

# The High School View

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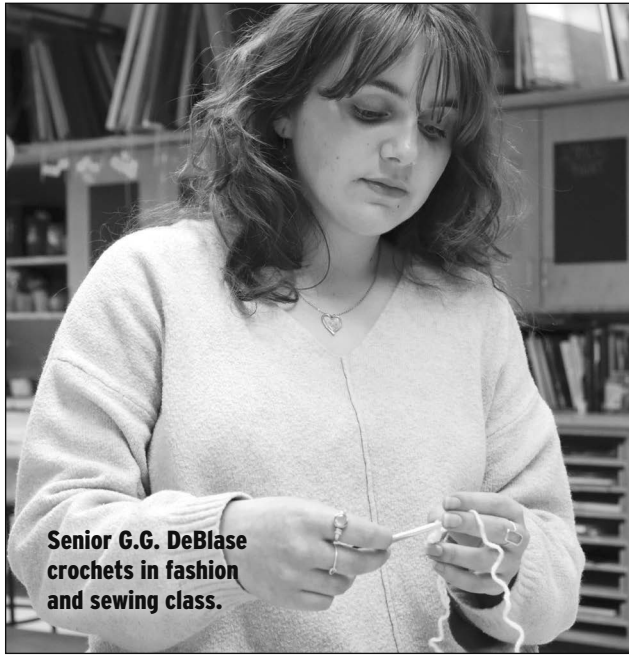
## Teens find the beauty of creating by hand

BY JULIA SAYRE

Whether at home or in class, students at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) are embracing the freedom to create by hand. Be it clothing, sculptures, or jewelry-making, hands-on project work offers students opportunities for creativity, and allows them to express their values.

Senior G.G. DeBlase, an assistant in art teacher Tiffney Shoquist's fashion and sewing class, first learned how to knit from her grandmother, and began crocheting three years ago. "It's super-satisfying to be able to make clothes," she said. "I can see something online that I like, and then I can just start making it. I don't have to buy it or wait for shipping."

Senior El Christy knits a lot on her own, and says her mother inspired her to begin knitting at a young age. El started by making hats and gloves, and after learning more advanced techniques,



Senior G.G. DeBlase crochets in fashion and sewing class.

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is currently making a sweater. "We have lots of knitting baskets in our house filled with yarn and needles, and my mom always saves materials for my sister and me to use," she said.

The cost of yarn can seem daunting to beginners, but

G.G. has ways of minimizing costs. "I don't really buy any of my yarn. It's all either gifted to me or I find it at the thrift store," she said.

Ms. Shoquist's class centers primarily on the basics of sewing by hand and with a sewing machine, but stu-

dents also venture into embroidery and dying fabrics. "We are mostly focused on upcycling old clothing, and making new things out of old things," she said.

The fabrics and materials used in class are all donated. "This saves money, and is also in line with my own ethics," said Ms. Shoquist. "A lot of what you'll see used in the classroom is from donations — mostly from other teachers and school district employees."

Students in Brendan Coogan's crafts and sculpture class work with materials sourced in similar ways. "We do a lot of scavenging to find materials, and repurpose a lot of them," he said. "We also receive a lot of donations, like the metal, yarn, and fabric that students use for their projects in class."

These types of project-based classes allow students more freedom to decide what they'd like to work on. "When you're upcycling, every-

thing is one-of-a-kind, which is very much in line with the way I like to run the class.

Everyone is doing something in their area of interest, and I'm not forcing everyone to make the same garment," Ms. Shoquist said.

Crafts and sculpture courses are offered to students at varying levels, and become more self-directed as students progress. "We don't use any automated processes in class, so students are building things from scratch," said Mr. Coogan. "By doing that, the process is demystified. I think it builds confidence to be able to say, 'I made this from nothing, and I designed it myself.'"

Junior Fernanda Rosa took advantage of this freedom to design: She has made seven rings this year. "I feel like making rings can be so personal, because you're working on them and seeing them all the time, and you can make them in whatever way you want," she said.

As students learn more

about the effects of fast fashion (whereby large volumes of clothing are rapidly mass-produced at low costs) on the environment, many have resorted to creating their own garments as a means of opposing it.

"It feels good to make your own things," said El. "It's nice not to be connected to so much waste and plastic packaging that comes from shipping clothes you buy when you can just make them."

"I think that making your own clothes is definitely a really good way to live a more sustainable lifestyle," G.G. said.

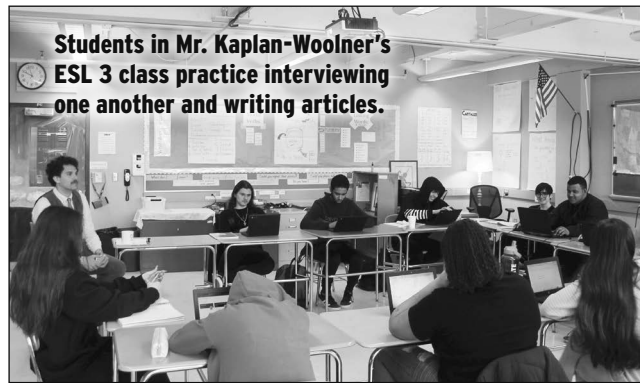
El's motivation for creating clothes by hand goes beyond wearing her own designs. "I have given scarves and hats before as gifts, and people always appreciate that. I believe it's a lot more meaningful for someone to receive a gift I made myself," she said.

The process of making things by hand does not come without difficulty. "It can be stressful at times," Fernanda said. "I spent three weeks trying to polish one ring. But when you do finish it, it's so beautiful." **HSV**

## English language learners tackle the fourth estate

BY NIKYEA TANKARD

For students moving to the United States from different countries, learning a new language is often the first step to understanding a new culture. At Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), English language learners (ELL) in Jonah Kaplan-Woolner's English as a Second Language 3 class (ESL 3) are taking an applied approach to mastering English. Rather than memorizing vocabulary words and studying conjugation charts, students are engaged in debate, writing personal mem-



Students in Mr. Kaplan-Woolner's ESL 3 class practice interviewing one another and writing articles.

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oirs, and serving as journalists who interview and write about their classmates.

Sophomore Gabriel Borges Dos Santos is enrolled in Mr. Kaplan-Woolner's ESL 3 course. "I'm still learning English, and the most

difficult thing is being able to speak and interact with other people [in English]," he said. The journalism unit has helped Gabriel learn English while also learning more about his classmates. "In journalism, we learn how

to make use of [the skills]. It's also about interviewing and talking. There's something healing about it."

During the journalism unit, emerging bilingual students are practicing the skills of active listening, understanding the interview context, and quoting versus paraphrasing a source. "We're using the model of journalism writing as a way to strengthen their English skills," Mr. Kaplan-Woolner said.

Mr. Kaplan-Woolner has been teaching language classes for more than 12 years, and has been working at MVRHS for two years. During this time period, Mr. Kaplan-Woolner has honed

his approach of teaching students via units of study that focus on a particular domain, such as debate or journalism. "I want my students to see all language skills in context, as opposed to just a chapter in a textbook," he said. "I base my units in a specific genre because it helps focus the instruction of writing in an actual real-world English context."

Senior Luis Costa speaks Portuguese fluently, and is now studying both Spanish and English. He is learning English as a student in ESL 3, and cites speaking as his favorite part of class. "I can express myself better by talking [in English]," he said. Luis

credits the journalism unit for furthering his speaking skills. "[Mr. Kaplan-Woolner] is having us write [articles] like in the newspapers," he said.

By learning how to write questions, interview, and construct an article, Costa gained a better understanding of writing, asking questions, and speaking.

During the journalism unit, students interviewed one another before reporting their unique stories about immigrating to America. "I think students like to interview each other, and they like to be able to tell their stories," Mr. Kaplan-Woolner said. "It shines a spotlight on their lived experience, and values everything that's going on for them in their real lives — both inside and outside the classroom." **HSV**

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