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CHOATE HOSTS SPIRITUAL LIFE EVENTS FOR STUDENTS

By **Annelie Hang '25** and
Lola Wennmachers '25
Reporters

The traditions of Easter, Passover, and Ramadan are spiritually significant holidays for Christians, Jews, and Muslims respectively across the globe and campus. Many Choate students who celebrate their faiths have attended events hosted by Spiritual Life to celebrate these holy days.

With the holidays in close proximity to each other in 2023, a rarity that occurs every 30 years or so, Reverend Aaron Rathbun, Choate's Protestant Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Life, said, "The biggest hurdle was everything happening back-to-back right on top

of each other this year. But, it's always a joy to work along with others in making preparations, planning services, food arrangements, etc., especially when we work together across different religious faith traditions!"

On Easter Sunday, a holiday celebrated by many Christian students and faculty members, a service was held in the Seymour St. John Chapel. The service consisted of prayers, hymns, scripture readings, a homily by Reverend Rathbun, and a baptism service. Christopher Joseph '25, an active member of Christian Fellowship and spiritual life at Choate, expressed gratitude for the service. He also praised Reverend Rathbun for his positive impact on spiritual life at Choate. Addressing the sermon

Reverend Rathbun gave at the Sunday service, Joseph said, "He's very relatable because he lives in the same place I do, has a similar schedule, and it's easier for him to connect with the students ... it's a lot easier and it hits closer to home."

In April, Jewish Choate community members also celebrated Passover. Rabbi Barbara Paris and Hillel, Choate's Jewish student organization, hosted the annual Passover Seder in Sally Hart Lodge. The Seder is a meal that celebrates the first nights of Passover and commemorates the Jewish Exodus from Egypt. This year, over 40 Choate community members were in attendance.

The Seder was open to the entire Choate community, inviting not only those who are Jew-

ish, but also those curious and open to learning about Jewish traditions to participate in the festivities. The celebration included singing, dancing, and eating special and sacred foods.

Hillel cabinet member Grace Walters '24 appreciated that many of her friends attended the Seder with her. She said, "It was really great to help introduce them to this new culture, but also to have dinner with my friends, get dressed up, sing, and dance."

Muslim students and faculty also celebrated Ramadan in April. Reverend Rathbun and Arabic teacher Mr. Yassine Ben-zinane helped organize the Eid al-Fitr meal that closes out the

See **HOLIDAYS**, Page 2



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

MR. MICHAEL VELEZ'S IMPACTFUL LEGACY



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Mr. Velez speaks to the student body in Colony Hall.

By **Eva Swanson '25**
Copy Editor

After 19 years of teaching at Choate, Dean of Students Mr. Michael Velez '00 will leave the School at the end of this academic year. On July 1, he will assume his new position as Head of Upper School of Riverdale Country School in the Bronx, New York City.

As a Choate alumnus of the Class of 2000, Mr. Velez returned to the School as a "boomerang kid" in the fall of 2004 after receiving his bachelor's degree in history from Middlebury College. Primarily a History teacher for the first eight years of his Choate career, Mr. Velez taught classes such as Civil War and Reconstruction, Classical History, and World History.

Mr. Velez was named the Dean of Students for Summer Programs in June 2014, and thus began his journey in the Deans' Office, where he remained after accepting the now-defunct role of Dean of Boys, then Form Dean of the Class of 2022, and finally Dean of Students in the spring of 2019. On campus, he is affectionately known as "MAV."

As Dean of Students before and during the pandemic, Mr. Velez saw the School through a tumultuous period of change. Even with shifts in statewide laws due to Covid-19 and vaccinations, or the consumption of tobacco and marijuana, Mr. Velez helped protect students and their well-being. Ava Maha '23, Student Body President, spoke to Mr. Velez's commitment to the students: "MAV pushed to pass student initiatives, pulled ideas out of his archives, and brought an empathetic listening ear to our conversations."

Aside from his dean duties, Mr. Velez has held titles in other areas of school life over the years, including Head of House in Combination House and Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey Assistant Coach. He also works closely with the Judicial Committee. Enforcing the honor code and upholding the rules of the School, Mr. Velez confers with members of the committee on how to proceed with disciplinary action.

According to Judicial Committee representative Sophie Park '25, "Taking the recommendations giv-

See **VELEZ**, Page 2

CHAPTER ENDS FOR JFK SENIORS

By **Sophia Liao '25**
Copy Editor

Each year, the senior students of the John F. Kennedy '35 Program in Government and Public Service deliver a culminating TED-talk-style presentation on a topic of their choice to the Choate community. This year, there were a total of 18 presentations, ranging from topics such as Supreme Court packing to the importance of foreign aid.

Dylan Clack '23 presented on polarization in American politics, a topic he became interested in after recognizing the lack of deeper study on the subject in America. In his presentation, Clack compared American politics to a pendulum swing, saying, "We are currently swinging towards individualism, and we will probably swing back to communalism at some point [in the future]." Metaphors like this made JFK presentations meaningful for a lay-person audience, as everyone could walk away having learned something even if they had no previous knowledge of the topic.

Michael Korvyakov '23 talked about the future of the Supreme Court, focusing specifically on the topic of Supreme Court packing. Korvyakov found interest in his topic early on when he worked for Keep Nine, a coalition that was trying to pass an amendment to the constitution to prevent court packing, over the summer.

Heidi Small '23 presented on the strategic power of foreign aid in an era of intense competition between China, Russia, and the United States. Small was inspired by the many "misconceptions and inflated views about how foreign aid is used as a means to form partnerships, bolster trade relationships, and prioritize American national security." She also relied heavily on the information she gained from her summer internship in Congress to create her presentation.

Students began working on their presentations during the winter term.

Clack started off his research process by browsing encyclopedias, such as Wikipedia and Britannica, to gain a basic understanding of the topic. Delving deeper, he read academic articles and books in order to "compile [the information] into something you could pack into ten minutes and easily digest."

However, the task of condensing the information proved to be challenging when researching a broader concept like polarization. "I felt frustrated because I had to make pretty meaningful cuts in the content to be able to fit it all in while still speaking properly and making it understandable," said Clack.

When crafting his presentation, Korvyakov decided to keep it more "idea-based" as

See **JFK**, Page 2

Game Jam Showcases Students' Innovation and Creativity

By **Ethan Zhang '26**
Reporter

After weeks of hard work, excited students gathered to share their games and programming. The air was buzzing with discussions over how people made their games, and what the story behind them were. This meeting was a result of an event called Game Jam, a fun and challenging opportunity for game enthusiasts, computer programmers, and developers to create and submit original games.

This unique opportunity to showcase students' creative talent was a two-week event that ended on April 23. Dr. Travis Feldman, Director of the i.d. Lab, facilitated the event in which students created analog or digital games based on this year's theme, "Interstellar Worlds and Multiverse Adventures," either individually or as teams. Then, awards including "Most Soothing Graphics" and "Most Unbeatable" were awarded to 25 of the participants.

Participating students chose from a wide variety of different topics provided by the organizing group for their game, including language barriers between alien civilizations, cultural and worldly differences, diplomatic negotiations between humans and aliens, and more. Once students chose their topic, they had two weeks before April 23 to create any sort of game that revolves around that idea. Participants created either a tabletop board game or a com-

puter game depending on their strengths and preferences. The game was then judged by a panel of three teachers.

Dr. Feldman wanted to make sure that students understood prior experience was not required for participation. "We made it clear that we wanted to voice to the Choate community that you don't need to know how to program," he said.

Ryan Liu '26 participated in Game Jam with no prior coding experience. Liu wanted to challenge himself by using a JavaScript library named p5.js, which is suited for newer programmers. His game focused on the dynamic movements of pixelated objects, and he created smooth transitions within the player's inputs and actions on the screen. Liu loved his first experience with coding: "I can meet a lot of challenges, but I can solve them, and then the sense of achievement when I'm playing my own game is even greater."

As his coding career continues, Liu said, "This experience will help me improve my coding when I'm making different games in the future because I can avoid so many different problems I [encountered] this time." As a result of his work, Liu won the "Most Focused on Motor Skills" award and said he will continue to challenge himself and learn more.

Dameer Gay '24, a student organizer for Game Jam 2023, wanted all students to know that "you can create anything you put your mind to if you have the

will to learn and the drive to get better." Gay's notion rang true as Connor Zeitlin '25, one of the only students to create a board game, won the award for most stellar concept.

Once all students had submitted their pieces, they gathered together and played each other's games while showcasing their own.

Dr. Feldman believes that this is the true goal of Game Jam. "Just being in the space for a Sunday afternoon, where everybody's purpose is to eat good food and play games. The work to put together this event was worthwhile," he reflected.

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Photo courtesy of Dr. Travis Feldman

Farrah McQueen '25 tries out another student's Game Jam project.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Travis Feldman

Students collaborate over programming during Game Jam.

New Home for Admission

P&Z approves new admission building

Local News • P3



Campaigning for Candidacy

An argument for abolishing the ban on campaigning

Campus Ops • P4

"In Honor of Karl"

The Best and Worst of the 2023 Met Gala

Arts • P7



Spring Sports Success

Recap of spring athletics season

Sports • P8

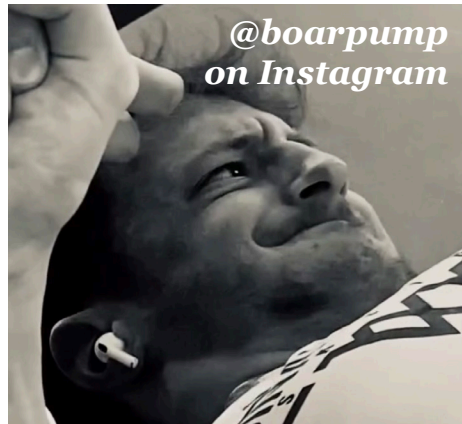
What's Inside

School News.....1-2
Local News.....3
Opinions: Campus.....4
Opinions: Nation/World.....5
Features.....6
Arts and Leisure.....7
Sports.....8



Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Ms. Lauren Lentine, Melody Qian '24, and Choate Flickr.



SENIORS IN JFK PROGRAM GIVE CULMINATING PRESENTATIONS

Continued from Page 1

opposed to “data-based” and was heavily inspired by his experiences during his internship. The main challenge was “making a complex idea into something simple” and keeping the presentation engaging for “audiences that aren’t political experts but have some interest [in the topic].”

Once he got past the initial research and preparation, the rest was smooth sailing. “I actually really enjoyed presenting,” said Korvyakov. “I think the crowd really enjoyed it ... and it was nice presenting to a crowd that was interested in this because it is a very niche topic.”

When asked what he would like the audience to take away from his presentation, Korvyakov immediately replied, “Hopefully, that court-packing is bad.” He hopes that the audience develops an “appreciation for how the three branches of our government work and how integral the Supreme Court is in creating a balance.”

For Small, the research and brainstorming process was extremely rewarding, especially being able to hear “the diversity of experiences [that] people had during their internship[s] and how it impacted their understanding of a political or philosophical issue.” Small hopes that through her presentation, the audience was able to better understand the “tremendous power foreign aid has to influence international diplomatic relationship, and how the continuation of investments in foreign nations is truly vital for America’s stability and longevity.”

JFK Program Director Mr. Ned Gallagher similarly emphasized the importance that “the speakers have interest and enthusiasm for what they’re presenting, because [then it] can be fascinating even if the people listening don’t have a lot of background in that particular thing.”

“I thought the presentations were really informative yet easy to understand, allowing any person who attended to walk away with a better understand-

ing of American government and politics,” said audience member Cassatt Boatwright ’24. “Everyone was very passionate about the topics they were talking about [and] you could really tell that they had all taken their time and put in a lot of effort, and they all had a lot of their personality embedded in [their presentations].”

For Boatwright, walking away from the presentations, she was inspired her to do more research in her own time. “Korvyakov talked a lot about the Keep Nine organization that he worked for, and after the presentations ended, I went back to my room, and I was researching it and looking into how I can help out,” said Boatwright.

The JFK presentations provided an opportunity for students in the program to share their interests in government and politics, while also allowing a chance for their peers to learn from them.

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AMES Celebrates Arabic Storytelling and Culture

By **Sarina Fernandez-Grinshpun ’25**
Staff Reporter

Instead of frantic typing in the Andrew Mellon Library, the Reading Room was filled with Arabic storytelling and music on April 26, when the Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) Signature Program worked with the library to run an event for Choate students to enjoy Middle Eastern treats and performances.

AMES Program Director Mr. Yassine Benzinane organized the event. He was particularly excited about a visit by Professor Shawkat Toorawah, a professor of Arabic Literature at Yale University, who came to speak about the history of Arabic storytelling. Professor Toorawah focused on five stories from the Abbasid period books that he helped translate. The event planning was centered around his talk, with student music performances and poetry readings worked into the program afterwards. Gideon Forbes from the

New York Arabic Orchestra also composed pieces of music on the spot after listening to the stories and performances.

Mr. Benzinane particularly enjoyed two Arabic 350 students’ interpretation of a medieval story from a book called *Impostures*, originally written by al-Hariri and translated by Michael Cooperson. A section of book was set in the American Old West as a way to help Western readers better understand stories of the Arab world. “Hallal and Roach interpreted it with the guitar, playing cowboy music. Hallal put on a full cowboy accent, and then he sang parts of it as well, so that was really a lot of fun,” he said.

The primary goal of the evening was to “humanize that part of the world that is underrepresented in our society, but also on our campus. So it gave [students] a different perspective on the Middle East in general and Arab culture as well,” Mr. Benzinane stated.

In addition to the performances, attendees also enjoyed

traditional delicacies such as nut-free baklava, a Turkish layered dessert of phyllo pastry around a syrupy filling. Students could choose from Moroccan mint tea, hot chocolate, and karkade, an Egyptian hibiscus tea with numerous health benefits, to accompany the snacks. The baklava was made by SAGE dining, and the karkade was actually made by the attendees in a traditional setup.

Overall, the event was a success, and attendees were able to take advantage of the opportunity to learn a little more about Arabic storytelling and culture. Jane Rak ’23, a student in the Arabic Literature and Translation class, said, “The experience overall was culturally enriching. I enjoyed being able to further my reading and dictation comprehension while enjoying some Middle Eastern cuisine.”

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Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Ava Maha '23 presents on free speech in the United States.

CHOATE CELEBRATES RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS IN THE SPRING

Continued from Page 1

month-long Ramadan celebration, during which Muslims fast every day from dawn to dusk. About 40 community members enjoyed the last moments of daylight in Ramadan with each other in the Paul Mellon Arts Center and gathered together for the eagerly-awaited meal on April 20. The Middle Eastern and North African Club (MENA) set up a mehndi booth outside the dining hall, where club members drew henna tattoos for those passing by.

MENA Secretary Monicke Costa '25 celebrated her second Eid at Choate this year. “We had ordered a large selection of Indian food from a local restaurant, invited different Muslim students from schools such as Yale, and gave a brief summary of what the month of Ramadan means to us Muslims,” she said, describing the Eid dinner at Choate. “After completing the challenging month of Ramadan, the opportu-

nity to connect and share in this occasion was great.”

Looking forward, Spiritual Life is “working with students in the South Asian Student Association to support events like Holi” and has an “inter-faith alumni service planned for alumni weekend coming up,” said Reverend Rathbun.

Aside from celebrating religious holidays, many students at Choate are a part of spiritual life through Christian Fellowship, Hillel, Buddhist Meditation, or other campus groups.

Walters describes Hillel as “a very good place for students who maybe grew up Jewish and weren’t very religious, and came to Choate and wanted to reconnect with that and join Choate’s Jewish community.” To build that sense of community, Hillel worked closely with Rabbi Barbara to plan the Hanukkah party and Yom Kippur dinner in addition to Passover Seder this year.

While Joseph appreciates Christian Fellowship, he would appreciate a weekly worship

service at Choate. “I would like to see more of an effort on the Christian scale because Christian Fellowship isn’t necessarily meant to replace your weekly Christian service, yet the only thing that’s here is Catholic Mass. So, I would appreciate a little more activities and planning, especially around Holy Week and Lent season,” he said.

“For folks who take spirituality seriously, it’s the fulcrum that helps us to navigate everything else in life all together,” said Reverend Rathbun. “This is why I’m grateful that Spiritual Life falls under our Equity & Inclusion umbrella, because it correctly acknowledges that this is a fundamental part of our identities, and as such, is extraordinarily important to nurture and take seriously.”

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Choate Students Excel in National Math Competition

By **Grace LaPlaca ’25**
Copy Editor

On April 27, the results of the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO) and the United States of America Junior Mathematical Olympiad (USAJMO) were released. Two Choate students placed significantly high, with Ryan Yang ’23 placing 23rd on the USAMO and Peyton Li ’25 placing 15th on the USAJMO.

The competitions are extremely difficult to qualify for. To begin the qualification process, over 159,000 students took the American Mathematics Competitions (AMC) 10 and 12. The AMC is a series of problem-solving examinations. The top 2.5% of scorers on the AMC 10 and top 5% of scorers on the AMC 12 were then invited to the

American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME).

Top-scoring students on both the AMC 12 and AIME were invited to the USAMO, and the top-scoring students on both the AMC 10 and AIME were invited to the USAJMO. In each competition, only 200-300 students qualify out of the initial 159,000. Prior to Yang and Li, only two students in Choate history were recognized as winners or honorable mentions for the USAMO or USAJMO: Jacob Klegar ’16 and David E. Speyer ’98.

To prepare for the USAMO and USAJMO respectively, Yang and Li studied past exams and practice problems. However, both agreed that adequate preparation requires longer-term mathematical education. “It is supposed to be doable with high school knowledge only,”

said Li. “But you will never do well in these competitions with just your high school curriculum.”

The exam consists of proof problems, which often require the usage of complex theorems and strategies. “Each of them is proving a theorem,” said Yang, “and you’re learning the theorem very deeply.”

For Yang, completing the exams widened his mathematical ability. “I really enjoy that I have this really broad set of paths or theorems that I just have in my repertoire now,” he said. “I have a super strong understanding of math that lets me actually make progress and contribute to fields, and figure out things that people have never figured out before.”

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MR. VELEZ DEPARTS CHOATE AFTER 19 YEARS

Continued from Page 1

en by the Judicial Committee, Mr. Velez makes ... the final decision of the consequence a student is given, either accepting or rejecting the recommendation.” However, when a student faces possible expulsion, he attends and observes full meetings to ensure students’ voices are truly heard.

Ms. Mary Elizabeth Williamson ’94, Director of Day Students and Latin teacher, was one of Mr. Velez’s first teachers at Choate. Once a new fifth-former in Ms. Williamson’s Latin 300 class, Mr. Velez now works alongside her in the Dean’s Office.

Having interacted with him as both a teacher and a colleague, Ms. Williamson appreciates Mr. Velez’s ability to understand and empathize with students’ concerns while remaining true to both his own and the School’s values. “[He] has never been afraid to be vulnerable — with us, as colleagues, ... [and] with students at school meetings. I think he puts his feelings out there,” said Ms. Williamson. “It’s really been helpful to have that as an anchor in our con-

versations about day student life [and] leadership on campus.”

Reflecting on his time at the School, Mr. Velez said, “I’ve enjoyed so many incredible memories at Choate. Personally, it is where my wife and I started our family and brought each of our four daughters home from the hospital. Professionally, the bookends to every school year (i.e., our return to campus and Commencement) have produced moments that I will cherish forever.”

Mr. Velez’s departure from the School will be bittersweet, but his impact will not be forgotten. Maha commented, “Although I am very excited for Mr. Velez to thrive in a new community, Choate will certainly miss him. MAV truly is the GOAT [Greatest of All Time].”

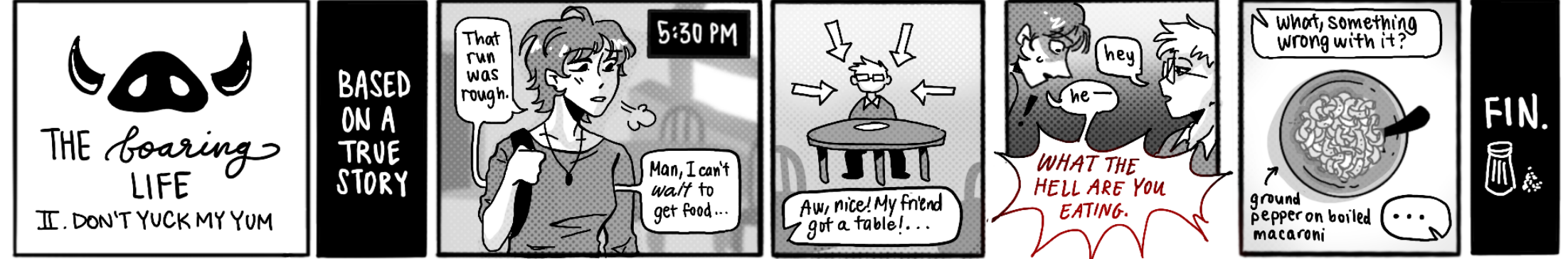
Ms. Williamson emphasized his dedication and hard work throughout his tenure at Choate and believes he will continue to approach the community at his new school with enthusiasm. “When the School has needed [Mr. Velez], he’s been there,” she said. “[Riverdale Country School] is going to be really lucky.”

As Mr. Velez has imparted many pearls of wisdom to fellow faculty members and students alike, he cites valuable lessons from his time at Choate. “I learned that it is important to have fun doing whatever it is that you do in life. Balancing a seriousness of purpose and fun is achievable, especially when you surround yourself with people who are passionate about the work they engage in together.”

After nearly two decades at Choate, Mr. Velez said he will miss the community the most: “My family and I are extremely fortunate to have forged so many wonderful friendships and connections with students, staff, faculty, and families over the years, and, fortunately, those relationships will continue in the years to come.”

Mr. Velez added, “Choate has been and will continue to be home, but Riverdale presents a new adventure.” He wishes a final farewell to the School: “Thank you, Choate, for taking me on a magical ride.

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

CHOATE ADMISSION BUILDING APPROVED BY P&Z COMMISSION

By **Reinah Lee '26**
Copy Editor

The Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z) unanimously voted in favor of Choate Rosemary Hall's plan to construct a new, dual-use welcome center and admission building on May 8.

The final decision came after much discussion, coordination, and earlier concerns from Wallingford residents about Choate's location within a residential zone. The original admission building proposal, like other buildings in comparable zones of Wallingford, underwent three levels of approval: Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA), Inland Wetlands and Watercourse Commission, and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

During a meeting with the ZBA, a request for a setback variance in Choate's initial proposal to build the project closer to the road than regulations allowed was shut down and removed from the final project plan. The plan also faced backlash from members of the Wallingford community at the P&Z meeting who were worried about potential disruptions by the building to their daily lives.

Concerns over the appropriateness of location, pedestrian and vehicular safety, preservation



Photo courtesy of Ms. Lauren Lentine

The watercolor rendering for the project depicts the new building on North Elm Street.

of the character of the neighborhood, and the capacity of the adjacent streets to handle the overflow traffic were raised in town hall meetings. In one instance, James Hine, Alternate Commissioner of the Wallingford Planning & Zoning Commission, was afraid that the building would create traffic blockage at an already busy four-way intersection.

"We all know that the intersection is busy, especially in the day with kids crossing the street," he said during the March 13 P&Z meeting. "I like what is being proposed, but I'm concerned for the safety of students and motorists."

In response, Choate conducted a traffic report and an environmental study at the town's request. They found that the building would not pose a problem to vehicular or pedestrian traffic, nor would it significantly impact the environment.

Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis said, "We've looked at whether there were other buildings that we could convert or use, and they're significantly more expensive and have more negative environmental and traffic impact."

The building has also been designed to ensure that it preserves the character of the neighborhood. "It very much fits in with

Homestead and Carrington and Edsall and Sally Hart. It tries to be on a residential scale and uses that kind of architectural language, so it is designed to keep the character of North Elm," Dr. Curtis added.

The planned building will be positioned on a six-and-a-half acre lot near the southeast corner of North Elm and Christian Street, measure 14,000 square feet, and include underground parking with approximately 70 spaces.

"We are planning a purpose-built building centrally located within the core of our campus: accessible for those with

disabilities and equipped with an underground parking lot," explained Mr. Patrick Durbin, Choate's Chief Financial Officer, at the March 13 meeting with the P&Z. The School is also working to obtain LEED Platinum and Park Smart sustainability certifications for the building and parking facility.

The objective of the new admission building is to replace Archbold, where the Admission staff has welcomed prospective students and their families for 25 years. Associate Director of Admission Ms. Brienne Ellis is among those who have commented on the outdated nature of the

building. "We are a very collaborative office, and having offices upstairs and in the garden level does not always make it the easiest to work together as a team," she said.

Currently, Admission team members share office spaces, creating challenges for conducting video interviews and phone calls. With bigger spaces to host events and meetings with families, advisees, and external stakeholders in the proposed building, this would no longer present a problem.

Choate officials have continued to emphasize the importance of the building to the School's mission. "As one of the first spaces our prospective families will see when they step onto our campus, I hope the admission building will always serve as [a] warm and welcoming invitation into our community," said Ms. Ellis.

Mr. Durbin added, "Educating students is core to our mission, and attracting those students [and] welcoming their families to campus and to Wallingford is a mission-critical function for us." Construction of the building is anticipated to begin soon and is expected to take 12 months.

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CALLING ALL ART-LOVERS: SPLAT ART STUDIO

By **Mira Gilchrist '25**
Reporter

For all the art lovers in Wallingford, the Splat Art Studio is a popular place in town to interact with all kinds of fine arts.

Founded in 2007 by art enthusiast Ms. Kate McNamee, the studio was established to cultivate a fun and loving environment to inspire the next generation of artists.

The studio offers year-long art classes in an extensive range of mediums. Of the most popular art classes, Ms. McNamee thinks that painting and drawing are the most popular.

The studio also offers an after-school program during the school year. Describing the general structure, Ms. McNamee said, "We kind of start slow with still life and a really strong foundation, and it could be food or it could be landscape. Then, we just really kind of grow from there." Usually lasting for an hour and a half, the classes are geared towards both younger artists, in

the Draw & Journal class, and older, more advanced artists, in Studio Art III.

Splat Art Studio hosts special events several times a month. On May 19, the studio will be hosting a kids' painting night with its long-time partner, the Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department.

"It's a three-hour event where the parents drop off [their kids], and we proceed to teach painting with all the kids. We also listen to music, and we just really have fun," Ms. McNamee continued, "It gives the parents a safe place to bring their kids to do something creative."

Apart from attending fixed events, individuals can also host their own events at Splat Art Studio. The studio offers adult paint parties for groups of eight to 16 guests, with employees working to help guests recreate a painting selected by the host.

After the end of every school year, summer camps for children ages seven to 14 are also open for sign-ups. Older children between

the age of 14 to 15 have the opportunity to be hired as counselors-in-training for the camp.

Each week of camp revolves around a different theme for which young artists will create corresponding paintings and drawings. Some examples of upcoming themes include Harry Potter, the '80s, aloha vibes, and fashion. Campers explore each theme and create artistic products in all different types of mediums, such as sculptures, sewing, and paper-mâché.

Ms. McNamee said, "It will be all kinds of media, which is the fun part in the camps, as we can do bigger projects because we're all together for five days, and we can take our time — not, you know, stuck to a deadline."

With Splat Art Studio being a 20-minute walk from campus, Choate students looking for creative opportunities can participate in Splat Art Studio's commitment-free, drop-in classes.

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Graphic by Carolyn Chen '25 / The Choate News

Wallingford's Newest Attraction: Le Jardin Café and ACHIQ Designs



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24 / The Choate News

Le Jardin Café is complemented by a ACHIQ Designs section.



Photo by Dana Tan '25 / The Choate News

Le Jardin Café offers a range of baked goods.

By **Dana Tan '25**
Reporter

Looking for a place to grab a bite and browse some unique jewelry? Look no further than Wallingford's newest eatery, Le Jardin Café.

First opening its doors to the public in February, the cafe features a unique design that combines an eatery with a jewelry store, ACHIQ Designs. With sections for gifts and children's products, the cafe is family-oriented and caters to those from all walks of life.

Le Jardin Café has grown to become a favorite among Choate students. Emma Ding '24 said, "I really enjoyed my experience there as it was slow-paced and relaxing. People were sitting at these little tables chatting away or working on their laptop."

Compared to other cafes in Wallingford, Paula Garcia-Moreno '25 likes Le Jardin Café the most, saying, "I've tried iced coffees at other cafes, and they were a bit underwhelming. I really like Le Jardin's iced caramel latte and usually get that."

Owner Ms. Fabi Giguere said that ACHIQ Designs was a family business that had been operating in Cheshire, Connecticut, for six years. When the opportunity to expand and move to Wallingford arose last year, she had to take it.

The idea for the cafe came later, when Ms. Giguere and her husband, Mr. Brad Giguere, realized that the space next door was available for rent as well. Mr. Giguere utilized his experience as a chef to create the menu for Le Jardin Café, and is now the chef de cuisine.

Ms. Giguere shared that her goal for ACHIQ Designs and Le Jardin Café was for it to be "an open concept store where you can shop and eat everything your heart desires."

In the three months since opening, her vision has been fulfilled. She said, "I observe people coming in here and enjoying good coffee, having a wonderful conversation, and enjoying the place." Customers have also mentioned the convenience of being able to grab a bite and browse merchandise at the same time.

As strong advocates of family-owned businesses, Ms. Giguere and Mr. Giguere show their support to other small businesses by selling their products in their own store. Ms. Giguere shared that many brands of the merchandise they carry are female-owned or from her home country of Peru.

The majority of her own creations in ACHIQ Designs are made of sterling silver or gemstones like chalcedony and amethyst, which are common Peruvian exports. Similarly, the cafe sources their

bread from local bakeries and their coffee beans from Peru.

"Our cappuccinos and lattes are big sellers," said Mr. Giguere. He shared that many menu items such as the chicken pesto cubano, avocado toast, quinoa salad, pistachio cake, and muffins have been a hit. To cater to customers with dietary restrictions, the menu also includes gluten-free brownies and customizable dishes that include more greens or no meat.

Mr. Giguere is now planning to expand the drink menu. He said, "We added iced coffee and chai and have been experimenting with creating new things." However, as someone who prioritizes quality over quantity, he added, "We don't want to be another Starbucks."

Ms. and Mr. Giguere have many ideas to expand the reach of Le Jardin Café, including hosting nighttime social events like karaoke night or live music night. With summer right around the corner, Ms. Giguere hopes that the longer days will draw more people to the homey cafe.

In keeping with Ms. Giguere's mission to carry "a little bit of everything," Le Jardin Café is an up-and-coming staple in Wallingford that has something for everyone and especially for those looking for quality food and a unique selection of jewelry and gifts.

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I HAVE BEEN SILENCED

By **Francesca Howard '26**

Opinions Staff Writer

Trigger Warning: This article includes mentions of sexual assault.

In preparation for my speech in Choate's third-form Krause-Stevens Declamation Contest, I was looking forward to the opportunity to voice my experiences and opinions. I knew that my speech, which explored my own experience with sexual assault and America's pervasive rape culture, would not be an easy topic to discuss. But, I felt compelled to speak up for myself and others in the hopes of sparking change.

My zeal, though, rapidly gave way to annoyance. When I was informed that I had made it to the semi-finals, I was eager to receive feedback, hoping to gain some insight into how I could improve my declamation. Despite my initial enthusiasm for critique, the feedback I received left me in utter disbelief.

"The time for politeness has ended. The time for sugar-coating the reality that many women face has passed."

I was told by my teachers that my speech was not "light-hearted" enough and that I sounded "angry and upset." I was told that I needed to find a way to make my message palatable and comfortable for the audience to hear. It was suggested that I be more polite and gracious. I was both baffled and slightly offended by these insensitive remarks.

While I understand the sensitivity and triggering nature of sexual assault, how could I possibly make a topic like this lighthearted? How could I be anything other than angry and upset when discussing such a devastating issue? Why should I be forced to tone down the passion and conviction in my voice when it is true to my story?

The time for politeness has ended. The time for sugar-coating the reality that many women face has passed. I refuse to back down, to soften the edges of my message so that it would be more pleasant to those who would rather turn a blind eye to the bitter truth. The subject at hand is not one that can be diluted or softened. It is not one that can be wrapped up

neatly in a pretty bow. It cannot be glossed over. It must be discussed with a sincerity and authenticity that goes beyond a disingenuous smile on my face.

My speech is raw, unfiltered, and indispensable. It is a call to action and a demand for justice. The problems in society that I address are no laughing matter. These are dark and traumatic issues that have been allowed to fester for far too long.

I am beyond angry. I am furious. I am ashamed that in 2023, we are still having to fight against gender stereotypes and expectations that should have never been an issue to begin with. My experience demonstrates that even in a supposedly progressive and open-minded community like Choate, there are still deeply ingrained expectations that women should be poised, submissive, and reticent. Yet, this is not just an issue with Choate, but rather a broader societal one.

There is a burdening pressure for women to conform to traditional societal standards, and my speech challenged that expectation. I am not diffident or meek, and I never have been. I will not allow my voice to be stifled or patronized by others.

Maybe that discomfort will be what finally spurs the bystanders into action. More women need to be willing to deviate from the norm and challenge the status quo. Society is stuck in a repetitive cycle of witnessing the same injustices year after year but making little progress towards long-lasting change. We must use our voices to rise above the pressures to stay silent. Not everyone will listen, and some will always be resistant to change, but for every person who dismisses our concerns, another will be inspired by our words.

I may not have advanced to the Krause-Stevens contest finals, but I refuse to let that define me or undermine my message. I will continue to speak out about the issues that matter, using whatever tone I deem necessary to convey their gravity and urgency. I am unapologetically a woman.

If you're reading this and feeling angry too, don't let anyone tell you that your feelings are invalid. Don't let anyone trivialize your emotions or pressure you to change. Let your indignancy be your weapon. Your anger is valid, your emotions are valid, and your voice is valid.

Francesca Howard is a third-former from New York, NY. She may be reached at fhoward26@choate.edu

SHOULD STUDENT COUNCIL CANDIDATES BE ALLOWED TO CAMPAIGN?

By **Adam Fleischman '25**

Opinions Writer

On Wednesday, February 22, I stood before my form, anxious to present my speech to over 100 people. I was prepared to convince them to choose me as their Student Council form representative, but, in that moment, I realized that I couldn't say I knew all of them. I'm sure many of them could have said the same about me. While I am now my form's president, the disconnect between myself and the student body uncovered a major flaw in the system in which I achieved victory: the lack of campaigning.

"There shall be no other form of campaigning or self-promotion (i.e. stickers, poster, buttons, self-promotional use of social media, etc.) outside of what is explicitly stated herein." This statement lies in the Student Council's constitution under the sections that lay out the election process for form representatives as well as the Student Council President and Vice President. According to Student Council President Amanda Bennet '24, the purpose of this rule is to eliminate inequities in the running process as some candidates are able to afford more campaigning material than others.

Although this concern is entirely valid, I believe that there are many ways candidates can campaign that don't cost any money, such as posting on social media, printing posters using Choate printers, or meeting students in person at various school events. Ultimately, I think this rule is too restrictive to the Student Council election process;

candidates are barred from any form of self-promotion and, by extension, self-expression for their candidacy.

I firmly believe the ban on Student Council campaigning at Choate should be lifted. As it stands now, the election boils down to a popularity contest and a short speech. As long as someone is well-liked and is well-versed in the skills of "SPATE" (Stance, Projection, Articulation, Tone, Eye contact), they've won.

Candidates are not permitted to be more involved in the election process and are limited to a 90-second presentation. Lifting the ban on campaigning for Student Council would allow the candidates to better distinguish themselves and show their constituents why they are the best candidate.

The ban on campaigning also inhibits candidates from showing their dedication to being a member of the Student Council. Allowing candidates to invest more time into their campaign in different ways would give them a chance to demonstrate their commitment. We already see this sort of dedication in the posters made by Student Council President and Vice President candidates, which are sent to the School via email prior to the election. The student body can determine how devoted each candidate is by the quality and content of their poster. These also allow students to learn more about the candidates and consider how their traits and qualifications might make them a good president or vice president. Implementing these policies for all Student Council elec-



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

tions and expanding upon them would open doors for candidates to illustrate their dedication.

In the short speeches currently permitted, information conveyed about a candidate can be sparse; candidates need to decide whether they want to focus more on their qualifications, their character, or the policies they will implement.

Are they going to be able to fit in any jokes? Is it worth running the risk of going over the allotted time? Is it better to cut out parts of their speech so that the deans won't walk up on stage and end it themselves? These are all questions candidates need to ask themselves when writing their speeches.

Of course, it's critical to keep their speeches to only the most important parts, but, unfortunately, that limits the amount of information candidates are able to share with the student body. Lifting the ban on campaigning would solve this issue.

In addition, allowing students to campaign would even the playing field and make the election process more equitable.

Currently, Student Council elections come down to a question of popularity rather than capability.

By giving candidates a chance to define themselves, we could move away from this incomprehensive election system. More often than not, new students who may be well-suited for the position struggle with becoming as well-known as returning students. I'm sure many of the new students in my class who ran for a post were required to do significantly more work to be recognized by their peers.

Right now, the Student Council election process is inadequate. It fails to let students show their devotion to the role, limits self-expression, and restricts their public perception to their popularity and a 90-second speech. Lifting the ban on Student Council campaigns would not only resolve these issues, but also allow for a more diverse election with a better-educated student body.

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A Debate on Underclassmen's Restrictions

By **Teniola Obayomi '25** and **Francesca Howard '26**

Opinions Staff Writers

With mandatory lights out and the inability to receive a sixth-course exemption, third- and fourth-formers enjoy few of the privileges granted to upperclassmen. Teniola Obayomi '25 and Francesca Howard '26 battle it out, debating whether these privileges should be extended to underclassmen or remain exclusive to upperclassmen.

Should underclassmen be exempt from their afternoon activity because of a sixth course?



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

Obayomi: No, sixth-course exemptions stifle time-management development

By prohibiting sixth-course exemptions for underclassmen, students are forced to learn important studying skills and familiarize themselves with Choate's academic expectations. If an underclassman continuously relies on a sixth-course exemption, they will not have the skills or patience to adjust when their workload increases with the level of difficulty of their classes. Additionally, by participating in

an interscholastic sport or a group intramural activity, underclassmen are able to make new friends rather than use that time to compensate for a sixth course.

Sixth-course exemptions encourage students to take six courses, and, for the sake of both mental health and happiness, underclassmen should be focusing on forming bonds with their peers through sports and free time instead.

Howard: Yes, sixth-course exemption gives students freedom and flexibility in their academic pursuits.

This rule states that students who opt to take a sixth course are exempt from participating in an afternoon activity or sport. Currently, only upperclassmen are allowed sixth-course exemptions; however, I firmly believe that underclassmen should be allowed this option as well.

At a place like Choate where students have their plates full with extracurriculars and work, time is of the essence. By widening this policy to encompass more forms, students of all ages would be given the opportunity to focus on and excel in their academics. Students are also dissuaded from taking more classes because of the tightly packed schedule and

Should underclassmen have lights out?



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

Obayomi: No, eliminating lights out would allow students to independently develop healthy sleep habits that suit their bodily needs.

Rules are crucial, especially for growing teenagers. However, unenforceable ones — like lights out — are pointless. Unlike upperclassmen, third-formers must turn their lights off by 10:45 p.m. and fourth-formers by 11 p.m. The restriction is meant to help students get enough sleep, but it is significantly flawed.

As is, few students actually go to sleep when their prefects turn their lights off. In fact, blue light from devices is more harmful than the overhead light in a dorm room due to the way it suppresses the body's release of its sleep hormone, melatonin, yet there is no rule con-

cerning this. Despite how frustrating it would be, lights out would be more effective if the practice of confiscating devices was added to the current practice of turning off the overhead light.

By giving students full responsibility over their sleep schedules, the School can allow them to practice decision-making skills. One may ask, "Should I stay up all night watching TikToks or be well-rested for class?"

Perhaps, underformers will develop healthy sleep habits from trial and error. Developing skills independently is more effective than being forced to adopt habits.

Howard: Yes, lights out helps to build healthy habits.

The lights out policy is imperative. Sufficient bed rest is foundational to the overall health and well-being of teenagers and has been scientifically proven to improve concentration and enhance academic performance. A 10:45 p.m. bedtime might seem too early to some of the night owls out there, but lights out provides

a framework that helps third-formers adjust to the new environment at boarding school. The policy encourages them to take full advantage of their free periods and establish healthy habits that will stick with them later on in life. Although it may be unpopular amongst some students, the lights out policy is a blessing in disguise.

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SHOULD WE HAVE TERM-LIMITS FOR SUPREME COURT JUSTICES?



By **Fiona Fu '25**
Copy Editor

After the Supreme Court’s June 2022 reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, a Gallup study showed American confidence in the Court sank to a historic low. This illustrates that the Supreme Court is out of touch with the American public and that our nation’s democratic foundations are beginning to crumble.

In a functioning democracy, the constituency believes that those in office will act for the public’s will and best interests. When that faith begins to waver, the legitimacy of this system is undermined. The numbers we see on the confidence polls are a glaring sign that there is a need for change, and implementing staggered 18-year term limits would resolve many of these misgivings.

No other country in the world gives its most senior judges indefinite terms. Even within the United States, all but one state have implemented fixed terms or mandatory retirement in their courts. The lengthy terms allow for the accumulation of political power, as demonstrated in Justice Clarence Thomas’s scandalous decades-long scheme of accepting “donations” from a Republican billionaire.

While Congress and the Senate write and pass laws under red and blue banners, the judi-

cial branch of government, particularly the Supreme Court, is supposed to be non-partisan in interpreting the Constitution. Unfortunately, life-long tenure has made the nominations and retirements of Supreme Court justices into a political circus, compromising any semblance of impartiality. The desire to hold and maintain influence within the Court explains the 6-3 conservative lean, a ratio that does not accurately represent the demographics of the American public.

Presidents are incentivized to find the youngest, most ideologically-aligned nominees to shift the Supreme Court’s rulings in a more party-favored direction. Similarly, justices make sure to time their retirements in line with presidents who match their political beliefs to guarantee that a like-minded justice will take their place.

Hypocrisy in who gets to nominate new justices also exposes how the Supreme Court itself is politically manipulated. When Justice Antonin Scalia passed away in February 2016, the Republican-led Senate blocked President Obama’s nominee on the grounds that a court vacancy nine months before the election should be filled by the new president. However, when Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away only a month and a half before election day in 2020,

then-Senate Majority Leader and Republican Mitch McConnell allowed former President Donald Trump P’oo to appoint his third Supreme Court Justice.

Term limits ensure that this type of political maneuvering cannot occur. With 18-year terms staggered two years apart, a new justice would be appointed every two years, allowing the regular input of someone less shielded from standard judicial proceedings and scrutiny. The predictable regularity of new appointments would ensure that political spectacles like that of Trump’s third nomination will never happen.

Instead, each president leaves an equitable imprint on the Supreme Court proportional to the years they serve in office, and any court majority has an expiration date. Bias and personal political philosophy might be an inevitable part of the Supreme Court, but so much of its integrity has been sacrificed both in terms of its own ethical standards and of partisan exploitation. Only by implementing term limits can we simultaneously protect the reputation the Court has built over centuries and ensure that the institution is still in touch with whom it serves.

Fiona Fu is a fourth-former from Hong Kong. She may be reached at ffu25@choate.edu

By **Michael Korvyakov '23**
Opinions Nation/World Editor of the 116th Masthead

For 250 years of U.S. history, the Supreme Court has been a stalwart institution that stands against irrational action done democratically. While the executive and legislative branches decide policy on a majority-rules basis, the Supreme Court was meant to be above this legal limitation. The nine justices who serve for life ensure that the other two branches don’t violate the Constitution, even when democracy demands it.

However, recent frustration with the political balance of the Supreme Court has led to many calling for structural changes to the court’s function. A frequently cited change is the implementation of Supreme Court term limits. Advocates of this policy argue that it would make the Court align more with the American people since they’d frequently be cycled through. While this may be true, it ignores the fact that the Supreme Court was always meant to be separate from the American people and the other two branches of government.

Suppose we implement the 18-year Supreme Court term limits to ensure that one of the nine justices retires every two years. Each two-term president would have the power to change four justices — that’s half of the court, which would almost certainly have an impact on the political balance. This practice

is dangerous because if one party controls both the presidency and the legislature, the president is able to facilitate the process of passing unconstitutional laws in the interests of their party.

The power of the Supreme Court lies in its ability to decide constitutionality without being swayed by the other branches. Under this new system, the Supreme Court compromises its judicial independence, thus transforming into a political weapon for the presidency.

The other portrayal of Supreme Court term limits is to decrease partisan disruption on the court. Following the status quo, justices often retire when they expect to be replaced by someone of their own party to ensure that they’re replaced with an ideologically-similar pick. While it’s true that these timed resignations would cease to exist with Supreme Court term limits, if every president is aware that they have the power to nominate four justices in a full presidential term, they will inevitably campaign with publicized judicial picks.

At the moment, there is a consensus that the Supreme Court makes laws somewhat independently from the other two branches. Because of this, presidents don’t frequently cite who they will nominate. However, term limits will inextricably bind the Supreme Court to the executive branch, neglecting judicial independence. This policy directly

opposes Alexander Hamilton’s argument in Federalist No. 78 — life tenures provide the judiciary with firmness and independence.

Finally, Supreme Court term limits increase partisan disruption by encouraging a constant flip in the stance of the Court. Suzanna Sherry, an author and political analyst, used computer simulations to predict how the Supreme Court might have treated abortion rights if 18-year term limits had been in effect at the time *Roe v. Wade* was decided. She concluded that the most likely result is that *Roe* would have been overruled in the 1980s, reinstated in the 2000s, and overruled again during former President Donald Trump P’oo’s first term. Our common law system relies on precedent, and precedent stops being a powerful aspect of the Court if term limits are in place.

Those who argue in favor of Supreme Court term limits cite that it would encourage the Supreme Court to make more democratic decisions and decrease partisan disruption. The latter isn’t true because it connects the court system to presidential and legislative election. And the former isn’t good, because the democratization of the Court prevents it from putting the Constitution above the political whims of the time.

Michael Korvyakov is a sixth-former from Old Greenwich, CT. He may be reached at mkorvyakov23@choate.edu

To Preserve the Film Industry, Ensure the Longevity of Writers

By **Harper Marsden-Uren '26**
Opinions Writer

While the CEOs of studios in Hollywood have entered the billion-dollar range in their yearly salaries, their writers can barely afford rent. The entertainment industry and major studio executives have exploited writers and their hard work for as long as the concept of media has existed. For the first time since 2007, writers are fighting back.

Late-night shows are shutting down, production on almost every television set has come screeching to a halt, and the entertainment industry is at a dystopian standstill. This has all been catalyzed by the actions of the Writers Guild of America (WGA), a union formed to protect the rights of the scriptwriters who orchestrate what we see on our screens. After 15 years of silence, approximately 11,000 writers are going on strike against the influence that the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMPTP) has on labor conditions and wages. This strike has the power to bring down the entertainment industry as we know it.

Following the Covid-19 pandemic and the insurmountable climb of streaming services’ popularity, CEOs of streaming services and Hollywood studios have pocketed millions while their writers’ wages have decreased. Because of this, a job that already fluctuates in instability is more financially insecure than ever before. The WGA East and West asked the AMPTP to meet their demands of fair and equitable pay for writers, which includes a 10-week guarantee of work, mitigating the use of artificial intelligence in the writing process, and a reworked residual pay structure to protect their finances.

To their dismay, the AMPTP refused to meet these

demands, resulting in a strike on May 2, 2023, with writers refusing to work until their demands were met. Numerous television series currently in production have shuttered, and movies set to be released in the coming months are likely to stall.

Furthermore, the ever-looming threat of artificial intelligence overtaking the job of writers has caused them to ponder the longevity of their careers. In an article in *The New York Times* entitled “Will a Chatbot Write the Next ‘Succession?’,” showrunner and creator of *The Good Place* Mike Schur said, “It is not out of the realm of possibility that [the next time the WGA negotiates with the AMPTP, the AMPTP] might just go, ‘you know what, we’re good [...] we don’t need you.’” Frankly, the AMPTP has ignored the needs of writers doing the heavy lifting behind television and movie sets for many decades.

The strike has garnered the support of many high-profile actors, directors, and other members of the entertainment industry who understand the importance of fair treatment and representation of writers. During a pre-recorded speech at Sunday’s MTV Movie & TV Awards broadcast, acclaimed actress Jennifer Coolidge defended the strike. She explained, “Almost all great comedy starts with great writers, and I just think that as a proud member of SAG (the Screen Actors Guild), I stand here before you tonight side by side with my sisters and brothers from the WGA that are fighting right now, fighting for the rights of artists everywhere.”

Likewise, many have taken to social media to voice their support; this solidarity speaks to the larger issue of income inequality in the entertainment industry, where those at the top reap the rewards while those at the bottom struggle to

make ends meet. By taking a stand, the writers are not only fighting for their own rights, but also for the rights of all those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to bring us the movies and television shows we love.

I believe that the ideological difference — where producers wish to create content, whilst writers wish to create art — has engendered this massive conflict. This art cannot be made without the sufficient pay and stability created by the AMPTP, and the writers are finally exercising their right to push back against their monopolizers.

What the AMPTP will soon realize is that the industry simply cannot create content without the writers behind it. No matter how flashy and modern a streaming package may be, it is but an empty stage without the writers orchestrating the whole show. This strike is a necessary course of action for an industry that has become oversaturated with the need for content.

There is an inherent structural issue with the way that Hollywood pays the people behind the scenes, and it is time for a change. Studios are going dark, writers flood the streets chanting “no contract, no content,” and streaming services lack content. It might be the end of the entertainment industry. It might be the beginning of television written entirely by artificial intelligence.

It remains to be seen how long the strike will last, but one thing is certain: the writers have shown that they are willing to fight for what they believe in, and they won’t back down until their demands are met. It’s the start of a revolution, and we all have a front-row seat.

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THE CONCERNING TRUTH BEHIND THE GROWING YUAN INFLUENCE



Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News

By **Arjun Pathy '25**
Copy Editor

Last March, China conducted more trans-border transactions in the Chinese yuan (CNY) than in the U.S. dollar (USD), marking a historic shift. Amidst uncertain international power dynamics, China has leveraged allied developing economies in an attempt to institute the CNY as the new standard global currency. If the United States does not make a bold move, a new Sinocentric global economy could begin to diminish democracy.

The strength of a currency is crucial to the success of an economy. For example, international confidence in the USD and the U.S.’s ability to pay back debts and support its currency has been a driving force behind the country’s global dominance for the last century. With such power, the U.S. has been able to become a trade behemoth. However, this status hangs in the balance in a world with a powerful CNY.

The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) Bloc laid the groundwork for the economic alliances we see forming today. This bloc eliminated volatile exchange markets and lowered the cost of trade by moving transactions to local currency. While the strength of this alli-

ance over the last decade has greatly diminished the USD’s dominance, it has been largely ignored in US foreign policy.

For instance, the war in Russia marked a watershed moment for Chinese trade; as extreme sanctions necessitated the need to remedy the shortage of USD, China offered the CNY as a non-sanctioned currency to further fund Russia’s war machine and to fuel their presence in international trade.

India has also launched a massive effort to dethrone the USD. Last month, the establishment of Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs) created a system in which all foreign trade could be conducted in rupees. 18 countries, many of which are rapidly developing African nations, have already signed up.

Disregarding monetary and economic goals, this shift — now occurring in many countries ideologically aligned with China — restricts the U.S. and other democracies’ ability to fight against foreign threats with tariffs and embargoes. Without access to these tools, a future marked by international instability and economic peril is increasingly probable.

A slew of political and economic issues have blinded the American public to the current administration’s indifference to pressing economic threats.

With high inflation and presidential controversy consuming primetime television and providing a distraction, the Chinese and their allies have orchestrated a coup d’état of the currency market.

This illustrates a pressing issue in American politics: if a problem isn’t relevant to a policymaker’s constituents, regardless of moral duty, it will not be solved in legislatures. The possibility of a trade war and lengthy negotiations is high, and large oppositions could arise without common knowledge of the problem at hand. Therefore, the Biden administration must cease pandering to its supporters and instead make it clear to the world that China’s efforts to dethrone the USD are intolerable.

If no action is taken, the results could be economically and politically catastrophic. Economics could very well be the first battleground in the war between democracy and autocracy if the USD loses its prominence. It is crucial that the Biden administration not remain a bystander; rather, they must assert dominance and prevent future threats to America’s position.

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DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF MEDICAL LEAVE

By Ethan Zhang '26
Reporter

At Choate, medical leave serves as a support system to allow those who are unable to fully engage at school for medical reasons to take some time off. Unfortunately, because the program has been shrouded in mystery, it tends to be misunderstood and stigmatized. So, it is crucial to open up dialogue and help students understand how the system aims to help them. While students may not always agree with the suggestion of medical leave initially, the School sees taking time away from campus as an opportunity to focus on mental health and well-being. "Supporting you is sometimes doing the hard thing for you," said Sixth-Form Dean Mr. Will Gilyard '98. "And I got no problem with that." Medical leave is often mistaken as a disciplinary action rather than a supportive system. Part of the stigma surrounding medical leave stems from the false perception that it is a catch-all response, indifferent to students' specific needs. Contrary to these beliefs, medical leave is a resource to support students when other solutions have not been sufficient. As the Student Handbook states on page 59, "The length of time for other medical leaves of absence shall be determined on an individual, case-by-case basis." Dean of

Students Mr. Michael Velez '00 explained, "We exhaust all of our resources before we're talking about a student going on leave." Choate recognizes each student's unique struggles. "Sometimes there is a mental or physical health component, which necessitates a leave. Sometimes, there are family circumstances — when a student just needs time away from school," said Mr. Velez. The School maintains a line of close communication with students while they are on medical leave. "When a kid goes on med leave, I talk to them for the rest of the entire year. They don't disappear," Mr. Gilyard said. The Counseling department, College Counseling Office, deans, and advisers work together to support each and every student to ensure the smoothest possible return to campus. Mr. Gilyard emphasized, "All the people who I've worked with who have gone on med leave — those who are back now and are coming back in the future — have had good experiences being off." One such student is Ramsey Scott '23, who went on medical leave during the spring term of the 2021-2022 school year. His dean at the time, Ms. Laura van Mierlo, recommended that he go on medical leave due to his Type 1 diabetes becoming harder to manage at school. Scott

was not enthusiastic when he first heard about the plan. "It's difficult seeing them [Class of 2022] graduate and then not walking across the stage with them," he said. After further reflections, however, Scott concluded, "I could definitely see the benefit in the future even if it wasn't necessarily apparent at this moment." After reclassing and joining the Class of 2023, he reflected, "I would definitely go back and do it again, because this year, I was in a much better position to succeed medically and academically." Removing the stigma around medical leave allows struggling students to receive the support they need. When asked about holding Q&A sessions to dispel some of the confusion surrounding medical leave, Associate Director of Counseling Mrs. Judith Bender said, "I think that we really need to do that. There's always been questions about what we do in the Counseling department." Mrs. Bender proposed ideas of open conversations at form meetings to clarify the process of medical leave and the importance of physical and mental health in general. This would be a step in the right direction towards a better understanding of the purpose of medical leave in the community. Ethan Zhang may be reached at ezhang26@choate.edu

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SAGE STAFF MEMBER



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Mr. Andy Welle is the manager of the Hill House dining hall and the Tuck Shop.

By Sophia Liao '25
Copy Editor

For many years, Choate's dining hall, Tuck Shop, and Lanphier Cafe have operated under SAGE Dining Services. While the dishes may seem to appear miraculously at meal times, staff members work diligently behind the scenes to prepare them for the community. Here, three SAGE staff members share their experiences of working behind Choate's servery.

Mr. Richard DeMartino

Mr. Richard DeMartino works both in the Hill House dining hall and at the Kohler Environmental Center (KEC). He follows a similar routine every day, coming into the kitchen in the morning to prepare meals for the next day. His shift usually begins at 9:30 a.m. and ends at around 7:00 p.m.. On days when he finishes all his assigned work ahead of time, he is able to catch a break and have some downtime, which is something he likes about his flexible schedule. "I like that I can sleep in in the morning, and not have to come in real early," he said. "When I go home at night, I still have time to do stuff — spend time with my wife." For Mr. DeMartino, his favorite time of day is nighttime because it's "less hectic" and "much quieter."

Mr. Andy Welle

Mr. Andy Welle is the manager in charge of the services in the Hill House dining hall and the Tuck Shop. He began working for SAGE in 2017 and is approaching his sixth year working at Choate. Each morning, Mr. Welle checks in with the staff, making sure they are all wearing the proper uniform and are prepared to carry out their tasks accordingly. In addition, he ensures that all the food lines are organized and ready to be served, often jumping in to help out when lines of hungry students get long. On some days, his shift goes from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., but on other days, it goes from 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.. Which shift he gets depends on which days of the week he comes in and which meal he is in charge of overseeing. Since most days are equally busy, Mr. Welle does not have a favorite day of the week. However, on Sundays, which are a bit more relaxed, he enjoys catching up with some of the staff and describes the SAGE camaraderie as "friendly."

On special occasions, he is also responsible for decorating the dining hall to accommodate holidays and traditions, such as the Mardi Gras celebration. Mr. Welle noted that if students ever have ideas for new recipes to try or any suggestions on how to improve the Choate dining experience, they should feel free to reach out to him.

Ms. Anita Patel

Ms. Anita Patel works in the Hill House dining hall and is approaching her 20th year working for SAGE. "I love SAGE," she said. "I love this school, too." Ms. Patel works on the morning crew and has to arrive on campus at 6:00 a.m. to prepare for the breakfast rush. Her primary responsibility is to take care of the dishes during breakfast and lunch. Her favorite part of the job, Ms. Patel pointed out without hesitation, is the flexible schedule. She takes Wednesdays and Thursdays off, but if she cannot come in on one of the other days, there is always somebody else who can substitute for her, and vice versa. While weekdays can get very busy, Ms. Patel loves working during Sunday brunch time, when she helps out at the omelet and waffle stations. Ms. Patel and her fellow co-worker, Mr. Felix Rayas, have an ongoing tradition where they make each other an omelet and waffle after the brunch rush ends. The camaraderie of the staff extends beyond their working hours, making their job more of an joy than a chore.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS: BOARDING EDITION



Photo courtesy of Rella Wang '26

Rella Wang '26 celebrated her birthday with friends in New Haven.

By Deyi Meng '26
Repoter

Three, two, one! You take a massive breath and aim for the candles. Your eyes light up with joy as the flames simultaneously dim down, and you make your wish. Surrounded by your friends and family, you recount the tumultuous year filled with ups and downs — another year in your life has passed. At a boarding school, however, you may feel that you are unable to host a birthday celebration with the same level of enthusiasm and effort as you would otherwise. So, here are some ways that your fellow boarding students have celebrated their birthdays at Choate to inspire you when you plan your next birthday celebration.

Case Sakamoto '23:

Case Sakamoto '23 usually has a mug night in his dorm, and his parents will order pizza and cake. Like most, his birthday typically falls on a weekday, so he always ends up celebrating on the weekends, when he goes into town with his friends. This year's birthday celebration in New York City has been Sakamoto's favorite one so far. With all his friends on campus during the week as well, he was able to see everyone he wanted. Although he wishes he could see his family, he feels at home in the boarding community at Choate. "Everyone's there for you," he shared.

Joshua Ramon '24:

In the past, Joshua Ramon '24 has celebrated his birthday

by going out with friends and eating at restaurants. This year was no exception. Traveling to New York City, he and a group of friends went around the city to shop and eat. Since his birthday landed on a weekday, people sang "Happy Birthday" for him inside the classroom. In his dorm, he received another celebration — a mug night consisting of doughnuts. Ramon said that he enjoyed his birthday at Choate the most this year because, "At this point, I've developed myself socially compared to freshman year." Before coming to Choate, Ramon would go out in the morning and afternoon with his family, and then have a cake at night. Ramon said that at Choate, "classes interfere a little bit," making it harder to "find time to spend with people."

Rella Wang '26:

Rella Wang '26 was lucky to have her birthday fall on a Wednesday this year, when she had an entire afternoon to do something fun. She ordered a cake from a local bakery, went to a New Haven restaurant called Taste of China, and had a celebration with her friends. Wang was surprised when everyone sang "Happy Birthday" for her at a cappella rehearsal; a group member even brought her cupcakes. In the dorm, Wang's adviser bought her an ice cream cake, which the entire dorm shared after another rendition of the birthday song. At junior boarding school last year, Wang did not get to celebrate her birthday to this extent.

"I just feel like, 'Oh, my birthday was remembered by someone else, and I got to celebrate even though my family's not here,'" Wang said. "So it makes me feel [like I] belong, and ... it's more like a birthday. It's more special."

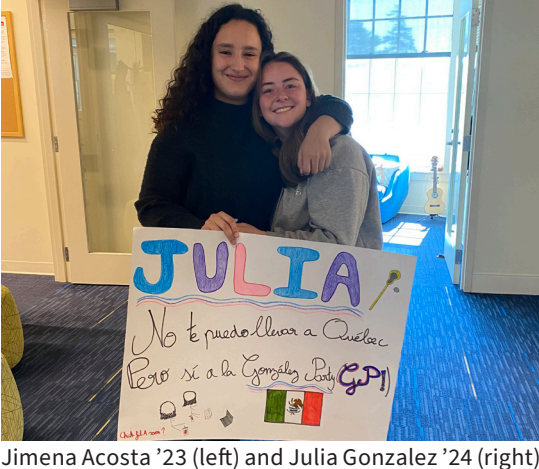
Yuki Zhang '24:

"Since I'm a boarder, there's really a lot of limitations on what I can do," said Yuki Zhang '24. For her 18th birthday this year, she wanted to organize a more upscale party but was unable to do so at Choate. Despite this, she has enjoyed a plethora of birthday celebrations over the past three years. In her third-form year, she had a celebration in the Bay Room of the Student Activities Center (SAC) with friends and boba. In her fourth-form year, she went out to a local hibachi restaurant, Iron Chef, with her friends and also celebrated with her water polo team. This year, Zhang went out to Iron Chef again with her friends on a Friday night. Despite her original plans to go go-karting and bowling on Sunday, she ordered boba and Pokemoto with her friends to avoid an overload of people at these locations.

While birthday celebrations on campus may differ from those spent at home, they can be just as special. From traveling to the city to cozy mug nights in dorms, there are plenty of opportunities for students to create festive memories on their special day.

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2023 Garden Party Proposals!



Jimena Acosta '23 (left) and Julia Gonzalez '24 (right)



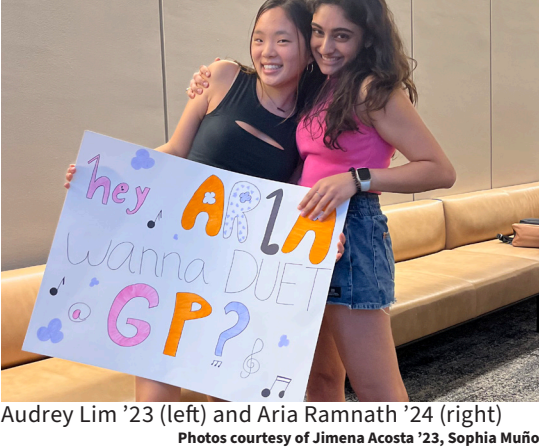
Sofia Muñoz '23 (left) and Amanda Benneh '24 (right)



Victoria Layden '24 (left) and Grace Furtado '23 (right)



Tatum Kent '24 (left) and Zoe Fleischman '23 (right)



Audrey Lim '23 (left) and Aria Ramnath '24 (right)



Gaby Nirmal '23 (left) and Kaya Tray '24 (right)

Photos courtesy of Jimena Acosta '23, Sophia Muñoz '23, Victoria Layden '24, Tatum Kent '24, Aria Ramnath '24, and Kaya Tray '24

EXPOSING SEAMS

Fashion's Biggest Night Out

By **Ximena Castillo Núñez '24**
Columnist

Let me fill you in on the 2023 Met Gala.

Each spring, the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) Costume Institute hosts the Met Gala to inaugurate the opening of its curated fashion exhibit. The annual gala is the fashion world's Super Bowl. In fact, it generates more "media impact value" than the Super Bowl itself, as confirmed by *The Guardian* in a recent article.

This year, Andrew Bolton, the Costume Institute's Curator in Charge, compiled an examination of renowned fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld's work for the Met's exhibit titled "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty." Accordingly, the dress code of this year's gala was "In honor of Karl."

Lagerfeld was an undeniable icon in the history of fashion. He worked at Balmain, Patou, Fendi, and Chloé before becoming the creative director of Chanel in 1983, a job he pursued until his death in 2019. Lagerfeld was a master of his craft, and he was responsible for making Chanel what it is today.

The most obvious way to be on theme for this Met Gala would have been to pull from the archives of Lagerfeld's Chanel collection or, if given the privilege, to wear one of Lagerfeld's custom-made pieces. Both would

have been boring. It's easy to look good if you're a celebrity, so just looking pretty at the Met Gala does not cut it.

Kate Moss, for example, looked elegant and beautiful in a baby pink slip dress, but I would wear that dress to Last Hurrah. It did not live up to the event. The gala is a costume party, after all, not an "adult prom," as Sophie Sharko '24 noted. I hoped for drama in any combination of bows, camellias, tweed, black and white, baby pink, pearls, accentuated waists, and wide shoulders.

So, who won? Fashion is art and inherently subjective, but here is my proudly well-educated, one-hundred-percent accurate opinion. You might need to Google the looks to follow along — it's more fun that way.

In the archival category, Ashley Graham won. Collaborating with designer Harris Reed, Graham created a look that was a nod to Chanel Haute Couture of the mid '80s and early '90s, manipulating a Chanel spring 1987 couture gown to give it more drama — as one should for the Met Gala.

Alongside Graham, the winners of the night was Camila Morrone. Morrone wore a Rodarte dress with Fred Leighton jewelry and a Jennifer Behr bow. The silhouette of the dress was interesting, yet timeless and still on theme: wide shoulders, an ac-

centuated waist, and a bow characteristic of Lagerfeld's Chanel in her hair. The look was a perfect nod to Lagerfeld's aesthetic, but in a very Rodarte way.

Liu Wen also rocked the red carpet in her Tory Burch gown that embodies the elegance and grandeur of the gala itself while still staying on theme. The custom gown was reminiscent of the 1950s, when Lagerfeld designed for Jean Patou. The bodice was sculpted from black grosgrain ribbons, each individually hand-sewn and engineered to curve around the body, with layers of tulle and hand-painted silk organza flowers. The final result was perfect.

On the other hand, the looks of Dua Lipa and Penelope Cruz, two of the five Met Gala Co-Chairs, fell flat. Global popstar Dua Lipa looked stunning and on theme, yet still boring with a vintage Chanel FW '92 bridal tweed gown. Of course it's chic, but it's nothing incredible. Cruz, gave a more interesting look, but the Chanel bridal dress she wore still came straight from the archives.

Big lessons learned: whether invited to the Met Gala or not, play it unconventional instead of safe, add drama, and make it your own. That's my take.

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PULLING BACK THE CURTAINS: UNVEILING THE STAGE MAGIC OF *MAMMA MIA!*

By **Grace LaPlaca '25**
Copy Editor

Choate's annual spring musical always features elaborate sets, seamless transitions, and eye-catching costumes. This year, *Mamma Mia!* will grace the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) from May 18 to May 20.

While audience members can admire the meticulous details of the set and the actors twirling in their costumes, what happens backstage to make the production possible is often overlooked. Faculty members and students who work on the set design, sound, lighting, and costumes play a crucial role in producing the annual musical.

Typically, a set designer from outside of Choate works in conjunction with the musical's director, Ms. Deighna DeRiu, to design the set for the play. Then, the design sketches are sent to Technical Director Mr. Mark Gostomski, who plans how the vision can be achieved, down to the minute details. Each show presents its own unique set of challenges and heavy considerations.

At the start of production of *Mamma Mia!*, Mr. Gostomski asked himself, "How do we create the world of the play, both what's needed due to the script, and what's desired by the designer, artist, and director? What's possible with the capabilities that we have, as well as what's possible with the timeline?"

After figuring out the logistics, much of the construction of the set is the responsibility of students enrolled in Tech Theater for their afternoon activity. The group is also responsible for aspects of lighting, sound, and costuming.

In addition to a student team for set production, the stage is also managed by a student group. The responsibilities of stage managers include helping actors with positions on stage, coordinating scene changes, and preparing props for a given scene. The role also covers much of the organizational side of the show, from paperwork and emails to taking notes on the production overall.

Justyce Easter-Butcher '24 started managing last year. "It gets you used to a lot of the things that actually happen if anyone wanted to stage manage out in the world,"



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News
Danny Yoon '24 and Elsa Franks '24 rehearse for the spring musical.

said Easter-Butcher. The managers are also available to answer any questions from actors. "We're their first point of contact before going to anybody else," said Qin Caldwell '24, the Head Stage Manager.

Unlike previous years, the live band for the musical will play under the stage in a closed-off room to accommodate the musical's larger cast. In the past, the musicians were positioned in the pit, which is an area formed by depressing the front part of the stage.

Sound Technician and Assistant Technical Director Mr. Paul Bozzi set up the space and outfitted it with audio equipment. "It's like designing and building a recording studio," he said. With 26 lines of audio for the band as well as cameras and displays for the cast and musicians to communicate, Mr. Bozzi's task was no small feat. He said, "It's a cool way to present the show because everything goes through the system."

In the puzzle of production, costuming is another crucial piece. Kinsey Ho '23 was inspired to join the *Mamma Mia!* costuming team after being in the cast of the winter show, *She Kills Monsters*. "The costume crew helped us in and out of the wigs, the costumes, the quick changes," she said. "I was really impressed with all the stuff that they got done. So that's what made me want to try it out for myself."

Jeremiah Olubowale '25, a member of the costuming team for both *Mamma Mia!* and past shows, described the process for this production: "I remember, at the beginning of the term, everyone

chose a character from the play, and we made a color palette and some ideas for outfits." Then, the group searched the PMAC costume supply and selected pieces that fit the vision. Once selected, the costumes were adjusted to fit the actor wearing them.

Elsa Franks '24, who will play Sophie in the show, said, "It's really important, especially because we're doing a lot of high activity dancing and singing and moving around. You want to have a costume that works for you."

The costuming process is also integral to fostering a supportive environment for the cast. Marissa Jacobs '24, Dance Captain for *Mamma Mia!* and an actress in past productions, said, "When the costumes are good, and you're out there, and you're feeling good about yourself because of what you're wearing, I just feel like that obviously elevates the energy of everybody on stage."

The production of *Mamma Mia!*, like every show, requires an incredible amount of persistence, creativity, and dedication from many groups of people. The result is a show characterized by professionalism and positive energy — an outcome well worth the work.

As is with many other students and faculty involved in *Mamma Mia!*, the process for Mr. Gostomski is one fueled by passion. "I get to play every day and create things out of who knows what," he said. "I get to make magic."

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ALUMNI FILMMAKERS PAY CHOATE STUDENTS A VISIT

By **Adrian Torres '25**
Copy Editor

As you unwind by watching the latest TV shows and movies, you might just stumble across the works of Choate alumni in the filmmaking industry. From the TV series *The Flash* to the movie *Borat*, Mr. David McWhirter '82 and Mr. Anthony Hardwick '84 have worked on notable productions in film and TV through their roles as director and cinematographer, respectively. On May 5, Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick came to campus from Los Angeles to visit theater classes and hold a Q&A session for students.

A result of the coordination between the Alumni Relations Office and Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick, planning for their visit began two years ago when Mr. McWhirter expressed interest in reconnecting with the

School and talking to students. During this time, Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick worked on the upcoming NBC show *Found* together. After recognizing each other as Choate alumni, Mr. Hardwick agreed to visit campus with Mr. McWhirter.

Mr. Chris Reichart, Senior Associate Director of the Alumni Relations and Development Office and friend of Mr. McWhirter, and Director of Alumni Relations Ms. Andrea Solomon then worked closely with Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick to coordinate and bring this event to reality.

Once on campus, the first stop of Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick's visit was the Theater Production Design class, where they spoke with students about the class's three different set design projects. "We were late [to the next class] because

we wanted to talk about all three, and we were rambling probably a little bit, because we love it and Chris [Reichart] was like, 'we gotta hustle.'"

The filmmakers' next commitment was at Theater and English teacher Mrs. Kate Doak's Playwriting and Screenwriting class, where they answered questions about the screenwriting process and how filmmakers adapt scenes from the script and edit in post-production.

"These alumni filmmakers brought so much wisdom and passion for their work to our campus," said Mrs. Doak regarding their visit.

In the evening, Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick held a Q&A session for students in the Arts Concentration Signature Program. They went into more detail about their paths to the film industry and offered

students advice about their own potential careers in film.

Lorraine Hillgen-Santa '24, who attended the Q&A, said, "Both had planned on going into the medical field until they had a realization that they would be happier creating film. I think that really stood out to me as such a beautiful way to live life since they both found happiness and success in their work, which is really important."

The filmmakers emphasized the importance of doing their best in every endeavor to the students. "Show up early, dedicate yourself to the work, be a communicative and flexible part of each environment you are able to be a part of, and learn from everyone around you," summarized Mrs. Doak.

Mr. McWhirter and Mr. Hardwick enjoyed seeing student-created works during their short time on campus.

"It was really nice to see current students and how excited they are and passionate about the projects they're pursuing," said Mr. Hardwick. "I'm certain I would have taken some of [the Arts Concentration courses] ... had there been a course like that. There's no question that I would have taken it. Screenwriting, production design, all of them. None of that quite existed the way it does today."

They credited their time at Choate and the large impact it had on their development and careers. "Choate prepared us not just for our careers in film, but for our lives in general," said Mr. Hardwick. "If you go through three or four years here and graduate, I think the confidence it gives you for the rest of your life [makes you realize] you can literally do anything."

Overall, the two enjoyed their return to campus. They were able to speak with students and reacquaint themselves with the School through a more authentic lens. "[Reunions] aren't the same. It's kind of like watching outside the box. You don't interact with the students," said Mr. McWhirter. "We got to see how classes run and how the rehearsals runs. We got to watch what was important to us, watching their work."

When asked what he hopes for students to take away from their visit, Mr. Hardwick said "whatever you do, whether it's business, finance, medicine, arts, you should do it because you love it. Because if you love the work, you're going to excel at it. You're going to enjoy your whole life."

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Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News
Mr. Hardwick and Mr. McWhirter speak to students in a Q&A.



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News
Theater students ask the filmmakers questions.

FIELD REPORT

Choate Spring Record

117 - 54 - 0

Varsity Games

Girls' Softball (11-2)
vs. Westminster, 2-7

Boys' Lacrosse (12-1)
vs. Berkshire, 9-8

Girls' Lacrosse (7-7)
vs. Westminster, 8-14

Boys' Tennis (7-1)
vs. Kent, 7-0

Girls' Water Polo (7-3)
vs. Hopkins, 10-0

Ultimate Frisbee (6-2)
vs. Berlin, 15-11

Boys' Volleyball (3-5)
vs. NMH, 2-3

Girls' Tennis (4-4)
vs. Westminster, 9-0

J.V. Games

Boys' Tennis (6-1)
vs. Kent, 6-1

Girls' Lacrosse (7-2)
vs. Westminster, 8-4

Ultimate Frisbee (2-1)
vs. Hotchkiss, 7-6

Boys' Lacrosse (3-3)
vs. Taft, 5-9

SPRING SPORTS SUCCESS:

VARSITY SPORTS RECAP

By Reinah Lee '26 and Kaya Weerasuriya '26

Copy Editor and Reporter

The Wild Boars have had a successful season winning games and breaking records this spring. As the spring season winds down, here is a look at each team's progress and senior reflections.

Girls' Varsity Lacrosse
The defending New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Founders League B-Bracket Champions, Girls' Varsity Lacrosse, are led by Co-Captains Cadence Secreto '23, Sarah Markley '23, and Mieke Buterbaugh '23. A notable moment for the team was their overtime win at Berkshire: "We all had so much camaraderie and spirit towards winning, and you could feel that we really wanted to win," said Secreto.

Boys' Varsity Lacrosse
The Boys' Varsity Lacrosse team is going strong with a 12-1 record. On April 15, the team traveled to Deerfield Academy, where they beat the rival team in a 14-13 turnout. They also snagged a 13-9 win against Avon Old Farms School at home. Co-Captain Adam Carroll '23 appreciates the team's range and said, "We have a lot of really good young players and a lot of really good older players. It's a good mix on both ends."

Boys' Varsity Baseball
After starting the season strong with a 12-5 win against Hotchkiss, Boys' Varsity Baseball earned an unexpected 1-0 win against The Loomis Chaffee School on April 19. Co-Captain Mac Cady '23 said, "Going into [the game], we didn't think that we were going to win, but we played loose and played well because of it." Cady has been a part of the team for his four years at Choate and will miss being in the dugout and messing around with his teammates at practice.

Girls' Varsity Softball
Currently the defending Western New England Champions and leading the Class A NEPSAC standings, Girls' Varsity Softball has an 11-2 record. This year's fairly small team consists of 11 girls; nevertheless, "everyone has improved so much," Co-Captain Heidi Li '23 said. Li will miss having fun on the bus rides with karaoke after she graduates.

Girls' Varsity Crew
A few regattas into the season, Girls' Varsity Crew has wins over Northfield Mount Hermon School and Hopkins School on April 12 and 15 respectively. On May 7, Co-Captains Tallulah Baird '23, Ruby Cameron '23, Ryan Froeb '23, and Gaby Nirmal '23 led their team at the Founders Day Regatta, where the second varsity boat

won their race. Baird reflected, "Over the past few years, I've really seen the team come together as one... to get stronger mentally and physically."

Boys' Varsity Crew
Boys' Varsity Crew bested Hopkins on April 12, with the second and third varsity boats winning and the first varsity race ending in a tie. Later in the season, the first and third varsity boats won against Taft. At the Founders League Championship, the first varsity boat placed second overall, besting eight crews. The team looks forward to an exciting few weeks of racing in the lead-up to the New England Championships.

Girls' Varsity Tennis
Girls' Varsity Tennis started the season strong with a 6-3 win against The Loomis Chaffee School. Led by Captain Sophia Zhang '23, they also defeated Kent School 7-2 on May 3. While Zhang said that departing from the team at the end of the year will be bittersweet, she is proud of her team and hopes that this season will be one to remember.

Boys' Varsity Tennis
Led by Captain John Henderson '23, the Boys' Varsity Tennis team defeated Trinity-Pawling 6-1 on April 26. They won 5-2 against both The Loomis Chaffee School and Westminster School and lost no matches at their 7-0 win against Kingswood Oxford School. They will compete in the New England Tennis Championships on May 20.

Varsity Ultimate Frisbee
Ultimate Frisbee has been dominating their competition, including a 14-8 win against Green Farms Academy on April 12 and a 14-6 win against North Branford High School on April 26. The team entered the New England Playoffs on May 13 to compete for a spot at the New England Prep School Ultimate League (NEPSUL) Championships.

Girls' Varsity Water Polo
On April 26, Girls' Varsity Water Polo went into overtime in a thrilling match against Deerfield Academy and finished with a 8-6 win. They also defeated Phillips Academy Andover, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Hopkins School. According to Co-Captain Tiffany Xiao '23, the program has grown from six to 22 players over two years, improving the team's performance from last year.

Boys' Varsity Track & Field
Boys' Varsity Track and Field emerged victorious on April 15 after they competed in 17 events against both Westminster School and Trinity-Pawling School. The

team, led by Captain Payton Garcia '23, will continue to work hard with hopes of qualifying for the upcoming New England Track & Field Championships on May 20.

Girls' Varsity Track & Field
Girls' Varsity Track beat Westminster School at their meet on April 15. Along with their victory, they also placed second out of four teams on April 12 among Miss Porter's School, The Taft School, and Hopkins School. The team looks forward to concluding their season with a podium spot at the NEPSAC Championships at the end of May.

Boys' Varsity Golf
Dominating their opponents with a record of 12-3, Boys' Varsity Golf has had wins against Pomfret School, Hopkins School, Avon Old Farms School, and Canterbury School, among others. One of their biggest victories was placing first at the ten-team Suffield Invitational Tournament on April 26. The team finished their season at the Bader Golf Tournament on May 13.

Girls' Varsity Golf
With four wins under their belt and just one loss, Girls' Varsity Golf is off to a great start this season. The team collected victories against many schools, including Miss Porter's School, The Ethel Walker School, and The Loomis Chaffee School. Led by Captain Cassatt Boatwright '24, the team will play their final match at home against The Ethel Walker School on May 17.

Boys' Varsity Volleyball
This season, Boys' Varsity Volleyball had wins against Northfield Mount Hermon School and Forman School, with their final games against Phillips Academy, Northfield Mount Hermon School, and Phillips Exeter Academy all on May 13. Led by Captain Tenzin Bista '23, the team's goal is to complete the 2023 season with some additional wins from upcoming games.

Varsity Sailing
Since its return in 2013 after a 21 year hiatus, Varsity Sailing has demonstrated strong teamwork and communication. They competed at New England Schools Team Racing Championship on May 6 and will participate in the Connecticut State Championships on May 20. Captain Julia Brighton '23 is excited to lead her crew through a competitive and fun remainder of the spring sports season.

All team records were last updated on May 10, 2023.

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Boar Pen Hosts Community Sports Events

By Leilani Gao '26

Reporter

Students looking for fun and informal sports competitions with their form and dorm need not look further.

This spring, Boar Pen organized two exciting sports events for the Choate community: President's Cup (P-Cup), an inter-dorm softball tournament, and Powder Puff, an inter-form football game for female-identifying students.

While this year's sport for the P-Cup tournament is softball, historically, P-Cup has been played in every sport at Choate and only became limited to softball as participation decreased over time.

Students sign up to play as a dorm and can draft day students onto their team. The tournament will take place every Sunday for several weeks, with dorms competing against each other until there is a winner.

The first round of the competition was held on May 7. Quantrell House, Spencer House, Tenney House, and Pratt 200 all successfully moved onto the next round of competitions on May 14.

According to Boar Pen member David Hallal '23, official P-Cup tournaments have been on hiatus at least since the pandemic. "I heard it was a lot of fun ... we wanted to officially run it back this year, so everybody had a chance to participate," Hallal said. "Bringing back P-Cup is something that the School has urged us to do."

Another Boar Pen member Sachi Mehra '23 highlighted the power of playing softball to bring together the community: "[Softball] can bring people together, you don't need too much skill or athleticism to really play. It's a universal sport."

Female-identifying also students had the opportunity to participate in Powder Puff on May 12.

In the game, these students are trained by members of Choate's football team to compete in football. Each form participates as a team against other grades. This year, Hallal coached the freshman team. Mehra designed the t-shirts to look like football jerseys, and each form sported a unique color and number.

Powder Puff can be empowering for female-identifying students. Mehra recalled, "Doing Powder Puff my sophomore year led me to start thinking about joining the football team my junior year. I want to get more exposure for girls who play the sport."

Jimena Acosta '23 has been an eager participant of Powder Puff in past years. "It's interesting to see these football PG's [post-graduates] trying to coach sophomore girls in football, and it's hilarious," she said.

Acosta most appreciates the sense of unity within forms at Powder Puff. "I feel like all these events where it's grade against grade bring together people you don't normally interact with," she said.

Recounting Powder Puff last year, Virginia Nelson '25 shared, "We lost, but it was a fun experience, and it was a bonding experience, and everyone thought it was funny." Nelson enjoyed "getting to play against prefects [and] tackling other girls" and said that "the overall experience is a lot of fun." She plans to compete in Powder Puff this year, as well.

Rachel Miller '23, a fellow Boar Pen member, emphasized, "A lot of [the] time, girls aren't considered as valuable in their athleticism. I'm excited to have that moment for girls."

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Students participate in President's Cup on Sunday, May 7.

CONGRATULATIONS, SENIOR ATHLETES, ON SIGNING DAY!



Senior athletes celebrate Signing Day on May 10.