

# SPOTLIGHT



MCAA Newspaper 

VOLUME 2 ISSUE#5 PAGE 1

FEBRUARY 2024



Advanced Dance performing to "Problem"

The February '24 Spotlight includes event articles on *Bugsy Malone*, the Winter Dance Recital, the Winter Ball, and an article about the pesky New Year's Resolutions and why so often people struggle to accomplish their yearly goals.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- 2/2 -Progress Report Q3
- 2/2-4 -Lenaea Festival
- 2/12-19 -February Recess
- 2/23 -Open Enrollment for 2024/25
- 2/27 -MJUSD Band Fest
- 2/29 -MJUSD Choir Fest
- 3/2 -Golden Empire Solo and Ensemble Fest

Teacher: The test isn't that confusing

The test:



## "Crazy In Love" With Dance

By Saihej Grewal

The Winter Dance Showcase took place on January 10th and 11th at the South Auditorium and was an amazing display of the Dance Department's talent. It was organized by Mx. Webb-Magee, the dance instructor, and the theme was collaboration. The Dance Showcase included every dance class from beginning to advanced, and there was lots of student choreography. The event highlighted the amazing talents of the dance students and their hard work throughout the first semester. While there were some setbacks, as the performance had to be pushed from December to January, the Dance Department worked hard and made the show absolutely wonderful. The atmosphere was full of excitement and there was a full house as the parents, students, and faculty filled up the auditorium to support the young dancers.

As a new addition to the event, Mx. Webb-Magee and the advanced dance class presented a talk and demonstration to show the audience the process of creating a modern dance. Each of the advanced dance class students improvised a dance in accordance to action words provided by the audience. The audience was able to see how dances can be created using action and movement. There was lots of amazing student choreography seen throughout the program, as many of the dances were choreographed entirely by students. Some of these dances include, "Be Our Guest" choreographed by Emily Dykes and Miguel Silva, "Crazy in Love" by Alexa Barragan and Cynthia Salazar, "All I Ever Asked" by Spencer Freeman, and "I Don't Dance" choreographed by Alyssa Ferrie and Sofia Walter. In addition to this, the dance department worked with alumni Miranda Xiong, who choreographed two dances. The dancers worked with Miranda after school and at 9th block to combine the two advanced dance classes.

There was a lot of hard work and dedication put into this performance by everyone involved including the Dance and Tech Departments. Everyone worked tirelessly to make the performance a success, and it was easy to see all the effort that went into making the show enjoyable. The Winter Dance Showcase demonstrated the talent and creativity of the students and was an amazing experience for everyone involved.

"While working on the dance recital, it gave me so much joy to see the kids bring my visions to life. It was my first time choreographing for such a big group, and they were all very cooperative and they are all so talented. I am very proud of everyone!" - Spencer Freeman

"It was so exciting to see how my whole class came together to perform our two dances. I had a great time performing with my classmates, and while waiting backstage I was able to bond with the other dancers making life lasting friendships." - Aaralyn Cowherd

"Hanging out and spending time with all of the other dancers is always a good time, the energy backstage during the dance performance was extremely positive. I'm glad I got to spend time with the graduating seniors and perform in their last winter dance recital!" - Aubrey Spence

Scan the QR Code to view Dragon's Digest past editions and their new issue!



## The Great Resolution Slip

By Kiyomi Gee

Every year we complete another trip around the Sun, and many people see this time as a chance to make changes and start fresh, lining themselves up for success in the new year with a series of challenges and expectations they set for themselves. The expectations vary in challenge and seriousness, but each presents the creator with an opportunity to do better or more than the past year. Resolutions are a commonality, but so is their failure. The question is, if these are such a regular part of our yearly pattern, why do they so often fail? By considering this question, maybe this year we can actually achieve some of the goals we set for ourselves.

The concept of New Year's Resolutions directly relates to the physiological "Start Fresh" effect. This effect takes place when *something new starts*. In this case, the new year gives individuals the opportunity to leave past failures behind *and start fresh* in 2024. The date reset from 12/31/2023 to 01/01/2024 enables people to believe they have entered a new phase of life, with their motivation and excitement at an all-time high. This elevation leads us to the creation of resolutions too large to carry on throughout the *entire* year. Stereotypically, people struggle with committing to their resolutions, an idea that has been consistent for decades and proven right annually.

**"Researchers suggest that only 9% of Americans that make resolutions complete them."**

**"23% of people quit their resolution by the end of the first week, and 43% quit by the end of January." - "Why Most New Year's Resolutions Fail"-Richard Batts**

The average person struggles with sticking to their resolution due to the fact they are simply unrealistic. Resolutions that are broad and intense force us to face too much all at once, leading us to become overwhelmed and stressed. Compared to loose resolutions, things you can integrate into your current life too easily as if nothing changed allows you to become lazy, bored, and unmotivated.

**For 2024, the Forbes Health/OnePoll survey found the most popular goals including:**

- Improved fitness (48%)
- Improved finances (38%)
- Improved mental health (36%)
- Lose weight (34%)
- Improved diet (32%)

In order to make your resolutions more achievable it is important to consider your strengths and weaknesses, and what can you realistically complete. It is important to be specific, you cannot say "My resolution is to better my health," or "My resolution is to eat better," and expect it to work out. What specifically about your health? How will you eat better and why? What are your main concerns? What can you do to make this resolution last long-term? Experts recommend writing out a plan for each goal and gradually working on them *one at a time* to avoid burnout, resulting in an improved lifestyle.

There it is. Though not every goal we set for ourselves in life is attainable, your New Year's Resolutions should be. If you haven't given up on this year's goals (yet), hopefully this gives you motivation to hold strong and keep striving to achieve those goals. If you are among the 43% of Americans who have quit their goals, it's alright, there is always next year! When making those goals, consider what is actually attainable, plan ahead, and don't give up when it gets tough. You can do this!

# SPOTLIGHT

VOLUME 2 ISSUE#5 PAGE 2

MCAA Newspaper

FEBRUARY 2024



## A Splurge of a Show

By Abby Miller

From January 25-27, the MCAA beginning drama classes presented “Bugsy Malone Jr.” The show had two lively casts and was directed by Mr. Demeritt, Danielle Gatlin, and Salma Alfaqeh. This delightful play set in the ‘20s featured flappers, gangs, and a whipped cream gun, taking place between two rivals, Fat Sam and Dandy Dan, along with their crews. Bugsy Malone is thrown into the middle of a wild feud for his newfound love, Blousey Brown, an aspiring actor who caught his eye. Bugsy’s only way to help his girl is by saving Fat Sam’s gang so that Blousey can get her dream job at the Fat Sam’s Speakeasy. Bugsy saves the day at the end with a speech about supporting one another and they all dance it out. This show was an excellent start for the beginning drama classes and we can not wait to see them act in the future.

When asked what was the hardest part of the show, one of the actors for Bugsy Malone, Caelum Gomez Perez, said, “probably trying to develop [Bugsy’s] character around Blousey and [Bugsy’s] relationship with her.” Stage manager Rachel Granger said that the show was, “A great experience with beginning drama, which is a lot different than working with advanced.”

We got to sit down with director Danielle Gatlin and ask her a few questions about her experience directing the show.

**So this was your first show directing, what was that experience like as compared to acting in a show?**

“It was definitely more challenging because you have to think of the production as a big picture rather than just you as yourself.”

**What was the biggest challenge in the process of getting the show together and the students ready?**

“Probably getting [the ideas] I had connected in the their minds. We would give them the material in a way that they didn’t really understand so then I’d have to go back and reteach it and then revise it to make it as best as it could be.”

**What are you most proud of, what was the biggest victory with the show and the groups with whom you worked?**

“I’m just proud of all the students and how far they’ve come in their acting journeys. They have improved an enormous amount from the beginning of the semester and just seeing everything come to life was really rewarding. I just loved connecting with everyone and getting to know them personally. I am really excited for next year because I will be helping out with the beginning drama again.”

**Thank you, Danielle! We look forward to seeing what you work on next year!**



## We Had A (Winter) Ball at McKenney!

By Benjamin Oliver

When it was announced that the Winter Ball would take place in another school’s cafeteria rather than a hall, many students were skeptical, murmuring their concerns among their peers. Would the dance be enjoyable? Would it feel the same as before? Would it live up to past winter balls?

In retrospect, the answer to those questions should’ve been obvious. The students have always been what made MCAA what it is; not our location or our circumstances. We learn in transportables, and yet we excel, always overcoming the expectations that have been set for us. The Winter Ball was no exception to this. By the end of the night, “Bohemian Rhapsody” had more energy than it’s had in a long time, with every single attendee gathered in a circle, running toward one another when the beat dropped with smiles and cheers.



The Royal Court lining up after being crowned

“The crowd was louder than the music. It was awesome,” noted Spencer Freeman, the junior class president. With 176 students having attended the dance— almost half of the entire school— this comes as no shock. The whole dance was lively and full of energy. Jack Magee, who was one of the runners-up for queen, even said that, “It was the best one we’ve had.”

Being a newer staple of the Winter Ball, the photo booth, run by the National Arts Honor Society Club, made its now annual appearance. Mr. Weisgerber also brought his 360 Photo Booth which became a quick hit among students. When asked about his experience running the 360 booth, Mr. Weisgerber laughed, saying, “I’m glad no one threw up [on it]!” Alex Giongco, who helped, said, “Running the photo booth is always fun because I get to see friends and couples make memories together and pose all cute.”

The Royal Court, coined the Monarch-y in alignment with the theme Butterflies & Begonias, was a huge success as well. Students gathered around in anticipation as Spencer Freeman lined up the nominees for each category, hovering the crown over their heads before placing it on the winner. “I felt awesome and I felt a little awkward,” said Tonantzin Valdes-Soto, who was crowned Winter Ball King. Other winners include Rachel Granger (Queen), Pietro Vargas (Prince), Miguel Silva (Princess), Felipe Benites (Knight), and Iztaccihuatl Valdes-Soto (Lady).

“The Winter Ball was absolutely amazing! The 11th grade class worked really hard on it, so I’m glad that everything went well,” commented ASB vice president Saihej Grewal when asked about her overall experience. The dance was both a huge success and a fun time for everyone involved.



## Comic Corner

Submission by Jacqueline Robles Gonzalez

