For college students, the holiday season is generally met with a sense of excitement — there are Christmas parties to attend, New Year’s Eve to celebrate and over a month offfrom classes and all of the work that goes along with them. However, in the midst of enjoying all of these winter festivities, our bank accounts end up feeling the crunch from the holiday season. Gift-giving shouldn’t be a stressful activity. After all, this time of year isn’t about what you get, but about spending time with family and friends and being able to do something nice for the people you love. Of course, you can’t exactly bottle up “something nice” and hand it out as a gift, but for those of us on a college budget, here are some less expensive gift-giving options to maintain your festive spirit and keep your wallet full.

For Parents or Grandparents: Remember that last family vacation you took? Or all of the memories you shared during the last holiday? Re-live all of those good moments by giving

Holiday on a Budget

Angela Milinazzo ’12
Staff Writer
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Check Out Page 7 for The Hottest Tech Gifts of the Season

Be the Key to a Teen’s Holiday

Megan Costantini, Merrimack’s Augustinian Volunteer, explained, “Campus Ministry works with the Key Program to donate gift cards for at-risk teenagers in their residential programs. Instead of buying gifts, we are asking that people purchase $25 gift cards, or whatever denomination they can give, from stores like Barnes and Noble, Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy, Aero-postale, Express, Forever 21, Claire’s, Dick’s Sporting Goods, malls in the area, or arts and crafts stores. This enables the teens to purchase something that they really want for Christmas.”

Over the past 30 years, the Key Program has been serving youth and their families. According to Costantini, “The organization’s mission is to assist those in need by helping them develop positive life skills and life experiences so that they may pursue productive and rewarding lives.” Remember that there truly is a gift of giving. As college students, we are very fortunate to be continuing our education. Stop and think how much joy
Christmas Cookie Recipes

Oreo Snowman Cookie Balls

what you need
1 pkg. (8 oz.) PHILADELPHIA Cream Cheese, softened
1 pkg. (16.6 oz.) OREO Cookies, finely crushed
2 pkg. (8 squares each) BAKER’S White Chocolate, melted
1 tsp. black decorating gel
2 tsp. orange decorating icing make it

MIX cream cheese cookie crumbs until well blended.

SHAPE into 48 (1-inch) balls. Freeze 10 min. Dip balls in melted chocolate; place in single layer in shallow waxed paper-lined pan. Decorate with remaining ingredients to resemble snowmen.

REFRIGERATE 1 hour or until firm.

Rudolph’s Sugar Cookies

YIELD: Makes 1 1/2 dozen
PREP TIME: 30 Minutes
FREEZE: 15 Minutes
BAKE: 12 Minutes
COOL: 21 Minutes
COURSE: Cookies, Desserts

Ingredients
1 (16.5-oz.) package refrigerated sugar cookie dough
36 pretzel twists
36 semisweet chocolate mini morsels
18 red cinnamon candies
Preparation
1. Freeze dough 15 minutes.

2. Roll dough to a 1/4-inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut dough with a 3-inch round cutter, and place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Using thumb and forefinger, pinch opposite sides of each slice about two-thirds of the way down to shape face.

3. Break curved sides away from center of each pretzel twist to form antlers. Press bottom of 1 set of antlers on each side at top of each reindeer face.

4. Bake at 350° according to package directions or until lightly browned. Remove from oven; press in 2 chocolate mini morsels for eyes and 1 red cinnamon candy for nose. Let cool 1 minute on baking sheets. Remove to wire racks; cool 20 minutes or until completely cool.

Christmas Tree Sugar Cookies: Omit pretzels, chocolate mini morsels, and cinnamon candies. Freeze dough 15 minutes. Roll dough to a 1/4-inch thickness on a floured surface, and cut with a 3-inch Christmas tree-shaped cookie cutter. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 350° according to package directions or until lightly browned. Remove from oven, and cool as directed. Frost tops of cookies with ready-to-spread vanilla frosting, and sprinkle with red and green colored sugars and sprinkles.
Domestic Violence Opponents Make Noise on Campus

Addressing Abuse

Dana Hildner '13
Staff Writer

On Nov. 30, the public relations class constructed a day dedicated to raising awareness on the issue of domestic violence. Class instructor Rita Barry-Corke got in contact with the Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center, which focuses on sheltering women who are victims of domestic violence. As a class project students were instructed to make public service announcements shedding light on the issue of domestic violence, following up with an event to present them to the Merrimack student body.

The event started Wednesday with members of the class passing out purple ribbons on Main Street during lunch hours distributing a total of 500 ribbons. Everywhere you looked around campus that day, one would see purple. Whether it was a person’s clothing, a ribbon on a student, or on a tree and the iron bridge decked out with purple balloons and bows.

If the distribution of ribbons did not make people aware during dinner hours the class set the TV’s in the cafeteria to channel 10 where the PSA’s were revealed. They dimmed the lights and everyone’s attention was drawn to the television simultaneously playing the student’s projects. Junior Brittany Eisenhaur stated: “When the domestic violence awareness day Public Service Announcements premiered in the cafeteria, I was instantly drawn to them. The way the issue of domestic violence was portrayed by the students was very powerful and I think they handled and produced the PSA’s made them worthy for being shown on television.”

The public service announcements ran every half hour starting at 5:30 and ending at 7:30.

Junior Manny Velez added, “The PSA’s were great, and really changed my perspective on the issue of domestic violence. Everyone should get to see them.” If you have not gotten the chance to see these videos you can check out the Merrimack College YouTube account. The public service announcements were made and produced by the students of the public relations class, as well as starring Merrimack College students.

Domestic Violence: Don’t Be Quiet

Esther Arromando '13
Staff Writer

“Speak Up!” was a program on domestic violence and sexual assault coordinated by a group of students for their course’s final project.

Held in Cascia Hall, the program demonstrated the severity of domestic violence and ways to heal from it. Through a mixture of poems, stories, readings, and songs, the students effectively showed the audience the reality of domestic violence.

The program started out defining domestic violence and sexual assault. The students wanted to portray how frequently these assaults happen, and how it is never to be tolerated. “The Struggle” was read next — a moving story about a young woman who had gone down the wrong road and had been beaten and raped repeatedly.

Two more poems, “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Recovery,” were read. The former was a heart-breaking poem of a coma-tose rape victim and the latter was about the hardships of healing from domestic violence. All of these poems were extremely effective in showing different forms of domestic violence, and how difficult not only the assault itself is, but the recovery as well.

Along with the poems and readings, many shocking statistics were given. The students in charge of the program informed the audience that one in six women are the victim of completed or attempted rape in their lifetimes, and for men one in thirty three are victims. “I Am Donald” was a reading that opened up the audience’s eyes to the harsh reality that females are not the only victims of sexual assault.

The final story was not so much about domestic violence, but about bullying and assault in general. It told the story of a bullied freshman boy, who was befriended by another boy in his class. The two became good friends, and after some time the first boy was no longer bullied. At their high school graduation, he announced his planned suicide from freshman year, and how his friend was the reason he changed his mind.

This story proved the importance of friends and family as a support system; it is much harder to endure bullying and assault on your own.

The final performance was the song “Only Hope,” sung by a student hosting the program.

The students ended the program by giving the audience advice on helping loved ones who are suffering from domestic violence. Listen, do not judge. Be patient. Empower the victim. And finally, encourage them to report the crime.

Letter to The Editor

In response to the article about “The Rape Lot,” (Beacon, Oct. 28) we are concerned about the rape culture and myths that exist on our campus.

Language such as “The Rape Lot” desensitizes us from the serious issues of rape and sexual assault.

The article mentioned that there had not actually been any rapes or assaults in this parking lot and that it is very well lit and safe for students. Students did not see any problem with the name and even thought it was humorous.

However, using such serious words like rape in a joking manner only perpetuates rape culture and enables its continuation.

These words have very specific and serious connotations, and by using them improperly we are allowing ourselves to become less sensitive and in turn less concerned about rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence in general.

Mary Paris
Melanie Tobey
Hannah Hagen
ANDOVER—According to reports by the Eagle Tribune newspaper, and statements from the Andover school administration, the Andover High men’s basketball team was involved in hazing at Hoop Mountain basketball camp at Stonehill College in Easton. Hoop Mountain is a private camp at Stonehill in which many Andover basketball players participate every summer.

The hazing incident involved members of the team playing a sex game.

“We will hold individuals accountable, but also provide them with an opportunity to learn and grow from this experience,” said Marinel McGrath, superintendent of schools in Andover in a statement released by her office.

McGrath said punishments range from suspension to expulsion. “We remain committed to maintaining an atmosphere free from bullying and hazing for all of our students, whether they are on or off school property,” she wrote.

Stonehill has since terminated the agreement with Hoop Mountain basketball camp.

Andover High School Athletic Director Chris Bergeron said in a statement that he would be following school procedure. “As stated in the rules, which apply to all athletic programs, participation in the AHS athletic program is a privilege, not a right, and the highest standards of conduct will be enforced,” he said.

According to the Eagle-Tribune’s report two students were expelled from Andover High and five other students were kicked off the team. Andover is now looking into whether criminal charges should be filed.

Hazing has been in the headlines in the Merrimack Valley since the beginning of the decade. Members of the Pentucket Regional High School football team in West Newbury were involved in hazing incidents that included sexual assault.

Merrimack College is no stranger to hazing. In 2010 the baseball team earned national attention when a student-athlete came forward about hazing incidents on that team. The team’s Florida spring training trip was cancelled due to hazing.

Lawrence Schools Enter Receivership

LAWRENCE—On Nov. 29, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to declare Lawrence Public Schools “chronically underperforming” allowing Commissioner of Secondary and Elementary Education Mitchell Chester to appoint a receiver to completely overhaul the city’s education system.

The vote was initiated when Lawrence Mayor William Lantigua called upon the state to take over the underperforming schools.

“I firmly believe that all Lawrence students are as capable as students anywhere in the commonwealth of learning and achieving at high levels. Today’s vote will enable us to implement an aggressive agenda aimed to transform Lawrence into a district where strong educational outcomes are the rule and not the exception,” said Chester in a statement.

Many in the city believe the achievement gap is due to numbers of students immigrating from other countries, primarily the Dominican Republic, and not being able to read and speak English enough to perform in the classroom up to state standards.

According to the statement, less than half of Lawrence students graduate high school within four years, the lowest graduation rate in the state.

Chester will name a receiver within the next two weeks. The receiver will create and implement a plan to dramatically change the Lawrence school district, and could serve up to five years under the current board.

The city has already announced that students may face longer school days and an expanded school calendar to address coming up short on standards.

Currently Lawrence schools are run by Interim Superintendent Mary Lou Bergeron. Under receivership, she will assume her previous position as assistant superintendent.

Former Lawrence Superintendent Wilfredo Laboy is awaiting trial on corruption charges stemming from the time when he was Lawrence’s chief academic officer. Laboy and seven senior aides were indicted during the Tierney general’s investigation into Lawrence schools in 2010.


NEWTON — In the wake of the state’s redrawing of Massachusetts congressional districts, U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, D-Newton, announced last week that he would not seek re-election to Congress in 2012.

The Fourth District representative announced that the recent redistricting was why he was retiring. In a press conference he said it would be distracting to learn about the new places he would represent while maintaining obligations to his current constituents and continuing to work on important policy issues.

Frank, 71, is chairman of the powerful Financial Services Committee. He has served in Congress for 16 terms. Prior to that he served in the state House of Representatives, and was an aide to the mayor of Boston.

Frank was the first member of Congress to voluntarily disclose his homosexuality, and has been a strong advocate for gay marriage among other issues.

According to Frank’s statement he will not retire and become a lobbyist, but hopes to teach.

Massachusetts was slated to lose one of its 11 congressmen in redistricting, based on state and national population trends. U.S. Rep. John Olver, who has long represented much of western Massachusetts, also announced he will retire after this term.

U.S. Rep. John Tierney, who represents Andover and North Andover in Congress, is seeking re-election. He will face the winner of a Republican primary featuring lawyer Bill Hudak, who lost to Tierney in 2010, and former state Sen. Richard Tisei, the Republican nominee for lieutenant governor in 2010.

Methuen Mayoral Race Finalized After Recount

METHUEN—The Methuen mayoral race was finalized last Wednesday after a recount of the Nov. 8 ballots was requested.

Candidate Al DiNuccio filed the request with the Methuen city clerk shortly after the results showed that DiNuccio, a local businessman, lost to City Councilor Stephen Zanni.

Initial results indicated that Zanni beat DiNuccio by only 28 votes. Both Zanni and DiNuccio hired election recount specialists to oversee the recount, which was conducted by the city clerk’s office.

City Clerk Christine Touma-Conway is responsible for overseeing all local elections.

The recount took election workers about 4½ hours to count just under 9,000 ballots, and showed that Zanni actually beat DiNuccio by 34 votes.

DiNuccio announced he was satisfied with the recount, and cited closure for his entire campaign for the motivating factor of the recount. According to Touma-Conway the recount cost the city around $7,000.

Cancer Society Fund-Raiser Slated for March

The American Cancer Society’s Relay for Life is drawing near. This volunteer-based event is once again being held at Merrimack College, where students, faculty, community members, and survivors of cancer will be gathering to take part in the occasion.

Participants work to raise money for the 12-hour event. These donations go to the American Cancer Society in order to work toward cancer research. The event runs all night, with the notion that cancer never sleeps.

Participants, along with their team mates, join in order to celebrate the lives of survivors, remember those who have lost their lives, and to fight back against the disease. Members of each team take turns walking the track throughout the night.

Food and games are constantly provided as entertainment and fun for volunteers.

This year, Merrimack has the goal of raising the cost of one student’s tuition. Together we can raise the $44,215!

The event is being held March 9 and 10, 2012 from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Participants will gather in the Sakowich Center on campus.

Cancer affects every individual in some way, and is therefore a concern and sorrow for many.


— Megan McKay
McGowan’s Last Lecture: Welcome ‘Analog’

Alicia Unis ’13
Staff Writer

Students and faculty of Merrimack College assembled in Cascia Hall on Nov. 15 to hear Professor Cynthia McGowan give her Last Lecture.

A tradition for years at Merrimack, the Last Lecture is delivered as if it were the last opportunity a professor has to speak before students and colleagues on any subject. The professor so honored takes this opportunity to give one “final” lecture on a specific topic or message that they feel is most important for their audience to hear.

This year, McGowan, a professor of chemistry and president of the Faculty Senate, was chosen to give the speech. As part of the Last Lecture tradition, the previous lecturer is responsible for introducing this year’s current lecturer. Professor Patricia Sendall, last year’s lecturer, introduced McGowan, informing the audience of the current lecturer’s background and personal qualities.

McGowan is a mother and wife, with a Ph.D. from Brandeis University and a B.A. from Russell Sage College. On the Merrimack campus, she transformed the organic chemistry curriculum by introducing microwave heating as a tool. She has various published works and has collaborated with a University of Connecticut professor to develop a range of new experiments for the undergraduate teaching laboratory. She is believed among her colleagues and students, Sendall noted, even having former students make the trip back to campus to be in attendance to hear her lecture.

Professor Cynthia McGowan delivers the 2011-2012 Last Lecture

Apparentall the undergrad classes with McGowan just weren’t enough for Merrimack graduate Dave Foreman, who came to hear his former professor’s lecture. He said, “Dr. McGowan is one of the teachers I am truly grateful for. She has provided me with the opportunity to better my education through her research. Her words that day were something she is passionate about and it truly showed.”

In her talk, titled “Reflections on Our Digital Age,” McGowan reflected on the evolution of technology throughout the years, labeling herself one of the generation of “digital immigrants,” as she warned her audience of both the advantages and dangers of this new digitalized age.

McGowan commented on the benefits of this new technology, saying it has transformed teaching and learning. Yet she cautioned the audience of the dangers in becoming too digitalized. She noticed that the young in this digital age are often unable to read analog clocks, lost in the digitized numbers that are so easily presented to their eyes for instant comprehension. She warned the audience not to become too digitalized, and welcome a little bit more analog into their lives.

As she warned the audience of the dangers of too much digitalization, McGowan outlined several specific cautions. She addressed “all natural” vs. “synthetic chemicals,” the battle between these two opposing forces and the advertisements used to promote supplements to feel better, look better and lose weight all while being totally “natural.”

While McGowan reflected on the evolution of technology and the dangers it presents in her Last Lecture, she also highlighted its advantages, as it revolutionizes the way people learn and think. She said, “When used correctly, the new technology is awesome,” but warned the audience not to be overcome by it.

Nominations are in for this year’s First Lecture.

Check The Beacon to see who is chosen

Crossing Borders
Changes Perspectives

Brittany Reissfelder ’13
Staff Writer

Nearly 175 students, faculty and staff attended the third annual screening of Crossing Borders a documentary film that focuses on the experiences of students crossing into another country.

The film, shown on campus Nov. 15, encourages students to think about their peers in other countries, and how they live their lives.

In the movie, students from America and Morocco are brought together for a week. The students live together and develop an understanding of each other’s culture. As the week continues they experience each other’s traditions and values, which helps them grow to understand each other’s views.

“Crossing Borders is a revolutionary film that brings the pressing global issue of interfaith relations out of the bias-filled news media directly to my generation,” said recent Merrimack graduate Kendra Lima. “Throughout this documentary you can see the friendships that were being made, and the discussion of these traditions and values helped each student open up and have a better understanding of each other’s lives,” she said.

Professor Lynn McGovern, chair of the World Languages and Cultures Department, brought the film to Merrimack, where it was first shown; she continues to sponsor the film with the Office of International Programs. It developed out of her oversight of exchange programs for American students in Spain, and then in Morocco.

She developed a relationship with Arnt Wachter of the Crossing Borders Foundation, who made the film and who attends the Merrimack screening every year to lead a discussion with the audience.

Seeing that this film targets young students who are looking to discover lifestyles beyond America, it gives viewers an understanding of how other cultures compare to what American students are used to. With the stereotypes involved and the strong traditions on both sides of the U.S.-Morocco exchange, viewers have found it interesting to see how the students initiate dialogue and debate in the documentary.

Alumna Kelsey Binne said, “The film makes you want to get up and be proactive and fight for people who have less opportunities.”

Junior Neil Berzins said, “I thought this film was an effective way to enlighten student’s minds on traveling.”
For Students, Gift Ideas on a Budget

Continued from Page 1

your parents a photo album or a makeshift scrapbook. You don’t need to spend tons of money and get all sorts of supplies. Print out some of your favorite pictures at your local CVS or Walgreens and buy a frame. It helps if all of the pictures have the same sort of “theme” to give your gift a sense of cohesion and thoughtfulness. If you want to get a bit fancier, get a shadowbox and include mementos from things you and your family have done together: a Red Sox ticket, a postcard from Boston, your ticket from the train ride into Boston and pictures from that Red Sox game you all attended together. It’s a gift that is uniquely you and your family, and will serve as a constant reminder of great moments together. You can get a shadowbox for under $20 and 4x6 prints for as low as $.19 at CVS.

For Cousins/Aunts/Uncles: If your family is anything like mine, you probably have a lot of shared recipes that get passed around through-out your extended family. Grandparents will pass on their recipes to aunts and uncles and share them with their children, but oftentimes, there isn’t one shared book that contains all of the family recipes. You can collect all of those recipes and make a family cookbook to give to members of your family. A great low-budget option is to buy some discounted scrapbook paper (T.J. Maxx often sells a book of scrapbook paper for under $10) and write down recipes with a Sharpie on the paper. Punch a hole in the top left-hand side of the paper and run a piece of ribbon through it to attach all of the pages. If you want to spend a bit more money, you can add stickers or photos to run alongside the recipes.

For Siblings: One of the most underrated gifts is the gift of time, and I think that is something that can be most appreciated by your siblings. Instead of buying a sweater or a gift card for your brothers and sisters, consider taking them out to do something and spend time together. This may sound a bit selfish, but if both you and your siblings enjoy going to a baseball game together – get a ticket for you and your siblings. Obviously getting Red Sox tickets can be really expensive, but consider attending a minor league game. Spend the day going into Boston and checking out a museum/the aquarium. Sometimes the museums have days when admission is cheaper, so check out their websites and see if anything is going on. Usually on Wednesday nights, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston allows people entry for free with the option of a donation. Go to the Museum of Fine Arts together and then grab dinner afterwards. Oftentimes we all lose sight of what matters most – spending time with our friends and family – so a gift where you can give time and attention to those you love can be a good option.

For Friends: It can be difficult not only to buy gifts for all of your friends, but to afford buying gifts for all of your friends. However, sometimes when you start buying gifts for all of your friends – even if it is something small – it can start to add up. A good alternative to buying tons of gifts for everyone (especially when you’d rather just buy one quality gift) is to participate in a holiday gift-giving game, such as Secret Santa or a Yankee Swap. With Secret Santa, you and your group of friends will figure out who is participating, and then out of the group, everyone is secretly assigned one person to buy a gift for – this way, you can buy a quality gift for one person and have fun trying to figure out who is buying for whom. With a Yankee Swap, everyone participating buys one gift and then depending on the number of people, you swap. For example, if there are eight participants, one person goes first, picks a gift, and opens it. The second person does the same thing but then has the option to swap their gift with the first person’s gift. This continues until the final person opens the gift and decides whether or not to swap. The first person who opened a gift, then gets the option of swapping with everyone – and generally, chaos and laughter ensues. Both Secret Santa and Yankee Swaps are great alternatives to buying every single one of your friends gifts AND it’s a good excuse to throw a Christmas party. Just make sure to set a monetary limit for whichever gift swap you choose so that one person doesn’t show up giving out an iPad and someone else a pack of gum.

For Students, Gift Ideas on a Budget

Continued from Page 1

and happiness one simple gift card could give to a young teenager or child. To purchase an ornament, you can take one of the paper ornaments from the tree in the Sakowich Center Lounge and bring it to the Campus Ministry Office to make your donation. Donations will be accepted until Wednesday, Dec. 14. Contact Costantini for more information at Costantini@merrimack.edu or ext. 5309.

Questions on the Quad

What do you want for Christmas?

Mike Romanella
-Jake Aldredge ’13

Longboard
-Kelcy Frencher ’14

iPad
-Brandon Regman ’15

Easy Bake Oven
-Josephine Clancy ’13

Naughty
-Willy Nickelson ’13

Nice
-Jenna Reilly ’13

Naughty
-Brianna Trabucco ’13

Nice
-Corey Lunney ’13

Continued from Page 1
Have a Digital Holiday: Giving Electronics

Robert Perochich ’12
Staff Writer

For the Techie
• Wireless reading device. (Kindle, Nook, etc.)
These devices go online now too so they are great for the techie on the go.
• Smartphone. The new Samsung galaxy is giving the iPhone a run for its holiday money.
• SmartTouch gloves. These gloves allow you to keep your hands warm and still use a touch screen.
• Helicopter alarm clock. For the lazy, the alarm won’t stop until the copter is returned.

For the Gamer
• Skyrim is getting praised on every major gaming site. It’s available for PC, Ps3, and Xbox360.
• Skyward Sword is the newest Zelda game for the Nintendo Wii. Anyone who loves Zelda will want this.
• Modern Warfare 3 is the newest edition to the Call of Duty franchise.
• Gift card. You can get gift cards for the Playstation Network, Xbox Live, and Steam on their respective websites or in certain game stores.

For the Media Buff
• Noise Cancelling Headphones. No one wants to be distracted while watching his or her favorite show/movie.
• MP3 player. If they don’t have one they probably want one, and if they have one there is probably a better one out by now.
• Digital Video Recorder. You can start making your own movies with one of these.
• Portable mini-projector. With one of these you can watch shows or movies when there is no TV available.

For the Hipster
• USB Tech Turntable. This turntable allows you to play your records and connect to a computer to digitize them.
• Portable Speakers. This way wherever they go everyone will have to listen to their indie music.
• Indie Film Sets. You can find these on specialty websites. If you haven’t heard of them they’ll probably like them.
• VHS to DVD converter. For those that want to immortalize their old recordings of Pete and Pete with commercials.

Student Tips for Finals, Move-Out

The Beacon Staff

In the midst of finals and on the verge of moving out of the dorms for the Christmas break, here are some tips to keep in mind:

Studying
• Deactivate Facebook: A short-term solution with long-term benefits. Hours of unproductive time on Facebook and associated games (Poker, Words With Friends, and all of the games ending in “vile”). Maybe you might not be able to get that “study” question answered quickly, but you still have your phone (with Words With Friends). Because that question often turns into a conversation, which will lead to creeping which often ends a half hour later with you sitting there asking yourself “what just happened?”.

• Utilize study groups: Talking out loud and teaching material goes a long way towards study-retention. Cranking out a paper is one thing, but sitting at a desk rereading the same page for 15, 20, or more minutes gets you nowhere.

• Utilize all resources: Professors are your best resource, since they are the ones choosing the material you need to know.

Moving Out
• Students involved in an end of the semester room change/move out need to be in contact with their resident director/area coordinator.
• Anyone involved in a room change needs to move all of their belongings to their new assignment before leaving on or before Dec. 16.
• Students who have an unfilled vacancy need to make sure furniture is reset and ready for a new student to be assigned over the break.
• Residence halls close for semester break at 7 p.m., Dec. 16. Requests for break housing (students taking winter session courses, etc.) are due by Friday, Dec. 9. Before you leave for break, don’t forget to:
  — close and lock all windows
  — lower your shades
  — shut off all lights
  — throw away any and all trash in your trash room/dumper
  — unplug all appliances and computer equipment; apartment residents should NOT unplug the full-size refrigerator in the kitchen
  — close and lock your door.
  Don’t forget your key!
• If you are moving, graduating, studying abroad or transferring, you need to schedule a time with your room condition form and report any damage. You must remove all of your personal belongings at this time.
• If you are moving from one room to another or another space on campus, your move must be completed by the time you leave for break.

Finals Week Rules
• 24-hour quiet hours begin on Dec. 9 at 5 p.m.
• No registered events or gatherings are permitted during this period.
• Quiet hours end on Dec. 16 at 7 p.m.
• Conduct violations will result in the immediate removal for housing for finals.
• Campus will be wet for those of age and in residence areas where permitted, but quiet hour room and guest policies will be strictly enforced.
• Augie’s Pub will be open Friday and Saturday (Dec. 9 and 10).
• During finals week the only guests/visitors permitted in rooms are other Merrimack students. Individuals who are not Merrimack students are prohibited.

Prayer Before Exams

Loving God, I know You are busy, but I would like to talk with You about a few things. I also am busy here at Merrimack this week with exams. I know that You are with me always and will be with me throughout this week.

I know that You will love me whether I succeed or fail, but I sure would like to do well.

Help me to be anxious enough to give my best effort in preparation for the exams, but calm enough to concentrate on what is most important.

May these exams and the effort I put into preparing for them help me to do my best academically.

But even more importantly, may I learn this week and every week how to become the person You have created me to be, and willing to use my Merrimack education for my good and the good of others.

Thanks for listening, Lord.

Merrimack College Campus Ministry
The search for Merrimack’s chief academic officer goes on as Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts and Provost Search Committee Chair Kerry Johnson announced in a statement that the search for a provost/provost candidate of academic affairs was suspended and will begin again next year.

After a national search, and multiple interviews of the search committee, which consisted of faculty from all schools as well as two vice presidents, narrowed their search to four finalists. The four finalists were Marc Manganaro, Matthew Polusny, Patrick Quinn, and Frederick Sweitzer. All four candidates toured campus, met with students and many college officials and committees during their visits.

Throughout the interview process over the past few weeks, it has become clear that as the college has changed, so has the role of the provost/VP/AAUP and the expectations were that as the candidates were, they are a reflection of what the college was looking for in the past. Now, in a different place, the college deserves a different type of leader,” Johnson said in a statement to the Merrimack community.

Johnson’s statement said that the board decided unanimously to suspend the search. While visiting campus the four candidates all presented themselves at a community forum, which was open to the public. Members and leaders of the Merrimack chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) asked all four candidates to explain their position on merit pay, and tenure. The Merrimack AAUP Chapter is not a collective bargaining chapter, but a voice of the faculty involved in it.

AAUP leaders asked each candidate the average salaries of each professor rank, assistant, associate and full, at their institution. The AAUP takes serious the idea of tenured positions and seemed to object merit pay in general.

“Acaemia is the reason this institution is here, and Merrimack needs to select the most qualified person for the job and even if it requires suspending the search altogether,” said Alisha Reppucci, SGAA president.

Merrimack Dining Committee by Domenica Fuller

The Merrimack Dining Committee is comprised of Domenica Fuller, Jessica Enaure, Erin Shellene and Jennie Votta. We meet biweekly with Jay Degiola from Sodexo to discuss how to make Sparky’s Place, the Den and Zest more appealing to students in terms of the food we serve as well as the hours of operation.

Our main goal is to reach out to students at events such as the taste testing in Augie’s Pub as well as SGA. We have been working on improving Augie’s Pub in terms of decor, attendance, activities, and the selection of drinks. Their present goals are: to incorporate a micro-brewery into the restaurant, to keep the cost being built into tuition, to plan more off-campus trips for students, and to bring a soft serve ice cream machine to campus.

Working hand-in-hand with the Campus Life Committee is the Transportation Committee. Here, members are endeavoring to improve the way students on campus can travel the areas surrounding Merrimack.

Next semester, they are trying to get a bus stop placed by Austin Hall, so that students have access to cheap and reliable transportation to travel to the Den, Zest, the shop, and other locations around campus. Another possibility is to strike a deal with a taxi service to take the Mack Card, enabling students to a more on-demand mode of travel.

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Reports from SGA’s Committees

Campus Life Committee by Anthony Bruno

Tony Bruno is a sophomore on the Student Government Association. Tony works at the library and is Chair of both the Campus Life and Transportation Committees.

The Campus Life Committee seeks to enhance the students’ experience at Merrimack in as many ways as possible.

Thus far, they have addressed the wireless connectivity problems on campus, planned a ski trip for next semester, and been working to improve Augie’s Pub in terms of decor, attendance, activities, and the selection of drinks.

The present goals are: to incorporate a micro-brewery into the restaurant, to keep the cost being built into tuition, to plan more off-campus trips for students, and to bring a soft serve ice cream machine to campus.

Campus Infrastructure Committee by Maria Russo

The Campus Infrastructure Committee consists of committee chair Maria Russo and SGA members Heather Lopes and Austin Capone. This committee is responsible for keeping up with the exterior of the college and making sure that students’ requests dealing with the grounds of the college are met.

We deal directly with the physical plant staff to help fulfill all student requests. Our successes this semester have been some of the puddle problems by paving over walkways.

We are currently in the process of making up plans to put parking lot signs up in lot 8a, 8b, and 8c and making sure that the Augie’s Pub radio is installed and the temperature of the pub is correct.

Our goals for next semester include finishing the parking lot signs by putting up a sign for the Route 114 entrance, and improving next years holiday decorations.

Public Relations Committee by Ashley Costa

My name is Ashley Costa and I am currently the Public Relations Committee chair member. Being part of the Public Relations Committee for the past year and a half, I have seen SGA grow as an organization through the work that each individual has put into making SGA something helpful for students on campus.

Last year the establishment of the SGA logo, which painfully took months to finally get it out there, was a huge success and now I feel like I see it every where on our flyers and fresh new sweaters that the members wear.

Recently we have had two new members to our PR team, and I find that these two are a great addition to our Public Relations Committee. The advertisements that we have done a lot so far for the semester were for the first Mack Meeting of this school year, and without the help from my committee and other members of SGA, it wouldn’t have been as great as it was.

I’m seriously going to miss my committee and SGA as a whole as I pack my bags and leave for Spain for a whole semester.

I wish the Public Relations Committee much luck and I know they will be in good hands as Alex Finney takes the chair member as she gets back from abroad.

We have much confidence that the Public Relations Committee will continue to do great things for the rest of the school year.

Finance Committee by Jeffrey Hanshaw

The Finance Committee has had an active semester thus far. In mid-October, the first round of supplemental budgets was conducted.

A total of $20,592 was allocated to 27 different active clubs and organizations. Additionally, the Finance Committee reviewed the Club and Organization Request Form, which is a packet that details everything that clubs and organizations need to know about their SGA-allocated finances.

Numerous points in this manual were cited for re-evaluation and revision in the near future.

Club Committee by Jessica Molignano

The Club Committee has seen many successes this semester. There has been a lot of interest in new clubs this fall, as well as reactivating clubs which have become dormant in the past couple years. We have not seen this much activity for new clubs in a long time!

Live2Give, which is most notable for their event: Up Til Dawn Dance and Relay For Life, was approved early in the fall season, along with World Peers, a club that helps to form bonds between Merrimack students and international students.

We approved the reactivation of the Invest Club mid-semester and they are already helping to prepare finance majors for their future.

In addition, we currently have four clubs waiting to make their presentations in front of Student Government Association in order to receive approval for the spring semester.

Although we have had a great semester, we do have goals for the spring. The Club Committee aims to develop better relationships with club presidents and e-boards by meeting with them on a regular basis.

Additionally, as a committee, we will be working to educate the Merrimack community about how to form a club on campus, along with the requirements a club must uphold to stay active.

While we have had many different groups preparing to become clubs, we’ve found that many students at Merrimack do not understand the process to form and/or stay a club on campus. We will be working on providing this information in the spring.
**Students Feel Lack of Off-Campus Transport**

**Kristina Williamson ’14 Staff Writer**

“Merrimack College; only 25 minutes from Boston!” is the slogan you’ll hear about, and have not yet received. For the students who are less fortunate and don’t have their own cars at school, a type of transportation to off-campus stores would be ideal.

“If Merrimack promotes being so close to Boston, then why wouldn’t they make sure they provided a guaranteed way to get there and back?” asked sophomore Shelby LaBarge.

That said, yet another positive attraction to have, this has been one of the most controversial topics to the students around campus; transportation.

This is something that students at Merrimack have been waiting to hear about, and have not yet received. For the students who are less fortunate and don’t have their own cars at school, a type of transportation to off-campus stores would be ideal.

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Theology With Tim
The Reason for the Season

Timothy Iannocone ‘12 Columnist

Every year my Christmas article is a little corny, if you will. The title of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness. You have heard countless of times of this article alone portrays a sense of sappiness.

Although these sayings sound like a religious fanatic’s way of putting a ‘cloud’ over Christmas, they are in fact not far from inaccurate. You have heard countless of times that the true meaning of Christmas has been forgotten. What has been seen for centuries as a devout Christian holiday filled with relaxation around family and friends is now looked upon as a hectic holiday filled with stress. The stress, which is due to the commercialization of Christmas, was said to have happened in World War II when people started to buy earlier in the season to get gifts to troops, but the early shopping season didn’t end with the war.

I am not stating at all that shopping along with the glamorous Christmas parties during the season is wrong, for I myself take part in these festivities. What is being said through this article is to have fun during this season, but to never forget why we are having fun or why Christmas is what it is.

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI offers many words of wisdom during the Christmas season. In particular, the Holy Father says, “Silence is so lacking in this which is often too noisy, which is not favorable to recollection and listening to the voice of God.” Benedict XVI continues by saying that, “In this time of preparation for Christmas, let us cultivate interior recollection so as to receive and keep Jesus in our lives.” This could not have been proclaimed better than by the Vicar of Christ himself. Noise, which is a major distraction during the Christmas season and the whole year for that matter, removes God from our daily lives and that interior motivation to remember Christ during the Christmas season. The incarnation of Christ which we celebrate on Christmas day, illustrates the creation of man at its pinnacle moment. God’s gift to us, which is Jesus Christ, shows that God is love forever and always. These words are not to be taken lightly. God’s gift of His only Son can never be matched by us. Instead, the gifts which can be reciprocated are those of silence and remembrance so that we may listen to the “voice of God” this Christmas season and remember that Christ truly is the reason for the season.

Police Log

Nov. 28 6:07 p.m. MEDICAL AID
Police Services officers responded to Deegan East after receiving a call about a student who had passed out after sustaining injuries to her face and mouth. The student was transported by ambulance to Lawrence General Hospital for further medical treatment.

Nov. 30 1:14 a.m. MEDICAL AID
Police Services officer responded to Deegan East to conduct a medical evaluation on a female resident. After assessing the individual, officers arranged for the North Andover Fire Department to transport the student to Lawrence General Hospital for further medical treatment.

Nov. 30 12:25 p.m. SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY
A Deegan West front desk attendant called Police Services to report two students engaging in suspicious activity in the quad area of St. Clare’s Center and confiscated alcohol and a class D substance from three individuals identified as:

Joseph M. Hayes, North Reading, Mass.
Bo G. Yianacopolus, Wakefield, Mass.

Dec. 2 7:40 p.m. ARRESTS
After conducting a motor vehicle stop on Cullen Avenue, two males were placed under arrest for resisting arrest, disorderly conduct, minor in possession of alcohol, possession of a class E substance and purchasing alcohol for a person under the age of 21. The two placed under arrest were identified as:

Bo G. Yianacopolus, Wakefield, Mass.

Dec. 2 9:36 p.m. MOTOR VEHICLE STOP
Police Services officer conducted a motor vehicle stop in front of Monican Center and confiscated alcohol and a class D substance from three individuals inside the vehicle, one resident and two non-students. After identifying the passengers of the car as non-students, they were issues Notices of Trespass and left the college property.

DEC. 3 1:34 a.m. MEDICAL AID
Police Services officers responded to Deegan West for an alcohol assessment of a resident. After assessing the individual, officers had the resident transported to Lawrence General Hospital by the North Andover Fire Department for further medical treatment.

Dec. 3 1:17 a.m. SUSPICIOUS ODOR
Police Services officers responded to O’Brien Hall for a suspicious odor on the third floor of the building. After assessing the situation and speaking with multiple residents in the third floor room, narcotic paraphernalia was confiscated. The incident was documented and will be sent to Residence Life for further action.

Dec. 3 12:05 p.m. LARCENY
A resident filed a report at Police Services stating that her laptop computer was allegedly stolen from her dorm room the previous night. A Police Services officer documented the incident and the case remains open at Police Services at this time.

Hockey for Haiti

On December 7, 2011 at the Merrimack vs. Vermont Hockey East matchup “Hockey for Haiti” was spreading awareness throughout Lawler Arena. The organization, Project Medishare for Haiti is a medical non-profit organization that was co-founded by Merrimack Alumnus Dr. Art Fournier and works together with the people of Haiti to provide rural communities in Haiti with quality healthcare and development services.

Merrimack’s partnership with Project Medishare currently focuses on one Civil Engineering and one Athletic Training goal. The goals are to provide the town of Cassie with clean water and provide health care for those who suffer from work related injuries.

For more information or if you’d like to donate visit www.merrimack.edu/donate-lservise or send a check to A8, 315 Turnpike Street, North Andover, MA 01845, with Haiti in the memo.

Alan Pastymak Jr. ‘13
**MC Hires Swimming Coach, Begins Recruiting Team for 2012**

Kayla Morong '12  
Sports Editor

Along with the upcoming athletic renovations to the new varsity sport programs, the Athletic Department announced the addition of men’s and women’s swimming to the NE-10 conference play for the 2012-2013 season.

Mike Spring, former assistant coach at Harvard University for four years, was hired for the new head coach position. Growing up in Syracuse, N.Y., where he lived most of his life, Spring said he was brought up around swimming. His father was an influential figure, teaching him the fundamentals of the sport. After high school, Spring attended The University of Buffalo, where he swam for the team and majored in communication studies. Currently, Spring lives in North Andover and owns Crimson Aquatics, which is a club for more than 200 swimmers. He teaches children between the ages 6 and 18 how to become talented swimmers.

“I enjoy coaching little kids and watching the energy they have for the sport,” he said.

With the addition of men’s and women’s track, women’s crew and women’s golf to the varsity athletic program, Athletic Director Glenn Hofmann is looking forward to the transition of the swimming program.

“We hope to see the program develop over the next two or three years, as it will take time to develop a full roster. Under Coach Spring, we expect to have a recruit talented student-athletes who are also devoted to their studies, who will become leaders of the first-ever swimming class at Merrimack,” he said.

“We did a lot of research regarding potential sports to add. In the case of swimming it was a sport that wouldn’t require us to build a new venue for practice or completion since we will use the YMCA pool and locker rooms,” said Hofmann.

“Swimming also offers a recruit that typically comes from a very academic-based environment and offers us the ability to increase our geographical reach. It was also important that our current conference offers the sport,” he explained.

In Spring’s first year as head coach, he has a lot to look forward to. Though it is late for recruitment for the 2012-2013 team, Spring still looks forward to finding swimmers whether they are students currently attending Merrimack or students still competing at the high school level.

“Junior Nationals is next week. I look forward to getting things together to promote the program,” said an enthusiastic Spring.

Practice will begin in fall 2012 at the YMCA in Andover. Spring is very excited for his future team and to begin competing in the NE-10 conference. With over 20 years of coaching experience and 30 years being surrounded by the sport of swimming, he will only benefit the new program through his knowledge and passion.

“I always get an enjoyment out of coaching. For me it is just fun,” said Spring.

Hofmann added: “Coach Spring understands the importance of providing a positive experience for student-athletes and his philosophies are very similar to those of our department. He brings over 30 years of experience to Merrimack, at the Division I, II, III and club levels. He developed and still oversees a club program with hundreds of swimmers and over 20 coaches, so he knows what it takes to start a program.”

Spring’s first step is to find students who are interested in the program, he said.

“I am ready to jump right in,” he said. “This is a new experience for the school and me. It is important that we tread lightly and make sure we are doing it all right. I want the first-years to feel a part of and stay with the team. They will be the founding fathers.”

**Lady Warriors Keep Eyes on the Hoop**

Alan Fastynak Jr. ‘13  
Staff Writer

After the tough start to the season, the Women’s Basketball team is still focused and not ready to quit. They start the season with a 2-6 record, but the Lady Warriors have re- mained focused on their team goals and are beginning to see the positive results of their determination.

They had a big conference win, beating UMass Lowell and improving their record to 2-5 overall and 1-4 in conference play. The win will put the team right back on track and build confidence for the team the remainder of the season.

One of the key players this season has been, Kelly Schatzlein, a junior forward from Tolland, Conn. She is averaging 16 points and 11 rebounds per game for the Warriors.

Schatzlein said, “Right now we just need to stay positive, and take what has happened so far in this season and let it drive us to be determined to win.”

Of playing under new Head Coach Monique LeBlanc, Schatzlein said, “It’s great. She is a very positive coach.”

Schatzlein is one of the team leaders in rebounds, blocks and free throw percentage at the same time presses each and every one of us on a daily basis to get better. She knows what it takes to be successful and is not going to accept anything less.” She also talked about how the two assistant, Julian Assibey and Blake DuDonis, are the same way and form a great coaching staff.

After going 2-6 to start the season, Schatzlein said, “Our ultimate team goal is the same goal we had since the start of the season, which is to win the NE-10 and make it to the NCAA’s. We have had a tough start, but the basketball season is a long season and we are ready and determined to turn it around and get on track to reach our goals. We also have a team goal to not lose to the same team twice, so since we have gotten off to a tough start, we are even more determined now to beat the teams who we have lost to thus far in the season”.

The new coaching staff, lead by LeBlanc is leading the squad and sticking to their goals. This young Merrimack women’s basketball team is looking to make a run to the top of the conference. Come and support the girls on their way to the top at the next home game after Christmas break on Jan. 3 against Adelphi University.

**Men’s Basketball Struggling**

Jack Messinger ‘12  
Staff Writer

The Merrimack men’s basketball team has had a rollercoaster start to the season.

They began the year strong with three straight wins, and since then the Warriors have gone 2-4, making their record 5-4 (2-3).

Merrimack’s basketball team were picked to finish seventh this season in the Northeast-10, and as it stands the Warriors sit at 12th.

The basketball team has had individual success this year. Senior guards, Wayne Mack and Roland Davis, both eclipsed the 1,000-point mark for their Merrimack careers. Since 1957, Mack and Davis are only the 31st and 32nd players ever to score over 1,000 points in a Merrimack career.

Merrimack’s three most prominent players are Mack, Davis and Aaron Strothers. Merrimack’s big three averages 66 percent of Merrimack’s points, meaning that if one of them underperforms the Warriors struggle.

Another key player for the Warriors is freshmen center Mike Clifford. Clifford, 6 feet 7 and 230 pounds, provides Merrimack with a big presence in the middle.

Clifford is all over the stat sheet being one of the team leaders in rebounds, blocks and steals. He has been a big addition to the Warriors this season.

Though Merrimack has struggled in their last game they have remained competitive. Merrimack has beaten first place team Franklin Pierce, lost to third place Stonehill in overtime and lost to preseason favorite UMass-Lowell by 2 points without Clifford.

As the Warriors look to improve their record key games will come against Adelphi (Jan. 3), Bentley (Jan. 31), Stonehill (Feb. 4), and UMass-Lowell (Feb. 11).
**Warriors Trap Catamounts**

Matthew LaMalfa '12
Associate Sports Editor

After last Saturday’s 6-1 loss to Providence at Lawler Arena, hockey head coach Mark Dennehy looked for a silver lining, saying: “I thought we came out pretty strong and had some chances in the first period. We don’t have to wait another week. We get to play again Wednesday.”

That game would be against the struggling Vermont Catamounts in the final game of the season series that Merrimack led 2-0. With senior Elliott Sheen, junior Kyle Bigos and freshman Dan Kolomats all out with injuries, the Warriors were going to need a gutsy effort to claim a victory. They got that effort and got back on track, downing the visiting Catamounts 5-2 Wednesday night at Lawler Arena.

Senior Jeff Velleca got Merrimack on the board midway through the first when he beat a Vermont defender and knocked the puck past goaltender Rob Madore for a short-handed tally. Both teams stayed off the board until Velleca scored again midway through the second. The senior entered the zone and took a snapshot from the half-wall that squeaked through Madore’s pads.

After last Saturday’s Kyle Reynolds converted on a five-on-three power play freshman Justin Mansfield knocked Merrimack’s third goal. Velleca again factored in the tally, notching the assist on Mansfield’s third of the year. Vermont put the Warriors on defense midway through the third, scoring what appeared to be two goals in 10 seconds. Luckily for Merrimack, the second was disallowed and the score remained 3-2.

This served as a wake-up call of sorts for the Warriors, who climbed down from their getting goals from Connor Toomey and a second from Mansfield to put that game away. Goaltender Joe Cannata stood tall against the Catamounts late charge, finishing the game with 32 saves.

“We played well enough to win tonight” said Dennehy after the game. “That being said we have a lot of things to work on.”

Merrimack dropped to No 5 in the polls this week after a pair of losses to Providence College last weekend. The Warriors dropped their first game of the year in overtime last Friday at Providence, and fell again at home on Saturday night 6-1.

The Warriors look to continue their new win streak when they travel to Hamilton, N.Y., this weekend to take on Colgate University. They round out the pre-Christmas schedule here at Lawler Arena on Dec. 17 against Union College. After that game, fans are invited to skate with Santa and the Warrior players.

How Do Hockey Rankings Work?

Matthew LaMalfa '12
Associate Sports Editor

Before last weekend’s losses to Providence dropped them to fifth, Merrimack hockey was ranked first in both the USCHO.com and USA Today/USA Hockey national polls. It’s a phrase I never thought I’d ever write when I stepped onto campus almost four years ago. Through the tireless efforts of the president’s office, the entire Athletic Department, and the hockey staff, something that was once considered unrealistic has been realized.

Analysis: What do these rankings really mean?

To start, you need to look with greater depth at the groups producing the rankings. The USCHO poll, short for United States College Hockey Organization, is largely recognized as the most visible poll in college hockey. Its web site explains, “There are 50 voting members to the poll, comprised of coaches, scouts and media members. Each conference is represented in the pool of voters. The names of the voting members are kept confidential out of respect for the privacy of the voters.”

The USA Today/USA Hockey poll, the other major ranking system, offers this explanation for how its poll is done: “conducted each week in conjunction with the American Hockey Coaches Association. The poll includes input from coaches and journalists representing each of the five NCAA Division I hockey conferences, as well as composite votes from officers of the ACHA and USA Hockey Magazine, the most widely distributed hockey magazine in the world.”

So be blunt, these polls statistically don’t mean much of anything. They are the opinions of coaches and media members, and while being ranked Nov. 1 in either is a tremendous honor, it isn’t going to punch your ticket to the title game. Head Coach Mark Dennehy recognized this last week, saying: “We’re happy to be recognized on a national level. It’s a tribute to the coaching staff, administration and players who have worked tirelessly to turn the program around in such a short period of time. But at the same time, it is important for us to recognize the difference between recognition and accomplishment.”

To see an example of this you need to look no further than last year’s Boston University Terriers. At the Christmas break last year, BU was the No. 1 team in the land, according to the USCHO voters. Granted, as a perennial power, it took less of an effort by the Terriers to get there, but it was impressive nonetheless. The trouble for them was the season didn’t end at the end of December. They fell hard in the second half of the season, eventually being upset by Northeastern in the Hockey East quarterfinals and missing the NCAA Tournament all together.

Much like the BCS in college football, the rating system that really decides your fate in college hockey is the PairWise rankings. PairWise is a computer-generated system that takes into account various stats used by the NCAA selection committee at the end of the season. Besides just record, it looks at the opponents that you’ve beaten and lost to. It even out the playing field since some teams play stronger or weaker than average schedules through no fault of their own.

This early in the season, PairWise is more of a fun game than anything else, since teams have not played enough games to get a complete picture. Merrimack sat third in this ranking system as of Monday afternoon. While it’s nice to see Merrimack’s name near the top the national polls, PairWise is what you want to be watching as the season grinds on.

Theoretically, the top 16 teams in the PairWise will make the NCAA Tournament at season’s end, so if the season ended today, the Warriors would be the third of four No. 1 seeds in the tournament. Again, that means little to nothing on Dec. 9, but it is important to put yourself in good position early on in the season.

So as the hockey season continues on and Merrimack fights to stay near the top of the college hockey world, fans will watch the rankings. My hope is now you can do that in a more informed manner.