



The High School View

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Dysfunctional actors fill the stage

By Fionnuala Howell and Olivia Cameron

Twenty high school actors formed one big dysfunctional family last week during school vacation.

The cast of *Closets*, this year's festival production, traveled to Barrington, Rhode Island, to compete in the Mass High School Drama Guild, a theater festival where more than 100 schools participated. *Closets* was written and produced entirely by students in the Theatre II class, and directed by theater teacher Kate Murray.

The over-arching theme of *Closets*, the high school's fourth play to be performed at Festival, is centered around a family coping with various issues, and explores realistic problems which some modern families may be experiencing.

"Our play was a really good way to help people understand problems," said senior performer Alex Roan. "It's something that everyone could connect to. The process leading up to festival was tiring, but ended up being a really good experience."

Students had been working on the play since September, and spent the whole of February vacation preparing and rehearsing.



PHOTO BY TOVA KATZMAN

(From left) Senior Taylor Perotta, freshmen Kathryn Antonsson and Megan Mendenhall, and junior Mariah Mackenzie rehearse for the annual festival competition.

During the weekend of Festival, students stayed in a 15-room mansion in Rhode Island.

During previous years, students met other actors and developed friendships with people from other schools, and this year's production of *Closets* was no exception. "Coming back every year is like a family reunion," said junior and actor Mariah Mackenzie. "The best part is getting to see all of the phenomenal shows."

Although they didn't advance in the competition, the students were not disheartened. "Even though we didn't move on, we had a lot of fun," said junior and actor Mike Patnaude. Three students—juniors Vivian Ewing and Grant Meacham, and freshman Jake Sudarsky—won individual awards for Outstanding Excellence in Acting.

Those involved in Festival found it to be intense and at times stressful, and while the students had to dedicate many hours to the show, they were pleased with the result. Said Mariah, "At first I was disappointed, but then I looked at our accomplishments and I felt like we had won something on a personal level."

Artists turn art into awards

By Eric Fletcher

A new epidemic is spreading through the regional high school. This time, however, the news is positive since the epidemic connects to a surge in creativity. Students are receiving prestigious art awards called Gold Keys, which are presented by the Scholastic Art Awards program in conjunction with the Boston Globe.

The Scholastic Art Awards encourages students from the United States and Canada in grades 7-12 to submit works of art and writing. Students can be awarded a Gold or Silver Key, or an honorable mention. Those who win a gold key, the highest award, move on to a national competition in May.

Anything from paintings, sculptures, photos, and architecture can be submitted. Senior Clarissa Murphy sent seven plans of her underground house, including elevations, floor plans, and colored renderings, earning her a Gold Key in architecture. Clarissa, who is hoping to study architecture in college, says that winning the award has given her more confidence when applying to college. "I thought the drawings were decent," said art teacher Paul Brissette. "But her winning a Gold Key showed me that someone who was



Junior Evan Eagan's Gold Key award-winning photograph.

looking at a lot of this stuff thinks the same thing."

There are over 150,000 works of art and writing judged every year in the Scholastic Art Awards, a fact that makes the success of the regional high school students even more remarkable. They won four Gold Keys, a Silver Key, and two honorable mentions. Junior Evan Eagan and freshman Fionnuala Howell both won Gold Keys for photography, and senior Brianna Buchanan won a Gold Key for her ceramics portfolio. "I'm very proud of our students," said photography teacher Chris Baer.

Mr. Dripps: the after math

By Chelsea Counsell

"I want students to come back and say, 'You really prepared me for college,'" said regional high school math teacher Craig Dripps. "I take pride in that no one has come back saying they were unprepared." Mr. Dripps will retire this June after 38 years of teaching.

During his extensive teaching career, Mr. Dripps has taught classes ranging from ninth grade Algebra to BC Calculus. "After teaching on the Island for 15 years, I can't imagine teaching anywhere else," said Mr. Dripps. "All the Island kids are great and I feel like being able to teach the AP and honors program is a special reward. I've really enjoyed what I've been doing. My job has been part-time, so I always have a three-day weekend. I always come back to work feeling rejuvenated."

Said senior Olivia Gross, "Mr. Dripps does what every teacher should. Rather than preaching something in a certain way, he shows us exactly why it is the

way it is and where it came from. His class is about true understanding, not busy work. My high school experience would have been less rewarding without experiencing his way of teaching."

Mr. Dripps also left a similar impact on other students. "The only reason I'm taking BC Calculus is because he teaches it," said senior Michael Kendall. "While I dislike the subject of calculus, he makes it tolerable with his interesting stories. He will be missed."

Senior Shaelagh Huntington said, "Mr. Dripps is a great teacher. He trusts his students and he treats us like adults."

"Between Mr. Dripps' life stories and humorous anecdotes," said senior Gail Herman, "I have not only enjoyed learning math in these past two years, but I have understood what it is that I'm learning. The reason his students enjoy his classes so much is because Mr. Dripps enjoys teaching."

"Before moving onto something more complex, he always makes



PHOTO BY EVAN EAGAN

Math teacher Craig Dripps considers his 38-year teaching career and what his life will hold after his retirement.

sure that he has everyone's full understanding on what he just taught," said Gail. "He has always put his students first and has even come in on days when he didn't need to be in school in order to make sure his students got the complete grasp about what he's teaching. Even beyond that, he has taught us the value of trust. He trusts us and applies the 'honor code' on all of his stu-

dents."

But math is not Mr. Dripps' entire being. Besides his classes, Mr. Dripps spends his free time on other things. He enjoys Vineyard landscape photography. "This coming year I plan to go digital," said Mr. Dripps. "Now that film is so costly, digital seems much more convenient."

Mr. Dripps had a photography book co-published with Rose Styron called *By Vineyard Light* in 1995. Even Ralph Lauren has used Mr. Dripps' photography for his men's clothing line in 1998. "I'm looking forward to pursuing various hobbies in earnest," Mr. Dripps said.

Besides photography, he is also a composer of music. Philadelphia community orchestras have

used three of his compositions. He is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Martha's Vineyard Museum. He is in charge of three lighthouses on the Vineyard. He has helped the committee raise over \$400,000 for the restoration of the East Chop and Edgartown lighthouses.

For the past 17 years, Mr. Dripps has been president of the East Chop Association.

"I'm looking forward to retiring," said Mr. Dripps. "My wife wants to travel. I'll be more inclined once I'm retired. We have four kids and seven grandkids all over the place—Indiana, South Carolina, and Wyoming. What I really want is to beat my wife at golf."

"It will be good to have more down time with him," said Mr. Dripps' wife, Betsy. "I think he feels good with the impact he's made (at the school). When he walks down the street and sees a former student, they still greet each other as if class hasn't ended. This is the end of an era for him. He taught most of his life."

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