



# THE CHOATE NEWS

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## CLASSROOMS OF TOMORROW: CHOATE EMBRACES AI

By **Fiona Fu '25**  
Copy Editor

When ChatGPT was released for public use on November 30, 2022, the world was forced to reckon with the endless potential of artificial intelligence (AI). Schools, in particular, faced a unique dilemma: should they integrate AI into their curriculums and embrace its educational capabilities, or shut it out completely due to the ambiguities it brings to academic integrity?

This year, the School is making a concentrated effort to not only equip teachers with the knowledge of how to use AI in their classrooms but also to create clearer expectations about how students should and should not use AI.

Opportunities for teachers to become more comfortable with this new technology began over the summer with a professional development experience called TECtonic (Technology, Education, and Contemplation-tonic). Humanities teacher and Director of Academic Technology Mr. Morgan Harris, who led the program along with Science teacher and Academic Technologist Dr. Viva Zhao, said that their goal was to let people “have an experience where they can discover how technology can actually help cultivate peace of mind,” instead of automatically associating it with stress.

“The biggest impact that I’m seeing is the shift in attitudes of some of the faculty to really re-imagine what might be possible in the classroom in an embracing way,” Mr. Harris said.

This September, faculty members participated in a professional development session titled “AI Exploration” also led by Mr. Harris and Dr. Zhao. They first discussed how AI could be used as a tool in teaching, and then in-



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

vited faculty to simply bring their laptops and play around with programs such as ChatGPT.

“For many faculty, it was their first time having some kind of direct experience with [it],” Mr. Harris said. “So we just encouraged people to adopt an attitude of beginner’s mind and serious play and open sharing: ... especially with technology, that spirit of play is absolutely vital in discovering its full potential.”

Those who wanted to learn more about using AI in their teaching could also join an asynchronous AI reading group and an AI playground. The reading group receives a weekly article from Mr. Harris and Dr. Zhao, through which they can read and engage with each other electronically. The playground is a monthly opportunity for faculty to collaboratively explore new AI tools and ways to use them.

Some teachers have slowly begun incorporating AI into their classrooms, but they are careful to

not sacrifice the important foundational aspects of teaching. “We’re just starting to delve into what AI means for us in terms of teaching students in the classroom and with academic work. I think one of the most interesting things is that it will allow us to have new ways of assessing understanding and also ways it may help students develop their own understanding,” history teacher Mr. Tom White said. “In [my] classes, we’ve talked a little bit about using [AI] to help us brainstorm ideas and also help us with our writing like a writing tutor ... I do have some ideas for projects later in the term, but we’re still exploring some of those possibilities.”

Language teacher Dr. Carol Chen-Lin has also worked on effectively using AI to enhance her students’ learning experiences. “We know we cannot [teach] the way we used to or do assessments the way we were,” she said. “So we know we need to coexist. We need to live with AI. This could be

a very useful tool, but we need to learn how to use it.”

Dr. Chen-Lin asks her more advanced Chinese classes to complete projects without AI on their own first before coming together in class and exploring using AI together. “[It] suggests something that’s constructive, which could be used in our essay writing or with our projects,” she said. However, she limits these exploration opportunities to higher-level classes because “we still need to teach students knowledge.”

In addition to aiding her students with their learning, Dr. Chen-Lin has also found AI tools like ChatGPT to be helpful with mechanical preparation work, like compiling vocabulary lists, which gives her more time to find interesting resources for her students.

The advent of AI in schools has also created some questions about academic integrity. For stu-

dents like Max Lo '25, different policies about using AI in different classes can be confusing. “It’s weird because it might be totally encouraged in one class, and then become something that can get me in serious trouble in another,” he said. “I wish there was a more consistent policy about AI usage throughout Choate.”

Mr. White also believes that it’s the responsibility of the School to ensure that the rules are laid out. “It’ll be important for teachers and for the School to be really clear about what’s allowed and what’s not allowed,” he said. “When it’s confusing for students, that can create real problems.”

A Generative AI Steering Committee, led by Director of Studies and English teacher Ms. Ellen Devine, has been formed to mitigate many of these issues. Director of Curricular Initiatives and Science teacher Mr. Deron Chang, a member of the committee, described it as an institution-wide

“policy building committee to consider how we should best utilize AI because we want to use it.”

The committee would discuss how AI relates to the Deans’ Office, the academic departments, the administrative offices, writing college recommendations, and writing term reports. “We won’t have answers to everything, but you certainly will have a roadmap for what we expect to be able to do,” Mr. Chang said.

Another member of the committee, Head of Student and Academic Life and Humanities teacher Ms. Jenny Elliott, said, “I am optimistic that Generative AI could help us achieve a number of our goals more effectively, and I am certain that the discussions ahead will illuminate how our core value of integrity must remain at the center of our efforts.”

There are still many unanswered questions about the implications of AI, but students and teachers alike are excited by the opportunities it presents.

“I think learning to use AI is definitely going to be very helpful,” Ella Morris '25 said. “I definitely think it’s one of those things that’s going to keep progressing and keep getting better, and it’s going to be integrated more into our everyday life. And I think learning how to understand it when you’re younger—that’s going to be important.”

Despite its exciting possibilities, use of AI tools and resources is currently only allowed for academic work if explicitly authorized by teachers. Otherwise, it is considered unauthorized aid. Ms. Elliott recommends that students be proactive in asking their teachers if they are ever unsure about any of those expectations.

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## WELLNESS CLASSES LAUNCH FOR THIRD-FORMERS

By **Anya Shah '25**  
Staff Reporter

Choate has spent the past few years reconsidering and updating their approach to student wellness on campus to better accommodate student needs. The most recent school-wide efforts to improve student mental health have included implementing “Wellness Days” once per term, reconfiguring the daily schedule, and making changes in the counseling department.

Another major adjustment is the mandatory wellness blocks held twice a week for third-formers. These classes are taught by Health and Wellness Educator



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

Ms. Leah Dullea, Associate Dean of Students for Health and Wellness Ms. Alexandra Copeland, and fifth-form dean and Health and Wellness Educator Ms. Aliya Cox. Each group has around 25 students, which is larger than a

typical academic class of around 10-12 students.

Wellness classes include interactive team-building activities, which help create an environment

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## Library Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

By **Adrian Torres '25**  
Copy Editor

To celebrate Hispanic and Latiné Heritage Month (September 15-October 15), the Andrew Mellon Library curated a display in collaboration with the School’s Hispanic Latiné Forum (HLF) in the Reading Room. Additionally, a wide array of digital resources featuring works by the Hispanic community were spotlighted on the library website.

With its tradition of celebrating Hispanic and Latiné Heritage Month, the librarian team coordinated with HLF to celebrate and spread awareness of the history, culture, and contributions of Hispanic and Latiné peoples.

“We want to get input from authentic communities on these specific displays that we do,” Ms. Sam Nelson, Assistant Director of the Andrew Mellon Library, said. “So we want to make sure the books we’re putting out, the resources that we’re putting out, and the signage all reflect the people who this would impact.”

Members of the librarian team built on the library’s previous displays commemorating Hispanic and Latiné Heritage Month with additional recommendations by this year’s HLF cabinet. “In a lot of these books, there are aspects you can relate to



Photo by Ada Tienworn '26/The Choate News

Library celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month through festive displays. if you’re Latino or Hispanic yourself, and that’s what we wanted to highlight and spread,” HLF President Sebastian Alvarez '24 said. “I remember when I was younger, I really enjoyed seeing that part of my life that I didn’t see in other English books being displayed.”

The library’s display included not only print books, but ebooks, audiobooks, films, and podcasts as well. Alvarez explained the decision to incorporate different forms of media as “trying to get more people to see what Hispanic culture is able to give.”

The display also featured a diverse set of literary genres, from Sonia Sotomayor’s memoir *My Beloved World* to Sandra Cisneros’s book of vignettes, *The House on Mango Street*. “What stood out to me is the mix of classics of Spanish

heritage and also more new and modern content,” Spanish teacher Ms. Angela Weston said.

“I hope students were able to see stories that were meaningful to them, to look at the resources and try something new that they may be hadn’t tried before,” Ms. Nelson said. “I hope that they were able to see themselves reflected in what’s available to them so that they feel like they have a place here and belong,” Ms. Nelson said.

The library will continue its LGBTQ+ History Month display with the help of SPECTRUM, a student club, for the rest of October and will curate a display for National Native American Heritage Month in November.

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## BUNGALOW AND HOMESTEAD’S SUMMER REVAMP

By **Ellie Porter '25**  
Reporter

While major renovations occur only every few years, improvements take place in dorms every summer. This year, senior girls’ dorms Bungalow and Homestead won the jackpot. While they might not be the most contemporary dorms on campus, both underwent significant renovations in the summer.

Homestead’s interior was fully redone by an external contractor to include a kitchenette and water fountain. The renovation team also expanded and updated the bathrooms and repainted parts of the dorm. Additional structural changes included reconfigured pipelines for the new facilities, an expanded common room, and a newly-installed washer and dryer.

Ava Sklar '24, a resident of Homestead, said, “The updates

are amazing. The renovations didn’t strip the hominess of Homestead, which is everyone’s reason for choosing it.”

On the other side of campus, Bungalow also experienced updates. Having been a House Mentor in Bungalow for three years, Ms. Melissa Koomson was inspired to design and submit a proposal for a new kitchenette.

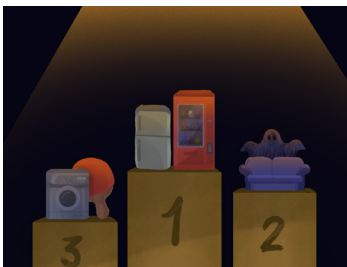
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Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by the Wallingford Public Library, Melody Qian '24, Leah Han '27, and Choate Flicker.

**Save the Date!!**  
**Halloween Dance**  
28 October 2023  
3/4/5 form: 8:45 - 10:45  
6th form: 11:30 curfew  
Hosted By Spectrum





## CLUBS HOST NATURAL DISASTER RELIEF FUNDRAISER

By **Eliana Li '26**  
Staff Reporter

Morocco and Libya are currently experiencing tremendous devastation as a result of the recent earthquakes and floods. In response to this, several clubs and faculty members at Choate collaborated to host a fundraiser last week to help those affected in both countries. The fundraiser was held in the dining hall on October 10, 12, and 13.

Lots of work took place behind the scenes to bring the fundraiser into reality. A four-way collaboration between Choate Muslim Student Association (MSA), Middle East and North African Club (MENA), Community Service Club, and Red Cross Club, cabinet members and club advisers got together to brainstorm ways to help and figure out which organizations were going to be the most effective in delivering aid. In the end, the clubs decided that all raised funds would be donated towards Islamic Relief USA, Muslim Aid USA, and Helping Hand for Relief and Development.

"It was important to pinpoint the specific foundations, and I be-

lieve that no matter what size donation is sent in through the Choate community, it is enough to impact someone else who needs it," MSA Vice President Rafia Pasha '26 said.

The organizers of the fundraiser hope their donations can help those across affected areas access scarce resources, such as food, water, and shelter. "When planning this event, our main focus was on helping the people who were stripped of their critical necessities," MSA President Zaki Shamsi '26 said. "Setting up these regions so they are able to rebuild is a significant focus of ours."

Rebuilding the parts of Morocco and Libya that have been destroyed and caring for the injured has been extremely expensive. As a result, many residents have struggled to afford it on their own. "We didn't think that the victims of these disasters should hold the responsibility of rebuilding their communities alone, so this fundraiser is a way for us to reach out and support residents in this difficult time," Vice President of the Red Cross Club, Sophia Britton '24, said.

Students were encouraged to help in any way that they could,

whether working at the fundraiser booth or spreading awareness of the tragic event and its impacts on local populations.

Emma Schwerin '26, who donated to the fundraiser, said, "I donated money because I think it's for a really good cause. I visited Morocco a couple of years ago, and the history and architecture there were super special. It's really sad to see that much of that is gone now, and I just wanted to help in any way I could."

Ms. Sanaa Sofiane, a faculty adviser to the fundraiser, said, "I'm hoping the students can benefit from this project [by] giving back to another country and be able to appreciate what they have and to help others who are less fortunate."

In the end, the event raised almost \$900 to help those in need. Maya Bashawaty '24, President of MENA, said, "We must all take on the responsibility of the global citizen if we ever hope to one day unify the peoples of the world, holding care for one another [with] the goal of a safe and equal global community above all else."

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## UNVEILING BUNGALOW AND HOMESTEAD'S NEW TOUCHES

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"[The dorm] is your home while you're a student here, and I think it brings an element of community in a centralized location for the dorm," she said.

The strategically placed kitchenette includes a refrigerator that was originally placed on the second floor, an up-to-date microwave, more storage and counter space, and most importantly, a sink. Previously, their common room had contained only a desk with an electric kettle and some board games in it.

In addition to the kitchenette, the Bungalow common room walls were also given a makeover from a dull gray to a bright beige color.

Ms. Koomson said, "I love it. The residents love it. The space just feels much more homey."

Associate Dean of Students and Director of Residential Life Mr. Pat Dennehy holds the yearly responsibility of determining budget allocations for renovations to dorms and buildings on



Photos by Emily Ma '25 and Joy Gao '24/The Choate News

Over the summer, Choate Facilities renovated the Homestead bathroom (left) and the kitchenette in Bungalow (right).

campus. He added, "In terms of promoting more communal gatherings, we hope these spaces have helped."

Ella Shafman '24, a resident of Bungalow, said, "I think the updates to the dorm really help not just with storing food and washing dishes, but also with the connection between everyone that lives here. We get to have great mug nights and have a nice place to hang out in the dorm now, so it's really good for dorm bonding."

As renovations are rotated between the 31 dorms on campus and all the buildings, changes will take time.

Over the past few years, the School has installed filtered water stations in dorms following requests from students. Though major changes span a couple years, these smaller changes to the dorms are quicker, equally beneficial solutions for residents.

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## BALANCING ACADEMICS AND HEALTH: CHOATE'S NEW STRATEGY

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where students feel more comfortable discussing their mental health with each other. In one class, for example, students separated into groups based on how much sleep they got. They discussed the importance of sleep, especially upon entering their first years of high school.

Instituting wellness blocks for third-formers allows them to develop good habits early on that they can carry with them for the rest of their Choate career and beyond.

Students discussed healthy lifestyle changes in wellness class, such as executive functioning, eating habits, sleep, and exercise, in their wellness blocks. "It's helped me make sure that I'm productive with my time and that I can get things

done as quickly as possible," Jason Schmidt '27 said.

The third-formers also participate in a variety of reflective work: they spent a week tracking their sleep, exercise, and eating patterns.

Not only have students talked about the importance of practicing wellness, but they also have applied real-world examples to their learning, like creating a balanced meal.

However, some students felt that the information is repetitive and hasn't changed their approach to self-health and mental wellness. "The things they talk about are the things we already know, like eat healthy food and get more sleep," Cindy Tian '27 said. "I get why they're talking about this, but I don't find it that helpful."

Other students still appreciated the School's effort to improve their mental health

through wellness education. Katie O'Meara '27 said "it was interesting to hear the actual statistics and facts" in wellness class.

On the other hand, Madeline Baldwin '27 would prefer if the wellness blocks did not take up time in and out of the school day with assignments. "They assign you videos to watch and you have to write journal entries about it," Baldwin explained. "You have to write two to three pages."

Despite the extra work that wellness blocks create, their purpose stands to educate and support freshmen during their first term at Choate. Francie Millstone '27 said, "I think the wellness blocks created a good community where we can all support each other."

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## SAGE CONNECTS COMMUNITY THROUGH CUISINE

By **Jai Midha '27**  
Reporter

Students, faculty, and staff walking into the dining hall are sometimes greeted by a long table draped in red fabric. On it are an assortment of pies on silver platters. The occasion? National Pie Day. Aside from the typical offerings in the dining hall, SAGE Dining Services will often prepare special foods to spruce up the dining hall menus and provide students with more choices during busy mealtimes.

Assistant Food Service Director Mr. Andy Welle looks for these national food holidays to add to the calendar during the year. These celebrations include National Pasta Day, National Pie Day, National Coffee Day, and more.

For students, the themed days are a breath of fresh air. "I think it adds refreshing variety to my dining experience. I never knew so many national food days existed," Nick Aldrich '24 said.

On some days, SAGE will feature a specific food item and serve multiple dishes made with it. On September 27, the theme of the day was "Goodness Grapeness." SAGE served grape salsa, champagne grape loaf cake, quinoa and green grape salad, as well as tarragon chicken salad with red grapes. They also put up educational posters about grapes next to the dishes.

During International Education Week from October 1 to 7 this year, SAGE sought to use food as a medium for celebrating different cuisines. They featured items from around the world belonging to a different food category every day: breads and spreads,



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Students bond over SAGE cuisine in the dining hall on National Pasta Day. teas, rice and noodles, soups and stews, and comfort foods.

Mr. Welle said, "I met with [Director of Global Engagement] Ms. Ashley Sinclair, and we came up with different features and menus, particularly for International Week."

James Stuber '24 enjoys these celebrations and the variety they bring to the dining hall food. "I think it's a fun little surprise when I step into the hallowed halls of Hill House and see that there are some extra [serving] tables," he said. "I feel a sense of excitement when I see that there are some different options that I can explore."

International dishes that SAGE serves are something for students, especially ones from overseas, to bond over. Toffy Prakittiphoom '24 shared his experience connecting with his friend's culture when the dining hall served kimchi stew. His friend's grandma used to carry clay pots from the village waterfall to make kimchi, and Prakittiphoom was glad to learn about

his friend's upbringing and culture through the dish.

The planning and decisions behind these dining hall celebrations go beyond SAGE. At Choate, student representatives on the Dining Hall Committee serve as a liaison between the student body and SAGE.

"We take feedback from the students and then relay that information to [adviser to the Dining Hall Committee] Ms. Katrina Homan or Mr. Welle in our meetings," Ethan Zhang '26 said. "We would all discuss that and try to come up with solutions or responses to that feedback and get back to the kids afterward."

For both SAGE and the Dining Hall Committee, their primary goal is for students to enjoy foods from the cultures of their peers. "We try our best to make the dining experience the best we can," Mr. Welle said.

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## SCOPE Powers Student Events on Campus

By **Lucy LaPlaca '26** and **Emily Scandrett '26**

Reporters

Students looking for activities to participate in on weekends are in luck: the Student Committee on Programming and Engagement (SCOPE) works hard to plan weekly events for students to participate in.

SCOPE was formerly known as the Committee on Student Activities (COSA), whose primary goal is to run the club proposal process and support clubs. Throughout Covid-19, COSA student leader Selam Olson '24 and Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long discussed how the organization could do more to build community on campus. They then created what students know as SCOPE today.

"[We] renamed it [and] gave them more responsibilities, primarily the increase

of planning events," Assistant Director of Student Activities Ms. Colleen Kazar said. "We wanted to make SCOPE an organization that students would come to if they had ideas."

The group is made up of two faculty advisers, Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar. There are also 12 student members, three of whom are executive board members, each responsible for a different aspect of student activities.

Club Chair Lylee Dai '24 manages all 85 clubs on campus, offering support to student leaders and ensuring that clubs have all the resources they need to execute events. Media Chair Selam Olson '24 is in charge of advertising school events around campus and posting content on SCOPE's Instagram account (@choate-scope). Events Chair Brecken Cullinan '24 brainstorms and plans all the Student Activities Center (SAC) weekend events.



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

SCOPE volunteer Qin Caldwell '24 makes popcorn in preparation for Harvest Fest, a SCOPE event, on October 17.

The other SCOPE members assist the chairs in their tasks.

SCOPE differs from COSA in that the group collaborates with the school community and takes student opinions into account. "We talk amongst each other in the teams about new ideas and what events people have liked, what events people haven't liked, and how we can fix stuff," Olson said. This new planning process allows the team of students and advisers to evaluate the events they are organizing and make improvements accordingly.

A multitude of changes and advancements to media and marketing have also been made in an attempt to make the student body more aware of SCOPE's role on campus. Olson mentioned that the media team will continue to grow through "using other platforms and [connecting] with the students in different ways that will make kids more interested." One such platform is the new Scope It Out newsletter, a "reincarnation" of the old weekly Boarcast email, intended to keep students informed about events happening over the weekends.

After a year-long hiatus, SCOPE is opening up club proposal applications this winter. SCOPE is also working on starting a new volunteering program where students can get a blue card for helping to set up SCOPE events.

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## LOCAL HISTORIC HALLOWEEN TOUR

By **Rella Wang '26**  
Reporter

Every October, Connecticut welcomes an enchanting chill, the rustle of leaves, and the ghostly light of jack-o-lanterns. With Halloween quickly approaching, Connecticut is gearing up for this spooky season by organizing events for its citizens. One such activity is the Seaside Shadows Haunted History Tours.

On October 7, 2013, Seaside Shadows Haunted History Tours opened for business. The company offers walking ghost history tours in Mystic, Connecticut, and Westerly, Rhode Island, blending history and mystery. On the two-hour-long walking tour, guests listen to stories of paranormal activity and gruesome historic tales.

Seaside Shadows also offers a Mystic Moonlight Graveyard Tour at an old colonial burial ground. Director of Marketing and Events Coordinator Ms. Rochelle Weinrauch said, “Our audiences will get an exciting, thought-provoking, and spooky

tour while being inundated with historical facts to corroborate all the haunting occurrences surrounding the Mystic and Westerly areas.”

Founder of Seaside Shadows Ms. Courtney McInvalle is a licensed tour guide, published author, historian, and storyteller. “She’s an actual descendant of accused witches. Courtney had numerous paranormal experiences in East Hampton, Connecticut,” Ms. Weinrauch explained. “She has always taken an interest in the unknown and has now put her sensitivities, investigative skills, love of history, and writing aspirations to work.”

These tours provide a thrilling activity for Connecticut citizens and educates participants on the history of the town. The tours operate six days a week with two tours running each night. Tour tickets and dates are available on Seaside Shadows’s website, [seasideshadows.com](http://seasideshadows.com).

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Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

## CASEUS PROVISIONS: GRILLED CHEESE CRAVINGS AND MORE



Photo by Kino Liu '26/The Choate News

Mr. J. Sobocinski transformed his food truck into Caseus Provisions.



Photo by Kino Liu '26/The Choate News

Caseus Provisions presents salami, grapes, nuts, and more.

By **Kaylin Lam '27**  
Reporter

If you’re looking for a cute Wallingford luncheonette or craving some grilled cheese, then Caseus Provisions is the place to go.

Caseus Provisions, a specialty cheese shop located on Center Street, features a staple classic grilled cheese sandwich. However, they’re not limited to just lunch items. With crackers and jams, sliced meat, charcuterie platters, French onion soup, and an array of cheeses sold by the pound, there are plenty of options. Whether hungry Boars are looking for a snack on the go, enjoying a meal on Caseus’s outdoor picnic tables, or using their catering services, it has tasty meals for everyone.

Originally named Caseus Fromagerie & Bistro, avid cheese lover Mr. Jason Sobocinski opened the business in New Haven in 2008 and was later joined by his brother, Mr. Tom Sobocinski.

Mr. J. Sobocinski shared that the main reason he embarked on this culinary journey was because of his graduate education. “I got my master’s degree in gastronomy from Boston University,” he said. “It was an interesting anthropological look at food and culture and why people eat what they eat and how that defines them.”

While in college, Mr. J. Sobocinski worked for a Boston cheese shop, Formaggio Kitchen, and later decided to open his own cheese shop and bistro in New Haven. The business took off, and after a few years, he and his brother created The Crispy Melty, a food truck that allowed them to expand their business.

Not long after, the eatery’s goals shifted. The Sobocinski brothers sold their original bistro to its chef, Mr. Craig Hutchinson, and found a gem of a property in Wallingford. The closed luncheonette with commercial kitchen suited the on-the-go nature of their food truck business.

“At that time, we were just looking for a place where we



Photo by Kino Liu '26/The Choate News

Customer orders the Cuban sandwich.

could prep all the goods to go on the truck. We weren’t thinking about opening another cheese shop,” Mr. Sobocinski said. That is, until their other partner proposed an idea. “We started talking about doing different ideas and ultimately decided that we would open up a small cheese shop with a little grilled cheese bar.”

With a reasonable price on the property and a large parking lot for the truck, the brothers were eager to grow their business in Wallingford, a community that Mr. Sobocinski expressed profound love for.

“I think the people are fantastic. I love the neighborhood that we’re in,” Mr. Sobocinski said. The tight-knit community has allowed him to work with other local businesses (like Passionately Pasta) and gain regular customers.

“My favorite part [of the job] is being able to showcase some really great cheeses and seeing people get excited when they try a new cheese for the first time.”

One of Caseus’s most frequent customers is Latin teacher Ms. Diana Beste. “Caseus Provisions is probably the only place so far that I can rely upon to have a really nice meal,” Ms. Beste said. “If I go out to eat, I want a nicely prepared meal with good ingredients.”

Ms. Beste wondered if the location of the shop has impacted its popularity amongst the student body. She hopes that delivery app services, including UberEats, which the restaurant uses, will help spread the word about Caseus and get students excited about the delicious food spot just around the corner.

“I just hope that it becomes kind of a fixture in the pantheon of restaurants that our students enjoy,” Ms. Beste said.

Caseus Provisions has not only attracted the business of Choate teachers. Steven Kee '27 said, “When I had Covid, it lifted my spirits. It was one of the best grilled cheeses I’ve ever had.”

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## ON THE RISE: MARTIAL ARTS IN WALLINGFORD

By **Calvin Moon '24**  
Staff Reporter

Tucked away in the quaint Wallingfordian suburbia are martial arts studios that give residents an opportunity to train their body and their minds. From kickboxing to taekwondo, Performance Combat MMA and Elite-Pro Martial Arts Studio offer a wide range of services and classes that several Choate students frequent.

As Ethan Zhang '24 describes, “It is just really fun to be there with your friends ... to be there together training, punching bags, sparring with each other. It’s amazing.”

Performance Combat MMA, a Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) school on North Colony Road, exemplifies the transformative power of martial arts. They offer group and private lessons for both kids and adults in MMA, muay thai, kickboxing, boxing, and Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

Gym owner Mr. Mike Hannon has 18 years of coaching experience and 26 years of training in the styles that Performance Combat MMA offers, as well as in karate, Russian sambo, wrestling, and judo.

Performance Combat MMA encourages members to test their skills in competitions as it provides a unique opportunity to challenge themselves and build confidence.

Ms. Kathy Matus, an employee in Choate’s Athletics Department, has trained in standard boxing for six years at Performance Combat MMA. She described her experience at an amateur boxing competition as a “lasting, once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

Whether it is learning self-defense, staying physically fit, or competing in kickboxing and jiu-jitsu, Performance Combat MMA classes teach valuable skills that are applicable to everyday life and are thrilling to participate in.



Photo by Yoyo Zhang '24/The Choate News

Yoyo Zhang '24 boxes with her coach.

Mr. Hannon recommends all Choate students join in on the fun regardless of prior boxing experience. The gym is beginner-friendly with frequent group lessons and flexible private lessons and offers a 30-day free trial.

“Don’t be intimidated. A lot of people come in very nervous, and they really don’t have to be because the environment here is super friendly and supportive,” Mr. Hannon said to newcomers. “The fighters all want to see you succeed just as much as they want to improve themselves.”

Less than three miles away is Elite-Pro Martial Arts Studio, led by Mr. Hugo Carrillo, who focuses on Taekwondo. Mr. Carrillo achieved a fifth degree Taekwondo black belt and was a member of the Peruvian national martial arts team. At the

core of his philosophy, Mr. Carrillo believes that fighters build confidence when they are faced with a difficult situation and respond with genuine effort and dedication.

Through their training programs, the gym aspires to instill values of respect, self-discipline, and hard work among their students. Mr. Carrillo hopes his trainees can view Taekwondo as an opportunity for personal growth, to build confidence, and to challenge themselves physically and mentally.

However, he acknowledged the intimidating nature of Taekwondo, which may deter beginners from giving it a try. “The biggest challenge is to cross the door. Trying something new; being exposed to an environment they are not

familiar with, is challenging, especially for teenagers.”

In the world of martial arts, the path to personal growth, discipline, and confidence is open to everyone. The wisdom of Mr. Hannon and Master Hugo Carrillo highlights the potential impact of martial arts.

Through this sport, individuals can not only maintain physical fitness but also channel the strength needed to face life’s challenges with confidence and resilience. So, whether it’s MMA or Taekwondo, Performance Combat MMA and Elite-Pro Martial Arts offer the opportunity to embark on the journey that martial arts provides.

**Calvin Moon** may be reached at [cmoon24@choate.edu](mailto:cmoon24@choate.edu).

## Poe Impersonator Returns to Town

By **Constanza Aportela '24**  
Reporter

With Halloween drawing near, the Wallingford Public Library (WPL) hosted a one-of-a-kind impersonator of America’s father of the macabre and horror genre — Edgar Allan Poe.

On Monday, October 16, Mr. Campbell Harmon, Associate Director of Communications & Website at the Yale Divinity School, returned to WPL after 14 years to perform his one-man-show titled “An Evening with Edgar Allan Poe.”

Since receiving funding from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2009, Mr. Harmon has been impersonating Edgar Allan Poe to inform audiences about the prominent cultural icon.

As a Wallingford resident, Mr. Harmon regards both the town and WPL with special esteem. “[WPL] is very special to me because it’s [in] my hometown and home library,” he said. “And back in 2009, that was one of the first libraries where I performed. This is the first time since that I’m actually coming back to the library.”

The event was open to all lovers of a good fright, regardless of

age. Mr. Harmon performed Poe’s classic short story, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” and then discussed Poe’s biography, his fiction writing and poetry, as well as his death and controversial obituary. He concluded with a recitation of “The Raven,” and answered questions from the audience.

The final segment of the show is Mr. Harmon’s favorite. “I like hearing the questions from the audience because [they] get excited to ask questions of this historic figure,” he said. “I never know what they’re going to ask me, so it’s always new, and it’s always challenging.”

The highly-anticipated show sold out to an audience of 133 attendees and was the largest event WPL has hosted since the beginning of the pandemic, according to Readers’ Advisory Librarian Ms. Cindy Haiken.

“Campbell Harmon portrayed Poe with skill and charm,” she said. “We’ve received some terrific feedback about the evening from many of the attendees and hope to host it again next year.”

**Constanza Aportela** may be reached at [caportela24@choate.edu](mailto:caportela24@choate.edu).



Photo courtesy of Wallingford Public Library

Edgar Allan Poe impersonator Mr. Campbell Harmon performs at Wallingford Public Library.



# THE CHOATE NEWS



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## C'est Manifique: My Study Abroad in France

By **Chelsea Branch '25**

Opinions Writer

Through a jetlag-induced haze, I couldn't help but wonder, Am I dreaming? I was not. After seven hours of being sandwiched between two unduly chatty passengers, I had finally arrived in France, where I would spend the summer of 2023 abroad.

Taking a deep breath, I tried to absorb every snapshot of my first moments in this new country when the words "Mademoiselle, trouvez vos valises, s'il vous plaît!" swiftly darted into my left ear and out the right. In an accent thicker than any my language teachers had ever used, it took me five whole minutes to decipher the simple sentence. It'll be easier to understand next time, I assured myself, but boy, was I wrong.

I drowsily lifted my two XL overweight suitcases off of the baggage carousel, then exited the terminal in pursuit of my host mother, Joëlle. Right near the door stood a petite older woman with a light brown bob holding a sign with my name on it. "Bonjour!" I exclaimed to her. Joëlle responded with a warm, "Bonjour, Chelsea." Finally, a discussion I could handle! I could feel my confidence replenishing by the second. "Le vol était agréable, non?" And with that, I was right back where I started: clueless and insecure.

For the rest of the evening, I spoke in the most flawed, slow French I had ever produced in my life. I began to fear that I did not deserve to study abroad, that I did not belong here. I never had any trouble with my French in Steele Hall, so what had changed?

The next morning, I woke up terrified. I was afraid of adjusting to a new culture and afraid of the conversations right outside my bedroom door. But, I had no choice but to face these fears. For the first week, I stumbled through every conversation I had. But, with every following day, things got a little easier.

All it took was some patience and practice for me to become comfortable with my new environment. I realized that my errors were not a reflection of whether or not I should be in France, but rather, a sign of my willingness and

readiness to learn. Knowing that it was okay to make mistakes and noticing that my slip-ups were becoming less and less routine, I began to truly embrace my trip.

Every morning, I woke up to the sound of birds singing and the sight of soft, sweet sunlight spilling through the blinds. I would enjoy a Nutella crêpe, which Joëlle kindly made for me each morning. I would then speed-walk to the bus stop just in time to board bus 78 — I always sat in the second to last chair on the left side, closest to the window.

I spent my rides admiring the countryside and enjoying whatever songs were blasting in my headphones. I would hop off the bus at Ville-Jean University and sit on the school's entrance steps, where I would chat with my friends about everything and nothing until the school day began.

Classes were filled with games, grammar, and discussions, and when the day was done, we would flood out of the building and into le métro for lunch. I usually ordered a crêpe or a sandwich à emporté and enjoyed a picnic-style meal at Parc du Thabor. After coming home for the evening, I would sit around the dinner table for hours with my host family, enjoying a meal and having meaningful discussions.

During my free time, I embarked on spontaneous adventures: trips to the roller skating rink, riding the metro just for fun, browsing through the items at thrift stores, or shopping the outdoor book sales. I will never forget riding my bike as far as I could through the countryside, babysitting my host mother's grandson, or trying to win over the affection of the house cat Obama (I eventually did!).

It was these moments of connection, daring, and pure joy that made my trip so special. To all the Choate students who are reading this, if you have the opportunity to go abroad, do it! Not only will your language skills improve immensely, but you will make lasting relationships and unforgettable memories.

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



Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News

## COMING TO TERMS WITH MY FAITH AND CHRISTIANITY



Graphic by Leah Han '27/The Choate News

By **Stan Cho '25**  
Opinions Nation/World Editor

Over the past few decades, opposition to religion has become a trend. The incessant scandals and controversies within religious institutions, as well as the clash between traditional religious teachings and modern values, has led to a decline in religious affiliation. Though I am accustomed to the casual criticism of religion amongst my peers, I remain astonished by the reasons for their remonstrance. I do not intend to convert anyone reading this article, nor am I criticizing those with clashing creeds; I merely implore that after reading my piece, you consider reevaluating your stance on religion.

Growing up, my relationship with religion was muddled. The maternal side of my family was composed of devout Catholics, but my father was an atheist, and my remaining paternal relatives were Buddhists. Due to the religious ambiguity in my household, I strayed away from religious affiliation altogether. Though my parents hadn't necessarily enforced their faith onto me, I felt an innate pressure to choose a side. And so, I decided to choose nothing.

One argument I used against religion is the claim that sacred stories are inconsistent with historical records and scientific knowledge. For a long time, I was a proponent of this critique. There is no proof that Jesus reincarnated himself. It's impossible for Moses to have split the Red Sea. These sacred stories, as far as I was concerned, were fictional.

Choate students, including myself, have been given the privilege of exceptional schooling. With such comprehensive classes, it makes sense for us to want to align our worldview with the curriculum that is taught to us. Atheism provided me with a straightforward, pragmatic approach to life that religious nuances did not. What I failed to realize back then was that these sacred stories do not aim to assert an exaggerated depiction of human history; instead, they were created to explain moral ideas through lore. While religion emphasizes faith in a particular deity (or deities) and compels its followers to practice certain traditions, it is ultimately a guide on how to live an altruistic and noble life.

Religious institutions first emerged as the answer to our existential questions, they soon evolved into a means of

spreading restrictive ideologies and justifying selfish convictions. Over time, followers began to slur those with variant affiliations by punishing heretics and waging wars. Instead of practicing the religious teachings of morality, some theists decide to police the beliefs of others.

Likewise, many contemporary religious institutions are notorious for their intolerance of dissenting beliefs. For instance, the controversial debate surrounding abortion is often crowded by moral convictions driven by ensoulment; in other words, many Christians believe that life begins at conception and that abortion constitutes murder. As such, followers have turned to vague, inapt scripture to fuel dissent instead of abiding by the fundamental teaching to nurture virtue and compassion for others.

It's difficult to defend an institution responsible for centuries of violence and hate, but I believe there needs to be a distinction between the institution and the follower, between the institution and the core ideals of the religion. It would be ignorant to deny the sins of our ancestors, but it would be equally as insensible to deny the foundations upon which these institutions are estab-

lished. In other words, though not all followers are good, they still have the capacity for good. They are simply misguided by dishonorable institutions that fail to deliver on the noble intentions of religion.

The corruption within religious institutions is reflected in faith culture at Choate. Though I can't speak on behalf of followers of other religions practiced at Choate, I find that the religious activities provided at the School fail to provide sufficient resources for followers to practice their faith. The jarring informality during Christian Fellowship may make services more approachable to unacquainted students, but they do not provide spaces for more devout students to remain persistent and passionate in their creed.

Over the past few years, I have moved away from Atheism to Catholicism. It's difficult to be proud to be a Catholic when several of my peers demonstrate a general lack of respect towards my faith. Nevertheless, Choate's ability to celebrate a myriad of religions without integrating them into our curriculum is a step in the right direction.

**Stan Cho** is a fifth-former from Busan, South Korea. He may be reached at [scho25@choate.edu](mailto:scho25@choate.edu).

## FEELING FEARLESS: TAYLOR SWIFT & MY JOURNEY OF SELF DISCOVERY

By **Cindy Tian '27**

Opinions Writer

During your first few weeks at Choate, did you ever feel adrift or set apart from everyone else? Or, perhaps, you found yourself wondering why your grades didn't align with the effort you were putting in? These new experiences, while challenging, are crucial to personal growth and finding yourself. In search of songs that mirror the unique Choate experience, I have found that "A Place in this World" by Taylor Swift perfectly captures my time at the School so far.

Choate is very different from my old school in Massachusetts, which had a much smaller, close-knit community. Choate is almost two times the size of my middle school and offers more diverse opportunities for students to choose their own paths. Throughout my transition from a smaller, more rigid community to a larger, more open one, I have slowly learned more about who I am and where I belong.

"A Place in this World" captures the essence of this transition from middle to high school. Released at the start of her music career in 2006, Swift's



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

debut self-titled studio album eloquently expresses the feeling of not knowing where one truly belongs and the journey towards self-recognition.

She sings: "And tomorrow is just a mystery ... trying to find a place in this world." Her lyrics explain her uncertainty concerning her future. She doesn't know how it will play out and where she will belong.

Though excited for her future, Swift was unsure of what would fill her life's pages. I,

too, am exploring these uncertainties and looking forward to what's to come in my next four years at Choate.

As a dancer, particularly one in the rigorous world of ballet, there are times when I question the worthiness of my pursuit. Though a ballet step may look effortless to the audience, a dancer spends hours on each minuscule detail. Similar to academics, sports, or social life, the surface can appear trivial, but motivation and effort

are required for authentic success. For me, that motivation has been bolstered by listening to "A Place in This World".

The lively rhythm and melody, driven by acoustic guitar chords and drum beats, continue to guide me through my process of becoming who I dream to be.

This song has become a loyal companion of mine during these first couple of months of high school, reminding me that the process of finding oneself requires determination and perseverance. Whether striving for perfection in a ballet routine or struggling through a physics test, Swift has reminded me to stay strong through adversity.

During this challenging period of transition, I have set out on a path of self-discovery. I believe that the message "A Place in this World" conveys is that it is necessary to persevere through hardships to find yourself, both when navigating life at Choate and beyond. I encourage every one of you to find a song that encapsulates your Choate experience. I believe it will help illuminate your journey.

**Cindy Tian** is a third-former from Wellesley, MA. She may be reached at [ctian27@choate.edu](mailto:ctian27@choate.edu).



## Overhauling Military Recruitment: Volunteers and Veterans

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
*Opinions Writer*

Being handed a weapon and pushed onto a battlefield presents a stark contrast to the comparatively tame American nine-to-five lifestyle. Mandatory military service seems like a dystopian violation of free will to most Americans. To maintain foreign interests and international influence without returning to mandatory service, the U.S. must find new ways to revitalize interest in the military.

A country where values such as individualism and liberty are of utmost importance, the U.S. currently follows a voluntary model for military service after they abolished military conscription in 1973. This was a watershed moment during which the U.S. military began prioritizing compensation.

Voluntary service allows the U.S. to ensure that their soldiers are committed to the military's ob-

jectives as they chose to join the institution of their own volition. U.S. Deputy Secretary of Defense Kathleen Hicks said, "The U.S. military's retention numbers are outstanding, with every service exceeding 100% of their goals in 2022."

Despite this remarkable statistic, the U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) shows that the number of military personnel declined by approximately 6% from 2020 to 2021. During a time of global strife, it's become essential that the U.S. maintain its militaristic fortitude.

Instead of increasing army population via mandatory service, the U.S. should consider pivoting their marketing to appeal to the younger generation. There exists a stigma surrounding the supposedly toxic, exclusive culture in the military.

For instance, the male-dominated composition of the army makes it a discouraging environment for women: the RAND Corporation notes that 22% of female active-component ser-

vice members experienced sexual harassment. Such factors keep female enlistment as low as 16%, with no signs of significant growth in the future.

Moreover, life after honorable discharge can be fraught with challenges. For instance, the risks of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), disabilities, and addiction often stem from serving in the military. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs revealed that 29% of the veterans in Operation Iraqi Freedom experienced PTSD at some point in their life.

Solving the issue of declining enlistment rates requires an adjustment in the military's outreach to potential recruits and their treatment of its veterans. While mandatory military service may never be the answer, major adjustments are necessary to inspire the new generation to voluntarily serve their country.

**Ethan Zhang** is a fourth-former from Acton, MA. He may be reached at [ezhang26@choate.edu](mailto:ezhang26@choate.edu).



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

## Balancing Wisdom and Health for Presidential Candidates

By **Andrew Jean Baptiste '24**  
*Opinions Writer*

The U.S. Constitution has specified that a president must be at least 35 years old in order to ensure that the nation's chief executive has the maturity and experience required for a position of such authority and esteem. However, with the controversy stirred up by recent media coverage surrounding President Joe Biden's health and old age, it has become evident that the U.S. must enforce a maximum age limit for presidential occupation.

The writers of the Constitution understood that while there could be exceptional individuals in their twenties who are fully prepared to take on a presidential role, exceptions should not dictate the norm. Since the birth of our nation, the longevity of the United States' highest office has demanded stability to ensure its effectiveness over time.

Medical advancements and lifestyle changes have enabled longer lifespans, making it possible for older candidates to participate in contemporary politics. At the start of their terms, both former President Trump P'oo and Biden were the oldest presidents in U.S. history.

It remains an undeniable fact that as we age, our mental and physical faculties decline. While there are exceptions — Zlatan Ibrahimovic's European football career — a governing

document as esteemed as the Constitution cannot operate on inconsistent rarities.

The debate on reevaluating presidential eligibility is not meant to be ageist or to disregard the wisdom that our elders have; instead, it's meant to acknowledge the human fate of facing limitations in our capabilities as we age. These limitations can impact a president's ability to make executive decisions.

Dissenters may argue that the rigorous presidential campaign prepares the candidate for office as they are forced to battle societal pressures and intense political scrutiny. However, this assumption overlooks the reality of modern campaigning. The purpose of campaigns is for a candidate to sell themselves to an audience and, in the process of doing so, conceal any potential issues that voters may otherwise criticize. Voters are, therefore, presented with a heavily manufactured facade instead of the true nature of their candidates.

Voters are often ignorant of the mental and physical capabilities of their candidates, and even if voters were provided with thorough medical records of said candidates, they cannot guarantee a president's projected well-being.

Recent history has shown that a president's health issues may remain undisclosed or downplayed during their time in office, only coming to light later. Jacob Appel,

a physician who has researched the medical histories of U.S. presidents at Mount Sinai Hospital, notes that presidents are neither required to publicize their medical records nor obliged to verify the accuracy of the information presented. Thus, relying solely on campaign dynamics and medical records may not be sufficient to safeguard the nation's highest office; instead, general information that correlates motor functions and neurological capabilities with age must be taken into account.

In the end, adopting a maximum age limit for presidential eligibility should not stem from ageist ideologies; instead, the goal must be about ensuring that the president can function as commander-in-chief for the entirety of their term. This role requires them to be consistent in their ability to guide our country through difficult challenges and rapid change.

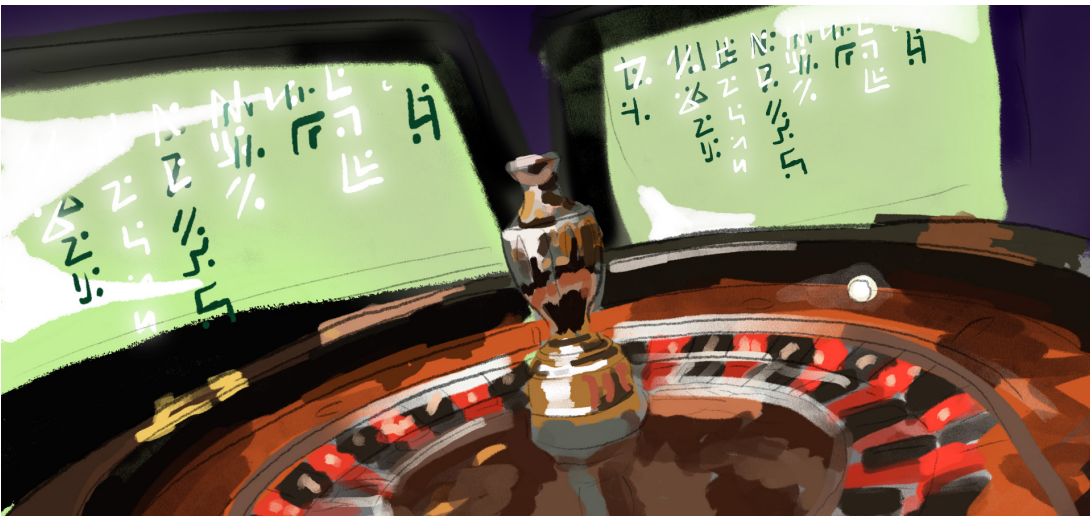
Now, we are rolling the dice by potentially re-electing Joe Biden, 80, and Donald Trump, 70. It's time for a national debate on whether a fair system for determining presidential eligibility — one that takes into account both the minimum and maximum age limits — would be better for our society.

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

## THE WIDESPREAD, WICKED INFLUENCE OF ONLINE GAMBLING



Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News

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

Shrouded behind claims of increased tax revenues and improved consumer protection lies the fight to spread one of America's dirtiest industries: online gambling. Since its official codification by a series of legislative changes in 2007, the online gambling industry has ballooned to \$93 billion in 2023.

Our attention has been focused on legalization's positive effects: a larger governmental revenue base and better public services. However, an examination beyond the politicized gibberish reveals an economic, public health, and illegal wagering crisis that will fester as long as online casinos exist.

Online gambling is currently legal in 34 states and en route to being approved in many more. This meteoric rise is not the result of fair competition and regulated growth, but rather a strategic lobbying effort funded by an industry pushing a fundamentally false narrative.

The widely accessible nature of the internet has rendered hopes of a controlled and beneficial online gambling industry useless. Despite an age restriction accompanying legalization, there is no way to prevent adults from serving

as intermediaries between minors and their desired bets. We now find ourselves in a situation where gambling addictions are starting at concerning young ages, exacerbating an already acute public health crisis.

Online gambling has also worsened existing socioeconomic issues, only driving the wealth gap further apart. On the surface, a highly-taxed industry such as online gambling would serve as a means of wealth redistribution. As gambling is becoming a dependency rather than a leisure activity, however, it has left more money in the hands of the wealthy and less in the hands of the poor.

Perhaps the most worrying element of this issue is the controlled narrative surrounding the conversation around legalization. Often taking the form of ballot measures voted upon in general elections, it would seem that online gambling legislation is presented fairly to the public. However, with their vast resources, online casinos sponsor musicians, YouTubers, and television segments to promote themselves while simultaneously buying lobbying power in state governments. Thus, online casinos have created an effective multilateral approach to advancing their interests.

As a result of this information landscape, instead of being exclusively available to adults over the age of 21, online gambling is now reaching the broader population through social media and the press. This democratization of gambling has encouraged the work of illegal middlemen and primed the next generation to be rife with betting addictions. Online casinos have neglected regulations on advertisement, with the only condition being a small disclaimer providing addiction resources. Not only does this fail to create meaningful change for those in need of treatment, but it also detracts from the fight for healthy wagering by presenting gambling's dangers only after enticing prospective customers.

One thing is clear: regulation hasn't worked, and the only logical step moving forward is to rescind online gambling licenses. If we sit back and watch while casinos lure generation after generation into an industry as detrimental as online gambling, we are all but ensuring a future defined by prosperity for the few and hardship for the rest.

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

## THAILAND'S WAKE UP CALL ON GUN CONTROL



Graphic by Kate Park '27/The Choate News

By **Ada Tiewnorn '26**  
*Opinions Staff Writer*

A shooting at Bangkok's Siam Paragon Mall on October 3, 2023, led to two fatalities and five injuries. The victims were from Laos, China, Myanmar, and Thailand. This terrifying event underscores the nation's persisting yet futile dispute over gun control. In acknowledgment of the growing frequency of similar incidents nationwide, Thailand must employ stricter gun control regulations.

Siam Paragon Mall stands as one of Thailand's busiest, most prosperous shopping destinations. Witnesses videotaped the incident from both inside and outside the mall, with some footage even capturing the chilling sounds of gunshots. The shooting sent shockwaves throughout the nation as civilians honored the lives that were lost while fearing for the safety of their loved ones.

However, the most disconcerting aspect of this tragedy lies in the identity of the alleged

shooter: a 14-year-old boy who had modified a firearm with materials purchased online. Further investigations revealed a history of mental health issues, which had gone untreated due to a termination of medication.

Deficiencies in Thailand's gun control regulations allow for the accessible purchase of "non-lethal" firearms. As such, it's no surprise that Thailand, according to the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, ranks second highest for gun homicides in the Southeast Asia region.

How is it possible for firearms to be legally procured without stringent checks? Who will take responsibility for the lives lost in this incident, and why is it feasible for minors, including the perpetrator of the mall shooting, to purchase lethal weapons without suspicion?

It is crucial for countries with flexible gun laws to recognize that criminals and individuals with harmful intentions can exploit the shortcomings within their nation's legal system, putting countless civilians at risk. On that note, the Supreme Court

recently allowed the Biden administration to regulate ghost guns — untraceable homemade weapons — as firearms under federal laws that impose conditions on their commercial sale.

Permitting firearm purchases for citizens with the intention of self-protection may contribute to more widespread gun violence; instead, Thailand must harshen their punishment of shooters and regulate the sale of non-lethal weaponry to ensure a safer environment without requiring excessive firearm circulation.

The time has come to prioritize the safety and security of our society beginning with implementing stricter gun control regulations. It's a moral imperative to safeguard the lives of both citizens — including my parents who were at Siam Paragon Mall during the incident — and visitors, ensuring that Thailand remains a safe and welcoming destination for all.

**Ada Tiewnorn** is a fourth-former from Bangkok, Thailand. She may be reached at [atiewnorn26@choate.edu](mailto:atiewnorn26@choate.edu).



HALLOWEEN MADNESS  
IN THE DORMS



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

By **Ethan Zhang '26**  
Reporter

Whenever Halloween rolls around, Choate embraces the occasion as an opportunity to hold inter-dorm candy hunts and transform campus into spooky landscapes. With midterms coming to an end, House Mentors and prefects in dorms are concocting ways to participate in the Halloween festivity and destress.

Neon purple bats and black and orange decorations adorn the walls and exterior of Squire Stanley, a fourth- and fifth-form girls' dorm known for its Halloween spirit.

In addition to these decorations, the dorm residents and House Mentor Dr. Amber Hodge are arranging a dorm trip to The Warren's Occult Museum. The museum features haunted artifacts from famous paranormal investigators around the world and offers typical Halloween ac-

tivities, such as pumpkin carving and creating candy baskets.

Led by Head of House Mr. Tim Yun, Memorial House, a co-ed dorm for fourth- and fifth-form students, plans to hold their annual nighttime manhunt this term. The event, known as "Mem-hunt," will be held in the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center.

"Mr. Yun always makes very simple concepts very fun," prefect Carter Foster '24 said. He also noted their classic "trail-of-terror" activity, which occurred on October 17. "At eight o'clock, when it's pitch-black, the prefects go out and scare people running on the cross-country trail," he said.

Third-form dorms are also doing their part to make this spooky season exciting for freshmen. Third-form boys' dorm East Cottage is considering handing out candy around campus in collaboration with third-form girls' dorm Pitman House. "It's important for freshmen, who aren't yet accus-

tomed to being away from home, to have a little fun to feel more integrated into the Choate community," prefect Tyler Kwee '24 said.

Amanda Benneh '24, a prefect in the third-form girls' dorm Nichols House, said, "When we're constantly consumed with academics, it's nice to be able to remember that there are events or days to look forward to throughout the year."

Although this year's plan is up in the air, Benneh spoke fondly about the dorm-wide pumpkin carving contest that she participated in last year.

Halloween is the perfect time for students to catch a break from their school work and enjoy themed activities that bring the dorm together. Ifeanyi Ndokwu '25, a resident of Clinton Knight, said, "Halloween reminds me of home and being a kid again, which is hard at Choate."

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Uncovering The Underground:  
Ranking Dorm Basements

By **Hannah Quan '26**  
Staff Reporter

Below the buzz of campus, dorm basements are secluded places to take a breather from the bustling activities above ground. Let us journey through cold cellars and quaint quarters across campus to find the best basements!

**1. Nichols**

Living underground presents a unique experience to any boarding student, especially for the third-form girls in Nichols House. Despite the lesser amount of natural light, potentially making the rooms less desirable, the garden-level rooms in Nichols are extremely spacious. Additionally, a kitchenette and a study room are readily available.

Resident Rachel Fan '27 said, "In my personal opinion, the basement is the best floor to live on. We have a fridge and a vending machine, and I don't mind that we don't get much light." The basement allows residents to have a quiet space while being part of a big, energetic dorm like Nichols.

**2. McCook (common room only)**

The basement of the all-gender McCook House is a popular spot amongst residents, whether it's for the laundry machines, the cozy common area, or the study room with sliding doors.

"The basement is great for late-night conversations. The couches and tables make it a useful common space for students, and it has a slightly different vibe than being in the common room [upstairs]," resident Friday Acuna '26 said.

Isabella Wu '24 added, "If you don't want to study in your

room, you can go to the basement and study in the study room. It's also really good on the weekends to play card games with friends."

**3. Clinton Knight (common room only)**

With the same configuration as McCook, fourth- and fifth-form boys' dorm Clinton Knight (CK) also offers a convenient and comfortable spot underground. The one special addition to CK is its ping pong table, which attracts even visitors from other dorms.

"We use it to hang out, to connect with each other, and to build community," resident Kino Liu '26 said. "It's also a great place to nap because the couches are comfortable."

However, the dim lighting is an improvement that prefect Henry Ding '24 hopes to see. "If the lighting was better, this basement would be top-notch," he said.

**4. Mead House**

The basement of Mead House is where many girls have met their closest friends as third-formers. Former resident Anne Coady '26 said, "The basement is the smallest floor: there are only four girls, and we had a really nice community."

Her roommate Kaya Weerasuriya '26 agreed, "We had more freedom, so it was fun for our first year."

**5. Atwater House**

Perhaps the basement experience doesn't get more intimate than in the third-form boys' dorm Atwater House. There are only four residents on this floor, one of whom, Pete Areewong '27, said, "Though it can get hot and there isn't that much space, we get to know

each other since there's only three rooms."

The Atwater basement also functions as the only common room in the dorm, with couches, a water fountain, and a fridge. "We have a special configuration, so we have dorm meetings in the basement," prefect Danny Yoon '24 said. "It does encourage everyone to come down and socialize."

**6. Memorial House**

As the only floor of the dorm that isn't co-ed, the basement of Memorial House has a different dynamic than the rest of the dorm. The nine boys on the garden-level have built a special bond: "The basement offers a unique and positive experience," resident Raghav Sharma '25 said. "The vending machine is very useful and convenient for those who live there."

**7. Tenney & Bernhard Houses (no rooms)**

The twin dorms Tenney House and Bernhard House each have a spacious basement floor that includes a laundry room and storage area.

Tenney resident Michael Xu '25 noted the convenience of Tenney being a designated drop-off spot for E&R laundry. "It's really used for the laundry service drop off, so that's nice," he said.

"It's very convenient because I can put my suitcases and furniture that I don't need there during the year," Tenney prefect Ethan Zhang '24 said.

Some Bernhard residents also noted the basement's great acoustics for some impromptu vocalization on their way to doing laundry.

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Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

Back of Hill House



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Swim Exercise Room



Photo by Nicha Tongdee '26/The Choate News

PMAC Spiral Staircase



Photo by Ada Tieworn '26/The Choate News

Science Center Bridge at Night

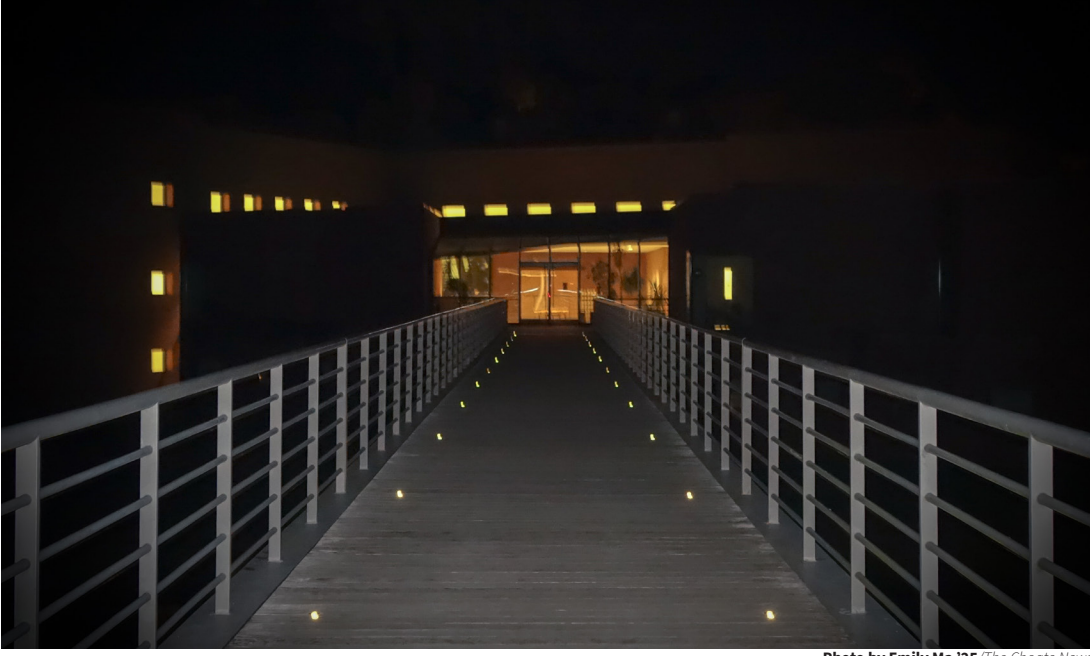


Photo by Emily Ma '25/The Choate News



## REIMAGINING THE FALL MUSICAL: SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD

By **Reinah Lee '26**  
*Copy Editor*

Get ready to embark on a musical journey presented by Choate students in the Gelb Theater this fall. Written and composed by three-time Tony Award winner Jason Robert Brown, *Songs For A New World* (*Songs*) consists of 17 songs, no dialogue, and no concrete plot; instead, a series of individual stories are presented, following themes of love, loss, rebirth, and reconnection.

This musical has no written plot — it is a series of individual songs each with a different story. Approaching how to connect all the individual stories is left to the director. Theater teacher Mr. Bari Robinson directed the play and created the plot based on the actors in the cast. With eight student performers, he decided to create a narrative for *Songs* that was easy to follow for the audience. The final idea was to have three very different couples all living in New York City. For example, one couple in the song cycle is in a long distance relationship and has to fight numerous challenges to stay together. “Each song represents a moment in time,” Mr. Robinson said. “That’s another way I thought about the narrative.”

Without dialogue, the music in *Songs* is the star of the show. “We couldn’t do this without our really talented mu-

sic director Mr. Nathaniel Baker, who’s an amazing pianist in his own right and is helping to shepherd [actors] through this really challenging music,” Mr. Robinson said.

*Songs* is student-choreographed by Jordan Dodd ’25 and Leanne Parks ’25. After choreographing a scene in last winter’s play *She Kills Monsters*, Mr. Robinson asked Dodd and Parks to do the same for *Songs*.

Even though choreographing and acting was exhausting at times, Dodd explained that “it always felt good to see [our] work come to life and have those ‘aha’ moments where this choreography works.”

Tackling the dual roles of castmate and choreographer was also tricky for Parks at first, but she, too, enjoyed the excitement of it. “It’s been really fun being able to do both because I love being on stage, but I also like doing stuff behind the scenes,” she said.

Whether it be improvising to the soundtrack or taking snippets from TikTok dances, the student-choreographers drew inspiration from wherever they could find it. The Act One finale, entitled “Steam Train,” radiates Michael Jackson’s “Beat It.” Another number, “River Won’t Flow,” borrows dance moves from Tina Turner. Lots of movement was taken from 90s pop culture and bands, such as TLC and En Vogue.



Photo by Nicha Tongdee '26/The Choate News  
*Songs of a New World* Director Mr. Bari Robinson gives notes to the cast following tech rehearsal in the Gelb Theater.

One of the greatest challenges for the actors was crafting their characters solely from their assigned songs. Actor Leanne La ’26 used a technique called method acting — incorporating the character’s life into your own life — to approach her character.

“We did a lot of scene study with [Mr. Robinson] to analyze every lyric and see what happens to us as actors and as artists,” La said. She expressed the importance of being intentional and its key role in crafting the show’s current narrative.

Making his creative debut at Choate, the set designer for *Songs*, Mr. Kyle Artone, a renowned set designer who studied design at Yale, collaborated closely with Mr. Robinson to transform Gelb Theater. The set consists of a blue safety net, made of 150 feet of netting, hanging from existing hooks on the ceiling. He also created a black, glossy dance floor to create the illusion of a dynamic void for the characters to live in.

Mr. Robinson also gave the actors 48 milk crates to use on stage to create different shapes, seats, walls, and dance with. These crates are symbolic of New York City’s working class because of their ubiquity on the sidewalks. Rooted in the principle of propelling the narrative, he wanted the set, alongside the cast and music, to resonate with the audience. “My design philosophy is to develop a design language that enhances the production and creates a dimensionality that goes deeper into the piece,” Mr. Artone said.

*Songs for a New World* is set to be a captivating collection of narratives, interweaving music, choreography, and set design. The team will present the play to audiences in the Gelb Theatre at 7:30 p.m. on October 27-28 and 2:00 p.m. on October 29.

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## Choate Welcomes Mr. Seny Camara to Teach West African Dance

By **Eliana Li '26**  
*Staff Reporter*

This year, Choate welcomed Mr. Seny Camara to the Dance Department. He brings his knowledge and talent to share with aspiring Choate dancers.

Mr. Seny Camara, who specializes in West African traditional dance originating from Guinea, Mali, and Senegal, praises dance as more than just movement, regarding it as a universal language instead. For Mr. Camara, it connects people from all over the world — from his students in New Mexico and Col-

orado to his family back home in Guinea, West Africa. “Dance has given me the opportunity to be able to connect with people from all walks of life, ages, and races, and I think that that’s the most beautiful thing,” he said.

Having been a teacher for more than two decades, teaching is a family tradition for Mr. Camara. “I teach because both of my parents were teachers, so this is kind of like the family business,” he shared. Mr. Camara and his dad used to teach together, spreading their love for the rich culture of West African dance to dancers of all backgrounds.



Photos by Toffy Prakittiphoom '24/The Choate News  
Mr. Seny Camara teaches his weekly West African dance class in the Colony Hall Dance Studio.

At Mr. Camara’s weekly Friday class, Choate students have been working on a Guinean coming-of-age dance, soko. “We’ve been learning about the drums used and how to respond to it by keeping a constant relationship between the dance movement and drum rhythm,” said Olivia Siegel ’24, a Dance Arts Concentration student.

Siegel has particularly enjoyed learning a new dance form not typically taught at other schools. “Mr. Camara is really enthusiastic about teaching West African dance and dance in Guinea,” she said. “He’s happy to answer questions about the history, culture, language, and instruments related to the dance.”

As a student choreographer, Siegel hopes to incorporate different aspects from Mr. Camara’s class, including the athletic, fast-paced, and high-energy movements into her work.

Since joining Choate, Mr. Camara has been content with the atmosphere surrounding the dance program. “Everybody is very, very, respectful, and I appreciate that. I think a lot of times in schools, there is a disconnect between the students and the teachers. And I think here, it’s not so much, and I like that,” he said.

In his class, Mr. Camara aims to teach skills that will benefit students in ways beyond the dance studio. “Everything is connected ... so I just tie dance to everyday life,” he said.

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## The Masterminds Behind SAC Dances



Graphic by Victoria DeVito '27/The Choate News

By **Amber Yung '26** and **Rose Lightfoot '26**  
*Reporters*

The first floor of the Student Activities Center (SAC) was abuzz with excited students, flashing lights, and booming music on September 9: familiar sights for any student who has attended a SAC dance. To kick off the first dance of the year, students gorged on pizza next to the Tuck Shop, belted songs while swaying to the beat, and made new friends on the dance floor.

The event was arranged by the Student Committee on Programming and Engagement (SCOPE), a student-led organization that oversees club life and helps organize events on campus. Events Chair Brecken Cullinan ’24 brainstorms and plans all the SAC Weekend events, which include the three to four dances hosted every term.

While the fall term opening SAC dance and HLF dance have passed, a Halloween-themed dance, a Blue and Gold dance after Deerfield Day, the Holiday Ball, First Hurrah, 3/4, Last Hurrah, and multiple SAC dances sprinkled in between are scheduled to take place this year.

From choosing the theme of the dance to deciding on lighting and decorations, SCOPE works hard behind the scenes to ensure the success of every event. For example, students’ music preferences are communicated to the DJ beforehand to make sure that everyone can sing along to the music.

“The DJ is the same guy every time,” Cullinan said. “If students have certain songs they want to hear, we can get it to the DJ ahead of time.” The requested songs are gathered and sent to the DJ, who downloads the files and plays them during the dance. For example, the Hispanic Latin Forum (HLF) provided songs they gathered from a school-wide collaborative playlist to the DJ prior to the dance they sponsored to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month on October 7. Top picks included Korean pop, Latin pop, Afro beats, and rap.

According to Ms. Alex Long, Director of Student Activities, Choate has established a valuable partnership with Sound Spectrum, a professional DJ and event services company from Wallingford. “They are well-versed in the layout of our venues, which allows for efficient and optimized set up of sound and lighting equipment,” she said.

Depending on the theme of the dance, the lighting equipment used varies every time. However, certain fan favorites always stay the same. “We have different lighting equipment, but most of the time it’s these rotating lights that are in the four different corners,” Cullinan said.

SCOPE is also responsible for brainstorming dance themes during their weekly meetings. Previous themes have included Flannel and Frost for Holiday Ball and a disco theme for Last Hurrah. SCOPE members pitch ideas based on feedback from their friends and peers. “We highly value and actively seek student input when it comes to selecting music and themes,” Ms. Long said.

Ms. Long particularly enjoys themed dances and events because she can experiment creatively with outfits, decorations, and activities. “We’ve been toying with different theme ideas for this year and will announce it soon! Keep your pearls polished,” she said.

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## PROP MAGIC: HOW PUFFS SWEEPS AUDIENCES AWAY

By **Lucy Domingo '26**  
*Reporter*

The Theatre Department’s fall production is preparing to take the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) stage with a comedy full of magic and props. Directed by English teacher Mrs. Katherine Doak, *Puffs*, or *Seven Increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic*, also simply known as *Puffs*, is a spoof on the famous boarding school for wizards and its corresponding wizarding universe.

While the actors worked on memorizing their lines, Mrs. Doak and Technical Director Mr. Mark Gostomski collaborated on something different: the set building process of *Puffs*. Describing *Puffs* to be “like an Elizabethan theater that represents over 40 places,” Mrs. Doak shared that the design inspiration was partially culled from historical images from the Tudor era and British buildings with a splash of “certain ways magical.”

For the first time in his career at Choate, Mr. Gostomski is leading the design team himself. “Typically, we have a guest set designer for all the mainstage productions,” he said. While Mrs. Doak imagined the design, Mr. Gostomski did the blueprints and drafting. Working with this term’s stagecraft students, Mr. Gostomski had plenty of help making the magical world come alive.

The play’s collection of intriguing creatures also add to the magic. Theater teacher Mrs. Deighna DeRiu is responsible for researching, ordering, and creating the props and costumes for all the creatures, an amount that was difficult to enumerate. There are “30 different categories and hand things. Then, we also have a huge snake we have to make ... [and] 43 feet of books on the bookshelf,” Mrs. DeRiu said. As she tried to quantify the number of props in



Photos by Finn Wikstrom '26/The Choate News

The props and costuming teams of *Puffs* work hard backstage. the show, a student joked, “Two thousand sixty eight!”

Because of the number of elements that need to be made, the process of creating each element is not as clear cut as one might think. Mrs. De Riu designed a multicolored chart listing everything by category to help her keep track. And while they often create similar props, the creative process of the team differs each time. The team uses the skills that they learn while making one prop to make another. “This is one of the best parts of theater because you use everything you know,” she explained. “I know how to sew and knit from my grandmother, and I used to build things with my father who was a mason. So, all those things that I learned how to do, they all come into play.”

With all this work, Mrs. DeRiu has plenty of passionate and enthusiastic students helping contribute to the final production. Beibhinn Geaney ’25, a veteran costumer,

particularly enjoys it. “I have been doing this for a year now, and it’s the best decision I ever made,” she said. “It’s a lot: a lot of time, effort, and energy, but it’s really worth it.”

Mrs. Doak, Mr. Gostomski, and Mrs. DeRiu try their best to ensure they create a supportive environment for their students, especially with the long weeks of toil to come leading up to the performance. Ryder Rubenstein ’25 noted that part of why he loves participating in the production so much is because of the relaxed environment.

For Nila Rajan ’26, the people she works with are her favorite part. Anne Coady ’26, who works in stagecraft, wholeheartedly agreed. “I get to know people I normally wouldn’t get to know,” she said.

Puffs will debut in the PMAC on November 2, with performances continuing until the 5th.

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FIELD REPORT

Choate Fall Record

61 - 26 - 8

Varsity Games

Girls' Soccer (7-3-1)  
vs. Taft, 4-1

Girls' Cross Country (1-4)  
vs. Deerfield, 27-28

Football (4-0)  
vs. Taft, 34-6

Girls' Volleyball (5-3)  
vs. Taft, 3-0

Boys' Water Polo (7-1)  
vs. Deerfield, 11-9

Boys' Soccer (7-3-1)  
vs. Kent, 3-0

Girls' Field Hockey (3-5)  
vs. Canterbury, 1-0

Boys' Cross Country (1-4)  
vs. Loomis, 46-15

J.V. Games

Girls' Soccer (3-2-2)  
vs. Taft, 3-0

Girls' Field Hockey (3-5)  
vs. Taft, 2-2

Boys' Cross Country (1-3)  
vs. Deerfield, 49-15

Girls' Volleyball (4-2)  
vs. Taft, 3-0

BOARS HOPE TO RELIVE DEERFIELD DAY MEMORIES

By Grace LaPlaca '25  
Copy Editor

With massive crowds and pumping adrenaline, Deerfield Day is an annual opportunity for sports teams to play their best and for the Choate community to embody Blue and Gold. Five student-athletes recall how they prepared for Deerfield Days and their lasting memories from the days of competition.

As players in the first game of the day, Girls' Varsity Volleyball faced high expectations last year. Fortunately, the pressure can be motivating. Celeste Shattuck '25 shared, "Having really high-energy fans in a high-energy environment makes us play better."

This year, to better prepare for the added stress, the team mimics that game day atmosphere by occasionally yelling at each other while serving in practice.

Having lost only two games their entire season, Girls' Junior Varsity (JV) Volleyball went into Deerfield Day 2022 with energy and confidence. Playing in one of the first competitions that day, the team was cheered on



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Students cheer for Boys' Varsity Soccer at Deerfield Day 2022.

by a large, enthusiastic crowd of students and faculty.

JV Volleyball player Emilia Stahura '26's favorite memory was when the crowd stormed the court after their victory. Outside of the high-pressure games, the team appreciated spending time together and their growth while training. "We really enjoyed practices and valued that time with each other," Stahura said. "We really feel like a family now."

After losing Deerfield Day 2021, Varsity Football came back roaring in 2022 with a 42-30 win over Deerfield. "One of the most noteworthy moments of last year's game was actually the first play of the game," Wyatt Morgan '24 reminisced. "On the opening kick off, Harrison Keith [23] returned it from our own end zone and ran it all the way to the house. That really set the tone for us, and we were able

to continue that momentum throughout the entire game."

Ella Chun '25 remembered her JV field hockey teammates sang the school song from the sidelines during Deerfield Day 2021. The team had lost only a single game their entire season, and the Deerfield game was no exception to their winning streak. "In that moment, it was just a culmination of all our victories and school spirit," she said.

Now a co-captain, Chun hopes to continue inspiring her teammates and helping facilitate the growth and improvement of the team. "Every game, we learn," she said.

Although Boys' Varsity Soccer Co-Captain Jacob Federowicz '24 was injured during Deerfield Day last year, supporting his team was a memorable experience. When Joe Moon '25 scored an unexpected goal in the second half, Federowicz knew the victory was theirs.

"We were all going crazy," he said. "It was out of nowhere, and [he had] this individual brilliance that stunned all of us, especially in a big moment."

Having learned from the leadership of previous captains, Federowicz recognized the importance of being a team on and off the field. Through pregame talks, helping to keep the team organized, and checking up on teammates' lives outside of soccer, he hopes to cultivate a stronger team culture as Deerfield Day approaches.

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RIFLING THROUGH THE ARCHIVES: SPORTS OF YORE

By Lauren Hsu '24 and  
Ayaz Zuberi '27

Sports Editor and Reporter

According to the archives of The Choate School and Rosemary Hall, horses once trotted through campus and a riflery range was housed in the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center (WJAC). Since then, sports teams, such as the equestrian and riflery teams, have come and gone over the years.

Skiing began as a club at The Choate School in 1938 and at Rosemary Hall in 1961. It developed into an interscholastic team in 1947 and in 1972 respectively, continuing on after the two schools merged in 1974. Beginning in the 1949-50 season, skiing took a hiatus at The Choate School but restarted in 1961. Finally, in 1995, the ski program came to an end.

During the 60s, the team trained at the former Powder Hill, now named Powder Ridge Ski Area in Middlefield, Connecticut, just a 16-minute drive from campus. "The snow bore no resemblance to powder and little resemblance to snow. It was, most agreed, a slightly tilted ice rink," Andy Love '63 wrote in the spring 2019 issue of the *Bulletin*.

One notable skiing coach was Mr. Donald Beaton, who taught math from 1963-1975. Under his leadership, The Choate School won nine New England Prep School Ski Championships titles against teams at other schools, including Phillips Academy Andover and The Lawrenceville School. The team also earned five rally victories over Deerfield.

In 1916, Rosemary Hall began a horse riding program. Josephine Smith, Captain of Riding in the 1923-1924 school year, wrote about the program in the October 1923 edition of *Question Mark*, Rosemary Hall's alumni and literary magazine. "We have had some splendid rides on the near-by bridle paths and two Sunday morning rides which were especially enjoyable," she said.

In 1922, the riding program formed a club called the Equites to promote team bonding. Co-Headmistress Ms. Mary Elizabeth Lowndes would invite the Equites to her home for tea to discuss riding.

At The Choate School, riding was more recreational than



Photo courtesy of Carl Klein Photo

A Rosemary Hall student on horseback in the 1930s.



Graphic by Rielle Reyes '27/The Choate News

interscholastic. Up until World War II, riding was a popular and common activity at the Choate School.

"Some boys quartered their own private saddle horses. All the mounts were exercised each day to keep them fit, and every night the groom gave them a good curry and rubdown," *The Choate News* reported in 1956.

Students even took excursions on horseback into the surrounding countryside, and there was once a red barn for horses where Archbold now stands. Upon its construction in 1928, the barn was moved to be near the Remsen Arena, where it remains today.

In the late 1930s, unable to justify the cost of maintaining horses as the popularity of riding declined, the stables became home to the Dramatic Club, devoted to performing Shakespearean plays.

"Today, around the Choate campus, a boy on horseback would attract more attention than a tomcat in a soup tureen," reported *The Choate News* in 1956.

Home to many of the School's athletic courts, the WJAC once also housed a shooting range for the competitive riflery team.

The interscholastic riflery program began in the 1950s,

but a rifle club had existed at the Choate School since 1915.

In 2001, the program ended when longtime coach Mr. Carl Johnson retired from his position as a Photography teacher, and the School was unable to find a replacement. Expensive ammunition costs also deterred the School from continuing the program. That same year, the WJAC underwent major renovations, so the riflery range was emptied out.

The riflery team had several experienced students who were active in local competitions. In its last year, Whitney Young '02 and Co-Captain Brian Partridge '02 competed at an all-state match. To facilitate students to continue training after the program ended, the riflery team was given a year to practice at an off-campus range.

Beyond skiing, riding, and riflery, the School once boasted sports such as cricket, gymnastics, and badminton. Teams may never hit Powder Hill again, and students may no longer trot across Wallingford on horseback, but a visit to the School Archives will take you on a deep dive into old sports at the School.

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SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURE ACTION

By Victoria DeVito '27

Reporter

Snapping away on the sidelines of the pool, fields, track, and court, student sports photographers point their lenses to capture special sporting moments throughout the seasons.

Garrett Curtis '24 picked up photography during the pandemic using his father's old camera. After photographing the football game during Deerfield Day in 2021, Curtis discovered his love for sports photography. He particularly enjoys shooting soccer and basketball because of the action-packed games and the basketball court's good lighting, but his favorite photo was taken at the pool. "My favorite photo that I've taken is of Ryan Liu [26] swimming butterfly," he said. "All the water droplets are in the air, and the lighting is really nice."

Ethan Cheung '27 also favors action shots. "For my very first lacrosse game, I shot a picture of my good friend. He was going up for a shot, and you can see the ball kind of set in the pocket," he described.

Cheung began sports photography last year at his previous school's basketball game. "It was my first time ever shooting sports, so I just turned on the high-speed mode of my camera and started rapid firing. I realized how much fun it was capturing moments frozen in time," he said.

Requiring much practice to develop skills and technique, Chris Joseph '25 embarked on his sports photography journey while taking the course, Digital Photography I, at Choate.

"When shooting games, there's a couple things we look at: One is shutter speed, which is how fast the shutter closes, and that determines the amount of light that the camera takes into the photo," Joseph said. Sports photographers adjust the shutter speed depend-

ing on their subject's speed. According to Curtis, developing techniques for good lighting took years of trial and error.

With dual roles of sports photographer and Football Manager, Ella Qu '24 often photographs outdoor games, which poses a challenge because of unpredictable weather and lighting. "You might start off when the sun's strong at four p.m., but when the game starts ending at six, the sun's gone down. In photography, you always have to be adjusting," she said.

Qu runs the football team's Instagram account, @choatefootball, in addition to taking photos for the team. "It's one way to display our program and attract attention for new talent around Connecticut and elsewhere," Qu said.

Curtis acknowledged that learning sports photography can be challenging initially. "It can seem kind of daunting, because you're out there all alone on a field or on a court, and it feels like there's pressure to do well," Curtis said. "If you go into sports photography, you're going to fail your first 30 games before you take a good photo."

However, one of the many rewards of sports photography is connecting with people. "I realized that people really enjoy when I take photos and send it to them after the game. People enjoy seeing themselves in those photos doing things that they love. I think that's just kind of an addicting feeling that I've come to love," Curtis said.

For students interested in dipping their toes into sports photography, hands-on experience is the most effective way to learn. "The most I have learned is not through watching tutorials but actually going out to any game and getting your settings ready and just shooting," Cheung said.

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Graphic by Grace Ju '27/The Choate News