



## Mr. Will Gilyard '98 Takes New Dean of Students Position



Photo by Chris Childs '24/The Choate News

Mr. Will Gilyard '98 serves as the new Dean of Students.

By **Nilan Kathir '25**  
Reporter

At the beginning of the new school year, the Choate community welcomed a new yet familiar face into the Dean of Students's office. Following Mr. Mike Velez '00's departure at the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, Mr. Will Gilyard '98 has stepped into his new position as Dean of Students with positivity and enthusiasm.

Previously a Dean of Students for six years at The Kingswood Oxford School, a form dean for the Class of 2023, and the Associate for Alumni Engagement, Mr. Gilyard brings extensive experience to his role.

Mr. Gilyard is able to establish relationships that allow him to best support students. He does so through what he described as having an "open door policy, being a listener first to what the kids are saying, ... and open communication and transparency."

His dedication to preserving the best interests of the student body is unwavering, and he hopes to make the community "a safe one in which [the students] can thrive, stretch themselves, and be curious."

The interview for the position followed an extensive process that included meetings with student leaders, the Judicial Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Student Council, Head Prefects, deans, senior officers, and the administrative team, Mr. Gilyard said.

Throughout the selection process, led by Head of Student and Academic Life Ms. Jenny Elliott, the selection committee posed various questions intended to help learn more about Mr. Gilyard and his goals as the Dean of Students.

Around the Deans' Office, Mr. Gilyard's passion for serving his community is clear. "He brings an enthusiasm that is contagious in this office. He's always got a big smile on his face, and he's always happy to see students," Ms.

Judy Senft, Assistant to the Dean of Students, said.

Similarly, Mr. Pat Dennehy, Associate Dean of Students, said Mr. Gilyard's new style of leadership in the Deans' Office has "reinvigorated our office in a lot of ways."

Mr. Gilyard has already taken his first steps in making an impact on the School through taking "pride in where we are and the opportunities we have." In addition, he maintained a focus to ensure that "kids are not overwhelmed by pressures."

This year, he has overseen changes to the advising system and housing process as well as the expansion of leadership programming. He has also worked on new Student Council initiatives and the updated visitation policy.

"I have the utmost confidence in his leadership," Mr. Dennehy said of Mr. Gilyard. "I think he's going to be excellent."

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## STUDENTS EXPLORE CULTURE THROUGH STUDY ABROAD

By **Charlotte Flynn '25**  
Reporter

Choate's study abroad program gives students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of different academic and cultural interests while enjoying language learning through immersive experiences around the world. The students who studied abroad in the 2022-2023 school year, the first cohort to do so since the start of the pandemic, have returned to campus for the new school year.

Some destinations students explored included Spain, France, Italy, and Singapore. With a heavy focus on language immersion, students were re-

quired to communicate in their selected language of study while staying with a host family and participating in classes.

Fifth-former Quinn Farmer '25 studied abroad in Rennes, France, during the winter and spring terms last year. She enjoyed her experience with her host family and is still in touch with them.

Through the program, Farmer became more independent and learned more about who she was as an individual. She added, "I'm a lot more extroverted after dealing with people in a new language and learning to be okay with being wrong and making mistakes within learning a language."

Sixth-former Jada Dixon '24 also traveled to Rennes during their fifth-form year. The study abroad experience inspired them to not only return to France, but to travel more in general as well.

Dixon's time in France also allowed them to gain a better understanding of themselves. "You are more than just the relationships you have with your family and friends and the ties of where you are from," they said.

In June 2023, Lucy Domingo '26 participated in Choate's inaugural trip to Singapore. 16 students spent 10 days studying business, sustainability, and entrepreneurship. Led by Chinese teacher Dr. Carol Chen-Lin and humanities teacher Mr. Craig Johnson, attendees visited cultural landmarks, museums, and startups focusing on sustainability and innovation.

Domingo described that her experience in Singapore gave her a more "well-rounded perspective of the world, the business world, along with life in Southeast Asia."

Fifth-former Lila Gizzie '25 studied in Zaragoza, Spain, during the winter and spring terms last year. Gizzie decided to study abroad to immerse herself in a new culture and work on speaking Spanish. She shared, "It gave me the opportunity to enhance my language skills."

Director of Global Engagement Ms. Ashley Sinclair hopes that the program will allow students to become "more confident in themselves, have stronger judgment and abilities, and feel ready for new and unfamiliar situations."

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Photo courtesy of Chloe Benson '24

Chloe Benson '24 gifts Choate gear to her host family in Zaragoza, Spain.



Photo courtesy of Zainab Khokha '24

16 Choate students on the summer Singapore trip pose in front of the Marina Bay Sands.

## Choate Leadership Institute Undergoes Change



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Student leaders and sixth-formers, dressed in yellow T-shirts, aid new students in registration.

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

Over the summer, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residential Life Mr. Pat Dennehy implemented a few important changes within the Choate Leadership Institute (CLI), a program designed to train student leaders to become better serve the community in their roles.

For the first time, six leadership groups arrived on campus at the same time. "This was an intentional shift to provide one leadership training program for most of our student leadership groups, which included team captains, prefects, International and Pathways Mentors, Judicial

Committee committee members, and Student Council members," Mr. Dennehy said.

Student leaders moved in more than a week before classes started for sufficient time to immerse themselves in their leadership roles. "There is a lot of responsibility that comes with leadership, and so the goal of the program is to help prepare students for situations they may confront while here but also realize the benefits and joy that comes from leading," Mr. Dennehy said. "The hope is that our student leaders can find ways to empower others and support community members in the best way they can but also understand that leadership is a muscle that needs to be constantly cared for and developed."

At the opening dinner on August 29, Mr. Dennehy announced that the theme for CLI this year was "one rung at a time." Student leaders received an insulated tumbler with the phrase as a reminder to take leadership responsibilities one day at a time by supporting each other while maintaining personal boundaries.

Caroline Kim '25, an International Student Mentor who participated in the CLI, said, "I think it brought together all the different leaders that have critical roles in the Choate community, and it really made everybody feel like we were all working towards a common goal."

Before this year, CLI was only for prefects, and other leadership groups had training



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Memorial House prefects are ready to welcome new students during Opening Days.

sessions separately during orientation week and throughout the school year.

However, following this year's amendments, all student leaders attended both general and position-specific orientation programs that served to prepare them for their year of mentorship ahead. Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers said, "The reason why all leadership groups came together for CLI was to signal, definitively, that all leadership positions are equally important."

The remodeled program also gave student leaders more extensive training. Ms. Ashley Sinclair, the faculty adviser to the International Student Mentors, said, "In addition to the all-student training, we were also able

to have more in-depth training on issues that past international students had requested, such as domestic diversity."

While Student Council didn't have designated meeting times before classes began in previous years, the group had a head start with revising their constitution, exploring new initiatives, and setting goals for themselves at CLI this year. "I really enjoyed the extra time to communicate with everyone," Student Body President and four-year Student Council member Amanda Benneh '24 said. "Now, we're able to delve deeper into what we wanted to do without the time crunch."

However, Kim said she wished CLI wasn't as long. "I

know scheduling can be hard, but as a whole, the program didn't need to be as early or as long as it was and could be changed so that students don't need to be here a whole week before school starts," she said.

On the whole, CLI equipped student leaders with skills to make an impact on the greater Choate community, whether it be in the dorm, on the field, or in the classroom. Nichols prefect Racquel Welcome '24 said, "It made me feel prepared for anything that might come up in my upcoming leadership position."

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### Activism Turned Vandalism

Disruptive protests are counter-productive to climate activism  
**Opinions N/W • P5**



**Seeing Double?**  
Living at Choate with a familiar face  
**Features • P6**

### A Balancing Act

A world-class juggler visits Choate  
**Arts • P7**



**Water Polo Prodigy**  
Chris Childs '24's journey in the pool  
**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 Melody Qian '24, Toffy Prakittiphoom '24, Lauren Kee '24, and Ethan Cheung '27.

### CHOATE STUDENT COUNCIL



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## WELCOME, NEW FACULTY!



Photo courtesy of Mr. Chris Aguiar

*Mr. Chris Aguiar*  
By **Charlotte Flynn '25**

Mr. Chris Aguiar '11 is a new biology teacher, House Mentor in Woodhouse (with his two cats), and assistant coach for Boys' Junior Varsity Soccer. Because of how impactful his time as a student at Choate was, Mr. Aguiar is excited to return as a teacher. He said, "The people that I got to meet were the heart of my Choate experience." Mr. Aguiar hopes to prepare his students to be "well-rounded learners to take the next step after Choate."



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Mr. Benson Bernard*  
By **Harper Marsden-Uren '26**

Mr. Benson Bernard is a new physics and chemistry teacher. Before coming to Choate, Mr. Bernard worked at the Xavier High School, an all-boys Jesuit institution, in Manhattan, an experience that he described as "very different" from Choate. He is most excited to engage in the "holistic education for a student," emphasizing the importance of critical thinking and the application of knowledge acquired in class to the real world. Outside the classroom, Mr. Bernard does dorm duty in Edsall House.



Photo by Toffy Prakittipoom '24/The Choate News

*Mr. Michael Abbatiello*  
By **Fiona Fu '25**

Mr. Michael Abbatiello is the new Associate Technical Director for the Arts Department. Mr. Abbatiello holds a BFA in Media and Performance with Choreography from The Ohio State University. Prior to coming to Choate, Mr. Abbatiello worked as the Lighting Designer and Technical Director for Middlebury College's Dance Department. "I'm looking forward to being a part of the Choate community while reconnecting with my stage roots and working to create magic," he said.

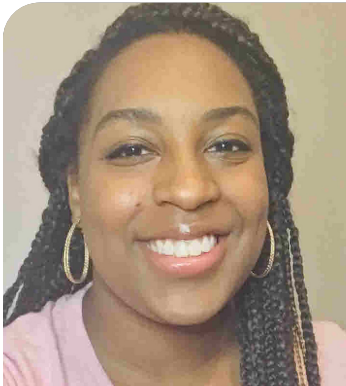


Photo courtesy of Ms. Daisy Braddy

*Ms. Daisy Braddy*  
By **Proud Tangaravakoon '27**

Ms. Daisy Braddy has been working at Choate since 2021 in Human Resources but recently became an official faculty member. Ms. Braddy attended Bentley University, where she studied business management. She is now an admission officer after seeing student tour guides during the summer and connecting with them. She is looking forward to getting to know students and serving as a mentor to student: "I am very excited to be a bigger part of Choate's community!"



Photo courtesy of Ms. Nicole Brothers

*Ms. Nicole Brothers*  
By **Alisha Gashu '27**

Ms. Nicole Brothers is a new addition to the Andrew Mellon Library staff. Before Choate, she lived in Qatar, where she worked at a Texas A&M University branch campus. She shared that the most inviting aspect of working at Choate was being able to engage with a culturally diverse school community. Ms. Brothers encouraged all students to ask questions and seek help from the librarian team. She said, "Even if you are feeling awkward or uncomfortable, absolutely bother the librarians."



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Ms. Donna Canada-Smith*  
By **Calvin Moon '24**

Ms. Donna Canada-Smith is a new French and Spanish teacher, assistant coach for Girls' Junior Varsity Volleyball, and House Mentor in Nichols. Before Choate, she taught at Millbrook School in New York and a day school in California. "I hope that curiosity and excitement transpire in my classroom and inspire at least one or hopefully many students to pursue similar studies or at least enjoy their time here learning languages," she said.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Christina Cicero

*Ms. Christina Cicero*  
By **Sophia Lind '27**

Ms. Christina Cicero is a new member of the Choate Counseling team. She attended Central Connecticut State University and Radford University. Prior to Choate, Ms. Cicero served as a school therapist and as a supervisor at a therapeutic day school. Excited to make an impact on the Choate community, Ms. Cicero said, "I hope to be here as a support for students and staff. I hope my personality and overall spirit is a great fit for some of the students."



Photo courtesy of Ms. Molly Dullea

*Ms. Molly Dullea*  
By **Fiona Fu '25**

Ms. Molly Dullea is a new math teacher coming to Choate from St. George's School in Rhode Island, where she has taught for the past nine years. In addition to her role in the Math Department, she is a House Mentor in Mead and will be coaching Boys' Junior Varsity Basketball and Girls' Junior Varsity Lacrosse. Ms. Dullea lives on campus with her wife and children. She hopes to not only enhance students' lives inside the classroom, but also to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion at Choate.



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Dr. Maria Ghiggia*  
By **Harper Marsden-Uren '26**

Hailing from Argentina, new Spanish teacher Dr. Maria Ghiggia is excited about the academic rigor and multifaceted approach to learning at Choate. What initially drew Dr. Ghiggia to Choate was the overwhelming sense of community and belonging, and she hopes to instill that same sense of spirit in her students. She teaches Spanish 350 and 400 and finds immersing oneself in culture an integral part of learning a language. When she's not teaching, she enjoys running, biking, and reading.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Stephanie Gold

*Mrs. Stephanie Gold*  
By **Victoria DeVito '27**

A member of the Archives staff since 2015, Mrs. Stephanie Gold became an official member of the faculty this summer as a Special Collections Librarian. As an archivist, Mrs. Gold manages Choate's anthology of alumni works. For her, the most rewarding part of her job is sharing her passion for history. She said, "If I can help [students] say 'this is cool' and just slowly open them up to the world of primary sources that are available to them — that's the impact I want to make."



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Dr. Sarah Hancock*  
By **Virginia Nelson '25**

Dr. Sarah Hancock is an English teacher and an assistant coach to the Girls' Varsity Water Polo team. Dr. Hancock came to Choate after finishing her PhD at Carnegie Mellon University, where she also taught writing, literature, and art history classes. Her dissertation was entitled "The Social Life of Flowers: Women and Ornament in Eighteenth-Century Britain." She said, "I am excited to work with students who are so passionate and motivated to learn and grow."



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Mr. Matt Kelsey*  
By **Jinx Hartong '27**

Mr. Matt Kelsey is a new digital art teacher. Before Choate, Mr. Kelsey taught filmmaking at Betsy Ross Art Magnet School in New Haven, Connecticut. He lives off-campus with his daughter and two pets, Annie and Paisley. Outside of class, he spends his free time building LEGO sets, listening to music, gaming, and enjoying the outdoors. Mr. Kelsey looks forward to empowering the filmmaking community at Choate as well as fostering equity and inclusion within the community.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Lisa Kimball

*Ms. Lisa Kimball*  
By **Allie McNervey '27**

Ms. Lisa Kimball is a new Associate Director of Counseling. Ms. Kimball was drawn to Choate because of the strong sense of community and unique setting of a boarding school. She hopes to have a positive impact on students by supporting them in all their endeavors and encouraging them to grow a stronger sense of self. Ms. Kimball is looking forward to seeing students do what they love outside of the classroom and attending performances, games, and productions.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Charlotte Peterson

*Ms. Charlotte Peterson*  
By **Ellie Porter '25**

Hailing from New York, Ms. Charlotte Peterson is a new member of the Admission Office. After years of working in admissions at both colleges and high schools, she decided to become an admission officer at Choate. Here, she is involved in the Gold Key tour guide program and is a House Mentor in Bernhard. She enjoys the strong sense of community at Choate, saying, "Everyone is just grateful for one another, and I really appreciate the culture of gratitude."



Photo courtesy of Mr. ShaCor Privott

*Mr. ShaCor Privott*  
By **Harper Marsden-Uren '26**

A graduate of Central Connecticut State University and the University of Pennsylvania, Mr. ShaCor Privott returned to Choate this year as the new Assistant Director of Admission after having coached football in 2017. As an Assistant Director of Admission and House Mentor in Spencer, Mr. Privott is most excited to meet students who are passionate about all aspects of Choate life. A football, basketball, rugby, and track and field athlete, Mr. Privott enjoys working out and watching sports.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Shyla Saltzman

*Dr. Shyla Saltzman*  
By **Eshana Hora '27**

Dr. Shyla Saltzman is a new English teacher. Prior to joining Choate, Dr. Saltzman attended Williams College. She then worked at Capital Community College as an English professor. She chose to work at Choate because of the welcoming feeling she received from the community during her initial visit. "I hope to help students become more confident as writers and more insightful and compassionate as readers," Dr. Saltzman said.



Photo courtesy of Mx. Athira Sanal

*Mx. Athira Sanal*  
By **Jolie Zhang '26**

Mx. Athira Sanal brings their expertise to the Math Department at Choate, where they teach Linear Algebra and Calculus AB. They were drawn to the diverse student body and the strong sense of community at Choate. "My goal and reason for why I became a teacher is to increase diversity in STEM. That's something I worked towards at every institution," they said. Mx. Sanal looks forward to watching their students' post-Choate journeys both within and beyond STEM.



Photo courtesy of the Choate Directory

*Mr. Rob Sanders*  
By **Sophie Chung '27**

Mr. Rob Sanders is a new math teacher. Outside of the classroom, he is as a coach for Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey as well as a Strength Coach in the weight room. Prior to his arrival at Choate, he taught in New York at Archbishop Stepinac High School and Trinity-Pawling School. "I think Choate holds their students to a very high standard, and I think that I'm able to hold kids to a standard and push them to be the best versions of themselves," Mr. Sanders said.



Photo courtesy of Ms. Kit Stone

*Ms. Kit Stone*  
By **Arushi Krishnan '27**

Ms. Kit Stone is a new chemistry teacher and House Mentor in Memorial House. She is also an assistant volleyball coach for the girls' varsity team in the fall and the boys' varsity team in the spring. "I was drawn to how progressive this school is, with students being leaders on all kinds of issues," Ms. Stone said. In general, she wishes for her students "to see science as a potential future endeavor for themselves, and not just a class they have to get through."



## Choate Alumnus and Wallingford Mayoral Candidate Runs Again

By **Rachel Fan '27**  
Reporter

Choate alumnus and Democratic candidate Mr. Riley O'Connell '14 is relaunching his campaign to be the youngest mayor in Wallingford's history. Notable, too, is that, for the first time in 40 years, incumbent mayor Mr. William Dickinson Jr. will not be the Republican candidate on the ballot.

Mr. Dickinson's decision to forgo running for a 21st term has brought on a buzz of anticipation within Wallingford's close-knit community. Residents are eagerly awaiting the voting period and impending results, which are scheduled for early November.

Two years ago, Mr. O'Connell launched a competitive campaign in the Wallingford mayoral election of 2021. He came closer to ending Mr. Dickinson's historic term than any other Democrat had in the past three decades, losing the ballot by a margin of less than 400 votes.

If elected as mayor, Mr. O'Connell plans to modernize Wallingford through a series of public safety policies and initiatives. Bringing up the challenges that arise from a town with an outdated framework, he said, "We operate as if we're in the 1980s, and it's not healthy for a town to be stuck in a bygone era." His agenda includes implementing direct deposit for town employees, installing a computer email for all workers, and introducing online bill payment options for residents.



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Wallingford resident plants pro-O'Connell sign outside their home.

Furthermore, Mr. O'Connell emphasized the pressing need for infrastructural improvements, from repaving roads to securing grant money for air conditioning in public high schools — a need highlighted by recent school closures due to high temperatures and a lack of working sustainable power.

A strong advocate for a forward-thinking approach, Mr. O'Connell aims to address more than just the immediate problems at hand. "Having a continuous, 15-year infrastructure plan is what my campaign proposes because, for the last

20 years, we've been without one," he said.

In addition to his commitment to modernization, a primary focus of Mr. O'Connell's will be to steer Wallingford toward a greener future. He hopes to increase the amount of renewable power sources and electricity, especially by prioritizing local solar initiatives. "There's nothing prohibiting us from getting into the solar development business," he said.

With Wallingford being one of three towns left in Connecticut to have municipal control of electricity, he believes that changes of power sources in

the city are a fiscal responsibility that should be taken care of and would be easily achieved. "We're in a unique situation in Wallingford," he said. "[It] gives us a lot of independence to make decisions at the local level on how we want to be sustainable in energy usage."

On September 14, Choate's Young Democrats club hosted Mr. O'Connell for a "town hall session." During the event, Mr. O'Connell offered students a closer look at his journey and campaign to bring Wallingford into the 21st century and participated in a Q&A session.

Vice President of Young Democrats Elia Ahmadi '24 said, "Mayors are community leaders. They're important leadership positions, and we wanted to give someone like [Mr. O'Connell] a platform."

Ahmadi expressed admiration for Mr. O'Connell's campaign: "[His] campaign is inspiring to us as students, especially as a young Democratic politician running in a city that has been historically Republican."

According to Mr. O'Connell, his Choate experience played a pivotal role in his political career. "I first had no interest in

politics," he recalled. "I was not politically involved whatsoever stepping into high school."

However, a class with HPRSS teacher Mr. Ned Gallagher transformed his perspective on government and fanned the flames of his budding interest in politics.

Academics aside, the relationships Mr. O'Connell cultivated at Choate continue to provide him with an enduring support system. "The friends that I made at Choate have played a huge role even now," he said.

Many of his former classmates have supported his campaign. "I've had friends whom I haven't seen since our high school graduation or the five-year reunion donate to the campaign," he said.

Mr. O'Connell is confident that he and his campaign, many of whom are familiar faces he worked with two years ago, will be a stronger force in the mayoral election than they had been in 2021. He shared, "They have gained a ton of experience and gotten so much more comfortable with their jobs." With an additional two years of political experience, he himself feels more comfortable with actively sharing his message by "knocking on doors, raising money, and hosting events."

On the Republican side, current Town Council President Mr. Vincent Cervoni has secured endorsement as the official Mayoral Candidate from the Wallingford Republican Town Committee.

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## LOCAL TOWNS CELEBRATE HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

By **Calvin Moon '24**  
Staff Reporter

Every year, the United States observes National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, celebrating the rich history, culture, and contributions of American citizens with roots in Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

In communities across Connecticut, residents have been gathering to uplift and share their traditions through vibrant activities and events, such as a concert series, a Hispanic genealogy program, and a fundraising wine event.

### INTEMPO:

For the Hispanic Heritage Month Concert Series this year, INTEMPO, a multicultural music education group based in Stamford, Connecticut, will be presenting "Sounds from Latino America" on October 1 in New Canaan and October 15 in Greenwich. The group's purpose is to promote cultural understanding through music education to children from immigrant backgrounds or other communities underrepresented in the arts.

The concert series will include 45-minute concerts in towns across Connecticut, including New Canaan, Darien, and Greenwich. With efforts to highlight the richness of Hispanic cultures

and the importance of preserving their uniqueness, the group will showcase Guatemalan music, Colombian national music pieces, and an Afro-Peruvian music style called Landó.

"We are just looking to give the [Hispanic community] a sense of empowerment, to say that your culture, your language is valuable," said CEO and founder of INTEMPO Ms. Angie Durwell. "You don't have to feel like you have to erase and forget all about your origin, but this community is welcoming you as a whole."

### Meriden Public Library:

The Meriden Public Library is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with an array of programs and events that reflect its mission of engaging lifelong learning and fostering community.

Acknowledging the large Hispanic population in Meriden, Connecticut, the library organized events to both welcome Hispanic and Latine populations and invite others to learn about the rich and diverse cultures of Spanish-speaking countries.

This year's celebration includes programs with mariachi bands, dance performances, traditional Mexican card games, and a Hispanic genealogy program, which intends to explore the roots of the local Hispanic community in the New England area.

Through these events, the library hopes to advance cultural understanding, diversity, and a sense of unity and pride within both Meriden's Hispanic and non-Hispanic communities. Meriden librarian Ms. Wanda Guzman said, "We just hope that people get a sense of belonging and create a future for Meriden."

### SCOW:

The Spanish Community of Wallingford (SCOW) supports the Latine community through a wide range of services, including medical assistance, mental healthcare, interpretation and translation of documents, programs for children, youth, and adults, leadership initiatives, and language education.

Assistant Executive Director of SCOW Ms. Lizandra Mejias-Salinas recognized Hispanic Heritage Month as a unique opportunity to share the richness of Hispanic culture and traditions with Wallingford: "[It is] an opportunity that we have to learn from each other, the opportunity to teach each other, and showcase those things that make us proud: the love of our values, our culture, and our traditions."

Their events for the month include an annual fundraising wine event featuring wines and food from various Latin American countries, as well as an empanada-cooking class at the Wallingford Public Library incorporating styles from Colombia, Mexico, and Puerto Rico. These programs aim to encourage open-mindedness, learning, and cross-cultural appreciation.

On a broader note, Hispanic Heritage Month recognizes the 60 million Hispanic Americans and Latine-identifying individuals in the U.S. They constitute the largest minority group in the U.S. today, and their diverse contributions to the nation's strength and prosperity span across government, culture, the economy, entertainment, and more.

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## SHEEHAN TEAMS PRACTICE ON CHOATE TURF



Photo by Nicha Tongdee '26/The Choate News

Mark T. Sheehan's field hockey team plays on the Class of '76 turf field.

By **Constanza Aportela '24**  
Reporter

Passing by Choate's turf fields, students will not only see athletes in blue and gold, but ones in burgundy and gold as well. Those are the school colors of Mark T. Sheehan High School, whose athletic teams are practicing and competing on Choate's turf fields until late October.

Mark T. Sheehan High School, a Wallingford public school, is undergoing renovations to their 17-year-old turf fields. Unfortunately, their remodeling coincided with disturbances in the turf manufacturing industry, which delayed the construction of their new turf and left their sports teams without a field.

In response to their need for playing grounds for the soccer, football, and field hockey teams, Sheehan High School's Athletic Director, Mr. Gary Gravina, sought out local schools with available turfs.

Both Choate and Lyman Hall High School agreed to lend Sheehan High School their fields temporarily. While construction

continues, most of Sheehan High School's field hockey and soccer games will be hosted at Choate, while football games will take place at Lyman Hall.

According to Mr. Gravina, this arrangement was an adjustment for Sheehan High School's students, particularly seniors, as their home games have deviated from what they are accustomed to.

"The senior class didn't get a proper freshman year, and, because of Covid-19, a lot of them didn't have a freshman sport. Now, they're not really getting senior home games, so it's tough on them," Mr. Gravina said.

With field renovations expected to be completed by late October, Sheehan's teams will be using Choate's fields until late October.

Because Sheehan High School isn't the only outside organization Choate rents its turf fields to, flexibility has been crucial to making the schedule work.

Choate's Chief Communications Officer Ms. Alison Cady said, "Sheehan High School is using the turf either once teams are finished practicing, after hours, or at odd times."

Additionally, the local youth sports organizations who play on Choate's turfs have also adjusted their scheduling to make time for Sheehan's teams to practice.

Sheehan High School expressed its gratitude towards Choate for allowing them to utilize their turf fields: "It's a big sacrifice on Choate's part and on the student athletes at Choate having to share their fields with other people. We're just extremely grateful."

However, the greater influx of people coming to Choate's campus for Sheehan High School's games has raised minor issues with parking. "People might take up a lot of the parking that would normally be used by people on campus," said Mr. Gravina.

In response to this problem, Ms. Cady said, "We always need to consider how all the events fit together to mitigate traffic, parking, and other resource pinch points. And, because of the busy nature of our campus, we often need to say 'no' to requests."

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Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News



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117<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

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Stan Cho '25  
Amelia Sipkin '25

**Features**  
Yoyo Zhang '24

**Arts & Leisure**  
Laya Raj '24

**Sports**  
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## DIARY OF A CRINGEY FRESHMAN

By **Eva Swanson '25**

*Copy Editor*

It is only natural for us high schoolers to do cringy things during our freshmen year. This is a confusing and uncomfortable time in our lives as we grapple with self-discovery and try desperately to fit in. When I was an underclassman, I did a number of cringe-worthy things that still haunt me to this day. From emails I sent to comments I made, I will never live down the plentiful faux pas that I have committed. Nevertheless, I would not be able to look back on these acts with amusement if I did not learn and grow from them. After nearly two years of one embarrassing deed after another, I have built up the courage to share my most cringe-worthy moments with you.

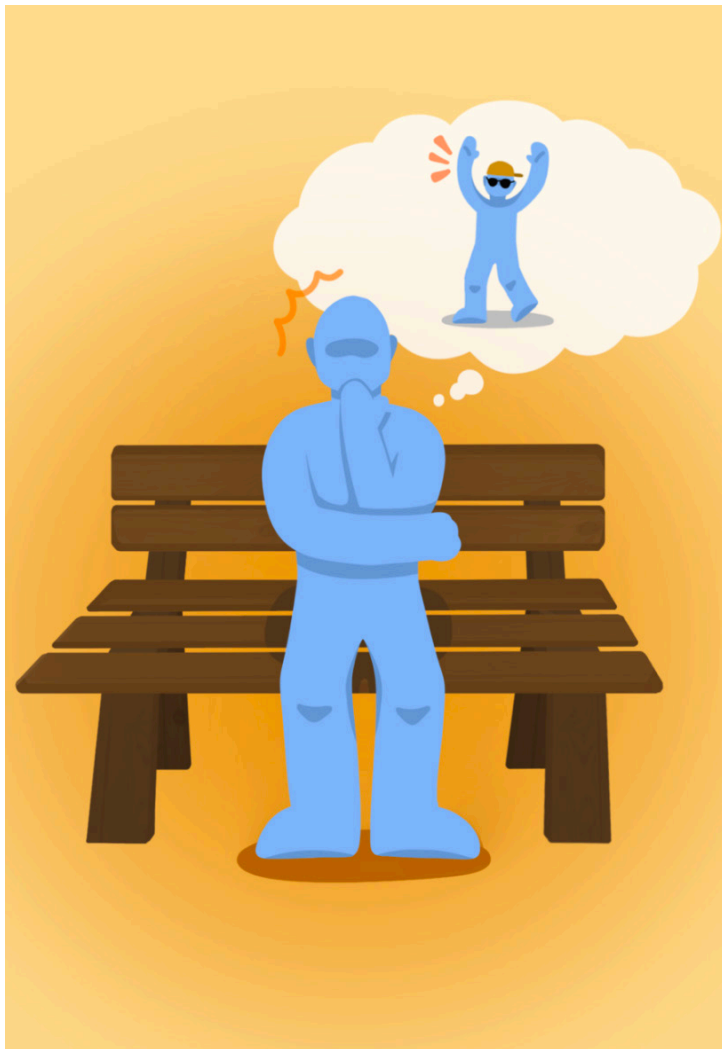
I cannot help but fear for the sanity of Choate teachers — especially for that of my poor geometry teacher, Mx. Chantal Wang, whose inbox was inundated with my frantic freshmen emails. I emailed them about every assignment to confirm I understood the task and due date correctly. I also emailed them every question I had on the homework, fearing I'd get detention if I failed a test. In truth, I swamped all my teachers with incessant emailing, but Mx. Wang had it the worst. I emailed them 40 times. 40 times. Sorry, Mx. Wang! To be fair, after being told how many emails I had sent that year, no other teacher of mine had to suffer the same fate.

Even worse than my emailing addiction was the amount

I corrected people in my day-to-day life — a habit that my friends will never let me forget. I was an excited freshman ready to embark on my academic journey at Choate, and I thought my peers would appreciate my correcting them in class. Lo and behold, I was wrong.

My third-form Spanish 200 class was my main victim. Having taken Spanish for roughly six years (and still being in the 200 level class, which says something about my Spanish skills), I thought myself to be a valuable asset to my peers' success. Thus, I took it upon myself to correct my classmates' conjugations and pronunciations. If a student used the preterite tense rather than the imperfect tense, I made sure to make them aware of their error so they did not make the same mistake the next time. Writing this, I can't help but purse my lips and shake my head — in what world would a freshman feel as though her older peers wouldn't be irked by this? At least I learned from my mistakes ... even if it was at the expense of my peers' patience.

As you can see, my 14-year-old self liked to approach everything with a high level of professionalism. So, naturally, I took Thirds Squash very seriously. I stepped onto the court my first day of practice convinced that I was squash's newest prodigy. One time, I was playing a game against a player from The Westminster School. My opponent was struggling to return any of my serves, and so I was winning by a lot. Each time she missed, I would saunter around the



Graphic by **Leah Han '27**/*The Choate News*

court, skipping and grinning. However, she caught on to my repetitive play style, and soon enough, the tables had turned, and she was the one annihilating me. I ended up losing and ran off the court in tears. Needless to say, I stick to intramural squash now.

Looking back on the blunders I've committed in my underperform years only highlights how far I've come. These embarrassing and awkward moments are an essential part of

growing up, and Choate invites us to experience and learn from them during our time here. So, while they make us cringe looking back, they truly are a rite of passage. Revisiting my past mistakes has reminded me that people forgive and forget — unless all of your blunders are immortalized in *The Choate News*!

**Eva Swanson** is a fifth-former from London, England. She may be reached at [eswanson25@choate.edu](mailto:eswanson25@choate.edu)

## THE PROBLEM WITH SCHOOL MEETING



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Students and faculty watch a presentation during School Meeting.

By **Elle Hardy '26**

*Opinions Writer*

As the clock strikes 9:25 a.m. every Tuesday, the Choate community gathers to discuss a plethora of school-related events. It begins with a captivating musical performance, but as the hour progresses, speakers saunter onto the stage one by one, each asking students to scan a different QR code for their club or showing them how to dispose of Lanphier Center coffee cups into the compost. These announcements can sometimes last until 10:30 a.m. The moment the final words of the school song are sung, signaling the conclusion of School Meeting, students rush to the exits, eager to leave as soon as possible.

All of these presentations are important as they help our community function and work as a cohesive body. However, a question lingers: should these announcements and QR codes be emailed to the student body instead?

The remaining time could then be used for an extra sleep-in, an early out, or a longer lunch. All of these things would benefit the wellness of Choate students, while School Meetings burden them.

Choate's policy allows for one hour of homework for 300+ level classes and 45 minutes for 100-200 level classes each night. If students are unlucky enough to have five classes on Monday or Friday, that is up to five hours of homework. If they are taking honors-level classes or a

sixth course, the time they have to spend on homework only increases. Time here at Choate is sacred, and an hour of unnecessary talking each week is a waste of a Choate student's time.

I understand, however, that some of the events at School Meetings are fun. The boar mascot bursting onto the stage and the incredible musical performances are key parts of Choate culture. However, these more unique and boisterous events can just as easily take place each month at a less regular meeting time. The Choate community could instead come together during more frequent Community Conversations, special speaker visits, and spirit days.

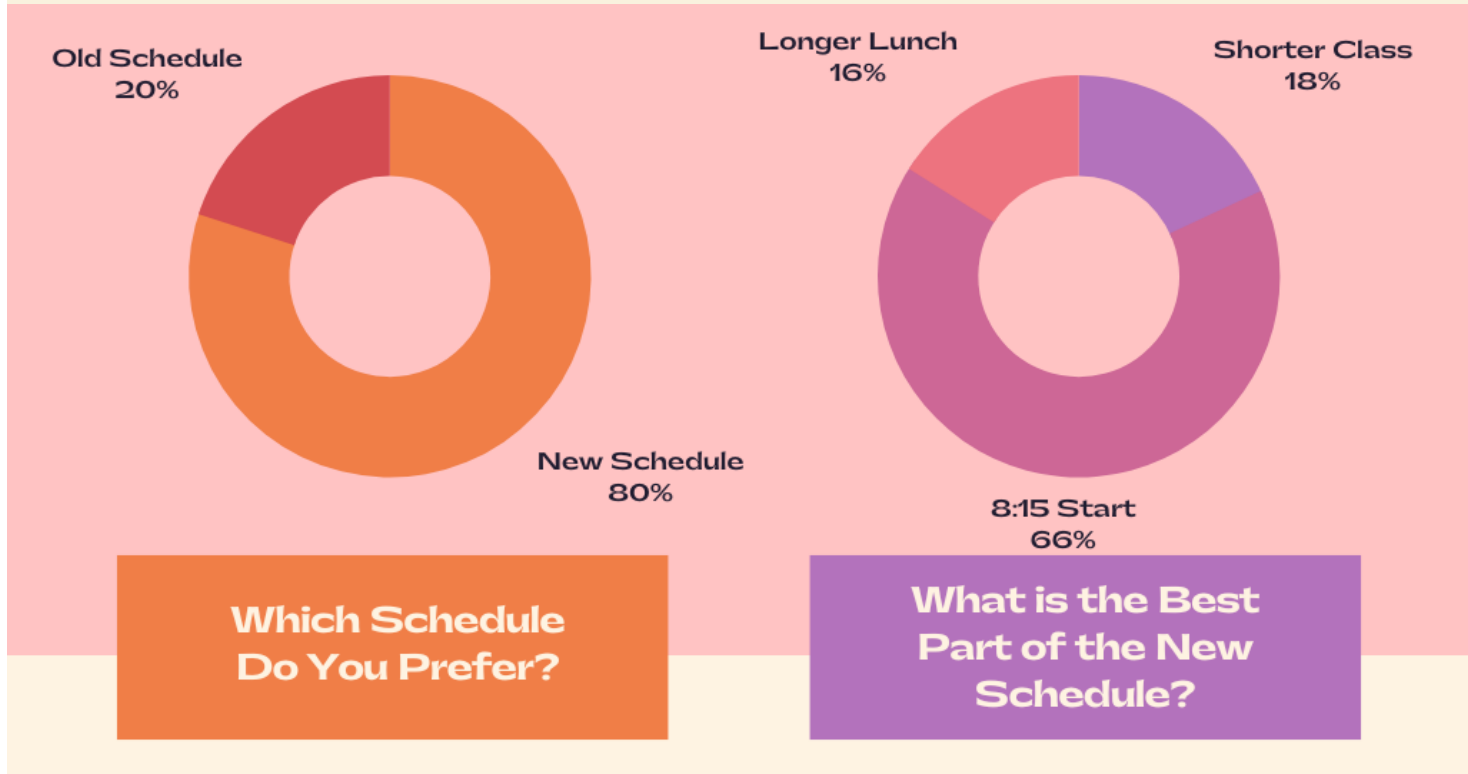
Students are already deeply involved in their activities and commitments at Choate. Instead of being required to attend School Meetings, the School should continue encouraging students to connect through sports games, theater and musical productions, and club meetings.

The replacement of weekly School Meetings with a monthly Community Conversation or spirit rally would be greatly beneficial. It would provide additional free time while still building and strengthening the relationships and bonds within our community. While this would be a significant shift in the Choate schedule, I know that it would be a positive one.

**Elle Hardy** is a fourth-former from Hillsborough, CA. She may be reached at [ehardy26@choate.edu](mailto:ehardy26@choate.edu)

## THE PROS AND CONS OF THE NEW SCHEDULE: UNPACKING OUR NEW ROUTINE

### 100 Students' Thoughts on the New Schedule



Graphic by **Amelia Sipkin '25**/*The Choate News*

By **Chelsea Branch '25**

*Opinions Writer*

This past year, a committee of faculty members spent months crafting an updated version of our daily academic schedule. Now, the Choate community finds itself with a brand-new routine. While I believe that some of these updates have created positive change, others have only produced more problems.

The crown jewel of the new schedule, in my opinion, is the 15-minute later start to the academic day. Unfortunately, not everyone is in agreement with me: Shaylah Finnerty '25 said that the new schedule doesn't really change anything for a day student like herself, whose wake-up time is determined by her parents' morning plans. Even many boarders, who don't struggle with commute times, agree

with her. "I just don't understand what the fifteen minutes are doing," Emma Bowles '25 said. "It just makes all the start times weird." However, as someone who wakes up as late as humanly possible, any additional sleep is much appreciated.

My second favorite change is the five minutes shaved off the end of every class. While many students may construe the shortened class times as shorter exam periods, I believe the hastened arrival of the weekend as you count down the minutes until 3:20 p.m. at the start of the last class on Friday makes it all worth it.

I have also found myself thoroughly enjoying the new weekly advising block. This new, built-in component of our schedule has successfully kept me in contact with my adviser more than ever before. Though creating a special block for advising

meetings makes it feel more like a class than a time to forge relationships, I know I would have been grateful for the consistency of our current system during my freshman year.

However, while I appreciate the later start, shorter classes, and weekly advising block, I am not a fan of the extended lunches. To make this adjustment possible, we had to lose, among other things, our Thursday conference block. Though these periods in the day are usually too short to serve their original purpose — getting extra help or meeting with one's adviser — they did give students a sacred moment of relaxation. When evenings are consumed by writing papers, running clubs, and practicing sports, we need as much unscheduled time throughout the school day as we can get.

Wednesdays now have a similar problem as well. Before,

Wednesdays were the low-stress half days, with a student programming period separating the first two periods from the third. Now that this block has been moved to the end of the academic day, all three Wednesday classes are back-to-back. This leaves many of us with three classes in a row on both Wednesdays and Thursdays.

While it may have been easy for me to identify all of the things I dislike about our new schedule, I do recognize the difficulty behind renovating an entire system, especially one that suits the needs of the entire student body and faculty. So, while our gripes are understandable, we need to respect the hard work of those who completed this near-impossible task.

**Chelsea Branch** is a fifth-former from Phillipsburg, NJ. She may be reached at [cbranch25@choate.edu](mailto:cbranch25@choate.edu)



# THE HYPOCRITICAL VANDALISM OF RADICAL CLIMATE ACTIVISM

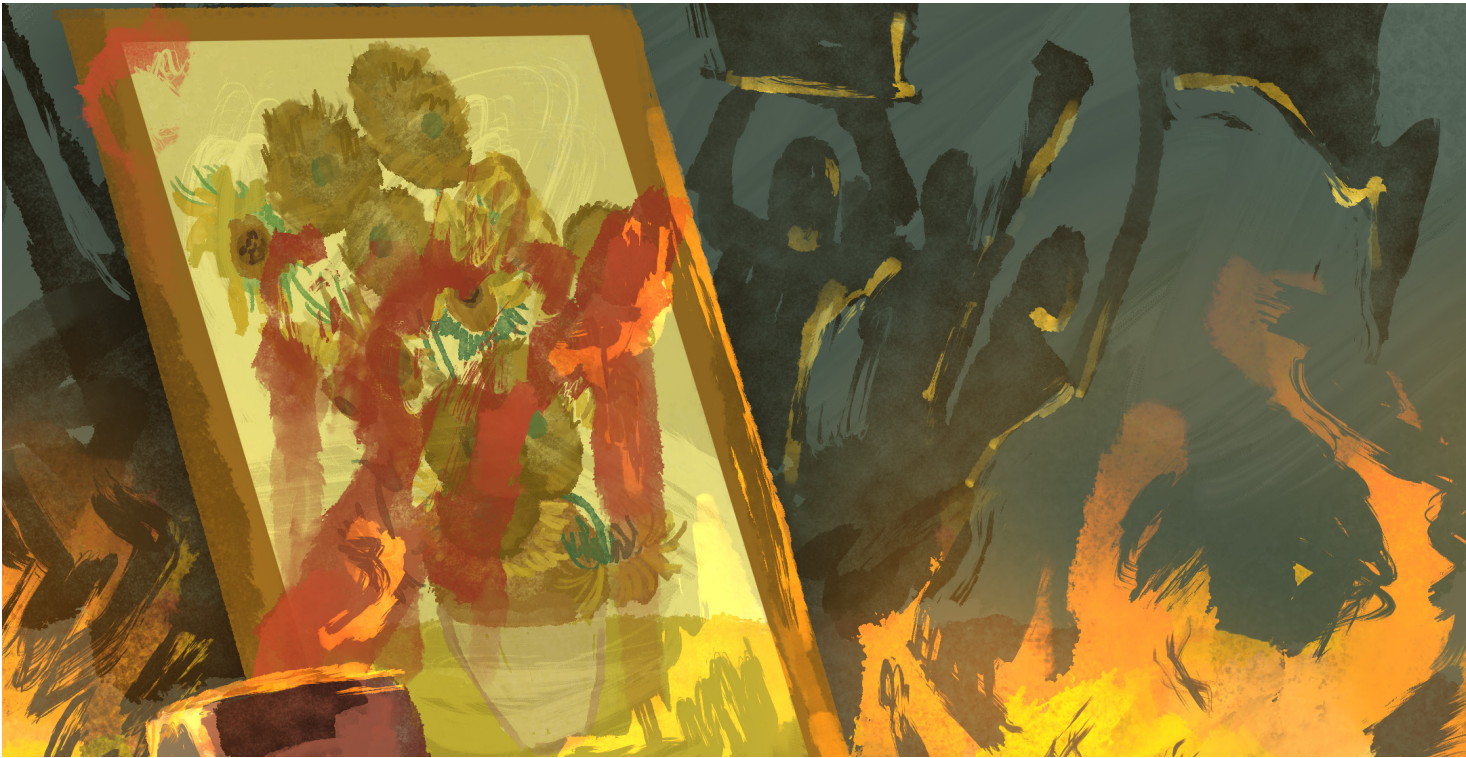
By **Steven Kee '27**  
*Opinions Writer*

Coco Gauff and Karolína Muchová played in the 2023 U.S. Open semi-finals; many may wonder why the U.S. Open has anything to do with the headline of this article. In truth, it probably shouldn't. Except, the tournament fell victim to the protests of an environmentalist group who unintentionally garnered animosity towards their benevolent purpose.

Members of Extinction Rebellion, a radical environmentalist group, chose the tournament as their target. The protesters glued their bare feet onto the ground and shouted slogans such as "End Fossil Fuels," delaying the tournament by 50 minutes until they were removed from the premises.

On the contrary, not only did their actions fail to contribute to solving climate change, but they were also counterproductive to the cause. The group's cheap attempt to attract the attention and support of spectators failed spectacularly, with the crowds shouting, "Kick them out!" The protesters justified their actions by claiming that if they didn't disrupt the match, climate change would.

This is just one instance of the extreme tactics radical climate groups have employed to "advance" their cause. In separate incidents in Germany and the United Kingdom, two civilians passed away because



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

emergency services couldn't reach them in time after climate activists blocked the roads and created traffic jams. This caused obvious outrage among the public.

On a different occasion, members of the Just Stop Oil group threw soup at a Vincent Van Gogh painting, angering many art enthusiasts.

While the stunts vary, they all have one thing in common — they distract and deter people from the actual issue at hand, instead evoking frustration with the movement. A Cantonese saying perfectly describes their selfish and obstructive attitude:

阻住個地球轉 或 "preventing the earth from rotating."

Make no mistake: I am a strong supporter of action against climate change, and I firmly believe that we, as inhabitants of this planet, must do more to protect it. Having said that, the actions of these climate activism groups are not only ineffective at solving climate change, but counterproductive in raising climate awareness as well.

Research from the University of Toronto shows that extreme forms of protests, such as blocking traffic or vandalism, consistently reduced support for social movements and

even swayed people in the other direction. The University of Pennsylvania also found that non-violent disruptions significantly decreased support for the climate change movement. 46% of respondents decreased their support after the tactics were employed, while only 13% increased their support.

It's difficult for people to empathize with activists when they're disrupting, scaring, and irritating society. To the general population, vandalizing paintings and gluing people to cars are unrelated to climate change; they only make these protests appear irrational and unreasonable. Disrupting sports

events and blocking roads, which prevents people from attending their regular functions, only adds to the frustration.

Furthermore, many of the props and stunts these activists use are counterintuitive and expose their own hypocrisies. While they preach about conserving resources, they squander pints of paint and cans of soup to vandalize monuments when those items could be used for more productive purposes.

Globally, 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted every year, significantly contributing to climate change by producing greenhouse

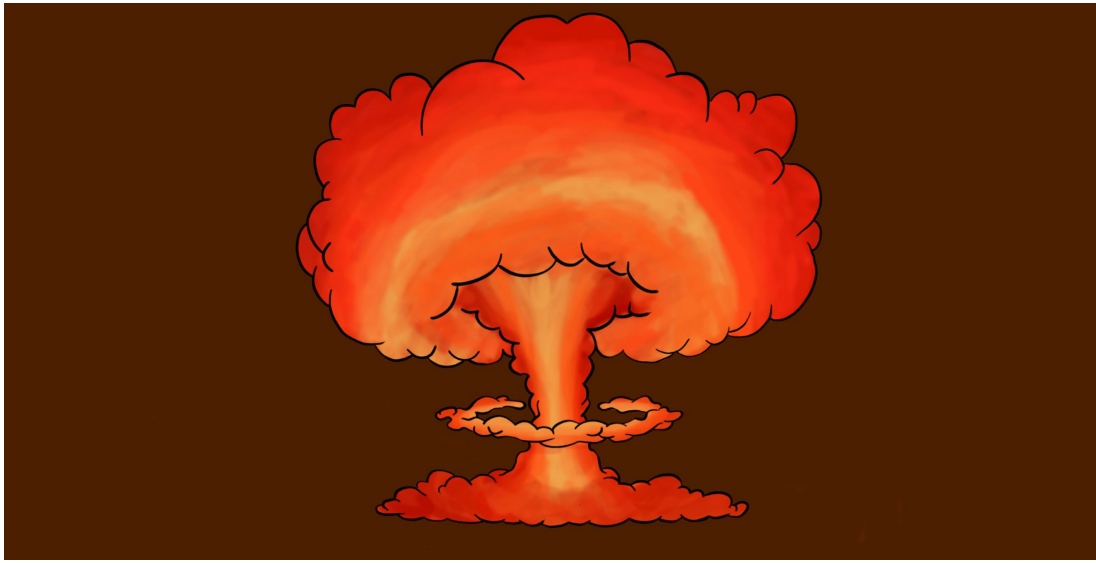
gasses while rotting in landfills. It's ironic that they contribute to climate change by wasting food while also trying to solve it. Their behavior is the very definition of hypocrisy and the phrase "rules for thee but not for me."

Instead of continuing to deter supporters through vandalism, it would be wise for activists to choose less disruptive and wasteful methods, even if that means accumulating less attention. They should follow the lead of activists like Sir David Attenborough, who has successfully spread awareness and influenced society through his work on different media platforms. He has amassed millions of viewers, educating them about the environment and the importance of protecting nature. Attenborough was named a Champion of the Earth by the United Nations Environment Program and has also received numerous honors from the British crown for his conservation work.

No matter what logic or justification radical environmental groups use for their destructive and disruptive "activism," it is clear that people disagree with them, and their actions are not convincing more people to support their causes. The best way to gain public favor is not to aggravate the audience, but to convince them of why they should care.

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## Nuclear Proliferation Reveals the Dark Side of the Human Psyche



Graphic by David Glover-Barr '25/The Choate News

By **Darren Lin '26**  
*Opinions Writer*

After the popular Christopher Nolan film *Oppenheimer* hit theaters this past summer, the problem of nuclear weapons and the moral implications of governments possessing them has returned to the forefront of many people's minds. Most have probably already decided where they stand on this infamous dilemma, but not enough consider this quandary as a chance to dissect the human psyche, analyze our inclination towards power, understand why a deterrent is so enticing, and analyze the near-impossible quest to eradicate nuclear arms.

In the annals of human history, there exist moral conundrums of monumental significance. Among these, the existence and proliferation of nuclear warheads stand as a stark reminder of both our capacity for destructive power and our ethical responsibility. Ever since their inception, nuclear weapons have captivated minds all over the world; likewise, pop culture staples, such as Stanley Kubrick's political satire and dark comedy film *Dr. Strangelove* and Alan Moore's comic book maxiseries *Watchmen*, have reflected on the despair of nuclear destruction and the aimless expansion of nuclear arsenals.

The intention behind the production of warheads was never to protect civilians. Rather, it has always been a way to display and flaunt power. Similar to a child who owns a toy that his classmates do not have, the validation and admiration

received from others often outweigh the pleasures of the object itself. The Space Race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the mid-20th century was also driven by the same desire to exhibit scientific and technological prowess.

There are many other examples of this phenomenon. The Global War on Terrorism against Afghanistan after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, hardly benefited any American lives; instead, the entire operation was a petty excuse to flaunt military power.

In addition, after receiving confirmation of the detonation of atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, President Harry S. Truman proudly declared that "the blood was on [his] hands," clearly unaffected by the massive loss of civilian lives. Despite masking it with the claim that the bombs were discharged to guarantee Japanese surrender and protect American soldiers, that decision was driven by the same desire to display power.

German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche touched on this concept in his 1886 book *Beyond Good and Evil*, writing about an "incarnate will to power" that is neither good nor bad but inherent in every human being. Nietzsche elaborates in his book *The Gay Science* that "we exercise our power over others by doing them good or by doing them ill." The ill measures are crude and dangerous as they may invoke revenge, while power through benevolence allows for mutual gain.

Unfortunately, the crudeness and danger Nietzsche defines ex-

ists in the real world as the doctrine of military strategy known as mutually assured destruction (MAD), which posits that any nuclear conflict could lead to catastrophic consequences for all parties involved. And yet, according to an annual report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, there are over 12,000 active warheads in the world today.

Albert Camus, a renowned French philosopher, encapsulated the paradox of warhead development when he explained its origins as the "confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world" in his essay "The Myth of Sisyphus." In the face of nuclear proliferation, humanity is confronted with the absurdity of its own actions. Nations accumulate weapons capable of leveling cities, all in the name of "security" — or, in other words, power.

Nuclear proliferation is terrifying yet fascinating. It strips the colossal governments and nations down to the naked reality of the human psyche, revealing their hunger and affection for power. Although explained and understood by various philosophers, this thirst for nuclear weaponry is by no means just. Just as society disobeyed nature to overcome natural selection, we must now understand the dire consequences of chasing power and suppress it before it's too late, even if it is in our nature to do so.

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## Presidential Primaries Have Devolved into Spectacles

By **Arjun Pathy '25**  
*Copy Editor*

Presidential debates are the most amusing part of the democratic process; up to 20 candidates partake in childish yelling matches for airtime. Politicians desperate for 10 seconds of fame, in valiant efforts to make headlines, have threatened the integrity of the democratic process. These debates, which are the most public part of the primary process and crucial to the larger battle for the presidency, shed light on a dangerous shift in politicians' focus from candidacy to mere publicity.

Cabinet appointments and campaign efforts following the presidential election reveal the intentions of unknown fringe candidates who were destined to lose. In the current political climate, primaries are now a route to political clout and prized presidential appointments instead of a meaningful fight for candidacy. Furthermore, this chase has exposed the American public to political and ideological fringes, further polarizing an already divided nation.

There are clear examples of both political parties exploiting the primaries this season. For instance, Democrat Robert F. Kennedy Jr., nephew of President John F. Kennedy '35, has made a name for himself as a proponent of various conspiracy theories, having claimed that vaccine research led to millions of deaths during the Spanish Flu, Covid-19, and HIV outbreaks. Likewise, Kennedy propagates a conspiracy that claims certain chemicals in water cause gender dysphoria (an idea first popularized by Alex Jones of the conspiracy theory website Infowars).

Considering such absurd claims, it is worrying that Kennedy, polling between only 10-15% compared to Joe Biden's 60-75%, has seemingly received more media attention than the Democratic frontrunner. Regardless of whether Kennedy sees success in the primaries this upcoming spring, he will have gained priceless notoriety, potentially setting him up for a successful candidacy in a smaller public office.

Another captivating story of using primaries as a route to fame is that of Pete Buttigieg. Prior to the 2020 presidential race, Buttigieg was remarkably unremarkable. Regardless, Buttigieg, a politician with large ambitions, saw the Democratic primary and its potential to be the fastest route to gaining notoriety. Despite polling averages peaking at 10%, President Joe Biden selected Buttigieg for the utmost consolation prize: a minor cabinet position.

This is not to say that Buttigieg's role as Secretary of Transportation serves no purpose at all; still, Buttigieg often dedicates his time to maintaining a public figure rather than enacting change. With the exception of a select few cabinet positions, this is the reality reflected by many federal department secretaries. However, this lack of impact is typically not an issue for most politicians, as the cabinet is a mere stepping stone to more meaningful public office.

Likewise, the former governor of New Jersey, Chris Christie criticized Donald Trump prior to leaving the 2016 presidential race and ultimately utilized his presence in the Republican primaries to bolster Trump's favorability. At one

point, Trump had even considered Christie as a potential vice-presidential running mate, showing gratitude for Christie's contributions. Unsurprisingly, Christie had ulterior motives for his support of Trump; it has since been revealed that Christie was aiming for the role of United States Attorney General, hoping that his goodwill with the Trump Administration would bolster his chances at the role. Since the 2016 primaries, he has made regular appearances on Fox News, pushing him further into the spotlight.

Regardless of the individual in question, a repair of the primary process is necessary to contain the spread of misinformation and give voters a realistic representation of prospective candidates. This doesn't mean silencing unpopular candidates; rather, we should reserve the biggest stages for the top two or three contenders. Such a system would transform debates into civil conversations discussing meaningful policy recommendations rather than generating news-worthy soundbites. It would also prevent publicity-hungry aspirationalists from gaining undeserved notoriety and require lower-polling candidates to campaign in a genuine way, gathering support through transparency and sincerity.

Unfortunately, such a change would be so fundamental that it is unlikely to happen without a larger shift in our two-party system. But there is hope — if the last election cycle has taught us anything, it is that the impossible is in the realm of possibility.

**Arjun Pathy** is a fifth-former from Denver, CO. He may be reached at [apathy25@choate.edu](mailto:apathy25@choate.edu).



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News



INSIDE THE COPY CENTER  
WITH Ms. ANN MARIE NOLAN

By **Hannah Quan '26**  
Staff Reporter

Located in the basement of Steele Hall, the Print and Document Services Center (or the Copy Center) is the hub of all types of print materials on campus. Students and faculty alike frequent the Copy Center to produce handbooks, tests, and campus publications. The supervisor who runs it all is Ms. Ann Marie Nolan.

Ms. Nolan works to print the majority of paper materials put up around campus. As a part of the Communications Office, she also helps with the graphic design for the *Bulletin*, the official publication of the School. Her recent work includes designing the “Hungry

for Justice” posters and stickers for Community Service Day.

Ms. Nolan started her tenure at Choate 10 years ago after working jobs at a few print shops in Connecticut. At the time, the Copy Center had two employees, and with the amount of printing needed, teachers had to wait in line to make their own copies for tests. Since then, the School has acquired new machines, and Ms. Nolan has taken over the task of completing print jobs based on requests.

“The Copy Center has been an amazing resource for me as a club leader, prefect, and literary magazine editor,” Cassatt Boatwright '24 said. “I am super grateful to Ms. Nolan for materials such as textured and

multi-sized paper, as well as the quick turnaround time.”

Ms. Nolan loves interacting with the students and seeing her work all around campus. “I probably get at least five compliments a day and people telling me ‘thank you so much for all your help,’” Ms. Nolan said. “It makes you feel real good.”

Working with printing has always been a part of Ms. Nolan’s life. Growing up, her family owned a printing company, which fostered her love for art and design. She started learning graphic design on one of the first Apple Macintosh computers, which came out in the 1980s.

“I had a mentor that helped me and taught me how to use the programs, and I loved it so much that I was able to grasp it quickly,” Ms. Nolan said. Since then, she has continued to foster her interest and develop her skills in this area.

Outside of printing and graphic design, Ms. Nolan likes to bake and create soaps. She explained that making soap is actually quite similar to baking. “You know, you mix the mixture up and then you pour it in a mold,” she said. “It’s like molding a cake.”

Ms. Nolan described her proudest soap artworks in detail, including a pumpkin pie soap that smells like the desert itself, a cow soap with black and white spots, and a cotton candy soap with blue and pink colors and sparkles. “I like being artsy,” she said.

“I enjoy the people. I love this job ... You know, the thrill that I get when a student writes me a little message of ‘thank you,’” Ms. Nolan said. “Just a quick two sentences or one sentence makes my day. I love it.”

**Hannah Quan** may be reached at [hquan26@choate.edu](mailto:hquan26@choate.edu)



Photo courtesy of Ms. Ann Marie Nolan  
Ms. Ann Marie Nolan works her magic in the Copy Center.

BAGEL BONANZA: CHOATE’S  
LATEST FOOD CRAZE

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
Reporter

For many Choate students, sacrificing an hour of precious sleep to line up for a breakfast sandwich or omelet is not a worthwhile trade. Luckily, they have another, equally as delicious option — the bagel, an easy and filling breakfast or late-morning snack on the go.

During the day, students can choose from an assortment of flavors in both the dining hall and Lanphier Cafe. These include plain, cinnamon raisin, poppy seed, sesame seed, and the everything bagel.

According to Mr. Paul Kikosicki, Choate’s Director of Food Services, students typically eat a staggering “18 to 20 dozen on the weekdays.”

During conference blocks especially, “a lot of traffic comes through and we’ll pretty much use them all up right then and there,” he said.

The bagels are sourced locally from Bagelicious, a store based in North Haven and Cheshire. Due to the high demand, bagels are delivered fresh every day of the week except for Sunday.

“If we see that we’re running out, we’ll up it,” Mr. Kikosicki said. In the rare cases when there are leftover bagels, they are made into croutons.

Aidan Cha '25 credits the extreme popularity of dining hall bagels amongst students to their satisfying texture and filling nature. “I enjoy the chewiness of the bagels, and they’re quite big,” he said.

As a connoisseur of toasted bagels with a cream cheese schmear, Vika Wei '24 is looking for a little more consistency in the quality of the bagels. “Dining hall bagels are really hit-or-miss. Sometimes they’re soft and nice, but when they’re bad, they can be pretty bad,” Wei said.

For Lois Kahu '26, having bagels in the dining hall is a convenient

way for her to get a quick energy booster during the long hours between breakfast and lunch.

However, its accessibility comes with the caveat of potentially mixing up the toppings in a hurry. Kahu noted an unfortunate accident where she mistook marshmallow fluff for cream cheese. “They look really similar, so when you’re in a rush, you need to just scoop it out and go quick,” she said.

Kyle Hata '25 suggested having a higher supply of bagels throughout the day. “They take away bagels at certain times in the dining hall,” he said. “As an athlete, I feel that in order to fuel myself throughout the day, I need to eat carbohydrates so I don’t feel sluggish during my sports.”

“A bagel is an overall great piece of food,” Truman Barbie '26 said. “I just like the simplicity in general.”

**Ethan Zhang** may be reached at [ezhang26@choate.edu](mailto:ezhang26@choate.edu)



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News  
A fresh everything bagel right from the racks in the dining hall.

SEEING DOUBLE:  
SIBLING SETS AT CHOATE



Photos courtesy of Zainab Khokha '24 and Ryder Holloway '24

Sibling pairs (left to right): Zainab '24 and Zahabiya Khokha '27; Ty '25 and Ryder Holloway '24.



Photo by Toffy Prakkittipoom '24/The Choate News

Four Geaney’s in a row (left to right): Aidan '24, Beibhinn '25, Isla '26, Finlay '27.

By **Fiona Fu '25**  
Copy Editor

“I’m seeing double everywhere I go,” said Dana Tan '25 on the walk up the hill after School Meeting.

Perhaps you share that same sentiment — and to a degree, it’s well-founded. There are 68 sets of siblings on campus this year, and we interviewed some of them to learn about how siblinghood has impacted their Choate experiences.

**Nick Aldrich '24 & Eliza Aldrich '27**

For Nick Aldrich '24, whose freshman year was spent mostly online due to Covid-19, his sister Eliza Aldrich '27 is providing a glimpse into what an authentic freshman year experience would be like.

“It’s fulfilling to hear about how her life at Choate’s been going,” Nick said. “I kind of wish I had an older sibling when I came here.”

Eliza agreed that it was nice to have someone who “knows the ropes” and could answer her questions, from dealing with mail room mishaps to regulating course loads.

Eliza said that she doesn’t feel like she’s living in her brother’s shadow, even when teachers mention him. “I got very lucky with a brother that’s a very good model,” she said with a laugh.

Eliza summarized the experience of siblinghood at Choate as having someone to relate to.

“We both know what it’s like to be away from San Francisco,” she said. “So I could say ‘I wish it was foggy,’ and he would understand.”

**Ryder Holloway '24 & Ty Holloway '25**

Ryder Holloway '24 and Ty Holloway '25 are one of only two pairs of siblings this year that are children of faculty or staff members.

Growing up on campus did not impact their excitement upon coming to Choate. “It was always both of our dreams to come to Choate,” Ryder said. “So it was cool to give [Ty] a little insight as to what Choate was all about.”

The brothers consider themselves to be very different. Ty jokingly pointed out that while he spends a lot of time in Colony Hall, his brother would

never willingly step foot inside the building. Despite this, Ryder said, “It’s cool being able to watch him grow up and share our experience at Choate together.”

“Yeah, and occasionally he [Ryder Holloway '24] gets some math help,” Ty added.

**Zainab Khokha '24 & Zahabiya Khokha '27**

Zainab Khokha '24 has been both a younger Choate sibling to Mohammad Khokha '21 and more recently, an older Choate sibling to Zahabiya Khokha '27.

Now as a senior, Zainab finally understands why her older brother always chose to sleep in rather than get to class early.

“Having this role-reverse is a great conclusion to my time at Choate, because in freshman year, I had somebody to look up to like my brother,” Zainab said. “Now, I’ve taken on that role as the guide.”

For Zahabiya, having not just one, but two older Choate siblings feels like a safety net. “It’s nice to be able to see familiar faces on campus and be like, ‘oh my god, that’s Zainab’s friend!’” she said. “They’ve all given me advice, so it’s not like I just have one person here, I have a whole group to bounce off of in case it gets hard.”

As day students, the sisters’ favorite moment together is their daily car ride home. “I’m really proud of Zahabiya for the progress she’s made socially,” said Zainab. “She’ll talk to me the whole car ride home, and it makes me really happy. We’re closer, even already.”

**Carmen de Vries '25 & Veronique de Vries '26**

Despite being sisters, not twins, Carmen de Vries '25 and Veronique de Vries '26 joined Choate at the same time — Veronique as a freshman, and Carmen as a new sophomore.

The idea to apply to Choate came from Veronique. “I was really excited about the possibility of going to a boarding school, but Carmen was very against it at first,” she said. “I knew that boarding school would be such a fulfilling experience for the both of us, so I made her apply.”

Luckily, Carmen doesn’t regret attending Choate. In fact, she said, “I’m kind of jealous that [Veronique] got to come as a freshman and start from the beginning ... But I’m glad she made me come here.”

The sisters often make plans

to have dinner together on the weekends and are grateful that they live close to each other on campus. They also share their Chinese 650 class and play squash together.

“Maybe having siblings at other schools would push you to be more outgoing, but it’s also comforting,” said Veronique. “I like having her at school.”

“She’s okay,” Carmen admitted grudgingly.

**Aidan Geaney '24, Beibhinn Geaney '25, Isla Geaney '26, & Finlay Geaney '27**

There’s a Geaney in every form at Choate this year. This is the first time siblings have spanned across all four year groups simultaneously in Choate’s history.

For Finlay Geaney '27, who has three older siblings at the School, coming to Choate felt preordained. “Every person I run into asks me if I’m Aidan’s brother,” he said. “And I’m like, ‘yep, that’s me.’”

Even as the second youngest of the four, Isla Geaney '26 still gives advice to Finlay. “I more so tell him not to do things than to do things, but I do try to impart a little bit of my wisdom,” she said.

The travel experience with four siblings can also be quite overwhelming: “When we go home on break with our suitcases and what-not, everyone’s just spurring out stories, and it’s very chaotic,” Isla said.

However, having several siblings also comes with its perks. For example, each sibling’s social circles encompass each others’ friends as well, which allows for easy bonding. Isla and Finlay described a game their friends have been playing, called “Geaney Bingo.” “Essentially, they try to spot all four Geaneys in a day,” Isla said.

So, the next time you’re walking down the path and see one of the Geaney siblings, you may silently count to yourself, “That’s one.”

Despite the differences in experiences, siblings are always there for one another to ride out the highs and lows of their time at Choate. “It’s like bringing a piece of home with you,” Veronique said, sharing a warm smile with her sister. And sometimes, that little piece of home is all you need.

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# THOM WALL JUGGLES IT ALL AT THE PMAC

By **Laya Raj '24**  
*Arts and Leisure Editor*

A family of three from Tolland, Connecticut, shuffled into their seats in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) auditorium for the long-awaited vaudeville show. Peter, the father, is an avid self-taught juggler of three months. His son, Vincent, supports his dad's hobby by picking up the juggling balls that he drops. Becky, the mother, surprised father and son with tickets to watch world-famous juggler Thom Wall perform at Choate Rosemary Hall on Friday, September 22. After the show, the family exited the PMAC with three books about juggling. They were published by Mr. Wall's publication company, Modern Vaudeville Press, which promotes research into the history of juggling.

In his hour-long show open to the public, Mr. Wall caught a bowling ball on a wine glass and balanced a spinning plate on top of a single playing card and a dagger held up by his teeth. He also juggled five knives behind his back — a trick he hadn't quite mastered yet when he first met Mr. Bari Robinson, a Choate theater teacher, a decade ago.

The two first met in 2013 at a devising theater called Celebration Barn in Maine. There, theater professionals and circus performers come together to workshop their own pieces and give each other feedback. Back then, Mr. Wall was still developing the more dangerous tricks



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Mr. Thom Wall performs in an hour-long show at the PMAC.

that he performs now. "I didn't use a knife, and I was still using a flat wooden spoon," he said.

Mr. Wall first dipped his toes into the juggling world in middle school. After checking out *The Complete Juggler* by Dave Finnegan from the library for a nonfiction writing assignment, Mr. Wall taught himself how to juggle with three balls. "It was a fun thing that I learned how to do myself, and it was kind of empowering," he said.

He went on to perform with Cirque du Soleil, traveling around the world and sharing his joy for juggling with large audiences.

During the meet-and-greet with audience members after his

performance at the PMAC, Mr. Wall recounted to a circle of students his experiences from being a member of Soleil.

Once, while in Paris for a performance, he had to pay a visit to a doctor because his wrists were in pain. "It got to a point where I couldn't hold up a cup without my hands shaking," Mr. Wall said, showing off his flexor pollicis brevis — the bulging muscle in his palm he has strengthened over the years. The strain his rigorous performance schedule had on his tendons and joints was one of the reasons Mr. Wall decided to leave the circus to become an independent performer.

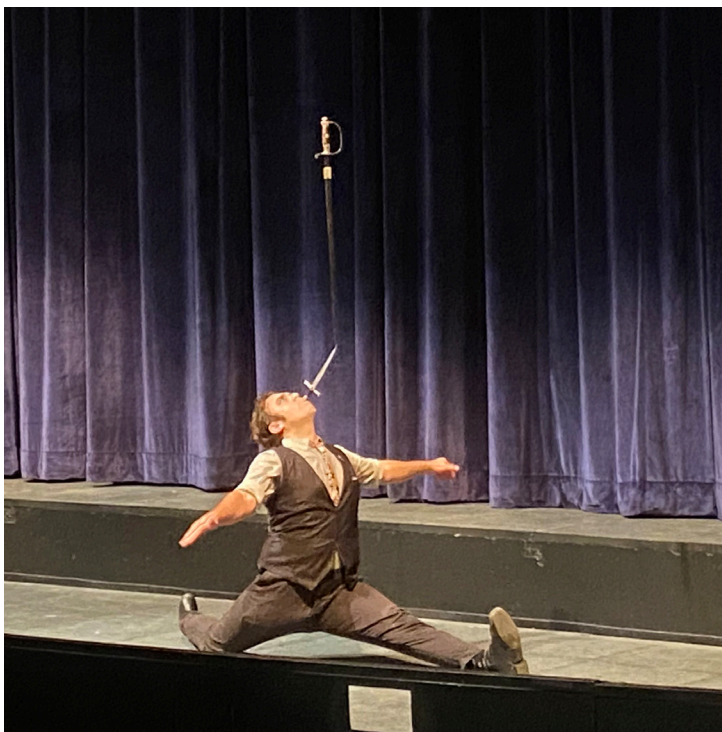


Photo by Lauren Kee '24/The Choate News

Mr. Thom Wall balances a sword on a dagger in his mouth.

Another was that although Cirque du Soleil came with fame, glitz, and glam, Mr. Wall wanted to make the craft of juggling more accessible. As an independent performer, he now has more control over the prices audiences pay to watch him perform. For an upcoming performance next week, he will be traveling to South America with Clowns Without Borders, a non-profit organization that spreads joy through educating about juggling and circus acts.

Besides his performance in the PMAC, Mr. Wall also worked with aspiring actors at Choate. He led a breathwork workshop with the cast of this year's fall play, *Puffs*.

"He taught us a lot about breath and how it can control an audience," said Andra Ionescu '24, a *Puffs* actor and member of the theater Arts Concentration program. "When the actor holds their breath, the audience finds themselves holding their breath."

Mr. Wall also paid a visit to Ms. Deighna DeRiu's directing class on the day of his performance, who first heard about Mr. Wall while listening to National Public Radio (NPR). She appreciated how Mr. Wall touched on the history of juggling during his performance. "I thought this was really interesting because I felt like it was a little less generic," she said.

Qin Caldwell '24, one of the students in Ms. DeRiu's directing class, ran the lighting cues for Mr. Wall's performance. With the original technical director falling ill, Caldwell received the lighting cues in an email less than 24 hours before the show and took on the booth solo. "I got there and ran through the act with him a few times so I could get my bearings. And then, I was ready to go!" he said.

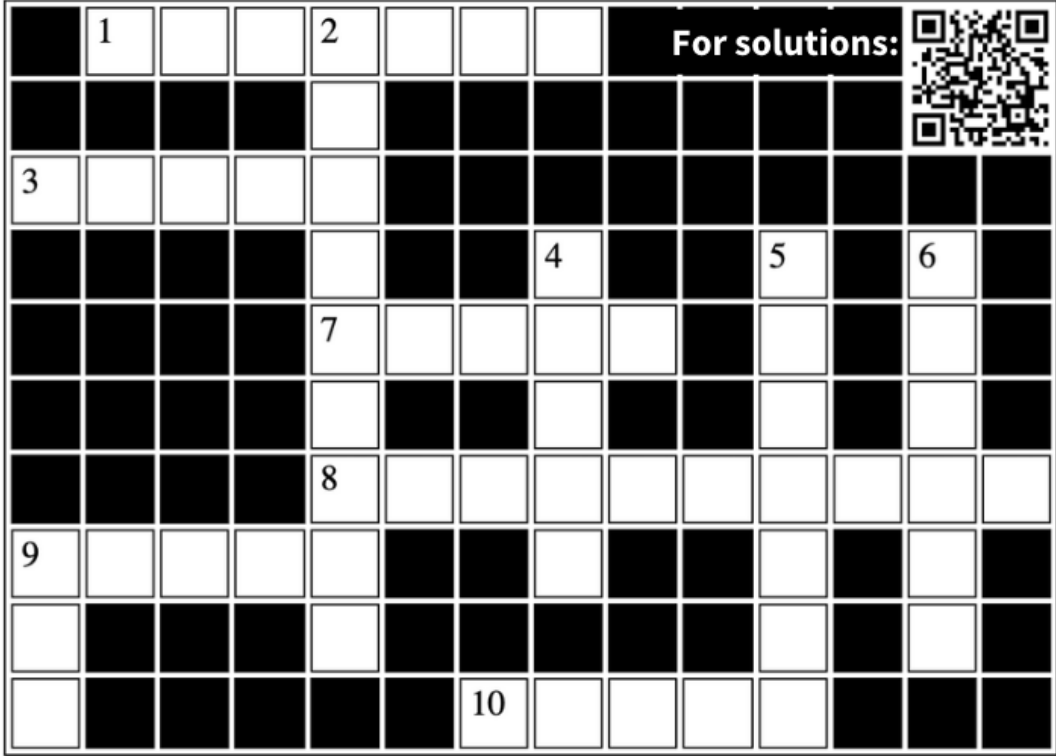
During the performance, Mr. Wall spontaneously paused to ask if the audience had any questions. Immediately, the hands of some young audience members shot up. "I've never had people actually ask questions during a performance," Mr. Wall said.

Max De León's question was, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how much fear do you experience as you juggle knives?" Mr. Wall followed this question with a sharp inhale, after which he said, "Next question!"

With a combination of comedy, artistry, and athleticism in his performance, Ionescu commented on how the connotation of the term "juggler" doesn't do Mr. Wall justice. "When you hear juggler, you think of someone who came to your third-grade party," she said. "But if they showed a video of what he did, I think a lot more people would have shown up because it's not [just] juggling. It's crazy. It's a whole performance."

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## TRY THE TCN CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1.** "We wanted something that was bright and \_\_\_\_ for the next however many years this mascot is going to be part of Choate."  
**3.** The yummy reason you are late to form meeting.  
**7.** It is shakin'.  
**8.** New teacher that is working to create some magic!  
**9.** Choate alum could possibly be the youngest \_\_\_\_ Wallingford's history!  
**10.** Describes a type of American country and is a language.

### Down

- 2.** Often proclaimed by Boar Pen and enthusiastic students.  
**4.** Copyjobs queen  
**5.** Burgundy and gold to mix with our blue and gold.  
**6.** Young peoples and waterpolo star.  
**9.** "He's always got a big smile on his face, and he's always happy to see students."

By **Zainab Khokha '24**

All clues are related to articles published in this issue.

## Ms. Laurel Lynch Pirouettes Into the Choate Faculty



Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News

Ms. Laurel Lynch coaches students through an exercise in ballet class.

By **Eliana Li '26** and **Emma Schwerin '26**  
*Reporters*

Choate's dance faculty welcomed a new dance teacher for the 2023-2024 academic year: Ms. Laurel Lynch, who will be teaching classes in Upper-Level Ballet and pointe.

Ms. Lynch grew up in California, where she started dancing at three and performed in numerous ballet productions, including *The Nutcracker* and *Don Quixote*. Her studies in ballet and modern dance styles brought her to The Juilliard School in New York City, where, while completing her studies, she also completed a work-study job with the Mark Morris Dance Group (MMDG). Upon graduation,

she traveled around the world with the group for 15 years, performing various forms of modern dance. Ms. Lynch also led modern master classes at universities around the country and taught company ballet classes at MMDG.

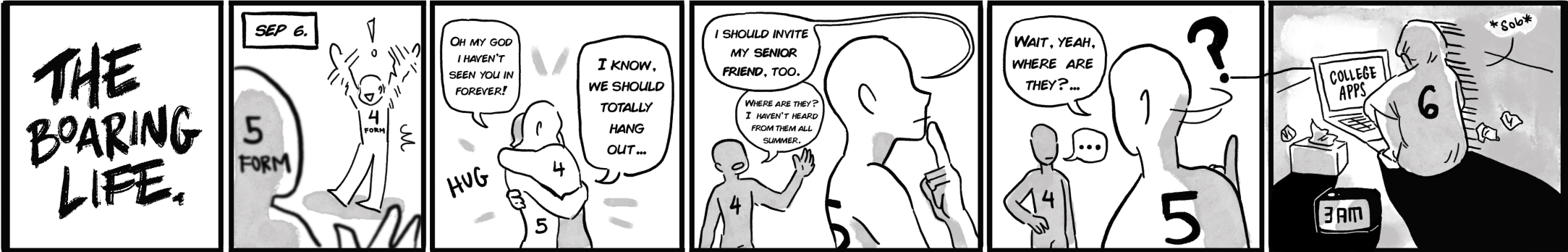
After leaving the MMDG, she moved to Connecticut and became a dance teacher to maintain her connection to the art form. "Teaching was the automatic next step," Ms. Lynch said. "When you spend your whole life learning every day, you end up with a lot of information, so it's nice to be able to share it."

Ms. Lynch credited most of her knowledge and expertise to her mentor, Ms. Marjorie Mussman, who passed away in 2009. Her main focus this year

is to teach her students how to move freely. She wants to help her dancers develop a strong foundation in ballet so they can "run wild and free with choreography," she said. She hopes her class will keep their bodies healthy and allow them to continue their craft sustainably in the long run.

Ms. Lynch is very excited to work with Choate students this year, a group she has described as "professional, accountable, and enthusiastic about learning." She added, "Choate is a warm and welcoming place, and it's cool to see how many different styles of dancing there are here."

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News



FIELD  
REPORT

Choate Fall Record  
21 - 4 - 0

Varsity Games

Boys' Soccer (3-2)  
vs. Lawrenceville, 2-0

Girls' Soccer (4-0)  
vs. Cheshire, 10-3

Girls' Volleyball (3-1)  
vs. Cheshire, 3-0

Boys' Water Polo (1-0)  
vs. Suffield Academy, 16-5

Football (1-0)  
vs. Lawrenceville, 61-7

Girls' Field Hockey (2-1)  
vs. Greenwich, 0-5

J.V. Games

Girls' Volleyball (2-0)  
vs. Cheshire, 3-0

Girls' Field Hockey (1-0)  
vs. Pomfret, 2-0

Girls' Soccer (1-0)  
vs. Ethel Walker, 6-0

Upcoming Games

Boys' Water Polo (Home)  
vs. Deerfield 10/4 @ 3:30

Girls' Soccer (Home)  
vs. Worcester 10/4 @ 4:00

Boys' Soccer (Home)  
vs. Wiliston 10/11 @ 4:30

2023 BOAR PEN BRINGS SCHOOL SPIRIT

By Grace LaPlaca '25 and  
Sophia Liao '25  
Copy Editors

No athletic competition would be complete without Choate's Boar Pen cheering from the sidelines. Boar Pen is a group of seniors who cultivate school spirit on campus, supporting teams of all levels. This year, Boar Pen's leadership lineup is composed of six students dedicated to the Choate community.

Historically, Boar Pen leaders play a varsity sport. This year, artist Ximena Castillo Núñez '24 is here to break tradition. What Castillo Núñez lacks in varsity letters she more than makes up for in school spirit.

One of her core memories at Choate is the Boys' Varsity Soccer game at Deerfield Day last year. Enthusiastically cheering with megaphone in hand, Castillo Núñez dubbed the experience her "audition for Boar Pen." Her desire to boost school spirit was largely inspired by past Boar Pen members. "They make everyday things about school more exciting," Castillo Núñez said.

Likewise, footballer and lacrosse player Tariq El Mammann '24 was influenced by former Boar Pen leaders, particularly Damian Carrano '22. "He was always a role model and mentor for me ... seeing him on stage at pep rally or School Meetings with so much

school spirit always inspired me to do the same as a senior," said El Mammann.

With a deep love for the Choate community, El Mammann hopes to make an impact on the School. "Everyone has a position on the Boar Pen. We're just the ones leading," he said.

Golfer Philip Harris '24 attributed his desire to be a Boar Pen leader to past members Carrano, Ava Parker '23 and Rachel Miller '23. His aspirations, some more realistic than others, include moving the annual Deerfield Day pep rally into the athletics center and acquiring a live boar for events.

An avid supporter of Choate athletics both on and off the field (or golf course, in Harris's case), he aims to expand his enthusiasm to the student body. "I was put on this earth to motivate and spread school spirit at Choate Rosemary Hall," he said. "At the end of the day, I bleed blue and gold."

Rower Brecken Cullinan '24's personality and desire to help foster school spirit motivated her to be a Boar Pen leader. "I myself am a very loud and outgoing person," she said. "I want to bring that energy to the School."

In the coming year, she aspires to "create an environment where everyone on campus feels supported and backed by everyone." In line with this sentiment,



Photo courtesy of Boar Pen

Boar Pen supporting the Girls' Varsity Soccer blackout game on September 22.

Cullinan hopes to highlight different aspects of the school besides athletics, like the arts.

Footballer and ice hockey player Carter Linardos '24 attributes his freshman year, a time when Covid-19 restrictions put a significant damper on school spirit, as his motivation to be on Boar Pen. Hoping to continue the trend of ever-increasing school spirit, Linardos wants to sell t-shirts and other merchandise for big athletic games this year.

He also plans to prioritize community engagement through regular school meeting appearances and social media activity

(@boarpen on Instagram). "We dream very big with what we want to do," Linardos said.

Lacrosse player Sophie Sharko '24 also recalls the somber Choate community amidst Covid-19 during her freshman year and the improvements since. At Deerfield Day last year, Sharko painted her body in blue and gold, enthusiastically cheering from the sidelines.

"That was the most spirited I had been," she said. "It was really fun to just go all out." Valuing the sense of community and support for all students, she looks forward to the pep rally before Deerfield Day this year. "Hav-

ing school spirit really brings the community together," she said. "It really changes so much about the experience at Choate."

Boar Pen has already elevated the atmosphere on campus, bringing dress-up themes to games and posting video clips of community members on social media. With a group as inspired, motivated, and enthusiastic as this one, the Choate community can expect a year to remember.

Grace LaPlaca and Sophia Liao may be reached at glaplaca25@choate.edu and sliao25@choate.edu

CRUSHING COMPETITION  
WITH CHRIS CHILDS '24



Photo by Ethan Cheung '27/The Choate News

Childs after Boys' Water Polo practice.

By Zack Cao '26  
Reporter

Since picking up water polo at age seven, Boys' Varsity Water Polo Captain Chris Childs '24 has been on a roll.

This past summer, Childs made the National Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association's (NISCA) High School All-American Water Polo Honorable Mention list. He also gained All-NEPSAC recognition at the conclusion of the 2022-2023 fall season and contributed to a fourth-place finish at New England Championships for Boys' Water Polo.

Childs started playing water polo at a young age with the influence of his mother, Boys' and Girls' Water Polo Head Coach Katie Childs '95 P '24 '26. Coach Childs began her water polo journey when she was a student at Choate, eventually becoming a member of the Junior and Senior National Teams.

Childs's commitment to water polo is year-round. In the summer, he trains rigorously with his club team, CT Premier, four times a week. During the winter term, Childs maintains his fitness as the captain of the boys' swimming team. He has also been a manager for Girls' Varsity Water Polo in the spring.

Though Childs typically plays hole set at Choate, a position in the center of the goal typically given to the team's strongest player, he plays differ-

ent positions with his club team. This has shaped him into a versatile player who is an asset to his team anywhere in the pool.

Inspired by American water polo legend Tony Azevedo, who was number eight in the pool, Childs also dons a number-eight cap.

Before each game, he practices a well-crafted ritual to set himself up for success. Childs starts by focusing on stretching and body activation to prepare for the physical toll of the game. To get in the right frame of mind, he listens to music before departing the bus on away games.

Not everything has gone swimmingly in Childs's journey. When he was 15, Childs experienced a significant ramp-up in the physicality of the sport. "The level of intensity really changed. It went from a little bit of contact to a lot of contact with kicking, grabbing and pulling," he said. "I've gotten my fair share of bruises and scrapes since then, but definitely the biggest challenge was adjusting to the level of physicality."

Childs aspires to play water polo at the collegiate level. "It's been such a big part of my life for so long," he said. "I've really just grown to love it, and the challenges, hard games, and practices make you better. The rush you get after finishing a hard practice is really worth it."

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The Wild Boar Gets a  
Fresh Makeover

By Lucy Domingo '26  
Reporter

For the first time since the fall of 1995, the School unveiled a brand-new boar mascot. The new boar sports a bright yellow sports jersey and a wide grin.

When Ms. Raquel Simoneau, Manager of Campus and Community Events in the Communications Department, first raised the question of redesigning the mascot in the fall of 2022, a months-long, multi-department effort was kickstarted.

"We wanted something that was bright and vibrant for the next however many years this mascot is going to be part of Choate," said Mr. Justin Whittaker, Assistant Coordinator of Athletic Operations and Head Equipment Manager in the Athletics Department, who was also involved in the research and design process of the new mascot.

Some features of the redesigned mascot include a fan inside the headpiece of the suit to keep the person inside cooled. The back of the mascot's jersey also now has the number "90" written across it, representing

the year the School was founded, whereas the previous mascot's jersey was chosen simply because it fit over the body. Ms. Simoneau noted that the new mascot is more aligned with the looks of the wild boar logos commonly used in the Athletics Department.

The previous wild boar was adopted by current HPRSS teacher and former Athletics Director Mr. Ned Gallagher. At nearly 30 years old, the boar was in poor condition, with pieces falling apart and the hooves needing to be stitched up.

Work on the new wild boar began with research into patterns and similarities between various mascots for other schools. Ms. Simoneau said that many mascots wore sneakers and had bigger heads. The design team also referenced other common mascot looks and the appearance of a real wild boar.

"We talked about the structure and size of the tusks, how wide the mouth was going to be open, and what color the eyes were going to be — little details like that made a huge difference," Ms. Simoneau said.

The School worked with the English-based design company Mascot Makers, who came up with several different versions of a new mascot to choose from. One particular prototype of the mascot "looked more tough and sports-mascot-focused."

However, in an attempt to make the boar look more approachable, compromises were made on certain design elements, such as changing the eyes to gold for the final design. "We needed to use it for school events and not just athletics, so it wouldn't be that fierce, competitive boar; it needed to be friendly and happy," Mr. Whittaker said.

Students' opinions on the new mascot varied. "It looks too nice to be in sports — the guy has a huge smile on his face," Jordan Wallace '24 said. On the other hand, Isa Marvin '26 said, "I like it. It is a little less creepy and more animated."

The new mascot made its debut during the first School Meeting in a skit by Boar Pen and Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long.

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Photo courtesy of Mr. Joey Avena

The new mascot poses outside the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center.