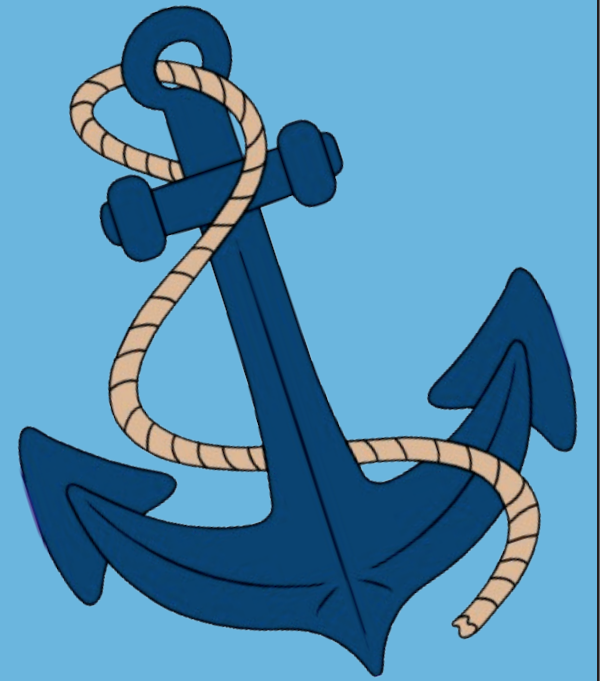


The Sailors'

LOGG



HOMECOMING HITS

Every year MSHS celebrates Homecoming with an array of fun activities: hallway decorating, a parade, the football game, and, of course, the dance. These activities mark a joyful start to fall. See pages 6-7 for more information.

AWAY WITH AI

AI has many negative effects on artists worldwide

Art has been a form of human expression since the dawn of time, so will artificial intelligence ever be able to take its place?

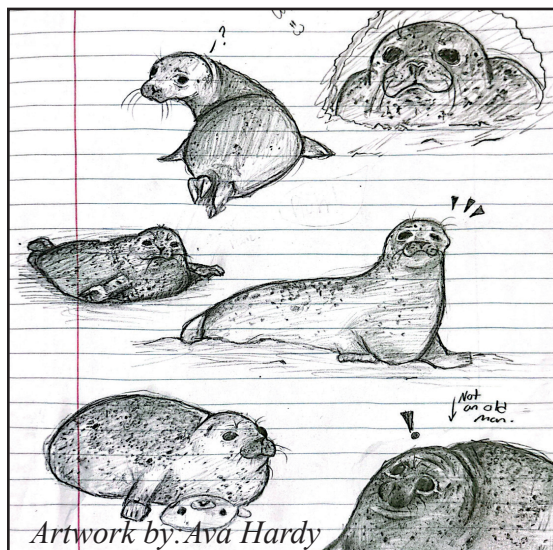
The fear that it could replace human creativity, such as art, writing, or music is becoming increasingly serious to artists, authors, and musicians all around the world.

AI is a widely used tool; the grand majority of people have either heard of it or used it. Most would agree that it's a brilliant tool, offering assistance to struggling students with its tutoring feature, assisting teachers with detecting poor grammar in essays, or giving deep, quick answers to curious questions.

But, naturally, there are downsides.

Artificial intelligence is being used by large corporations for art; it's quick and easy, but harms the community. Many artists make money off their creations through commissions, where someone requests art of something in exchange for payment. But who would pay to get art days after requesting it when you can get it instantly for free? That is one of the reasons AI art is so heavily hated by artists; it's viewed as a replacement.

I would argue that typing in a prompt and letting AI do all the work for you doesn't make you an artist. Does ordering food make you a chef? Of course not. Without human emotion, AI art could never have the impact famous paintings like *Las Meninas* by Diego Velázquez, or *Starry Night* by Vincent Van Gogh had because the intent to hide meaning in everyday items or facial expressions isn't there. How can we expect something incapable of feeling emotions like rage, regret, or joy to express it in something as intricate as art? It pains me to see aspiring artists giving up and switching to AI because they're comparing their art to the art of someone who's been drawing for far longer than they have. Giving up



Artwork by: Ava Hardy

isn't the answer! Put in an effort to learn anatomy, or figure out your own unique art-style, because it is worth the time.



By Ava Hardy,
Staff writer.

Secondly, music. Music is another form of art; it conveys emotion through sound rather than through visual means, musicians use music to vent their stories, and express their hardships in a catchy way that others may relate to.

Although less common, AI is being used to create songs. There are a few AI bands, such as The Velvet Sundown, whose most popular song has over 3,000,000 listens on Spotify (It's not even that good). This is far more than smaller, human creators which isn't how it should be. Many report that they didn't even know it was entirely composed by AI, because it was so convincing. It's not a new idea with new themes or tunes, but a mathematical reproduction of preexisting songs and/or melodies (which assists in it seeming man-made).

So, I ask you this; Could artificial intelligence replace the works of Mozart? Could it recreate the strong feeling "Dies Irae" has?

My final point is writing. I adore writing. Extensive vocabularies, elegant poems, and deep stories are all some of my deepest passions. So you can imagine my

surprise when I learned that people called themselves authors for publishing stories written by AI.

This happens more often than not in schools; students struggle to write an essay and, instead, get ChatGPT to write it for them. Not only are they robbing themselves of education, but also making Fyodor Dostoevsky sob in his grave. Similarly to music and art, AI takes from premade literary works and jumbles the words into something new, combining ideas and causing copy-right issues. But is this as major an issue as actually publishing an AI written work? Maybe. If you struggle with writing essays or creative writing as a whole, you most likely will not pursue a career that revolves around writing, thus won't be publishing stories written by artificial intelligence, but if you do wish to pursue writing but have put no effort into discovering the way of words, why not let a robot do it for you?

Authors make money off their work, but this isn't exclusive to the hard working, genius society of poets and actual writers. "Authors" get paid, too. Which is irritating real writers; their effort is getting rewarded as much (or less) than prompt-born writing. Which could destroy their urge to write and share their fantasy or life story with the world. It's destroying people's will to create something that is special to them.

To conclude, AI is by no means a bad thing; it can be used for good in many ways. But using it to replace things that needs to be man-made to convey emotion could destroy so many communities and talents. I don't believe AI could ever fully replace art, be it music, writing, or any other form of expression, because it has too much history to be replacable, but that doesn't justify the theivery AI commits.

Even if you can't draw, or don't enjoy writing, understanding the importance of these skills and respecting their significance is still key. Use AI responsibly, and remember that the ability to think creatively and critically is crucial, especially now that AI is only getting more advanced.

from the editors

No need for seasonal sadness with so much to look forward to this fall.

As the summer months come to a saddening close, the cool chill of the brisk autumn air arrives. But there is no need to sulk.

If you are like any of us on the newspaper staff, you have probably experienced seasonal blues. Whether you miss the 80 degree days spent on the beach, or the long nights spent hanging out with your friends, we can all agree the end of summer and the beginning of fall is somewhat miserable.

However, fall is just as fun as you make it out to be. During the fall, you can spend your Friday nights cheering on the football team, or spending the weekend in a pumpkin patch.

You also have many things to look forward to, like fall break, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and for those who love it as much as we do, Christmas time. But we won't look that far ahead into the future... for now.

After spending so much time outside, which is not a bad thing, curling up in your bed and throwing a movie on is not a bad option. Those movies could include, but are not limited to, *Halloween*, *Hocus Pocus*, *Beetlejuice*, and the very best fall movie, *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*. Plus, if you are looking for a little extra joy this time of year, go to Meijer, buy a costume, grab your pillowcase, and go trick-or-treating. You are never too old to go and try to get some king-sized candy bars.

Now we know that asking you to not be sad that summer is ending is unrealistic, but if you just look on the bright side, fall is not all that bad.

The Sailors'

LOG



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The AP Advantage

Advanced Placement classes offer numerous educational benefits

As a student, choosing your classes each year can feel overwhelming. There are so many options, and sometimes it's tempting to pick the easiest or most familiar classes to avoid stress. But when it comes to Advanced Placement (AP) courses, I believe more students should seriously consider taking them—even if they seem challenging at first. AP classes are more than just extra homework or harder tests. They offer unique opportunities that can shape your academic journey and prepare you for life after high school.

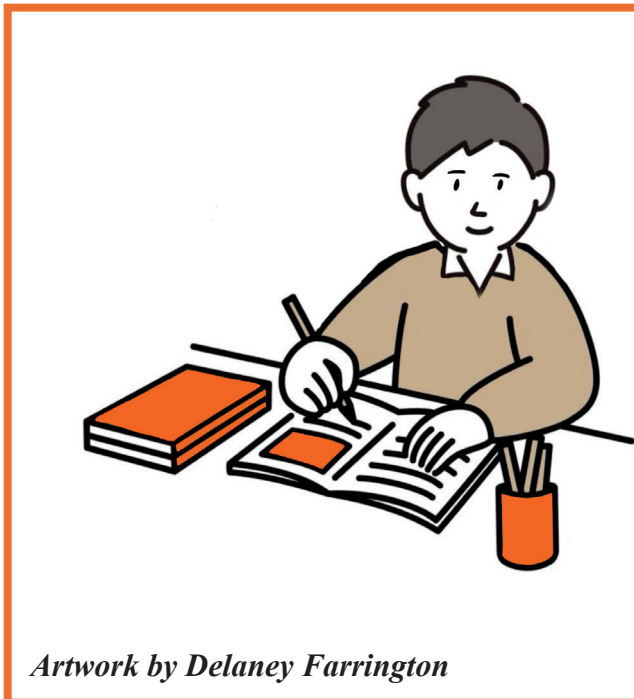


By Eddie Kuznar, Editor-in-Chief

Sure, AP classes are difficult. But pushing yourself academically is one of the best ways to learn what you're truly capable of. When I took my first AP class, I was nervous, but by the end of the year, I felt a huge boost in confidence—not just in school, but in general. These classes teach more than just facts; they teach you how to study efficiently, manage your time, and handle pressure. These are skills that will help you no matter what you do in the future.

For me, the biggest change came in how I learned to manage my time. In a regular class, I could sometimes wait until the last minute to study or do homework. In AP, that strategy doesn't fly. You have to stay on top of things, and while it was stressful at first, it made me more organized. I started completing assignments early, learned how to study without distractions, and managed my time better. These are skills I know I'll need when I go to college and even later in life.

In a competitive college admissions landscape, standing out is key. AP classes demonstrate that you're willing to challenge yourself, a quality that colleges value. It shows that you're not afraid to take on difficult tasks and that you're prepared for the rigorous demands of higher



Artwork by Delaney Farrington

education. Even if you don't get a perfect score on the AP exam, the fact that you took the class shows initiative. Admissions officers look for students who push themselves academically, and taking AP classes can help set you apart from other applicants.

One of the most rewarding aspects of AP classes is the personal growth that comes with them. The material is challenging, but with hard work and dedication, you can master it. Every time you succeed in an AP class—whether it's acing a tough test or completing a complex project—you build your confidence. You realize that you're capable of handling difficult tasks, and that feeling of accomplishment will carry over into every other area of your life. Taking on AP courses helps you develop resilience. You will encounter challenges along the way,

but overcoming those challenges teaches you how to persevere. There is a sense of pride you get when you walk out of the exam room after finishing this excessively long test at the end of the year. Knowing that you did something that was hard makes you feel good about yourself. The personal growth you get from these courses will help you throughout the rest of your life.

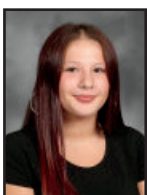
Another reason I think AP classes are worth it is how they give you a taste of what college is like. I remember sitting in my first AP history class, staring at this huge packet of readings, thinking, "There's no way I can get through this." But I did. Slowly, I got used to it, and it made me realize that college won't be as scary as it seems. While some students might feel shocked by the workload when they graduate, AP students already know what to expect.

Now, I'll be honest: AP classes aren't for everyone. They are tough. There will be nights when you're buried in notes or writing an essay while your friends are relaxing. But here's the thing: even if you don't ace the exam, the effort itself makes you stronger. You'll learn discipline, patience, and perseverance. Those are qualities that colleges—and life in general—value. I think that's the real reward of AP. Even if you don't pass the exam or get the college credit, you walk away stronger. You become a better student, a more disciplined person, and someone who knows how to face challenges head-on.

If you are considering taking an AP class, just do it. Don't overload yourself. Start with one or two. If you are feeling like you have the ability to do more, then do it. There will be times when you wonder what was going through your mind when you signed up for the class. I have experienced this firsthand and still do it this year. But the person you will become because of the classes and the experiences you will get to have in these classes will greatly outweigh the struggles you endured throughout the year.



"So far the year has been pretty good. I've really enjoyed playing volleyball and hanging out with friends."
Kenzie Bard, freshman



"My classes have all went well for the most part. Going to the football games has been very fun."
Peyton VanOpynen, sophomore



"On a scale from one to ten, I'd give it about a six or a seven. I've enjoyed choir and the new teacher. I've also made some new friends."
Uriah McAuley, junior



"So far so good I would say. Golf season has been pretty fun and I like all of my classes."
Kiele Buckner, senior

How did your first month of school go?



In each edition of *The Sailors' Log*, eight students will be asked their opinion about a current topic.



"Football has been a lot of fun. I'm still trying to get used to the new building but I'm finding my way around."
Grant Elliston, freshman



"I've liked all of my classes, so I'd say it's going pretty well. Taking an AP class has been a lot of work, but it's not too bad."
Brady Volkmann, sophomore



"It went great. My classes are pretty fun so far, and I've enjoyed meeting new people in them."
Sam Knowlton, junior



"It's going pretty good. Football has been a ton of fun so far. My classes are all pretty easy so it's fun."
Tyson Terpstra, senior

THE SHOW GOES ON

Lin Manuel-Miranda's *Hamilton* celebrates 10th anniversary

America: bald eagles, freedom, hot dogs, baseball. If you read this list and thought to yourself, "Where is 'Epic Rap Battles?'" Your name is Lin-Manuel Miranda, American songwriter and actor.

Miranda's name may be familiar as it's in the credits of seemingly every single Disney movie that has come out in the last 5-10 years (including but not limited to: *Encanto*, *Mufasa: The Lion King*, and *Moana*), but his most notable role is, without a doubt, as the writer and star of *Hamilton: An American Musical*.

For those who are lying about being unfamiliar with *Hamilton*, the show tells the story of the "ten-dollar Founding Father without a father" Alexander Hamilton, who "got a lot farther by working a lot harder, by being a lot smarter," and by being a "self-starter."

Miranda was inspired to write the show after relating to the forgotten Founding Father as an American immigrant who moved to New York City himself, describing *Hamilton* as "the story of America then told by America now." He outlines the United States of the 1700's through a cast of predominantly people of color and a sung-and-rapped biography of the country's original mythology.

As *Hamilton* celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, it's a perfect time capsule of Obama-era America and liberalism. I have certainly done my time celebrating its birthday over the last few months, having had the privilege of seeing it live in Grand Rapids in July and watching the pro-shot version in a movie theater in September. I love *Hamilton* and have ever since I first heard "Aaron Burr, sir" in a *Warriors* animation as a child.

If it excels in anything, *Hamilton* excels in being the perfect song to draw warrior cats to. A middle school book series I adore for its cat murder, cat romance, and, of course, cat politics, *Warriors* and *Hamilton* have always been a package deal to me.

The show is truly unparalleled in this feline metric, to the point where, after ten years, it's gotten to be a bit old. There are only so many ways one can draw a cat rapping the same 40 songs. So I, ever the journalist, have decided to take the burden of finding a new American history musical

to animate warrior cats to upon myself (you're welcome).

If we want to find *Hamilton 2*, a good start is to look toward the obvious. Miranda credits much of the show's success to former President Barack Obama, a more recent political figure, and so I quickly recalled something else very important from the land of the TikTok. Its name was *44: The Obama Musical*.

Once trending for the hilarity of the concept, one quote rang through my head as I fervently searched: "And his name is Obama. Barack-a-lacka Obama."

Unfortunately, I could not track down a full recording of *44* (legal or otherwise), so I can only go off the bits publicly available. On its website, *44* is described as "the story that ended racism forever" and "the story of Obama as Joe Biden kinda sorta remembers it."

Although I was intrigued and bookmarked the tickets page, this left me very disappointed. *Hamilton 2* needs to be able to take itself somewhat seriously, and I was not going to be able to get that from *44*. The Obama musical gets a rating of four lives out of nine, as you cannot draw feral cats murdering each other to its questionable soundtrack.

Unsuccessful and defeated, I turned to the title that inspired this great search: *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. The consistent first search result for "American history musicals that aren't *Hamilton* but are still awesome," it was my last hope.

I can now say with absolute certainty that *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* is awesome. Written by Michael Friedman and Alex Timbers and premiering on Broadway in 2010, *BBAJ* is essentially *Hamilton*'s edgy older brother that Mom is mildly ashamed of. *BBAJ* is not the sequel to *Hamilton*; *Hamilton* is the notably more sane prequel to *BBAJ*.

The show follows controversially bloodthirsty seventh president Andrew Jackson, who is "not that guy" and also a rockstar. Where Miranda's writing focuses on rap, Friedman and Timbers' story reflects the rock scene of the 2000s in a way that many musicals have attempted but few have succeeded.

A common criticism of *Hamilton* is that the musical is too scared to show how truly horrible many of the Founding Fathers were, only briefly mentioning events like slavery. On the other hand, *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* had me wishing they would do some sugarcoating. The show is a lot of things, but it is absolutely not

"scared."

Andrew Jackson is here for two things: populism ("yea, yea!") and mass murder, and he's all out of mass murder.

This show does not shy away from how badly Jackson wants to kill everyone immediately, and it's hilarious. Much like *Hamilton*'s Hamilton, Jackson aspires to lead his country to victory in times of war and fix a system he no longer believes in. Unlike *Hamilton*'s Hamilton, I'm pretty sure that's just a cover to drink the blood of his enemies while a rock song blares in the background.

Although the show is truly ridiculous, the soundtrack is fantastic. There are a couple of songs that haven't been able to stay off my Spotify in days. At its best, *BBAJ* is right on par with *Hamilton* (which is praise I do not give lightly). Although, unlike *Hamilton*, it is wildly inconsistent in quality.

All the songs are decent, but only a couple really stand out. That being said, that couple really stands out for animating warrior cats. *BBAJ* gets seven out of nine lives on the cat scale. It's not *Hamilton*, but it's pretty good, and the closest I was going to get.

If you enjoy the inconsistent and want to feel better than everyone else when your friend brings up *Hamilton* next, check out *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. Maybe get parents' permission first.

As amazing as the musicals I had an excuse to discover were, none of them were the great *Hamilton 2* I set out to find. We may never see a show as flawless as *Hamilton* or a writer as talented as Lin-Manuel Miranda, but we all have the potential to create greatness. Instead of focusing on replication and recreating what has already been created, we must instead focus on our own visions.

As improbable as it is, if there ever were to be a *Hamilton 2*, it would need to focus on a political figure not too recent but not too distant. After the time of *Hamilton* but before the time of Obama. Someone uncontroversial (un-Andrew Jackson) and beloved by all of America. And last but certainly not least, it has to have a soundtrack that syncs with the plot of *Warriors*.

After inspiring myself (I am brilliant), I will begin work on my next great endeavor: *16: An Abraham Lincoln Musical*. I haven't decided if I want to open with "his name is Abraham Lincoln" or "my name is Abraham Lincoln" yet, so any feedback is appreciated.



By Anna Trasky, Staff Writer

Eddie and Stella's Top Ten: Fall Activities

1. Wear a sensible fall sweater.
2. Ding-dong ditch your neighbors on Halloween night.
3. Carve your enemy's face into a pumpkin. (Then smash it.)
4. Pass out from eating too much candy on Halloween.
5. Be a background dancer in Michael Jackson's "Thriller."
6. Scare your siblings with scary costumes #personalgrowth.
7. Take two pieces of candy when the bowl says to take one.
8. Bawl your eyes out at a haunted house.
9. Drink large amounts of apple cider.
10. Push a friend into a pile of leaves.



Mona Shores High School Players Present

Clue

November 6 & 8

Catch Clue at the Mona Shores High School Performing Arts Center on November 6 at 7:00 p.m., or November 8 at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for students. The show's content is appropriate for middle school-aged kids and above. Tickets will be available at monashoresplayers.ludus.com.

By Estella O'Brien,
Editor-in-Chief

When it comes to *Clue*, most are likely familiar with the board game, but this fall the MSHS Players will be bringing the play based on that board game to life.

"This show is so funny, and it's such a classic," said senior Catherine Conrad, who will be playing Miss Scarlet. "And we love a good fall murder mystery, of course."

Clue details a dramatic and comedic murder mystery, set during the era of McCarthyism, and sports a vibrant main cast of characters. The center of which is a character who is not in the board game: the butler Wadsworth.

"I am absolutely stoked for my role [as Wadsworth] because I've never had a massive role before," said junior Taevien Walek-Russell. "This will be my first, so I'm HYPEDDDDD!"

As Walek-Russell prepares to take on a bigger role than ever before, his fellow cast member senior Kaleena Frederick, who will be playing Mrs. White, looks forward to taking on a different type of character.

"I'm most excited to play a character who is mysterious," Frederick said. "I've never played a character like this before."

Many actors are stepping out of their comfort zones with their roles in *Clue*, senior James Olejarczyk is also excited for a change of pace with his role as Mr. Green.

"'Excited' is an understatement, I'm geeked to be playing



The cast of *Clue* poses for a cast photos with advisor Ms. Baker. (Courtesy Photo)

this role," Olejarczyk said. "I like the character of Mr. Green. I've always played pretty outgoing roles, so it's a nice change of pace to play this timid guy with a small voice."

As many of the cast members prepare for a different kind of role, some, like sophomore Anna Peterson, who will be playing Professor Plum, are simply excited to be taking on a lead role.

"I am unbelievably excited about my role," Peterson said. "I didn't think that I could make it this far honestly. If you had told me six or seven years ago, when I first started performing, that I would be a lead in an adaptation of one of my favorite childhood games I would call you a liar."

Ms. Baker takes on Players after years of waiting and gives her thoughts about the play *Clue*

By Shane Thompson,
Staff Writer

This fall, Mona Shores High School's theater club, Players, is under new leadership. Ms. Baker is stepping into the spotlight as the new head of Players. With her at the wheel, the club is diving into the hilarious murder mystery *Clue*.

Ms. Baker has been passionate about theater since day one.

"Players has been my passion since I started here at Mona Shores High School," Baker said. "I went to college to be a theater educator...and just share the passion that I have for theater with students."

Bonding with the cast and crew has been one of the highlights for her.

"It's exciting to meet and see the new faces," Baker said. "Players is a really unique group of students who are truly passionate about just being together and putting on the shows."

The transition into leading Players has been smoother than expected.

"The most surprising part for me is just how easy it is to jump right back into being in charge of Players," Baker said. "It's been going so smoothly and so wonderfully."

Even though rehearsals have just begun, Ms. Baker hopes her directing style will inspire the cast.

"I hope that the students will see my energy and passion, and the time that I'm putting into them," Baker said. "And that they thrive, and...grow as actors and humans."

Choosing *Clue* gives tech students a chance to shine, with scenic changes, props, lighting, sound, makeup, and more.

"...it offers great opportunities for actors to really grow and take on challenging roles," Baker said. "We're really lucky that we are even getting to do this amazing show."

Ms. Baker is excited to bring her own creative vision to the production.

"Every director has their production concept, and their vision," Baker said. "And I definitely have a vision that I can't wait to bring to life."

The cast is already connecting with the story.

"During our read-through last week, it was hilarious and fun," Baker said. "Students laughed at each other's lines... it just showed how great the cast members are at their characters already."

When it comes to choosing roles, Ms. Baker looks for more than just talent.

"We look for students who are dedicated," Baker said.

Clearly, all cast members are excited to bring these characters to the MSHS stage. While said characters are definitely larger than life, many of the cast members have found ways to relate to them.

"I would say I'm not super similar to my character because she's a little hysterical," Mann said. "Though I do feel like I am similar to her in the way of her confidence because she stands up for herself."

Whether they found similarities or not, everyone is excited for their roles in this show. In fact, one student has been a fan of the movie *Clue*, which this play is based on, since she was a child. "I'm really excited about my role in this show because I've loved the movie *Clue* since I was a kid, and Miss Scarlet was always my favorite," Conrad said. "Whenever I got to choose the game for board game night, I would always choose *Clue*, and I HAD to be Miss Scarlet (mostly because she went first because she's a boss)."

A unique show such as this is sure to excite all who are involved, but it also has a lot which appeal to an audience.

"The show has lots of dead bodies, if you're into that kind of thing," Olejarczyk said. "Gonna be some real creative set design, and I get a chandelier dropped on my head."

Overall, the cast of *Clue* is working hard to ensure that it captivates and entertains all who attended.

"This play will keep you on the edge of your seat," Frederick said. "Was it Plum in the hall with the rope? Watch and find out!"

"Willing to take direction and have a positive attitude and energy."

One of the most exciting parts of the show is the set.

"The set has secret passageways and rotating pieces," Baker said. "It's a super fun set that is very similar to the board game *Clue*."

Ms. Baker has big dreams for future productions, too.

"I have a real passion for Shakespeare," Baker said. "I've already directed *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, but I've always hoped to someday direct *Taming of the Shrew*."

For Ms. Baker, success isn't measured by ticket sales or perfect performance.

"Every play is successful because it's all about the kids," Baker said. "To build confidence, to be part of something so huge and so important, and then to share that with the community is such an amazing opportunity."

Ms. Baker's passion for theater combined with the excitement of the cast and crew have brought a fresh energy.

Her creative vision and the carefully chosen production of *Clue* has made it clear that she's committed to making this experience meaningful, and rewarding for everyone involved.

2025 Homecoming Proposals

Jarrett and Hadley



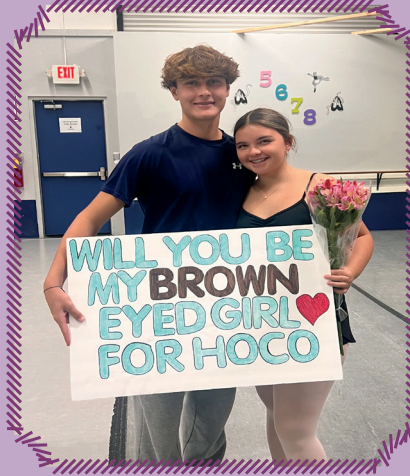
"I chose this sign because I knew her favorite candy was Reese's, and I thought there was no way she would turn candy down."
- Jarrett Merrill, junior

"I really like the sign because Reese's peanut butter cups are my favorite candy."
- Hadley Kinney, sophomore

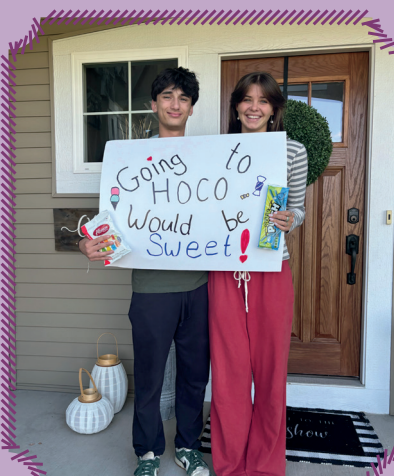
Gavin and Harper

"The sign was inspired by the song Brown Eyed Girl. Harper's dad is in a band and sings it. It's one of our favorites."
- Gavin Glinski, freshman

"I had an idea that it was gonna happen, I just wasn't sure when. My favorite part about the sign is that it relates to me as a person."
- Harper Trombley, freshman



Alden and Emma



"The sign took me about an hour or so to make because I had to make it look nice and neat for her."
- Alden Cortez, senior

"I was surprised when he asked me because I didn't expect it to happen when it did. I love that he hand wrote it nicely and put effort into it!"
- Emma DeYoung, senior

Sydney and Breslin

"I chose this sign because I knew that she loved slushies, so I also brought her her favorite slushy."
- Breslin Walek-Russell, senior

"I was a little surprised but at the same time I kinda knew that it was coming, I love that he knew my favorite slushy was Coke!"
- Sydney Seiferlein, junior



Hits of Homecoming

Annual Homecoming dance at Mona Shores High School generates a multitude of traditions

By Megan Avila
Staff Writer

On the 12th of September, Mona Shores High School celebrated its annual homecoming parade with high levels of anticipation for the football game that occurred later that evening. Starting at Shores Community Church and ending at the Sailor Stadium, this parade featured many floats representing the various clubs and extracurricular activities that make up what Mona Shores High School has to offer.

"My experience in the parade was great," said senior Grace Chasco. "Fiddlers can often be overlooked as an extracurricular, so for our group to get some recognition was really nice to see. I have been in the parade before, but this year was different in that we had a different set list, and as a senior there is a lot more pressure to perform well."

For the fiddlers, the parade provided a much-deserved moment for them to be in the spotlight. These fiddler members practiced tirelessly for weeks leading up to the event. All of the effort that they put in was evident in their outstanding performance. Their involvement offered a chance for them to be seen and valued for their dedication by interacting with the community.

"To me, being in the homecoming parade is all about connecting with the community," Chasco said. "Shores has an amazing music program, and the parade was a great opportunity to show it off and share our talents. I will remember everyone's cooperation and DeRose's commitment to the club. It takes a lot of practice and patience to put on an event like this (especially for musicians). Everyone gave it their all, and it showed!"

Being involved in the homecoming parade for the community aspect was not only important for Chasco, but also meant a lot to senior Camden Epplert, who is involved in soccer here at Mona Shores High School.

"My experience from the parade was a lot of fun, and I love getting to put a smile on all the little kids' faces," Epplert said. "The parade for me is a chance to let all the future Mona Shores kids see what we have to offer and all the different sports teams we have."

Even though both soccer and fiddlers are quite contrasting extracurriculars, it was common ground that they both had similar feelings through the duration of the parade. Not only was the parade about the community for them, but it was also about having a chaotic and humorous

time. "As far as funny goes, I don't think people realize just how comical it is to play a string instrument in such close proximity on a float," Chasco said. "The number of people I was bumping into with my bow or scroll was wild! Thankfully, no casualties...yet. Performing is always a lot of fun, but it can be hectic. Honestly though, it's fun BECAUSE it's hectic! I wound up performing a duet. Initially, I wasn't planning on it, but Derosé convinced me I would regret it if I didn't. She was right. It wasn't my best performance, but it was a lot of fun, and I'm proud that I put myself out there."

The energy of the parade, characterized by excitement and amusement, served as the perfect beginning to lead into the football game that began later that very evening. Senior quarterback, Joe Thole, shared the team's goal going into the game against Flint Hamady.

"Our team goal in this game was to continue to stay efficient," Thole said. "And, of course, throw some touchdowns."

The team accomplished that goal by dominating the contest and never letting Hamady score. They went into half with a 58-0 lead, and the game ended with the Sailors defeating the Hawks 64-0. With being so far ahead, their drive could have decreased, but Thole said differently.

"We made sure to continue to dominate in the second half by focusing on getting our two's in, which are the backups that work really hard in the scout team," Thole said. "We just wanted to give them an opportunity to play."

For many, the football game was not just about the win, but it was about the personal victories and favorite memories that made it so such a memorable experience. "Seeing the younger guys get in, and it was a really cool experience for him, was my favorite moment from the game"

The homecoming game, fueled by the electric atmosphere of the parade and the players' determination, was a resounding success. The players' performance, inspired by the day's festivities, delivered a memorable victory.

Homecoming 2025 will be remembered as a showcase of school pride and athletic achievement. The energy and excitement of the event created lasting memories for everyone involved.



Senior senate members pose for a photo in their "rock and roll" themed winning hallway. (Courtesy Photo)



Students meet together during the annual homecoming dance for a photo (Courtesy Photo)

Hoco Court 2025



Seniors Ryan Opsommer and Lydia Ogle crowned 2025 Hoco king and queen. (Courtesy photo)



Juniors Andrew Fisher and Harper Robinson represent the junior class. (Courtesy photo)



Sophomores Kendal Brown and Ja'Yon Gardner represent the sophomore class. (Courtesy photo)



Freshman Brennen Reister and Gabi Koziak represent the freshman class. (Courtesy photo)

Hoco Special Events

Dance results in discourse over music played

By Kendall Berghuis,
Staff Writer

On September 13th, the annual homecoming dance was held. This year's theme was music genres. The cafeteria was transformed, and the familiar lunchtime tables had vanished, replaced by a swirling sea of colored lights, balloons, photo booths, and tables accompanied by a delicious assortment of cookies.

"Overall, I thought the dance was really fun and I had a good time hanging out and seeing all of my friends," junior Brooklyn Briseno said. "My favorite part was dancing and singing along to the music."

Most people who attended the school dances agree with Briseno that homecoming is a very fun way to hang out with your friends, one of them being Sophomore Cal Vanderwall. "I was at the dance the whole time," Vanderwall said. "I stayed with some of my senior friends."

Every year the dance is unique, but this year's theme really seemed to make an impact on how students felt about the dance.

"This year's theme was very cool," Briseno said. "I really enjoyed the hallways that were decorated to different music genres. My favorite was the junior hallway."

However, one thing that was controversial was the music that was played. A lot of Sailors thought that some of the music that was chosen wasn't worthy of being played, while others really liked the music.

"I think the music was definitely better than last year," Vanderwall said. "I would not have picked to play other songs."

"I didn't really like the music that much, but it was still fun," Briseno said. "Some of the songs that were played I had no idea what they were. There were also a couple times where the whole room was chanting 'SKIP' because no one liked it."

Overall, homecoming is something that almost every high school has, but many believe that MSHS does it best. Sailors take pride in making sure everyone gets involved, whether it is decorating the halls, running for homecoming court, walking in the parade, being hype in the student section and at the assembly, or just hanging out at the dance with friends. Homecoming is a fun event for all.

Class of 2026 senate wins fours year in a row

By Megan Avila,
Staff Writer

During the week of homecoming, the student senate members in all four grades competed in a hallway decorating competition. Each of the grade's hallways had to fall under a category of music styles. The freshmen had country, sophomores selected jazz, juniors hip-hop, and finally the seniors chose rock 'n' roll.

"This was my 5th year helping with homecoming hallway decorations," said math teacher and senior senate advisor, Desiree Medina. "This year was different because my group are now seniors! They really took control and knew exactly what to do to get the job done. Since we had won the last three years in a row, we knew we needed to "Rock" this one too!"

Since the senior senate had won the last three years, they knew that they had to step it up this year. They believed that choosing rock 'n' roll would do just the job.

"We went down the list of all the different music genres," Medina said. "We wanted a theme that would make a huge visual impact. Teachers also love rock-and-roll, and we knew they were the ones we needed to impress the most to win."

The senior senate knew exactly what to do to pull out a win, so when it was announced that they had won once again, they were ecstatic.

"I was so proud of my seniors!" Medina said. "Pure joy was written all over my face. The seniors always come up with such great ideas and are so dedicated to making their vision a reality."

When senior senate president, Adrienne Mills, was asked about her reaction to the victory, she had a similar response.

"I just felt a sense of relief because I wanted our group to end with one final victory," Mills said. "Our hallways always brought joy, so to have one final impact on the teachers and students felt great."

The competition revealed the creativity, dedication, and school spirit that, not only the senior senate, but also the rest of the school senate members had in them as well, which perfectly exemplifies the P.R.I.D.E. that Mona Shores High School has.

Around The World

Mona Shores welcomes exchange students with open arms

Improving English skills through visit

Camilla Facenda is an exchange student who arrived in the USA, bringing with her a vibrant blend of culture, curiosity, and enthusiasm.

"I am from Rome, Italy," Facenda said. "I came to the US because I wanted to learn the culture and improve my English. The culture here is very different from Italy so adjusting to American culture has been challenging."

Since arriving, Facenda has embraced the challenges and opportunities of adapting to a new culture. She is eager to learn from her American peers, build friendships, and gain new perspectives. Facenda's openness and positive attitude have made her a beloved member of her school community.

"Before coming here I was expecting my first exchange year to be bad," Facenda said. "I'm very shy as a person, but I joined the cheer team and it helped me make new friends."

Through her exchange experience, Camilla hopes to foster greater understanding between cultures and inspire others to embrace the value of global connections.

"Even if you think you're shy or not very extroverted, you should do it," Facenda said. "It can be scary but it's a great experience."



Facenda in front of the Colosseum in Rome, Italy. (Courtesy Photo)

From Spain to a world of new experiences

Coming from Barcelona, Spain, Maria Lopez decided to take a bold step by coming to the United States as an exchange student. She wanted to experience life away from home and learn how to stand on her own two feet.

"The hardest part about being away from my family is being homesick," Lopez said. "Everyday I call my mom and dad to stay connected with them."

Through this experience, Lopez discovered that independence isn't just about doing things alone; it's about learning to trust yourself and being responsible for your own growth.

Lopez adjusted to school in America by embracing the differences she encountered compared to her school in Spain. Although the teaching styles, schedules, and social environment were new to her, she actively participated in extracurriculars like volleyball and choir, which helped her connect with her classmates.

"Schools are more different here compared to Spain," Lopez said. "But I've adjusted to how school is here. I'm on the volleyball team and I'm also in choir. I'm also thinking about joining the basketball team."

Lopez is not only improving her abilities to live on her own, but also improving on her understanding of the world. Lopez is ready to bring back these valuable skills back home to Barcelona.

Embracing a new culture and new friends

Japan is a fascinating country known for its rich culture and advanced technology. From the peaceful temples and gardens to the vibrant cities full of life, Japan offers a unique experience that combines history, nature, and futuristic living all in one place.

When boarding the plane to the United States, Mihiro Tanaka was filled with nervous anticipation. She imagined that her experience would be overwhelming and frightening because of the language barrier, different culture, and unfamiliar customs. However, as Tanaka began to settle, she discovered that her fears were largely unfounded.

"I came to the United States to improve my English skills," Tanaka said. "The hardest part about learning is that I can't easily join in on friend's conversations."

From the moment Tanaka began school, she was greeted with kindness from her peers and eagerness to include her in activities.

"The students in this school have been really kind," Tanaka said. "I joined the marching band and it has been my best experience so far."

Over time, Tanaka realized that the challenges she initially feared were actually opportunities for growth and learning. Stepping out of her comfort zone has led her to unexpected friendships and hobbies.

Every year exchange students arrive from all over the world to learn at Mona Shores.
By Emily Dimas,
Staff Writer

Finding and enjoying the American dream

Simon Leroy arrived in America chasing the American Dream: a vision of new opportunities, personal growth, and the chance to experience life from a new perspective.

"I'm experiencing the American Dream," Leroy said. "Food, school, and football games."

His parents, who have traveled, encouraged him to explore the world and embrace new experiences.

"I became an exchange student because my parents have had similar experiences with it," Leroy said. "One day they asked me if I wanted to experience something like that, and I said sure."

Coming from France, where soccer is a well-established sport, Leroy was excited to join the high school's team.

"When I first met the team, it had already felt like a family," Leroy said. "I met a lot of new people who have become my friends."

Throughout his journey as a French exchange student in the USA, Leroy discovered that the American Dream is more than just success; it's about embracing new opportunities and building meaningful connections.



Leroy posing with Rambly the Raccoon in Europa Park (Courtesy Photo)

Embracing those unexpected experiences

Kattalin Muguerza, an exchange student from Spain, came to the United States with the goal of gaining greater independence.

"Meeting new people and learning how life is in the US has been fun," Muguerza said. "I'm going to try out for the basketball team because I've played it in Spain."

Muguerza hopes that this experience teaches her valuable life skills.

"I want to live new experiences and learn how to be without my family," Muguerza said. "It can be hard sometimes because I miss my family but I spend time with my host family so I can feel more at home."

Muguerza imagined the USA to be just like the movies she had seen, with big cities, glamorous lifestyles, and constant excitement.

"I thought it would be like the movies," Muguerza said. "My friends in Spain would tell me to share photos because they think that America is going to look like what the movies show. There are some similarities, but there are a lot of things that are so different from what I thought it would be."

While things aren't always exactly as she imagines, the experience helps her become more adaptable and open-minded.



Muguerza enjoying time in the small town of Mendota, Spain. (Courtesy Photo)

Overcoming significant cultural challenges

Elisa XU, arriving from China to the United States for school, embarks on a unique and enriching journey. This experience offers a chance to explore a new culture, improve language skills, and build lifelong friendships. Upon arrival, the student often encounters a different educational system, which encourages active participation, critical thinking, and collaboration.

"I came to the United States to experience a different life," XU said. "My only challenge here is that I don't know how to word things when I want to explain something."

Adapting to life in the U.S. involves overcoming challenges such as language barriers and cultural differences. However, with support from host families, teachers, and peers, the student gradually becomes more comfortable. Participating in school activities and community events helps them feel connected and valued.

"School in America is different from school in China," XU said. "In China, you would stay in one classroom and the teachers would come to you rather than you going to five different classrooms everyday. Also, studying is so much more interesting and easier to comprehend compared to the depressive and complicated Chinese studies."

Despite the initial difficulties, XU's journey has been rewarding. She has made new friends, discovered new interests, and has gained new skills that could help her in the future.

From Home to Hallways

Students and parents find themselves getting closer and bonding being in the same school

The Halls



The Halls posing for a family picture. (Courtesy Photo)

Psychology teacher Heather Hall and senior Natalie Hall are able to spend time together in a classroom setting every day, and thus, they continue to deepen their bond every day through the subject that is psychology.

"I had my mom for Psychology 1 and 2, and now I'm in AP Psychology and I love it," Natalie Hall said. "I like what she teaches, and it's such a fun experience to be in her classroom as a student, rather than a daughter."

Psychology is one of the many interesting subjects taught at Shores, and with Natalie Hall taking psychology three times with her mom as a teacher, the Hall family is definitely very familiar and comfortable with psychology as a subject.

"All three of my children took my AP Psychology class and my blended Psychology classes," Heather Hall said. "I loved it, as it allowed both of us to see each other in a different light. For example, I get to see what kind of student each of my children is, and they get to see how much I actually know about psychology and how I teach my classes."

In the classroom setting, as Heather Hall said, she is able to view her children from an objective perspective as a student, while her children are able to view their mom from an objective perspective as a teacher. This experience is one that not many kids can have with their parents.

"When my child is in my class and they have a question, I am there to answer it," Heather Hall said. "I do not give them answers, but I help them understand the content and help them figure out the correct answer through discussion."

When Heather Hall interacts with her children, she has two roles: a teacher and a mother, and she excels in both. She ensures that she does not just give her children the answer, but nurtures their education and their understanding of the vast subject matter that is psychology.

The Clausens



A photo of the Clausens at the beach (Courtesy Photo)

The Reisters



The Reisters in front of a scenic view. (Courtesy Photo)

After teaching for 25 years, Spanish teacher Joshua Reister is now able to teach alongside two of his children in the same building: senior Elena Reister and freshman Brennen Reister.

"It's a pretty special situation," Josh Reister said. "I feel very lucky to be here with them, and I love this stage of my life. I get to see Elena and Brennen and all their friends, teammates, and classmates every day here at school."

Being a teacher with children attending the same school as them makes it easier to know what school-related events are happening in their kid's lives.

"It is nice that my dad can help me with Spanish, since I take Spanish classes," Elena Reister said. "Also, if I ever need anything, I can walk down to his classroom. Whether that be last-minute printing, food, money, or a signature."

As Elena Reister had mentioned, if a student's parent teaches a subject that they happen to take a class in, they have their own personal tutor, which is extremely helpful.

"I taught my daughter, Elena, in Spanish 2 her sophomore year," Josh Reister said. "I was honestly a little nervous to have her, but it went really well. She liked my class and enjoyed me as a teacher, and I loved having her as my student. We did the Panama Trip a couple of years ago together as well, and it was a ton of fun to go with her and other Shores teachers, students, and parents."

The Reisters are able to further deepen and develop their relationship through their interest in Spanish. The Panama trip they ventured on was an opportunity to explore Spanish culture, but also a moment to spend time as a family.

By Sara Kim Mona Shores is a close-knit community **Staff Writer** with many families ingrained in the district.

Outside of Mona Shores teachers, Mona Shores faculty staff also have children who attend the same school where they work, such as counselor Amorrrette Clausen and her son, sophomore Lincoln Clausen.

"Having my mom as a staff member is honestly super nice," Lincoln Clausen said. "I like that I am able to visit her office and talk to her whenever I want."

It can be comforting knowing that a parent is in the building to talk to at all times.

"I love seeing my kid during the day in the hallway or if they stop into

my office; it's always a nice surprise," Amorrrette Clausen said. "It is also nice that I see so many of my kids' friends."

Amorrrette Clausen is able to not only get close with her son, but also with his friends, and as a counselor, knowing a lot of students on a personal level can be extremely beneficial.

"Some benefits of having my mom work here are that I can go to her office anytime, I always have a ride, and she knows a lot of my teachers," Lincoln Clausen said. "I can also ask her to sign things right away, I can put my sports

The Geoghans



A family photo of the Geoghans. (Courtesy Photo)

Math is often regarded as one of the toughest subjects to master. However, having a mom who is a math teacher makes having extra support in math a little easier.

"I had my mom as a teacher for my sophomore year for Algebra 2 Blended, and I have her again this year for AP Calculus," senior Kyli Geoghan said. "I've really enjoyed being in her class."

As Kyli furthers her journey into math, she is able to do so with the help of her mom, math teacher Tracey Sauced-Geoghan.

"I love having my kids at school. All three of them would stop by at random times between classes or at lunch to tell me a quick story or just to say hi," Sauced-Geoghan said. "They don't usually ask me for help at all. Once in a while, they will ask me if a problem is correct, but math came easy to all of my girls."

Sauceda-Geoghan's love for her children being in the same school as her is a common feeling shared across the teachers who are parents at Shores.

"When I was in middle school, I didn't think I would want to have her as a teacher," Kyli Geoghan said. "But now that I'm in her class for the second time, I actually really enjoy it."

The thought of having a parent act professionally in a school setting may seem strange and foreign to some at first, so lot of students don't want a parent to be their teacher. However, the pros outweigh the cons by a mile.

"I had all three of my children in Blended Algebra 2 and AP Calculus," Sauced-Geoghan said. "It's a pleasure to have had them two of their four years of high school math."

Since Sauced-Geoghan teaches different types of math classes, she is able to have the unique experience of having and teaching her children in multiple of her math classes.

bags in her office, and she has snacks."

As Lincoln Clausen mentions, there are numerous benefits and countless opportunities in having a parent in the school building.

"Hearing things from my kids about their experiences gives me more insight into what certain classes, rules, and events are like," Amorrrette Clausen said. "It is helpful for me when talking with my students to know what my own kids' experiences have been like."

Just like how having a parent at school is beneficial for the kid, it is equally as beneficial for the parent.

A Page in the Times

Shores student gets featured in The New York Times and on Good Morning America



Addison Gandara enjoying time at home with her family, and her cat. (Courtesy Photo)



Addison Gandara's article in *The New York Times* was about social media and technology usage in teens. (Courtesy Photo)

By Julia Campos,
Staff writer

Junior Addison Gandara has been on quite a unique journey after being featured in one of the most famous newspapers in the world.

What began as a small opportunity eventually grew into an unforgettable milestone that shaped both her confidence and her sense of identity.

Gandara first came across this chance at the beginning of 8th grade, though the article itself was not completed until the end of 2023.

The process stretched over a full year, involving conversations, interviews, and careful preparation. Clearly, a lot of time and energy went into the making of this feature.

"I first came about this opportunity when my mom's friend sent a form from The New York Times about getting teen girls to be featured in their article," Gandara said. "My mom thought we should fill it out and see how it goes."

Being individually picked by such a large and well-known corporation could be incredibly challenging, but Gandara quickly discovered that it was not impossible.

When she learned she had been chosen, Gandara was both surprised and thrilled to take part in such an extraordinary process.

"I was genuinely brutally honest about being my true self in the application, and I can't believe they picked me," Gandara said. "I was very proud of myself and happy that I was given that opportunity."

While the idea of being in the public eye might seem scary, Gandara thought it would be a great way to get out of her comfort zone. She realized this opportunity could also serve as a turning point in her personal growth.

"I feel like now I've grown into a person that is their true self," Gandara said. "This article helped me realize being different is okay, and to push yourself out of your comfort zone because it could work in your favor."

The experience went beyond just an interview. Gandara was also followed around with a camera as part of the project, which added an extra layer of pressure. The presence of a lens required her to manage her emotions carefully.

"My experience with being followed around with a camera was very interesting, I just felt a lot of pressure and anxiety from that," Gandara said. "They needed pictures of me at school, at home, in my room, and even when I was hanging out with my friends."

Gandara felt like all eyes were on her. She had a hard time with being in the spotlight at first, but Gandara had a support system built of friends and family who all supported her.

"My friends and family were very supportive of me," Gandara said. "My family was very happy and proud that I got to be a part of this amazing experience."

Even though she loved the experience itself, there were some hardships when it came to the article being published.

When the piece first came out Gandara was sceptical about how it portrayed her life.

"At that point in time, I didn't love the article when it

came out," Gandara said. "I think the reason I felt weird about the article when it came out was because I wasn't comfortable with myself, which I feel like is just the teenage experience."

Being put out of her comfort zone resulted in Gandara learning new things about herself and who she is as a person. She was able to express herself in a way that represented who she truly is.

"Something I learned with that experience was that regardless of what people think or even what you think of yourself, you can do it," Gandara said. "This article altered my life because from that moment on I strived to be myself and be authentic at all times."

Even though there were moments of doubt and anxiety, she ultimately found that the experience had lasting positive effects on her.

Gandara went through a roller coaster of emotions; the only thing she regrets is not being more open to this experience. She believes that this opportunity helped her find who she truly is.

"If I could go back I would definitely do it, but I would go about it differently and be more open minded," Gandara said. "I will forever be grateful for being given that chance."

From being featured in The New York Times to being on Good Morning America, Addison Gandara was able to be part of a unique journey that reflects bravery, dedication, and authenticity.

This experience has built confidence and individuality to Gandara's character, and will forever shape the way she approaches new challenges in life.

Student Section Switch-Up

New school year brings new student section leaders



Student section leaders seniors Cullen Conrad and Lydia Ogle are excited to lead their classmates during this year's football season. (Eric Sturr)

By Delaney Farrington,
Staff Writer

With the start of a new football season comes new student section leaders, which many Sailors are excited about. The student section plays a key role in MSHS's football games. It brings energy and passion to the games, has a major influence on the atmosphere, and can even create a distraction for the opponents.

"I think the student section plays a big role in our games," said senior Vincent Coleman, who plays for the Shores football team on the offensive and defensive line. "Even if we can't hear what they are saying, it's nice to look at the section and see our classmates spending their Friday nights to come support not only the football team, but the community as a whole."

Seniors who wished to lead this year were encouraged to fill out an interest form. Once the prospective students sent in the form, the

student senate handed the list over to Mrs. Bustard to verify that the students do not have any major referrals or violations.

"We first sent out an interest form to see who would like to have the opportunity," said senior and member of the Student Senate Luci Cooper. "Then as a senate, we discuss the qualities and behavior of the students until we all come to an agreement."

This year's student leaders were chosen by the student senate, and are seniors Lydia Ogle and Cullen Conrad.

"I wasn't really surprised," Ogle said. "I know there were only a few people who filled out the form. I did expect to get picked just because a few people in the Student Senate told me that they thought it would be a great choice."

Conrad answered similarly, that he too was not surprised to get this role.

"I wasn't that surprised to be picked," Conrad said. "Only because I figured there couldn't be very many applicants."

The student section is a vital part of the MSHS football games and requires student participation to make it function properly. For some MSHS students, they would consider themselves student section experts. For others, they are not as familiar with the scene and find it intimidating to be a part of. The leaders offered some advice for the newbies.

"If you're a freshman in the student section for the first time, you should really just not care about what other people think," Conrad said. "Be loud while having fun with your friend."

Likewise, Ogle builds on what Conrad said.

"I would say it's more embarrassing if you stand there and don't cheer," Ogle said. "Like, if you get dressed up and come to the games and then you're embarrassed to be screaming, you look more like the odd one out if you stand there and don't cheer. So don't be afraid to yell."

Schedule

- Aug. 28 vs. Grand Blanc
Theme: Hawaiian
- Sep. 5 vs. River Rouge
Theme: Pink Out
- Sep. 12 vs. Flint Hamady
Theme: Blue & White
- Sep. 19 vs. Reeths Puffer
Theme: USA
- Sep. 26 vs. Byron Center
Theme: Western
- Oct. 3 vs. Muskegon
Theme: White Out
- Oct. 10 vs. Forest Hills
Northern
Theme: Jerseys
- Oct. 17 vs. Grand Rapids
Union Theme
Theme: Camo
- Oct. 24 vs. Toledo Central
Catholic
Theme: 80s

Sports Briefs

Football

The team is currently 3-2 with wins versus River Rogue, Flint Hamady, and Reeths Puffer. Losses have come from Grand Blanc and Byron Center. Tomarion Steward leads the team in touchdowns so far.

Boys' Tennis

The team won the 2025 GMAA Championship. Individual city champions: 4 doubles, Jaiden Pope and Blake New; 4 singles, Micah

Bement; 2 singles, Marcus Powell.

Boys' Soccer

The team has been trying their best with a 4-11-1 record. Wins came against Grandville, Whitehall, and two versus Muskegon. Adam Flenar, Edgar Zambrano, Cooper Mulder, and Chase Coburn lead the team with four goals each. Camden Epplert leads the team in assists.

Volleyball

The team holds a 9-10 record. Maddie and Laynie Russell lead the team in kills. Chelsea Leenhouts leads the team in digs. Elena Reister leads the team in assists. Laynie Russell leads the team in blocks.

Girls' Golf

The team placed third in the final OK Green Jamboree. Avery Nehra led the way with an even par 37. Estella Cross and Evie Lucas added a 47 and 49.

Girls' Swimming

Hollen Emmick broke the school diving record with a score of 368. The previous record was 333.

Cross Country

Both the girls and boys teams placed 13th at the Allendale Invite. 19 runners earned a personal record with an additional 5 runners earning a season best time.

SENSATIONATIONAL SINGLES STAY SUPREME

Young Sailors are forging a promising path for the Mona Shores tennis program

By Nathan VanEtten,
Staff Writer

The 2024-25 season has begun as one of great transformation for the Shores Varsity boys' tennis team. After graduating nine seniors from last year's roster, the Sailors are faced with the challenging task of beginning a new season with one of the youngest lineups in West Michigan.

This year's Sailor roster includes just one junior, four sophomores, and an astounding nine freshmen. Despite the little shared experience at the high school level, being that the whole team is practically freshmen and sophomores, the Sailor's tennis team has battled its way to an impressive 7-2-3 record so far. Each of these results has been a mix of impressive blowouts, nail-biting draws, and hard-fought lessons.

For head coach and team captains alike, wins and losses won't define how successful this season is.

"We're not looking long-term," head coach Traci Hackney said. "We are focusing on learning how to play and compete the way we want to."

The team has instead focused on building chemistry, growth, and resilience, with wins coming as a plus, rather than the sole focus of the season. With nearly the entire roster set to return for the coming years, the Sailor's tennis program is laying the blueprints for what could become one of the program's strongest squads with the tightest bonds in recent memory, and possibly a state championship caliber team.

The team's leadership falls on the shoulders of the three captains: Reid Hackney, Micah Bement, and Jackson Hurley. These are hard roles to fill, especially since all three team captains are underclassmen, with Micah and Jackson being sophomores, while Reid is a freshman. So far this season, they have proven themselves worthy to be captains, with each of them producing impressive individual records.

For Reid Hackney, maturity has come quickly. Playing as the singles ace as a freshman, he has impressively yet to lose a single set this season.



Team captains Jackson Hurley, Micah Bement, and Reid Hackney have lead by example this year. (Courtesy Photo)

"I try not to think of it as a huge deal playing an upperclassman," Hackney said. "I just focus on what I can control, and always have great sportsmanship."

Reid's passion for the sport comes naturally; tennis runs in the family. His brother plays college tennis, his mother coaches, and his father also plays. Reid often spends time hitting, enjoying professional matches, and even creating mini-tennis games in the house. Reid also hopes to follow in his brother's footsteps and one day compete in tennis at the college level.

Micah Bement, meanwhile, plays the four spot for singles and describes the season as "a hard but fun one, full of growth." Although in the middle of a hard season, Micah's unique confidence stands out.

"I go into every match thinking I can dominate, no matter who's across the net," Bement said. "Confidence is key."

Jackson Hurley, the three-spot for singles,

takes a steady approach to his leadership role.

"If I stay focused on my game, it doesn't change whether my opponent is a freshman or a senior," Hurley said. "I go into matches with the same mindset regardless."

For Jackson, tennis has been about discipline: balancing time wisely between athletics, academics, and his personal life.

At the center of the Sailors' increasing success this season has been its top singles players, Reid Hackney, and Marcus Powell. The duo has remained undefeated so far through the team's first 12 matches.

Reid's dominance at No. One has been overwhelming, often cruising to 6-0, 6-0 victories, as seen against North Muskegon, Reeths-Puffer, and Grand Rapids Northview. Marcus, the No. Two, has matched that intensity, losing only a handful of sets across multiple matches, while also keeping a flawless record so far with zero losses.

The ability for Reid and Marcus to consistently deliver two points at the top of the lineup gives the Sailors increasingly incredible odds of winning in nearly every dual meet, no matter how the doubles pairings perform.

While the singles lineup has been a rock-solid foundation, the doubles squads have been a work in progress. The results have been mixed. Against Jenison, all five doubles matches fell. But in others, such as the sweep of Reeths-Puffer and the wins over North Muskegon, the doubles depth shined. Coach Hackney recognizes that as the young roster grows, doubles play will be one of the biggest areas of improvement for the years to come. The Sailors' two sophomore captains have shared their insight into how the season has felt so far in comparison to the previous one.

"This year is a lot different than last year," Bement said. "We definitely have a stronger bond. We love being around each other. It feels like we're growing together."

Jackson Hurley decided to comment on how this current team's talent compared to the previous year's: "This year's team would definitely beat last year's team, and I don't really know if it would be close."

With such a young roster, the Sailors are uniquely positioned compared to many other programs in the area. Whereas other programs focus on graduating seniors, instead of keeping a unified roster, the Sailors will retain nearly their entire team for the next several seasons to come.

Having a young varsity roster allows the team to create stronger bonds, deeper chemistry, and more opportunities for the refinement of skills against tough varsity competition.

"We're a very young team with great potential," Reid Hackney said. "Just having fun and building each year . . . that's what this season is about."

Wins, although sweet, the true victories may be the foundations being built for a program that could dominate West Michigan tennis for years to come.