



The High School View

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Hundreds of scientists gather at high school

By Lily Bick

For the past few months, students have been hypothesizing, experimenting, and learning how to become scientists in preparation for the regional high school's 13th annual science fair. The fair, which occurred last Saturday at the high school, included engineering projects, investigative projects, wind turbines, and much more. Projects such as "Musical Materials," "The pH of Juice Over Time," and "Glass vs. Plexiglass" were on display for students, parents and community members to peruse.

The science fair offers first, second, or third place in several categories. They include chemistry, physics, engineering, environmental science, earth science and wind turbines. The top three projects were Lee Faraca and Gordon Moore's "Cost Efficiency: Solar vs. Wind Energy," Jack Wallace's iPhone app "Homework Buddy," and Charlotte Hall's "Ceramic Glazes: Chemistry and Art Combined at High Fire." Students were not allowed to have help from sci-



PHOTO BY KATHERINE DONEGAN

Left to right winners Jack Wallace, Charlotte Hall, Gordon Moore, and Lee Faraca proudly display their trophies.

ence teachers, but some projects needed supervision from a teacher because of the presence of flames or chemicals.

Prizes were awarded to the top three projects in each category, along with special prizes sponsored privately. Tisbury Waterways sponsors the fair and donates prize-money for the top three winners in

memory of former president Dr. James Porter.

More than being a competition, the science fair is a learning experience. Junior Alice Greene, a painter, did the project "Eco-Friendly Earth-Based Paints." Alice said, "A lot of paints have a ton of ingredients. I wanted to know what I was painting with." With this mis-

sion, Alice created different paints out of a solution of chalk, water, carrot, pomegranate or spinach for color. For her presentation, Alice had demonstrations of her paints next to more traditional paints. "My paints spread just as well as other paints and retained the color." Alice came to a few roadblocks, like when she discovered that her paints fermented within 48 hours. "By trial and error I found the solution that really worked."

Sophomore Jacqueline Menton, like many students, chose to research something that they are interested in. She is a dancer, which is why she did the project. "Do Canvas or Leather Ballet Slippers Have More Friction?" Certain dance studios require that dancers wear either canvas or leather ballet slippers. Jacqueline said, "I was curious about which was better."

For the science fair, participants need to complete a project, create a presentation board, and write a scientific journal. For some, this process can be unpleasant. Freshman Erik Faber did the project "Boiling Water on Bacteria

Growth." He said, "It's good because people do projects on things they're interested in and learn about it and teach other people about it."

At the fair, members of the community who are doctors, scientists, or engineers judge the projects. Erik said, "The judges seem like they are actually interested in what you've done."

Biologist Carla Cooper was invited to judge the science fair this year. She said, "The science fair is fascinating. I love how original most of the projects are."

"Having enough judges is a critical factor to the success of the fair," said director of the fair, high school science teacher Jackie Hermann. "They are so dedicated to the science fair, some have been judging for 13 years."

Science teacher John Nelson thinks that the science fair is good for students. He said, "It gives the opportunity for many different kids to shine." Whether they win a door prize, are recognized for their project by the panel of judges or not, most participants did learn a valuable lesson: how to come up with an idea that interests them, and learn about it.

Young brothers warm island

By Ina Thigith

For the last two months, members of Young Brothers to Men have been focused on the ideals of community during their winter coat drive. The group aimed to provide Martha's Vineyard residents

in need with winter clothes, mainly through the Island Food Pantry and local churches. Coats were collected from high school students, faculty, and Island elementary schools.

Business teacher and founder of Brothers to Men, Leo Frame, start-

ed the group almost 20 years ago to help young men make the transition to adulthood and take on the necessary responsibilities. He was inspired to host a clothing drive by one of his own students, senior Cal Fiore, who volunteers with members of his church in a program called Clothes to Go. Noticing a shortage of coats at the Island Food Pantry, he asked for Mr.

Frame's help.

"As we were in the process of sorting the clothing, word got out and soon over a dozen people came to pick up coats," said Mr. Frame. "One person came, who had three little children," said Mr. Frame. "All of them had lost their coats and we were able to help them out."

The coat drive proved to be a success with over 160 coats col-

lected locally and from a donor from northern Massachusetts. Mr. Frame and the members of his group hope to continue the drive next year.

"It feels good to be helping out the Island community, even if it's something small," said senior Je-Vaughn Crooks. "Being warm can actually make a big difference."

commentary

How to kill an imagination

By EmmaJean Holley

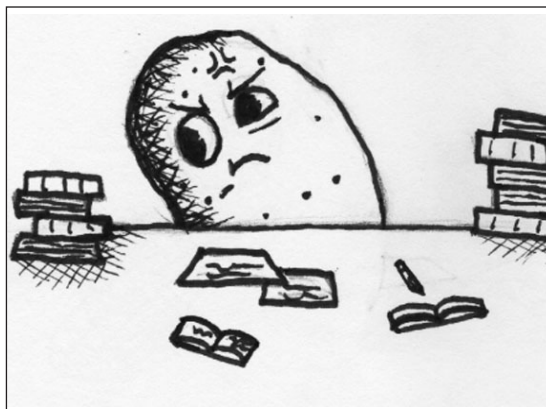
My name is EmmaJean Holley, and I can say with neither pride nor shame that I am a desk potato. It is a remarkably resilient breed, a distant cousin of the couch-dwelling species. We are a superhuman race, relying on only caffeine and pencil lead for day-to-day subsistence. We are forgers of the future. We are vessels of knowledge and makers of meaning. We are sponges and scribes, virtuosos of vocabulary. But above all, we are underslept and overspent.

In my experience, the teachers at the regional high school are, in short, extraordinary. I've been amazed by the depth at which my thoughts have delved during discussions, by the click of my mental light bulb as circuits connect, and

at the level of trust and mentorship I feel with those teachers who care. It has been long accepted that homework is an indispensable aspect of education. Teachers who must convey a hefty volume of material in their curriculums may feel that work outside of class can supplement what happens in class. This appears on the surface to be a perfectly logical rationalization.

But with hours of homework each night, time is limited or lost that could be spent on activities that foster essential emotional, psychological, and neurological development. As our potato roots embed themselves into textbook pages, our growth is stunted in other areas of equal importance.

According to research by Professor Harris Cooper of Duke University, there is a minimal correlation



ARTWORK BY VICTORIA SADOWSKI

between the amount of work done outside of school and achievement within it. In his own words, "Too much homework may diminish its effectiveness, or even become counterproductive." A large study by the University of Michigan, published in the May 2001 edition of *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, asserted that family meals are the single strongest predictor of better achievement scores for children

this instilled asset, success will follow.

If homework stress causes stress at home, what kind of environment is this for a student to live and learn in? Pressures surrounding assignments, tests, and grades can easily create uncomfortable tension that can leave an acrid taste in the student's mouth when it comes to assignments. Associating school

three to twelve years of age, and that these results carry into higher levels of education. In other words, it isn't massive amounts of homework that make students do well. It isn't busy-work or desperate measures or Wikipedia. It's a foundation of stability and security for the student; with

with anxiety, learning ceases to be the main priority; rather, many begin working, mechanically, for an acceptable grade.

Speaking as a student who adores learning for its own sake, but who loves sleep and sanity just a little bit more, I propose a change. As young minds, we want to learn; but we want success to come from ourselves, not from the ability to recite information on command that means less than nothing to us. What about ten questions instead of fifty of the same? What about one chapter a night, instead of three condensed into a mud pie of forgettable facts? What about assignments that make us think and reflect, rather than the mindless tedium of photocopied worksheet pages? In the words of Henry David Thoreau, "It's not enough to be busy; so are the ants. The question is: what are we busy about?"

EmmaJean Holley will be attending Brown University in the fall.