

KHS Class of 2008

On Friday night, the Keene High School Class of 2008 will graduate. As has been our custom for many years, the faculty has selected a group of seniors whom it feels best represents the diversity of this class. What follows is a profile of those students, which we hope will give you a feel for the Class of 2008.

Max Ken Barrett-Lhu – Special Education student

Hymoi Shena Carty – Vocalist

James Andrew Hadden – Cheshire Career Center student

Kelsey Alana Huckins – Athlete

Gretchen Edyth Schillemat – Valedictorian



Max Barrett-Lhu has been accepted at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, NY, where he plans to study engineering.

Max Ken Barrett-Lhu

To meet Max Barrett-Lhu is to meet a strapping young man who has put all of the pieces together. There were times in elementary school and middle school when it didn't look like that would ever happen. Yet, starting with a proper diagnosis of his communication disorder, Asperger's syndrome, Max has received the services from special education professionals and classroom teachers that have helped him navigate and thrive in school. As a result of his incredible success at Keene High School, Max was selected as the outstanding special education student of his graduating class. This incredibly bright young

man will study engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York next year. His story is one of intelligence, perseverance, adaptation and ultimately, success.

Max was raised in Keene by his mother Anne Barrett, a longtime pharmacist at The Apothecary, and his stepfather Kevin Roentsch, now retired. His father, Leo Buk Lhu, lives in Brookline, Massachusetts and is an entrepreneur. Max's half-brother, Lexan, is a grad student at Penn State. Max attended Fuller School, Keene Middle School and, for the past four years, KHS. "Asperger's syndrome is a (See Barrett-Lhu/Page 3)

Gretchen Edyth Schillemat

Eighteen-hour days are the norm for this highly accomplished young woman with a GPA (grade point average) of 4.46, who is the valedictorian of her class. She rises at 4:45 a.m. on school days, drives, with her younger brother, Peder, from their family home in Nelson to church on Summit Avenue in Keene for bible study from 6 – 6:50 a.m., then she's on to Keene High for a full day of school. If it's fall, she has either practice or a varsity volleyball game after school before she can head home to study. During the winter and spring she usually gets home and starts studying by three to three-thirty and aims for lights out at 11 p.m. Some nights she's up past midnight, but she doesn't like to make that a regular occurrence.

Gretchen parents are Katharine and Duane Schillemat of Nelson. Her mother is the office manager at MOCO Arts in Keene and her father is a certified pump installer for Cushing and Sons Well Drilling in Keene. She has four older siblings – Kirstin, 24, KHS class of 2002, a graduate of Clarkson University, who has just returned from a year-and-a-half mission trip in Spain; twins, Andrea and Poul, 22, KHS class of 2003. Andrea graduated from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah where she now teaches and Poul, is a student at Utah Valley State College. Johanna, 20, graduated from KHS in 2006 and is a junior at Plymouth University in Plymouth, NH. Gretchen's brother Peder, 16, is a sophomore at KHS and her youngest brother, Geoffrey, 13, is just finishing 7th grade at Keene Middle School. Gretchen attended the Nelson School K through 5th grade, KMS and, for the past four years, KHS.

Math and science are her favorite subjects and that is clearly reflected in the courses she's taken this year – Advanced Placement (AP) Calculus, AP Physics, AP Psychology, Literature and Composition Honors, Latin I, and Civil Law. She will attend Brigham Young University



Valedictorian Gretchen Schillemat heads to Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah to study mathematics.

(BYU) in Provo, Utah where she plans to major in mathematics and hopes to go on in the same subject for graduate school at BYU.

At KHS, Gretchen is secretary of student council, vice president of senior class council, a member of

the young Rotarian Interact club and the National Honor Society, a varsity volleyball player, and a member of the competitive math team. Somehow she finds time to work 15 to 20 hours a week at Hannafords Supermarket.

Asked if she ever appears sleepy in class, her AP Calculus teacher, Rob Tiebout, said no, that she's always on top of her game. "She's very bright, very well organized, communicates well and is a meticulous worker," he said. Most students who take Tiebout's calculus class take the A/B AP exam, but Gretchen decided to take the more difficult B/C exam. In order to prepare she had to study extra material. "If she does well," Tiebout said, "She can earn college credit for a calculus II course." Quite an achievement Tiebout notes. Fellow math teacher Barbara Ware, who had Gretchen for pre-calculus honors said, "She's an A+ student (See Schillemat/Page 2)

Top Ten

Valedictorian

Gretchen Edyth Schillemat

Salutatorian

Kayla Maria O'Meara

Carlo Anders LaScala

Christopher Alan LaRue

Leah Tamlin Arnold

Hymoi Shena Carty

Heather Ann-Marie Sykes

Natalie Anne Ryder

Bess Antonia Seidler

John Patrick Bower

Schillemat

(Continued from Page 1)

all the way. Not that the courses are super easy, it's just that she works so hard. Her notebooks are a model." Ware added that Gretchen goes above and beyond on every project she's assigned.

David Lybarger who has had Gretchen in AP Physics this year notes, "Many students are highly gifted but don't develop their gifts the way Gretchen does. She maximizes them to the fullest." Lybarger is also struck by how modest and unassuming Gretchen is. "She doesn't think she is better than anyone else," he said, noting that she demonstrates academic strength across the board. "She's a good problem solver, very strong in mathematics. When I assign a reading, most of my students will scan the text, but not Gretchen. She will be diligent in reading and digesting the material," he said.

Amy Chapman who teaches AP Psychology commented that Gretchen is the kind of woman she hopes her own daughter will become one day. "She cares about learning for the sake of learning," Chapman noted. "She's also very compassionate, very down to earth, very grounded, and very centered spiritually, but not in a pushy way. She's not trying to persuade anyone about how they should live their life," she added.

Gretchen is a Mormon. She and her family attend the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Her religion is important to her and led her to decide on BYU over other attractive alternatives including Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in Troy, New York. She received the RPI medal last year which recognizes the "superlative academic achievement of young men and women, and supports and motivates students towards careers in science, engineering and technology." Had she chosen to attend RPI, she would have received a \$15,000 a year merit scholarship.

Bible study is an important part of Gretchen's life. This year her morning studies have focused on the Old Testament. In past years she has studied the New Testament, the Book of Mormon Scriptures, and Mormon Church history. "Gretchen has an innate ability to stay focused and calm," said Chapman, "I think she is that way because she comes from a very (Continued in Column 2)

Kelsey Alana Huckins

It's not often that a Keene High School graduate gets a full athletic scholarship to a Division I school, but, this year, Kelsey Huckins, has accepted that extraordinary package from Boston College where she will compete in the track and field events of the discus, shot put and hammer throw. She's been an athletic standout at Keene High, shattering school, meet and state records as she moves up in the world of elite athletes. Last year, she was named the Gatorade NH track and field female athlete of the year. She competes on the junior Olympic level and placed 10th in the national meet in the discus her junior year. She has traveled to Philadelphia to compete in the Penn Relays as well as to North Carolina and Ohio to compete in junior national meets. It's no wonder she was selected as the athlete of her class. Many elite athletes are so focused on their sport that they don't really put much thought into what's next. That's not the case with Kelsey. She wants to be a nurse and that goal led her to choose BC because it has an excellent program. She plans to complete a four-year RN (registered nurse) degree and stay on two more years to become a nurse practitioner in the field of women's health.

Kelsey is the daughter of Darcy Wilson and Chip Huckins of Westmoreland. Her mother is a social worker and her father works for Masiello Employment in technical placement management. She has two sisters. Kaitlyn, 19, who graduated from KHS in '06 and lives in Westmoreland, and a younger sister, Kristen, 16 who is just completing her sophomore year. Kelsey grew up in Westmoreland, attending the Westmoreland School

Schillemat

(Continued from Column 1)

supportive family and draws strength from her faith." Chapman notes too that Gretchen inspires other people with whom she comes in contact. "She expects and gets the best in people. You find yourself aspiring to be better because that's the kind of example she sets for herself," Chapman added, "She'll be successful in whatever she chooses to do. She's brainy and high achieving, yet compassionate. She doesn't have the arrogance that can go along with those characteristics," she said. "She's a wonderful person."

from kindergarten through 8th grade. She has deep roots in Westmoreland where her grandparents, Bruce and Joanne Smith, owned and operated High Hopes Orchard for many years. She's comfortable working on the farm. Hard work comes naturally to this focused young woman.

It's no surprise Kelsey competes in the discus. Both her parents were recruited field athletes at Boston University – her father for the shot-put and her mother for the discus. Kelsey didn't pick up a discus, however, until she came to KHS. "My parents didn't put any pressure on me that way," she said. "They told me to do what I love and I really do love field and track." Once she decided to focus on the sport, her parents were behind her 100 per cent and double as her coaches. "They know a lot about the sport and I am very grateful they are so willing to help me," she said, "I could not have come this far without them!"

At 6' and 195 lbs., Kelsey is an imposing figure. But having the build is only part of the equation. Hard work, good coaching, and the right attitude are vital to success and, fortunately for Kelsey, she brings all three to the table.

"She works extraordinarily hard as an athlete," notes Bill Derry, a KHS English teacher and girls track coach. "With some athletes, when you first meet them, you have a sense that this person is going to have the potential to do something great, and I certainly had that impression with Kelsey," Derry said. "It's a steep learning curve," he observed. "Once she decided this was something she wanted to do she applied herself completely." Kelsey's list of accomplishments is impressive. She's broken the KHS record in the discus (set by her mother!); she holds the record in Class L competition and in the Meet of Champions and, last year, broke the New England record by six feet with an incredible toss of 158' 9" (a record which stood for 27 years), and is close to her mother's long-standing shot-put record at KHS. Derry said, "She is the third best discus thrower in the country." He said the only time Kelsey takes off from practice is on Monday when she mentors a younger girl through the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. It's her third year in the program and she "absolutely loves spending time with her 'little'," she said. "We play games, do homework,



Kelsey Huckins got a full athletic scholarship to Boston College, where she'll compete in the discus, shot put and hammer throw.

and just generally hang out."

At KHS, Kelsey competed on the basketball team where she was a four-year starting varsity player. Paul Miller, managing editor of *The Keene Sentinel* newspaper and Kelsey's coach her first three years, said he was impressed with her commitment and determination. "There was never any doubt that track was her first commitment, but she had that fire in her belly, that competitiveness, that made her a very good basketball player," Miller said. As a 6' forward, Miller counted on Kelsey as a rebounder first, but he said she has a really good jump shot. "She's a naturally gifted athlete, a leading scorer this past year and named to the all-state team," Miller said. He noted, too, that she is a mature person. "She has an air about her. She's just more serious than a lot of kids her age," Miller said. "There's just not much out there that's going to get in the way of her accomplishments. She has the support system at home and the drive and determination to do what needs to be done," he said.

That same focus is displayed in the classroom. Kelsey has a 3.69 GPA (grade point average) and has been an outstanding student throughout high school. One of her loves is Spanish. Teacher Suzanne Charles had Kelsey in three classes, Spanish IV, V and advanced placement Spanish. "I also took her to Spain in April, so I've gotten to know her pretty well," Charles said. She likes what she sees. "I don't know her as a track person. I know her from another perspective. She's mature,

poised. She has in mind what she wants and she just goes about achieving it," Charles added. "She's very focused and uses her time extremely well." Kelsey was one of the first students to sign up for the trip to Spain Charles said. "Kelsey knew that because of her athletic commitment to BC she wouldn't be able to take a semester abroad in college so she decided to take advantage of the opportunity in high school. To me that shows a lot of foresight on her part," Charles said.

The thing that strikes social studies teacher Mark Hayward is that Kelsey doesn't have any airs about her. "Here she is, this incredibly successful athlete, but you'd never know it," he said in a recent interview. "She's just this easy going person, not at all pretentious. She's hard working, does what you ask her to do and more," he added. He had Kelsey sophomore year for World Perspectives II. "She is just a really well-rounded person."

"She clearly has the right body type for the events she competes in," said Derry, but noted that the discus is a sport that also demands incredible dedication to form. "You have to have an intense scrutiny. You have to constantly rework the little things. It takes an ability to never be content and Kelsey fits that to a tee. Some people would be driven nuts by that aspect of it but not her. She likes to tinker, to examine, to try and refine the little pieces to make a better throw." He has no doubt she will bring that same work ethic to bear in college athletics and to a career in nursing.

After talking to a number of people who know Hyomi Carty well, there may not be enough superlatives in the English language to describe her adequately. Not only is she ranked 6th in her class, she has a GPA (grade point average) that exceeds 4.0, a straight A. Her's stands at 4.122. She is also director of the KHS women's a cappella group, *Momentum*, vice-president of the Student Rotarian's Club *Interact*, very active with the Cheshire Coalition for Tobacco Free Communities, has a green belt status in Tae Kwon Do, and works 25 hours a week at the Cheshire Medical Center as a hostess in the food service department. This on top of taking three advanced placement courses – English, Environmental Science and Spanish - Physics honors, statistics honors, a cappella choir honors, and receiving an A+ in an on-line course on the United Nations – all in her senior year. And as if that weren't enough, she has been named as the outstanding vocalist of her class. This incredibly bright, gifted young woman will matriculate at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts this fall. She was admitted early decision and awarded a \$44,000 scholarship!

Hyomi is the eldest of five children of Hisako and Vincent Carty of Keene. She has four younger brothers – Kosei, 15, a sophomore at KHS; Masaki, 12, a 6th grader at Keene Middle School; Sung-Ki, 10, a 4th grader and Hyo-Hyang, 8, a 2nd grader at Fuller School. Her mother is a Personal Care Service Provider for Granite State Independent Living and her father works at LePage Bakeries in Brattleboro, Vermont. Hyomi was born in Cranston, RI and lived in a number of towns in Massachusetts – Chelsea, West Roxbury, Norwood, Mansfield and Pepperell. Her family settled in Keene when Hyomi was in 5th grade.

She plans to major in International Relations at Tufts with a concentration in foreign diplomacy and public policy. She is hoping to complete both an undergraduate degree and a masters program at Tufts Fletcher School, one of the premiere graduate programs in international affairs in the country, all in five years. Those who have gotten to know her well at KHS don't doubt she'll accomplish what she has set out to do.

"I have total confidence she

will be successful," said her school counselor Kendra DiLegge. "Simply put, Hyomi Carty, is outstanding and her talent and intelligence shine in any dimension of her life whether it be in the classroom, interacting among peers and adults or in the community," DiLegge wrote in a college recommendation. "Hyomi is the type of person who believes in working hard, doing the right thing and helping others."

Steve McGrath, a counselor with the federal government Department of Education's Educational Talent Search, a program designed to help students from limited income and/or the first in their family to go to college, has worked with Hyomi for the past 18 months. His job is to help students navigate the college application process. "She is extremely self motivated, intellectually curious, and a person who knows how to use resources extremely well," he said in a recent interview, noting that Hyomi has an innate ability to find a path to achieve her goals. "Not only a path for herself but, I have no doubt, she will help her brothers find theirs as well," McGrath observed. He also admires Hyomi's ability to hone in on a subject. "I saw her probably 10 to 12 times a year and at each meeting she knew exactly what she needed to get done. She never wasted a minute," he said.

Three teachers who have gotten to know Hyomi well at Keene High are English teacher Scot Tolman, social studies teacher Jennifer White, and music teacher Tom Martin.

"She has a beautiful soprano voice," Martin said. "But she has more than just that, she's a leader and a person you know will do what's necessary to be successful." Only a handful of Martin's students take A Cappella Choir as an honors course, which requires much more of a commitment academically and musically. Hyomi is one of them and she has done extremely well. "I first met her when she was in 8th grade and part of the middle school's show choir. Even then she had a presence about her," Martin remembered. *Momentum* performed a very challenging number, *Sweet Dreams* by the Eurhythmics, at the school's annual spring cabaret show *Nostalgia*. Not only did this group of eight sing impeccably but they danced as well. The piece brought down the house. "She's a real leader," Martin said adding, "She has such focus and



Hyomi Carty, vocalist of her class, will attend Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts to study international relations.

confidence. She just really takes care of business." When asked what that meant, Martin replied, "That means you do your work outside, so when you come to class you are prepared." Hyomi has represented KHS at several elite music festivals. "She's just a delight to work with," Martin added.

Music is incredibly important to Hyomi. She has been part of both *Momentum* and *A Cappella Choir* for three years, which clearly reflects her commitment to music. "When I sing, I only think about the joy and feeling of liberation that music brings me, and life's cares momentarily dissolve away," she said. "I especially love singing in groups like A Cappella Choir because people, regardless of what social circle they're a part of, come together for the common goal of creating beautiful music."

Scot Tolman knew of Hyomi's reputation as a gifted writer before she came to his first AP English class last fall. She had won a very competitive writing contest and received an 800, or perfect score, in the SAT I exam. "Her name came up repeatedly as a top student," he said. So he was a bit surprised at how hard she worked to improve her writing. "She just puts in the hours necessary," he said as he looked through Hyomi's portfolio to refresh his memory. "Here it is. She did six re-writes on her *Equus* essay. Six,"

he said with admiration. "She came in as a solid writer but she had a breakthrough this year. She found her own voice, which isn't something many students accomplish," Tolman said, noting. "She has a very powerful voice." He worries though that Hyomi might be stretched too thin. "I just hope she finds time for herself. She's so good at managing so many things, but I'm not sure she finds enough time for herself. Finding time for just fun," he said.

Jen White had Hyomi for World Perspectives I and II, which spanned her freshman and sophomore years. "She just such a great package," White said. "A real role model for any teenager. She's a very high achiever. She is very academic but also very creative. She just never lowers the bar." White is also impressed with Hyomi's generous spirit. "She's a very thoughtful person, genuinely kind. Really looked up to by her peers," White added. The other aspect of Hyomi's personality that strikes White is her optimism. "She's just full of pure optimism and delightful energy," she said. White noted that there are always kids at the high school who are big fishes in a little pond but when they go on, they find themselves as little fishes in a big pond. She has no doubt, however, that Hyomi will be a mover and a shaker no matter where she goes.

Barrett-Lhu

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neurobiological disorder named for a Viennese physician, Hans Asperger, who published a paper in 1944 which described a pattern of behaviors in several young boys who had normal intelligence and language development, but who also exhibited autistic like behaviors and marked deficiencies in social and communications skills," writes Barbara Kirby, founder of the Online Asperger Syndrome (AS) Information and Support website. The disorder can range from mild to severe. Max's case is on the more moderate side. Through the natural maturation process and his learning to cope with AS, he appears to have reached a comfortable place in life. Kirby notes, "Persons with AS have difficulties with transitions or changes and prefer sameness." Max commented, "I can attest to that."

Elementary school was rough going according to Max. "Nobody knew how to deal with me," he said. "Then, when I went to the middle school, it got worse," he added. After a tough transition to KMS, Max was referred to the Special Education department, which ordered a battery of tests. It was only then that he was diagnosed with AS and started to receive appropriate special education services. (Even though Asperger identified the syndrome in the 1940s, professionals have only recognized it in the past few years, Kirby said.)

Max said it was a great relief to him and his family that a name was finally put to what he was experiencing. "It was someplace to start dealing with various problems."

Max's special education case manager, Diane Delisle, who has been in charge of the KHS social skills collaborative for students with autism and Aspergers for the past three years, says she hardly ever sees Max. "I used to see a lot more of him sophomore and junior year, but he's really pretty much on his own now," she said, adding, "He's grown up so much. I've seen a huge change these past few years – physically, emotionally, and in his maturity level." Max had a tendency earlier on to say inappropriate things in class and to misinterpret teacher responses to him and his work. "Fortunately, he's learned how to control himself and doesn't need me anymore, which is great!" Delisle said, adding that she has no doubt that Max will be very successful (See Barrett-Lhu/Page 4)



Jimmy Hadden, selected as the outstanding Cheshire Career Center student, plans to major in business administration at the University of San Diego in California.

James Andrew Hadden

Jimmy Hadden is one of those rare students who has taken full advantage of the opportunities he has had in high school. There won't be any "woulda, coulda, shouldas" for this accomplished young man. Take this semester as an example. He is in the third year of marketing, only one of two students at the Cheshire Career Center to be accepted to this independent study program. He is also taking International Business, Web Design, English, Inc. (a business oriented English class), and Probability and Statistics. He wants to have his own small business one day and has taken as many courses as he can to prepare for that eventuality. It's no surprise then that he was selected as the outstanding Cheshire Career Center student of his class. Next year he will enroll at the University of San Diego in California where he plans to major in business administration.

Jimmy is the only child of Sue and Jim Hadden of Spofford. He grew up in Dummerston, Vermont where he attended kindergarten through 8th grade at the local elementary school. His family tuitioned him to KHS his freshman year and then moved to New Hampshire the next year. His father works for Brunelle & Son Construction in Brattleboro, and his mother is a homemaker.

John Luopa, marketing teacher at the Cheshire Center, has had Jimmy in class for the past three years. "He has grown so much since I first got to know him sophomore year," Luopa said in a recent interview. "He was pretty shy and reserved back

then, but he's really come out of his shell," Luopa noted. Asked about Jimmy's strengths he said, "He's very studious, listens closely, and works extremely hard. Everything he does is quality work." Luopa is also adviser to DECA, a club for marketing students. Jimmy and a partner's sports marketing project placed 2nd in state competition, which qualified them to compete at the nationals in Atlanta in April. While not placing, Jimmy said it was a great experience, "I loved it. I met a lot of kids from all around the country, even Canada. It was really a diverse group." Jimmy served as president of the DECA club this year and did a great job Luopa said. He said that his other marketing students have adopted a phrase when they fall short of the mark. "They say, 'I didn't quite Jimmy it,'" Luopa notes with a laugh. "Everything he does is terrific. He just not satisfied until he does A+ work."

That same kind of effort was apparent to KHS teacher Scot Tolman who had Jimmy in English, Inc. "His writing is amazingly clear and concise. Mechanically it is just beautiful," Tolman said. He nominated Jimmy for one of the department's achievement awards. "His essays have been of the same caliber as students in my AP class," he said. "He has such a strength and command of language. I hope he pursues writing."

"He's the kind of kid who makes things happen from the background," said Linda Merrill who had Jimmy in International Business

and Web Design this semester. "He doesn't draw a lot of attention to himself. He just does his work and let's that speak for itself." Merrill also advises the FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) club. Jimmy came in second at the FBLA state conference in April. He qualified to go to national competition in August, but won't be able to because he will have already left for college. "He has been a very active member in the club," Merrill noted, "He always gets the job done. He never has to be reminded, he just does it."

He was also a prime mover behind a recent fundraiser held at Keene State College's Spaulding Gymnasium called the *Battle of the Bands*. The event drew 14 bands from as far away as New York state and raised several thousand dollars for Kelley's Cause. (Kelley Goddu, a 2005 graduate of KHS, was severely injured in a diving accident two summers ago.) "He did an outstanding job." Luopa said. "He developed a plan, produced TV commercials and radio spots and helped organized the event itself."

Besides being active with DECA and FBLA, Jimmy has been a pivotal player on the KHS varsity basketball team. As starting shooting guard, coach Jon Perry counted on Jimmy to guard some of their toughest competitors. Perry remembers one night when Jimmy was sent to guard Spaulding High School's standout player Lucas Croteau. "He shut him down, keeping him to only 2 points the first half," Perry said. "Jimmy's such a hard worker. Not the kind of kid who likes to draw attention to himself. He leads by example." As one of the team's captains, Perry said Jimmy was a great role model for the younger players. Basketball has been a focus of Jimmy's life for years. He started playing in 3rd grade and by 5th grade he was competing in the AAU (Amateur Athletic Union) program in Brattleboro. While in middle school, his AAU team won the state championship and traveled to the nationals in Orlando, Florida.

In his leisure time Jimmy likes to go to the movies or watch them at home. His interest in movies led him to an internship at Video Headquarters in Keene, where he hopes to land a summer job.

He's hoping one day to open his own business and sell sports and entertainment memorabilia. Luopa has no doubt that Jimmy will make a go of it. "If he has his mind set on something, it will be one of the best stores you've ever seen," he observed. "That's just the way he is."

Barrett-Lhu

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in life. "He's learned to put all the pieces together."

English has always been a challenge for Max, especially writing. "I've always had a hard time, especially with creative writing," Max said. "If I can write something concrete and factual I usually do okay, but it's the other stuff that's a problem." This year, his English course happened to coincide with a great interest of his, science fiction. The course, taught by Bill Derry, was Science Fiction and Fantasy Honors. "It's pretty high octane material," Derry said, adding that with a few modifications here and there Max did wonderfully in the course. "He has a brilliant mind for detail and was able to probe culture and society through the literature we read."

Open-ended questions tend to be Max's bete noire, but he thrives on answering "cut and dried" complex questions. Math is his favorite subject, and this year he is taking pre-calculus concurrently with calculus honors. He is also a four-year member of the KHS math team. Teacher Rob Tiebout is one of the advisers to the math team and praises Max for his contribution to the team both in competition and in logistics. "At the end of each meet there is always a lot to put away and Max is always there to help," Tiebout said. He also had Max for calculus this past semester, and notes that Max is extremely bright and picks up math concepts pretty easily. "He really wants to know the why of things," Tiebout said.

In addition to the math team, Max plays the bass trombone in the concert and jazz bands, and is a member of the yoga club. He also competes in the shot put and discus events for the track team, and is a regular in the weight room during the fall and winter to keep in shape. There, he joins a group of teachers known affectionately as "Olds Gym". "It's been really interesting to see how Max has become part of the mix," said Cliff Lerner, a biology teacher at the high school and one of the "olds" regulars. "Max has

a wonderful sense of humor and just fits in. It's a pretty loose group. There are eight or nine of us who are desperately trying to stay in shape and there's Max, who's young and fit, working out right along side us. It's been a great relationship," Lerner said. He has also had Max in class for honors biology sophomore year and led him and a group of other Keene High students on a biology trip to Belize last year. "Max is so smart and has an incredible ability to concentrate," Lerner said.

One of the teachers who has gotten to know Max well is Erik Kress, a special education teacher at Keene Middle School who worked with Max in 8th grade. For the past two years, Kress has been an assistant track coach at Keene High School, and has been able to watch Max's development. He has great admiration for Max's dedication to the discus, saying, "He spends more time than anyone on technique. He's 8th in Class L's at the moment, which is pretty remarkable when you think about it. He doesn't have the ideal body type for the discus, but he's done everything he could possibly do to be the best he can, and is a regular contributor to the KHS program."

"Middle school was a tough time for Max," Kress added, "He didn't socialize that well and would just shut down if he was asked to do something he didn't want to do or didn't see the need to do." Kress said he thinks that being labeled "special ed" was hard for Max because there can be the perception that coded students aren't bright. "That couldn't be further from the truth with Max," Kress said. "His reading, science, and math skills were off the charts. He just needed help with his writing and social skills." Kress added that Max is not the kind of kid one would think of as disabled, "He's unique. He's just Max."

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