

The High School View

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Awardwinning author talks horror and writing

A COLLECTIVE EFFORT BY MS. HENNIGAN'S C BLOCK FRESHMAN ENGLISH CLASS

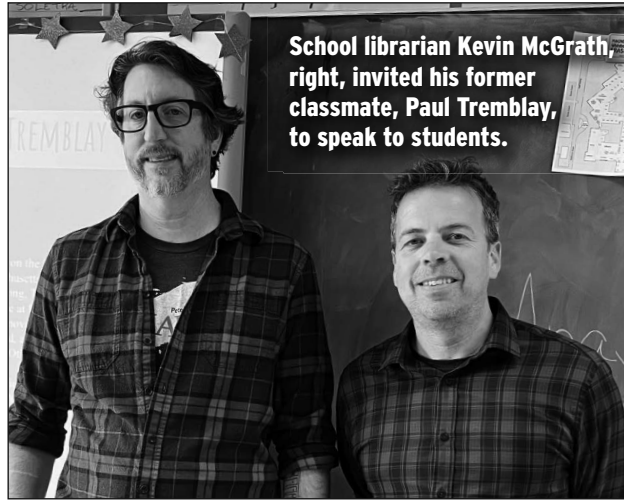
Author Paul Tremblay, whose book "The Cabin at the End of the World" was released this year as a major motion picture titled "A Knock at the Cabin," visited Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) last Monday after being invited by school librarian Kevin McGrath. During his visit, he spoke with students about writing horror stories, his double life as a math teacher, and the Tweet that changed his life.

"It was August 19, 2015," said Mr. Tremblay to a class of attentive ninth graders. "Stephen King tweeted 'A

Head Full of Ghosts, by Paul Tremblay, scared the living hell out of me.' I have it, like, tattooed on my back," he said with a laugh, referring to his first novel, the one that put him on the map. "So Uncle Steve, I'm calling him that, really helped me out. I've been publishing consistently since."

Mr. Tremblay, a high school math teacher at St. Sebastian's School in Needham, did not always know that he was a writer. He said that during his senior year as a math major at Providence College, he had to take an English class. "In that class I read a couple of short stories that opened my eyes — like, whoa, I didn't know people wrote stuff like this."

He was in graduate school studying to obtain a master's



School librarian Kevin McGrath, right, invited his former classmate, Paul Tremblay, to speak to students.

OLIVIA MACPHERSON

degree in math when his now wife introduced him to Stephen King's writing. That's when he started to write his own stories.

"I really wanted to be a half-decent punk guitarist or

writer [at that point]. I was sort of messing around with both. Unfortunately, I figured

I was a better writer than musician. Still makes me sad to this day," he said with a smile.

When he isn't grading or

working on lesson plans, he is trying to write as much as possible. "I'm trying either to write for an hour and a half in the morning, or at night, or if I'm really tired, early on the weekends. It's always been about stealing time."

When asked why he writes horror, Mr. Tremblay said, "I've always had this love and terrified relationship with horror. When I was a kid, I was the world's biggest scaredy-cat. But I've always felt there's something cool about the possibility of Godzilla existing, or the possibility of this weird, supernatural thing happening that would be terrifying."

Mr. Tremblay is not drawn as much to slasher horror as he is to ambiguity, which is what he plays around with a

lot in his writing: "You're not sure if something's true or not. To me, that's the scary part, it's that we don't know. I think it's scary because it mirrors our real life."

"A Knock at the Cabin" has grossed \$54.8 million so far this year, worldwide. He spoke with students about seeing his novel adapted for the screen and directed by M. Night Shyamalan.

The story is a psychological thriller that asks readers if they would sacrifice someone they love in order to prevent a global apocalypse.

"My favorite stories ask, How do we live through this? What decisions are you going to make? Do you know the consequences?" he said. "And really, the ultimate question: How does anyone live through what we're living through? I think a horror story can get at those questions in really interesting ways." **HSV**

Ms. Brew retiring after 27 years of service

BY PICKLE EVILLE AND PENNY HADDAD

Special Education teacher Debbie ("Kansas") Brew will retire this year after 27 years teaching at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS). Ms. Brew teaches academic support and reading resource classes at the high school, but has taught many classes over the years — including small-group English and biology, and general education English. She is known as a warm and empathic teacher who helps students grow.

Ms. Brew's teaching career began with her father, who suggested she study and earn her teaching degree after high school. "I didn't know what I wanted to do, but my dad was a math teacher, and he said, 'Why don't you just get your teaching degree, because you never know?'" she said.

She attended Boise State Teachers College (now Em-



Special Education teacher Ms. Brew.

ISA MERRIAM

poria State University) in her home state of Kansas, and graduated with a degree in education and science. She didn't begin teaching immediately. Instead, she began working in the restaurant business, managed a bed and breakfast, and traveled extensively. Ms. Brew continued to explore new places, moving to Vermont to work at a golf course. She learned how to ski and, later, how to sail.

Before officially entering

the classroom, Ms. Brew's first students were her co-workers. "[At the restaurant], I was always teaching people how to mix this, or chop that, and I realized I liked doing that," she said. "I met up with some people who liked sailing, so I came down [to Martha's Vineyard]."

After moving to the Vineyard, she felt ready to enter the classroom. "I got hired at [MVRHS] as an education support professional first, then since I already had a bachelor's degree in science and education, they said, 'Why don't you add special education onto that?'" she said. Ms. Brew took additional coursework, and was hired as a special education teacher.

Junior Tobias Russell-Schaeffer has taken an academic support class with Ms. Brew. "She wants to help her students achieve their academic goals," he said. "She's more on the laid-back side, and I think that emphasizes to stu-

dents that she respects them and makes them more willing to work independently."

Junior Alissa Habekost also has Ms. Brew as a teacher for academic support. "She always helps me with my work," she said. "I will miss her nice snacks and funny jokes."

In addition to teaching, Ms. Brew enjoys singing in the Martha's Vineyard Community Chorus, and practicing and teaching yoga. She is also passionate about sword dancing, a traditional form of dancing practiced around the world. She is looking forward to spending more time doing these things in her retirement, as well as spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren.

Most of all, Ms. Brew will miss her students. "I'll miss working with them, especially with reading," she said. "It's nice to see them progress, and to hear from other teachers that their reading has improved." **HSV**

Editor's farewell

Writing for The High School View was an aspiration of mine since my first day of high school. I attended my first meeting that year, and haven't missed one since.

Despite being initially intimidated by a staff of mostly upperclassmen, I began writing and interviewing for articles, and was soon hooked. After a year of publishing remotely my sophomore year, I became the assistant editor-in-chief my junior year, where I really started to delve deeper into what it meant to be a journalist. After writing and contributing to dozens of articles ranging from profiles to feature stories, I've learned that I love to share and spotlight what others are passionate about. Hearing students and staff speak about what they find joy in has made me love writing that

much more.

While I'm unsure as to whether I will continue as a journalist in the next chapter of my life, I know the skills I've obtained from my time on The High School View will follow me to Brown University in the fall.

On behalf of the staff at The High School View, I would like to thank everyone at The MV Times for supporting our work. In particular, we would like to thank Nicole Jackson for her willingness to guide us from week to week, and for her patience as we work to meet weekly deadlines. Perhaps most importantly, we'd like to thank our readers for trusting us to deliver news from the high school. We look forward to seeing you here again next fall.

Sincerely, Julia Sayre
Editor-in-Chief, 2022-23

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