachers, and parents. “It was a huge honor to have that recognition,” he said. “The dinner was a good memory and a nice celebration of our time and hard work at KO.”

Senior Mia Seymour said she agreed that the evening was a moment to just appreciate KO and everyone involved in her success here. “I thought that KO did a really nice job putting together the dinner and celebrating all the inductees,” she said. “The cafeteria was beautiful and I liked how we got to sit with teachers. It was really a time of celebrating beyond just ourselves, but everyone who saw things in us that we didn’t see ourselves—our teachers, our parents, our friends.”

Senior Ali Meizels said that the dinner was very nice and elegant. “One thing that I really enjoyed was that our parents and lots of our teachers were there, which was really special since I got to celebrate this honor with many of the people who have helped me throughout high school,” she said. “I thought the speaker was excellent, and I really appreciated his message about gratitude, and I think it’s super relevant as we get closer to graduation.”

Mr. Monroe said that the evening was one of a kind. “It’s always been a wonderful evening,” he said. “There are many nice moments in the school year, and this is one of them, where deserving students are recognized along with their families.”

The editorials below represent the collective opinion of the members of the KO News Editorial Board: Ben Small, Nell Schwartz, Lian Wolman, Esha Kataria, Kush Kataria, Ishaah Sohail, Taline Norsigian, Luv Kataria, Maeve McDonald, Jaden DiMauro, and Alma Clark.

KO needs life skills

Kingswood Oxford is devoted to educating students and preparing them for college and life beyond academics, and they do so very well, yet life skills classes are something the curriculum lacks and should be implemented ASAP!

Learning how to do taxes, put a down payment on a house, and write a good resume are all skills that are just as important as arithmetic and grammar. The KO News believes education should prepare students for the future, whether that involves going on to a higher education, joining the workforce, or just generally becoming an engaged, well-rounded member of society. Therefore, we think that KO should add classes that teach interview skills such as eye contact, proper etiquette, a good firm handshake, and writing a solid resume.

While the public speaking class is a great course, students need to go beyond just speaking and become even more prepared for their future. Additionally, economics and statistics classes are a great additions to any students' course load but rarely cover important life information such as buying a car or maintaining a bank account and credit score.

The world is always changing and becoming more advanced, and schools need to equip students with the kind of skills that will enable them to conquer anything the work world may throw at them. There are skills people use every day without even realizing they are using them that need to be honed and worked

on to be applicable in a work setting. For example, critical thinking is a skill used in math and science at school all the time but is just as useful in any sort of work setting when brainstorming how to better solve a problem that may have come up in the office.

Schools need to realize how important these skills are and integrate them into teaching. Rather than seeing a life skills class as optional or not relevant to education, the KO News believes this course should become a part of the core curriculum in high school. There is often a divide between what students learn in the classroom and the demands placed on them outside of the classroom.

So many students lack key skills such as communication skills, the ability to work well under pressure, and professional skills. If part of the purpose of education is to prepare students for the real world, that goal is not completely being achieved. Students normally use proper grammar, can write a five page essay, and can do calculus, but they need more than that to be a functioning and successful member of society.

Every year KO graduates smart, capable and happy students. Imagine how much better prepared our students would be if we offered classes that taught students how to tackle real world scenarios. The KO News believes teaching life skills classes will only help and better prepare our students for a life of civic engagement because so much of what counts for success outside in the real world goes beyond academics.



by Ben Small '19

A Wyvern's Tale Good-bye and good luck

This is my final issue on the KO News, and I thought I'd use my last editorial to reflect on my time at the KO News and—maybe—to give some advice.

When I signed up for journalism during my freshman year, I had no idea what the KO News was. I just thought it might be a fun and interesting class.

In S-110, I met Mr. Kyff—one of the kindest and most considerate people I've ever had the pleasure of knowing.

Mr. Kyff helped me break out of my self-imposed bubble and adapt to a new, unfamiliar school. Before I came to KO, I was homeschooled. So KO represented a pretty sizable shift in my education, and Mr. Kyff was instrumental in my smooth transition.

However, I do confess that for the first few classes, I called him "Mr. Kiff" by accident. I'm sorry about that, Mr. Kyff.

I remember that when I was a freshman, I subconsciously idolized the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editors.

At the time, they were Ben Waldman, Kate Betts, and Gwenyth McDonald. They seemed so mature—as if they had their lives figured out.

Now that I'm in their place, I realize that there isn't a special maturity conferred by "being the leader of the paper." I don't feel very different from my freshman self. For example, on one of the recent issues, I misspelled the word volleyball, while editing one of the Sports pages.

Typos do not discriminate. No matter how proficient or eloquent you think you are, they'll get you. That's something the KO News has taught me.

I hadn't really realized that my tenure was coming to an end until I had to consider who would comprise the next staff. I remember gathering outside a classroom in Seaverns a few years ago. The person before you in line opens the door and leaves. You can tell if they got the position they wanted by their body language. There is rarely talking in the hall. For three years, I was on the side of the table facing Mr. Kyff or Ms. Schieffelin and the Head Editors. This year, there was a strange role-reversal. To be honest, it felt odd to hold this authority.

Vested with it, nevertheless, I tried—along with the other senior editors—to create a successful, efficient, and creative staff for next year.

We had to make some difficult decisions—as I'm sure every staff has to do—but we made them all in an effort to what was best for the paper.

By working on the KO News, I think everyone comes to learn that the paper itself is the most important thing. We set aside our personal issues to make sure we produce the best possible issue every month. Of course, we make mistakes, but I think this striving—the determination to be better—is what makes the paper successful.

I would encourage everyone to at least consider joining the KO News.

Even if you don't take journalism and become a formal editor, you can still write for the Opinions section. Sharing your views on the world creates healthy school-wide dialogue.

Often times, after someone writes a particularly controversial article, I hear people talking about that same topic. Sometimes, they are moved to voice their own opinion in the paper. I think this is the exact purpose of the KO News—to spur discussion and to inform.

Writing for the paper teaches you a lot of things. Firstly, and most obvious, is how to communicate.

These communication skills manifest in many different ways. Writing articles requires you to be concise and accurate and to prioritize the most important information. Crafting interview questions, likewise, requires eloquent communication.

I also think that writing for the paper teaches confidence. Gathering quotes for an article forces you to interact with the community around you. It forces you to talk to people with whom you otherwise would never meet. For people just entering KO, writing for the paper is a great way to get acquainted with your fellow students and teachers and with the school in general.

However, it would be irresponsible of me to paint writing for the KO News as all fun and games. Most of the time, it's hard work.

During a Baird Journalism Dinner a few years ago, Mr. Kyff said, "being the advisor for the KO News requires a lot of these," holding up a bottle of aspirin. The KO News causes a lot of headaches, but in the end, we all know it's worth it.

So to any freshmen reading this, I encourage you to write, to expand your bubble, to engage with the KO community around you.

As I leave the KO News, I'm confident that the next staff will continue to build the paper—to improve it and to meet every challenge.

So, it's with sadness that I say goodbye to the KO News right now but with optimism that I look forward to its bright, bright future to come.



A celebratory cartoon by Alma Clark '20, honoring Dr. Heather Wayne, professor extraordinaire.

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Seniors count days to graduation

by Lian Wolman '19

On Friday, Feb. 15, at 9:00 a.m., the development office organized a breakfast for the senior class in the library to celebrate 98 days until the class graduates and therefore becomes alumni.

Prior to the breakfast, Form 6 Dean and Spanish teacher Ronald Garcia sent out an email to the entire grade on Friday, Feb. 8, informing everyone of the actual event and what would be happening at it; however, the breakfast had to be postponed from the original date because of the bad weather which caused a delayed opening.

The breakfast was meant to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 13, during advisee group to celebrate 100 days until graduation but was moved to Friday, Feb. 15, during PLB. Mr. Garcia notified the class of the time and date change in another email.

In this email, Mr. Garcia again addressed the purpose of the breakfast and revealed the new name for it. "Due to our modified schedule today, the 100 day breakfast is being moved and renamed," he said. "We will be having the 98 day breakfast on Friday at 9 in the library. This breakfast is organized by the development

office, which will talk to you about becoming part of the KO alumni association upon graduation."

Since the date of the breakfast was moved, Head of School Tom Dillow was unable to attend the way he had originally planned. Instead, Mr. Dillow recorded a video with a message for the class to watch at the breakfast containing the information he would have said at the breakfast. "One of the things I said is enjoy this time and make the most of it because 20 years from now, you're going to remember your high school experience, especially your senior year," Mr. Dillow said.

Mr. Dillow also reminded the seniors that there are still 98 days left until graduation and it is important to finish strong. He said that he wants to see all 83 members of the senior class receive their diplomas on Friday, May 24 at graduation.

Seniors said this celebration really snuck up on them. "It's crazy to think that we have less than 98 days until graduation," senior Camilla Berckemeyer said. "Senior year has flown by."

The tables in the library were set up in long rows with chairs all around for students to sit and enjoy their breakfast. Each seat also had a mug as a gift placed at it for the

students to take home. "It was cute to walk into the library and see it all decorated with 100 day mugs for all of us on the tables," senior Maeve McDonald said.

The breakfast was catered by Sage Dining and there were many options for students to choose from to eat including delicious hash browns. "The food was good," senior Garth Swanson said. "There were a lot more options than there usually are at these types of events."

Director of Annual Giving Meghan Kurtich said that they hosted the breakfast for a number of reasons, including to familiarize themselves with the graduating class. "We wanted to get our names and our faces out there because once you graduate, the alumni office is sort of your guys point of contact for the school," she said.

Another reason the development office hosted the breakfast was to inform the class of the 2019 Time Capsule that they should put something in for when it gets opened in five years.

The time capsule is currently in Mrs. Perkins' office; students can think about what items they want to add to it over the next couple of weeks. "I love the idea of having a time capsule! It's very cute and will be nice to look back on in a few

years," senior Molly Baron said.

After the breakfast, Ms. Kurtich sent an email out to the class to thank everyone for coming to the event and to remind everyone to cherish their last few months as a class before they join a large community of 7,761 alumni.

"It's crazy to think that we have less than 98 days until graduation. Senior year has flown by."

—C. Berckemeyer

At the breakfast Ms. Kurtich said they informed students about how it is important to give back to the community. "Just as we do for each senior class, we ask that you consider starting your alumni journey with a pledge to give that will carry on through college and until your five-year reunion," she said.

She said that often alum donate to the school in honor of a particular teacher or faculty

member who impacted their time at KO in a positive manner. She suggested to the class to start thinking about who they would give in honor of.

She added that there is a Wyvern alum who has been donating since the year he graduated in 1948, and she encouraged students to follow in his path. "The amount is not important, but your participation is," she said. "So start your streak today and support KO's teachers just as they supported you. Be the first senior class to reach 100 percent participation!"

While many students enjoyed the breakfast and celebrating 98 days until graduation, some felt it is still too soon to be asking the class to donate before actually graduating from the school. "I appreciated the gesture of the breakfast, but I feel like it's a little bit early to start asking us for donations," senior Adam Sonntag said.

Regardless, Ms. Kurtich said that the class of 2019 has already gifted donations to the school in honor of faculty members in the short time since the breakfast. She and her colleagues also wanted to congratulate the class for their accomplishments so far and wish them the best for their futures.

'Tight and Bright' incites controversy

by Shreeya Chalikonda '21

On Saturday, Feb. 16, the Kingswood Oxford SGA hosted the annual winter dance in the dining hall.

The theme of the dance was advertised as "Tight and Bright," but essentially it was a neon theme.

The dance created a lot of buzz and controversy but ended up as a success. The theme "Tight and Bright" may have been misinterpreted, but the SGA wanted to emphasize our tight-knit community at the dance and by using "tight" they meant it as awesome and fun.

The theme idea came up as most other boarding schools do a "Tight and Bright" dance at some time in the year.

"Personally, I wanted to pick a cool name for it," Form 4 Vice President Sloan Duvall said, "and 'Tight and Bright' is something I've heard other schools do. It's also a catchy and fun name!"

Form 4 President Emma Henry said she agreed with Sloan that the name for the dance was catchy. "It was a pretty clever name that got people excited and talking about it," she said. "We knew we wanted to do a black light dance," Sloan said. "KO hasn't done a blacklight dance in a really long time."

Emma said blacklight dances

seem to draw in a large crowd, and the last time there was a black light dance, people seemed to enjoy it. "It was a big success, so I thought the same would happen with the dance we had this year," she said.

A lot of planning and preparation went into the dance. "Big shoutout to Sloan Duvall for all of her vision of how everything would get set up," SGA faculty advisor Mela Frye said. "We had glow sticks from the ceiling and then there was neon tape wrapped around the columns."

Additionally, to complement the neon theme of the dance, the organizers purchased special decorations to light up the dance floor.

"We ordered four blacklight cannons which means that everyone was glowing on the dance floor," Emma said.

In addition to the new black lights for this dance, the SGA got the special effect lighting package which includes strobe lights, lasers, and other colored lights.

The DJ from Homecoming was very popular, so SGA brought him back to DJ this dance.

"We had given him some other requests because I think there had been some complaints there was too much of sort of one genre," Mrs. Frye said.

She said that this offered a greater variation of songs more people would enjoy.

As always, there were different "Tight and Bright" themed extras. "We had a new photo backdrop, a special Snapchat geofilter, themed decorations, and we gave out some surprises to people who came," Sloan said.

The turnout for the dance was more than 150 people.

"Last year's winter dance it was around 70 to 80, so I'd call this dance a success," Mrs. Frye said.

Like all SGA events this year, the money was donated to Grace Academy and Covenant Prep.

These are two schools in Hartford that are funded entirely from the outside.

SGA picked these schools to donate to so the kids in these schools can get the supplies they need.

"It's really important to us that people in our community receive the help they need," Emma said.

They raised over \$100 for the schools at this event.

Sloan said that the dance was a bigger success than predicted, similar to Homecoming.

"The Student Government was happy to put on another event that built community, relieves stress, and also raised money for a great cause, she said. "Thank you to everyone who came. We are excited to continue planning events like these for our wonderful community."

Forensic Union hosts KOPST

by Aidan O'Loughlin '20

On Sunday, Feb. 10, the Kingswood Oxford Forensic Union team competed in and hosted the annual public speaking and debate tournament at KO.

The team from KO was composed of four members, and their performance in their individual events landed Kingswood Oxford in second place overall.

Six schools competed this year, which was more than last year. "We moved the date of the competition off of Super Bowl Sunday," Forensic Union Coach Michelle Schloss said. "Last year a couple of the teams all came wearing football jerseys and left as soon as the competition ended. The change in date allowed for more people to compete."

The competition started with a brunch hosted by KO. Then students competed throughout the rest of the day and joined back together for the awards ceremony at the end.

The Kingswood Oxford team was made up of seniors Janvi Sikand and Charlie Coxon, junior Elan Stadelmann, and sophomore Jane Liang.

Everyone competed in two events twice. "First you do either an after dinner or a persuasive speech," Ms. Schloss said. "The second event is an extemporaneous or on the spot event, where you choose between

impromptu speaking, or the other choice is ethical dilemmas."

Elan participated in impromptu speaking, in which students have two minutes to prepare a three to five-minute speech.

He also did an after dinner speech and won second place in impromptu speaking.

"I think it went well," Elan said. "It felt like a culmination of how hard I had worked all year and going to Internationals definitely helped! I got the practice there, and I applied it locally!"

Overall the competition went well for KO.

"I was super impressed with the comedy of the speeches our team came up with, or in Jane's case, how ridiculously well researched her speech was," Ms. Schloss said. "At a small tournament the competition is rough. Last year we weren't able to compete as a team because someone got sick right before, so I was very happy we could do so well and place second in the competition this year."

Elan was also excited with how the competition went.

"It always just feels like a gathering of a lot of passion for public speaking," Elan said. "The closest thing you could compare it to is a sports meet where everyone really wants to be there. It was a lovely experience, and I recommend competing regardless of skill level."

Teen trivia raises money for BTA

by Lian Wolman '19

On Friday, Feb. 7, from 6:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. students of all ages gathered to compete in the annual CT Brain Tumor Alliance (CTBTA) Teen Trivia Night in Mead Dining Hall.

Six years ago, Austin Lemkuil '16 and Andrew Lemkuil '16 started this event because their mother was diagnosed with a brain tumor.

Now, junior Emily Lemkuil continues the event to raise awareness and money for the CTBTA.

Form 3 Dean and history teacher David Baker has been the emcee for the event for the past six years – since the first trivia night. He said that this year, they had the biggest turnout with 14 teams.

Each team was assigned a table with a picture of a board game on it, which became their team identifier. “Every year we have a different theme like countries or candies, and this year we chose games,” Emily said.

Mr. Baker said that each year he writes all of the questions, organizes the rounds, asks the questions and plays the music. In past years, former history teacher

Jim Weeks would co-host the event with him and help him with these tasks. Mr. Baker said that Mr. Weeks did help him come up with questions this year again but virtually because Mr. Weeks moved to Canada. Mr. Baker also said that he had help from Spanish teacher Beau Macksoud at the actual event.

Each member of the team brought a different skill set to the table and junior Matthew Marottolo brought a lot of knowledge about geography to his team.

“The Lemkuils always make it run smoothly, and they do a great job organizing the event.”

—Matt Marottolo

“A lot of the questions were centered around geography, which was very helpful for me and my team,” Matthew said.

Matthew said there were

other areas where he and his group struggled more. “The picture round was especially challenging because there were a lot of unrecognizable photos that you had to take a wild guess on,” he said.

Team Monopoly came in second place, earning \$20 each at the end of the night, falling short to a team of students from an outside school. “Our team donated all of our winnings to the organization at the end of the night,” junior Ethan Pinkes said.

Senior Josh Leshem said that the highlight of his night was actually when his team, team Chutes and Ladders, answered a question wrong.

“My favorite part was when we had gotten a bunch of questions right in a row and then there was a new one and Aidan said he knew it, so he immediately wrote an answer down and sprinted up to Mr. Baker only to find out that the answer was wrong.”

Josh added that he and his table had a lot of fun answering the trivia questions and it paid off because they earned third place.

Junior James Ravalese said that he and his teammates disagreed with the supposedly correct

answer to one of the questions. “David Baker does not know what a website is,” he said. “One of

“They brought in a very interesting speaker who spoke about her personal experience with brain tumors.”

—Caroline Dawson

the questions we were asked was something like: name five of the top ten social media sites. We decided not to put Snapchat because it’s not a site, but in the end it was a correct answer. We were very upset.”

Junior Jaden DiMauro has come in second place every year that he has participated in the event, but he remains hopeful for next year’s trivia night.

“My favorite part of the

night was the competition and the great cause we’re supporting,” he said. “This was my third year in a row finishing second, and I hope to finally win next year.”

Freshman Caroline Dawson was also disappointed with her team’s performance.

“We were Team Mouse Trap and we didn’t do too well but we still had a good night,” she said. “The food was really good, and they brought in a very interesting speaker who spoke about her personal experience with brain tumors.”

Member of Team Uno sophomore Cici Chagnon also shared one of the most interesting questions from the night. “The final question was kind of fun because it was very high stakes,” she said. “It was to name seven Canadian provinces and the capital of Canada. We got it wrong.”

Matthew said this was not his first year attending the event. “I wanted to participate because I have been going to the event for a few years, and it’s obviously for a great cause,” he said. “The Lemkuils always make it run smoothly, and they do a great job organizing the event.”

KO hosts National Girls in Sports Day

by Casey Qi '19

On Saturday, Feb. 16, 120 girls, ranging from age eight to 14 in the Greater Hartford area, came to celebrate National Girls in Sports Day in the Hoffman Field House from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.. KO’s coaches and student athletes hosted and organized the event.

Director of Athletics Debbie Fiske said that this was KO’s second annual event celebrating women in athletics and that there were 24 KO coaches and 65 student athletes involved in organizing the program. “It’s a celebration of our own coaches and student athletes as well as girls in athletics in general,” Ms. Fiske said.

Ms. Fiske said that there were three 40-minute sports sessions, where athletes could participate in various sports from basketball to indoor track, followed by a 45-minute team building challenge, lunch, and poster making.

Ms. Fiske said that the goal for those session clinics is to expose girls to sports that they might not have tried.

“We want to inspire them in pursuing sports while paying close attention to health and wellness,” she said.

“The challenges in the team-building session such as ‘cross the river’ are lead by KO Athletes, and I think that session, along with the poster making, really demonstrate

the KO spirit and girl power.”

Senior and girls varsity basketball player Jane Dunbar said that she enjoyed helping with the registration of the event and the drills in the basketball sessions. “The highlight for me was having little girls come up to me and be in awe with my participation in a varsity sport,” Jane said, “I think it’s a great opportunity for girls to come and participate in clinics for sports, trying new sports and seeing other high school female athletes.”

Jane said that she found it fulfilling to inspire young athletes. “I enjoyed being a role model for the younger kids, and my teammates and I had a lot of fun,” she said. “We gave a lot of advice, and the bonding of the team was really good.”

History teacher and Head Coach of girls cross country and track and field Tricia Watson, said that there were over 50 girls in the program and that she enjoyed playing an active role in supporting the girls in sports through managing the track and field session.

“The goal is to maintain the high level of energy, and the smiles and laughter in the room, while encouraging people to participate in sports,” Ms. Watson said.

Senior Mia Seymour, who is the captain of varsity field hockey and lacrosse and a member of the Student Athletic Advisory Council (SAAC), She said that the

event was very important to her.

She said that she helped out with planning the event and registration and check-ins, as well as various competitions on the day of the event.

“I really enjoyed helping out,” Mia said. “A particular highlight of my day was eating lunch with the girls because I got to hear how much they loved the program and how excited they are for their upcoming sports season.”

Mia said that the event provided an open and welcoming space for young girls to try out new sports and ultimately embrace their athleticism.

“It can be daunting to start a sport, ask for help, or even meet other new people,” she said, “but this program creates an environment that strips away any intimidation and instead encourages fearlessness, which is especially important for young girls.”

Mia said that both the participants and the athletic leaders can grow and benefit from the connections that they have made through this experience.

“The young girls really look up to the high school leaders and form connections during the day,” Mia said. “Girls in Sports Day is an incredibly fulfilling opportunity for both the participants and high school leaders alike. It is something that I hope becomes a permanent event for the community!”

Musical brings ‘all that jazz’

Continued from page 1.

which fostered a special feeling. “‘Chicago’ is a really difficult production and I think we rose to the occasion,” she said. “I loved the opening number, ‘All that Jazz,’ which was a thrilling performance in which we created a vibe of mystery and deception.”

All in all, the audience also said they enjoyed the show.

“I really liked the music and everyone was so talented,” junior Hannah Shames said. “They made the show engaging and interesting.”

Sophomore Ahana Nagarkatti said she agreed that the musical was amazing.

“The set was phenomenal, and I liked the functioning of the jail cells, the elevator, and how the band was on the top of the platform,” she said.

Junior Brandon Stake said he thought the musical was performed very well.

“My favorite part was when Mr. Dillow came on the stage and was the judge,” he said. “It was pretty funny.”

Junior Ella Schwartz said she agreed that the performance was very lively and entertaining.

“I really enjoyed the musical because of how technical the show was, in terms of its set, choreography, and staging.”

Sophomore Melissa Hasbrook said she agreed that the choreography was spec-

“We are pushing boundaries in terms of the quality of our productions. We are evolving.”

—Kyle Reynolds

taclar. “The dancers were all in sync and you could tell they had worked very hard,” she said.

Olivia Pear said that Mr. Reynolds has made theater more than just an extracurricular activity. “He has made theater a lifestyle, and you have to learn things outside of rehearsal as well.”

Olivia Coxon said she agreed that the theater program at KO has become much more involved. “I’ve had three different directors for the four years I was here, and it was a jump each time,” she said. “Theater is much more serious, and Mr. Reynolds has taken a vital role in it as the leader.”

Mr. Reynolds said that he wants the community to recognize that the theater program is moving up.

“We are pushing boundaries in terms of the quality of our productions,” he said. “We are evolving.”

The problematic fave blues

by Janvi Sikand '19

Hi everyone, and welcome back to getting lit in the opinions section with Janvi!

I can't believe it's March already; it's almost surreal how quickly time is passing.

Anyways, although it may not look it outside, we're beginning to shake off the winter slump and enter Spring Break, which means longer days, shorter sleeves, and the official beginning of concert season!

With this -- and recent news -- in mind, it's important to think about what happens when an artist you really like begins to act in a less-than-savory manner.

Let's start with a question: So your favorite artist is problematic. Now what?

Sometimes, we learn really dark things about artists we idolize -- allegations are made, old secrets surface, or a big exposé reveals all.

Other times, an artist's bigotry plays out right in front of us. In any case, it really super sucks when someone you love, whether irl or celebrity, turns out not to be as great of a person as their art may suggest to you.

This kind of situation can be a huge letdown, and you may even feel a sense of betrayal -- that's completely normal and expected.

Though there's plenty of different kinds of artists, and many ways to measure a person's character (or lack thereof), today I'm going to focus on the singers and rappers that a lot of us listen to on the daily, as well as actors and directors we may know and love.

The idea that "celebrities are humans, too" is often brought up when an artist "messes up," i.e. does something nasty ranging from the odd faux pas to an egregious crime.

But shouldn't they be held to the same level of scrutiny as a regular person, if not higher

since their ideologies are so far reaching, and be treated as such?

The sooner you and I recognize this, the sooner we can break down those inequities.

"Janvi," you say, "leave me alone. Stop making me feel guilty about the music and movies I like! Can't I just enjoy this art without thinking about who made it?"

Here's the thing: you can never truly separate the art from the artist.

No matter how irrelevant an artist has become or how much of a pariah they are in their industry because of their actions, their name is still very much attached to their body of work, and so are their misdeeds.

(By the way, there's a great article by Constance Grady for Vox.com called "What Do You Do When The Art We Love Was Created By A Monster?" that covers all sides of this argument and the history of separating art from artists.)

A creator and their creation are, by nature, intertwined, and unfortunately, no matter how much we might want to, we can't separate them.

Thus, by supporting the art, you support the artist-- in more ways than one. First up is monetary, since your streams, clicks, purchases, and plays all provide that artist with royalties, which in some cases (like R. Kelly or Kodak Black's) go straight to paying for their legal defense.

Other times, by sharing their work, you expand their platform and boost their fame, which obviously isn't ideal.

Finally, consistently supporting the art of someone who's known to be problematic sends a particular message: that you know what they've done, and you don't mind.

"But Janvi," you cry,

"that doesn't sound like me! I like these songs and movies but I definitely don't support racism or abuse! What do I do?" And hey, don't worry! I'm pretty sure that a lot of us have been or will be there at some point or another, and it's just something that we personally have to deal with.

If you think this statement kind of describes you, then you've come to the right place! So this brings me to what we can do when we have a problematic fave.

First, if you can, cut them out. If you're super committed to opposing your problematic fave's actions, probably the most impactful thing you can do is quit their art altogether.

Tell whoever's got the aux to skip that song; choose a different film for movie night; tell your dad to stop blasting R. Kelly "for nostalgia's sake;" don't go see *Fantastic Beasts* in theaters; take a breath, remember why you're doing what you're doing, and move on. Spotify now has a great option where you can choose to "never play" a certain artist, effectively shutting them out of any mixes or playlists.

Remember that this swearing-off process is messy, and hard, and never perfect. I've personally had this experience, and it's difficult.

In the fall of my junior year, my then-favorite singer/songwriter was accused of rape by her own former best friend, and to think that she could have done something that horrible broke my heart.

It's embarrassing to admit now, but for a while, I was compelled to ignore the story entirely, pretend I hadn't seen it or that it wasn't real because it was unproven and the accuser could have just been seeking attention.

But after a while I remembered -- would I rather

take the side of a potential abuser, or a potential victim?

The answer was clear, and since then I've worked to cut her out of what I listen to.

I won't lie, I sometimes miss those songs, but I don't miss the feelings of guilt and sadness that came with continuing to listen to her when the allegations came out.

Remember to consume consciously. This means understanding the artists whose art you support regularly, and taking the bad with the good (and both with a pinch of salt).

It's difficult, but you have to be able to find a middle ground you're comfortable with, somewhere in between the extremes of "stan culture" and "cancel culture."

Obviously, some offenses are much greater than others, and you have to figure out where you stand on individual issues. Be ready to make some compromises, but understand why you're making them.

For example, Aziz Ansari, Louis C.K., and Rob Lowe have all been accused of/have committed varying levels of sexual assault, but you might still watch the show *Parks & Rec* because it tells a fun story of female empowerment and autonomy (and since those actors have since had their royalty rates reduced by NBC).

Ask yourself what is and isn't worth it -- does it make sense to get in a twitter fight with Ariana stans over Manchester Pride ticket prices?

And sometimes, some media becomes so entrenched in pop culture -- I'm thinking Drake's "In My Feelings," "Hotline Bling," "God's Plan," Cardi B's "Bodak Yellow," etc. -- that it's practically inescapable.

That's fine, but you can live with that without going out of your way to continually support a man

who grooms and dates girls right out of high school, and a woman whose recent response to the government shutdown does little to offset (lol) her transphobic rhetoric.

And don't despair! There are so many amazing artists out there in every single genre and niche imaginable, and with a little effort, you can find new faves, whether they're already big names that you never explored or one of the many up-and-coming creators who deserve a larger audience.

Again, it's all about finding a balance that works and deciding what you're okay with.

Finally, start conversations to get yourself and the people around you to think about the media we consume.

This doesn't have to be really deep or difficult; maybe you say "hey, I thought Ariana's new album was such a bop. Don't you think it's kinda weird though how different she is now from the Victorious era though? I hate how she's commodifying "trap" and "hood" culture to push this bad girl look, and how she's basically in brownface.

"Thank u, next went super hard though." Or "woah, it's really really gross what R. Kelly did and I'm glad he's in jail, but a couple years I liked watching *Trapped In The Closet*-- do you know any similar songs or comedy sketches?"

Or even "there's no denying that *Pulp Fiction* is one of the most iconic movies ever, but isn't it strange how gross Quentin Tarantino is? Like he wrote the script, so he definitely knew what he meant when he made that kitchen scene cameo."

Trust me, you don't have to feel bad for them or their memory-- take recently deceased XXXT*ntacion, for example;

Continued on page 7.

Individualism over collectivism

by Jaden DiMauro '20

Famed transcendentalist and individualist Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face."

While these words hold credence in many facets of modern society, nowhere are they more relevant than the current American education system.

Growing up, we are constantly reminded of how lucky we are to "be American," and more specifically, to be a part of the American education system.

But are we really so lucky? A recent Lancet poll ranked the United States 27th in the world in education, placing us just around the 50th percentile.

While there are a plethora of factors contributing to this less

than stellar ranking, primarily a declining allocation of funds reserved for education since the mid-1980s, I firmly believe that standardization and a deep rooted sense of collectivism is the disease that threatens to kill the freedom, individuality and passion for knowledge America claims to hold as its most sacred tenets.

Even in its most basic form -- kindergarten through elementary school -- it is evident that the education system caters not to the development of an individual, but rather to the creation of a collective.

Instead of teaching children how to think critically and independently at a young age, the emphasis is placed on the memorization and regurgitation of material.

This creates a dangerous dynamic wherein children grow up without the necessary skills to view information, process

it, and make a judgement on the material based on personal experience and knowledge. This

This divide between critical thought and memorization becomes even more apparent the higher up the educational ladder you climb.

divide between critical thought and memorization becomes even more apparent the higher up the

educational ladder you climb.

Standardized tests such as the SSAT, SAT and ACT, the results of which often determine the future of the person taking them, are just as their name implies: standardized.

The tests are designed to assess the prowess of students in a variety of broad topics such as basic math, English and reading, and rank the test takers by giving them scores, usually out of 36 or 1600.

While mastery of these fields may have its merits, I believe these sorts of tests do nothing to assess skills more important in higher education and in the "real world."

There is no test for critical thinking, open-mindedness, or the ability to converse productively and respectfully with those whose views differ from your own. In fact, a student's entire

academic career has been a test on how not to do these very things.

Information is presented not to be analyzed, constructively criticized and discussed; it is presented to be memorized and regurgitated, with no chance to debate its potential validity or lack thereof.

The result is a group of individuals who act as a collective, merely accepting material as it is presented to them, and in the same manner.

It is practices such as this, along with propagandistic rituals like the pledge of allegiance which are the beginnings of despotism and lay the foundations for dictatorship.

Without the ability to come to a conclusion on the merits of information independently, we risk indoctrination as a society.

And the only means we have of fighting such indoctrination is education, proper education.

21 Savage's arrest causes controversy

by Juliana Kulak '20

Rapper 21 Savage was taken into ICE custody on February 3 of this year, two days after he released a video for his song, "A Lot," which criticized the Trump administration's immigration policy.

His case has quickly become the most notable deportation case in recent years, shining

This has caused many to speculate that 21 Savage's arrest by ICE was targeted and a response to the political commentary he expressed in his music.

a light on the many flaws in the United States immigration system.

21 Savage was originally born in the United Kingdom and came to the United States legally on a visa when he was seven years old; he then went to the United Kingdom for a month in

2005 before returning on another visa which expired in 2006.

He has been living in the United States as an undocumented immigrant ever since.

In an interview with ABC, 21 Savage stated he had no idea what a visa was when he arrived, nor did he understand what it meant for his life when the visa expired.

The rapper, now 26 years old, has lived in the United States for most of his life and, despite not being a citizen, considers the United States to be his home.

Many DACA recipients are in a very similar situation.

In 2017, 21 Savage applied for a U Visa (a type of visa available only to those who are victims of crime) making his immigration status known to authorities.

Yet it was not until this month that ICE took any action against the rapper.

This has caused many to speculate that 21 Savage's arrest by ICE was targeted and a response to the political commentary he expressed in his music.

The music video of "A Lot" featured an extended version of the song where he criticized immigration policy at the border. This video debuted just two days before his arrest and detention. 21 Savage was in a detention facility for nine days, separated from his

children who were born here in the United States. This case has gotten a lot of press and many celebrities, politicians, and organizations are backing 21 Savage.

Jay-Z hired and paid for an immigration lawyer for him, rappers like Killer Mike and Cardi B have stated their support for 21 Savage and disapproval of ICE, Black Lives Matter started a petition to free the rapper, and congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez even tweeted about the matter.

Along with bringing awareness to 21 Savage's situation, influencers are also bringing attention to controversial policies of ICE and onto the institution of ICE as a whole.

Lawyers for 21 Savage released a statement that ICE was intimidating the rapper by keeping him in a detention facility for nine days. Many undocumented immigrants are detained for long periods of time because they do not have enough money to come up with bond nor do they have legal counsel.

The state does not appoint a lawyer to anyone in an immigration detention center because it is considered a civil law matter, not criminal, yet the immigrants are treated as criminals. 21 Savage compared the detention facility to a prison, stating

that it was somewhere one would expect a murderer to be held.

21 Savage expressed sympathy for immigrants in similar situations and promised to bring as much attention to this issue as is possible.

The American Civil Liberties Union states, "Many of ICE's removal tactics take away even the right to a fair hearing in court, as the government rushes to judgment and tries to ram people through a rubber-stamp system that ignores individual circumstances."

This poses threats to the constitutional rights of due process and equal protection and freedom from racial discrimination. Many immigrants come to this country in the hope of starting a better life for themselves, and they often cannot afford to take on a legal battle against ICE's practices.

The undocumented immigrants who ICE detains usually pose no threat to our society.

In a video released by the website Mic, celebrities like Kendrick Lamar and SZA shared stories of how immigrants have been detained while getting their coffee in the morning, leaving a grocery store, or because "they looked foreign."

The situation with 21 Savage points to a case where his detention is a result of his

using his First Amendment right to freedom of speech and was done by ICE in retaliation to criticism of their practices.

The strategies that ICE employs to deal with immigrants are cruel and unnecessary and sometimes even unconstitutional.

A primary reason immigrants come to this country illegally is because it can take over ten years for a visa to even be reviewed. ICE is treating these immigrants as if they are violent criminals rather than people who are looking to better their circumstances and live the American dream as productive members of our society doing jobs that many Americans will not.

While the United States needs to have an agency to manage immigration, ICE's treatment of and way of dealing with illegal immigrants under the current administration is horrible, and recent inhumane acts have damaged the reputation of ICE beyond repair.

Therefore, ICE should be abolished and replaced with an agency that can treat immigrants as the hardworking and hopeful people that they are.

Immigration has been a key factor in the creation of the country and the current administration needs to stop disguising their racism as immigration policy.

My opinion on Opinions

by Maeve McDonald '19

For my final article I am going to be sharing my opinions on what it has been like sharing my opinions with the school for the last three years. Whoa... KO News inception.

I pretty much knew after I completed the journalism course during the first semester of my sophomore year, that I would want to write either reviews or opinions when I officially

I find that the best articles are the ones where I would just find something that I had a slight opinion on, then basically just exaggerate the heck out of it.

became a member the staff.

I've always been pretty opinionated, but what drew me to this section has always been the fact that I can write about literally whatever I want. Of course, sometimes I have trouble coming

up with article ideas, which may or may not be the reason that for this issue I am literally writing an opinion on writing opinions.

Although in every edition of the newspaper there are at least a couple politically driven opinions in this section, you will never find one of them to be written by me.

Obviously I have my own political views, but I just don't feel the need to publish them in the paper. I would honestly rather just write my articles on other (arguably more insignificant) issues.

I find that the best articles are the ones where I would just find something that I had a slight opinion on, then basically just exaggerate the heck out of it. And usually by the end of the article I would actually feel more passionate about the topic.

Something that is unique to the opinions section is that we gather people that aren't a part of the KO News staff to share their opinions.

So, something that I have been responsible for this past year being the head editor of the opinions section is finding students (and sometimes teachers) who are willing to write an article.

I always strived to gather varying opinions so that the section didn't seem so one-sided, but sometimes it was hard to get people to be willing to put themselves out there, which is completely understandable.

Although I value this aspect

of the section, it can be difficult at times to find people who actually follow through with their articles. Nothing is more frustrating than counting on someone to write a 700 word article, only for them to tell you the day before News Day that they won't actually have it done.

That being said, I do find myself incredibly lucky that I get to read the opinions of people at KO that I maybe wouldn't have had the opportunity to hear otherwise.

I am grateful to have learned to accept all opinions, and take a closer look at them before I judge those opinions. Of course, there have been some articles that I read through and question how in the world someone could feel such a way.

But, then, I think about if the roles were reversed and that person heard my opinion, they would probably think I was crazy too.

That is why I always make it a priority to keep an open mind as I read through articles. Not only because it's not my job to judge people's opinions, my job is simply to edit and publish them, but also because I learn more about my own opinions through reading about others.

Sometimes I may go into an article thinking that I have a completely differing view, then by the time I am done reading it, I understand the other person's views and maybe even agree with them after seeing their argument.

Over the past couple

of years, I have learned to be comfortable with other people knowing my opinions, and sometimes disagreeing with them. Although, I haven't had to deal with this too much, seeing as I have always stayed away from writing political pieces.

If you have an opinion that you want to get out there or you just want to rant, then I strongly suggest writing an article for the

It doesn't matter what grade you are in, and if you aren't too sure it's something you see yourself doing, why not go out of your comfort zone a little and at least try it.

opinions section of the KO News.

It doesn't matter what grade you are in, and if you aren't too sure it's something you see yourself doing. Why not go out of your comfort zone a little and at least try it? It will give you a chance to take a closer look at your own views and why you hold them. It's been real, KO News.

Consume wisely

Continued from page 6

he was a violent misogynist and queerphobe who tortured several women, as well as attempted to murder his gay cellmate in jail. His remaining supporters may say that they promote their art out of respect for him, or because he "tried to make a difference" by yelling about being brokenhearted in his songs. Well, keep in mind that quite a lot of people have "tortured minds" or tales of trauma, but that is neither a prerequisite for being an artist nor an excuse for being an awful person.

Respect is earned during a person's life, and deifying genuinely bad people once they're dead or behind bars is dicey at best (sorry, ancient Roman emperors). Talking about an issue is always the best first step to creating some positive change, and you have that power! So go forth and use it wisely.

I don't mean to go all "Adam Ruins Everything" on you, but in a world where we have so much power as consumers, it's naturally important to use your time, money, and energy to support artists who do the right thing. Besides, you deserve the ease of mind and heart of knowing that your faves aren't problematic! Now it's up to you, and I totally trust you, dear reader, to make the best decision for yourself and others. Until next time, stay woke!

Roasting myself: Lian Wolman

by Lian Wolman '19

No need to fear, Lian Wolman is here to bring back the “Roast Myself” segment of the opinions section. For those who have never read a “Roast Myself” article, it is pretty self explanatory.

It is basically when a person takes on the task of roasting themselves in around 600 words. Usually people focus on a variety of things to roast themselves on, but I decided to focus on something more specific or else I would need an entire page.

If you know me well, you know I can get side tracked pretty easily, which can be an issue at times. If you know me, you also probably know that I am a camp girl.

Every year at camp, we participate in something called the “Big O” (the “O” stands for olympics) which is when the entire camp is split into four teams and compete in a three-day long competition.

A crucial part of the packing list each summer is a plain white Hanes V neck T-shirt to decorate during the “Big O.” The teams are either separated into

countries or a random theme depending on the year. In order to show which team you are on, everyone decorates these white shirts with their team name, team colors and flag or symbol.

During my fourth year of camp, I sat in an empty bunk with my friends decorating shirts for our designated teams. This was a country year, and I was on team Switzerland. While making the shirts, I was chatting and therefore not paying very close attention to what my hands were writing, but by the end I was still pretty satisfied with how my shirt came out, and I put it on.

I wore it for the second half of the day after I had made it and because it did not get dirty, and it's camp so who cares if it was dirty. I also wore it on the second day.

Later on the second day during one of the competitions one of my counselors turned to me and said, “Why does your shirt say ‘Swerland?’” I was so confused. I thought what do you mean my shirt says “Swerland! You must be reading it wrong! It says Switzerland!”

Then I looked down. I read my shirt. She was right because in fact I had written “Swerland”

on my shirt. I literally forgot the “itz” in Switzerland. I was partially in shock because I had

not noticed my spelling error but also how had no one else seen it until this very moment.

At first, I was completely embarrassed by my lack of intelligence to spell Switzerland correctly until it became a camp joke. People started calling me “Swerland” and my counselors made me stand on the table every meal and yell, “My name is Lian Wolman and I forgot the “itz” in Switzerland” over and over again or else I had to stack the entire table. Then I literally got into a “shirt war” with my counselor at camp over the shirt. Basically, whoever had the shirt had to keep it safe or else the other one would steal it back. Somehow the assistant director at camp even got involved in the war.

One day we were walking back to our bunks after breakfast, and I looked up to the maintenance shed and there the shirt was hanging at the way top of the shed by a poll. I couldn't stop laughing, and I was honestly really impressed.

Now, “shirt wars” have ended because I unfortunately lost the shirt. If you have, it please return it. It's my favorite shirt.



Senior Lian Wolman flexes on all of us in her “Swerland” T-shirt at camp. Photo courtesy of Lian Wolman '19.

‘Chicago’ actors wow audiences *Mock trial*

by Nell Schwartz '19

On Friday, Feb. 24, KO's cast for the winter musical performed “Chicago,” a story of infidelity and murder, and one of the best productions KO has ever put on.

The story line follows the characters Roxy and Velma in their quest for fame after killing their lovers.

I personally think this musical was one of the best ever put on in KO's long history.

At least in the time I've been a student here (a long seven years), I can confidently say this musical was one for the books and one I will never forget.

As many people know, I am a huge fan of musicals, making KO's rendition of “Chicago” especially fun for me to watch.

Junior Remy McCoy was sensational, playing the convincing, conniving and cute Roxie as was senior Katie Brough who played the equally charismatic Velma.

“Remy was amazing, her voice is beautiful and I know she worked really hard for this part,” said junior Sophia Kaufman, who happens to be Remy's best friend.

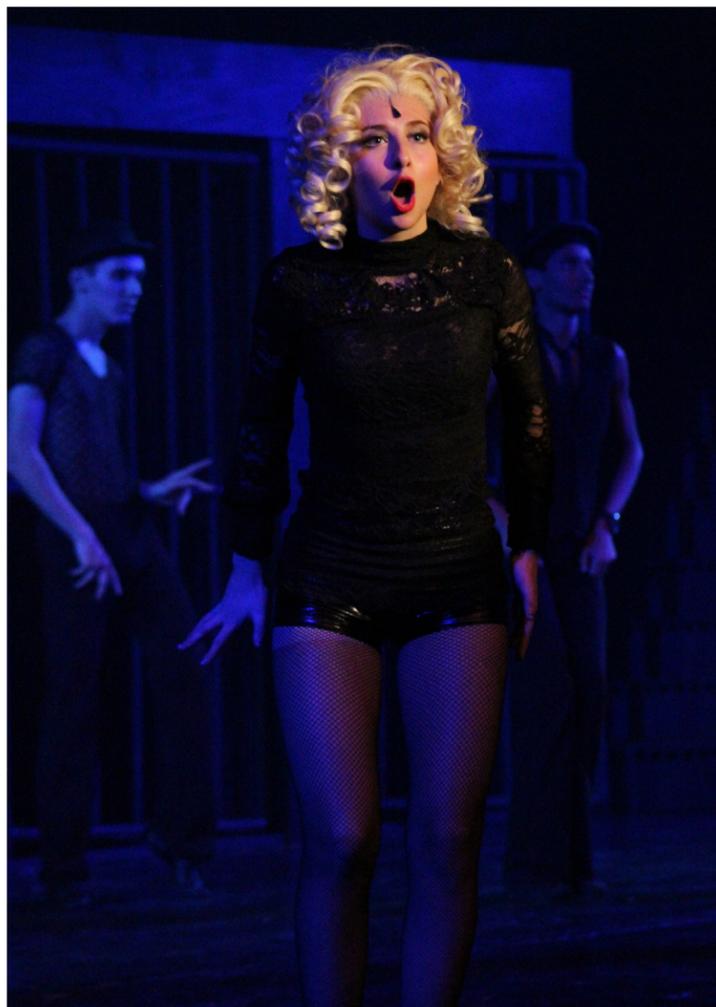
It wasn't just the main leads who showcased their talent; senior Olivia Coxon played a Cell Block Tango girl and was mesmerizing.

“I really loved the musical this year!” Olivia said. “The whole rehearsal process was much more professional, and every single ensemble member was putting in just as much work as all of the leads. Everyone had a huge role in this show which was super nice.”

Not only was the set design engaging and better quality than past KO shows,

the level of professionalism and thespianship displayed by every actor was fantastic.

The choreography that Theater Director Kyle Reynolds created was high quality, and every student pulled it off well. The entire show oozed professionalism and passion for musical theater.



Junior Remy McCoy belts out a “Chicago.” Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

“I really like to dance, and past KO shows have not involved a lot of it so “Chicago” was a really nice change.” Olivia added.

Senior Emma Kate Johansen played Mama Morton. “I'm so proud of how well we performed especially because of how much dancing was in the show. Mr. Reynolds basically had to teach most of us how to dance before we could learn anything,” she said.

The actors worked hard

loved seeing everyone dance do their thing on stage” she said.

Senior Molly Baron agreed: “The talent we have in our music department really brought the show together.”

“The talent we have in our music department really brought the show together.”

—Molly Baron

When the curtain closed and the musical finished, murmurs among the audience all seemed to echo the same thing: that this musical was one of the best school productions they had ever seen.

“For sure, this production was different from last year and the set was amazing.” Sophomore Shreeya Chalikonda said. It was definitely more talent based and the students really shined.”

“While their first performance was spectacular, they did even better on Saturday for their second showing,” Sophia Kaufman said.

“I thought it was really good [the first performance], but the performance on Saturday was 100 times better because performing in front of their friends is really hard and stressful some of the student actors said.” Coxon added, “Chicago was a lot of fun and I can't wait to come back to KO next year to see what else the music department will accomplish.”

Continued from page 1.

own Superior Court ended with a victory for KO. At this time the scores have not yet been released but those present at the trial attest that the Legal Wyverns were the clear winners. “I think the reason we have gotten this far is because of our execution,” Mike said. “We really understood the case, and because of that understanding have been able to fight objections, and articulate our arguments.”

This year, there was a panel of four judges instead of two, and one ruling judge. “I really liked the change to having a jury,” Mike said. “I liked the fact that I didn't have to talk to a judge but could talk to a jury. It made the trial feel more authentic. As a lawyer you are trying to convey a story and it's more fun if you have an audience.”

This year, the team has made it farther than ever, but a lot of work and effort went into preparation. “The dedication and time that all Mr. C, Mrs. Ravalese, Judge Budzik and Ms. McKee have given to us is the reason why we have been so successful,” Mia said. “This sets us up to have really strong years in the future because we have seen the level of competition and execution we have to perform at.”

Since the season has been so successful, the coaches are incredibly happy. “I could not be more proud of how the Legal Wyverns performed,” Mock Trial Coach Ryan Costantini said. “From the start of the year, the team has been laser-focused on making a statement in this year's competition and that they have done.”

Academy Awards: a golden success

by Niki Taylor '21

The Academy Awards, more commonly known as the Oscars, took place on February 24 this year.

With 29.6 million viewers tuning in to Sunday night's ceremony, the three or more hour long show did not get the ratings that it used to. The past four years have included record low ratings and viewer counts.

This year's show also lacked a host; this has only happened five other times in the show's history.

Even though most people find sitting through the lengthy ceremony extremely boring, this year's show was certainly one for the books.

I personally love watching the Oscars, and this year was no exception.

From the montage of films from the past year at the beginning to powerhouse performances and jaw-dropping results in who would receive a golden statue, the 91st annual Academy Awards brought a little bit of everything to the table.

Actresses and comedians Tina Fey, Amy Poehler, and Maya Rudolph kicked off the show by poking fun at the host situation and making jokes they most likely would have made if they had been hosting.

They brought much needed humor to the program, and the emptiness they left when they were gone was quite tangible.

...the 91st annual Academy Awards brought a little bit of everything to the table.

The show then proceeded to give out awards for Best Supporting Actress, Best Costume Design, Best Original Score, and so on.

Quite frankly, my favorite parts of the show were whenever Chris Evans was shown on camera, whenever a Marvel actor presented or accepted an award, and Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's performance of "Shallow."

As many people know by now, I am a huge Marvel fan. So the fact that "Black Panther" was nominated for eight awards was a dream come true – and the fact that it actually won three awards was just icing on top of the cake.

It was the perfect way to honor the passing of Stan Lee, who was also included in the Academy's montage of people in the industry who had passed away since the

previous ceremony. I shed more than one tear during this montage.

Other Marvel actors were also featured in the ceremony as presenters. Some of these actors included Chris Evans, Brie Larson, Samuel L Jackson, Chadwick Boseman, and Tessa Thompson.

This isn't necessarily a reason as to why the 2019 Oscars were entertaining for other people, but I certainly enjoyed it.

Another of my favorite parts of the show was the performance of "Shallow" by the stars of "A Star Is Born": Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper. The performance was attention grabbing and hard to look away from as the chemistry between Gaga and Cooper was palpable. I felt bad for Cooper's girlfriend watching these sparks fly while sitting in the front row.

"Shallow" has been added to the list of my favorite songs of all time, so I thoroughly enjoyed the performance and was extremely joyous when it won for Best Original Song.

"A Star Is Born" also happens to be one of my favorite movies of all time, so I was quite upset when it didn't win as many awards as I thought it should have.

Gaga and Cooper were both nominated for Best Actor and Actress, but neither won,

much to my disapproval.

The award for Best Actor went to Rami Malek for his portrayal of the late Freddie Mercury in "Bohemian Rhapsody" and his journey with Queen and finding himself as a person and as an artist.

I personally didn't think the movie was as good as critics made it out to be, and Malek's iffy portrayal of Mercury definitely wasn't chalked up to the reviews it received. He certainly

...the chemistry between both Gaga and Cooper was palpable.

didn't deserve to win the award for Best Actor either. No disrespect to Malek – he's an amazing actor – but there were just more deserving actors for the award. Including Bradley Cooper.

Gaga was also snubbed for the Best Actress award by Olivia Colman for her performance in "The Favourite." My heart wanted Gaga to receive this award because I thought her performance in "A Star Is Born" was simply

astonishing, but I also wanted Glenn Close to win the award.

Close has now been nominated for seven Academy Awards without a single win, the highest of any actor or actress in history. It's been a long time coming for Close and her night should have been that night.

The biggest upset of the night, in not only my opinion, but many many critics as well, was the winner for Best Picture. The nominees were "Bohemian Rhapsody," "The Favourite," "Black Panther," "BlacKkKlansman," "Green Book," "Vice," "Roma," and "A Star Is Born."

The winner ended up being "Green Book," which took many people, including myself, by surprise. I thought for sure that the award would have gone to "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Roma," or even "A Star Is Born."

I certainly didn't expect "Green Book" to take home the gold statue for Best Picture.

All in all, the 2019 Academy Awards was certainly not the best to have ever happened, but it also wasn't the worst.

Hopefully, sometime in the future the show will return to what it once was – completely engaging and entertaining – and maybe even have a host. A good host.

(Prai)ing for more: a restaurant review

by Bella Leuschner '20

For this month's review, I decided to do something different and go to a restaurant of the same cuisinal genre as another I have already done and compare the two.

So this week, I went to Prai Kitchen located at 23 LaSalle Rd in West Hartford Center.

Prai is a Thai cuisine based restaurant and has a more welcoming ambiance than the Blue Elephant Trail.

There is less seating and parking at Prai than there is at Blue Elephant, but what they lack in size they make up for in flavor.

For appetizers, we started with the Shumai Ball, a deep fried shrimp ball served with sweet chilli sauce.

This dish was a good simple appetizer. It was heavier than the other appetizers we ordered, but pleasing.

There is less seating at Prai than there is at Blue Elephant, but what they lack in size they make up for in flavor.

We then moved onto Crab Rangoons, which are crabmeat and cream cheese in fried wonton wraps.

These were nice, simple, and light, with a noticeable infusion of seafood flavor, but the taste of the crab did not overpower the dish. The rangoons were light and tasteful.

We also ordered the vegetable dumplings, which is one of their very delicious vegetarian options that the restaurant serves.

The dough and vegetables were light and not over

So we ordered a yellow curry meal, which is yellow curry paste with broiled coconut milk, red onion and potatoes and we added in sauteed chicken and white rice.

If you are more sensitive to spice, but still like curry, this is the perfect meal to order.

The dish has the right amount of kick but is easily balanced out and cooled down



Ramen noodles with chicken, vegetable broth, and roast pork at Prai Kitchen. Photo by Bella Leuschner.

or undercooked, but just right.

After our appetizers, we still had room for our main courses. None of them were too filling, even though we ordered a lot.

with the chicken and rice.

The meal was very pleasing to the palette, and I rather enjoyed it.

The dish presentation was simple yet tasteful.

It came in a porcelain white bowl, so the yellow would pop with a side of rice to place and proportion evenly into the dish.

That was also nice because it made sure that the rice wouldn't be soggy by the time it had reached our table.

We also ordered the Drunken Noodles, which were sauteed flat noodles with basil, chili, tomatoes, bell peppers, onions and an egg and decided to add duck to the course to give it a meat base.

This was a more spicy dish, and it had a good amount of heat where you could taste it in the dish, but it didn't leave your mouth burning from the heat.

The presentation was very appealing as it came in another white bowl and had pops of color that were heightened due to the brightness of the bowl and the darkness in the dish.

It made the dish look quite sophisticated and very appealing.

Next, we ordered Ramen noodles with a Thai twist, rather than your everyday Japanese noodles.

These ramen noodles were made out of egg, with chicken and vegetable broth with vegetable and roast pork toppings.

The well-balanced presentation of this dish was quite visually appealing and made a real impression.

It came in a black cast iron pot and the mix of colors of the different vegetables stood out.

It was very satisfying. The taste was excellent, exceeding your everyday \$0.25 ramen.

This dish had actual flavor but was mixed, so nothing was overpowering but rather balanced.

Our final meal was the Prai Rib Eye, and this was by far my favorite meal of the day.

It was a stewed short rib with coconut milk, curry, pineapple, tomatoes, basil leaves and a side of sticky rice.

The steak was cooked perfectly and had a nice sweet flavor and caused the steak to taste light

...pops of color [that] were heightened due to the brightness of the bowl and the darkness in the dish.

so the portion was a nice amount.

The presentation was beautiful: the servers brought the food out on a cutting board type of plate, and they gave a large steak knife, similar to one you would receive from a steakhouse.

What I enjoyed most about Prai was that it was high quality cuisine but you didn't have to pay a bunch of money or get all dressed up for it.

This classic and comfortable restaurant can be reached at (860) 232-1817, and they take reservations.

Make 'Room' for the worst movie ever

by Maeve McDonald '19

Written by, directed by, produced by and starring the wonderfully mysterious Tommy Wiseau, "The Room," created in 2003, is without a doubt the best worst movie I have ever watched.

Costing Wiseau six million of his own dollars, and making only \$1,800 in box office, this film seems to be a massive failure. But I feel otherwise.

A couple years ago, my sister sent me a YouTube video and told me it was funny and I had to watch it. I took her advice, and I am so happy I did.

The video was a compilation of the best scenes from "The Room." I thought for sure it was some sort of parody or joke, but I was soon baffled to find out that it was a legitimate movie.

If you aren't going to sit through the whole movie, I suggest you at least watch the 10 minute video of all the best scenes.

You might be thinking,

but why would I watch only 10 minutes of a movie? How would I be able to understand the plot?

Well, my answer is, you won't. But this doesn't matter because even if you were to watch the entire 99 minute film,

If you aren't going to sit through the whole movie, I suggest you at least watch the ten minute video of all the best scenes.

odds are even then you wouldn't completely understand the plot.

One aspect of this extremely poorly edited film is that most of the dialogue is actually voice over. Not to mention the acting is awful, considering Tommy and his brother are the main characters, neither

of who belong on the big screen.

I know it sounds like I am basically just bashing on the movie, but I actually love it. That being said, I am able to recognize how unconventional and technically flawed it is; it is those parts of the film that make it so entertaining. Tommy's acting, although intended to be dramatic, comes off as far more comedic than anything else.

The only reason he was even able to make the movie himself is because he is so wealthy, although nobody really quite knows why. Of course, he did lose a lot of money through the making of "The Room."

I find it almost inspiring though, because all he wanted to do was to be an actor and for people to know his name. Although I'm sure this isn't the way he intended for it to pan out, he was successful in the end.

The movie wasn't very successful at first, but over the years, it has gained a cult following.

Many people, myself

included, are captivated by the unique and incredibly unorganized story line of the film. The fact that the lines themselves make nearly zero sense, and the clear overacting by the cast makes for a laughable performance in nearly all of the scenes.

So what separates this bad film from the rest of the bad movies out there that are labeled just as they are, bad movies?

In my opinion, "The Room" is known for a few scenes that are especially funny and make the least sense. If you have ever heard someone randomly blurt out, "Oh hi Mark," odds are they are referencing arguably the worst and most famous scene in the film.

It is little lines like that which made the film so well known, the lines that although seem so poorly written, but at the same time seem so genius and entertaining.

I'm not going to spoil anything, but the ending scene is comprised of maybe some of the worst acting Tommy Wiseau has

ever done, followed by maybe an even worse ending. I was shocked, and also kinda of sad, which, I am realizing now, is probably exactly how Tommy wanted his audience to feel. So, I guess he isn't so bad after all?

In 2017, James and Dave Franco starred in a movie called "The Disaster Artist," a film about Tommy and the people helping to make his movie star dreams come true.

After watching "The Room," I highly suggest watching "The Disaster Artist," partially because it is interesting to have an idea of what the heck Tommy Wiseau was thinking when he created his abomination, but also just because James Franco's impeccable impression of Tommy's strange voice and laugh is so spot on and entertaining.

Bottom line: I can appreciate the fact that perhaps "The Room" isn't for everyone, but it is without a doubt worth watching as it is almost geniusly awful, something I can't say about many movies.

'thank u, next' review A KO News review

by Madeline Arcaro '21

I love Ariana Grande, as most people know. I think she's super talented and funny, but honestly, I didn't love her new album.

I really wanted to like it to uphold my reputation, but I didn't and it was upsetting. In fact, the first thing I sent anyone when I heard it was, "I'm having a crisis" to Niki. Because I was, genuinely, having a crisis.

My drama aside, I thought the album was fine at best.

The songs are extremely catchy, and as a whole it had a very good message which I liked.

I loved most of the singles that Grande put out. "thank u, next" came out first, and it was stuck in my head for weeks on end.

I loved it. It was really catchy and fun, and while Grande could have made it a depressing anthem about her exes, she decided to make it fun and interesting.

Debuting only weeks after she and Pete Davidson broke up (yikes), it was a fun song that went in a different direction than I was expecting.

Next was "imagine." I didn't like it at all. I think Ariana has the best voice in pop music right now, and I was excited to hear her whistle-tones again.

Then came "7 rings." Despite the controversy with her tattoo, the song was really good.

It's okay for Grande to brag a little bit, and the song was put together really well. I'm not the biggest fan of trap music, but the strange combination of trap and "My Favorite Things" worked well.

"Break up with your girlfriend, i'm bored" was the her best single from "thank u, next," and was so entertaining.

The song was a replacement for a song Grande did not want to

keep on the album, and honestly when I saw it, I didn't expect much. I thought it would be a song that was written fast for fun, but it definitely wasn't. It was well written and had a great chorus.

Some other standouts for me were "bad idea," and "bloodline." "Bad idea" has a lot going on in terms of vocals and the actual music.

The combination happened to work for this song, but in

of a story, and when the first 30 seconds of the song is just talking, it doesn't make much sense. This wasn't the first time she's done this either, the talking also appeared twice in "sweetener."

I wish Ariana had shown off her amazing voice in "thank u, next." People know her for being one of the most talented voices in pop music, but the reason why this album fell short was because

by Lian Wolman '19

News Day always began promptly at school at 8:00 a.m., but I was in New York City on this particular Sunday, so I woke up at 5:30 a.m. to make it happen. If you had told me I would have to do this three years ago, I would have looked at you in disbelief.

I originally took journalism as an elective sophomore year because my brother recommended it and because I wanted to take a class with Mr. Kyff – the man everyone raves about.

Now, I am so glad I did take that class because it enabled me to write for the KO News which in turn has partially sculpted my high school career for better or for worse: you will be the judge as you continue to read this article.

It is impossible for me to wrap up my time on the KO News perfectly in just 600 words.

In fact, my experience was not perfect, but it was definitely rewarding. There is so much work that goes into creating just one issue of the newspaper before it is printed and distributed around campus.

When I see a person reading a copy of the KO News, I don't just see the articles; I also see what it took to get the the articles to print: the imperfect process of scheduling interviews, submitting articles on time, and reading them before edits are made.

It was hard work. Many weeks, I would have to prioritize writing articles and editing other associates' articles over doing my own class work – which, in all honesty, I did not really mind.

For me, if my name is going to be put on an article, I wanted to ensure high quality writing and accuracy.

This meant completing

news work in free periods instead of doing homework, or just missing out on social time.

News Day was always a different experience. Sometimes people would have all their articles in on time so the day would fly by, and other times we would be missing a few.

We, meaning all the staff, would spend up to five hours in the library one Sunday a month laying out the Newspaper.

Then, Ben Small, Nell Schwartz, Ms. Schieffelin and I would go home and read through all our individual sections one more time only to go back to the library the next day to put our final edits in before we could send the print edition to the printer.

This was a lot of work, but at least I was always kept up to date about the happenings on campus.

Through the KO News, I have met so many people I would never have crossed paths with otherwise, and I must say that I never had a bad experience with a single person on the staff, which I think is kind of insane.

I am so lucky to have been a part of such a funny, hard working group over the past few years. The staff always makes the long hours in the library much more enjoyable.

Since sophomore year, I have learned how to read critically and persevere.

I have learned how important the truth is in reporting the news; accurate and truthful reporting is tied to my credibility and reputation. I have learned how to manage my peers in an equitable manner.

The KO News has been a life skills training ground, and I am forever grateful to have been involved in this publication.

I am sad this will be my last issue, but I am excited for the future of the paper.



"thank u, next," Ariana Grande's hit 2019 album. Photo courtesy of Google images.

songs like "make up," trap and advanced vocals don't mix, so there is so much going on. "Bloodline" wasn't vocally outstanding, but it was fun to listen to.

One thing that was a little weird about the songs in "thank u, next" was that a lot of them started with samples of other people talking, including "bloodline" and "nasa."

It's an interesting concept, but when it's more than one song, it's weird to listen to. I'm someone who likes to listen to a song instead

she didn't play to her strengths.

With someone who has a voice that is so advanced and amazing, Ms. Grande shouldn't be ruining it with the background music that doesn't match the vocals. I loved "sweetener" and all of Ms. Grande's albums, but this one fell flat to me. The album as a whole felt kind of rushed, and I wish she had taken another month to release it so she could have perfected some of the songs that weren't very good. So thank you, Ariana, but next.

Students artists create after school

by Bella Herz '21

The After School Art Program is a new class that lets students explore and expand their artistic creativity.

This is the first year of the program, and sophomores through seniors are allowed to participate. The program was designed to give students the freedom to take their art wherever they want it to go in a small, comfortable environment.

Creative Arts teacher Katie Burnett views the students in this class as working artists because the participants switch between a variety of pieces and projects.

"Some of the students participating in this program are focusing on very big projects that they will complete over a considerable amount of time, where others are working on a few smaller projects that they focus on at different times," Ms. Burnett said.

A few students from the program, such as sophomore Brooke Seaver, briefly described what they are currently delving into. "At the moment I am

doing a pop culture themed project. I am drawing MTV logos repetitively with different designs and colors," she said.

Sophomore Niki Taylor is also engaged in a similar project. "I thought it would be really interesting to find coins from each year I have been alive and paint something on each coin that represents or symbolizes that year through my perspective," she said. "For example, the year I started attending KO, I drew the KO logo."

Each student chooses which medium best suits their project, including painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, and film.

Ms. Burnett takes a unique approach to the class as not only does she assist the students with their projects, but she also works on her own art.

"Students get to work alongside me, not just taking direction, but watching how I go about a project, learning that I also make mistakes and how to adjust and correct," she said.

Niki commented that she appreciates this process.

"I have learned so much from working with Ms. Burnett and watching her create her own pieces," Niki said. "I did not know what to expect from this program and am so glad I decided to do it. It has been one of my favorite experiences at KO thus far."

The program is very enjoyable for the participants, permitting people to socialize with students from other grades or people they wouldn't normally have class with or get a chance to meet. It is a small group, so students really get to know one another well.

"It has been so much fun to make new friends, meeting other KO students who have a similar interest in art," said sophomore Jaden Paldino. "My art has progressed as it really helps to be around other creative people."

One other unique aspect of the program is the opportunity to go on art field trips. So far, the group has gone to the University of Hartford School of Art.

While there, students saw a clay show and a printmaking show. Both displayed works of art from

current University of Hartford art students. The group was able to

"I have learned so much from working with Ms. Burnett and watching her create her own pieces."

—Niki Taylor



Senior Erin Bowen's after school artwork. Courtesy of Erin Bowen.

"It motivated me to continue to work on my art. It gave me something to strive for."

I am also a student in this program and found that it has really helped me be more independent as an artist. I enjoy getting to try different things that I have not been exposed to in my other art classes. It has been a place for me to take more risks and be more creative, trying new things and learning as I create.

J. Cole amazes Big (Mouth) turn out

by Nell Schwartz '19

So far in the new year, we have heard much new music releases by a handful of artists; however, "Middle Child" by J. Cole is definitely a stand out so far. After six long years without releasing a single, J. Cole finally made a comeback with the release of this new song, which came out on January 23.

This track is the first official single J. Cole has come out with since 2013. Produced by T-Minus, J. Cole's bars mesh perfectly with the percolating beats behind the lyrics. Arguably one of his best songs, "Middle Child" is part of J. Cole's project titled "The Off-Season," until his much anticipated sixth studio album titled "The Fall Off."

In "Middle Child," Cole's lyrics are significant as he speaks about his place in the rap game. The song dances around the fact that J. Cole thinks that he is stuck between two generations.

Cole, who has been a star in music since 2007, is both a veteran and a relevant rapper. He is no wonder why he feels a little lost between the two generations. J. Cole raps about the artists who ed worthy lives yet have tragically passed away and

Cole speaks about his place in the rap game. The song dances around the fact that J. Cole thinks that he is stuck between two generations.

he also hints at artists who don't deserve to be famous yet that are.

Most likely, Cole is referring to the untimely deaths of controversial XXXTentacion and beloved Mac Miller, in 2018. Cole seems to dread being "stuck in the middle" — unable to relate to either music generation. Even though he is full of hope, he refers to his situation as being "dead in the middle."

He ends the second verse with references to the oppression of African Americans and what they have endured for centuries. Cole does not forget to mention the gang wars where African American brothers kill each other daily.

Despite dropping some hot bars along the lines of being a middle child, J. Cole is not one himself, and has one older brother.

Towards the end of the song, he gives props to the classic rappers who came before him. "Was watching you when you was paving the ground," he raps. "I studied the greats, I'm the greatest right now." It's so good to see J. Cole finally come back in style and assert his dominance in the rap world once again.

by Bella Leuschner '20

Warning: this article may contain spoilers.

"Big Mouth" is a Netflix Original Series created by Nick Kroll. It is an animated show that tells the story of middle schoolers going through puberty, so basically it is a combination of "Family Guy," "South Park" and "Brickleberry."

This is by far one of my favorite shows to watch with friends as it is so unfortunately relatable that it's funny.

The show follows the story of three main characters — Nick, Andrew and Jessi — and what sets them different from the other characters in the show is they have Hormone Monsters.

The male Hormone Monster

The episode delves into the stress of giving the best valentine to someone special. It also goes into how much Valentine's Day is by far the WORST holiday for anyone who is single.

Maurice, or Maury as they call him, helps Andrew with understanding the changes he is going through and also makes many raunchy jokes. On the other hand, Jessi

and eventually Nick both have the female Hormone Monstress Connie, who does the same as Maury for both of them while also being an emotional trainwreck.

"Big Mouth" became wildly popular as soon as it aired and currently has two seasons on Netflix, both of which I have watched more than a dozen times.

As a true fan of the show, I was ecstatic to see that the writers and creators had decided to give us a sneak peek of season three that aired the first episode on Valentine's Day because honestly, what was more traumatizing than Valentine's Day in middle school.

To make it even better, they doubled the length of the standard 22 minute episode, extending it to 46.

The show opens up with Andrew and Maury sitting on a couch talking to a camera crew about how they first met, similar to what they do on reality TV.

The episode conveys the stress of giving the best and most elaborate valentine to someone special. It also goes into how much Valentine's Day is by far the WORST holiday for anyone who is single.

However, as much as I absolutely adore this show, I have to say that I also think they were trying too hard. Yes, it was funny and entertaining, per usual. But, they completely overdid the scene with Coach Steve and the ladybug; their lines got to the point where they weren't even funny, just immature, stupid, and irrelevant.

Then again, Nick's family always manages to crack me up. The elaborate gifts, the gourmet dinners, and the lines said by Nick's older brother Judd are flat out hilarious.

To set the record straight, one of the best characters in the entire show is Lola. She is crazy, funny, and such a hot mess that anything she does makes me die of laughter.

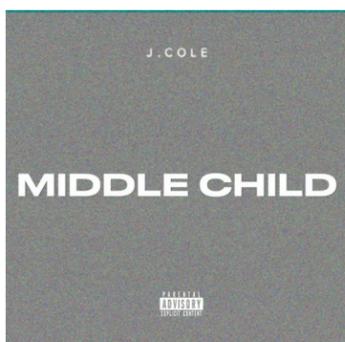
To set the record straight, one of the best characters in the entire show is Lola. She is crazy, funny, and such a hot mess that anything she does makes me die of laughter. She is the type of character where you can find people who somewhat remind you of her, but to extreme proportions.

The pair that could not be matched during this episode, though, was definitely Matthew and Maury. Matthew is the one character on the show who is openly gay, and he also has Maury as a hormone monster.

Maury is "assigned" to Matthew and is at first is skeptical, but it grows into an amazing friendship, and the dynamic between the two is hilarious.

"Big Mouth" did a decent job with the creation of this episode; while it did not exceed my expectations, it also did not disappoint.

The first two seasons of "Big Mouth" are available on Netflix, and it is rated TV-MA.



Album cover for J. Cole's single. Photo courtesy of Google images.

Seniors sing, keep doing their thing

by Cici Chagnon '21

As seniors start receiving acceptance letters and committing to schools, they are also getting excited about the college years to come; for some of our seniors, this means pursuing their passions in singing!

For example, senior Olivia Coxon, who has been singing in various a capella groups at KO since eighth grade, will be attending Northeastern University next year.

Since Northeastern is a larger school, Olivia said she is excited about getting involved in singing there, too. "Northeastern has like six a capella groups

because it's such a big school," she said. "So I thought along with being in a great location, it has so many different, great opportunities for me to continue my passion in college without it being my major."

Even though singing won't be her major at Northeastern, Olivia is passionate about continuing her love for music in college and beyond. "I never want to stop singing," she said.

Olivia has been performing at regional and all-state a capella competitions since middle school, and found one of her favorite songs at All-States last spring. Songs similar to "The Seal Lullaby" by Eric Whitacre are her favorite,

which she sang in KO's co-ed a capella group Outlook this year.

"Every year there's just one really beautiful song that we sing in Outlook that has incredible harmonies and everything, and there's just one song that sticks with me for the whole year," she said.

"Every year there's just one really beautiful song that we sing in Outlook that has incredible harmonies and everything..."

—Olivia Coxon

Olivia became interested in singing when she was little along with her twin brother senior Charlie Coxon, who is looking to continue singing at Babson College.

Charlie has been singing at KO for five years, and said he enjoys the relationships that are formed through singing with other people.

"I love performing with my



Senior Olivia Coxon belts out a vocal solo during a choral concert. Photo courtesy of David Newman.

friends and building relationships with so many great people," he said.

Charlie said his passion comes from the feelings evoked by music. "There's no better feeling than really nailing a song for the first time," he said. "It's absolutely electric and is totally worth all of the practice it takes to get it perfect."

Charlie also uses music as a way to unwind. "After a long day of classes, I can sing and just forget about everything else," he said.

Senior Emma Kate Johansen agreed that music is a good stress reliever. "It's kind of just calming," she said. "It's

something fun that I get to do and a lot of my friends sing, too."

Currently undecided on which college she's going to, Emma Kate said she has applied to Ithaca College and Syracuse University among others and hopes that no matter where she ends up, she will still be able to sing.

Another senior passionate about singing is Eryk Jones, who has been singing at KO since sixth grade and has been a part of every male a capella group from Upper Prep Choraliers to Crimson 7, and more.

While he isn't majoring in music, Eryk definitely wants to audition for a capella groups in college. "I've applied to Skidmore and Connecticut College, which are two schools in particular that have very highly regarded a capella groups," he said.

"So I'd be really excited to sing at either one of those places, or at any of the other schools I've applied to as well."

Like Charlie, Eryk's favorite aspect of singing is the connections he forms with people through music.

"I definitely just like the experience of making music with other people and building that friendship through something that we all have in common," he said.



Senior Emma Kate Johansen performs a solo during a choral concert. Photo courtesy of David Newman.

Baker belts out Stolfi's special art skills

by Luv Kataria '20

History teacher and Crimson 7 director David Baker has been singing his whole life and continues to pursue this passion at KO.

Mr. Baker began singing choir in elementary school and started studying classical voice lessons in the ninth grade.

He also started a capella in the ninth grade at Conard High School and sang in a group there.

He said that he was part of a capella group there because the choir director had created a group for students who were interested.

After coming to KO, in his senior year Mr. Baker formed a capella group with a few of his friends, which they called Crimson 7.

"I loved it [singing group at Conard] so much I started it [Crimson 7] with Billy Crowe, a friend who was in the choir, and we convinced five other people to sing with us," he said. It is only fitting, then, that when Mr. Baker came back to teach at KO, he took over as the director of Crimson 7 and has been directing the group since 2008.

Also during his senior year, Mr. Baker applied for a scholarship at Skidmore College and received it, mainly for tenor voice.

There, he continued to audition and sing in choir groups as well as continue his lessons.

During his freshman year of college, Mr. Baker was invited to sing during the summer in the Vineyard Sound a capella group, a semi-professional musical group.

"I sang there for three

summers; that's how I got into mainstream a capella," he said. "Throughout college I trained as a classical tenor and did a senior piece."

Mr. Baker currently sings at different events or just for fun. For example, he sang at the West Hartford Symphony Orchestra, a professional orchestra; he has sung as a section leader and guest soloist for various church concerts, as well, including at a Christmas concert this past December.

Mr. Baker said he always enjoys connecting with the audience, who is not just listening to the performance, but are actually an essential part of the concert.

"It is emotionally powerful to perform, because you share something with others and they share it with you," he said. "I've always loved singing; some things you can't explain why you love."

Even though he continually sings when he can, Mr. Baker said he wishes to do more with music in the future.

Junior Matthew Marotolo, a member of Crimson 7 and one of Mr. Baker's students, said that Mr. Baker maintains a fun environment while still creating a productive one. Matt also said that Mr. Baker is a great singer and always inspires him to compete in singing competitions and do his best. "He loves singing the music that can be made at KO," he said.

Matthew, who has been part of Crimson 7 since his freshman year, said that he is grateful to be taught by Mr. Baker, who has a great level of expertise and knowledge in the world of music.

by Kathryn Westrick '20

The KO art department has selected junior Nick Stolfi as February's Artist of the Month. You may know that Nick loves to play football and guitar, but what you probably didn't realize is that he is also a passionate artist.

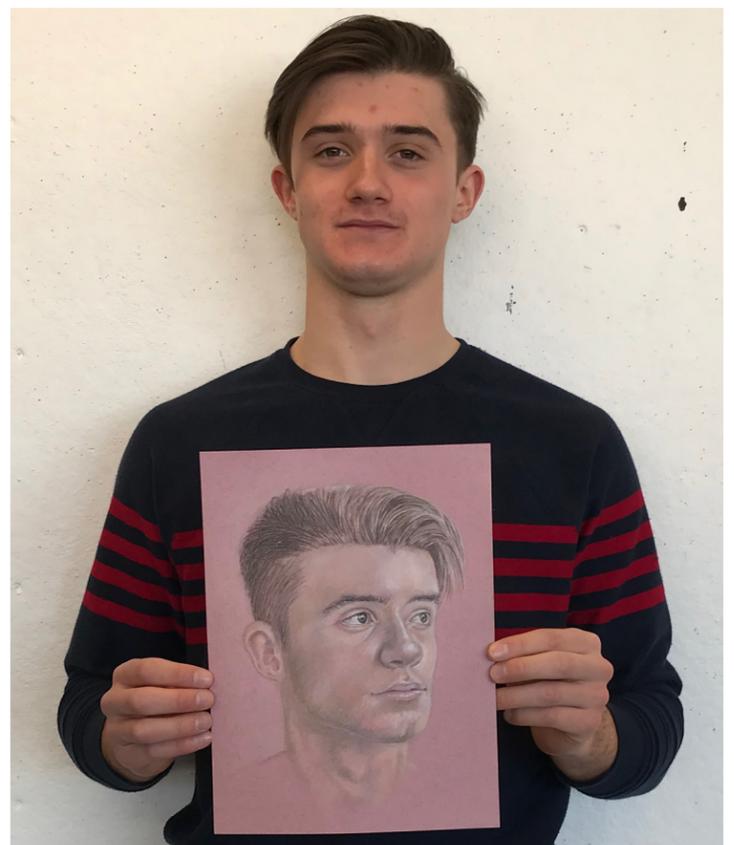
Nick said the visual arts have always been a major part of his life. "I've been interested in art for as long as I can remember," he said. "Ever since I was little kid, I've loved to draw." Between academics and sports, Nick doesn't have a lot of free time but when he does, he often uses it to work on his drawings.

Nick's favorite medium to work with is graphite and colored pencils. "I've tried pretty much every medium, but I always come back to the basics," he said.

In terms of specific styles, Nick is especially interested in hyper-realism. "I like being able to look at something and draw it so perfectly that it almost comes alive on the paper," he said. According to Nick, famous artist Marcello Barenghi has greatly influenced his work.

So far, Nick has been enjoying his experience with the arts at KO, pointing to the freedom he has in art classes like Portfolio Prep to choose his own project.

Creative arts teacher Scott McDonald and Greg Scranton each teach a semester of Portfolio Prep, so they have both had the opportunity to have Nick as their student. "It has been a pleasure being Nick's teacher; he is a very independent student so I have



Junior Nick Stolfi stands tall and proud, posing for the camera with his hyper-realistic work of art. Photo courtesy of Nick Stolfi '20.

enjoyed watching him work," Mr. Scranton said. "His realistic style is one that many students shy away from because it is so time consuming and meticulous."

Mr. Scranton compares Nick's process of creating art to that of a surgeon in an operating room. "He always organizes his materials and develops a plan before he begins," Mr. Scranton said.

Mr. McDonald said that Nick is one of the most technically talented students that he's worked with. "His art reflects his dedication and hard work," Mr. McDonald

said. "Nick often comes in to the art room during his free periods and works on his drawings."

It is clear that art has had a meaningful impact on Nick's life in several ways. "Being an artist definitely challenges me to see things differently and through multiple perspectives," Nick said.

He also explained that art has taught him valuable lessons about work ethic and has helped him to develop time management skills. "You can't just make a great piece in one day," he said. "It's all about the process."

Farewell to our lovely seniors!

Ben Small

by Alyssa Pilecki '20



Ben smiles, reminiscing all of his KO News days. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

You have seen his picture on the editorial page in every issue of the KO News this past year... the one, the only, Editor-in-Chief senior Ben Small!

You can find the snapshot of him peering out over an edition of the KO News on page 3, right next to the article he writes every month, in which he speaks on an issue important to him and the KO News editorial board.

Ben said his favorite editorial that he has written is the one from the January issue, in which he suggested that the school send out the "Wyvern Weekly" publication to all members of the KO community. He also mentioned he enjoyed writing the article about the College Board (found in the September issue).

Furthermore, Ben has taken up the challenging responsibility of heading our newspaper and managing the entire KO News staff. As you can probably tell from the name, the position of Editor-in-Chief is extremely important and, as Ben said, not at all easy.

"I didn't think it'd be as hard as it is to manage people, but since we are all only human, a lot of mistakes and problems come up and I usually have to help figure them out," he said. "I think it's a good skill to have, though, being able to work through issues with other people, whether it be mistakes in laying out articles or dealing with problems in general. Collaboration and management skills are just important in life, and I've definitely learned a lot from being a part of the KO News."

Ben initially joined the KO News in his freshman year when he took the prerequisite journalism course. "Journalism was actually my first elective, and honestly I didn't really know it existed, but I thought it sounded cool so I thought I'd take it," he said. "I'm happy I did." He said he was excited to try out a brand new opportunity after having been homeschooled his whole life and not having the chance to be part of a community like the KO News.

After finishing the class, Ben became an Associate News Editor his sophomore year and the Head News Editor his junior

year, a position that he also said he really enjoyed being in. "Being the Head News editor was really fun," he said, "because I was very involved with the front page, and I could communicate the news to the whole entire school." Ben said he plans on writing for his college newspaper and is excited for that, as well.

Ben, you have been an outstanding Editor-in-Chief and made sure all of us on the KO News staff put out the best and most accurate news that we can. Your work ethic never fails to amaze all of us, and you have shown us the true meaning of responsibility and leadership. Congrats on a great year. Thank you for everything you do, and we will miss you so much!

Lian Wolman

by Sophia Kaufman '20



Lian grins, remembering all the laughs and fun from being on the KO News. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

As the Managing Editor for News, Sports, and Investigative Journalism, we will for sure miss senior Lian Wolman on the KO News staff next year.

Lian originally took journalism in the first semester of her sophomore year and then joined the newspaper staff the next semester as an Associate News Editor.

She began journalism and the process of writing for the newspaper because her brother originally recommended it. In addition, Lian wanted to have Mr. Kyff as a teacher and he taught all sections of journalism, so it was perfect.

After crafting many different articles, Lian reflected on what she's loved the most. "The coolest article I got to be a part of was the one I co-authored with Ben Small about an interview we had with Symposium author Colson Whitehead. We played poker with him, which I practically knew nothing about, and I asked him all the questions we had," Lian said.

Lian said it was such an interesting article because she got to spend time with a very fascinating and intellectual person while having fun and learning a new game.

In addition, she said she thinks that the impact the KO News has made on her experience at KO is very important. She said that most of her friends don't know what all the unique techniques are for writing an article

or using the program InDesign to format the entire newspaper, yet Lian said the KO News has held a significant role in her life.

She has been challenged to step out of her comfort zone when speaking to people in many different departments of the school for different articles.

"I wish I had been able to write at least one story for each section on the newspaper during my time," Lian said. "I have written for News, Sports, Features, Opinions, Editorials and I have an article in the Reviews section this issue. But, I do not think I ever got a chance to write for Arts or Investigative Journalism."

Also, Lian has learned to better her time management skills because she juggled finishing homework assignments with the demanding deadlines of KO News work. With several interviews, writing articles, and editing articles, it certainly takes up time, but she said that she believes it will benefit her in the long run.

Overall, Lian says that she will miss the staff on the newspaper because at planning meetings and News Days, Lian talked to people she would not have otherwise met. She said she enjoyed working with a fun and diverse group of people over a common love of journalism.

We all wish Lian good luck for her future and hope that she brings her journalism skills on to her new journey in college.

Nell Schwartz

by Sophia Kaufman '20



Nell looks studious and prepared for the future. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

For two and a half years, the KO News has had the pleasure to have senior Nell Schwartz as a writer and editor for the paper. Nell was originally an Associate Arts Editor her sophomore and junior year, and became the Managing Editor for Features, Arts, Opinions, and Reviews for her senior year.

Nell said she was originally interested in journalism because her dad was on the KO News when he was a student here in the 80s, so she wanted to continue the legacy. In addition, she said she loved reading magazines growing up, so it was another way to express herself.

She said she does not have any regrets about being on the newspaper and is glad that she took part in this awesome journey

of watching a newspaper evolve.

For many different topics, Nell was able to read, revise, and write opinion pieces which is always fun and interesting for her.

Her favorite article that she wrote for the newspaper was about transgender rights, because she said she enjoyed writing about hard hitting topics that are not talked about a lot at school. Additionally, Nell said she loves to experiment writing about cosmetic items or learning about interesting people in our world.

"I have always loved to write because it is a great way to express your words, and show a new perspective," Nell said.

Nell said she will miss brainstorming every month with other writers for the paper to create a collaborative issue but not the early mornings on Sunday for News Day.

For future writers, Nell advises students to be willing and open to new ideas from many different people because getting critiques can always help one become a better writer.

Everyone on the KO News can agree that we will miss all her contributions to the paper, as well as her fun spirit.

Maeve McDonald

by Sophia Kaufman '20



Maeve grins from ear to ear after finishing her last articles and last news day. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

As a two and a half year writer for the Opinions section, we are sad to say goodbye to senior Maeve McDonald. For her first year on the newspaper, she was an Associate Opinions Editor and earned the title of Head Editor of the Opinions section.

Maeve originally got into journalism and the school newspaper because of her sister who also wrote for it.

In addition, she has found that writing for Opinions is so interesting because people outside of the KO News staff are allowed to write for the paper, so she can gather a wide range of opinions and writing styles.

"I have always loved writing because it's an amazing creative outlet that allows everyone to voice their opinions and let their words just flow out," Maeve said. "Writing for the KO News is just another great opportunity to do this." She stated that she will

miss the bagels and donuts on Sunday News Days, but will possibly continue to write for her school newspaper in college.

During her time on the KO News, Maeve has learned how to communicate with people better because she constantly needs to reach out and ask if they are interested in publishing their writing.

For future writers, she recommends partaking in the Opinions section because there are not any interviews and it's a great place to express their ideas.

Maeve said she wishes that she had the ability to write articles for different sections over the course of her time on the newspaper.

Lastly, Maeve stated that her favorite article that she wrote was her one roasting herself last year. She talked about her obsession with Miranda Sings in middle school.

She said she hopes that she left a positive impact on the newspaper and staff, in addition to leaving a strong legacy for her name.

Overall, the staff of the KO News will miss Maeve's amazing and creative writing in the Opinion section, as well as her strong leadership on the paper.

Taline Norsigian

by Alyssa Pilecki '20



Taline flashes a smile, ready for new adventures. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

A nature enthusiast, co-leader of the Green Team, girls cross country captain, and Model UN co-chair, senior Taline Norsigian wears many hats on campus but is perhaps most notably known as the devoted Head Features Editor for the 2018-2019 publishing year.

Taline never failed to bring her great spirit and energy to every single meeting and Sunday morning News Day throughout the year, encouraging the Features section to come up with original article ideas, follow style rules carefully, and write accurately, as well as reminding us to have fun while doing so. She has a genuine interest in helping everyone out as much as possible and in making the KO News be a great experience for both the Features section and the entire newspaper staff.

Taline's passion and love for journalism, specifically feature writing, explain why she is so dedicated and enthusiastic. She said that when picking departments to apply to, her first choice was

A continued farewell to senior staff

Continued from page 13.

Taline Norsigian

... Features, and she was happy she received the position of Associate Features Editor for her junior year. "I liked Features the best because for me, when it comes to writing the article it's more about the language around the content, not just the content," she said. "It's about translating what you learn in an interview and creating a story. That's something Mr. Kyff would push me to do, and so Features was my first choice for the staff."

When applying for a position this year, Taline said she wanted to stick with the Features section and become the Head Editor.

"The reason why I wanted to be Head of Features and didn't even apply to be Editor-in-Chief or one of the Managing Editors was because I really liked how Neil [previous Features Editor] was so close to the Associates and always checking in with us, giving us tips," she said.

Taline also said that she wanted to have the chance to be able to do the same for new associates.

"I feel like the Head Editor of every section is very involved with the actual brainstorming and article writing, while the upper positions are more behind the scenes, with laying out the paper, fixing mistakes, and helping to organize everyone. Both are a lot of work and a lot of fun, but I felt like being a Head Editor was a better fit for me."

Taline also holds the unique position of simultaneously being an Associate Photo Editor. She said she appreciates the different perspectives of both writing for and taking pictures for the paper.

While she said it is a lot of work and dedication, she also said she enjoyed being in the two positions and called it the best of both worlds. Yet, somehow, even with the great responsibility she holds in other areas of her life, Taline still manages to do an excellent job leading the Features section, and being an Associate Photographer, she never ceases to surprise everyone with how well-organized and helpful she is.

Taline, thank you so much for being an amazing Head Features Editor and an awesome friend to everyone! Lucky for us, you had a scheduling conflict sophomore year that led you to take journalism instead of art. We're blessed to have had you on the staff, we appreciate all that you do, and we hope you can continue writing for your college paper!

Ali Meizels

by Alyssa Pilecki '20

"Lights, camera... pose!" Senior Ali Meizels, the Head Photo Editor for the KO News this past year, has a well-deserved reputation for photography all around campus. Need a photo? Just ask, and Ali will not disappoint. In fact, she is always willing to take a picture and is sure to

exceed your expectations with her exceptional photography skills.

Each issue, Ali has had the unique responsibility of taking, editing, and formatting quality photos for many articles in both the print and web versions, as well as making sure the Associate



Senior Ali Meizels, on the other side of the camera this time, smiles wide. Photo by Taline Norsigian '19.

Photo Editors step up to par and take quality photos, as well. If the necessary amount of photos hasn't been taken, it's up to Ali to make sure to get all them in on time.

Ali has been an integral part of the KO News ever since she joined her freshman year, when her advisor recommended she develop her love for photography through the school newspaper.

"I always have been interested in photo and have done stuff outside of school, and I just wanted to find ways to do it in school," Ali said.

Ali said she got into the newspaper by a faculty recommendation. "When my advisor suggested taking photos for the KO News, I was really excited, and Mr. Kyff and Shelby Fairchild [the faculty advisor and a member of the KO News at the time] agreed it was a good idea," Ali said.

Ali said she enjoys being a part of the KO News because it allows her to work on her communication and collaboration skills as well as become more involved in the community.

"I think the KO News has been one of the most important parts of my KO experience," she said. "I've really had the chance to see myself grow out of my shell. I used to not want to photograph stuff on my own, but now I really like going by myself with my camera and finding interesting events and people around campus."

Ali said she still clearly remembers the first issue she had to photograph for and being so nervous, but she said she is much more comfortable now, both in photographing and in working with others.

When 2019 Symposium speaker Colson Whitehead came to campus, Ali said she was especially excited to photograph him for the newspaper. "I was in the Symposium class, so I had been reading all his books, so it was just really exciting for me to meet him and take a photo of him," she explained. "I even went to the small poker game he had and got

to take a photo of them playing! It was just a really cool experience."

Besides taking pictures for the newspaper, Ali extends her interest in photography in many different directions.

She said she is also one of the Head Editors for Retrospect, KO's yearbook, and also takes pictures for other people, such as senior pictures, family photos, prom photos, and others.

Moreover, she took Photography 1 and an independent study in documentary photojournalism as a sophomore, where she took a photo series for the Team Tobati trip she had been on that spring, and Photography 2 as a junior.

This year, Ali decided to take Advanced Studio Art, where she is able to experiment with film photography, which is different from the digital photography she is used to using.

Ali also received the Rossoff Fellowship and recently went to Paris to take a lot of pictures, an experience she said she is very grateful for.

Ali, you truly have a great eye for taking amazing photos and have been an essential member of the KO News! Keep taking stunning pictures, and best of luck with all your future photography endeavors.

Jacqueline Dugan

by Braeden Rose '21



Senior Jacqueline Dugan poses nicely and smiles wide for the camera. Photo courtesy of E.B.

Senior Jacqueline Dugan has been an imperative member of the KO News with amazing Arts articles and we wish her well as she graduates!

Jackie has been on the KO News since her junior year, after taking journalism. English had always been one of her favorite subjects, so she thought she should pursue that interest even further.

She's an Associate Art Editor, so she usually writes about the artist and musician of the month. "I absolutely love writing my articles, because it gives students around campus recognition for their talents and achievements," she said, "which I think is super awesome and important."

One very important thing that she has taken away from working on the newspaper is the importance of sharing ideas, not only within the newspaper staff, but with the whole community.

"There have been so many

times where I share my article with someone else on the news and they add ideas and perspectives I wouldn't have been able to see just for myself," Jackie said.

She said that the newspaper has made her a better writer and a more open-minded person, allowing her to accept ideas and critiques from a multitude of different people.

Another thing the KO News has taught her is the importance of face-to-face connections. "The majority of the time when interviewing a student or teacher, you meet with them face to face," she said, "which I think is awesome and forces kids to learn how to speak and be good communicators."

As for her hopes for the paper's future, she said that she wishes more people join the Arts department to replace the seniors who are leaving this year.

Her advice to future writers is to get articles in on time. "It makes life so much easier and you don't have to stress," she said. "Also, be willing to take ideas and critiques from everyone!"

In college, if she has time, she definitely would like to be involved in the newspaper or something involving writing.

Jackie's enthusiasm for writing and adaptability will be missed by the whole KO News staff next year.

Sean James

by Braeden Rose '21

As graduation nears, the KO News staff must reconcile with the fact that many of our beloved seniors will soon be gone from the paper, including sports writer senior Sean James.

Sean has been working in the KO News for three years, ever since his sophomore year. He's currently an Associate Editor for Sports. His interest in journalism and the KO news started because of his interest in writing.

Of the many interesting perks about being in the KO News, Sean noted that he gained relationships with many teachers due to his involvement on the KO News. On the flip side, one of the challenges, he said, was waking up early on Sunday mornings for News Day.

Throughout his tenure at the paper, he has been surprised



Senior Sean James shows enthusiasm. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

at the level of commitment everyone puts into the paper. "That's what makes it so fun," he said. He said that one of the many things that he will miss is being with everyone on Newsday.

"The newspaper taught me how to write better, and that time is everything," he said.

Looking forward, to the paper's future, Sean thinks that things are perfect the way that they are. "The online issue that we have now is great," he said.

His advice for future KO News writers is to go into a field that they really enjoy writing for, since it is a big commitment to one department.

He said that he does not yet know what he plans to study in college, but has considered writing for the school's newspaper. Regardless of his decision, he will be dearly missed by all the KO News staff. Good luck Sean!

Casey Qi

by Braeden Rose '21



Senior Casey Qi grins happily. Photo courtesy of E.B. Taylor.

While senior Casey Qi's time at the KO News has been short, it's certainly been sweet!

Casey has been on the KO News staff for one year, and she is an Associate for the News department. She was drawn to journalism because of her interest in analytical writing, and she thought that the KO News would be a great way to engage with the community here.

"I really like interviewing and talking with people, seeing how they think," Casey said. Her favorite memory of her time on the KO News was seeing her article in the paper for the first time. "That was really nice," she said.

Casey learned about her love of writing her sophomore year in English. "I really liked writing papers, stream-of-consciousness stuff, that's why I took journalism," she said. At the KO News, she said that she will miss interviewing people at KO. She said she will also miss laying out articles on News Day. "I won't miss brainstorming ideas for the paper, or more so, struggling to brainstorm ideas though," she said.

Her advice to next year's news staff is to make sure that they incorporate more perspectives into their stories. When you're sampling perspectives for interviews,

Continued on page 15.

Casey Qi

Continued from page 14.

...“just make sure it’s a wide range of perspectives,” she said. “Sometimes people, and that includes me, just interview the people they’re closest to because that’s easier, but it’s important to reach out to people.”

From her time at the KO News and in journalism class, she learned that there are many perspectives on an issue that lay outside of the writer’s angle, and that it’s important to include those perspectives, even if it fits outside of your angle. It’s a bit harder, she said, but it’s important.

“I think journalism and writing are, and this is a weird word, but they’re sacred,” she said.

“In a way, you’re helping other people’s voices to be heard.”

She also said she hopes that the KO News will accommodate more viewpoints on things like school events. “If you’re writing an article about a school event, obviously you’re not going to really bash it, even if it was really bad,” she said. “The school paper should be more democratic, I think.”

In college, she said she will probably write for the school newspaper, if the opportunity presents itself.

Casey will be greatly missed in the News Department, and the KO News as a whole. Everyone on the newspaper wishes her best of luck in college and beyond.

Open-mindedness revisited

by Taline Norsigian '19

While America currently seems especially divided, this nation has always faced challenges. During every debate and discussion, one must remain open-minded to the other person’s side.

Inside the Dec. 20, 1929 edition of The Kingswood News, an editorial titled, “On Open-Mindedness,” details why challenging one’s beliefs is vital to our society.

The editorial explains that unique points of view and the ability to stay open-minded is rare but necessary.

“There are not many men who will allow themselves to be charged in their views on prohibition,” the newspaper reads. “They have formed a deep-set prejudice, and are not approachable when it comes to thinking on the other side.”

At the time, as noted, one subject of great debate was the prohibition of alcohol. Although the National Prohibition Act was repealed three years later, in 1933, with the creation of the 21st amendment, the Prohibition era created controversy.

For students in 1929 the solution was clear. “It would tend to dispense with any ill feelings which may rise amongst us, if all of us would try to be open-minded, to see the other fellow’s side, to

try and understand his feelings, and to tolerate those actions of his which we may not be able to understand,” the editorial states.

Yet, students crafted these resolutions 90 years ago. Is there still any weight to their words?

“Even if your opinions aren’t going to change, I think it’s good to listen to others’ opinions so that you always know what’s going on around you,” current senior Ali Meizels said.

Today, communities across America hold differing political views, notably on abortion and immigration.

Social media gives people a platform to present their ideas, which can lead to fiery debates. Often, one person will end the discussion, refusing to listen to anyone else or make any attempt at learning something new. Or, others deem the argument not even worth fighting for, since they know the other person’s opinions will not change, regardless of how long the debate lasts or what points the other person raises.

“In some respects, society is open-minded but in others it is not because people have preserved notices of the way society is,” senior Ben Small said. “The news people consume confirms their ideals and acts as an echo chamber, like Breitbart [far-right American online news outlet] and

Alex Jones [American radio show host and conspiracy theorist].”

Ali said it is hard to mediate political discussions. “Political issues are very personal for a lot of people, so there’s a certain point where you can’t be open-minded,” Ali said.

There are certain shortcomings to the accessible online world, one of which is the reliability of news outlets. “I think anything that is fake news is not a legitimate news source like pizzagate,” Ben said. “I think the reason fake news exists is you can make an outlandish claim and get massive amounts of attention, so there’s definitely capitalist incentive. One kid in Macedonia posted before the 2016 election and that got a lot of attention.”

Many news outlets want recognition and notice so they cast out some shocking or appealing bait, and reel in large amounts of views and likes for posts, whether or not the story is true.

Both events taking place in 2016, Pizzagate cropped up after an alt-right conspiracy theory, claiming the Comet Ping Pong pizzeria in Washington, D.C. permitted Bill Clinton, his wife Hillary, and her former campaign manager to operate a child molestation business, caused a flood of threats to the restaurant and an attempted shooting.

In Veles, Macedonia,

a teenage purveyor of fake news managed to gain 685,000 page views a week and a four figured monthly salary.

Narrowing the focus to where most KO students spend their day, KO acts as an educational discussion facilitator, whether between students and teachers or students and students. “I think KO is trying to be more mindful and hold discussions on things,” Ali said, “which is good. Since I’ve involved in social activism groups, the groups I interact with are open-minded.”

Both Ali and Ben agreed that social media could be the remedy to all the chaos that prevents civil discourse. “I know Facebook and Instagram are taking to ensure fake news does not propagate, which is good,” Ben said.

Additionally, Ali said she believes that the internet can educate people on various issues.

Regardless of which side your views land on, the students at KO still believe it is always prudent to be observant and empathetic. In order to entertain civilized conversations, arrogance and ignorance must be pushed aside.

Here’s hoping that the not-so-new idea of receptiveness to new ideas gains some traction in the near future, just as KO students envisioned for us 90 years ago and current students still try to uphold.

Fashion Lover: Ben

by Sloan Duvall '21

With a peacoat draped over his chair, a new quilted jacket tied around his waist, and his computer open to a tab of Nordstrom’s men’s clothing, Fashion Lover of the Month senior Ben Poulios can often be found during his free periods online shopping and hanging out with friends.

Ben’s love of fashion comes from how it allows him to express himself and stand out in a crowd. “I started becoming interested in fashion when I came to KO because at my middle school we had a uniform, which was the same thing every day,” Ben said. “Then I came to KO and although you mostly wear khakis every day, you can wear a certain jacket or switch up other parts of your outfit to make it unique.”

Ben’s perfect outfit is one that he creates himself and did not copy from a trend. He recommends using a pattern in your outfit to make it pop. Ben’s favorite part of an outfit is the jacket. “I love jackets because they can really make an outfit stand out while also dressing it up a lot,” Ben said.

Ben does not find it too difficult to create stylish and chic outfits that still are within the KO dress code. The only part of the dress code that limits his fashion is the prohibition of jeans. “I love wearing jeans on the weekends, and I like to wear different

colored jeans too,” Ben said.

Even though he does not copy trends, Ben still keeps up with global fashion, as any true fashion lover would. His favorite fashion event is New York Fashion



Ben stands confidently with his chic fashion. Photo by Taline Norsigian '19.

Week. “I hope to see a New York fashion week show one day,” Ben said. Besides events, his fashion idol is Tom Ford. “He always wears really great suits and always looks so stylish,” Ben said.

Ben’s favorite places to shop include Nordstroms, DSW, American Eagle, and Tom Ford. “Tom Ford is probably my favorite brand,” Ben said. “It is expensive, really nice quality, and has good styles of clothes.” He recom-

mended checking out the jackets and shoes on the Tom Ford website.

A pro shopping tip from Ben is to take advantage of the rewards programs at your favorite stores. He uses the “DSW bucks”

and all the coupons American Eagle sends him to get great deals on many shoes and clothes he would have otherwise had to buy for full price. By being a savvy shopper, Ben is able to save money on basic attire and then can splurge on bigger items like a new jacket from Nordstrom.

Ben said his advice to everyone, fellow fashion lovers or not, would be to stop following trends and find your true style.

Congratulations to the 2019-2020 KO News Head Editors

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Managing Editor of News, Sports, Under the Radar

Esha Kataria '20

Managing Editor of Features and Arts

Alyssa Pilecki '20

Managing Editor of Opinions and Reviews

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Arts Editor

Luv Kataria '20

KON News

In the Middle

Balancing act: MS gets involved

by Maggie Dwyer '23

It's no secret that all KO students live hectic schedules full of sports and studies.

What about students who are passionate about outside of school activities?

It takes talent to manage another activity during the week, but a majority of the students at the Middle School do so—and some to the extreme.

A survey showed that about 88 percent of KO Middle School students are involved in after-school activities that aren't KO related.

In addition, it showed that students are putting anywhere from two to 24 hours into these activities a week.

To some students, these sports and activities are necessary to clear their heads and have allowed them to find their niche. Eighth-grader Sattah Phouthakoun

does after school karate. "When I've had a tough day, I just need something to de-stress, have fun, and cool down," she said.

Although students are devoted to the activities they participate in, sometimes the amount of schoolwork they receive makes them question if it's feasible.

"I only have about a day per weekend to do my homework because of religious commitments," eighth-grader Jolie Flash, a committed Seventh Day Adventist, said. "That's a lot less than the other students in my grade and it's hard to balance with everything."

Extra involvement makes completing homework and being a successful KO student more difficult. So, how do students do it? Several extremely involved students find themselves giving up more than just homework time to cope. Eighth-grader Kyra Dunnirvine participates in after

school softball and soccer. "It is difficult to fulfill all of my responsibilities, and how I manage is I have no social life, because I mean something has to go," she said.

Despite time-management challenges, many students choose to continue their activities.

"I think that the values that I learn from diving help me in school," eighth-grader Eli Brandt said, who dives outside of school. "Like, when I come across a challenge, even though sometimes I can't overcome it, I try my hardest and try to push forward- it [diving] sort of translates to other parts."

Participating in after-school activity enhances character. It also instills values in students that they can apply to their future endeavors at KO and in life. These students are devoted enough to choose to be involved with extra activities, and deserve to be rewarded with the occasional deadline extension.



Eighth-grader Kyra Dunnirvine saves the ball. Photo by Keith Homiski.

Although, it seems that if one is as passionate as these students, staying up an extra hour to finish homework isn't that significant.

Movie club shines MS creates safe spaces

by Preston Seaver '23

Sixth-grader Guru Anand started a movie club with his fellow sixth-grader Ryan Sadowski after hearing about high school clubs. Guru decided he wanted to start a club that anyone could enjoy after school.

"We saw the high school making a lot of clubs and thought to ourselves, why can't the Middle School have a cool club?" Guru said. "So I thought, people like watching movies, and some people like making movies, so why not make a movie club?"

Guru and Ryan had all the plans ready for the club, but they just needed a teacher to become the faculty advisor.

History Teacher Peter Burdge decided to volunteer. "I really like movies, and I like making movies," he said. "I thought it would be fun to do that with those students who are also really excited about it. And I also like watching

movies too, and that was part of it."

When it comes to choosing which movie to watch, they select a few and have the club vote on which one they want to watch.

The most recent movie they watched was "Hotel Transylvania 3." Not only does the movie club watch movies, but they also make movies.

Their most recent film was a spinoff of "Home Alone." It takes a while to make the movies. "On the movie we are currently working on, I would say it takes about a month to make each movie," Ryan said.

Creating these movies takes some effort, and requires technical equipment. "We use green screens, cameras, Go-Pros, a drone," Ryan said.

To persuade people to come to Movie Club, Guru and Ryan offer snacks to whoever comes. The club meets every Tuesday after school and everyone is welcome.

The club's latest movie is available at thekonews.org

by Jacob Joseph '23

What are affinity groups and why are they in place? Affinity groups or clubs let people share a common interest or traits with one another.

The Kingswood Oxford Middle School has established two affinity groups in the past three months.

One group was begun by eighth-grader Elyana Alleyne, known as Ely.

She established a club as a safe space for students of color where they can talk about matters that they cannot discuss inside of the classroom.

"We go over how to deal with being a student of color in a mostly white setting and also about our hair, different hairstyles, and how people touch our hair and about different experiences we have had where we have been singled out in situations," Ely said. "Also that we are not alone in these situations."

Director of Cultural Diversity and Cultural Competence Joan Edwards is the Faculty Advisor for this group. "This will let students of color have a connection and learn how to have a voice and learn about topics that the group talks about and talking about them in bigger groups," Ms. Edwards said.

"Also knowing what I know about identity development, students of color will feel a sense of belonging because the group makes their members feel more confident and grounded with who they are," she said.

Another affinity group began just two months after Ely created the group for students of color.

The Jew and Jewish Allies Club was started by eighth-grader Jacob Joseph.

"I want everyone who feels different to know they are not alone, no matter if they are Jewish, black, hispanic or in the LGBTQ community," he said. "I wanted to not just have a club

for Jews but for their allies too because I wanted those in my group who are Jewish to know that people support them," Jacob said.

History teacher Andy Krugman jumped at the opportunity to join this group as the faculty advisor.

"I think clubs almost always work out better when made and orchestrated by a student," Mr. Krugman said.

Jacob began this club to discuss discrimination and hate, no matter who it is towards. "One should not be penalized just for being themselves; they should be living freely just like everyone else," Jacob said.

The club Ely started plans to meet during lunch on Wednesdays and the Jew and Jewish ally club will meet Fridays during choice time.

All interested students are encouraged to drop by and check out what they do or join in the conversation.

Jack, Owen rock AirPods: are they worth it?

by Ignacio Feged '23

At the Kingswood Oxford Middle School, most students display their musical talents during band, orchestra, choir concerts, and the occasional assembly. However, many students can't perform their preferred style of music with the same frequency and attention as those in organized musical groups can.

One of these musicians is eighth-grader Jack Gold. Although Jack plays the clarinet in the Concert Band and the jazz guitar in the Jazz Band, his true passion is playing rock and metal on his guitar.

His love for the guitar started in first grade when he received his cousin's old Fender Squier navy blue electric guitar. Ever since that day, Jack has endlessly practiced his craft as a guitarist and can now recreate fast and complicated riffs from AC/DC and Metallica with ease.

Ever since his elementary school days, Jack has loved rock and metal. "What I like about rock and metal is that it is fast and aggressive so when I'm not feeling it or just need something to do, it fixes me basically," Jack said. "[It's] super aggressive and it's just fun to play, cause it's fast."

Another musician is seventh-grader Owen Caliguri.

Owen sings with the choir; however, he is known for rapping on his SoundCloud account he named BigScooch.

Owen created BigScooch after his friends dared him to record a song. What started as lower quality music with an extremely basic recording software has now turned into longer, stronger, and more entertaining tracks.

Before being deleted, "trAck-A (disstrAck)", a song Owen recorded with two other friends, had almost 500 plays. For the most part, Owen enjoyed the overwhelmingly positive reaction he got from friends and classmates. "I was really happy. I knew it was going to get a lot [of attention], because it was a diss track. It was kind of a joke I really wasn't trying to be rude, and in the beginning I even made a disclaimer," Owen said.

Although many non-traditional musicians do not get as much recognition as they deserve, Jack Gold and Owen Caliguri have excelled in their fields of music. Students can find Owen's music when searching BigScooch in SoundCloud. Jack Gold will soon put his music on his Instagram account. "I'm always looking for a new guitar, so if you have one lying around, please give it to me," he said.

by Tess Chapman '23

There is a new visible trend around Kingswood Oxford: airpods. Whether students own a pair or not, most everybody has heard of Apple's new wireless earbuds. The many pros and cons of these new gadgets make people ask: Are airpods really worth the \$159 price?

Apple first released its airpods on September 7, 2016, alongside the iPhone 7 and Apple Watch Series 2. It wasn't until December of 2018 though, that wireless

"You can move your head, so let's say if you are doing sports or working out, it doesn't get in the way."

—Owen Carliguri

earbuds really became popular. One benefit of airpods is they are easy to use while exercising. "You can move your

head, so let's say if you are doing sports or working out, it doesn't get in the way," seventh-grader Owen Caliguri said.

Owen also mentioned that he liked them because they don't fall out and they are noise canceling. He said they make the music experience a lot better and he would definitely recommend them to others.

Apple's airpods also come in a small charging case. The case has 24 hours of battery life before it needs to be charged itself. "They are way more convenient because one, they have a smaller case you can carry around, and two, you

don't have to worry about the wires getting tangled up," eighth-grader Jordan DiMauro said.

However, eighth-grader Cooper Schumacher had a different opinion. "Less convenient, they are easier to lose," he said.

Cooper also mentioned that earbuds – the ones with wires – are able to catch your phone if you drop it, while airpods obviously can't do so.

There are clearly two opinions about the value of Apple's wireless earbuds. Each person will have to decide for themselves whether airpods are worth it or not.



Eighth-grader Jordan DiMauro with displays her AirPods. Photo by Tess Chapman '23.

MS students compete in national geography bee

by Sophia Brunalli '23

On Wednesday, January 16, 2019, Middle School history teacher Andy Krugman and eight middle school finalists took their places on the stage in Roberts Theater as the audience cracked their knuckles in nervous anticipation.

Kingswood Oxford's annual Geography Bee was about to begin.

The Middle School has been participating in the Geography Bee for between thirty to forty years according to Mr. Krugman.

"My first year teaching was twenty-eight years ago and we were doing it then, so in terms of how long before that it couldn't have been that much longer because I don't remember them doing it when I was a student, and that was in 1980 so my guess is that we've been doing it somewhere between thirty and forty years," he said.

Eighth-graders Eli Brandt, Zora DeRham, Jordan DiMauro, Ignacio Feged, Will Jacobs, Hana Roggendorf, and Theo Stephan, and sixth-grader Cameron Hart were the eight contestants.

They sat anxiously at a long table and responded to difficult questions drawing upon all their knowledge of geography. Each contestant was hoping to follow in last year's champion's footsteps, eighth-grader Theo Stephan.

According to Mr. Krugman, Theo qualified for the state competition and from what he understands, Theo correctly answered some tough questions.

This year Zora claimed the spot as the Geography Bee champion for Kingswood Oxford. "It was a rush of a lot of things," Zora said. "I am pretty proud of myself for only getting one [question] wrong."

In order to move on to States after winning the school round, the winner has to take another test and the top hundred scores to move on.

The audience also enjoyed

the Geography Bee even though they were not up on the stage. "I think it is essential for all students to watch because you learn something new every year just from watching it even if you don't really make it on the stage," eighth-grader Brady Nichols said who watched the Bee this year for the second time.

KO plans to continue participating in the National Geography Bee in the future. "As a school, we will keep registering for the Geography Bee because it is a great experience to have for the students," Mr. Krugman said.



Geography bee contestants eighth-graders Zora DeRham and Theo Stephan smile for the camera. Photo by Lynne Levine.

Middle School girls stay fashionable

by Allegra Kotowitz '23

Trends and fashion statements change and spread around the KO campus very quickly.

Throughout her three years at KO, eighth-grader Jordan DiMauro has enjoyed the style at KO along with many girls in the Middle School.

"I think that trends start mainly because one person starts wearing something, and it catches on because people like how it looks," she said.

Jordan said that she likes to shop at Pacsun, Brandy Melville, and American Eagle for her clothing because they are stylish and very comfortable. Some items that she wears a lot are the colored pants from American Eagle, quarter-zips, and sweaters from Pacsun, and shirts from Brandy Melville.

Also, Vans are the most popular shoe brand. Students like Vans because they match with everything, are easy to take on and off for sports, and are very comfortable to wear.

"I really enjoy these styles, especially because that's really all I wear to school since the dress code limits some things, all of these clothing and shoe items are very useful," Jordan said.

Sixth-grader Lia Arnold explains how younger students also enjoy these styles. "These are exactly what my grade wears, I love

the brands and the style," she said.

One girl at KO really stands out for her exotic and cool style that has spread among her grade. Eighth-grader Quin Kearney has a passion for wearing bucket hats. "They just fit your head really well, and there are so many designs to choose from," Quin said. "I always get compliments on how they look and it makes me feel really good."

Quin's interest in this type of headgear has inspired many girls in her grade to buy hats of their own to enjoy for themselves. "I feel accomplished that my classmates are also interested in these," she said.



Eighth-grader Quin Kearney sports her fashionable bucket hat. Photo courtesy of Quin Kearney '23.

More than typical animal lovers

by Daniel Deng '23

Most KO students enjoy having household pets such as dogs and cats. However, some live on property large enough to keep a larger variety of animals.

Examples of students who own farm animals include eighth-grader Pierce Flynn, sixth-grader Addisen Nicholson, and creative arts teacher Katherine Nicholson.

Pierce has two goats and two alpacas, along with his two cats, two dogs, and a guinea pig. He has owned the goats and alpacas for about a year.

Addisen and Ms. Nicholson own two horses, some sheep, chickens, a cow, two dogs, and two cats.

The Nicholson family works hard to take care of their animals. "All the animals get fed twice a day. But, we have to care for their stalls, we have to care for the barn, we have to care for their health," Ms. Nicholson said.

Addisen began taking care of their animals when she was five. "I started feeding the horses, and the chickens were my responsibility," she said. "But then I gave them to my brother, because he

has the cats and the horses and the chickens. Now the sheep are basically my responsibility." Pierce also has to take care of his animals. "[We have to] clean them, feed them, refill food, and refill water every day, and check on them every one or two hours," he said.

Even though taking care of animals requires a lot of effort, the Nicholson family enjoys having so many. "It's a lot of work when it's two degrees at 5:30 in the morning and we have to go out and we have to chip ice out of water buckets," Ms. Nicholson said. "But, when the day is done, I love having animals, it's a lifestyle that I love."

Addisen shows her sheep at fairs. "There's the show season, which is the start of fall, the summer, and the end of spring. And we show them all over the country," Addisen said. "The farthest we've gone is to Ohio." Pierce does not show any of his animals at fairs, but still enjoys keeping his goats and alpacas. "I like having them," he said. "They are cute and fluffy."

Despite the extra work that raising farm animals requires, these KO community members are willing to put in the extra hours it takes to keep all them healthy.

Down for the count

by Cole Ellis '23

On Feb. 2, 2019 the KO Middle School Mathcounts team traveled to the University of Hartford in order to participate in the Mathcounts regional competition. The four members, eighth-grader Arav Kumar, seventh-graders Tobias van Wilgan and Rayyan Haider, and sixth-grader Guru Anand, represented the Middle School at the competition. Mathcounts is a math competition that occurs all around the country every year.

The captain of the team, Arav, started Mathcounts last year and now leads the team this year. "I like math, and last year I found out about Mathcounts from one of my friends outside of school," he said. His score qualified him to move on to the State Competition. Next year's captain, Tobias, said he really enjoys Mathcounts. "I have been pretty good at math and I am a year ahead. It will take a lot of skill to place higher in the competition."

Most participants believe the competition has benefited them. "I got a lot better at math and I became closer with my teammates," said Arav.

Tobias agreed. "It is nice to have that time to study more," he said. Most people said they like that it makes them better at math and enjoy the extra time to study. However, one participant has not noticed any benefit. "I'm pretty much the same person," said Rayyan.

Practicing is crucial to success in the competition. Getting ready is different than studying for a math test. "We watch Youtube math videos, use the Mathcounts trainer, and the practice tests from last year," Arav said, referring to tests from last year's tournaments that the Mathcounts organization releases.

The Mathcounts team will continue next year. "I hope more kids join us because it's fun," Arav said. He will compete at the state level on March 9.



The Math Counts team smiles for the camera. Photo by Lalarukh Haider.

KO welcomes Ms. Dix

by Jolie Flash '23

On Feb. 1, 2018, KO welcomed a new member to the school as the Administrative Coordinator of the Middle School: Ms. Brittany Dix, who has held this position for over a year.

On the first day of meeting her, teachers and students alike fell in love with her and her charismatic personality.

The job of Administra-

"The first person they see when they come in is Ms. Dix, and they feel welcomed."

—Mrs. Levine

tive Coordinator of the Middle School was redefined by Director of the Middle School Ann Sciglimpaglia, known as Ms. Scig.

It was difficult to find the right person. "We were

looking for somebody, and we weren't quite finding what we wanted," Ms. Scig said. "The person had to have certain qualities and virtues: they had to be a people person, and be able to use and understand technology and several computer systems."

The Administrative Coordinator has multiple jobs to complete in order to make the Middle School run smoothly.

The job includes maintaining all the schedule, attendance and grade records as well as dealing with situations involving all different types of people.

After interviewing several candidates, Ms. Scig said that she knew Ms. Dix was right for the Middle School.

Ms. Dix creates a great first impression on most of the people she comes in contact with.

As she is home right now with her new daughter, Lily, everyone looks forward to her return after spring break.

Mrs. Hope Cameron, who is substituting while Ms. Dix is on maternity leave, enjoyed learning about the job from Ms. Dix. "One of the best things of

coming into this position was that Ms. Dix was an amazing teacher," Mrs. Cameron said.

Others such as English teacher Mrs. Lynne Levine said, "She was a great addition because teachers, the kids and the parents like her, which is the most important thing. The first person they see when they come in is Ms. Dix, and they feel welcomed."



Ms. Dix smiles with her husband Mike and newborn daughter, Lily. Photo courtesy of Ms. Brittany Dix

Dancers follow passions

by Hannah Krause '23

Even though dance is not a sport offered at the KO Middle School, many students still decide to explore dance outside of school. Some of these students include eighth-graders Madi Oh, Olivia Dufresne-Achatz, Naisola Sarfo-Mensah, Bella Theodorou and Grace Deng. Each of these dancers began at a young age.

Madi started to dance when she was two years old, and similarly, Olivia began Irish step-dancing when she was three.

Grace also started to dance when she was around five years old. Dancing became a true passion for them, and as a result, dancing takes a lot of time out of their normal weeks. "You could say 24/7 because if I am not at dance, I'm thinking of dancing, watching videos, or practicing," Madi said.

Their passion taught these important lessons. Madi and Olivia said they agree that dance has helped them learn discipline, while Grace believes that dancing has taught her how to pursue challenges. "[I learned how] to perse-

vere through hard challenges, because dance is harder than it seems," Grace said. Bella has realized that she might be disappointed after an audition. "I've learned that sometimes you won't always get the part you want," she said.

Olivia said she recalls that her grandmother has influenced her since she started to dance. "My grandma definitely has been the biggest influence on my dancing,

"[I learned how] to persevere through hard challenges, because dance is harder than it seems."

—Olivia

Dufresne-Achatz



Eighth-grade dancers Grace Deng, Olivia Dufresne-Achatz and Madi Oh strike a pose. Photo by Hannah Krause '23.

just because she takes me to every single class unless she is on a trip or something, and she's just been so supportive," said Olivia.

Naisola said that Misty Copeland inspires her to become a better dancer. "I get inspiration from dancers I see in performances and on TV, but Misty Copeland has been a really big inspiration in the dance world," she said.

These five eighth graders have made substantial progress as dancers after so many years of lessons and practice. Following their passion, these dancers will continue their journey throughout high school.

Super Bowl, lackluster performance

by Aarya Dalal '23

Many people in the KO community watched this year's Super Bowl, in hopes that it would be an interesting and high scoring game. However, the Super Bowl was not as appealing to KO students as they hoped it would be. Unlike most games, this one ended in a score of 13-3.

Matter of fact, in Super Bowl history, there has never been a combined score lower than this Patriots-Rams matchup, and there has been only one other team that has scored as few points as the Rams did in a Super Bowl.

The Miami Dolphins are the only other team in Super Bowl history that have scored three points in a Super Bowl game, and this was back in 1972 when they lost to the Dallas Cowboys by a score of 24-3.

KO students and faculty were surprised by



Rams QB Jared Goff takes a snap in Super Bowl 53 at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Photo courtesy of Google Images.

the outcome of the game. "I thought it was gonna be a high scoring game, cause you know the Patriots defense

isn't the best, and compared to the regular season, I'm very impressed on how they did," eighth-grader Preston Seaver said.

Although science teacher Clay Miles was rooting for the Rams he claims, "The Rams were completely

predictable and they weren't at all creative. And when you play a Belichick team you better be creative, cause he's got you nailed if you're not."

Mr. Miles, unlike other viewers, was not surprised by the outcome of the game.

"The Rams were completely predictable and they weren't at all creative."

—Clay Miles

"I thought it was gonna be a low scoring game," he said.

This game may not have been appealing to most, but there is always a next time. Chances are the Super Bowl will be a much

School limits phone use *Advice to eighth-grade*

by Jordan DiMauro '23

Throughout the current eighth-graders' three years at Kingwood Oxford, the Middle School

I think that we should be able to have our phones, it makes me feel connected."

—Tess Chapman

the director of the Middle School Since Director of Middle School Ms. Ann Sciglimpaglia, also known as Ms. Scig, has taken over, some of the rules have become a more prominent part of the average student's day. "The rules got a lot more strict and hard to follow," eighth-grader Alex Arnold said. This seems to be a general consensus among students.

One of the main rules students find difficult is the no phone rule. Middle School students are required to turn their phones into their advisor. "I think that we should be able to have our phones, it makes me feel

rooms, and teachers will remind students if they see that a student has not done this. "I am not going to pat people down to find phones," Assistant Director Mrs. Dunn said.

Another rule that was added by Ms. Scig was no headphones during study hall rule.

Many students say that headphones help them get more work done and block out the distractions. "I get what the goal is but for me personally I work better with

"I get what the goal is but for me personally I work better with music as it helps me to be more productive during study halls."

—Alle Kotowitz

music as it helps me to be more productive during study halls," eighth-grader Alle Kotowitz said.

Among students, this seems to be the most difficult rule. "What I do not understand is the fact that we can't talk but we can't be silent in our own way," eighth-grader Jacob Joseph said.

The middle school has seen many changes but most of them have a purpose.

"Anyone who knows me knows that I don't think that we are a completely rule oriented community because that is not a good environment," Ms. Scig said.

Any teacher that is asked will say that the rules are there to help us get the most out of the day at school, even if we don't see it that way.

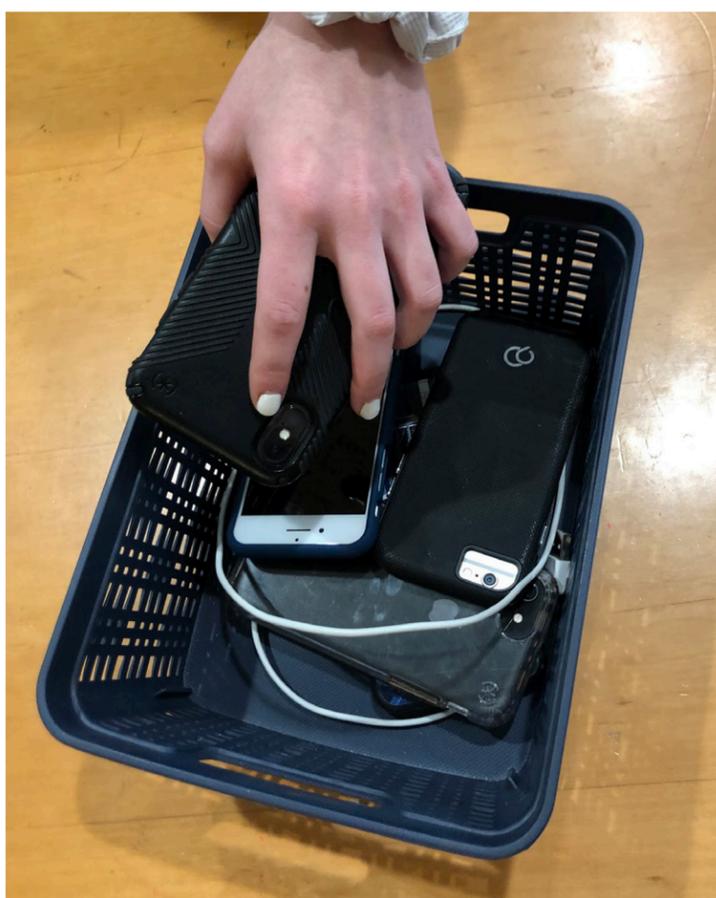
by Elyana Alleyne '23

Seventeen thousand, two hundred and eighty hours. This number is roughly the amount of time students will spend as a high school student. As the eighth graders power through their last semester of middle school, they are becoming curious and excited about what is to come as they enter high school.

Fortunately they have advice from high schoolers and teachers. "High school isn't as scary as everyone makes it out

at least one trip to Tobati, Paraguay, the community service trip where students help the community and spend a lot of time with their peers over spring break. "Tobati is an incredible experience that KO offers. I love traveling to Paraguay, meeting new people, and immersing myself in a different culture with all of my friends," Claudia said.

In high school students have a chance to figure out their identity and learn who they are as a student. "As you go into high school think about the person you have been,"



Phones in an advisee bin after they have been taken away to adhere to the new and stricter rules restricting phone, headphone use. Photo by Alle Kotowitz.

has seen two directors and various rule changes, both minor and major. From 2010 until 2017 math teacher and Director of Teaching and Learning Mrs. Jane Repp was

connected," eighth-grader Tess Chapman. Now the phone rule has always been in place but last year it became a more enforced rule. Phones must be stored in advisee



Mr. Gilyard gives advice to eighth graders, Photo courtesy of Mr. Gilyard.

to be. Everyone is going to be fine," senior Claudia Petrie said.

Besides more work, tests, papers, and quizzes in high school, there are other opportunities to discover and explore. In high school everyone gets the chance to make new friends and create new memories. "Some of my favorite memories are on the buses back from sports games and just bonding with the team," sophomore Isabel Berkemeyer said.

Most students highly recommended that everyone should take

Dean of Students and math teacher Mr. William Gilyard said. "If you like that person stick with it, but if you don't maybe let that go."

New students should listen to advice from their older peers. "It's not like Disney World, so study a lot and you will be fine," senior Ben Polious said.

Although high school may seem scary now, with the advice from upperclassmen and teachers, it may not be like Disney World but it will definitely be full of exciting experiences.

Dr. Elizabeth Jorgensen's mental health insights spark conversation

by Isha Sohail '20

On Friday, Feb. 1, Dr. Elizabeth Driscoll Jorgensen, a drug and alcohol counselor who works in Ridgefield, Conn. came to KO to speak at an assembly.

Dean of Students Will Gilyard chose Dr. Jorgensen to come in and speak to everyone because he said he thought that she was a good public speaker who wouldn't preach to everyone.

Dr. Jorgensen received her degree from Fordham University and has been a therapist for the past 28 years.

The way that she usually approaches patients is she will meet a teen or an adult with their

She sounded like she was trying to dumb everything down for us, which seemed patronizing."

—Braeden Rose

family and ask different questions like where they are mentally and how they've grown up.

This helps her understand the root causes of substance abuse, depression, anxiety, compulsive behaviors, and also "acting out."

She will also coach parents and loved ones on how to help someone in the most supportive community possible.

She offers a variety of programs such as Adolescent Recovery Support Programs, Young Adult Group, and Positively Teen.

The Adolescent Recovery Support Program is for teens and provides DBT, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Family Therapy, and other treatments.

The Young Adult Group tackles issues such as independent living, college life, and transitioning after experiencing academic or behavioral problems in college.

The Positively Teen Group meets one time per week and teaches soothing and coping skills to teens who struggle with anxiety, depression, self-harming behaviors, and many other issues.

At the assembly, she gave information about the brain that she thought would be helpful. Many people thought otherwise.

"She was kind of all over the place," Mr. Gilyard said. "I knew that some people were going to like her and others weren't."

Part of the administration's job is to think about issues that teenagers are dealing with as they are growing up and how to raise awareness about what is going on.

Prior to the assembly, Dr. Jorgensen was already doing workshops with parents, so Mr. Gilyard thought that it would be a good idea to have her speak to the student body as well.

She essentially lectured everyone about how the majority of people that have mental illnesses are the only people that are addicted to substances such as marijuana and juuls.

Furthermore, she said that most people who don't have a mental illness most likely won't have an addiction.

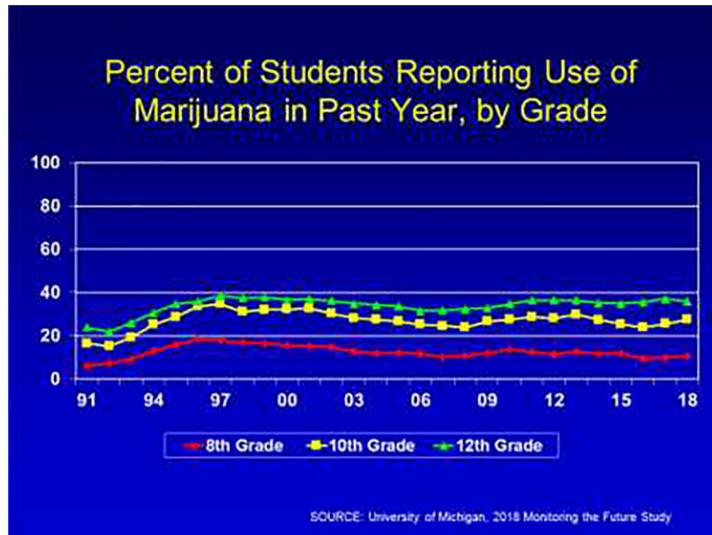
In addition, from what some people perceived, she mentioned political issues (like the power of governmental leaders and the Church) in her talk

Many people didn't like how she did this and other people did not mind.

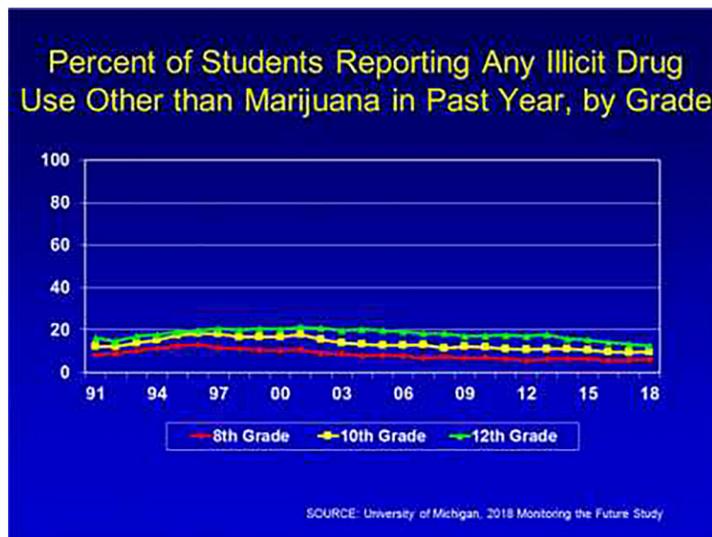
If I can help at least one kid, then I will keep bringing in other speakers as well

—Mr. Gilyard

"She had a good message, but she just got very lost in her train of thought," junior Alyssa Pilecki said. "She would keep



Graph of survey conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse in December 2018. It reports the usage of marijuana by grade in the past year across the nation. Photo provided by www.drugabuse.gov.



Graph of survey conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse in December 2018. It reports the usage of any other illicit drug other than marijuana by grade in the past year. Photo provided by www.drugabuse.gov.

diverging into other subjects and wouldn't finish her sentences, so it was confusing, but I still liked her."

Senior Jason Meizels had a lot to say about the assembly, both good and bad. "I think the assembly was definitely great in theory, but some elements of it seemed a little patronizing, and I'm not sure how effective it was," he said. "I don't think anyone's minds were changed very much by that assembly. It was cool that people felt comfortable sharing though."

Senior Ben Small said he agreed. "I think the assembly had potential, but the execution could have been better," he said. "I don't think a lot of people took it seriously."

Towards the end of the assembly, Dr. Jorgensen had people write different questions anonymously on cards that she read out loud and answered.

While many people said that they didn't like this, there were a number of students who took this activity seriously.

They asked questions like: "Why isn't it more widely known that if people do drugs, vape or drink, they're actually ruining their brain?" "Is there a way to spread that knowledge?" "How do I stop my juuling addiction?" "How do I help stop my friends juuling addiction?"

There were other ques-

tions that didn't specifically relate to the topic of substance abuse but rather mental health and well-being, such as, "Is it normal to cry every night?"

There were also a number of people who wrote about how they did not want to be there at all or how they were confused about what she was talking about.

"I don't do any of this stuff, why do I have to be here?" "What is the point of this?" "Why are we being compared to soft-shell crabs?" "Please stop having these embarrassing assemblies." "I'm not a crab," showed up numerous amounts of time.

The soft-shell crab analogy was a theme that Dr. Jorgensen kept bringing up.

The analogy was that your brain was a soft-shell crab that is rapidly making connections.

Because of all of the connections, your brain goes a little haywire for a bit and your ability to make good decisions is dramatically skewed; the teenage brain is malleable and unreliable.

"She sounded like she was trying to dumb everything down for us, which seemed patronizing," sophomore Braeden Rose said. "I'm sure that she is an incredible individual, but she sounded wacky."

Subsequently, in advisee group the following Monday,

there was the conversation about the brain and how important it is to take care of it.

"It is so important for students to hear this," Mr. Gilyard said. "I do think that the feedback is always important because we need to think about how do we do it better. If a student doesn't like the speakers, I want to know what they would prefer. The student voice is very important."

Mr. Gilyard expressed that we should constantly be educating kids. When a student makes a bad decision and gets in trouble, he wants them to be mindful of this fact.

Mr. Gilyard wants kids to be making a decision from a place of power, not from a need for approval or a fear of rejection.

"If I can help at least one kid, then I will keep bringing in other speakers as well," Mr. Gilyard said.

This isn't just a conversation that happens at KO, but rather, all over the nation.

Different schools and organizations are always attempting to check in on kids and seeing what the statistics are.

The National Institute of Drug Abuse conducted a survey on drugs and other substances in December 2018 to research this topic more. They found that in the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey, that drug use is on the rise in the form of vaping.

The percentage of rates increased as the teenagers become older. The poll found that 37.3 percent of 12th graders, 32.3 percent of 10th graders, and 17.6 percent of eighth graders reported to vape.

The MTF results also revealed that this past-year, the usage of drugs other than marijuana was at the lowest level in the past twenty years.

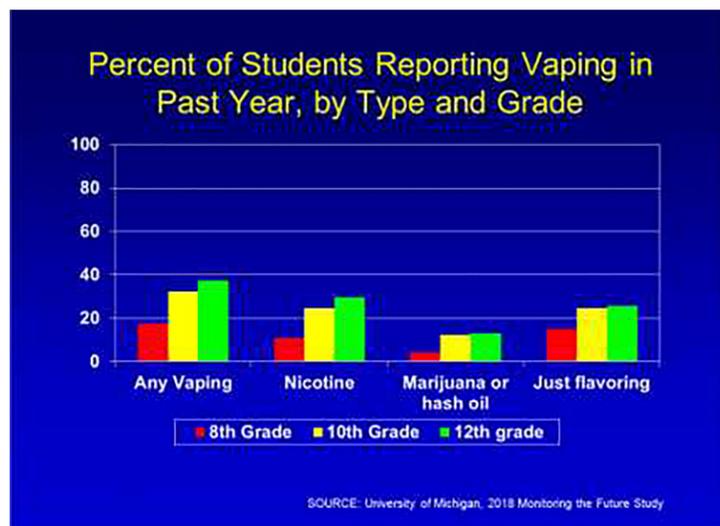
It was reported that there were 6.1 percent of eighth-graders, 9.6 percent of 10th graders, and 12.4 percent of 12th graders who reported using non-marijuana drugs.

The use of marijuana

"She would keep diverging into other subjects and wouldn't finish her sentences, so it was confusing, but I still liked her."

—Alyssa Pilecki

declined among students in the eighth grade. It didn't change for students in the 10th and 12th grade, despite state marijuana laws changing in the past five years.



Graph of survey conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse in December 2018 that shows the percentage of students that vape across the nation. Photo provided by www.drugabuse.gov.



Sophomore boys squash player Henry Kriebel. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

Henry Kriebel

Sophomore Henry Kriebel is the boys squash player of the moment. Kriebel has been playing squash for the past five years and has developed his skills each year.

Even though Kriebel is a sophomore, he has become a young leader on the team and a great example for his teammates.

Senior Captain Aidan Shea said that he has really enjoyed having Kriebel as a teammate because he is so hard working and has a great attitude.

"Henry has played very well this year and always competes during tough matches," Shea said.

Kriebel said that his favorite match of the season was also one of the most challenging matches he competed in all season.

"My favorite match of the year was my finals match at New England's," Kriebel said. "It was a really, really tough match, and I lost the first game 21-19, which was really mentally and

physically draining." Kriebel was able to push through and ended up winning the match.

Head Coach Robby Lingashi said that Kriebel was a major asset to the team this season because of his great skills on the court and his demeanor off of it.

"He has been winning most of his matches even as a team event," Coach Lingashi said. "He stays focused, works hard, and enjoys the game which helps lead to his success."

Kriebel has noticed his own development and growth as a player this season and understands all the responsibility he has on the team even as an underclassman.

"This year I played number three," Kriebel said. "In the end, I played really well this year with an overall strong winning record. I am really looking forward to continue being a leader on the team next year and guiding the younger players. With a really young team, even as a sophomore, some of the younger and older kids have looked up to me in some way or another."

Cai Kuivila

The girls swimming and diving player of the moment is junior Cai Kuivila for her great improvement and hard work throughout the season.

Kuivila shared that this is her first year swimming for KO, but she has been swimming recreationally her whole life.

"I have never swum competitively on a serious team," Kuivila said. "I swam with a youth club team for two seasons when I was eight, but I have no other experience on a swim team."

Kuivila said that the highlight of her season was the Founder's League meet where she won three out of four of her events and achieved a personal record in the 50 free.

"This was a personal goal of mine and was exhilarating to achieve that goal at such an important meet," Kuivila said.

Coach Baker said that Kuivila is tough in the water,

and she has high hopes for Kuivila. "I feel like she will end the season well because she sees races as an opportunity and is not nervous," Coach Baker said.

Kuivila said that the Founder's League meet was a great bonding experience and was a celebration of how far everyone has come.

"It was a great opportunity to swim against a variety of competition in preparation for New England's," Kuivila said. "The heats are organized by seed times, so you are swimming against people with similar times allowing for a very competitive race with equal opportunity to win."

Kuivila truly enjoys being on the team. "We always cheer each other on, regardless of time or place, and it has made the season go by extremely quickly," Kuivila said. "We celebrate each other for taking risks and trying our best and I think that it makes KOSD truly unique."

Despite some shoulder problems throughout the season,

Kuivila has fought through this adversity with the help of her teammates and is resilient.

"I just want to say thanks to the entire team for being so supportive the whole season," Kuivila said. "I doubt that I would have stuck with the sport nor become so passionate for it without the never-ending support for my achievements, both big and small, and progress."

Kuivila mentioned that her swimming role model isn't any of the great Olympians, but someone on the team, freshman Allie Wildstein. Kuivila said that Wildstein always holds herself to a high standard, both in the pool and out, and has been a huge part of the team.

"When she was injured, she came to every meet to cheer on her teammates and she has so much passion for the sport and the team that it inspires every one of us," Kuivila said. "Although I am two years older than she is, and she is like a little sister to me, I admire her endlessly for being so hard-working and a leader on the team."

Coach of the Month: Coach Biondi

by Nick Traver '20

Head girls squash Coach Cameron Biondi grew up in Greenwich and attended Brunswick Academy, which is a school with an extremely strong squash program. They have been in the high school national championship finals for the past seven years, winning three times.

He started playing squash when he was eight and continues to play in his free time. He played in the national championship in middle school, which he said is his favorite squash memory. He continued to play in high school

"My favorite moments are those in between game moments where the girls are the ones giving advice or encouragement."

—Coach Biondi

at Brunswick, but never made the varsity team. This, however, did not diminish his love for the game as he went on to play club squash at Yale University.

Coach Biondi said that his time with the club squash team at Yale really helped him develop his coaching skills. "I had to figure how to motivate people with interesting practices, team dinners, and social events," he said. He has

brought this to KO as he is not only trying to develop the skills of his players, but also their teamwork, leadership, and love for the game.

Coach Biondi said that his main goal in coaching is to help teach his team about the game of squash and how to compete as a team even though the matches are individual. Coach Biondi set up a Google Classroom account for the squash team so his team

always knows the practice schedule but also so they could learn the game of squash. On the Google Classroom account, Coach Biondi posts videos of practices and professional matches so his team can fully comprehend and immerse themselves in the game.

Coach Biondi said that his favorite part about coaching is seeing his players coach each other. "My favorite moments

are those in between game moments where the girls are the one's giving advice or encouragement," Coach Biondi said.

He said he is very appreciative to be able to work with such a great group of people who truly care as much about winning, improving, and squash as he does.

Coach Biondi's players have definitely appreciated his presence this season. "He brings a really good positive energy," senior Co-captain Camilla Berckemeyer said. She added that Coach Biondi's experience playing squash has really helped the team develop their skills. "We've all furthered our skill level," Berckemeyer said.

Berckemeyer also said that Coach Biondi runs practice a slightly different way, balancing both strenuous drills with fun. "He has done a great job making practices both fun and different," Berckemeyer said.

Senior Co-captain Ananya Alleyne said that he does a great job communicating with his players. "He's open to listening to our ideas," Alleyne said. Alleyne added that his communication skills have helped bring the whole team together, and made squash more fun. "I hope he stays next year," she said.



Coach Biondi circles up with members of the girls varsity squash team, offering inspiring words of advice and encouragement before the big match. The girls carefully listen before playing. Photo by David Newman.



Junior swimmer on the swimming and diving team, Cai Kuivila. Photo by Ali Meizels '19.

Girls basketball secures key win

by Lian Wolman '19

On Saturday, Feb. 23, the girls varsity basketball team secured their first win of the season and beat Canterbury School 50-38.

Senior Co-captain forward Jane Dunbar said when reflecting on the season that her favorite game was against Canterbury, which was also her senior day. "My favorite part of the season was definitely the last game where we came back from being down 12 points," she said, "and we made a huge comeback and won the game, and the crowd that was there stormed the court even though it was like 10 people it felt like so many more, which was really cool."

Head Coach Quinn O'Brien said he was impressed with the team's performance in this final game. "It made me proud the way they never gave up and fought until the last second of the game," he said, "and ultimately got their first win on the last game ever for the seniors."

Junior Co-captain shooting guard Angelina Maselli also said that the Canterbury game was her favorite to compete in because everything just came together. The team was down for the majority of the game but fought really hard in

the fourth quarter to achieve a 12 point win. "My favorite game was for sure Senior Day and getting the win," Maselli said. "It was back and forth all game and finally with only about a minute left in the game we just didn't miss and were able to secure the win for our seniors."

Freshman guard Natalia

Correa agreed with her other teammates that Canterbury was her favorite game. She said that even though they struggled throughout the season they didn't give up that game or lose hope in winning.

The team's losing record of 1-22 does not show all of the great progress or accomplish-

ments the team had off the court. "This season we always stayed positive and supported each other no matter what, which was hard because of our record," Dunbar said. "But, we never gave up, and we fought through every game and worked hard and stayed super positive which made each game enjoyable even though they didn't always go our way."

Maselli also commented on how proud she is of the team for not letting their losses crush their moral. "I think throughout all the rough patches, we did a great job at staying as one team," she said, "not splitting off or checking out. The chemistry was strong from November all the way to February."

Dunbar said that one of her least favorite games was against Watkinson School on Monday, Feb. 11, when the Wyverns lost 71-33. "We played them after playing a ton of games in a row and right after a super close loss to Kent two days before, and we just weren't mentally ready for that game," she said.

Maselli said that she was disappointed with the end result of the Ethel Walker School game on Wednesday, Feb. 23. "My least favorite game was Ethel Walker," she said. "We didn't

come ready to play. It was a team we could have competed with but didn't bring the right energy."

Senior center Madi Henry said that she is really proud of the team for working hard through adversity. "One thing we did really well was never giving up on each other or the season as a whole," she said. "I am excited to see what the team is able to do next year and I am excited to come back and visit."

Coach O'Brien is hopeful for the future of the program. "My hope for the future would be to continue the progress we made this year," he said, "by coming back next year as a cohesive, hard working team that has more experience and is ready to take the next step forward in terms of learning how to complete games and ultimately have a better record and become a competitive program."

Maselli said that she is very hopeful to see what the team can do next year even though they are losing many seasoned players. "We graduated five seniors this year that have been influential in the program," she said. "Although it'll be tough, I'm excited to see what a team of 'newer' players can do. It will be different, but there is nothing I love more than KO hoops."



Senior center Madi Henry remains fierce in competition as she rockets a quick chest pass to a teammate in Hewett Gym. Photo by David Newman.

JV games of the month

by Conor Caneday '21

Over the winter season, the various JV teams have played their hearts out. In the season, certain games stand out as they showcase the abilities that the teams possess.

Starting off with JV boys basketball, the best game came against Taft. The Wyverns ended up winning in double overtime. "We worked together really well during that game," sophomore center Jake Schwartz said. "It was a team win."

The Wyverns were down by three points with 40 seconds left on the clock. Sophomore point guard Nate Capodice sank a three to send the Wyverns into overtime.

After the first overtime, the Wyverns were down by two. Junior shooting guard Sam Capodice got fouled on the three-point line. He ended up making two of the three free throws, making the Wyverns go into double overtime.

The Wyverns ended up winning due to key baskets by sophomore point guard Jeff Davis and Schwartz. "We played till the end," junior center Wes Pierce said. "Taft is one of the hardest teams that we played, so it was a big win."

As for JV girls basketball, their best game happened against Suffield Academy on Wednesday, Feb. 20. The Wyverns beat Suffield for the first time in three years, 40-14.

"We played really well in all aspects of the game," Head Coach Ron Monroe said. "Passing, shooting, defense, they did it all."

As for key players, a

number of people stood out and helped in the win, starting off with sophomore forward Keegan McMahon who got key rebounds and scored eight points in addition to playing strong defense.

Senior shooting guard Alessia Caruso also played strong defense, shutting down her opponents and causing multiple turnovers. "Our defense was really strong," Coach Monroe said, "We held them to four points in the first half."

As for offense, sophomore forward Emma Henry made key baskets to increase the lead against their opponent. Sophomore point guard Catherine Daniels also had multiple fast breaks and contributed greatly to the Wyverns success. "It was a team effort," Coach Monroe said. "We wanted that win more than they did."

Next is girls JV squash. The girls played a great game against Williston Northampton School. The girls pulled out a victory, winning 5-2. It wasn't easy though. On the day of the match, there was a massive snowstorm heading right for them. So, it was either play as hard as you can or get stuck in a snowstorm.

The girls obviously decided to play tough, some having the best matches of the season.

"We were under a time constraint and a lot of pressure," Head Coach Cameron Biondi said, "but the girls ended up winning and making it a short match."

One player who did well was junior Alyssa Pilecki.

Pilecki was coming off of a period of being injured and was sick a lot, but she powered through, winning the match 3-1.

Another player who performed well was freshman Aliza Sadic. With her amazing serves and strong fundamentals, she was able to win 3-2.

"I was really proud of them," Coach Biondi said. "This match they were able to show their strength and dedication to the game."

Finally, JV boys squash played a good season, but their best game in the past month came against Pomfret School. The Wyverns won the match 7-0, sweeping their opponents.

"I'm really proud of them," sophomore Henry Mandell said. "When they come to practice with us on varsity, they are always focused and giving it all they got."

Some players who did well were freshman Aidan Dillow. Dillow is improving his skills every day and starting to become a stronger player.

Another player who performed well was sophomore Jaden Weinstein. Weinstein continues to play well every match. He is focused, determined, and a hard worker who is bound for success.

Overall, the Wyverns played one of their best games of the season, with everyone coming out determined and ready to play.

If the Wyverns consistently perform at their highest level, they will be unstoppable in the coming year.

Boys basketball lands winning season, 12-11

by Lian Wolman '19

Boys varsity basketball competed to their best ability against tough teams to achieve a 12-11 winning record.

After the team beat Gunnery School on Saturday, Jan. 26, 80-45 on their home court, they struggled to win their next few home games. They lost a very competitive game to St. George's School on Saturday, Feb. 2, 62-60 in Hewett Gym. Then on Monday, Feb. 2, they competed again on their home court against Marianapolis Preparatory School and suffered another close loss 85-78.

Junior guard Calvin Schumacher said that his favorite game of the season was against Loomis Chaffee School on Wednesday, Feb. 6, when their luck changed and the Wyvern's beat their team 74-64. "My favorite game was against Loomis because it was a great team win against a really good class A team," he said.

Schumacher said that when the team played to their best ability, they were unstoppable. "We had ups and downs this season, but overall we learned we were a dangerous team when we played to our full potential."

The next game they travelled a bit farther to Kent School on Wednesday, Feb. 13, and were able to pull out another win, 57-46 where they showcased their great skill and teamwork.

Unfortunately, they did not

end their season on a high note as they lost three out of four of their last games. When they travelled to Millbrook on Wednesday, Feb. 13, they lost 71-48. Then on Saturday, Feb. 16, they played against Hopkins School at the Wyvern's home court and won 75-56.

Then they suffered two home court losses, one against Hopkins School 75-56 on Wednesday, Feb. 20 and another 95-67 on Saturday, Feb. 23, against Canterbury School.

They lost to Williston Northampton School on their senior day by only three points and it was devastating. They were neck and neck the entire game and they stayed in the game until the very last seconds when they lost 67-64.

When sophomore forward Carter Meshanic reflected on the season as a whole, he spoke about making it to the championships of the KIT's. "My favorite part of the season was definitely competing in the KIT's for the first time and beating the Winchendon team in the semi-finals," he said.

Schumacher is already thinking about next season when he will be a senior on the team. "Next year I'm excited about competing and hopefully winning a class B championship," he said.

Senior shooting guard Nicholas Bray is eager to improve his skills for next season.

"I'm excited just to see where I can take my game to by next year and see the progress I am going to make," he said.

KO swimming, diving splashes way through Founders League

by Kush Katatria '20

The boys and girls swimming and diving teams both ended their season on a strong note at New Englands on Saturday, March 2.

The boys came in fifth. Senior Captain Ellis Winfree broke KO's school record in the 50-freestyle and won the event at New Englands' with a time of 21.79 seconds.

The girls came in eighth, and several swimmers made finals. Junior Cai Kuvuila made it to the 100 free finals and shaved four seconds off of her Founder's time. Sophomore Risha Ranjan also managed to shave 10 seconds off her 500 free time from Founder's. Freshman Allie Wildstein set personal records in her finals performances in the 500 free and 100 backstroke.

Before New Englands', both the girls and boys teams traveled to Kent School on Wednesday, Feb. 13. The girls fought hard but were not able to pull out with a win. They ended with a score of 93-80. The boys did their best, but unfortunately lost 93-87.

Both teams swam in the Founders League Championships on Wednesday, Feb. 20 and Saturday, Feb. 23.

Coach Baker said that the strength of the girls team is their youth because the team only has one senior and two juniors,

which means that the younger girls have the opportunity to lead and create long lasting bonds.

"There is also a lot of versatility within the team," Coach Baker said. "Some swimmers can swim a bunch of different events."

Head Coach Alex Kraus said that the strength of the boys team is that they are hardworking and cohesive. He said that they are willing to try new things. "The team has great energy, and everyone is really supportive," junior Nick Traver said.

Coach Baker said that the team hopes to have more swimmers and continue to build the program. She said that she would love to have more breaststrokers. "It is hard to swim competitively in a meet with only 12 girls because depth matters," Coach Baker said.

Coach Kraus said that the swimmers, especially the younger ones, have gained a lot of competitive experience as the season progressed.

He also mentioned how the team is much smaller and younger from past teams. The team has graduated nine seniors from last year and needed to fill many empty spots and people had to learn new things. "The team is not as experienced as last year's team, but we have come a long way," junior Jamie Amell said.

The boys team has formed a really close bond. Traver

said that the swimmers even bleached their hair in unity to get ready for the competition season and show their team bond.

He said that the team is built of energy and does better when the team supports one another. "We formed a close bond as we spend a lot of time training together," junior Marwynn Somridhivej said.

Coach Kraus also mentioned that some standout swimmers on the team included: Winfree in sprints and butterfly, eighth-grader Elias Brandt in diving and Amell and Traver.

Both teams eagerly looked forward to the championship meets. They have worked tirelessly to prepare for the tournament in order to be prepared for the great competition.

"It is an exciting time of the season because everyone has done their training and now can go faster than before," Coach Kraus said.

The boys swimming and diving team has won New Englands the past three years and before the tournament Coach Kraus said that he had high hopes again for the competition this

season. "I hope that everyone can get best times and finish strong on Saturday," Coach Kraus said. "We hope to finish in the top five."

Winfree said the team competed very well was able to accomplish that goal. "We had a lot of good swims and best times," he said. "It was also very emotional because we are such a small and close-knit team."

The girls swimming and diving team had similar goals going into the competition. "My goal is that everyone finishes feeling proud of their time," Coach Baker said.

Senior Captain Tom Betts said that the team was very memorable this year and everyone is really supportive of each other. He said that a memorable moment this season was the team's 100x100 practice.

"Despite the bad air quality at UHart and the difficult nature of the workout, it was a great practice because I really saw how far everyone had come in their season," Betts said.

Betts said that the team has great spirit and the swimmers push each other to improve. "My takeaway from this season is that winning meets does not determine a successful season," Betts said. "It sounds cliché, but spending time with your teammates and seeing everyone improve is far more important than beating other teams."



Helen Lu '19 swims hard against her opponents. Photo by David Newman.

Boys squash wins New Englands

by Jamie Amell '20

Boys varsity squash finished their regular season with a 1-11 record after some tough fought matches but delivered a strong finish by winning their New England's Class C competition.

Although the team had a difficult, hard fought regular season, their hard work paid off as they won the end-of-season championship.

Four resilient Wyverns reached the finals, and three came home with individual titles, helping the team capture the overall title.

Sophomore Henry Kriebel won the title at No. 3 singles, junior James Ravalese was victorious at No. 4 singles and freshman Teddy Keegan won at No. 6 singles.

Although the the team had a strong lineup, they had very difficult competition throughout the season.

On Senior Day, Wednesday, Feb. 20, the Wyverns helped celebrate their three seniors on the team, captain Aidan Shea, Eryk Jones, and Sam Mazo for their contributions to the team over the past few years.

The team was not able to accompany the celebration with a team win against the Williston Northampton School

but they, fought hard. This year the team had a very difficult and very competitive schedule.

"The season was pretty difficult and although we only had one win, we had a lot of close matches,"

Shea said. "We played against tough opponents which challenged us a lot such as Suffield Academy, Pomfret, and Loomis Chaffee."

Head Coach Robby Lingashi said he is very proud of his team

for competing at such a high level. "I have been impressed with the team this year because although we are in the C division, we play teams from the A division and are able to compete," Coach

Lingashi said. "The match against Williston Northampton School was extremely close, and all was riding on the number five position and everybody gave everything they had so I was proud of them even though we lost 4-3."

Although the team was small, they were close. "Our team chemistry was pretty great, and I think that is what made the season so fun despite the losses," Shea said. "Because there are only 10 guys on the team, we got to know each other really well and it's fun hanging out with them during practice because I usually don't see them during school."

It was sort of a rebuilding year because the team was quite young with two other sophomores and one freshman," Henry said.

For Shea, his last high school match was challenging. "My favorite match of the season had to be my very last one at New England's," he said.

"It went to five games, and I was so exhausted, but all my teammates were there supporting me. Even though I lost, it was probably the most tired I've ever been in any sport, so I was happy I was able to give everything I had in my very last game."



Boys squash senior Sam Mazo lunges quickly for the ball against a tough opponent. Photo by David Newman.

Ice hockey glides out of season

by Keegan McMahon '21

The Kingswood Oxford ice hockey team finished the year strong with a 7-6-1 winning record led by senior Captain forward Garth Swanson and Head Coach John Hissick. In the past, the boys team had won only one game but this year the team pulled together and won seven.

The Wyverns prepped for all their games this year, as not a particular one stood out. The annual Hockey Night is the biggest game they have since everyone comes to support the team.

"Hockey Night was a highlight for everyone on the team this year since everyone had fun playing in it," Swanson said.

They had many inspiring wins this year and even a tie. On Jan. 30, the team played Saint Luke's School who they had previously lost to 4-1.

After playing a hard and intense game, the team came out with a well earned tie, 2-2. The team showed a hard work ethic, battling through all three periods of the game.

Another big game was on Feb. 13. The Wyverns lost against Harvey School, 6-3, which unfortunately prevented them from making the playoffs. The game was well fought. They fell behind early in the game but freshman forward

Sean Gilland scored the first goal for the Wyverns off a shot that found the top of the goal. Despite the strong push towards the end of the game, the Wyverns still fell to a crushing defeat. Their last game on Feb. 15, was a 9-2 victory over South Kent School where, collectively, the team

put on one final show together.

In the past, the boys team has not been that strong, and this year they, battled against tough teams. These battles started with clear, accomplishable goals set for the whole team. As a team, they had two goals: make the playoffs and do their best each and every

game. Even though they missed the playoffs by half a game, it was important that each player gave it their all. "We did not end up making the playoffs this year, but more importantly, I believe that we did leave everything on the ice every game, and tried our best to win each game, no matter

the opponent," Swanson said.

Practices helped the team prepare for every game that came its way. This year, they focused on many things through the season: puck support, shooting for rebounds, and creating more scoring opportunities.

They also worked on their power plays and penalty kills which increased their ability in converting power plays into scoring opportunities. "What didn't we work on in practice?" Coach Hissick said.

The Wyverns possessed great team chemistry which helped the new kids fit in with older players.

"Even though we had some new kids this year, they have really fit in well with some of the veterans on the team, who have been playing with each other for multiple years, and who have great chemistry together." Swanson said. Another strength they possess is their work-ethic. They worked and gave their full effort every game and every practice.

The only thing the team lacked this year was a skill gap since they were one of the weaker teams in the league. They compensated for this in their work ethic when facing other teams.

"We are able to use our ability to work hard to our advantage in order to offset the skill gaps that we may face when playing other teams," Swanson said.



Sophomore Mitchell Autorino skates down the ice on a breakaway at their home hockey rink. Photo by David Newman.

Girls squash celebrates big victory

by Nick Traver '20

On Friday, Feb. 1, the girls squash team won the division five national championships. This tournament consisted of 16 teams from across the northeast region. The Wyverns were ranked in the top four going into the weekend and were hoping to bring home the championship that eluded them two years prior, as they came in second.

KO was supposed to face Nardin Academy, which is a high school in Buffalo, on Friday but Nardin was unable to make it, so the Wyverns won by default. The girls squash team then faced SquashSmarts, which is a program in Philadelphia, and won by a decisive 6-1 margin.

Head Coach Cameron Biondi said he was especially proud of senior Co-captain Cami Berckemeyer and junior Amelia Levine who were able to win very close 3-2 matches.

Later that same day, the team faced Moses Brown, a school from Providence, Rhode Island, in the semifinals, where they were able to win 6-1.

Coach Biondi said he was very happy with his team as they had multiple convincing victories.

In the last day of the tournament, the Wyverns found themselves in the finals against Buffalo Seminary.

The Wyverns won 5-2 and were able to bring

some hardware back to KO

Coach Biondi said he was pleased with how both his teams played and how they supported each other. "Numbers two, three, and four didn't lose the entire tournament," Coach Biondi said.

He was also very happy that his team was given an opportunity to compete together in a tournament opposed to how New England's is formatted. "Nationals is a team tournament vs. New England's,

where each person has their own mini-tournament," Coach Biondi said. He believes that this national tournament, especially winning it, brought the team closer together, refined their skills, and gave them great confidence heading into the back half of their season.

The girls squash team then faced Berkshire School on Wednesday, Feb. 6, where they were unable to pull out the victory, losing 4-3. Similarly on Thursday,

Feb. 7, the Wyverns faced Miss Porter's School where they lost 4-3. Coach Biondi said that these matches would be good interpretations of what New England's would be like: close and hard fought.

On Monday, Feb. 11, KO played host to Loomis Chaffee School where they won 5-2. Sophomore Sloan Duvall had a decisive 3-0 victory and senior Co-captain Ananya Alleyne was able to win a rivalry match against a close friend

to whom she had lost in November.

On Wednesday, Feb. 13, the girls squash team hosted Green Farms Academy for their senior day and were able to go out in style, winning 7-0. "We were able to enjoy our last home match, and the underclassmen gave great speeches," C. Berckemeyer said.

On Thursday, Feb. 14, the Wyverns faced off against Hopkins School where they were unable to come out with the victory, losing 6-1. Despite the scoreline, Coach Biondi was happy with his team's performance, especially considering that they were missing their best player, sophomore Sydney Smith, which forced everyone to play higher on the ladder than they were accustomed to. Still, Alleyne was able to win her match, playing against Hopkins School's best player in the No.1 spot.

On Wednesday, Feb 20, the Wyverns had their last match before New England's against Williston Northampton School where they won dominantly, 7-0.

Coach Biondi said that there were convincing wins across the board and this match surely helped boost the team's confidence before New England's.

On Saturday, Feb. 24, the squash team traveled to New England's where they were able to place eight out of 16 teams. Stand out performances were by sophomore Isabel Berckemeyer and C. Berckemeyer who both placed fourth in their brackets.



Sophomore Isabel Berckemeyer hits a strong shot, taking the lead in her competitive match. Photo by David Newman.