



Elephant In The Room

Milton High's Student Newspaper

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Letter To The Editor

To the Editor,

Every time I try to look something up, Gemini gets there first. It slides AI-written answers above every Google search, with tidy summaries and bright links that lead exactly where it wants you to go. ChatGPT launched on November 30, 2022, during my freshman year, and it hit a million users in less than a week. By the time my sophomore year began, more than 100 million people were using it. OpenAI has gone further, releasing its own browser, built so ChatGPT doesn't just answer questions but reads, summarizes, and acts on your behalf. It remembers what you view, anticipates what you'll want, and folds your habits into its logic.

AI is obviously impressive. I use it the way most of my friends do to make sense of something, to test an idea, or to get unstuck. What I'm skeptical of is the guilt it's wrapped in and the shrinking of curiosity that comes with it.

The difference in how people talk about AI is what gets me. It could've been the first real chance for students and teachers to learn something new side by side. Now, teachers are in private Google Docs figuring out how to automate grading, and students in private tabs trying to figure out how not to get caught. The irony is that both sides are learning from the same bot, just in different tones of shame.

If we're going to teach "AI literacy," we should begin with honesty. It's already part of how everyone learns. The real question is whether we admit it. Who gets to call it learning and who gets called a cheater?

Senior, Class of 2026

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The Town That Turned Toward the Sun



Photo By ADAM CHEAIRS

Tucker Smith in a full sun costume brightens the town green.

By ADAM CHEAIRS

The light came first in Boston, washing the Old North Church in green.

Tucker Smith watched from the cobblestones with her husband, Hale, as Mayor Michelle Wu pressed a button and the historic steeple, the same belfry that once signaled "one if by land, two if by sea," blazed iridescent green as the new color of revolution.

"The idea was that you shine a green light on climate justice," Tucker remembered. "We looked at one another and said, 'We should do that in Milton.'"

Five months later, they did.

On September 21st, Milton's First Parish Church and the Town Hall hosted Sun-Day, one of more than 450 gatherings across the country urging Americans to "rise for a sun-powered planet."

The lawn between the gazebo

and the parish hummed with life. Music from a drum circle rolled across the grass, toddlers smeared yellow paint on paper halos, and neighbors traded stories about heat pumps and solar panels.

Milton's green awakening may look spontaneous, but it has been brewing for nearly two decades. Sustainable Milton, founded in 2006, existed before the town had a climate plan or an energy manager. Through the swings of four presidencies, three recessions, and countless rounds of uncertain funding, residents kept holding meetings and workshops in borrowed rooms, patching together their own grants, and championing to keep the public will alive.

Hale and Tucker have retrofitted their 1938 home for this new century's problems with geothermal heating, sun-tracking solar, and two EVs in the driveway. "It's not the cheapest

thing to do," Hale said, "but it's the right thing."

Tucker, dubbed "the Sun Queen" by friends, composts at home as she has for 35 years, and has volunteered with Sustainable Milton since 2014. She has served on the board, including a term as president.

Milton residents Mark and Patricia Ostrem said they came out to support the town's clean energy movement and the neighbors leading it. "We believe in renewable energy. We have an EV," Mark said. Patricia smiled and added, "And we know the Sun Queen!" It wasn't the speeches or displays that defined the event so much as these easy exchanges.

For the Ostrems, the day was about continuity. Patricia previously led the stringed instruments program in Milton's schools. "It's great to be together with community members and with high school students."

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This Moth Saw Brightness: A Review

By CORY WONG

How do we know if conspiracy theories hold any truth? This Moth Saw Brightness brings readers into a world not unlike our own but awash with secrets and complexities.

This Moth Saw Brightness by A.A. Vacharat is a weird, funny and heartfelt book that can confuse and make you laugh at the same time. Needless to say, it's an easy book to love. It is the type of book that creeps up on a reader until finally one decides that they love it.

Starting this story came with a rather embarrassing sigh while reading the first chapter. It

seemed like every realistic fiction book which includes a slightly sarcastic main character who likes to monologue to the reader. Let's not forget about some quirky side characters and parents who don't seem to notice what their kids are up to.

I frowned when reading the footnotes knowing I would have to hop back and forth trying to connect the dots. At first glance, it's admittedly easy to be unimpressed with the main character 'Wayne (with an invisible D, mind you) and his acronyms.

Luckily this feeling didn't last for long. The further an audi-

**THIS MOTH SAW
BRIGHTNESS**

a novel
A. A. VACHARAT

ence reads, the more easily they are hooked. Now a scientific study is being thrown in with a hidden purpose that may or may not be dangerous. As the scientific study goes on 'Wayne has to try to figure out the truth of the study along with his friends, Jane, an

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Students Speak: New School Bells



Photo credit of AIDAN LESCHUK

Guarino's Xylophone (above)

By AIDAN LESCHUK

In late August, MHS welcomed back students from their summer break—the building, more active than it had been for the past few months, was filled with familiar loud sounds and noises. From the stomping of shoes during transitions to the voices of students and staff alike, it seemed as if everything was returning to normal.

One new sound, however, has caught the attention of all. For, as of 7:45 on Wednesday the 27th of August, the unthinkable happened. The school bells had changed. Guidance Counselor Scott Devlin gave some insight into why these changes came about. He learned prior to the start of the school year that the school had implemented a new system in order to adjust timings for special schedules like half days. However, this upgrade to new technology came with another unique opportunity.

Devlin soon realized that the system could “incorporate sound files” as bell sounds. This led to the creation of the modern bell sound, which is actually a couple of notes played on Mr. Guarino’s xylophone. “Overall, I think it’s an improvement” says Devlin, indicating support for the new bell system. While staff may view this change positively, students at MHS may have other opinions.

In a survey shared in a recent publication, students were asked what they thought about the bells. Out of the students who chose to respond, the large majority dislike the bells.

Out of these responses, many returning students dislike the change, preferring the old system. “I don’t think there is much of a point in adding a new bell noise,” says senior Cullen Morrissey, also citing that the bell can be hard to hear during lunch blocks.

Even new students who aren’t familiar with the old system, such as freshman Annabel Peyton, who says, “it’s hard to hear and I can never tell when I’m supposed to go to my next class.”

While students and staff disagree when it comes to the introduction of the new system, all school community members are becoming more used to the bell, now nearly 3 months into the year. It seems that, despite the initial disruption caused, this sound may become the new normal.

Students Voices Gathered at Fall Poetry Open-Mic

By ELOISE MARLAND

The Milton High School Poetry Club hosted a poetry slam on Friday, October 24, 2025. This bi-annual event was hosted in the library, and there was a huge turnout with over 100 students.

The event was hosted by two MHS seniors and started off as an open mic. Using the flyers around the school to sign up, most performers shared poems or songs they had written with the community.

There were several breaks within the open mic. During one of these breaks, more students who were unable to sign up originally were able to put themselves on the MC list.

One of the best parts about the open mic, according to Freshman Julianna Perella, “was getting to listen to everyone’s different poems and

perspectives.” After the open mic, there was a poetry slam, where nine contestants competed by sharing their poetry and receiving scores from the judges. The audience was instructed to use their voices if they liked the scores, cheering “Higher!” if they believed the poem deserved a better rating.

Freshman Ivy Muzquiz said, “I loved the energy, especially towards the end, it was really positive and engaging.”

By the end of the night, the crowd dwindled, leaving around twenty or thirty dedicated viewers to see the second round of the poetry slam, where four contestants were eliminated and the five that remained read new poems.

The poetry slam and open mic were possible because of several clubs,



Photo credit of Mr. Lopresti

including Poetry Club, Tech Club, Photography Club and the Echo.

Many students also received extra credit in their English Department classes if they attended or performed, although it depended on the teacher. Some teachers required a paragraph on the student’s experience while others required only a selfie.

There were also many sweet treats at the event. Some cost money, and were a part of a fundraiser for Poetry Club, while others were free. As the event was Halloween themed, many of the treats and poems were spooky.

Overall, the Poetry Slam was a great way for students to share their ideas and showcase their creativity.

The Town That Turned To the Sun

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Among the booths on the green, Rachel Gentile of Resonant Energy, which develops solar projects for nonprofits and affordable-housing providers across Massachusetts, spoke to locals behind a solar model and pamphlets.

“Right now is critical,” she said, referencing the changing federal support. “The federal solar tax credit is scheduled to phase out. We’re trying to help as many organizations lock in incentives while they still can.” Sun-Day’s booths felt less like salesmanship than triage.

In July, Congress passed The One Big Beautiful Bill, redirecting federal dollars and rewriting the incentives that have supported America’s clean energy boom. It ends residential credits at the close of this year; commercial incentives start tapering in 2026 and conclude by 2027.

Resonant Energy has completed solar installations for three houses of worship in Milton, including First Parish and Beth Shalom of the Blue Hills. “We specialize in the projects that are the hardest to finance,” Gentile explained. “Low-income homeowners, nonprofits, multi-family buildings – places that have historically been left out of clean energy.”

At the edge of the lawn, the Reverend Lisa Ward of First Parish stood beside the 1678 church that initially seemed too sacred to modify. “It took a year of conversation,” she said. “One of the hesitations we faced—and you’ll see this in Milton—is that the church is a historic building. Some people felt we shouldn’t touch it.”

“Instead, we installed a long solar array on other parts of the property, including the Children’s Church. It felt right, because that’s what it’s all about: the future. Why are we doing this if not to be sustainable for the children?”

The panels feed energy back

to the grid, some of it shared with an urban ministry in Roxbury. “It’s interdependence,” Ward said. “We’re all in this together.”

Conversations circled around home projects and neighborhood solar, but Milton’s ambitions stretch further.

At the center of it is Alex Hasha, co-chair of the Climate Action Planning Committee (CAPC) and a board member of Sustainable Milton. “One of the key recommendations in the Climate Action Plan is to build neighbor-to-neighbor electrification coaching,” he said. “Solar’s a slam dunk, but some technologies are bigger challenges. People really benefit from having trusted voices who aren’t trying to make a buck.”

If Sun-Day captured the spirit of what Milton could become, the following month turned that energy into law. At the October Special Town Meeting, members voted overwhelmingly to adopt Article 4, giving near-unanimous approval to set community-wide climate goals aligned with Massachusetts law: cut emissions in half by 2030, three-quarters by 2040, and reach net-zero by 2050. As a result of the approval, Milton is now eligible for Climate Leader Communities funding, including millions in state grants for decarbonization, renewable energy, and municipal electrification.

Lauren Borofsky, president of Sustainable Milton, has kept the nonprofit’s momentum through cycles of enthusiasm and the shifting political winds. “We’re now entering the phase of implementation and mobilization,” she said. “That means expanding education and outreach so the whole community can take the next step.”

And this progress now has professional help: for the first time, Milton has a municipal energy manager. Kai Müller was hired in September and shares his responsibility with Randolph. At the Climate Action Planning Committee on September 11th, he said his goal will be to “help both

towns reduce energy use and electrify wherever possible – and to do it at the lowest cost through grants and smart planning.”

Karen Groce-Horan, founder of Courageous Conversations Toward Racial Justice – a community group that brings Milton and Mattapan residents together for honest dialogue about race, equity, and privilege – also works as a community engagement strategist at the Neponset River Watershed Association.

She came to see how Milton’s clean energy work might also become equity work. “I work with communities that have been most deeply impacted by climate change, yet [are] not at the table when decisions are made,” she explained. If you’re a parent of young children of color, your day is already full with education, work, and putting food on the table. It’s not easy to add climate change to that list. We meet people where they are and help them see they can have a say.”

Then she paused and leaned in, “We can’t talk about justice if we don’t have a planet to live on.”

As the afternoon waned, Reverend Ward’s words from earlier in the day came back to mind.

“The question,” she said, “is whether we can find a sustainable way for humans to live here. The Earth will still be here, no matter what. It’s up to us to pay attention—to listen to what the Earth is telling us. Sun energy, wind energy—these are all gifts. There’s a natural harmony in them, but we have to look beyond human need and want.” Her words hung in the late-day light, reinforcing what the whole event seemed to suggest.

Milton’s plan will take years, maybe decades, to fulfill. Federal money will surge and recede. But for one bright Sunday in early autumn, the town was sure that the revolution still lives here in Massachusetts, not in muskets or lanterns, but neighbors facing the same direction, toward the sun.

This Moth Saw Brightness

(continued from page 1)

origami-loving girl and Kermit, a tech genius. As annoying as the repetition of tropes for side characters can be, Jane and Kermit are delightful.

“Wayne has to face a lot more than this study though. He has to grapple with his awkward relationship with his father and his long absent mother. The story touches on mental health and what it means to care about the world.

This story is so complex and rich. The thing is, readers finish the book with a frown on their faces, perhaps confused by the ending. Then one puts it down and minutes later runs back to pick it up again, trying to figure it all out. Somehow pieces are

easily missed but impossible to get out of one's head. Then readers realize the background characters were tangled in secrets of their own and they realize the true genius of A.A. Varcharat.

“Somehow pieces are easily missed but impossible to get out of one's head”

At least, this is what happened for me.

Before I get ahead of myself here, let me highlight something admirable about *This Moth Saw Brightness*: its representation of minorities.

Oftentimes, authors only have one specific character that is ‘diverse’ in their novels, which is annoying. Much preferable is the diversity of characters sprinkled in which this story did perfectly. There were characters from all different races, genders and many of the characters were neurodivergent. As someone part of all of these groups, I am happy to say the author did well in portraying them.

After reading this incredible novel, I rushed to email the author hoping that she would respond. The style of *This Moth Saw Brightness* is very unique with short chapters and a variety of pieces of writing from scripts to phone screens to email. The format really added to the quirks of the novel (including the footnotes, which were much funnier and more enjoyable

than I want to admit).

A.A. Vacharat commented on the format saying, “When you’re trying to capture a feeling in as few words as possible, you start having to consider all the tools in your toolbox. For me, that included changing the narrator, including documents, and more.” I have to agree and praise her for the amazing flow that the book has.

For fans of delightfully funny authors such as Stuart Gibbs or John Green, this book will be perfect! I didn’t want to give too many spoilers but if you want to find out what happens, maybe this is your sign to pick it up and read! This is an amazing and worthwhile read and is highly recommended for anyone who wants a good book to read.

Through The Deep Dark and Beyond: The Oh Hellos Perform in Boston

By NICO HAYDEN

The Oh Hellos concert came to the streets of Boston like a roaring valley on the 11th of October. Their band was joined by a smaller, though a personal favorite one, Rabbitology, which played the preshow and actually later returned for a combined finale.

The setlist consisted of Rabbitology’s most recent singles, including “Prey Birds” and “Living Ghost: Still Rising”. Meanwhile, the Oh Hellos played three of their most popular albums, *Notos*, *Boreas* and *Dear Wormwood*, as well as their number 1 single “Soldier, Poet, King”. Through this mix of indie, folk and rock, you can really feel the community these bands have both grown.

Though the bands had moved venues (from the Royale to the Roadrunner), they made great use of the small performance space. Something that really stood out to me was their ability to connect with the audience, be it with sound, music or words. These people come to hear stories and songs and they get both fulfilled wholeheartedly, which creates such a nice space and a safe feeling all around.

However, nothing can be perfect, as some parts of the show, especially Rabbitoly’s preshow performance, sounded like the bass was boosted to 110%. This overpowering force was mostly calmed by the playing of other

instruments for the latter half of the night. Even though the bass made it harder to hear some parts, like the quieter sections, it made sure that you could really feel into the music. No literally, the floor was basically shaking. If you’re trying to place this show in context, imagine a cross between Mumford & Sons when they dial back the pop, and Fleet Foxes when they step up to the mic with a full acoustic-electric build, banjos and mandolins. The Oh Hellos bring that folk-choral energy of Mumford, but with the more dramatic peaks and valley moments of Fleet Foxes. For a concert goer who’s seen both bands, this show felt like stepping into the heart of that hybrid, earnest, and expansive music, while staying grounded in folk roots.

Who is going to get the most out of this? Fans of indie folk, folk-rock, vocal harmonies, banjo/violin instrumentation, will feel at home. It’s great for a slightly older crowd comfortable with standing and engaged with the music, but equally for younger listeners interested in discovering high energy folk songs with a twist.

A large audience of the Oh Hellos are people who might run into the woods and try to befriend every creature and live with the critters till the end times. However, if you prefer strictly mellow acoustic sets with no electric push, this show may feel a



Photo By NICO HAYDEN

The Oh Hellos Concert (above) sonable enough to be fully considered as per the restraints of the venue.

“The Oh Hellos delivered emotionally, musically, and visually”

For a musician or folk-lover, you’re getting a genuine live performance with heart.

Therefore, if I had to give a rating, it would be an 18.6 out of 20, not perfect, but still good to make you wanna break out in dance and maybe build a log cabin.

The Vacancy in the Select Board

By ALYSSA ZULLAS

This is a special election that only consists of the vote for the new Select Board representative. This election is happening because John Keohane resigned on August 5, 2025, writing a letter to the Chair Ben Zoll and Keohane states “I’ve come to realize that public office and the political landscape that comes with it are not the right fit for me.” After the resignation of Keohane the Select Board decided to hold an election for the available

spot.

On August 27th, Arthur Doyle took out nomination papers to run for the office. Then, John Driscoll took out his nomination papers on August 29th, making this race contested. On September 9th, Doyle returned his papers securing him a spot on the ballot. Finally, on September 2nd, Driscoll turned his papers back in, 13 days before the due date which was September 15th.

Arthur Doyle kicked off his campaign on September 30th, and his main goal as a Select Board member, if elected, is to give back to the community as best he can, “Seeing that we have just had a town election 6 months ago and we’re going to have another town election in 6 months. Ok, this might be in some way, I can payback the community.” As Arthur Doyle likes to say, “It’s as simple as that.” In addition, Doyle’s

Comic By THOMAS HAYDEN



If I die right now my wife will killlll me.

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Select Board Vacancy (continued)
from page 3)

focus would include making the town a better place for all with projects such as completing the Atherton Street Fire Station, public safety solutions, and strengthening public schools.

John Driscoll's campaign kicked off on October 5th, bringing a lot of ideas to the table. His ideas include protecting the open spaces and historic places in town while also working collaboratively with the other members of the board and the town citizens, delivering public services to the town as a member on the board. Ultimately, Driscoll plans to increase the amount

of fire fighters and police officers we have in the town to accompany the new buildings that are getting built in East Milton.

The election took place on November 4th and it seems to be a close race between Doyle and Driscoll. Many people held signs for Driscoll and for Doyle around town. Doyle, on (insert day), said "It really depends on who shows up."

The results of the 2025 Select Board election is that overall John Driscoll won. The total vote count is Doyle 2487 votes and Driscoll 2760 votes, Driscoll,

in the end, winning by 273 votes. Despite the board operating as the "Chief Elected Officials and Executive Officers of the Town" according to Milton's official website, and yet there was an extensive drop in voter participation. In the last election for Select Board seat last April, a total of 18014 votes were cast with Winston Daley and Meghan Hagerty being the newest elects. When it came time to choose between Doyle and Driscoll, only 5247 voters out of the 21437 registered in Milton voted. Compared to this most recent select board election, a significant

12767 voters didn't vote this time around.

Another election for this board won't be until next April; for now the five person board will remain with Ben Zoll, the Chair of the board, Winston Daley is the Vice Chair of the board, Meghan Hagerty is the Secretary of the board, and Richard Wells and John Driscoll are members on the select board.

Thanksgiving Roll Recipe

By Grace Weddleton

Every family has recipes that are passed down through generations and, in other words, recipes that connect us to the past. During the holidays, this tradition allows us to connect with loved ones and find joy in simple pleasures, such as eating a well-made bread roll.

Bread rolls are an important staple that belong on every Thanksgiving table. They are a core comfort food that define the holiday meal for many, and often the first thing people reach for.

Specifically, my family's comfort food is my grandmother's bread rolls. When you pick one up the dough is soft, yet the outside is hard and tough as though it could endure a storm. Its light tan color looks like sand, and when I take the first bite I always hear the crunch of the crust.

However, the scent of the rolls is what draws people in. It's a comforting combination of yeast, butter, and sugar that's warm, like pulling a blanket over yourself on a cold fall day. This sweet almost-nutty smell mixed with a yeasty aroma could make anyone want to take a bite.

I grew up always loving these rolls, but found a new appreciation the first time my grandmother and I made them together. It was a lot more work than my 10-year-old self expected. After you make the dough and knead it, you have to let it rise three times, which makes the process an all-day experience.

Instead of a simple ball of dough, I now see my grandmother smiling at me. The first bite takes me back to moments in the kitchen, listening to stories about her youth. The



delicious taste is the same, but these bread rolls mean more to me now. As I eat one, I think about time spent with my grandmother and it's no longer just a roll, it's a time machine.

If anyone is interested in add-

ing a new staple to their Thanksgiving table this year, here is my grandmother's recipe for her bread roll dough. I definitely think you should check it out.

Ingredients:

5 cups of flour
 $\frac{2}{3}$ cups of Crisco shortening
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk
2 tablespoons of sugar
1 egg
1 tablespoon of yeast
1 teaspoon of salt
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of warm water

Instructions:

Mix the dry sugar and salt together in a bowl. In a pan, pour the Crisco and milk and start bringing them to a boil. Next, combine the boiled Crisco and milk with the sugar and salt mixture. Then, in another bowl, add the warm water to the yeast in order to activate it. Finally, add yeast mixture to the bowl with the boiled liquids, sugar and salt. The dough should now rise when fully baked.

The Elephant in the Room is always looking for feedback! If you have suggestions, feel strongly about an article, or think there's anything The Elephant in the Room should address, feel free to submit a letter to our editors. Email your letter to mhs.eitr@gmail.com



Sincerely,
The Elephant in the Room Staff

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