



The Breeze



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Somerset, Massachu-



Dress code addressed

By Cailin Roy '05

As a student of Somerset High School, it seems to me that students are really being forced to abide by the dress code now, rather than disregarding it as they

have done in the past. This change is due to the new enforcement of our dress code put into action by the Somerset School Committee and other administrators. When asked what her thoughts were
(Please continue on page 2)



T-shirts displaying drug or alcohol references and tanktops, as seen above, are not allowed according to school regulations

Virtual High School may become a reality at Somerset High

KC Dowd - Editor

Virtual High School may soon be a reality at Somerset High School, if the school committee approves the funding. This innovative program offers online educational coursework, providing student centered subject matter. This serves to expand academic choices by increasing options and enhancing curricula. It features a collaborative model and has won recognition for its progressive use of cyber-education. VHS meets nationally accepted standards for its offered coursework, which is extensive and varied. The 2003-04 course offerings list diverse subject areas including: Math, Science,

Foreign Languages, Language Arts, Business, AP courses, Social Studies and the Arts.

Working toward making this a reality are Mrs. Gosson and Mrs. Machado, site coordinator, who have attended workshops and meetings to investigate the merits and feasibility of implementing VHS at SHS. English teacher Mrs. Gosson is presently being trained as an on site coordinator. The program has not yet received financial backing by the school committee. Therefore, the actual teacher(s) and site coordinator(s) have not yet been appointed. This initiative is ac-

(Please continue on page 2)

Is bullying a problem at Somerset High?

By Jessica Roberge '05

The National Mental Health and Education Center states that bullying is the most common form of violence in our society and between 15 and 30 percent of students are bullies or victims of bullying. Mrs. Nassiff from the Student Support Center (Room 109) states that bullying is a big problem both in Somerset High School and schools nation wide. She explains, "It's a pervasive problem throughout our country's schools."

Mrs. Nassiff says that a lot of the issues that go to the peer mediators are about bullying and harassment. She sees some verbal threats, but the majority of these cases are of physical threats. President of the Student Council Election Board, Tiffany LaRose, feels that there has been more physical bullying this year than past years, but verbal is more common around the school.

Though many of the students and facul-

ty here at Somerset High are not aware of this problem, signs of bullying are all around the school. School avoidance, along with dropping various school activities are signs that a student is being harassed. Also, Tiffany states that she sees some of the upper-classmen pushing freshmen around in the halls.

Because the victims of the bullying cannot take the taunting, many experience anxiety, stomach aches, and become sick from their fear of bullying. "The problem can lead to violence, low self esteem, depression, and anxiety," Mrs. Nassiff says, "which lead some victims to suicide."

She explains that bullying affects not only the victims, but also their family. The parents of victims must deal with their child and many of these victims become distant with their family. Teachers also are affected. If one of their students is being harassed, the student may become

(Please continue on page 2)



Dress code...

regarding the newly enforced dress code, Somerset School Committee member Kathy Gunning had this to say: "I am pleased with the response of the student body to the committee's request to have the dress code enforced. My personal belief is that an atmosphere of respect for one's self and others is more conducive for learning." She went on to say, "I know fashions and peer pressure don't seem to parallel the dress code, but there are times and places for cultural dress."

There have not been additions to the dress code in some years, and the only difference now is that teachers and administrators are taking a stand against scantily dressed students. A student who wished to remain anonymous had this to say: "I personally think the dress code is good, everyone should come to school with appropriate clothing. It's not like we have to wear uniforms to school so that's good." When asked if she is more able to concentrate on her studies now that the dress code has been strongly enforced, the sophomore replied by saying, "I think clothing has nothing to do with school ... but I do think it's better for people to not have revealing clothing or inappropriate language on their clothing. I think that everyone should be comfortable in school

and they can do that without wearing inappropriate clothing."



Though fashionable, the above accessories are a violation of the dress code due to the possible dangers that they impose

VHS at SHS...

nally in the exploration phase. The training programs are being funded by a grant.

VHS is a non-profit organization that partners with over 200 schools in the United States and around the world. It is intended to offer enhanced learning opportunities to faculty and students who seek an extended educational experience. VHS advertises that its program offers a "shared teaching expertise and increased curricula with dynamic core and elective courses, not typically offered."

Mrs. Gosson clarified, "Students enrolled in a VHS class interact via the internet with the teacher of that particular class. A teacher and student aren't required to be in the same school. For example, a teacher could be from California and student from Massachusetts. The site coordinator of the school oversees the SHS students enrolled. He or she monitors the students. All assignments are submitted via computer to the teacher of the course who grades them. The VHS teacher submits grades every two weeks to the site coordinator. The site coordinator is the liaison between the VHS students and their parents. Also, students who have internet access can do some of their work at home."

If approved and funded, the program could be in place by next school year. Approximately 25 students could participate, initially. Mrs. Gosson explained that all of

Bullying a problem...

withdrawn from the class, become angry, and may have a fear of participating in class. Ms. LaRose feels that many of the bully victims are shy. She states, "They are more vulnerable and are afraid to speak up for themselves. Because the offenders can get away with it, they often target shy students."

"The causes of bullying," Mrs. Nassiff states, "are a lack of connectedness, low self-esteem, and anger in a person." Vice Principal Mrs. Camara adds that many of the harassment cases are a result of bad relationships and other people talking. Tiffany LaRose comments, "People that bully have the need to feel superior and are insecure about themselves."

Because there will always be cliques in school, and people do not treat others equally, Tiffany feels that bullying will always exist. Completely eliminating bullying is an ultimate goal, states Mrs. Nassiff, yet she admits that it is long term. She explains, "We can help this problem with prevention, awareness, and early intervention. There are several ways in which this can be accomplished."

Peer Mediation provides support for people being harassed and she encourages anyone needing help to go there. Mrs. Nassiff feels that though expulsion or detention may help stop the offenders, giving victims help and support is the best way to solve the problem.

Mrs. Nassiff will be going to the 9th and

the eligibility issues relative to student participation "are in progress and not definitive at this time." VHS classes will not replace classes that are offered and required at SHS, including AP courses. In other words, any course that is presently offered at Somerset High School will not be accessible through this program. VHS courses will be used to enhance course work or provide what is not presently available. In this way efforts are not being duplicated and offerings will be varied. Actual credit for these courses, which will be considered elective, has not been determined at this time, though will probably be available if course conditions are achieved.

This educational tool has the potential to enlist a "global community of learners and educators." In a teaching venture that is quite an alternative to the traditional classroom model. Class participation would be interactive and more individualized.



For now Mrs. Gosson and Mrs. Machado, educators with a progressive vision, are being trained in this innovative concept. Enlisting cyber intelligence to enhance learning opportunities is the way of the future. Should the school department endorse this, providing funding is available, the future could be at the start of the next school year.

11th grade health classes to discuss bullying and suicide. This suicide prevention program will help make students more aware. Somerset High School is also in the process of starting a Diversity group in which students can meet after school to talk about issues including bullying and harassment.

Vice Principal Mrs. Camara also feels early intervention helps to decrease the problem. Starting in kindergarten and continuing through grade 12, the issue of bullying is discussed in health classes in the Somerset Schools. Many teachers, specifically in History and English courses, include this in their curriculum as well.

Tiffany LaRose says that if Somerset High feels bullying is a big problem, Student Council could take steps to help these students. She suggests a poll be taken in Student Council to see if there are many students being affected as well as seeing if Student Council should become involved with the prevention of bullying. Tiffany explains that students can turn to Student Council advisors for help because that is what Student Council is all about.

Mrs. Camara states, "Bullying is not tolerated at Somerset." If anyone is feeling bullied or harassed, the Peer Mediators, Student Council, and Administration urge you to contact them. Bullying is a form of violence that our school and all schools face.

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Around School



Channel 98 keeps residents posted

By Anthony Dowd

Somerset High School's Educational Public Access Channel 98 is now an available resource to students, faculty, and community members. Provided through Comcast Cable, Channel 98 is presently showing school committee meetings and displaying an ongoing informational bulletin. Scheduling and school notices are posted which keeps public awareness current. Spearheading this media venture are Mr. Raymond Nekrasz, Technology Coordinator, and Mr. Marc Couture, Information Management Technician. Mr. Nekrasz noted that this will serve as a televised bulletin board to inform the community of upcoming events and school related programs.

This initiative is intended to provide a venue for school events, plays, sports and productions relevant to the school community. Student projects, science fairs and faculty presentations are all welcomed for programming. Informational programs are also appropriate. This offers an excellent means for showcasing student-generated works, whether serious ventures, class assignments or recorded sports events.

Prospective tapes may be submitted at the Somerset High School Audio Visual Center to Mr. Nekrasz or to Mr. Couture. The center is located near the library at Somerset High School. Tapes must have a minimum of twenty seconds of black tape before starting and at the end of each program. Tapes must also be submitted in VHS format and Standard Play (SP) mode in order to be aired. Tapes should also be properly labeled.

Potential tapes must be accompanied with a signed User Agreement contract. This outlines the allowed use of this programming facility and serves as a disclaimer for legal use. Material that is considered "obscene, indecent or an invasion of privacy" is not permitted to air. Commercial use and political purposes also are prohibited. Mr. Nekrasz and Mr. Couture have the authority to determine what is appropriate to air.

Mr. Nekrasz is also looking toward future enhancements. One such idea is connecting with a radio station to add music to the bulletin viewing. It is expected that more uses and programming will evolve as Channel 98 takes hold. Further information can be accessed at www.somerset.k12.ma.us.

Intramural fencing is becoming quite popular at Somerset High School.

Massachusetts is distinguished as the smartest state in country

By KC Dowd

Massachusetts has been given the 2003 Smartest State Award. This recognition is annually published in the Education State Rankings, which is a reference digest from Morgan Quitno Press, located in Kansas. This company is an independent research group that evaluates and compares situations based on designated standards. Morgan Quitno Press publishes its findings, rhetorically awarding the state that is deemed to have the highest standards in most areas queried. The Bay State is ranked number one for excellence in its elementary and secondary education. This is a gain in position from a strong number seven for 2002. It appears our overall intelligence quotient has collectively increased.

Based on 21 factors, as determined by the Education State Rankings, all fifty of the United States were evaluated in an excess of 400 elementary and secondary educational categories. A formula that assessed how each state compared to the national averages in various categories, was used to determine ratings. Some of the areas measured included math, writing and reading proficiency, cost per pupil, student-teacher ratios, graduation rates, percent of administrators in school district, and teacher salaries. Support staff, safety and efficiently managed schools were also considered. Another rating was based on the percent of fourth grade parents who were strict about ensuring the completion of their child's homework. Scott Morgan,

President of Morgan Quitno Press, stated in his publication, "Massachusetts has a winning combination. Its students are some of the nation's most proficient in reading, writing and math."

Following Massachusetts in the top five states were Vermont, Connecticut, Montana and New Jersey. This gives New England, already recognized for its exceptional colleges and universities, yet another educational stronghold in the elementary and secondary levels. In contrast, New Mexico ranks last in the country, with Nevada, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama following at 46th. (Cited - Education State Rankings- Morgan Quitno Press)



Winslow gets off on the right note

By Jenny Patel '06

Mr. Winslow, teacher at Somerset High School, teaches concert choir, treble choir, history of the theater, music foundations, piano/keyboard, and vocal tech. This year he has offered his concert choir and vocal tech. classes the opportunity to take part in the Show Choir Festival. Out of all the classes, a total of twenty-three students will be attending the festival.

The students will be leaving Somerset Friday morning, November 7th, around 11AM and will be going to Easton, MA, returning to Somerset around 10PM. They will be returning to Easton early Saturday morning. There, they will be working with famous clinicians from the Midwest. The students will be learning dances for two songs and vocals for three songs. On Saturday night, the students will perform in a

concert with 600 other students from twenty different schools. All together, these students will be putting twenty-six hours into the Show Choir Festival.

"It's a long weekend, but it's a lot of fun," said Mr. Winslow. "The students will have a great time and the people they are working with are incredible." This event also gives the students the opportunity to meet kids from other schools.

Mr. Winslow is looking to start a show choir at Somerset High School next year. The Show Choir Festival weekend is his way of introducing the program to some of the students.

The Show Choir Festival will be taking place Saturday night, November 8th. It will be at Oliver Ranch High School in Easton, MA. Good luck to all the students and have fun!

Want to join The Breeze staff as a writer or photographer? Contact co-advisors Katherine Pereira at Somerset High School or George Austin at (508) 674-4656.

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ASHTON HOUDE AND SCOTT BORGES are member of this year's Somerset High School football team.

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Perspectives



Editor's Thoughts

First, I have to comment on the Somerset High School football team. This team has played with resolve and determination through some heartbreaking decisions. I want to acknowledge especially the senior members, who continue to persevere. The win-loss numbers do not accurately represent the reality of this team. Earned recognition goes to Jon "Finn" Martel, who surpassed 1,000 rushing yards at his final home game against Coyle. Also, Evan Costantino and Bobby O'Brien have relieved pressure off the running backs by blasting up the middle for long gains and touchdowns. Rusty Cohen and Adam Viana could be found around the ball stopping the opposition's momentum. Dylan Dunne emerged as an outstanding kicker, wide receiver and cornerback. Chris Chagnon, what more can you say, stop and block. Danny McGillick, a gutsy defensive end, always makes his presence known. Quarterback, Eric Thibeault, leads the league in touchdown passes. Greg Molinar and Erik Matheson are both strong defensive players. Ashton Houde broke down barriers. Jeff Couto contributed on offense and defense. We're looking forward to the final showdown at Case.

There are some new activities being offered that may be of interest to those who want to get involved. Peer mediation has been reinstated. This offers a great opportunity to meet people outside of your usual group of friends and possibly make a difference in someone's life at SHS. Active membership will also improve the participant's communication skills and be a plus on your resume. Science Olympiad is also available to those seeking challenges. If you are data motivated, have a



hypothesis, and like to experiment, this is the activity to pursue. I always advocate being involved; it can change your outlook.

The Case Rally preparations are gearing up. Put your class ahead of the spirit contest and join in. Everyone has an idea, share it. This is the final senior rally, time for some serious humor.

Freshmen and sophomores should be aware of the Homework Club, which offers extra help with difficult courses. Most everyone faces concerns in some area of their academic schedule. My advice, be proactive and take advantage of this resource. The school website provides a schedule which runs from 2:15-3:15 p.m., in the Media Center. Math, Language and Science are the areas of support.

Take notice of Channel 98. Record and submit a sporting event, concert or class project and become a media personality. The school website offers updated information on a variety of activities and is continually expanding. Both provide excellent resources for all you need to know about what's going on.

Commentary

Where is all the school spirit at Somerset High School?

'05 Jessica Roberge

Walking down the hallways, it is easy to see that there is something lacking in the students of Somerset High School. Hearing a student "talk trash" about a faculty member, seeing a student standing all alone in the corner, or hearing two different cliques getting into a verbal argument with one another are only some of the signs that school spirit is missing.

This unfortunately may seem to be a normal situation to many of us, though these types of situations can turn out disastrous or even deadly as some schools find out too late. The level of school spirit must rise to benefit the students, faculty, and the school as a whole.

Somerset High School has now been labeled a "Compass School" for our great faculty. Although our school may have a spectacular faculty, the atmosphere is not nearly as great. If students must attend over six hours a day of school, there must be something there that appeals to them in order for them to want to be in that classroom. Because school spirit is lacking, many students have nothing exciting to look forward to each day.

A rise in school spirit would increase the number of students who join the numerous activities Somerset High School provides for them ranging from sports to music to debate. If students had more school spirit, allowing them to enjoy

school more, they would want to be there for extra activities, performances, games, and other events at the high school. The spirit of the school needs to rise, as well as a sense of pride, in order to help the students join the activities that will end up changing them in a positive way.

If all the students joined and participated in school events, people would become friendlier with one another. Some students feel alone every single day at school. They see cliques everywhere they turn, yet no one will be their friend because they are not "cool" enough. And sadly, many students are bullied. People could have more respect for their peers and teachers. School spirit would bring the students together because they would share the pride of their school with each other.

Obviously, education is the top priority of this school, however, if students cannot feel proud of their school, the drive to learn will not happen as easily.

This lack of school spirit we face at Somerset High needs to increase in order to make the school a better place. We cannot continue to ignore these signs. The atmosphere of the school will be better, students will join activities the school offers, and everyone will have mutual respect for one another. School spirit can certainly make a positive influence on the students at Somerset High School.





Dear Bev

Dear Bev,
 I feel like I have no life. All day long I work, first at school, then at home. My parents both work and they expect me to take care of my little brother after school. They make me do housework and even laundry. All of my friends have time for sports and fun but I never get a break. How can I convince my parents that they are ruining my life?
 -Stressed out

Dear Stressed out,
 I think you do have a problem. It's ok to help out but if it is consuming all of your time, then your parents need to give you a break. You should tell them in a nice way that you are feeling stressed and if that doesn't work, tell a close relative. Don't give up until they let up a little. You're only a kid once. Good luck.

Dear Bev,
 I met a guy online and he lives right here in Somerset. He sent me a picture and he is gorgeous! We have a lot in common and he says he loves me. The only problem is, I am 15 and he is 22. He wants to meet at the mall and my friends are all telling me to forget it because he could be a predator. I am so curious, though. Should I meet him and bring a friend for safety? Signed, Anxious

Dear Anxious,
 You have to be kidding. Don't you read the paper or watch TV? Almost every day you hear stories about teens and adults meeting people online and getting raped or even murdered. He is a pedophile and you are in danger. Change your e-mail address and try your best to forget him. I know it probably seems like he would be the perfect boyfriend but sometimes things really are too good to be true.

Be more acceptant with different cultures

By Ali Mahoney '06

At Somerset High School, we as a school are not very culturally diverse. Many of us have only been subjected to one kind of culture with one religion, one set of beliefs. Even though the school department has tried to break down these culture barriers with mandatory world language classes, many students fail to notice the world outside of Massachusetts.

I have heard several students refer to a foreign custom or tradition as being weird or stupid. It is saddening to think that even in America where we are supposed to be understanding and tolerant of others beliefs and cultures, a simple foreign belief can not be taught without an ignorant remark shouted out in class. Children younger than us in other countries know more about America then we do about theirs.

With the world being in the condition it is today, it is especially important to at least learn a little something about other cultures of the world. As Americans, we have been called dumb and arrogant because we go into other countries and do not try to speak their language and yet we expect foreigners to know English. It is time to prove to the world that Americans are not the dumb, "stuck up" people we are advertised as.

Learn something about another culture. Try to at least accept other cultural customs as just different and not weird. With these simple things, maybe we can get rid of the negative image of Americans and help promote a positive one. We should strive to create images where Americans are seen as understanding and welcoming of differences.



Student Council getting ready for Case Rally

Write letters to the Editor of The Breeze. Submit them to Ms. Pereira.

If you have a story you want on The Breeze, contact Co-advisors Ms. Pereira or George Austin or Editor K.C. Dowd.



Sports



From left to right: Chris Chagnon, Andrew St. Amour, and Jason Greene

SHS football players pumped up for Thanksgiving Day game.

Eleni Skarpos '06

The bright and vibrant colors of the leaves are coming out and you can just start to feel the frost in the morning. What does this all mean? The fall is here and Thanksgiving is right around the corner. The best thing about Thanksgiving is the Somerset versus Case football game. It is something to look forward to and something that makes you want Thanksgiving to be every day. There is something in it for everyone. Parents get to see their sons and, for one family, their daughter play a great game. For the kids, it's a good afternoon spent with their friends, and for people with nothing to do, well, it gives

them something to do.

With Somerset's team looking great this year, who is Case to them? Somerset football players are pumped and ready to win against them again. Somerset has a great offensive and defensive line as well as an awesome kicker, quarterback, and some great people to run the ball. The past two years were a little rocky for the team. They had to adjust to the new coaching staff but they seem to have it down this year. It should be a great game and lots of fun for everyone in the family, so make it fit into your plans. Come see the Raiders rock the Cardinals!

Opposing teams cannot get shots past Goncalves

By Jan Taylor '06

The Somerset High School Boys' soccer team has had a terrific season this year. One of the players that has led the way for the soccer team is senior goalkeeper Sean Goncalves.

Goncalves, who is in his second full season on varsity, has probably been one of the best, if not the best goalie in the entire league this season. This year, he had 11 shutouts, which is now a school record for boys soccer. To add to his list of shutouts, he posted shutouts in the first two tournament games that Somerset played in.

Coach Whit Horton said that Goncalves has been one of the best goalies in the league this season. When asked if he actually was the best goalie, Horton said, "It's kind of hard because there were a few other good goalies in the league this season, but I would certainly rank Goncal-



ves up the top."

Horton also said that Goncalves' athletic ability and the fact that he is very hard-working has made him so successful at a position that is very demanding.

"Goncalves is a very hard-working player, and he is a good athlete; those are the main reasons why he has been so successful this season."

Donaghey and Roussel have a good connection

By Jan Taylor '06

The Somerset High School field hockey team has had an outstanding season this year. Two players that had the most impact on the team are Seniors Julie Donaghey and Katie Roussel.

Donaghey, a center forward, has played on varsity since her sophomore year. She has been one of the leading scorers in the Eastern Athletic Conference (EAC) over the past two seasons. Donaghey, also one of the captains of the field hockey team this season, was always determined to get past the other teams' defenders. Opposing teams were always looking to stop her from getting past them, but at most times, they did not succeed at doing that.

Donaghey said that she would like to continue playing in college, but she has not decided on any schools yet. She is hoping that some schools will contact her with their interest in having her on their field hockey team next year.

Another outstanding field hockey player for Somerset is left wing Katie Roussel, who has been Donaghey's teammate since seventh grade. She has been a key player on the varsity team for the past two seasons.

In games, Roussel was always looking to get past the other team and to try to create scoring opportunities for herself. If she didn't feel that she had the best scoring opportunity, she would always be looking to pass the ball to another girl on the team.

Donaghey and Roussel loved playing together and said that they "have a good connection together." Their involvement in field hockey has made them best friends. During their years of playing field hockey, they did nearly every drill together, and they always tried to make each other better players. Although they said that they will certainly miss playing field hockey for Somerset, they are ready to move on to college.



Katie Roussel (left) and Julie Donaghey have led the way for the Somerset field hockey team this year. They were the team's leading goal scorers.