

The High School View

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A farewell to Ms. MacDonald

BY ALEXIS CONDON

After 26 years of making a difference in the lives of students at the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), guidance department chair Mary MacDonald will retire this year. Ms. MacDonald was born on Martha's Vineyard, and while her father was her math teacher for two years at MVRHS, and her mother was also an educator, she was unsure what she wanted to focus on going into college. "Education made sense based on my family background," she said, "but I wasn't drawn to pursuing it until later in college, when I realized that becoming a guidance counselor meant I could help kids from all walks of life, and I felt like I could have more influence."

She did indeed have an influence. As a guidance coun-

selor, she has helped students navigate each year of high school, apply to college, and make plans to enter the workforce — and students know her as someone who is always available to talk. Senior Harold Lawry has had Ms. MacDonald as a guidance counselor since his sophomore year. He said, "She understands what we are going through as teenagers, and what has stuck out about her is that she is always so excited to see me and help me with what I'm doing with my life. She always cares."

"The trials and tribulations that some students have gone through are really indescribable," said Ms. MacDonald, "and they leave me in awe of the way they overcome these obstacles and show up every day. Being a teenager can be very challenging, and to help them get through that time period and catapult them into

adult life is very rewarding." Ms. MacDonald has mentored students in more ways than one. She served as the girls varsity basketball coach for 10 years, from 1996 to 2006, after starting the Martha's Vineyard Youth Basketball Program in 1993, a program that had more than 400 youth participating when she handed it off. "Being a coach was a different type of role. I always felt very close to my players, and a lot of them still call me Coach to this day," she said. "While an objective of the program was definitely to create a strong feeder program for the high school team, the more important significance of my role was the same as what I always have hoped to have done as a guidance counselor: to help students grow."

One of Ms. MacDonald's favorite parts of the job has been getting to write college



Ms. MacDonald works at her desk in the guidance department.

EMILY GAZZANIGA

recommendations. She often attends school sporting events — you'll find her singing the national anthem at many of them — plays, and other stu-

dent performances in order to fully understand what students are taking part in. She has a longstanding tradition of reading her col-

lege recommendations to students in person the fall of their senior year. "Sometimes they don't realize that just because they haven't fixed all the problems in the world, they have done remarkable things. Because it's a small community, I have been able to see their random acts of kindness, like helping an elderly person carry their groceries at the supermarket. Letting them know that what they do is noticed is important to me." With her retirement about a month away, Ms. MacDonald is looking forward to traveling with her husband and spending more time with her 4-year-old granddaughter. She also sees herself volunteering for different organizations, such as Hospice and the Red Stocking Fund: "There's a lot of different things I plan on doing, but I won't stray far from my character. Most of what I want to do consists of giving back. That's the common thread of everything I've done and really enjoyed." **HSV**

Senior publishes first book

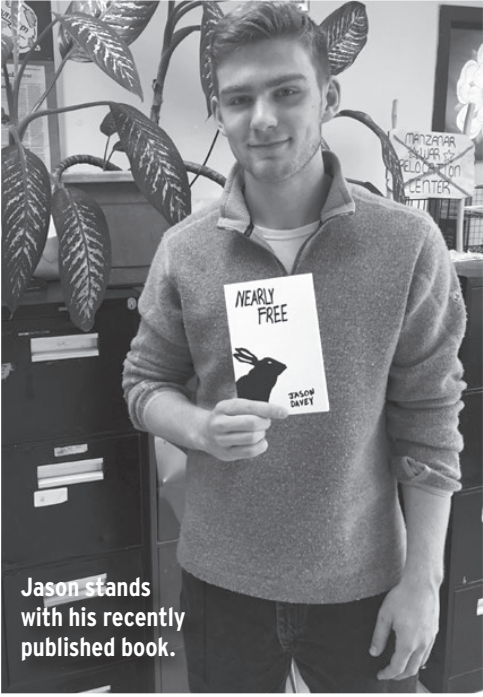
BY HENRY HITCHINGS

Senior Jason Davey has chosen to cap off his high school career by self-publishing a 149-page historical fiction novel for his senior capstone project. "Nearly Free" tells the story of Arlen O'Reilly, a young Irishman who joins a gang called the Dead Rabbits — a real-life gang that existed in the 1800s, and one of the gangs that eventually formed the New York mafia, which still exists today. (The silhouette of a rabbit adorns the cover in reference to the gang.) "I've been wanting to write a book ever since I was in middle school," said Jason, "and [the capstone class] gave me the opportunity and time to do so."

Senior capstone — which is taught by English teacher Christine Ferrone and library teacher Kevin McGrath — is a class for seniors, in which

participants work on a self-guided project. In past years, students have published their own poetry books, written and produced plays, showcased art portfolios, designed clothing lines, and created programs that have become a part of the school's culture and curriculum. Jason started the book in Leigh Fairchild-Coppoletti's historical fiction class during the first semester of his senior year. Jason wrote the first chapter of the book in that class, which then spurred him on to continue working on it during the second semester. "My original plan for capstone was to write a book

about local politics, but after I started this book in my historical fiction class, I decided to make finishing the book my project."



Jason stands with his recently published book.

KATHRYN HENNIGAN

"Jason's enthusiasm for his story was unflagging," said Ms. Fairchild-Coppoletti.

"He was dedicated to editing and revision, and he was always exploring new plotlines. It was inspiring to work with him." "I just wish that I had more time to write it," said Jason, "because as I wrote it, the story kept getting bigger and bigger, and because of the deadline, it was like I had a full movie pictured in my head, but was only able to produce the first half-hour of it before the deadline." Jason will be attending Virginia Military Institute next year, which will certainly keep him busy. But he doesn't yet feel that he's done telling Arlen's story. "I definitely want to go back to it," he said. "I think there is a lot more that can be added to the story." Jason's book is currently available on Amazon. **HSV**

Soccer tournament heats up

BY JAIDEN EDELMAN AND EMILY GAZZANIGA

Following the success of the schoolwide 3v3 basketball tournament that was held before April break, the Restorative Justice Office (RJO) has organized a soccer tournament among students and faculty in the school gymnasium. The tournament started on May 2 with two rounds of seeding games, and will end with a championship game this week. RJO coordinator Nell Coogan and physical education teacher Kathy Perrotta organized the tournament. The idea was proposed to Ms. Coogan by varsity soccer captain Emanuel Da Silva, who was initially inspired to start the soccer tournament after seeing the success of the basketball tournament. Emanuel, who grew up in Brazil, has a strong passion for the sport. Soccer tournament partici-

pant and senior Alley Estrella said, "I think tournaments like the soccer competition are beneficial to the MVRHS community. They allow everyone to come together and share their passions and skills. The Brazilian community was especially excited to participate [in the soccer tournament]." "The change in the student-staff relationship on the court is huge, too," said Ms. Coogan. "You just see people in a completely new light. It levels the playing field a little bit, and it lets people see another side of you." Ms. Coogan is thrilled with the positive response to the tournaments from both students and staff. "I would love next year to have an outdoor tournament," she said. "We're thinking about Wiffle Ball and lots of other sports that don't have a varsity team. The goal is to have a competition once a month." **HSV**

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