



The High School View

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Rent goes up tonight

By Julia Sadowski

Aliens in the form of student actors infiltrated the regional high school's chorus room last Thursday as the cast and crew prepared for a run-through of the high school's annual musical, the 1996 Tony Award-winning show, "Rent."

The cast's warm-ups included exercises ranging from tongue twisters, to stretches, to the entire group making what can only be described as alien sounds, in preparation for the rehearsal.

Although the musical's actors, musicians, and tech crew enjoyed the exercises, a somber tone was present throughout the high school's theater department. "Rent," which takes place in New York's Lower East Side in the late 80s, depicts the lives of young bohemian artists, most of whom battle the increasingly prevalent threat of AIDS.

Despite the serious subject matter of the musical, which is directed by theater teacher Kate Murray, the actors are having fun getting into their roles. "My character Mark has a bunch of great songs," said senior Nick Jerome. "He has a wide range of emotions which is great to play."

Unlike musicals where the amount of dialogue and music are nearly equal to each other,

"Rent" consists almost entirely of songs. "It's much more intense [than the average musical]," said musical director Janis Wightman. "If we have a minute without music during the show, that's a lot. The dialogue is spoken-sung in rhythm. It's a rock opera."

Even though "Rent" has presented some long-time student actors with new challenges, it has helped others discover newfound talents. "It has been a really good experience," said junior Mike Patnaude, who just got involved with the theater program this year and is the production's stage manager and assistant director. "The most challenging part has been blocking, which is when we write down where every person is in every scene at any time."

As actors rehearse, many are finding the school community to be a source of strength. "I'm so nervous," said junior Ashleen Cafarelli, a chorus member and soloist in the musical. "We have a lot of energy. It's great being with everyone that loves doing it, and the faculty is excited to see it, which gives us support."

But not all of the musical's popularity with the student actors may be attributed to the roles they were awarded. For



PHOTO BY TOVA KATZMAN

(From Left) Naomi Pallas, Austin Gampfer, and Rykerr Maynard rehearse their parts for this year's musical, "Rent." Ashleen Cafarelli, Taylor Rasmussen, and Rykerr Maynard "raise their glasses" over the body of Mother Earth.

some, Rent had a strong fan base before it was introduced to students through the theater department. "Some students needed very little coaching because they're so familiar with the music themselves," said Ms. Wightman.

"I've had an obsession with the music from "Rent" since the fifth grade. The whole cast is great, and it's awesome to have the opportunity to be the characters ourselves," said senior Katie Mayhew who plays the character Mimi for three of the four performances. This year, four of the main characters have both lead-

ing actors and understudies. The understudy show will be on Friday, February 12.

As actors and musicians enter "Hell Week," the last week of rehearsals before opening night, the actors and musicians are not the only ones preparing for the show. "I think capturing all of the different emotions going on during the play is the most challenging part of my job," said senior Matthew Fisher, who is in charge of lighting design. "Every character is unique."

As opening night gets closer, the actors maintain a calm attitude. "Sometimes you will have a

really good rehearsal, and then a bad dress rehearsal but that's good luck," said junior Vivian Ewing, who is a member of the chorus and plays the character Ali. "It always comes together."

There will be four showings of "Rent" at the Martha's Vineyard Performing Arts Center. February 11 and 12, the show starts at 7 pm, on February 13 at 1 pm & 7 pm. Tickets are \$7 for students and seniors and \$10 for adults. The musical does have a PG-13 rating and is not appropriate for all audiences.

Young scientists fair well

by Olivia Cameron and Kristen Parece

Once a year the cafeteria and library fill with display boards, the aroma of mixed chemicals, and miniature wind turbines—artifacts of thousands of hours of scientific research by regional high school students.

This year, 182 students were involved with the 11th annual science fair. Since November, students have been planning and preparing their projects, which may not involve humans or other vertebrates.

The area of science they are currently studying did not limit their research. From the effectiveness of waterproof mascara to the swimming safety of West Tisbury ponds, projects were varied. By participating in the fair, students learn the process of scientific method leading to a research paper and presentation.

The overall winner of this year's fair was sophomore Eva Faber for her study, "The Effect of Smoke on

Seed Germination on Martha's Vineyard." Eva, a student in Dr. Natalie Munn's honors chemistry class, said, "I wanted to do something unique to the Island. After talking to the head of the Nature Conservancy program, I decided to see if parts of fire change the composition of soil."

High school science teacher Jacqueline Hermann coordinated this year's fair. "It is important for students to learn the scientific process of inquiry. It is the backbone of scientific research," said Ms. Hermann. "It is really important to celebrate academic achievement." The fair is completely sponsored by community businesses and organizations. All projects are judged twice by community members who have expertise in the field of science.

"I appreciate an opportunity to physically apply what I've studied since that is how I learn best," said junior Vivian Ewing, who did the project "Acidic and Alkaline Reactions."

Last Saturday, fair participants



PHOTO BY TOVA KATZMAN

Sophomore Eva Faber accepts the first place prize for her science fair project, "The Effect of Smoke on Seed Germination on Martha's Vineyard," from Jackie Herman.

signed in at the fair at 8:30 am along with their display boards. The judging took place between 9-11 am. At the end of the judging, the fair was open to the public. The award ceremony began at

noon. At this time door prizes and special awards were presented. "When you're ready to give awards at noon, you know [the fair] went smoothly," said Ms. Hermann.

Ms. Herman, along with many

others who attended the fair, were pleased with its outcome. The fair included 128 investigative projects and 23 wind turbine engineering projects.

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