

# The Blue and Gold

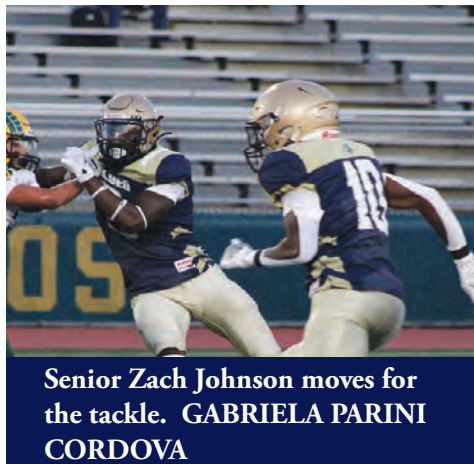
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Malden High School  
Volume 110 Edition 1

77 Salem Street  
November 2024

## Malden Football Kicks Off

## Malden Schools Welcome New Superintendent



Senior Zach Johnson moves for the tackle. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Thomas Tierney  
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Head of Sports

The Golden Tornados have hit the midseason point of their season.

Currently, the team sits with a record of two wins and four losses, and with a record of 1-3 in the Greater Boston League, they currently sit in 7th place. So far, their struggles have come from the

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Johnson Huynh runs for a touchdown. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Alexia Lima  
Lead Reporter

With the delicacy of the Malden Public Schools administration hanging in the balance, granting the responsibility of overseeing the administration to a new superintendent loomed over the school committee after the expiration of former Superintendent Dr. Ligia Noriega-Murphy's contract. A comprehensive search assisted by the collective effort of educators, families, and community members led the school committee to meet Dr. Timothy Sippel who, after various deliberations, ultimately became Malden's new superintendent.

Dr. Sippel's diversely rich background in education made him uniquely qualified for the position, given the importance of diversity in the city of Malden. Whether one is considering his previous experience as a teacher and school leader in Los Angeles and Pasadena, California, or his recent position as a district administrator in Cambridge and for the Worcester Public Schools, there is no questioning how Dr. Sippel's vast knowledge of the public school system can be an attribute to Malden's administration.

"Throughout my career, I intentionally have sought positions

## Malden High Shows Spirit at Masquerade

Gabriela Parini Cordova  
Head of Sports

Delina Yohannes  
Head of Local

Homecoming is one of the few nights each year where students can come together and have fun. The school is decorated with streamers and filled with smiles on everyone's faces, as people talk and dance with their friends, dressed in their best attire.

This year the Class of 2025 decided on a Masquerade theme. "We were bouncing around ideas, like

neon glow-in-the-dark, Disney, country-western, just a bunch of different ideas," explained class advisor, Courtney Braz. She continued, "It was the student council that really liked the idea of masquerade, which was why we went with it and it ended up being so cute." President Christina Anasthal added, "Out of all the themes we talked about, we felt like Masquerade is versatile and would cater to everyone."

Masquerades aren't only about dressing nicely; they also involve the masks people usually wear at a masquerade-themed party. Bertha Jean Louis mentioned that this

idea was used for prom a few years ago, but "nobody really went along with it, so we made sure to get masks and all of that stuff. We wanted something that people would find fun and want to post about."

"When I heard the theme was a Masquerade ball, I got super excited because it was different and people could actually participate. This theme seemed like it would actually make people want to go to Homecoming," Senior Samara Perez detailed.

The Class of 2025 had many ideas this year but wanted to do

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New Malden Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel. Photo taken from cityofmalden.org.

as a teacher and as a principal and then as a district administrator in districts where there is a very diverse community, just because I think it is really important to be a part of a diverse community. I find diverse communities just awesome. I enjoy learning about new cultures and meeting people from different cultures," Dr. Sippel explained.

Dr. Sippel continued by detailing how while his previous experiences were valuable to him as an educator, he does not want to incorporate previous administrative

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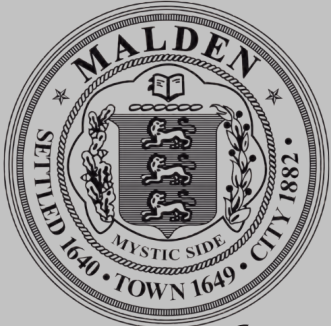
Nourdeen Mossalam, Julianna Rua, and Lunna Hasibuan posing for a picture together; Amanda Retamero Granja and Derek Lam posing for a picture together. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

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Malden High School

# The Blue and Gold

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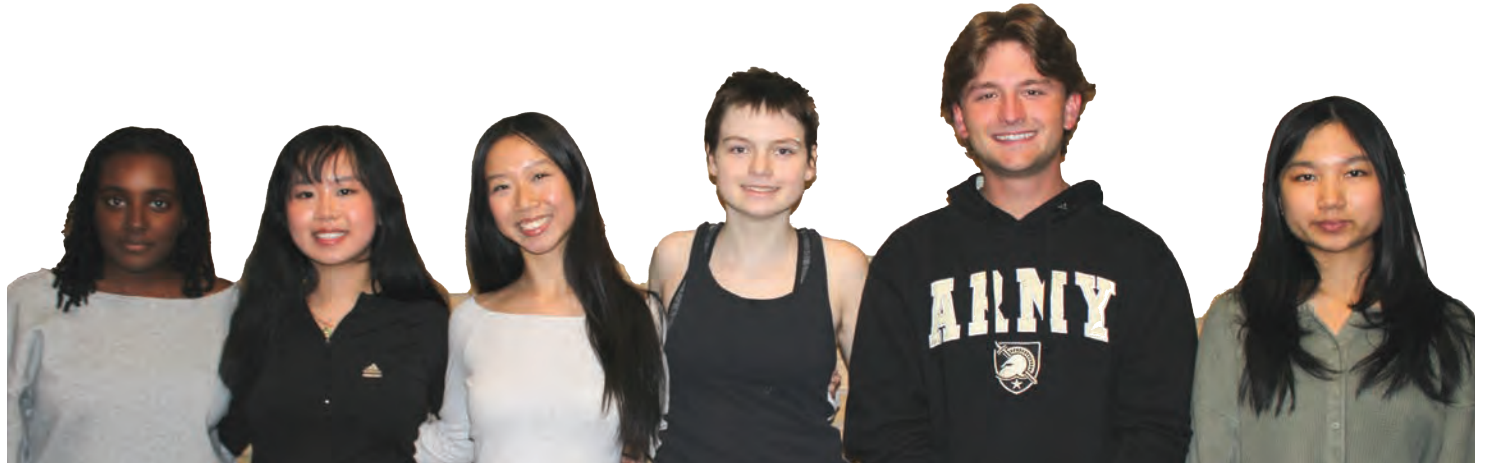
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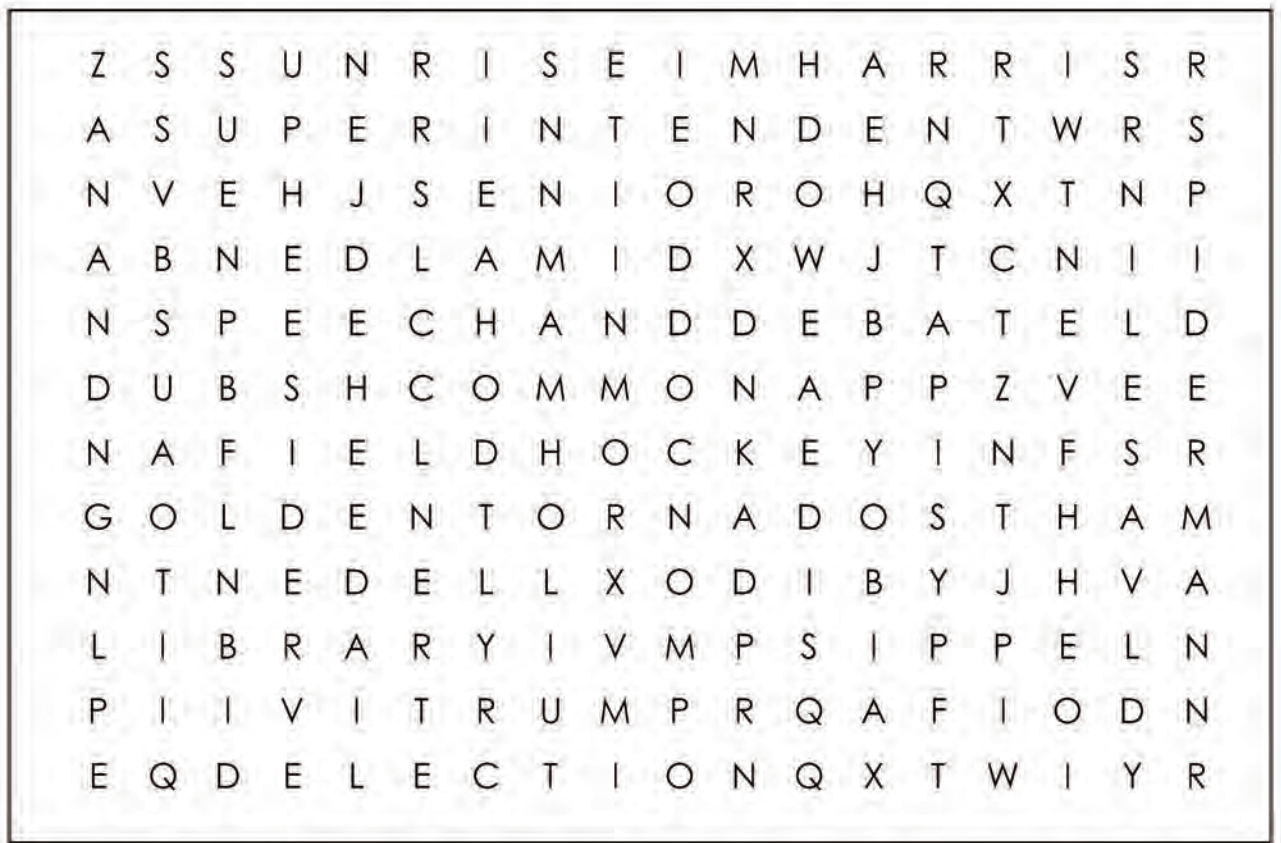
RYAN GALLAGHER



From left to right: Editor-in-Chief of Print and Design Abigael Fesehaie, Editor-in-Chief of Social Media and Print Jaslie Fang, Editor-in-Chief Jessica Li, Editor-in-Chief Mack Keating, Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile Bo Stead, and Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile Lily Nguyen posing together for a staff photo. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA



From left to right: Managing Editor Thomas Tierney, Head of Sports Gabriela Parini Cordova, Head Copy-Editor Chouaib Saidi, Head of Local Delina Yohannes, and Managing Editor Ashton Calixte posing together for a staff photo. JESSICA LI



Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

ANAND  
COMMON APP  
ELECTION  
FIELD HOCKEY  
GOLDEN TORNADOS  
HARRIS

LIBRARY  
NEDELL  
NEDLAM  
NILES  
SENIOR  
SIPPEL

SPEECH AND DEBATE  
SPIDERMAN  
SUNRISE  
SUPERINTENDENT  
TRUMP

# The Blue and Gold

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# Malden High Implements New Hallway Policy

Jessica Li  
Editor-in-Chief

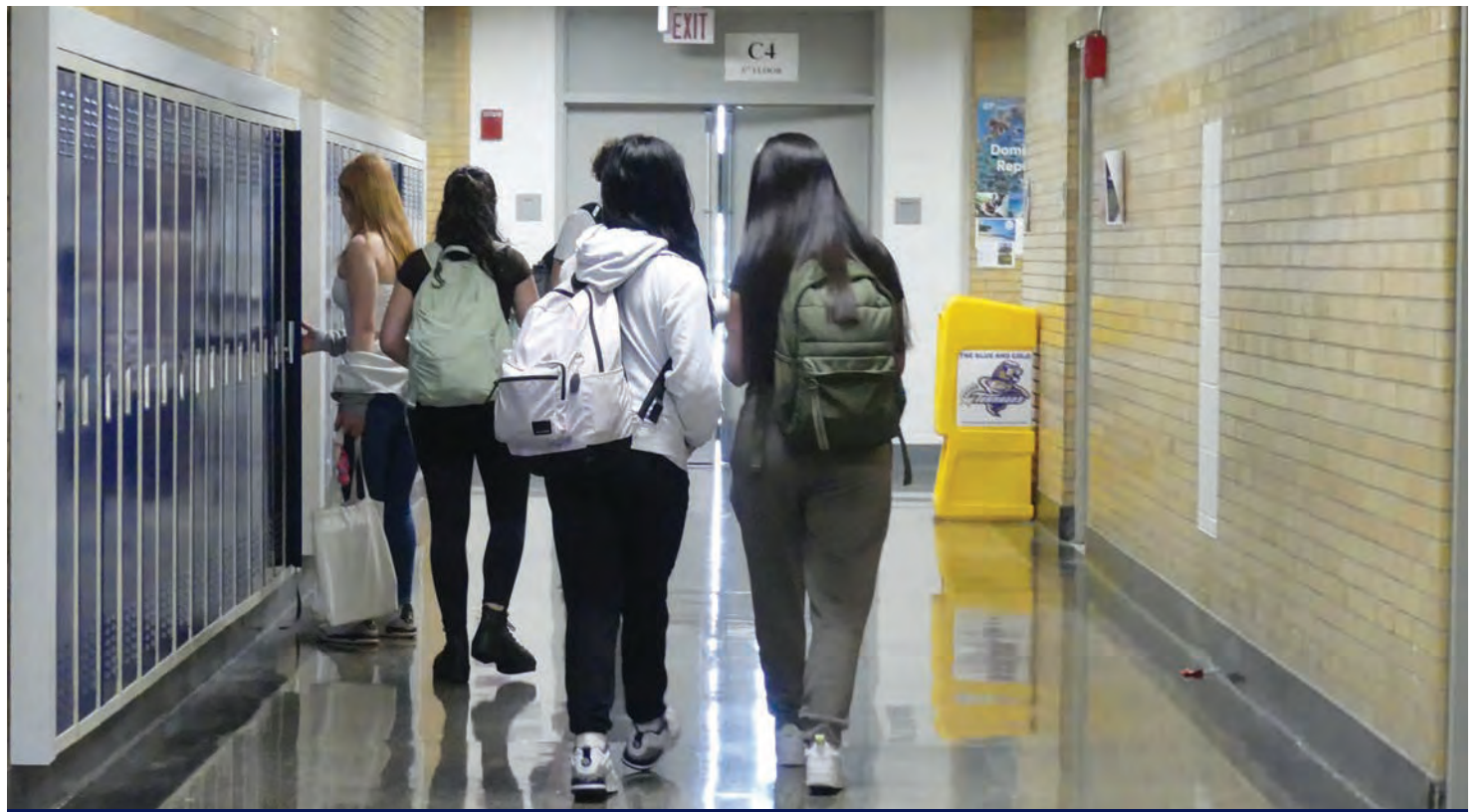
In the aftermath of the pandemic, hallways have grown increasingly cluttered as students struggle to make their way to classes on time. Instead, they opt to socialize with friends, spending excessive time in the halls.

Despite a marked improvement in the current school year, Principal Chris Mastrangelo noted that changes still needed to be made regarding the school culture around tardiness.

"We talked about it at the beginning of the school year, 'Let's Make It Happen,' let's change the culture. And we are seeing that... one of the ways that we want to build on the momentum of changing is clearing the hallways," he explained.

In light of this, Malden High is introducing a new hallway procedure starting November 12th to urge all students to arrive at their classes in a timely manner before the bell rings. Its goal is to assist in developing professionalism, fostering a productive classroom environment, and promoting a more responsible school culture.

The procedure uses a disincentivizing approach to prompt students to arrive on time, mandating that all teachers shut their class-



Students photographed walking in the Jenkins hallway during passing period. JESSICA LI

rooms who don't seem to realize that getting to class is a priority."

The current issue of students increasingly lingering in the hallways may stem from the pandemic. As social studies teacher Richard Tivnan stated, "post COVID, there's a lot more people in the hallways than there was before. There's a lack of urgency to get to class."

Another cause may also be that there used to be a different code of discipline, such as sending students to detention for up to several hours

the constant flow of students entering class will often disrupt the learning environment. Teachers plan their classes for the entire duration of class, mapping out structured lessons with plans including the full class roster. "Every time those kids walk in, there's a distraction to the classes and there's a distraction to the flow of the lesson. The teacher has to get those kids to catch up to where they're at," Mastrangelo explained.

For Valente, it can also be

down when there's traffic, making me late. Also, it's very annoying when areas are overcrowded when they shouldn't be."

These issues, similarly noted by new superintendent Dr. Timothy Sippel, were taken into account when he and Mastrangelo explored methods to guarantee all students arrived to class on time. During his time as principal in California, Sippel had followed the escorting procedure and found it to be effective. After sending out surveys to staff, discussing it with the Student Advisory Board, and gaining positive feedback from the student and faculty advisory board, "we decided to go with it," Mastrangelo adds.

In anticipating a quick turnaround, he expects that "the first week, that week of November 12th, we might see hundreds of kids being redirected. By the second week, we might be down to 10s, and by the third week, we might be down to fewer because it's a hassle for everybody."

This new procedure seems to be welcomed by staff. Tivnan, emphasizes that the hallways have been "way better than it has been the last several years," and predicts its effectiveness: "I think overall, it's going to work, and I think it's going to work fairly quickly, because how many times is a kid going to want to get walked to class by some adult?"

The purpose of "discipline is to teach responsibility and empathy, and it helps you mature," Valente stated, "We need to do more of that. And I think if kids realize that being in class is important for their education... for their future, I think they'll realize that the consequence of being left out is bad."

"I often say to students who are late that the class is missing out on you too; you had stuff to offer, and now they missed out on it. And then there's that underlying level of respect knowing that this teacher worked hard to plan something for us, and I'm messing it up," Mastrangelo concluded.



Students walking in the Holland hallway during passing period. JESSICA LI

room doors when the bell rings. If students arrive to class after the doors close, they will be escorted by a staff member to one of three redirection centers, where their names will be documented before they are escorted back to class. After three tardies, staff will notify students' caregivers. In addition, bathrooms will be locked for the first and last ten minutes of class to prevent students from skipping class.

Jim Valente, longtime media teacher at Malden High, observed the changes to hallway traffic over the years. He described the hallways as "a lot more concentrated with

after school or sending them home to return the next day with their guardians to explain why they were late. These strict policies would act as deterrents which both Valente and Tivnan said kids responded to quickly. While schoolwide policies, such as Friday detention and several tardies equaling an absence, and teacher policies, such as grade deductions, should keep students from being late, there remains a margin of students still not making it to class on time—an issue that Mastrangelo was concerned may worsen in the coming months.

For both students and teachers,

perceived as a level of disregard. "When it becomes habitual, it almost becomes like, 'Well, I really don't care.'"

Senior Thalia Louigene noted, "Throughout the years, I think the hallways have gotten a little better. Although some areas still have a lot of traffic, there's usually a staff in the hallway directing everyone to class. So that's definitely better than it used to be, but the kids who regularly skip and walk around are still there." For Louigene, the slow pace of the hallways affects her own ability to get to class on time: "The whole pace of the hallway slows

# WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

“Andrew Garfield’s Spider-Man hangs upside-down by a web. Photo from office *The Amazing Spider-Man 2* video game cover.

As a kid, I watched Spider-Man movies with the kind of awe only a child could have. I saw Peter Parker swinging from skyscrapers and facing enemies that threatened his life—and even more painfully, the lives of his friends and family. The “Parker Curse” weighed on him, putting everyone he loved at risk simply because they were close to him.

Parker could only watch as his powers drew them into his tangled web of danger and pain. No matter how many battles he won, his friends and family always seemed to bear the cost. Sometimes, as I look around at my own life, I feel a bit like I’m living that story.

In the years since I came out, I can’t shake the feeling of a similar curse. Shortly after I came out as transgender, a large number of my friends came out as part of the LGBTQ+ community as well. More recently, I received a diagnosis for my health condition Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), and over time, I saw some of my closest friends begin journeys of their own with declining physical health.

It seemed as if each part of my life spilled over to theirs. Here we are, this group of people who once bonded over school, movies, and video games: kid things. Now, we’re navigating the medical system, managing doctors’ appointments, and talking about the weight of things we had never imagined facing so young.

Parker faced imminent, physical threats with his spider powers, but the dangers my friends and I are up against are more invisible. Instead of villains in masks, we face chronic symptoms, mental health battles, and hostility. Spider-Man might have been able to swing through the city, but my friends and I? We’re just trying to make it through the day with whatever energy we can muster.

Like Parker, I found myself wishing I could protect my friends from everything difficult or painful. I don’t want them to feel the way I do: trapped in a body that does not cooperate with its mind. As more of my friends began dealing with similar issues, I felt an uncomfortable, inexplicable guilt. Was I somehow dragging them into my struggles, cursing them with my challenges?

There’s a kind of isolation in that guilt. You want to reach out, but part of you is afraid that sharing your struggles will somehow make things worse. There’s a reason Spider-Man keeps his identity hidden from his loved ones; the fear that revealing his true self will only hurt them is almost stronger than the dangers he faces. But at a certain point, even Parker could not keep those walls up forever. And eventually, neither could I.

But maybe I had it wrong all along. In those early days, when I was hesitant to share my own struggles; it was my friends who helped me feel less alone, who showed me that I didn’t need to hide or downplay what I was going through.

As time went on, I realized that by being open about my journey, by showing vulnerability and honesty, I made it safer for them to do the same. We became not just a group of friends but a network of support—no judgment, no pressure to have it all figured out. By being vulnerable, I created a safe space where they, too, felt free to drop their masks.

Spider-Man doesn’t get stronger because he’s alone: he gets stronger because he has people that see him fully and love him anyway. By being honest about my own life, I didn’t pass on a curse: I helped create a kind of web—a network where we support each other.

In our desperate texts for help, or when we exchange texts about our latest doctor visits, or laugh about how ironic it feels to be talking about medical tests at our age, I realize I’m not dragging them down—we are lifting each other up.

Spider-Man’s story is his resilience. His challenges don’t go away, and no one swoops in to magically make everything better. He lives in the real world, where sometimes the best you can do is pick yourself up and try again tomorrow.

For my friends and me, that resilience has taken on a new meaning. There are days when it’s hard to get out of bed, when every step feels like it takes all the energy I have. There are days when it feels like I’m swinging from building to building, hoping the webs won’t snap. But knowing I’m not alone in that struggle makes all the difference.

So, maybe I’m cursed, maybe I’m not. Maybe none of us are. Maybe, like Peter Parker, it’s not about the darkness we face but the light we manage to find in each other. Talking about our struggles might not cure our conditions or resolve all our challenges, but it breaks the silence that once kept us isolated.

In a way, that’s its own kind of heroism. We’re not saving New York City, but we’re saving each other—one conversation, one shared laugh, one late-night talk at a time. And if that means we’re more connected, more honest, and a little bit more hopeful, then I’ll gladly take that curse any day.

Mark Keating  
*Editor-in-Chief*

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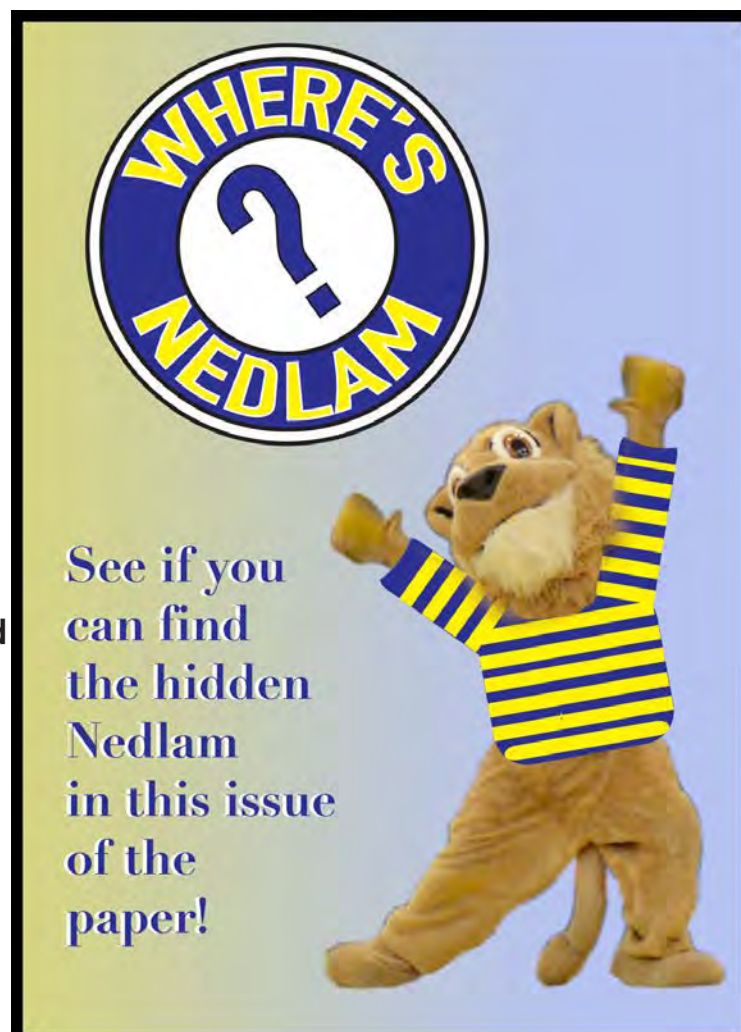
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*The Blue and Gold* is an open forum for student expression. It is produced by students for the school and the community. The views presented in this paper are not necessarily those of the advisor or the school administration. The views presented in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

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

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

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c/o Malden High School  
77 Salem Street  
Malden, MA 02148

# Preparing Pippin

“I feel like it’s really fun to take on different hats in theater.”

- Adriana Messana



Play Production students practicing movements for the play. Photo submitted by Todd Cole.

Chouaib Saidi  
Head Copy-Editor

Play Production is a place of prosperity and positivity. Imagine taking the stage after countless hours of practice and rehearsal and getting one shot to perform the variety of skills that have been manufactured over many months of practice.

Malden High’s Play Production team does not have to imagine, as they have been preparing for the play Pippin since June. But before mentioning the cast, it is important to mention the staff who are the foundation of the play.

“I spent a lot of hours this summer planning as it sort of comes down to, ‘what do I want the stage to look like? What should the sets be like?’ It’s scouring the script to say what props do we need?” stated Director Todd Cole, who is entirely new to directing.

Another director sharing the reins of management of this play is Ariana Messana, in which this is her first year as technical director but second year leading the play production class.

“I feel like we did a lot of growing last year from being my first year here, getting to know the kids a little bit and them getting to know me. I’m really excited for this new role as technical director and testing that out for the show. I think with everything that Mr. Cole put into it, it’s going to be a great show,” Messana exuded.

“It was the first show that I



Instructor debriefing the play pro cast. Photo submitted by Todd Cole

ever did in high school. It’s such a great musical. It’s what really made me love musical theater when I was in 9th grade way back in the 1980s. I did Pippin, and I fell in love with how cool theater can be because Pippin is different,” Cole expressed.

Malden High’s Play Production team is collaborating with Esh Circus, in which they have brought in the circus performers to help the cast prepare for the play.

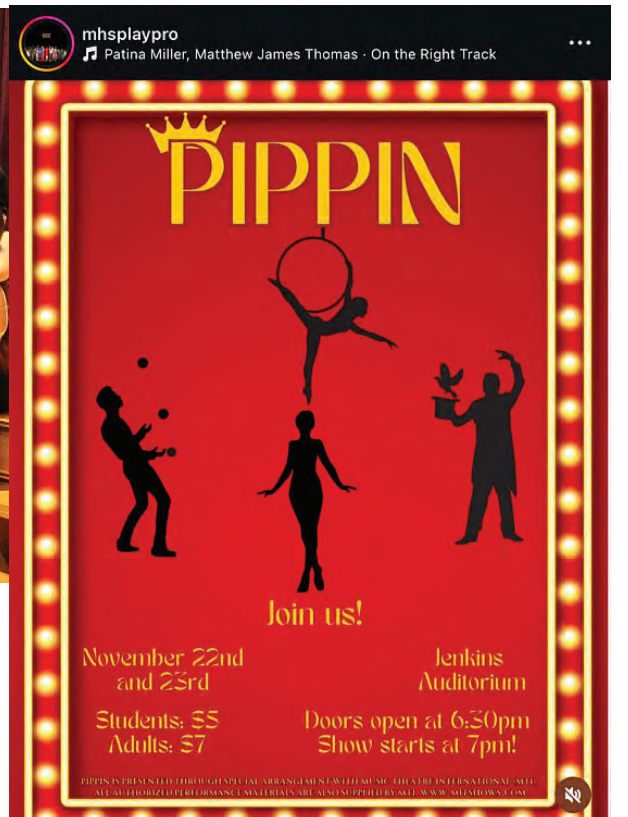
It’s heart-warming to see the emotional connection between the directors and the play itself. Surely these feelings have an effect on the cast as well, as they are tasked with characters such as senior and President Addison McWayne playing Catherine and junior Liam Gallagher playing King Charlemagne in the play.

McWayne has high expectations for this play and shares that sense of enthusiasm by giving a

holistic perspective of the play.

“I listened to the soundtrack and really got into all the characters and seeing them come to life on the stage even just after a few rehearsals with the opening number, it looks so good and I can’t wait to see it with all of the technical elements and our set and our lights. I think this show is really going to be a great show and I can’t wait to see it,” McWayne shared.

“We are going over scenes, and songs multiple times. We are also doing independent practices after school, whether that be between two characters or an entire ensemble. The environment’s always a good place and it’s been very fun specifically with this play because it’s such a fun and different play from other musicals or theater productions,” Gallagher stated.



Play Pro’s Pippin’ flyer on Instagram @mhsplaypro

Without giving too much, the directors and cast members all settled on one idea in regard to the theme of the play: Finding yourself in a chaotic environment with tyrant kings and shedding light on the parallelism of reality and non-reality that goes along with it.

With expectations rising, nerves forming, and stage fright lurking, Malden High School’s Play Pro squad hopes to impress. Don’t miss out, go check out @mhsplaypro on Instagram for more details about the play Pippin at the Malden High School Jenkins Auditorium on November 22nd and 23rd at 7 pm!

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This article was written prior to November 5th; all interviews were conducted without poll data.

Graphic of Presidential nominees Kamala Harris and Donald Trump over their respective parties' logos, separated by their Vice Presidential nominees. JASLIE FANG

# MALDEN HIGH SCHOOL'S PRE-PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OPINIONS

**Jaslie Fang**  
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**Jessica Li**  
Editor-in-Chief

In the last eight years, political polarization in the United States has intensified, with both major parties advocating strongly for their respective agendas. The 2024 presidential election takes place in a climate of heightened concern, where one side fears for the future of American democracy, and the other side worries about the nation's standing on the world stage.

Since Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 presidential election, a series of defining events have shaped the national landscape, including, but not limited to, the January 6th insurrection of 2021 at the United States Capitol, the tragic toll of the COVID-19 pandemic, nationwide protests for racial justice in 2020, international tensions involving Russia and Ukraine, and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

At the beginning of this election cycle, many voters and citizens anticipated a rematch between Joe Biden and Donald Trump, echoing the 2020 race. However, on July 21st, 2024, incumbent Biden announced his withdrawal from the election, which many speculate is a product of the pressure from the Democratic Party. This sparked discussions about his competency in office among voters, especially after what many believed to be a poor debate performance.

Among the notable events in this campaign was the assassination attempt on Trump's life during a rally in Pennsylvania on July 13. As

Trump addressed supporters in Butler, Pennsylvania, a gunman armed with an AR-15 fired shots, one of which grazed the 45th President's ear. While Trump recovered without serious injury, firefighter Corey Comperatore was tragically struck in the crossfire and later succumbed to his injuries.

Unlike other presidential elections, the running mates have become a deciding factor for many American voters. The Vice-Presidential debate, hosted by CBS News, was remarked as a refreshing change of formality and civility in politics, drawing in an impressive 43 million viewers.

The nation has seen two completely different administrations and the outcome of this election could make history. Should Trump win, he would become the second president to serve two non-consecutive terms, joining Grover Cleveland. On the other hand, a victory for sit-

ting Vice-President Kamala Harris would mark her as the first female president, first Asian-American president, and second president of color in American history.

## How Did Students Expect to be Impacted?

Malden High School is one of the most diverse high schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, making the student body prone to conflicting opinions. Nevertheless, 77% of Malden High students appear to support Kamala Harris and her running mate, Tim Walz, as the potential future leaders of the country as discovered through a poll shared via The Blue and Gold's Instagram and Facebook accounts, @theblueandgold.

Despite the dominance of Harris in these polls, there are massive varying opinions across the board over both candidates. Junior Hasnaat Khan believes that this major-

ity opinion derives from the fact that Massachusetts is a well-known blue state and in general, "Republicans are looked down upon," in Malden High's student body.

Adding onto this sentiment, senior Reda Benhafoun stated that "everyone is either too scared to say what they want, or follows the crowd."

Khan furthered his position by noting he has seen "teachers having a bias, whether they admit it or not." In a call for action, Khan believes that students at Malden High should consider differing beliefs by recognizing perspectives outside of their own.

Senior Jennifer Slawson believes it is "difficult to teach about politics, especially events that are so relevant in the present, without any sort of bias bleeding through."

"Everyone is either too scared to say what they want, or follows the crowd."  
- Senior Reda Benhafoun

Contrasting Khan's points, senior Merari Flores believes that Malden High fosters a civil environment where students can have opposing beliefs without bias. However, the same cannot be said with social media where Flores put forth, "social media has such a huge role in presenting information to the people, especially about the candidates and who the target audience is."

On a similar note, vice president of History Club and senior Remi Santos believes Malden High's diversity enables the "difference of points of view, opinions," and that it is in Malden's best interest "to have an open mind when it comes to different issues."

In regard to these different issues, Flores's positions housing, abortion, and education as the most important factors when evaluating a candidate's policies. She emphasized, "It's more about the future generations as it's getting so much harder to afford college. The same thing goes for housing." This viewpoint highlights one of the main critiques of Harris—that the details of her policies have not been fully



Rioters outside the US Capitol building holding US flags and "Make America Great Again" flags. Photo from Wikimedia Commons.

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articulated to the public.

A large focal point of this election has been centered on the topic of abortion. Adding to this conversation, Flores commented that “knowing how a candidate acts towards the topic of abortion lets me know whose interest they have in mind: women’s rights should not be taken away,” hinting at Trump’s vocal stance on abortion.

Slawson added, “As a woman, I am extremely passionate about the freedom of women to make choices about their own bodies and I hope that following the upcoming election will help protect that right.”

Santos adds to Flores’ and Slawson’s comments, stating, “I think Harris is more qualified to be president, and her vice presidential pick Walz holds similar views to what I support, in comparison to Trump and Vance.”

Akin to Santos, Slawson affirmed her support of Harris, explaining that “just seeing how quickly she was able to pull her campaign together and gather support” gave Slawson “hope in what she can do for the country.”

**“The economy is absolutely the biggest issue we have, and that’s because I’m overhearing young Americans almost every other day say that they don’t believe in the American dream, and that crushes me inside.”**  
- Senior Reda Benhafoun

However, the focal issue of many Americans is the economy. Benhafoun explained that basic necessities have significantly increased “to a point [that] the average American has to find multiple jobs to live paycheck to paycheck.” Upholding his beliefs, Benhafoun calls for increased tariffs on Mexico, China, and Vietnam, in order to “stabilize our economy to a point where young kids can keep that American dream alive.” Expanding upon this, Benhafoun expresses that the declining idealism of young Americans “crushes him inside.”

On the other hand, Trump aims to shift education from being a national matter to a state matter. The

45th president reiterates this commitment to eliminating the federal Department of Education while on his campaign trail and in one of his campaign videos, “Agenda47: President Trump’s Ten Principles For Great Schools Leading To Great Jobs.” Benhafoun reasoned “Trump isn’t perfect, but you can’t argue against his policies, which worked.”

Federal decisions on education funding will significantly impact schools, as will policies on gun control. Gun violence has become one of the leading causes of death for children in the United States, with rates continuing to rise. Harris, a gun owner, still wants to ban assault weapons and take high-capacity magazines often used in mass shootings off the streets. Harris, amidst the school shootings in this country, addressed the need for a more expanded background check system.

Contrastingly, Trump, who is backed by the National Rifle Association (NRA), believes that every American has the God-given right to protect their families and themselves with firearms. Moreover, Trump vowed to protect “law-abiding” gun owners from having their firearms seized from them. Bump stocks increase the fire rate of a semi-automatic weapon; during Trump’s tenure, his administration voted to ban them, following the Las Vegas Mandalay Bay massacre.

Malden’s immigrant population makes up 43% of the city’s total residents, making it one of the most immigrant-rich cities in Massachusetts. Another one of the most highly contentious issues for this election is America’s immigration and border control crisis. Republicans criticize the Biden-Harris administration for the eight million encounters with immigrants at the southern border, whereas under the Trump-Pence administration, there were just shy of two and a half million encounters. During debates, Harris often blamed Trump for vetoing a bipartisan border control bill. The spotlight on this action has led some democrats to believe Trump vetoed the bill solely to have an issue to campaign on. In response, Trump argues “It’s a phony deal. It’s a scam. There’s no bill. I never had a bill,” during a recent campaign event with Latino leaders.  
English Teacher Leader Yahaira



Vice President Kamala Harris takes the Oath of Office during the 59th Presidential Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol, Washington, D.C. Jan. 20, 2021. (DoD photo by U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Kevin Tanenbaum)

Márquez built off of this, stating that “One of the most important issues is immigration ... we have a lot of families that are new to the country and a lot of students who are new to the country.”

**“My thoughts are that Harris is the more qualified candidate. There are some points Trump may have, but he is a convicted felon and I truly do not want a felon to be running this country, especially because he has ‘concepts of a plan,’ but doesn’t actually have one.”**  
- Senior Merari Flores

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly known as “Twitter”) have become one of the biggest battlegrounds for winning over young voters in both parties, with 66.7% of students surveyed claiming that they receive their information regarding the election via social media.

To connect with Generation Z—born between the years of 1997 and 2011—both candidates have embraced trends, podcasts, internet influencers, and celebrities to attract the younger generation of new voters. Trump’s most prominent endorsement comes from Tesla and SpaceX CEO, as well as the owner of X, Elon Musk who has attended and spoken at several rallies. Comparatively, Harris has built momentum among young voters through multiple endorsements and a strong TikTok presence, highlighted by international popstar Taylor Swift’s endorsement and the strategic use of Charli xcx’s “BRAT” album, and the concept of a “BRAT” summer.

**“So much of the political discourse online just seems to be two sides arguing back and forth ... it is very easy to get caught up in content that only pushes one side’s viewpoint.”**  
Senior Jennifer Slawson

On the topic of social media’s role in politics, Slawson cites social platforms as one of the contributing

factors “in polarizing our country and preventing any productive conversations.” Apart from this, the accessibility of social media plays a significant part in the spread of misinformation amongst the nation. Slawson supports this by giving insight into her own experiences, “Sometimes when I go on TikTok, I am scrolling through videos so quickly I often do not even comprehend how truthful they are or take an extra second to think about what I am being told.”

Furthermore, modern technology has caused the rapid development of Artificial Intelligence (AI), leading to numerous cases of disinformation that pose risks to voters’ viewpoints and decision-making.

On a separate note, in the previous 2020 presidential election, Malden had 25,757 (73%) of its registered 35,300 voters turn out and cast ballots. Biden-Harris received 19,111 votes and the Trump-Pence ticket had 6,026, further corroborating the claims of how left-leaning the City of Malden is and likely will be for this upcoming election.

Just prior to ballots closing, America witnessed burning of ballot boxes and other last-minute efforts to secure and potentially skew votes. If anyone was unable to vote in this election but would like to be eligible in the next election, visit Vote.org to register or pre-register —s young as 16—to vote.

**“What makes Malden High School a great institution of learning and the City of Malden, is the ability to have respectable differences of opinion, because the only good way to combat bad speech is with your own speech.”**  
- History Teacher Leader Kurtis Scheer

And as Scheer states, “the ability to have these tough conversations and to have diversity of thought and opinion is how you move ahead.”

*\*This article was written prior to November 5th; all interviews were conducted without poll data.*



President Donald J. Trump gestures with a fist-pump as he disembarks Air Force One at Wilkes-Barre Scranton International Airport in Avoca, Pa., Thursday, August 20, 2020, and is greeted by guests and supporters. (Official White House Photo by Tia Dufour)

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Phones hanging on a phone tree. SOPHIE LEBLANC

## Protecting Intellectual Curiosity: English and World Language Departments' New Cell Phone Policy

Sophie LeBlanc  
Lead Reporter

In a world with such an embedded reliance on technology, it's not difficult to believe that phone use has permeated classrooms, but the extent to which it has disrupted learning has been shocking. High schools worldwide are finding that, increasingly, what was once a lively environment of fostering curiosity and making life-long memories is now one of social media, online shopping, and silence.

Jennifer Clapp, a long-time English teacher who teaches multiple AP courses, reflected on her classroom environment in prior years, stating, "The English department all noticed, post-pandemic, it's been difficult to get that community feeling." She claimed that classes "used to have a lot more life."

"I think it's a problem for everyone," affirmed Physics teacher Julie Grillon, "you're missing out on life in general...it's a society problem. It's made the school space less enjoyable for me because there isn't as much connection between students."

Over the summer, the English and World Language departments concluded that the best course of action to restore community and focus would be to enact a stricter phone policy. The policy outlines the expectation that all students must place their phones in a designated area at the beginning of all English and World Language classes. Specific implementation varies by class, with many teachers opting for slotted wooden boxes or "cell phone trees," which are numbered pocket holders that hang on classroom doors.

However, one thing is universal: "Cell phones are not to be seen, used, or in possession of the students during classes," states English department leader Yahaira Marquez. "As a department ... we can't change the school policy, but we can do something to help on a smaller scale."

Teachers' reaction to the new policy has been overwhelmingly positive. Many faculty members are witnessing enhanced student focus without the distraction of cell phones. "Focusing on your work... is so much better without the constant barrage of notifications and

alerts," stated Clapp. "Last year, I didn't make people put it away, and I was always having to address it... this has been much better [with] it not being a distraction."

Additionally, many are finding that student engagement has drastically improved without the disruptive influence of phones. Lucia Musilli, an English teacher and former librarian at MHS, observes that "students are more present." According to Clapp, "The lack of distractions has really improved classroom interactions."

Ariana Messana, an English and Theater teacher entering her 2nd year at Malden High, reflects on how it's "A chance for teachers and students alike to unplug."

Clapp even finds that she'd like the policy to extend outside of the classroom environment into other parts of the school day, "I've thought about [implementing the policy] with my morning meeting group...they just don't talk to each other." She understands, however, that the pushback for this would be more problematic and that the administration is likely far from implementing such a policy.

## A New World History Teacher "Straight" from New Orleans

Wafia Saruwar  
Reporter

Fatima Husain  
Reporter

Abyan Ali  
Reporter

World history—two simple words that hold vast information about humans from the very beginning of time. Whether we talk about the Stone Age from 2.5 million years ago or the Fall of the Berlin Wall, history intertwines with our daily lives in numerous ways. To teach about the mosaic of our past, Sarah Straight has become a part of Malden High School's community as a world history teacher.

"She came to us with 14 years of experience in New Orleans... she taught in the heart of the city. She and her family moved up here, and she was looking for a job. She was certified in Social Studies, with AP World History and AP Government among the many classes she can teach. She completely owned the interview. I walked her out, and I came back in and everybody said, 'Did you hire her yet?'" Principal Chris Mastrangelo stated.

Ann Pember, a world history teacher who collaborates with Straight in the social studies department said, "She's great. She's worked in several schools before and has a lot of experience, so she knows her history. We're lucky to have her."

Like all teachers, she has a strong passion for her subject. As a kid, Straight was already showing signs of wanting to be a teacher, as she would "force" her siblings to play school. She would teach them important lessons on how to read and ride their bikes. She finds a lot of joy in explaining things and, therefore, loves her job as a history teacher. Straight describes teaching as a "combined job," where she gets to teach about something that she is truly passionate about.

Although her interest in history fueled her desire to become a teacher, she also thinks students of all ages are interesting to work with. She is not the kind of person who enjoys being bored—and with students, a day is never boring. A fan of the New Orleans Saints Straight grew up in Louisiana and started her career as a teacher in that state. After spending a couple of weeks at Malden High, she can clearly point out a few differences and similarities that she has noticed between the students from both cities.

"I think that schools generally have their structure, but New

## Class of 2025 Hosts Senior Sunrise



The Class of 2025 student council gathered for its first group photo as seniors. THOMAS TIERNEY

Thomas Tierney  
Managing Editor

On September 6th, the Class of 2025 came together for an early morning at MacDonald Stadium for its first class event of the year.

The fairly new event brought

the class together for the beginning of the end of a long chapter for the new seniors. After the CO '25 Instagram sent out a poll for students to decide on its location, they were left with a split vote between Waitts Mount and MacDonald Stadium. Eventually, students agreed for the event to take place at 5:30 AM at MacDonald Stadium.

Despite the cloudy weather, students still gathered together for a cheerful event. For many, the day was about becoming a senior: "It was a good opportunity to get together and celebrate finally becoming seniors," said senior Darian O'Brien. During the event,

*Continued on page 11*

*Continued on page 11*



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# SUPERINTENDENT DR. TIMOTHY SIPPEL

## Welcoming The New Superintendent of Malden Public Schools

*Continued from front page.*

practices into Malden without the community's input. "I have been in education for 33 years. I know a whole bunch of stuff. I was a principal. I taught elementary school. I was a high school principal, but I was not here. And so I want to hear from the people who live here and who go to school here, who work here, who have invested their lives here, and what they think before we make any big decisions," Dr. Sippel added.

The significance of the superintendent's role in our community cannot be understated, which is why the hiring process for Dr. Sippel was not only intricate but also heavily community-oriented.

"We wanted to make sure we had an educator from each union that was represented. So unit A is your teachers, unit B is directors, and unit C is all the paraprofessionals, as well as parents whose students represent every aspect. We wanted to have an English language learner, somebody that had a special needs child, whether it was academically or maybe medically fragile, and then a general education student, just making sure we covered all of our bases," Jennifer Spadafora, Malden School Committee Vice-Chair and Co-Chair of the superintendent search, shared how the search committee prioritized diverse representation.

Despite the diversity of the search committee, members had one desired trait for a new superintendent in common: they wanted someone who would ensure there be open communication and collaboration between administration and families. Families feel as if they need to be informed about the administrative decisions that directly affect their children, therefore the search was focused on finding a superintendent that would embrace and facilitate these crucial exchanges.

Dr. Sippel's morals align with these ideals, he elaborated how "it is really important to me to lead in a way that is inclusive and collaborative. I am going to make a lot of decisions because that is what I have been hired to do, but I strive to include people and get input from them in decisions that are going to impact them. I am constantly wanting to consult with principals, teachers, the teachers union, parents, and students to get their ideas on what the district can be, what the district should be, and what steps we should take to get there."

Even with the short time he has had in the position, Dr. Sippel has already begun enforcing this collaborative initiative. "I live by a general rule: collectively we are a lot more intelligent than I am individually, collectively we are a lot stronger than we are individually."

"The fact that he put that as a



Dr. Timothy Sippel listening intently to a Malden Education Association representative during the most recent school committee meeting. ALEXIA LIMA

goal, to listen and work collaboratively with not just the adults but the students, I think is exactly what we need as a district. And again it has to be genuine, and I've seen nothing but genuineness from him so far," Malden High School Principal Chris Mastrangelo contributed.

Recalling his roots in education after attaining his degrees in international relations and a certificate in Latin American studies, Dr. Sippel started his career as a bilingual Spanish teacher in Los Angeles with the help of the organization Teach for America. Since then, Dr. Sippel has continued to use his fluency in Spanish to embrace inclusivity.

"I have tremendous empathy for our students here who do not speak English, not just students, but families who don't speak English and who are far from their home. All of us, whether language is the issue or not, whether it's a teacher trying to become a more effective teacher or a student trying to become better in a certain subject or a family that's having a rough season, we can all grow," Dr. Sippel emphasized.

Spadafora further supported Dr. Sippel's focus on inclusivity, she shared how given his prior positions she "knew that it would not

be overwhelming to come here, for some people they have been interviewed and might have come from districts that are smaller but Malden is unique. In the whole state, we are the most diverse high school in Massachusetts." She continued, "I think it takes a really strong person to be able to lead a district where every single student has the ability to succeed."

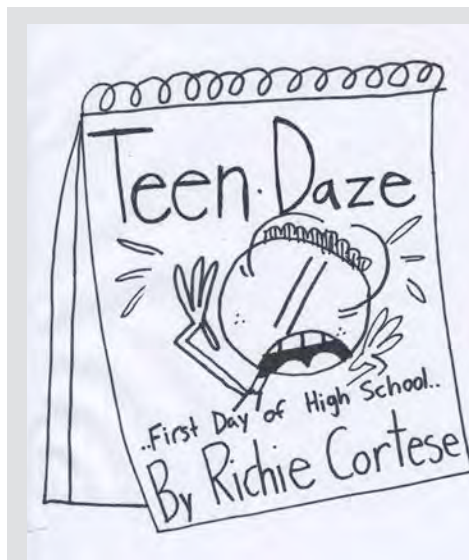
Within his first couple of months, other administrators have noted how well his approach to entering the administration is going, and how it will benefit his relationships in the future. "You have to earn trust, and that is the phase where we build those foundations because things are not always going to be great, things will get rocky, that is life, but if you can establish a sense of trust and a sense of understanding that is what gets you through those rocky times. That is what he is doing right now and I think it is wise. Some people come in and they want to change everything right away, well you turn everything upside down and people feel resentful, they get caught in their emotions, and then we do not move forward," Mastrangelo clarified.

Looking into overall goals for

Malden's administration, Dr. Sippel highlighted how "Malden is a community like a lot of urban cities, where public education can make the difference for children in terms of whether they have opportunities after high school. It is not for us to decide for them what they should do or what they should pursue in life. But what it is for us to do is to make sure they are prepared to have as many options as they can possibly have."

Dr. Sippel intends to always have the best interest of the students of Malden at heart and to constantly discover new ways of supporting families and educators to provide the educational and social opportunities that students deserve.

"I have vested interest, I have two teenage boys in the district so I want Malden to be the very best it can possibly be. I want us to offer a curriculum and classes that put us at the forefront of education that other schools might not be offering. I want us to be the school that they talk about in magazines and say 'Move to Malden, this is where you want your kids to go,' and I think he can get us on the road there so I am excited," Spadafora enthusiastically concluded.



Comic series:  
**Teen Daze**



"and this is the reason why I'm hiding your halloween candy this year!"

Comics drawn and submitted by  
Richard "Richie" Cortese.

# Traveling Librarian Stephen Nedell Finds New Home at Malden High



Venusia Teklu, Charlotte Berliner, and Angel Rex are having a conversation with Stephen Nedell about the perks of having a library. WAFIA SARUWAR

Fatima Husain  
Reporter

Wafia Saruwar  
Reporter

Abyan Ali  
Reporter

Libraries are a significant component of student's lives as they offer literary materials for class, allow them to explore their creativity or pick up a riveting book, and serve as a place for friends to hang out together.

For the past seven years, Stephen Nedell has been the K-8 Traveling Librarian for the Malden Public Schools and finally came to a stop as the permanent librarian at Malden High School following the retirement of the previous librarian, Mary Liberge.

"He's very organized. He very much wants the kids to be in the library, but he's also been in the district for a long time, so that was actually kind of an easy one [to hire] because of all the things we have to teach new teachers about Malden, he knew everything... He's a funny guy, by the way. He has a very, very good sense of humor," Principal Chris Mastrangelo proudly stated.

Nedell has been a part of Malden for over a decade, delivering unremitting support specifically to the academic community. Seven years ago, he organized the collection of books at the K-8 schools to make

it easier for students to access and process the necessary books.

"I was struggling with reading, and he helped me pick up a book that was just right for me," said his former student Sofia Rivera.

Pasquale DiBenedetto, an English teacher at Malden High, described a memorable interaction between Nedell and his students: "He was very inviting when we first came down [to the library]. One particular time when seniors were working on their college essays, he was willing to help me check in with my students, which I thought was really cool."

After some layoffs in 2017 in the district, librarians were among them, and the district would not continue to employ five professional librarians. Instead, they decided to have one librarian alternate between all the K-8 schools and build the library program. Though he enjoyed having the opportunity to visit all of the libraries and took pride in organizing them, the constant change in location five times a week made it difficult to merge into the different school environments and build relationships.

"It was very frustrating because I was only there one day a week, so it was very much what library services the student could get, and there was not a lot," Nedell said.

In 2017, The Blue and Gold conducted an interview when he first started



Stephen Nedell organizing books and boardgames. WAFIA SARUWAR

his journey, and he explained in thorough detail his plans, motives, and sentiments about the libraries. To hear more about this interview, read here: "Revamping Malden's K-8 Libraries"

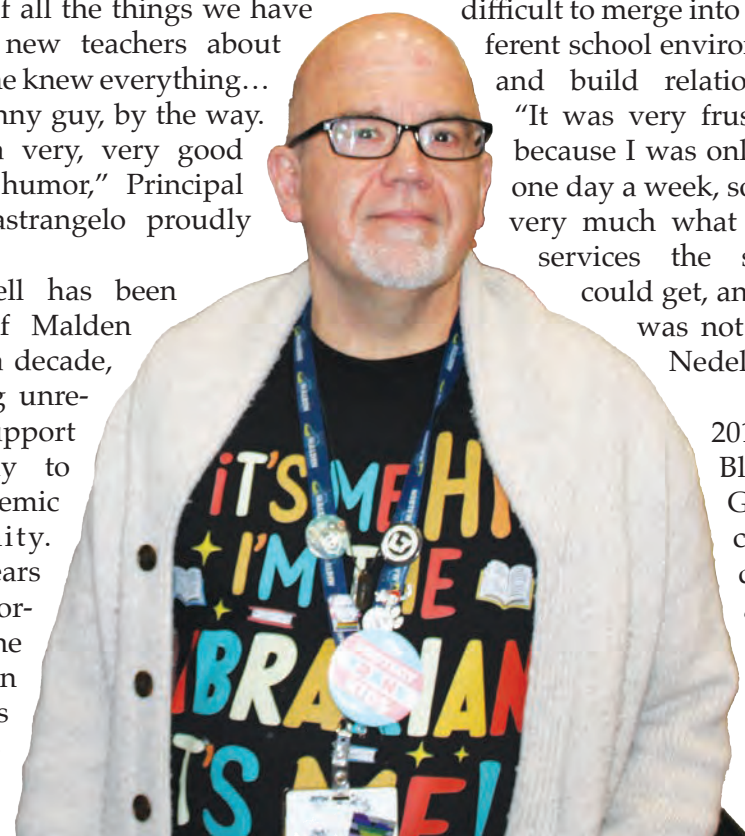
Comparing the interviews from 2017 and 2024, it can be said with utmost confidence that Nedell's view of Malden Public School libraries was fulfilled. He vowed to bring unity to the libraries and was successful. He did not want the students in the district to think of themselves as separate but instead as a part of a whole. "I want to make sure that there is a connection between the K-8 schools and that they don't necessarily see themselves as separate islands but as branches of one whole," Nedell explained.

"From seeing his interaction with students, I can sense how much students feel supported and seen by him, and I am very grateful that someone in the building is giving that to students," Anne Mooney, another English teacher at Malden High, remarked.

During 2017 – 2019, three more librarians were hired to help with

his visions. The following librarians are Ms. Touit, Ms. O'Toole, and Ms. Liberge. The four of them worked dedicatedly to refurbish the literature community of Malden and welcome interested students. A major bump in the road occurred when COVID-19 hit. The pandemic posed multiple challenges, including the inability to continue with the organization process. Nedell remarked that "COVID caused enormous obstacles, of course"; however, it also "helped build greater connections between me, Ms. Touit, and Ms. Liberge."

Nedell has not only been a part of the Malden community as a teacher but also as a parent. His son graduated from the Malden Public Schools and Malden High. At first, he and his son rarely crossed paths during school hours, but when he became a parent and teacher at Beebe, he had to draw a line that would allow him to fulfill both roles. Nedell shows the importance of maintaining professional boundaries. When asked about his experience as a parent rather than a teacher, he reminisced, "I did know that I had



Stephen Nedell poses for a photo. WAFIA SARUWAR

maldenblueandgold.com

From left to right: new staff Mason, Benson, Doucette, Lee, Anand, Freeley, Penafiel, Nedell, Malivuk, Straight, Goldin-Whyte, Niles, and Archilla.



For more information on our new teachers, as well as more profiles, follow the QR Code to our website.

Look to the next edition for more profiles.



*Continued from page 6*

Orleans schools have a different structure, like every school in New Orleans is a charter school," Straight explained. "A lot of the schools in New Orleans are smaller, so where I've taught it's always quicker to build community when it's just physically smaller...I'm from Louisiana, so this is my first time teaching outside of where I've been teaching forever." She added, "I think there was a little bit of nervousness at the very beginning, but once the day started, I was like, oh yeah, kids are great everywhere."

What stood out to her about Malden was the diversity of the school. Straight describes the students as what makes the school's community a place of wonder; it "makes the classroom just a bit more interesting." The rich diversity of Malden High really stood out to her in her job search, and demonstrated her dedication. She even read The Blue and Gold to learn more about Malden High and the community of the building.

"When I was preparing for my interview, I found all the newspaper articles, so I actually used the newspaper as a research tool to try to get a job here, which I guess worked. I got hired," Straight recalled.

Stepping into her classroom, you can see how students are given space to work, but she makes sure to direct her class when needed. She also has a humorous tone while teaching, helping students engage and pay attention in class.

Straight's next-door neighbor in school, Michael Lightbody, a US History and Foundations of Law teacher at Malden High, enthusiastically remarked, "She's only been here a few weeks, but it feels like she's been here forever."

Since 2009, Straight has worked as a teacher and her motivation to keep going is to acknowledge important figures in history. She stated, "I'm not going to make everyone love history...my class is probably not going to convince you to change but maybe you'll end up watching the news and go 'Oh wait, I did

learn about that!"

"She's wonderful, she really is. A team player with gentleness and enthusiasm," Marsha Healey, another World History teacher at Malden High, commented about having Straight on the team.

In addition to her classroom duties, Straight is passionate about building relationships with her students. She believes that understanding their backgrounds and interests is key to creating an inclusive learning environment.

One of the things she loves most about history is the fact that there are many interesting stories. She enjoys teaching students about things that they most likely would not know about, and she teaches world history for that reason. The students that she teaches are juniors in high school. These students al-

ready know about US and European history, which was why she was so drawn to teaching world history. "It's cool to be able to like, actually remember there's a whole world, right?" Straight elaborated.

"I think school is a lot better if you can find the things in school that bring it up.

It's just a little bit of joy, right?

Even if you're like, 'I don't really want to be at school at eight in the morning, I would rather be asleep.' What are the classes that are a little bit more exciting? What is the thing you're looking forward to?" Straight said.



Sarah Straight smiles for a portrait. WAFIA SARUWAR



Class of 2025 attendees group photo. THOMAS TIERNEY

*Continued from page 8*

students played games, took pictures, listened to music, and enjoyed an early breakfast from Dunkin'. Students also brought signs and friends from other schools to kick off the year with a memorable moment. As the sunrise peaked, MHS Principal Chris Mastrangelo organized students to take a full class picture. Additionally, students gathered for pictures with their middle schools to reflect on the past and remember who they have grown up with.

# Senior Sunrise

maldenblueandgold.com

## Malden High School Welcomes New English Teacher Jasleen Anand

### Anand

Lauryne Jean Joseph  
Reporter

Yen Nguyen  
Reporter

Hannah Cogswell  
Reporter

Jasleen Anand is a new English teacher at Malden High School. She received her bachelor's degree at McGill University in 2005 before acquiring her master's degree in education at Harvard in 2012. This allowed her to kickstart her career in Pune, India, where she worked with homeless children for a year and a half. From there, she became interested in working with children. Initially, she was not planning on becoming a teacher, but that was before she took a captivating teaching class that led her to pursue work in education.

Outside of school, Anand enjoys spending time outdoors, with her hobbies consisting of going to the beach and the pool, hiking, walking in her neighborhood, exploring local cafes, and cooking. On Sundays, she teaches Sikh History at her Gurdwara, a local temple.

With the school year starting, Anand has been adjusting well. Since joining Malden High, she has found that "the faculty and administration have been super supportive, welcoming, gracious."

Fellow English teacher, Lucia Musilli, said she is "really intelligent," and "a good fit for Malden High School." English teacher Anne Mooney is "excited to have someone who has high standards for students."

Recalling her interview, Principal Mastrangelo remarked that Anand stood out because she had a great deal of experience and was "fantastic, very calm, and clearly student-centered."

Not only has Anand made a positive first impression among faculty, but she is also well-liked among students. Sophomore Kailey Bae shared that "I specifically like how strict she is with taking phones because it lets us be more productive." Sophomore Ryan Huang added that "she gives a lot of feedback when doing assignments, and it helps us improve as writers."

Anand is still adapting to the new curriculum. Her commute is longer, which is tough, and the



Stephen Nedell reading a spin-off of his favorite book trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings*. WAFIA SARUWAR

to be very careful because I had to be both a parent and caregiver, but also a teacher."

Nedell himself did not know he wanted to become a librarian until much later in his life. From his early childhood, he had shown a passion for reading and shared how his mother often found him in the bookstores at malls. "If you would have told me in high school that I would be a high school librarian, I would've never expected that to happen," Nedell commented.

Originally, Nedell had planned to become a social studies teacher, then shifted his major and became a scholar of Soviet history. He went to Russia, studied Russian East European Studies, and planned to get a doctorate when he realized that was not the course he wanted to take. Back at his university in Indiana, there was a function at a strong library program. He considered it, applied, and was accepted. "By the time I graduated, I had two Master's degrees, one in Russian East Euro-

pean Studies and one in library science," Nedell said. From there, his journey began, and he eventually landed in Malden.

Freshman Sabrina Bhattarai enthusiastically said, "Mr. Nedell is kind, energetic, and always eager to help people."

When asked about his first impression of the students of Malden, Nedell commented, "I really like working with the kids from kindergarten to the seniors in high school...one thing I find impressive about the students here is how diverse they are, and how willing they are to advocate for themselves... Students here are self-assured."

Additionally, Nedell happens to have a talent for being on stage and acting. He explained how acting and being a librarian can collaborate. For example, the younger students are much more engaged in read-alouds when Nedell uses different voices to act out a few of the scenes. Nedell enjoys the experience of being on stage and the close rela-

tionships formed with the cast and crew members. 35-millimeter and Puffs are among the plays he has been involved with.



Stephen Nedell's message while working as a librarian. FATIMA HUSAIN

school is big, so she grows tired easily, but besides that, everything else has been positive for her. She loves the school's diversity and how engaged her students are in class. Sophomore Vicky Chen said, "I feel like I've talked a lot more in her class than in any other English class."

During her time here at Malden High School, Anand highlighted her hopes to establish strong relationships with students and families and

meaningful work with the students—work that will motivate them and engage them on a personal level. She finds the diversity at this

school special.

Anand declared, "I hope to be here for a long time."



Left: Jasleen Anand posing with a book. Above: Jasleen Anand having a deep discussion with her class. YEN NGUYEN



Niles working with freshmen Ronald Fernandes. REVA UPADHAYAY



Niles observing students working. REVA UPADHAYAY

## New Art Teacher Shalea Niles Brings Vibrancy to Malden High

Reva Upadhayay  
Reporter

Salah Bouam  
Reporter

Aliana Lloyd  
Reporter

Entering Shalea Niles's room, you will find students collaborating, creating art, and having fun in a friendly and welcoming class environment.

Niles was born and raised in the Boston area but moved to Georgia when she was in high school. She eventually moved back and returned to Massachusetts after missing the community and her family.

Her positive energy and drive to teach art have been a true asset to Malden High School. Niles had last taught for nine years in Georgia at a school that she adored. "I loved the vibrancy. I loved the school spirit. I loved the students. I enjoy just being in that space and constantly expanding myself within the space and creativity...I'm bringing in more school spirit here. I want to bring some vibrancy to the building. I want to bring in some more color," said Niles, who exudes many important and valuable traits of a high-quality high school art teacher.

"I want to just plant my feet and get grounded here. Next year I plan to expand the curriculum, and also work with students and create a more safe and comfortable environment, and then hopefully play a role in uplifting a lot of the women inside of the building as well," Niles stated.

Niles has already created a safe and welcoming environment, constantly making students smile and laugh while simultaneously steering them towards productivity. Her room has a homey feel; it is colorful and not as tightly packed as classrooms usually are. Niles also has a table with framed artwork by students along with additional artwork that has been done in her class. On a Friday in October, she walked

around the room, constantly catering to her student's needs so well that there was not a single student off track or not engaging in class.

"We're excited to have her here. Her portfolio is incredible and she does a lot of great stuff," said Principal Chris Mastrangelo.

Niles paints murals and plans to bring in a new mural in the building or even around the area of Mal-

den. She also mentioned that she teaches kundalini yoga and meditation outside of the classroom in her spare time.

"The environment in the classroom is very nice and calm," said sophomore Wongel Yohannes, a student in her period five class.

"I enjoy kids, they keep me young and always tell me something new. With teenagers, it's like

I can relate. A lot of the things that you guys are already doing, I kind of already do in my life, I'm just on a further path. A lot of the things that you may be interested in now or you're thinking about, I've already kind of touched and I can pour my wisdom right back into those teenagers," said Niles.

Julie Mullane, a neighboring art teacher, mentioned that Niles has "hit the ground running" and believes she will add a lot to the culture and environment of the school.

"I really enjoy her class, she's a nice teacher and she always has a positive attitude. She's always around helping students and even though she's new, I feel like she's making a good impact on the school already," concluded sophomore Abner Rodriguez, a student in Niles' period 3 class.



Niles helping students Justin Hernandez and Jereon Billingsley. REVA UPADHAYAY



Some of the artwork from the students in Niles' class. REVA UPADHAYAY

maldenblueandgold.com

# GROWING ENGAGING SPEAKERS

Chelmie Hyppolite  
Lead Reporter

## Speech & Debate Class Thrives in First Year

As many new clubs start to develop their place within MHS, a few clubs had the opportunity to become an elective. Among many clubs, Speech and Debate has recently transitioned into an elective that students can take for all four years. Some notable classes within the school have also originated as clubs, such as The Blue and Gold and Mock Trial. These classes transitioned successfully, gathering more and more attention each year.

Kurtis Scheer began working at Malden High School as a History teacher in 2015 and has been running the Speech and Debate team for about 8 years.

"I think the transition into a class has gone really well. The thing that is a little bit more on my end here is preparing and creating lessons that will both prepare students for a competition here, but [will also] be transferable to other avenues, too. I think that part is always difficult, whenever you're going from a club that [loosely run] to a class with a curriculum, and ways to assess students. So it's just a little bit more work," stated Scheer.

Scheer then continued to talk about the differences between a club and a class. "The major difference, though, is, instead of just meeting with some kids once a week here for a short amount of time, now we meet two or three times a week, guaranteed in the class."

"Now we can do more specific things that would help gear students, not only for our competitions that we do, but also for public speaking skills that they're going to



Leica Naceus and her teammates try eagerly to guess the word to gain a point. CHELMIE HYPPOLITE

use in classes like English, math, science, and any class where you have to do a presentation. So we can do a whole more pull up more than we could have previously," explained Scheer.

This switch from a club to a class has introduced new opportunities for the students who previously couldn't participate in the club due to tight after-school schedules, gathering more attention from students.

"I knew that Speech and Debate was a club before and I was interested in it but I didn't have enough time after school to join the club, so I'm very happy it's a class," exclaimed sophomore Beyonce Rene.

"I wasn't necessarily interested in joining the club since I didn't have much time but because it's a class now I can do it in school which is much better for me," mentioned junior Vin Chau.

Many previous club members are also very delighted with the switch. "I'm quite happy about it becoming a class, especially about the funding aspect. I feel like it will also really help a lot more people to join now," said junior Aldino Talic.

Many previous club members are also very delighted with the switch. "I'm quite happy about it becoming a class, especially about the funding aspect. I feel like it will also really help a lot more people to

join now," said junior Aldino Talic.

As the speech and debate class continues to prosper and more students join, Scheer hopes to create a Junior Varsity and Varsity dynamic between students; similar to the way the mock trial class is run.

"I have three goals and hopes for the class. One is everybody enhances their skills in speaking. The other one is we find success at our tournaments here. The last one is that everybody enjoys this class enough so that we can offer it again and expand it, or to use this as an opportunity to prove that having more electives here at the high school benefits us in innumerable amounts," shared Scheer.

## Engineering Club Shoots for the Stars with New Events

Sophie LeBlanc  
Lead Reporter

Worldwide, engineering is commonly viewed as one of the hardest college majors and professions. Numerous online sources have ranked it among the top three most difficult college majors, according to average weekly study time and GPA averages. It involves complex mathematical equations, laborious labs, and hours and hours spent grasping abstract subjects, leading many to avoid the field entirely. However, a group of MHS students has set out this year to reduce the stigma surrounding engineering and popularize it as something vastly different: a hobby.

In the Spring of 2023, MHS alumna Alejandra Fernandez started the club alongside current seniors Megyn Ta and Sara Zhang. The club was created to foster relaxation, uncommonly associated with the stressful nature of engineering.

Ta, the club's current President,

aims to extend this goal during her final year and the foreseeable future. "Compared to engineering classes, I really want to make this space more casual for hobbyists and crafters like me."

"Engineering branches out into a lot of different categories," recalled Zhang, the current Vice President. Its variety broadens the scope of potential projects and helps attract members with interests and backgrounds that differ from the standard. Zhang emphasizes that the club is an opportunity for anyone to learn, saying, "I think people should join the Engineering Club since it's a big learning experience for everyone. It could be a place to hang out and also learn some pretty cool concepts, make new friends, and learn together."

The club meets on Thursday afternoons in Physics teacher Julie Grillon's room. Club officers typically give a brief introduction to what members will be working on, which can range from engineering



Club members Susila Wong, Megyn Ta, and Sienna Hoang collaborating on their model rockets. SOPHIE LEBLANC

research to projects resembling arts and crafts.

Zhang explained her favorite project she worked on last year in the club: "We split into groups and researched a given problem in a local or global community that you want to solve, and then you would propose your own solution of creating a sustainable way of

solving that problem." She created a wooden bridge with her friends that is still presented in the classroom, a memory that highlights the creativity fostered within the club.

During their second meeting on October 3rd, club members constructed rockets made from plastic

*Continued on page 15*

Continued from page 14

water bottles and cardboard before venturing to the courtyard to pour baking soda and vinegar into them and watch the explosive reaction unfold.

While the club has incentivized many members to return year after year, various students have found the club just this year. Newly intrigued by the field of engineering, freshman Derline Hyppolite discovered the club through the MHS involvement fair. She expressed that she hopes to “gain a better understanding of the field of engineering” and learn about how to effectively apply the concepts.

Sophomore Shannon Pokharel joined the club to chart the path for future endeavors. “In the future, I want to be an astronaut, and though it’s not exactly similar to engineering, I wanted to experience creating rockets and other projects,” she stated.

Looking ahead, club officers aspire to elevate the club beyond its current simplicity and dive into the exciting realm of engineering competitions. “There’s a National Geographic one we’re interested in, and there’s also a NASA one someone is looking into,” recalled Ta. However, this endeavor has proved initially challenging, as Ta mentioned that, “it’s hard to figure out which ones work and which ones don’t, and as most of us are seniors, we’re busy all the time.” That said, club officers are hopeful about identifying suitable competitions for their group and are dedicated to supporting their members’ needs.

With so many incredible clubs, extracurriculars, and classes at Malden High, it can be difficult to know which ones are right for you. Many students have ruled out engineering entirely due to the widely accepted idea that it is only for professionals and geniuses born with a natural gift. However, the MHS Engineering Club wants to spread the word that it can be as simple or complex as you want, ranging from stacking legos to designing intricate robotic systems for competitions. Engineering is a spectrum, and all that lie on it are encouraged to join.

“The main idea of the engineering club is to foster a community,” said Ta. She continued, “It’s for people who are interested in science or people who just want to build stuff. Everyone and anyone can walk into the Engineering Club, pick up a project, and do something.”



Sophomores Carolina Rosa De Oliveira and Dante Bell pose for a photo. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Continued from front page

things differently even suggesting a venue, but that didn’t work out because “if we wanted to earn more money back it was a safer option for it to be in the courtyard. Also, we felt that the courtyard could quite honestly look very nice and give a different feel with the right decorations and care put into it,” stated Vice President Saniah Charles.

The Class of 2025 council and advisors were happy with how Homecoming went this year. “They had many food options, and the music kept the crowd active,” stated Jean Louis. Braz mentioned how she loved that some of the songs she was “going crazy for in high school were the same songs that a lot of the kids here were going crazy for. Mr. Grinnell and I were like, ‘Why do they know all the words to Clarity and Call Me Maybe...what year is it!’”

Even though Homecoming was a lot of fun, the council and advisors still felt that there could be improvement in some areas. “One thing I would do differently is how much we advertised. We should’ve advertised it a lot more and started posting sooner,” Jena Louis claimed. By posting sooner the word could have spread more and allowed for more people to come. “I think we had about 400 students show up which was really, really good. I think that the students that went had a good time,” Robert Grinnell said.

Another big topic for the night and all the dances at Malden High School is the music that is played. There were many mixed opinions but everyone agreed that there should have been “better communication for the playlist because there

continued on this though and said, “I was overhearing that many people didn’t like some of the songs. Also maybe make the food prices go down a little, many people didn’t buy the food due to the prices or they didn’t know that people actually had to buy the food.”

Junior Rachel Lanza agreed with these sentiments. “Even though people kept requesting music it wasn’t being played which was very disappointing; it also felt like they would move the music and not play it if someone asked for a song they said they put it on the queue but then it would never play which brought the mood down to me and many, many other students there,” said Lanza. Communication with both students and council members was huge for this dance and for the two aspects that draw people in the most, they were lacking. Even with these downsides the dance was still amazing and allowed for an open community to develop with students.

Overall, Homecoming was a huge success that can be used as a learning experience and a pat on the back to the Class of 2025 as they put



From left to right: senior Jeslyn San, senior Lovely Ann Gerochi, junior Rashmi KC, and Avani Chhetri. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

did tend to be lots of like people asking for song requests,” Charles explained.

The council and advisors wish they would’ve carried this out differently even suggesting a “poll for song requests earlier because we ended up not having enough time. And so at the dance I had like a bunch of kids running up to me request- ing songs,” described Braz. Perez

out a wonderful Homecoming with lots of effort and time. “I think the best part was just seeing all the kids dancing and having fun because you know, it just takes you back,” mentioned Braz. She continued, “Anytime that we have the opportunity to make the students of this school feel like they’re a part of a community like a blessing.”



From left to right: Taisha Balan, Cedric Mathely, Olivia Ivy, Christina Anasthal, and Brayan Jose. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

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# GOLDEN TORNADOS SEASON UPDATE



Lynn Tech defensive players attempt to stop Malden from running the ball down the field. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

*Continued from front page.* defensive side, with a total of 178 points allowed. Alternatively, their offense has been strong with a total of 185 points scored. Their two wins have come from their season opener against Lynn Tech (27-20), and after an unexpected 4-game struggle, the Tornados demolished the Chelsea Red Devils 47-12.

So far, the Tornados have played just three games at home (1-2), while they have now played four games away (1-3). With just one game left in the season, Malden will end the year with the long-awaited Thanksgiving game against their rival, the Medford Mustangs.

Another key component of

the team's struggles has been the loss of crucial players on both sides of the field. Senior captain Kevin Exilhomme elaborated on this issue, saying that "we lost some key players due to injuries and grades, which has kept us from dominating constantly this season." Before the season even commenced, the team had already lost two of the five captains: both senior linebacker James Hyppolite and senior running back and linebacker Matt Britto, who suffered season-ending injuries early in the season, leading to the team's defensive struggles.

Despite flourishes on the offensive end, their defense and discipline have been the team's struggle. Exilhomme emphasized that "there

have just been too many times we shot ourselves in the foot, whether with penalties or just recurring mistakes that put us in bad positions, which has hurt us in the end."

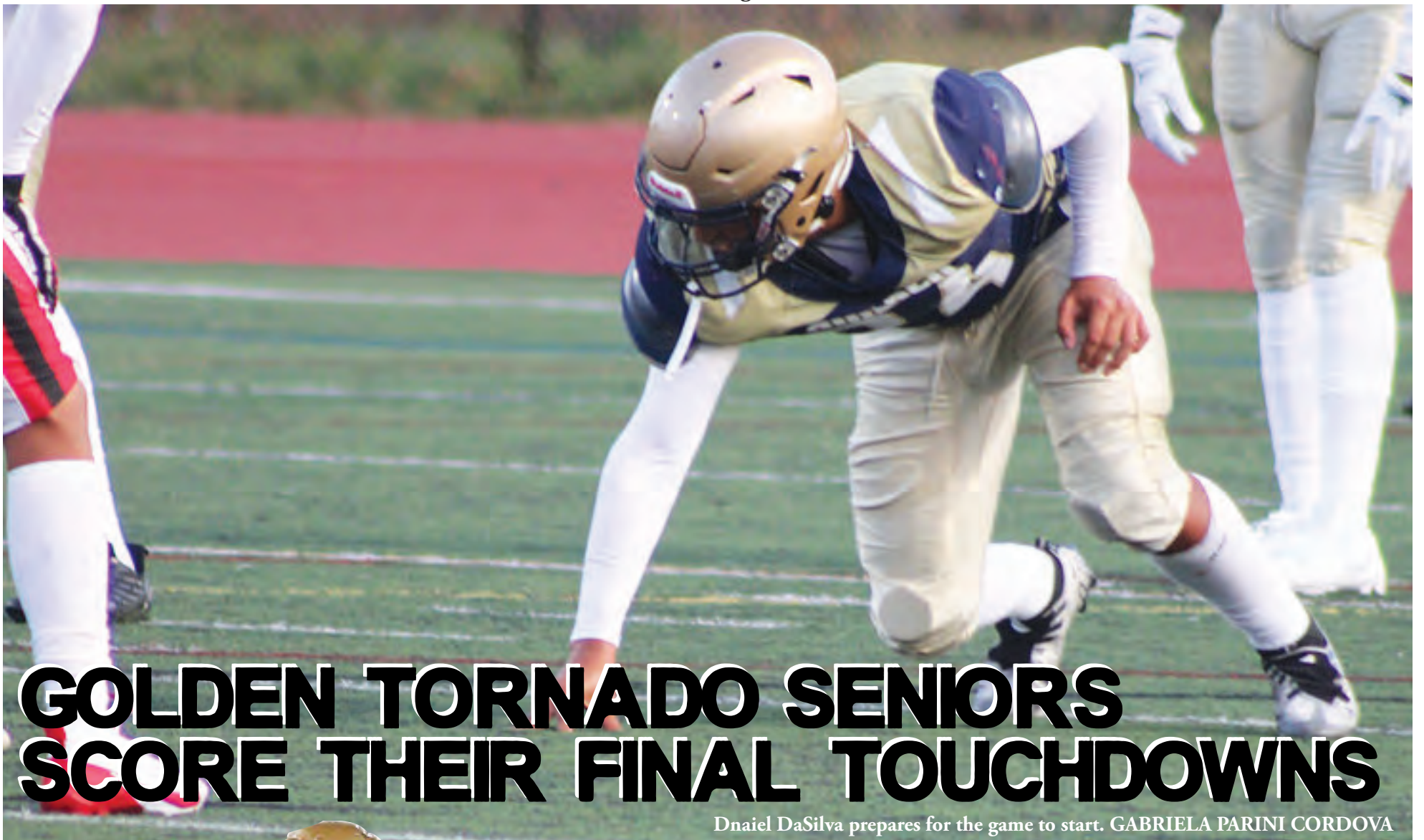
With the loss of two captains, Exilhomme stepped up into a very important role as a leader for the Tornados. "As a captain, I try my best to keep the team morale up. At the end of the day, those 11 guys that go out with you are your brothers, so it's important to have a brotherhood relationship. You play better as a team when you know your brothers have your back, but sometimes, keeping the team's morale up can be hard because it seems that things just continue to not go in our favor," he explained.

Despite the team's record, they have remained focused and fostered a tight-knit community. "The team has provided me with so much opportunity and support that I feel I must give back by putting my everything into helping the team gain further success," said senior safety Xavier Coulanges Blaise. The Tornados have played their hearts out this year and gained connections with each other that they will carry throughout their lives.

Remaining engaged, the team looks forward to the end of their season and making a final push through its conclusion.







# GOLDEN TORNADO SENIORS SCORE THEIR FINAL TOUCHDOWNS

Dnaiel DaSilva prepares for the game to start. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

Ashton Calixte  
Managing Editor

The Malden Golden Tornadoes football season comes to a close with the sights of their annual rivalry game approaching on Thanksgiving. The team had a lot of high expectations for the team's class of 2025's senior night, with key players facing injuries during and pre-season, many players had to step up to the plate, though receiving a disappointing 24-14 loss against the Revere Patriots Football team many fans were left with the desire for Malden to bring one more win against Medford.

Before the game, a ceremony was held for each senior to walk down an aisle of familiar faces of teammates and cheerleaders with family, coaches, and friends each having a smile on their face knowing that everyone around them was proud of how far they have come over the years. Fans were also seen cheering in the stands for each and every player, showing their support and love for both the players and the sport.

Throughout all four quarters, Malden's offense was fighting and putting their effort into every snap, but there were still mistakes on the offensive side, such as missed catches that led to interceptions of the ball, allowing Revere to pull ahead. On the defensive side, there were hard hits from Malden all throughout the game, showing the improvements that the players

have gained through their hard work and dedication during their off-season and practices. But, the small mistakes throughout the game were what led to a disappointing loss for the Malden Football team and their seniors.

With the team saying goodbye to 18 seniors, many are left wondering how those losses will affect the team. "Nothing will change. What we did was fasten the underclassmen and those guys will be ready to step in and really dominate their opponent because we prepared them to," stated Head Coach Witche Exilhomme.

As some seniors have played for Malden Football throughout all four years of high school, many have dreams of college football in the future. Captain and senior Kevin Exilhomme

explained football has given him "a life after High School. I play football, coaches like my film, and then it gives me an opportunity to go to a good school that I wouldn't have if I wasn't playing football."

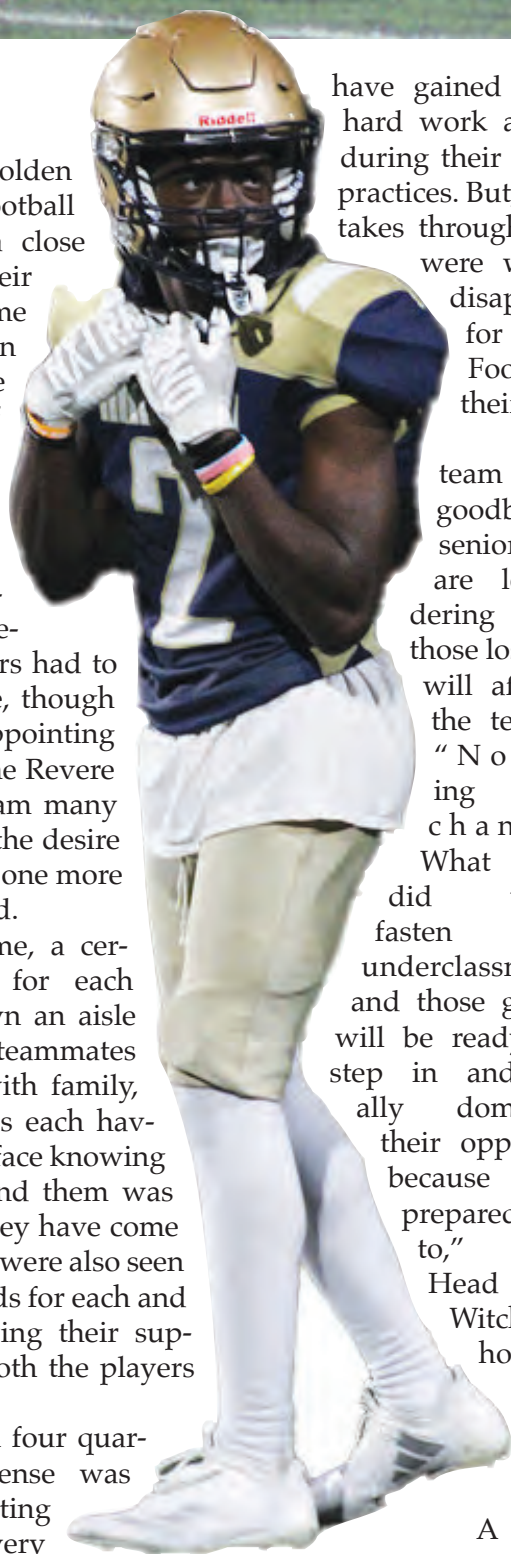
By spending years and months playing football and spending time together teammates have grown special connections and gained memories they will never forget: "My favorite moment was my freshman year, we didn't have a good season and nobody thought we were going to win the last game but we beat Medford," stated senior and four-year player Wyatt Dessert. Though memories don't always have to be winning a game: for Zach Johnson it was "getting my first touch down on JV, and the first game of the season this year."

With the long-awaited annual Thanksgiving game against the team's rivals, the Medford Mustangs, as their last game of the season, there is always room for improvement in plays and mentally for each player. Football does not just build athletes: it builds people. "I

learned to be humble and it helped me with my work ethic, it gave me a reason every day to be better and just in life in general", stated Kevin Exilhomme.

"I grew as a player and a person because I got more mature. I began to take more stuff seriously in both football and school," continued Dessert.

Malden fans can look forward to the Medford Mustangs Vs Malden Golden Tornadoes rivalry game right in their own backyard at Macdonald Stadium with the hope of attaining one last win for the City of Malden.



From left to right: Xavier Coulanges-blaise, Zach Johnson, and Kenny Turcios Melgar. GABRIELA PARINI CORDOVA

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# Girls' Volleyball Seniors Bid Their Final Goodbyes

Jacob Fuentes  
Lead Reporter

Emilly Weihrauch  
Lead Reporter

Before the Girls' Volleyball team was even on the court, the bleachers were filled with families and supporters of the seniors and decorations. The energy in the Finn Gym stayed strong throughout the night and the team was prepared to send that energy right back.

After both teams finished their respective warm-ups, they lined up on opposite sides of the court, and Coach Daniel Jurkowski started by showing gratitude to MetroTech Vocational School and saying some words for the seniors on the team. He reflected on how he had seen the seniors grow up and blossom into the people they are now. "To see them grow up and become the humans first that they are is really special. They've exceeded all expectations as I knew, as I knew they would. We have a team that qualified for the state tournament, which is awesome." This season, there were seven seniors and three captains. Jurkowski then continued by addressing each senior individually, talking about how he has seen them all develop and how they have had a positive impact on the team.

He started with Julianna Lin

who played on Varsity for one year. "She's an unbelievable kid. She does great things in school. She's been an MVP for us on the court at certain times this year, whenever we need her and call her name, she comes in and she plays, and just the way that she smiles every single day." He continued, saying, "I don't think that she's ever had a bad day, because she's smart enough and mature enough to be able to process things in a way that makes sure that everyone else is happy."

When Jurkowski continued and began talking about Marie Cheng, a senior who played on Varsity for two years, he said, "She's very passionate about certain things, and very happy that she became passionate about volleyball. She's been a huge help with everything we do with middle school volleyball. She's always volunteer-

ing her time, she's always willing to help fresh new girls, the JV girls coach, and she's been encouraging them to be better volleyball players and people."

Next was Amanda Piva, a senior who played in varsity for two years. Jurkowski showed appreciation for her dedication to the sport even though she had her own challenges off the court. "Like a lot of our students at Malden High, she has a lot of commitments, she needs to be a big sister to her siblings. She does the work to help support her family. And it would've been super easy for her to not play volleyball her senior year because she had so much going on." However, this did not stop her, as Jurkowski expounded: he wanted to be a part of the team. And one of our superstar middles had an unfortunate injury. She was able to step in, and she's been great for us".

Next was Sarah Pham, who had also been on Varsity for two years. Jurkowski showed appreciation for her willingness to enter a new role. "Last year she was here every day at practice. And this year she stepped into a Center role. And it takes a lot of courage to play this position. She's been great for us". It is not easy to transition into a new position, especially so late into a career, but he elaborated that Pham always made it happen.

Then Jurkowski intro-

duced the three captains for this year's Varsity team. He started with Lovely Anne Gerochi, who had been playing on Varsity for two years. "She's one of the friends I met in the fifth grade at Salemwood when I had no idea what I was doing as a teacher. She played volleyball in the gym basically every single day. I would put a net up no matter what the activity was. And to see her eight years later as an all-around player... she's all on the court. She knows how to play and she knows where to be."

The next captain introduced was Jeslyn San who has also been on Varsity for two years. Jurkowski stated "She has that ability where she's able to inspire the people around her without saying anything. When you watch her play on the court, the other girls automatically have to be on top of everything. Because she's diving all over the floor, and she's our Libero and she's been phenomenal all year, she's been probably our MVP."

Jurkowski then finished with Abigail Lee, a senior who had been playing on varsity for three years.

Lee was also one of the students that Jurkowski taught

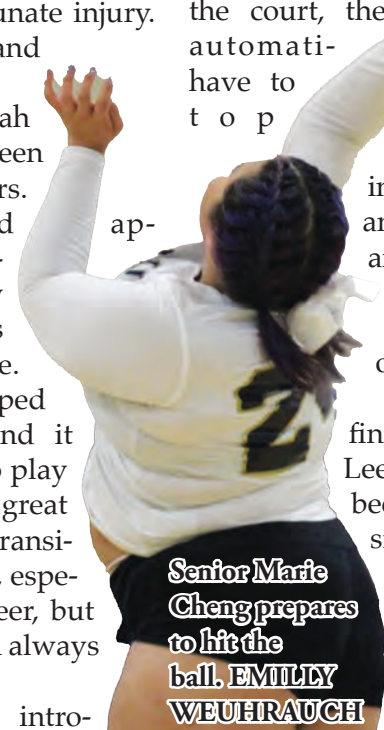
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The team huddles up right before the game.  
EMILLY WEIHR-AUCH



Four-year Malden volleyball player and captain Lovely Anne Gerochi tosses the ball up for a serve. EMILLY WEIHR-AUCH



Senior Marie Cheng prepares to hit the ball. EMILLY WEIHR-AUCH

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at Salemwood before arriving at Malden High. "When Abigail was in fifth grade, our volleyball team went one and 19. And I certainly don't define the success of our program based on wins, because it's high school sports and high school sports are supposed to be fun and they're supposed to be a life experience to make people better in life." Despite this not being the only factor, he confirmed that was just one sign of her dedication to the team: "it is nice when you see the kids put in the work on the court and in the classroom and what they've done for the community and the kids below them. It is nice to see that that hard work pays off in a meaningful way. She's had 36 wins so far in her career for Malden Volleyball. It's because of people like her that our program is where it is".

After Jurkowski introduced the seniors and they took their family photos, the team decided to share a message. "He has helped us improve ourselves on the court. Dan always puts the team first. He buys us hair ties knowing that us girls can't keep up with them, and his main focus is to make sure we are all safe and healthy. We want everyone to know how much Dan has impacted our lives and the kind person he is. He is kind, he is hardworking, he genuinely cares, he is giving, he

is very supportive, he's very trustworthy, he's really patient, and always there for us," the captains professed. At the end of the ceremony, the team was energetic and ready to play five sets. Jurkowski closed out the ceremony with "Let's play volleyball!"

With the help of the supporters chanting in the bleachers, the team started the first set with energy that set a foundation for how the team would perform for the entire game. The set

started with three consecutive aces from Pham. After Malden started trailing 15-12, Jurkowski decided to call a timeout. The team came out of the timeout strong making sure they kept smooth rotations and the ball moving quickly. A repeating theme throughout the game was Malden's ability to use their height and jumping ability to make sure the ball didn't cross the net. After an intense sequence of rallies, MetroTech called a timeout with Malden leading 20-19. After the timeout, both teams stepped on the court ready to close out the set. But Malden closed out the set with a kill from Abigail Lee, resulting in a 25-21 victory for

Malden.

The team stayed aggressive throughout the second set, but they lacked control early in the set. When Malden called a timeout while trailing 15-9, Jurkowski addressed their impulsivity saying "The hustle is phenomenal, the energy is great, but we're too excited." Although the team wasn't able to earn the lead, the players used Jurkowski's motivational words of "keep fighting one point at a time" and kept momentum as Cheng was able to perform eight consecutive serves all resulting in points for Malden. Although Malden lost the set 25-22, Cheng believes that the set "mo-

tivated the team to actually keep fighting instead of giving up the set. Energy was low before the end of the set and that was our way of resetting for the rest of the game".

The third set was a completely different story: the team was able to make sure that no serves were uncontested. The team was completely dominant throughout the entirety of the set, forcing MetroTech to call a timeout while trailing 19-5. During the timeout, Jurkowski showed appreciation for how the team opened every serve, "Keep swinging. We still need to finish. Our serving has

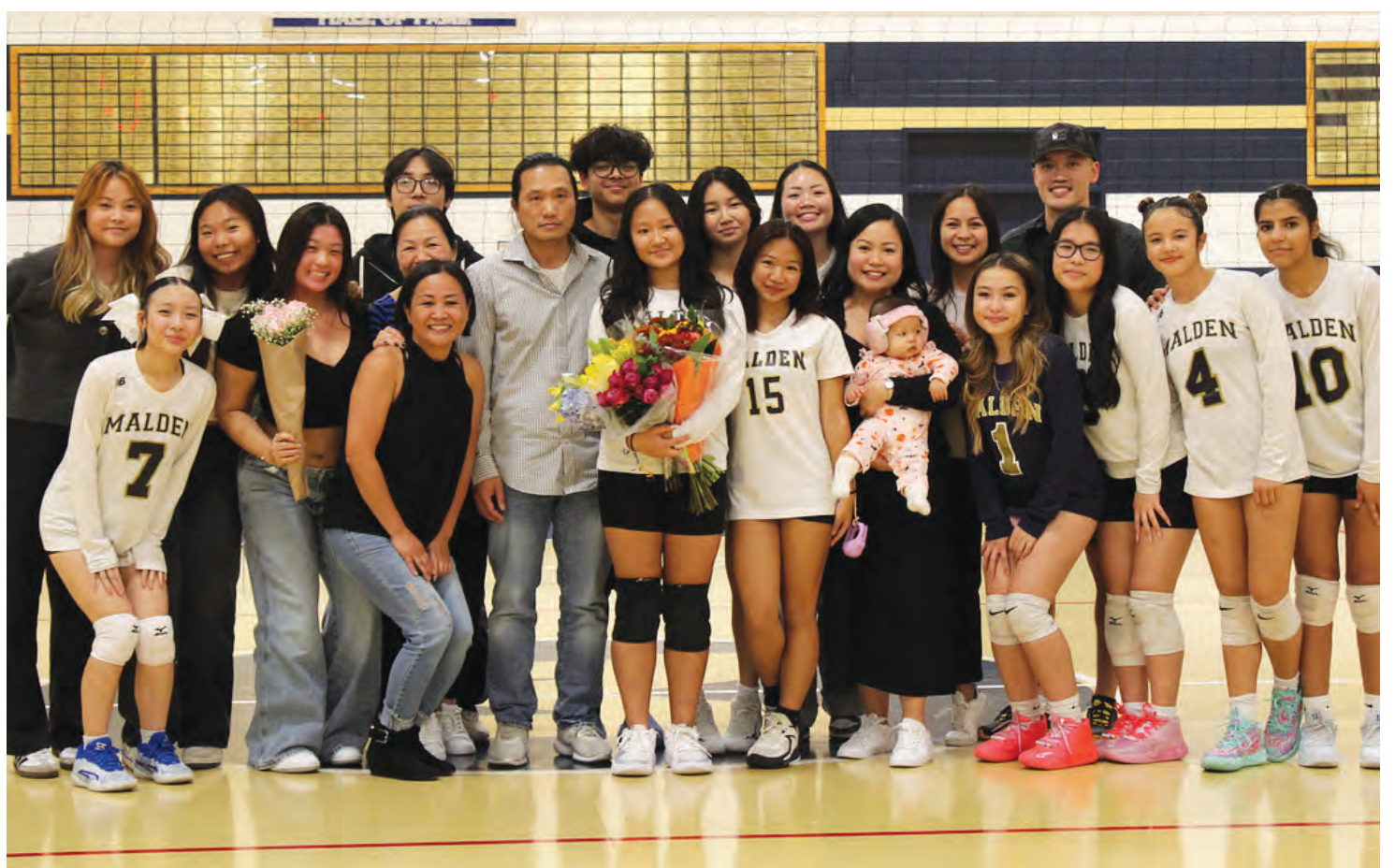
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Senior captain Jeslyn San serves the ball to start a new set, in front of the all the seniors' posters and gift baskets. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH



Senior Ammanda Piva preparing to block the opposing team's hit. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH



Senior, captain, and three-year varsity player, Abigail Lee posing for a picture with family, friends, and teammates before the game starts, holding flowers gifted from her supporters. EMILLY WEIHRAUCH

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# Cross Country Season Concludes



The entire Malden Cross Country team. BO STEAD

Bo Stead  
Editor-in-Chief of Web and Mobile

The 2024 season proved to be a productive one for the Malden High Cross Country team. The troupe went 6-2 in their overall record and placed third in the Greater Boston League Championship.

While every meeting was filled with laughter, and the team simply having fun; each senior had their calendars marked for October 16. Of course, this was the day set up for their senior night.

Senior nights are a time for coaches and teammates to reflect on the past years they have had together as well as seniors to reflect on their own time in high school.

For the cross country team, their senior night was filled with music blaring over the speakers, photos with friends and family, and plenty of running.

Despite the cold day, this did not stop many of the players' family and friends from showing up to support the seniors on their special night.

Sports do more than keep us in shape and make memories, they teach us lessons that we do not realize they even give us. Senior and captain Sean Retotal noted that "discipline" is what he learned. "All the pain you go through in a race," noted Retotal, "it's hard and you need the drive to just keep going."

Fellow captain, Gordon Zeng said that running cross country has shown him that "Social skills, life skills or athletic skills, it is all about putting in the work and being consistent." Zeng concluded that you need to "go through with things in order to make a difference." Finally, yet another captain, Slade Harding also said that the sport showed him how to "be honest" with himself. Harding's father, Corey Harding agreed, noting how much he has watched Slade grow over the years because in such a unique sport you need an "individual drive" that you can "turn on yourself at any time."

With these seniors coming full circle, from being young and eager freshmen to wise and experienced seniors, it is a surreal feeling for many as they are finally saying farewell to the team. Harding expressed that "It's pretty cool, because I remember when I was a freshman, I was pretty slow, and it was always



Coaches Sean Weldon and Michael Nicholson during Senior Night. BO STEAD



Senior Kevin Lin receives his senior night rose. BO STEAD

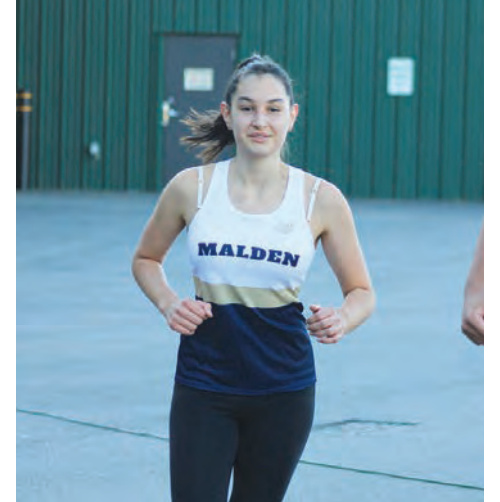
really cool looking up to all the seniors that were super fast. And I was like, that'll be me one day." Retotal concurred noting "it does not feel real, it feels like I'm in a movie." Zeng felt like it was a surreal experience, concluding that "I was once over there taking pictures with them at the posters, signing their posters, and now, I'm the one having my photo taken with you know, I'm the one having that poster being signed. Honestly, it felt so great."

Not only is this a time for reflection, but it is also one for the classes under them to acknowledge their departures. Junior Sean Cochran remarked that this group of seniors made a sport that may "otherwise have been boring" a little more "fun and silly--- they lightened the mood." Fellow Junior Lincoln Boswell agreed, recognizing the seniors "had so much of an impact" on him and that is "very hard to see them go", he feels like the "years just fly by." Junior Nam Le simply put it that the seniors "inspired him."

Senior captain Gordon Zeng expressed how much appreciation he has for running cross country. "It's all about the community here,

when I started freshman year I had no friends except the ones from middle school. The upperclassmen were open and inviting and showed me what high school is really about," stated Zeng.

Coaches also play a massive role in the athletes' lives. Coaches act as mentors and friends for each member of these teams and often have very special bonds with the senior groups. Coach Sean Weldon reflected, "it's crazy the time that we've put into the season, but also that they've grown up so much from the years they've been here." Weldon further went on to explain how he had several of the kids on the team since his seventh-grade class at the Beebe School. Weldon also expressed how great it is for coaches to watch players grow throughout the years, however, he will "really miss all of the seniors" on the team. Fellow coach, Michael Nicholson explained that this year they have "had an awesome group of kids who have supported the coaching staff and [are] always doing their best to help new kids." However, as many coaches feel, Nicholson noted that he is "excited to see what they

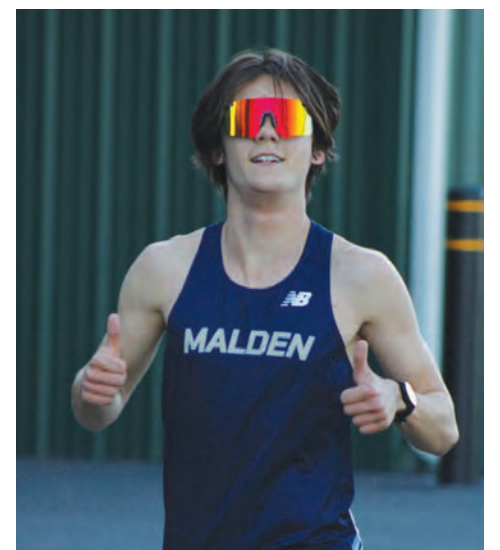


Ivana Marinkovic running through the Pine Banks course. BO STEAD

do with their lives, they're going to do so much."

Looking to next year, sometimes this thought might be scary for teams that have graduating seniors. For reassurance, Harding urged the team to "stay consistent no matter what," and Retotal affirmed the team needs to "always keep pushing even when things get tough." Zeng is hopeful for the team next year when he has departed, he expressed "I have no doubt in my mind the underclassmen will become better runners and better leaders than we all are, but honestly I just want to see this amazing team environment stay the same way." Harding offered a little piece of advice to "keep working over the summer and always be running and improving yourself." It is always crucial for off-season work to be put in by athletes in order to perform in-season.

If one cannot realize by now, this team cannot be more thankful for the wonderful group of seniors, as well as captains, they have had. Now, the seniors are eager for what the future has in store for each of them.



Slade Harding leads the way at the senior night meet. BO STEAD

# Boys' Soccer Senior Night Photos

All photos by Chouaib Saidi



## Post-Season Unity



### Girls Soccer Honors Their Seniors

Haset Tesfaw  
Lead Reporter

Abigael Fesehaie  
Editor-in-Chief of Print and Design

Although the Girls' Soccer senior night game against Lynn Classical ended in a loss for Malden, it proved to be one to remember as it was the senior's last night playing with their Malden High School team on home turf.

MacDonald Stadium was full of energy. It was packed with decorated posters and gifts for the seniors, the stands were full of families, students, and others who shouted chants and cheers to support the seniors during their final game.

The game started off with the players determined and ready to put in their best effort, especially those who were playing for the last time at home.

At the beginning of the first half, Lynn Classical made many attempts to score which were all

blocked by sophomore goalie Imane Agoumad. Overall, the team had a hard time defending against Lynn until halfway through the first quarter when Lynn made their first goal, making the score 1-0.

Lynn scored four times after, with one more being in the first half and the rest being in the second. But during the end of the second half, junior player Mercedes Costa Aispuro scored Malden's first and only point.

Malden was struggling both defensively and offensively throughout this game as Lynn Classical is ranked second within the GBL, and when Lynn scored their fifth and final point towards the end of the game, it sealed Malden's defeat. This season was one of growth for the girls as players were consistently switching positions in an attempt to see which fit their team the best.

The team was also inexperienced, as many of their players graduated in the previous year which hampered team chemistry

and led to the unfortunate season record of 4-14.

This season was one of growth for the girls as players were consistently switching positions in an attempt to see which fit their team the best. The team was also inexperienced, as many of their players graduated in the previous year which hampered team chemistry and led to the unfortunate season record of 4-14.

"Our record isn't the best, but these girls were positive every game. Every practice, they showed up," Coach Rick Caceda described.

"Our current season has definitely been a struggle, but we made sure to pull through and make the best out of it. I'm really looking forward to seeing how our team can improve and work together to make the playoffs," Costa explained.

Despite their loss, the team left knowing that they gave this game their all. The seniors and captains helped everyone keep a positive mindset through their attitudes and strong leadership, which shifted the team forward and helped the players focus on trying to change the result of their next game by focusing and improving their mistakes.

"The seniors made a big influence by always making sure to push and motivate our team to try our best," Costa stated.

Although Malden did not win against Lynn English, Coach Caceda believes that they played well regardless. "We had some mistakes that cost us, but overall, the vibe tonight was really good, so I'm happy with that," Caceda said. "I think we've been doing better with having more ball movement. We've

been working on that, as the season is going on, just more possession. We have plenty of good chances to score, and we're still going forward."

The senior night proved bittersweet for all players, regardless of grade or age, as the seniors were leaving their teammates and coaches with whom they formed close bonds over their years of playing.

"I felt emotional since I have dedicated four years of my life to Malden High Soccer. It was sentimental for me as it felt like a chapter was ending," highlighted Valentina Hernandez, a senior on the team.

The seniors not only created relationships with their teammates but also formed tight-knit bonds with their coaches who they believe have taught them a lot. "I'm going to miss the special bond that you create with the coaches; it's a really personal relationship," senior Sarahy Escobar Ayala also stated.

"I think what I'm going to miss most is the friendships and bonds that I've created over the past four years. These friendships are genuinely unforgettable and it's like a sisterhood that we've created with the whole team. I'm going to miss it all," senior Jazlyn Martinez stated.

Even though the team lost on their Senior Night, the team's bond and connection with one another stood out and proved that the team was more than just a soccer team, but a community. "We had the right energy and did everything we could to make sure we went all out for our seniors. Even though we didn't win tonight, it definitely felt like we did," Costa concluded.

maldenblueandgold.com

# Blue and Gold Alumnus Daniel O'Toole Returns to Malden High as New Field Hockey Assistant Coach

Mack Keating  
Editor-In-Chief

After finishing his four years with Malden High, as well as working for our newspaper The Blue and Gold as Editor-in-Chief, graduate Daniel O'Toole has made history by becoming the youngest coach in Malden's history.

Due to COVID impacting his first two years, O'Toole began playing field hockey as a junior. "I knew coming on as a first-year player that it was going to be a learning season for me. It was the first time I'd ever picked up a field hockey stick," O'Toole commented. "I was hungry for opportunity: I always wanted to keep getting better every day. I wanted always to be the first person on the field, the last person off."

His dedication quickly became evident. After just a few weeks on the JV team, O'Toole eventually earned a spot as a starting defensive line player on varsity. Varsity Coach Samantha Souza and Assistant Coach Tiffany Cane recognized his effort and growth, and by the end of the season, he was named captain for his senior year. "It was a big responsibility for me, but it was a title I definitely wouldn't let down."

Transitioning into his senior year, O'Toole embraced the role with a specific target in mind: "I knew our one goal was to win the GBL (Greater Boston League Championship). We're at six times in a row at this point, so it has become the standard," O'Toole explained.

In a remarkable season, the 2023-2024 field hockey team not only claimed GBL All-Star honors but also became the second team in school history to reach the State Tournament. After winning their opening game, the season ended

with a loss in their second tournament match—the furthest the team had ever progressed. "I was and am so grateful to be on that team and to be around such a great group of players," he had commented, reflecting on his field hockey journey.

In March of this year, Coach Souza informed Coach Cane of her pregnancy and that she would be on maternity leave during the next season. Cane stepped into the role of Varsity Coach, prompting Malden High to search for a new JV and Assistant Coach. "I was in the midst of the college process and looking at where I wanted to go to school, so it was only in the back of my mind at that point," O'Toole noted.

As the months passed, the prospect of coaching became increasingly tangible. O'Toole committed to Emerson College in Boston and began the application process to coach. Throughout the summer, he worked closely with Athletic Director Charlie Conefrey and Athletic Administrative Assistant Jeanne Marquardo until he officially secured the coaching position in mid-summer. "I'm so thankful for every opportunity they've given me and the amount of trust they've put in me. I won't let them down."

As summer transitioned into autumn, O'Toole embarked on two new paths: coaching and college. Balancing school and sports is far from a simple task, hence Conefrey often reminds Malden High students, "We call it student-athletes, not athlete-students. The student comes first." Although this specific label no longer applied, O'Toole felt he still had much to learn under this message. Over the past three years as a Malden student-athlete, he recalls learning "how to take care of myself and how to manage my time



**"I'm able to offer a unique perspective and give them more of an insight into certain things, especially since I was a player in this program not too long ago... Honestly, I think it offers a perspective not all coaches can give to their players."**

**- Coach Daniel O'Toole**

**Coach Daniel O'Toole shouting orders from the sidelines. DANI LICONA-CRUZ**

and my work."

Now that the 2024 field hockey season has officially begun, O'Toole has been navigating his new position, though not without challenges. During the first week of practice, he acknowledged, "There was definitely a little bit of a barrier to establishing formality." To address this, he quickly set clear boundaries: "I'm not Daniel, I'm not Danny. I'm Coach O'Toole. I'm here to do my job." Transitioning from a peer relationship to a subordinate one has been difficult for the team, and O'Toole has found that "there are some times that it can be a little bit harder for them to take me seriously."

Junior Audrey Nguyen started

playing field hockey during her sophomore year, the year O'Toole became captain. She noted that the way she addresses O'Toole has shifted, and while it was difficult at first, she has made sure that she remains "respectful towards him at all times," and has started addressing him "the same way" she addresses Coach Cane.

Despite these challenges, the transition has been overwhelmingly positive for both O'Toole and the team: "I'm able to offer a unique perspective and give them more of an insight into certain things, especially since I was a player in this program not too long ago," he detailed. He emphasized, "Honestly, I think it offers a perspective not all coaches can give to their players."

Nguyen followed this by commenting that it has been "easier to associate with a younger coach and to talk with him," because there are fewer "barriers" in communication. She emphasized that knowing him previously has helped with the transition process involved with a new coach. "He already knew most of us and how we play," she highlighted.

One part of O'Toole's perspective includes knowing what the players do when the coaches aren't looking. "I want to make sure that I'm setting the tone that, hey, I was in your same shoes last year, I know some of the things that we got away with, and I want to make sure that they're they're aware of that."

"Obviously, I still have a lot to learn," O'Toole noted, "but I'm excited to grow and learn." Looking forward to the rest of the season, O'Toole hopes to learn more from his athletes, spotlighting, "I'm here to coach them and hope to win and grow as a team."



**Coaches Daniel O'Toole and Tiffany Cane during team huddle. DANI LICONA-CRUZ**

# Raising Sticks to Another Successful Season



From left to right: Cat Nguyen, Amayar San, Linh Do, Kamani Gomes, Yawen Zuo, and Audrey Nguyen collectively pose for a photo before the quarter starts. SOPHIE LEBLANC

Sophie LeBlanc  
Lead Reporter

Mack Keating  
Editor-in-Chief

From the minute they tie their laces for their first game, many student-athletes view the prospect of senior night as the overarching end goal. In every sport, senior night provides an opportunity to reflect, transforming a typical game into a heartwarming display of achievement. In many cases, senior night brings in an influx of family and friends to stop by and show support, and for less mainstream sports, this additional encouragement is incredibly significant. One of these lesser-known sports is field hockey, and on Wednesday, October 16th, the seniors celebrated a hard-fought 1-0 victory, receiving overwhelming support from the wider community.

"It's amazing to be able to walk out onto that field knowing that what you've done for the team, all the time you spent going to all of these practices and games, is being appreciated," enthused senior captain and goalie Ashlyn Cullity. "What we have here as a team is so special and important."

Before the game, coach and MHS alum Daniel O'Toole reflected on his senior night. "The energy was high; you're really excited; you get to see all your friends and family, ready to honor you for all the service you brought to the team... I hope we can bring that energy into this game."

Earlier this month, the team faced Revere for their senior night, which resulted in a disappointing 0-0 tie. Despite this, going into this game, they felt confident regarding the issues they formerly encountered. "I think communication has been improving a lot more. We're looking a bit smoother; that happens as you get further into the season, but I'm hoping we keep that up," said O'Toole. He reinstated the importance of the game as a Greater Boston League (GBL) match, serving as a crucial stepping stone to a



Senior Kevin Chen redirects himself as Revere prepares to hit the ball in from the sidelines. SOPHIE LEBLANC



Coaches Tiffany Cane and Daniel O'Toole address the team and their performance during halftime, reminding players to stay one step ahead of Revere. SOPHIE LEBLANC



The team breaks a huddle and raises their sticks up. SOPHIE LEBLANC

shot at the GBL Title.

The game began with a heartwarming ceremony to celebrate the seniors. Underclassman players stood on the field and lifted their sticks to create a tunnel for seniors to run through. Cheering and screaming could be heard from the stands, full of friends, family, and even MHS field hockey alums.

Edmond Chen, a former player and now a sophomore at UMass Lowell, reflected on returning to the stadium: "I miss the feeling of being in a team, but I'm also really proud of the underclassmen who are in the same position that I was in a few years ago."

"When I was a senior, they all seemed so young, and now I feel old," said Sabrina Flores, another former player. "I'm back here, and I'm like, I guess I do miss high school!"

Right off the bat, Malden's offense was electric, dominant, and effective. Four minutes into the first quarter, Kevin Chen shot a smooth pass across the field to Matthew Garcia, who scored.

Despite Revere's impressive defense, Malden's communication on the field allowed for quick passes and strategic movements; players constantly called out plays and supported each other. This cohesive teamwork led to a remarkable domination of time of possession.

Two minutes later, Everett aimed the ball directly toward a gap in the goal, though senior Satvir Singh's dive blocked this gap and returned the ball to Malden's possession.

The energy in the team huddle was very encouraging. Despite Malden's lead, Coach Tiffany Cane encouraged Malden to keep applying pressure. "When we get out there, we stay out there. We can't back down," said Cane.

Despite this, the second and third quarters were less effective for Malden's offense. At the beginning of the second quarter, Shawn Chen ran the ball down from the midline and shot it down to Garcia

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# Raising Sticks to Another Successful Season

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by the net. Unfortunately, Revere interfered and ran it out of bounds. The ball bounced between Malden and Revere in mid-field, never reaching another net for the next 10 minutes. Sensing Malden's increasing fatigue, O'Toole encouraged, "Don't wait for them to back down. They won't. We need to have more stamina."

On the side-



## Girls' Volleyball Seniors Bid Their Final Goodbyes

*Continued from page 20*

been phenomenal." The end of the set was very similar to the beginning. After maintaining focus and high energy, Malden was able to win the third set 25-10.

Unfortunately, this dominant victory was immediately responded to by MetroTech. While Malden was aggressive throughout the set, this led to a lack of accuracy in their hits, which only increased the distance in their scores. Malden went on to lose the set 25-13.

The final set started with three rallies served by Pham that resulted in points for Malden. As the team shuffled through their serving cycle, they witnessed numerous aces from multiple players, including Rashmi KC. As the team pushed closer to victory, the bleachers roared with chants and excitement. As the score stood 14-7, the ball was placed in Pham's hands to serve the winning rally. An ace from Pham earned Malden the win as supporters from the bleachers crowded the court and showed their excitement for the team. After the team lined up at the net to show sportsmanship and shake hands with MetroTech, they were met with friends and family as they all chanted "Let's go, Malden!"



**Left: Kevin Hoang prepares to knock the ball back in bounds. Above: Malden prepares for first quarter to begin, as Shawn Chen practices his passes and hits. DANI LICONA-CRUZ**

lines, younger players were just as active as those on the field, repeating chants, never taking a seat on the bench, and even wearing blue and gold glitter to show camaraderie. Yawen Zuo, a sophomore player, expressed her admiration for the senior players. "I'm going to miss the seniors." Similarly, freshman player Emme McWayne commented that the seniors are "all really inclusive" and that they have welcomed her into a "really good community."

By the fourth quarter, Malden nearly scored, and while the ball left their possession, it did not leave their side of the field. Revere made numerous shots on goal, with Malden's defense retaliating tirelessly. With just four minutes on the clock, senior Kyle Huang passed to Garcia, who took a powerful corner shot. While they could not seal the goal, they withheld the ball from Revere just enough to conclude the score 1 to 0.

After the buzzer rang out, celebratory yelling filled the air. Senior players ran to one another in excitement, and after engaging in an uplifting team huddle, they headed to enjoy Pisa Pizza and take pictures with friends and family.

"A win is a win," remarked O'Toole after the game. "Another win closer to States; you focus on the good." Looking forward, MHS Field Hockey has a pivotal match against Everett coming up, which will prove to be their most important game of the year. "If you win that, you win GBL, simple as that."

Reflecting on the environment, O'Toole was moved by the turnout, specifically that of alumni. "It just goes back to the culture of the team. I think we have one of the best cultures, if not the best culture, of a team at Malden High School."

Another former player, Marianne Rivadeniera, joyfully expressed that she is "proud the team is still going strong."

However, the impending gravity of GBL on the horizon was put on hold for a night of joy, memories, and celebrating all the relationships one has built within the last four



**Tanvir Singh dribbles down the field with defensive player following close behind. DANI LICONA-CRUZ**

years. While many seniors will be closing their field hockey chapter, senior night proves to be a reminder that many chapters are just beginning. As Coach O'Toole puts it: "It's moments like tonight that you look back, and you really see: that's why."

Nearly two weeks later, the team went on to secure a final record

of 6 wins, 6 losses, and 2 ties, leading them to win the GBL by only a rematch tie to Everett and additionally qualifying them for states, which will come in the following weeks. The hard work the team has put in for the past two months is reflected in their team status, proving to be an uplifting end to a great season.



**Head Coach Tiffany Cane applies glitter to Audrey Nguyen's face prior to the game. SOPHIE LEBLANC**