



DIVERSITY DAY 2022

ICONIC SOCIAL-JUSTICE ACTIVIST ANGELA DAVIS VISITS CAMPUS



Photos by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

As part of Choate's annual Diversity Day, Dr. Angela Davis delivered a keynote address and answered questions from students.

By **Alexis Lien '23**
Associate Editor

On the School's 31st annual Diversity Day, renowned activist and scholar Dr. Angela Davis visited the Choate community to deliver a keynote speech, participate in a student-led Q&A session, and attend an affinity lunch with select students and faculty members as part of this year's Diversity Day.

Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers began the search for this year's Diversity Day speaker last summer and managed to book Dr. Davis through the American Program Bureau (APB), an organization that specializes in pairing speakers with appropriate events. In accordance with this year's Diversity Day theme, "Leveling Up: Black Power in the Next Generation," Dr. Myers explained that Dr. Davis was selected to speak to the community, because her legacy has been a testament to

what it means to "level up" and because of her iconic status as a social-justice activist.

"In the past few years, we've seen a lot of painful things," said Dr. Myers, "Why not hear from somebody who understands the importance of promoting not just the painful parts, but also the powerful aspects of humanity."

Dr. Davis began her talk by delving into the history of the abolition of slavery. She discussed how Haiti, the first nation to formally abolish slavery, is still one of the poorest countries in the world today. She went on to explain that freedom can never truly be achieved but encouraged the audience to always strive for more justice among oppressive institutions. Additionally, she stressed the importance of acknowledging the interdisciplinary nature of injustice.

Many members of the community resonated with Dr. Davis's words. "The thing I really appreciated was Dr. Davis' ability to ex-

plain something so meaningfully in a way that makes sense," said Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Filipe Camarotti. "I came out thinking, 'That is the reason why I believe in the justice that she is preaching,' and how it's all interconnected internationally and intersected with environmental justice and our rights for other species and everything related to the slavery revolts and revolutions."

College counsellor Ms. Michelle Thompson-Taylor said, "How we should be thinking more broadly about humanity — that struck home. The notion of humanity — it transcends borders, it transcends nationalities, it transcends countries and politics and government, and is something that links us regardless of where we reside, where we live, who we are, what color our skin is, and that point was probably an unexpected one but one that I think really resonated."

Many also appreciated Dr. Davis's comments on the pain

that comes from discrimination, yet noted her optimism. Dr. Davis explained that she never would have predicted the advancements that have been made toward freedom in the past few years, but through practicing "hope as a discipline," she believes that more progress is possible.

Joy Gao '24 said, "When she said hope is something that is developed over time, not randomly found, it gave me inspiration to take initiative to change my outlook on what hope is and how I can acquire it."

During the Q&A session that followed her talk, Dr. Davis touched on topics such as police brutality and tactics to better law enforcement, her views on the efficacy of structural and systemic reform versus abolition, and how these issues are entrenched in the capitalist heteropatriarchy.

Although the School understood that not everyone on campus would agree with Dr. Davis's

political positions, the event's organizers hoped her visit would push community members to reflect on their perspectives.

Rohan Shivakumar '22 said, "At Choate, we want to invite people with different perspectives, and if she's a communist, I don't care. Should we not listen to people because of their political opinions? That seems very [against] what our values are."

Simone Johnson '23 said, "There are a lot of people in the Choate community who don't know all that she stands for and have written her off based on one part of her rather than judging her as a whole person and what she's done." Johnson was disappointed in students' failure to utilize the provided resources on Dr. Davis's history and writing, which she thinks would have provided more context for the talk.

Black-identifying community members were given the opportunity to enter a lottery to attend

the affinity lunch with Dr. Davis following her lecture.

Fifth-form dean Mr. Will Gilyard '98 who attended the lunch said, "The lunch with Angela Davis was fantastic. She moved from table to table to talk with folks, and so all of the students who were in attendance were able to connect with her on some level. In my conversation, we discussed the importance of having and intentionally building a community so that you have someone to lift you up when you fall."

Johnson echoed such sentiments of gratitude. "I loved the lunch with Angela Davis," she said. "It was very much like talking to your grandmother, in a sense where it's someone who's older than you, who's lived through and experienced so much and you know that and you respect that."

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WORKSHOPS ON INCLUSION FILL DIVERSITY DAY

By **Tess Taetle '24**
Reporter

On Monday, January 17, Choate hosted its 31st annual Diversity Day, which offered both in-person and virtual workshops for all students and faculty members to share their experiences and learn about different facets of diversity and injustice. The day began with morning workshops, followed by a talk from reknowned activist and scholar Dr. Angela Davis, and ended with afternoon workshops and movie discussions.

After consulting with the Choate Diversity Student Association, Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers and Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Camarotti designed the program to amplify student voices by making most workshops student-facilitated. Community members had the option of attending a workshop or a movie session. This year's workshops focused on how topics such as political division, mental health, socio-economic class, and environmental justice relate to identity.

Student facilitators helped in planning and overseeing each workshop, ensuring that community norms were followed and promoting meaningful discussions. Manuela Sepulveda-Cortina '23 chose to co-facilitate a workshop on capitalism in the United States because "the intersection between capitalism and race is at the root of all that we do," she said. "I not only wanted to become more educated on the topic myself but inform others on its importance in a thought-provoking and meaningful way."

While Sepulveda-Cortina struggled to balance conflicting political opinions during the discussion, she believes that sensitive and controversial questions need to be discussed at Choate because they "are absolutely crucial from a self-reflection point of view. Difficult conversations are the segue to digging deeper into our identities and ultimate self-discovery."

Third-form workshops provided tools for third formers to be active and knowledgeable participants in identity-based

conversations. Third-form workshop facilitator Ixchel Hernandez '23 said, "I think it was very enlightening to discuss with the third-formers very interesting and mature topics like how sexual orientation or racial identity affects student life at Choate." She believes that workshops specifically designed for third-formers are important because "they are very new to this community and they don't know each other very well. I think this was a great way for them to get to know what Choate is really about."

Third-former Loulou Politi '25 said, "My biggest takeaway was that I don't have to have everything that's happened to me in my life be part of my identity, that I could choose what partakes in my identity."

As a participant of a workshop on relationships and stereotypes, Racquel Welcome '24 was surprised by the active and thoughtful discussions held. She noted that many people seemed uninterested in her virtual third-form workshop last year; however, this year was different, "since

most people went to seminars that they voluntarily choose to do, [so] the conversation flowed a lot more naturally."

Many aspects of Diversity Day remained affected by the pandemic. "It's definitely harder to facilitate a real conversation when everyone is on Zoom and their cameras are off. Being in person forces people to engage a bit more," said facilitator Sedi Agyeaman '23 said.

Overall, Ms. Megan Shea, who facilitated the virtual viewing of the documentary "13th," appreciated the discussions of Diversity Day. She said, "The immediacy of the film viewing, as the subject of our conversation, certainly helped to inspire a robust discussion and reactions in real time. We discussed what people learned, as well as thoughts on how we can end this cycle, because, as Angela Davis says in the film, 'Historically, when one looks at efforts to create reforms, they inevitably lead to more repression.'"

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Photos by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

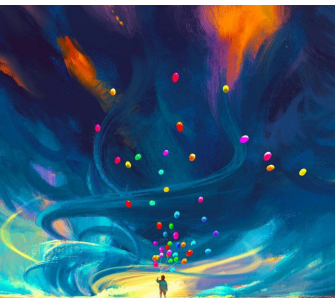
Students participated in workshops during Diversity Day

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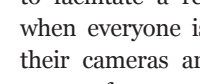
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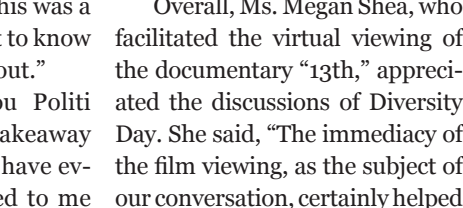


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Visuals by The New York Times, Gonzalo Castillo, NeurologyLive and Tiffany Xiao.



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CHOATE UPDATES COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

By **Arin Tongdee '23**
Reporter

With the Covid-19 Omicron variant running rampant across the world, students returned to campus with new safety guidelines reminiscent of the 2020-2021 academic year. With students returning from all around the world, the School is taking vigilant measures to keep everyone safe.

Before students could return to campus they needed either one negative PCR test within 72 hours of arrival or two negative antigen tests, one 48 hours prior to arrival and the second 24 hours prior to arrival. When they arrived on campus, students were tested once again before entering their dorms.

After witnessing the Covid-19 outbreak on campus following the School's decision not to test all students after Thanksgiving Break, many students were relieved that this decision was made. "I think it created a lot of animosity between students and the administration

when the School didn't test for the beginning of Winterlude, but students were also doing things to make Covid-19 worse," Orville Amankwah '22 said.

During the first week back from break, all classes were held virtually while the Health Center ran multiple rounds of testing to ensure that any positive cases did not spread. In order to further mitigate the spread of the virus, the rules and restrictions that were implemented in the few days before winter break were extended through the first week on campus. Grab-and-go meals were provided, sports practices and games were cancelled, and ensemble rehearsals were moved to be virtual.

Some students found the virtual format difficult. "It's hard to focus with online learning, and it's pretty slow," said Cooper Ackerman '23.

Amankwah agreed, "It took all my want to be in classes away. I understand that teachers were struggling with that too — it's such

a daunting thing to Zoom into a classroom full of students who don't want to be online."

On Monday, January 10, in-person classes resumed, though many restrictions remained. Masks were required indoors, and room to room and dorm to dorm visitation was still prohibited. The dining hall continued serving grab-and-go meals, with boarders required to eat in their rooms or outside, while day students had access to St. John Hall. Most other common spaces resumed normal hours, but sports games were postponed.

In an email on Thursday, January 13, the School announced the opening of dine-in service in the dining hall, St. John Hall, and the Tuck Shop to boarding students the following day. Lanphier Cafe reopened on Tuesday, January 18. Sports games also began again last weekend on January, 12. "It's nice to be back on campus with the team and play together again," said Zephyr Simus '23.

On January 7, the School announced dates for a vaccine clinic for students, "12 or older and in need of a first, second, or booster dose," on January 13 and February 3, in hopes to immunize the community and allow for fewer restrictions. Many students got their booster at the clinic, in hopes that the vaccine will mean more normal living is in sight. Given the massive influx of students to

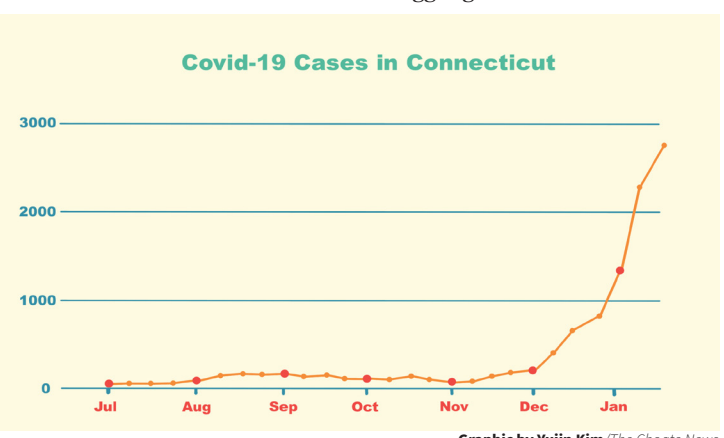
the clinic, however, some students were turned away due to a shortage of vaccines, but are set to receive the vaccine at a later date.

The administration is monitoring the situation carefully and taking the necessary precautions to prevent any further positive cases. The Medical Director, Dr. Miriam Cohen, explained that "the signs that we could loosen up the restrictions" include "higher booster rates and a decline in Covid-19 cases beyond the campus."

Regarding a return to online learning and quarantine, Dr. Cohen said, "I think it's not likely. I don't foresee that happening unless there is an entirely new variant causing trouble." As the vaccination percentage of the school population increases, more facilities will open up and more freedom will be available.

Many students have leaned into the community to find optimism as the uncertainty of the next few months play out. Many students greatly appreciated gathering together for the sledding event on Friday, January 7. "It was especially tough for the first week back when we had to quarantine," said day student Hugo Chung '22. "Seeing all my friends and everyone else during senior sledding was a reminder for how great Choate could be."

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Varun Ramamurthi '22 Wins YoungArts Award for Voice

By **Calvin Moon '24**
Reporter

On December 6, 2021, Varun Ramamurthi '22 received the 2022 National YoungArts Foundation Merit Award for Voice. YoungArts is a widely recognized and highly competitive art contest that covers ten broad genres and dozens more specific classifications under each genre. Over 7,000 contestants around the world participated in the competition, of which 15 from each genre were selected as Merit Award winners.

Participating in the classical voice section, Ramamurthi submitted four recordings including "one art song in English from any time period", for which he submitted "Let Beauty Awake" by Ralph Vaughan Williams; "one art song in a language other than English", for which he submitted "Le Secret" by Gabriel Fauré; "a song or aria selection", for which he submitted "Prayer" by H. Leslie Adams; and "one art song or aria in Italian from any period", for which he submitted "Toglietemi la Vita Ancor" by Alessandro Scarlatti.

Ramamurthi's passion for singing started when he was eight years old. Joining the Grace Cathedral Choir of Men and Boys in San Francisco, he honed his choral singing skills. "The rigor of the Cathedral Choir created the basis for my singing skills,"

said Ramamurthi. With over twelve hours of practice per week for six years, the choir traveled throughout the country and performed in many events, including singing the National Anthem for the San Francisco Giants. Now, as the Co-president of the Maiyeros acapella group and assistant conductor of Chamber Chorus, Ramamurthi continues to invest his time.

His inspiration to join the YoungArts National Competition stems from a summer program he attended at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, a prestigious program for classical voice and music. The three-week program allowed him to learn with some of the most capable instructors in the world and receive college and conservatory-level training. After the program, an instructor at the program recommended him to apply for the competition.

"With the merit award of the competition, YoungArts provides me with ample opportunities as an artist in both my creative and professional pursuits," said Ramamurthi. "I also receive a subscription to YoungArts Post, which is a great way to connect with the art community."

According to the YoungArts website, the YoungArts Post is a "a private, online portal for YoungArts artists to connect, share their work and discover new opportunities."

Despite still being undecided about his career, Ramamurthi wants to continue his passion for music in college and see where that takes him. Ramamurthi is searching for colleges with a rigorous classical voice and composition program that will leave both career opportunities open to him in the future.

"No matter where I am after high school, I know that this competition has given me a

great boost to my future career as an artist," Ramamurthi said.

Ramamurthi recently sang at the Angela Davis Presentation on Diversity Day with members of the Chamber Choir and will perform in many future musical events on campus including Winter Recital at the end of the term and Senior Recital in the spring.

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Photo by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

Varun Ramamurthi sang with the Chamber Choir at Diversity Day.

Joy Bang '22 Named Regeneron STS Semifinalist



Photo by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

Joy Bang injecting samples into a test tube at the Science Center.

By **Ryan Kim '23**
Associate Editor

On January 6, Joy Bang '22 was announced as a semifinalist and one of the top 300 scholars for the 2022 Regeneron Science Talent Search (STS), one of the oldest and most prestigious high school math and science research competitions in the country. This year, 1,804 students from 603 high schools across 46 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, and eight other countries applied to the competition. Bang's winning biology project focused on using Transcription Factor A Mitochondria (TFAM), a type of protein, to safely store data-holding DNA.

The bulk of the research for her project took place over the summer at Suwon University in South Korea. According to Bang, current methods of storing data such as images are space and energy-intensive, which has led scientists to explore other means of storing information. DNA data storage "is a field that's being really intensively studied because of its great potential to be the next mainstream medium of data storage," she said. However, one critical issue with this method is the inherent instability of DNA. Bang's work was on using TFAM to encapsulate and protect mitochondrial DNA from various stress factors such as ultraviolet (UV) radiation and oxidative stress. "I wanted to see if this protein could be combined with DNA storing actual information," she said. Her research results showed that the TFAM-DNA complex met stable storage needs in aqueous conditions, despite harsh UV irradiation and oxidative stress. Furthermore, she successfully stored and retrieved both 10x10 black and white imag-

es and binary numbers encoded within the nucleotide of the DNA.

After three months working on the project, Bang recalled the night, or rather morning, that she heard the news. "I remember it was 2 a.m. in Korea, 12 p.m. EST, when I got an email notification from STS saying 'Congratulations!'" Bang continued, "I was so thrilled and excited, and I got to celebrate it at home." For her work, Bang and Choate have each received \$2000 in prize money from STS.

Bang's motivation for this project came from not only her principal investigator at Suwon Professor Woo Rin Lee, who introduced and helped Bang develop the model for her project, but also literature review she completed for the biology section of the School's Science Research Program (SRP). "SRP built a strong foundation for my research skills and literature review" she shared. Although her SRP and previous research experiences pertained to

lung-related conditions, "a lot of techniques I used and the analysis I did were similar to my prior research," she said.

Looking to the future, Bang shared her interest and passion for continuing her research project. "I'm definitely interested in furthering this project — I'm planning on reaching out to professors in this field to receive feedback on my work and further it."

On January 20, 40 of the top 300 scholars were named Regeneron Science Talent Search Finalists, in which 10 of those students will be selected in mid-March to receive a combined total of \$1.8 million in awards during the final award ceremony.

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COMMUNITY CONVERSATION FOCUSES ON RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

By **Aubrie Williams '24**
Reporter

On Friday, January 7, Choate held its fourth Community Conversation of the year, focusing on religious identity. Held over Zoom, various topics were discussed at the meeting, from misconceptions about religions to feeling out of place in religious communities.

The student co-host of the conversation, Jansher Azmat '22, wanted to help facilitate the discussion to celebrate religious diversity at Choate. "As president of Muslims Student Association, I think it's important to showcase all aspects of religious identity, especially since religion is not often discussed in our community," he said.

Many students enjoyed the change of pace and topic for this Community Conversation. Adama Sowe '23 said, "In the past Community Conversations, it was easy to find things we could have done better or things that could have been said differently, but this meeting was actually a learning experience."

Compared to the last conversation, students felt that it provided more opportunities for all community members to speak up and share their experiences. "It felt so different from the other community conversations because there wasn't much animosity," said Julia Xu '23. "People were just talking about their experiences and it seemed like people had really positive experiences with religion."

Many also appreciated the questions asked, due to the conver-

sation they were able to foster. The questions included how students' religious identities and practices have changed since coming to Choate, as well as what misconceptions exist regarding students' religions. "They tried to use questions that were relevant to the topic, and where people could share their opinions, rather than questions that could be searched through Google," said Sophia Kim '24.

Sowe also enjoyed the nature of the questions. She said, "Everyone was speaking on their own experience, and no one was here to school anyone."

This Community Conversation proved to be a learning experience for many, especially when it came to the different religions that make up the campus. "There isn't a high population of religious

people at Choate," said Kim, "So it was great to learn about religions I hadn't even heard of."

"The number of religious identities that I was not aware of was particularly interesting," said Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Filipe Camarotti. "I gained a greater appreciation for them just by sitting and listening."

At the same time, the conversation bridged the gap between seemingly different religions "Yes, there's diversity," said Ximena Castillo '24. "But there's a lot of things that are the same across religions, like parental relationships or what to bring up at the dinner table."

The conversation also fostered a sense of belonging among religious people at Choate. Castillo added, "Seeing [different] people

talk about their religion made me feel like a part of a community."

Because of the Zoom format, more people could participate with the anonymous chat function. "People who would be too afraid to speak in front of 1,000 people can write down a chat and share their opinions," said Kim.

While the chat feature included more people in the conversation compared to the in-person format, Kim also appreciated the Zoom format's time efficiency. "When it's in person, when they walk around with a microphone for each question, it takes a lot of time and creates a sort of awkward atmosphere," she said.

Although there are some proponents for Zoom Community Conversations, others

believe they are best in Colony Hall. "I prefer in person, because I want people to be able to sit in a room together," said Sowe. "Especially when the School is getting divided constantly with Covid-19, we should appreciate it when we can all sit in a room together."

Many agreed that the Community Conversation proved to be valuable for both religious and non-religious students, with each group being able to gain something positive from the event. The next Community Conversation, on Multiracial Identity, is scheduled for February 3, and is planned to be held in person.

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Wallingford Historical Preservation Trust Uncovers Hidden Local Truths

By **Eva Li '24**
Staff Reporter

Although the Wallingford 350th anniversary Jubilee was cancelled in 2020, the town embarked on a different significant project to commemorate the town's history: "Enslaved Wallingford: The Missing Chapter of Our American Narrative." This project is also referred to as the Black Stories Matter History Project. Though less celebratory and more solemn, the initiative was created by the Wallingford Historical Preservation Trust (WHPT) serve to publicize the lives and stories of enslaved people of Wallingford from 1670 to 1840, as well as the town's free African-American community in the late 19th-century.

WHPT's president, Mr. Jerry Farrell Jr. '86, founded the Trust in 1991 hoping to preserve, interpret, and educate the public about the early historic structures and culture of the town. "Wallingford needed more of a focus and a better telling of the many stories that deserve a deeper dive and a deeper look," he explained.

A major component of the Trust is its historically-significant properties: the Johnson Mansion, which features the American Silver Museum, and the Royce House, Wallingford's oldest building. Both houses have ties to slavery, and the Black Stories Matter History Project aims to to acknowledge and educate on that connection. In order to further expand on the Trust's goals, Choate Catholic spiritual director and project consultant, Mrs. Lorraine Connelly, said, "We're going to have a permanent exhibit that will be available to the public in June 2022 at the Royce House."

At Wallingford's first ever Juneteenth celebration on June 19, 2021, the WHPT read



Photo courtesy of Visit CT

The Johnson Mansion, a historic building in Wallingford with a lesser known connection to enslaved people in Connecticut.

the names of 400 enslaved Black people from Wallingford as part of a memorial. "These were just the first names of the people we discovered — not a last name," Mrs. Connelly explained that limited records were because the enslaved Black population was historically considered property instead of people.

Through their research for the project, the WHPT also discovered that in the 1760s, Wallingford's population of under 4,000 included 182 Black people. The numbers corresponded with

other findings that showed that nearly all merchants, physicians, lawyers, ministers, politicians, military officers, and farmers owned enslaved people. Mrs. Connelly expounded upon this reality, saying that one would more likely see a Black person in Wallingford in 1790 than in 2022: "To imagine that in the 1790s, if you walked out of a dorm or I walked out of my home, there was a Black community that existed that we don't necessarily see today... to me, that is mind-boggling."

Since the stories of the high population of enslaved people

were not chronicled as their white contemporaries were, the WHPT hired Mr. Chris Menapace, a Senior Educator at Discovering Amistad and independent scholar, to further investigate Black life in Wallingford. Under the guidance of Mr. Menapace, local volunteers from the greater Wallingford community looked up relevant primary documents, including numerous church records, federal census records, and military records to identify the names of individual enslaved peoples and, later, their descendants. In a presentation at the

Wallingford Public Library, Mr. Menapace noted, "When most people think of slavery, they think of farm work, but one of the most common professions that enslaved were reverends," Mr. Farrell also commented, "We always thought those were stories about the American South, but apparently there are just as much stories about New England."

The Black Stories Matter History Project discovered the connection of enslavers to buildings and historical figures from Choate Rosemary Hall, including the dormitories

Atwater, Homestead, and Squire Stanley House, as well as faculty residence John Hall House. Mr. Menapace noted "Every prominent family in Wallingford — the Atwaters, Cookes, Halls, Stanleys, Royces, and Yales — were all enslavers."

After contacting the Director of Development Mr. Dan Courcay and Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers, the WHPT sent a proposal to the School that included plans to place witness stones at some of these properties. On finding out the true origin of many campus buildings, Dr. Myers commented: "I was not surprised. Enslaved people were everywhere in this country, as were those who profited from enslavement. I am grateful to WHPT for taking on this project." Additionally, Mrs. Connelly explained that analysis of primary documents will be incorporated into Choate's curriculum "to restore the history and honor the humanity of enslaved individuals who helped build our communities."

For a model of what the witness stone project could look like at Choate, John Reach '24 talked about his own project at the Country School in Madison, Connecticut. "Recognizing and appreciating [enslaved people's] humanity granted us a better appreciation for each individual life, and made information from history textbooks personal. ... I hope to share this type of experience with others in the future, and to continue to uncover more about the lives of people who were enslaved," he said.

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Fans Cry Foul at Lopsided Basketball Victory

By **Caroline Lawlor '23**
Reporter

On January 3, Wallingford high school Lyman Hall was defeated, 92-4, in a varsity basketball game against Sacred Heart Academy (SHA), a Catholic girls' high school in Hamden. While the 88 point difference drew national attention and criticism — including an article from *The New York Times* — the story has prompted reflection on sportsmanship and proper conduct on the high school level.

One of the most significant outcomes of the game was the one-game suspension of Mr. Jason Kirk, the SHA coach. The school's President, Sister Sheila O'Neill, told *GameTimeCT*, "Last night's girls' basketball game versus Lyman Hall High School does not align with our values or philosophies." Both Sacred Heart and Lyman Hall belong to the Southern Connecticut Conference (SCC), an athletic consortium with stated values of "academics, leadership, sportsmanship." After the incident, SCC commissioner Mr. Al Carbone posed this question to the New York Times: "Do we need to do a better job of teaching what sportsmanship is?"

This question was debated not only by organized conferences and administrations, but among local students and athletes as well. To some, like Wallingford resident and hockey player Dan Altschuler '22, Sacred Heart's plays made the game unsportsmanlike. "What upset the people the most was how aggressive the other team seemed to play even after they were leading 56-0 at halftime. Putting the starters in for the beginning of the third quarter is what irked a lot of people," Altschuler explained.

Similarly, Athletic Director Mr. Roney Eford, specified how he would have handled the situation as a coach. "I personally could not win a game by 88 points as I don't feel it is in line with good sportsmanship for high school sports," he said.

The morale of the players in any competition should be

preserved, Altschuler argued: "It never feels good to lose by a lot, and being a hockey player, I have lost my fair share of games by 10 plus goals, but I don't think that comes even close to losing by 88 points," he said. "That would not sit right with me at all."

The score disparity is accompanied by a discrepancy in the resources that are accessible to a public school like Lyman Hall in comparison to a private school like SHA. Altschuler noticed this inequitable matchup and noted, "It's unfortunate that a team that has the ability to 'recruit' athletes can play against a town school and feel fulfilled about winning."

To Jackson Mailhot, a senior at Lyman Hall, the game's outcome was in favor of SHA, but there was an expectation that it would be a balanced event. "Both teams understood the skill gap going into the game, but the SHA coach continued to pound it into them for a decent part of the first half," he said. "Sportsmanship would have looked like letting some of the younger girls get their shot at the big stage."

To Wallingfordians, the fact that a local basketball game has shone attention on their community is surprising. Mailhot commented, "I think it was pretty cool to see our school's name up on

sites like [*The New York Times*] and [*Barstool Sports*]. Would have loved for it to be more positive, but still cool nonetheless."

Altschuler recalled that the score was trending on his Twitter feed, and the game received much visibility on social media. For Mailhot, most of the attention surrounding this ordeal was related to "the hateful and devious comments on our team through social media," he said.

Altschuler seconded Mailhot's opinion, saying, "Many people who had no stake in the event seemed to have a comment on it and felt the need to share it on social media. Some of the stuff a lot of people were saying about the players and the Lyman Hall coach was pretty repulsive."

While the outcome of the game has produced hypervisibility, many in the Connecticut athletics community see it as a learning experience, through which interscholastic teams and players will be more conscious about sportsmanship and collaboration, rather than strict competition. Altschuler said, "While it certainly reflects poorly on sportsmanship at the high school level, my hope is that other schools and teams will learn from this situation."

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Photo courtesy of MyRecordJournal

Sacred Heart Academy recently defeated Lyman Hall 92-4.

SIGHTS OF WINTER STORMS



Photos by Junho Lee, Sophia Kim, and Garrett Curtis / The Choate News

The first winter storm of 2022 brought in over five inches of snow on January 6.

THE CHOATE NEWS



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Spencer House: The Dorm Fit for a King

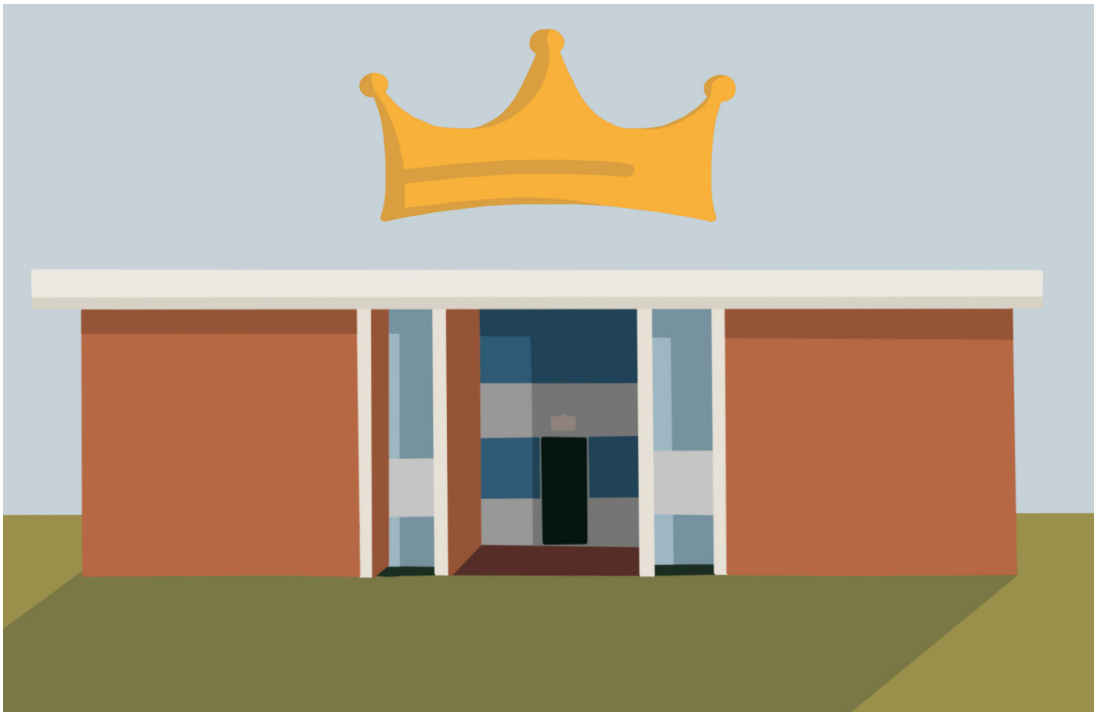
By **Michael Korvyakov '23**
Associate Editor

We've all heard the saying: it's not what's on the outside that counts, but what's on the inside. Never has this statement been more true than with Spencer House, the best dorm on campus.

Is it too obvious to say that Spencer does not have a reputation as one of the nicer dormitories on campus? Originally built as a temporary living space in 1962, it lacks certain modern amenities that make for gracious campus living. When selecting dormitories for the yearly housing lottery, students will put down all kinds of dorms to avoid getting placed in Spencer (Logan Munroe? Atwater? Really?). Up until this year, Gold Key tours have even been told to avoid Spencer at all costs — *Oh, they'll miss seeing half the campus? As long as they don't discover that students actually live in Spencer.*

Although Spencer is looked down upon by the majority of students on campus, the dorm has a distinct aura — one that is appreciated by its inhabitants. Over the course of its 60 years on campus, Spencer has transformed from a once overlooked dorm into a bastion of friendship and auspicious living. What we — I and my 21 dorm mates — lack in accessories, we make up for with heart and camaraderie. Allow me to share with you some of the great things about Spencer.

The first amazing thing about Spencer is its design, perfect for fostering community building and conversation. The building layout is symmet-



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

rical, with the common rooms placed directly in the middle of the dormitory, so you can't go to your room without being sucked into whatever mayhem is going on in those spaces. The lack of soundproofing also contributes to the community feel — even if you've locked yourself in your room and are simply trying to have a relaxing night, you still get to (or are forced to) participate in the conversation going on in the common room. Just ask resident advisers Mr. Charlie Fuentes or Mr. Pat Guelakis, and you will be sure to hear about the frequent deep and thought-provoking conversations that continue until 2:30 a.m.

The second reason Spencer is such a wonderful dorm is the unique design of the windows. While in many other dorms, you

can expect a prison cell window — only getting a small amount of natural light — Spencer's windows take up half the wall, ensuring that you have less space for decoration (saving money!) and more space for sunlight. It also ensures that you never miss out on the piercing glare of anyone walking by your dorm. Who doesn't love people attentively watching them as they do their homework?

Spencer's location is another major benefit of the dorm. While other dorms are situated close to important buildings, Spencer is conveniently located far from everything. Want to go to the WJAC? Not a problem — if you're willing to walk 30 minutes. The Humanities building? Might as well call an Uber. So, why would you live in Hill House, where the only things you can easily access are

the dining hall, the Tuck Shop, study rooms, game rooms, and academic buildings, when you can live in Spencer and have quick and easy access to the empty, and mysterious, former Student Activities Center?

So, enough with the slander of Spencer. Start to embrace the unique gifts that the dorm has to offer. Put it at the top of your dorm lottery ticket. Come and visit every once in a while. Next time someone tells you they live in Spencer, don't offer your condolences — congratulate them on their living space fit for a king. And start proudly telling prospective families when they approach the dingy, box-shaped dorm: "This is Spencer, the best dorm on campus."

Michael Korvyakov is a fifth-former from Pelham, NY. He may be reached at mkorvyakov23@choate.edu

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AN ODE TO THE FRESHMAN SECTION OF THE DINING HALL



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

By **Tiffany Xiao '23**
Associate Editor

Hunger hits me the strongest after swim practice, but a close second is anytime my brain is working — while studying, calculating the latest possible time I can get up for class without arriving late, or thinking about how long a spider web has been sitting on the top ledge of my window. In other words, always.

Perhaps this is what initially drew me to spending my freshman year free periods in the dining hall. The idea of the warm, crispy toasted bottom of an everything bagel smothered in whipped cream cheese was constantly tempting me. Now, in my junior year, I still find myself returning time and time again to the seats in the back of the freshmen section. They are, in my humble opinion, unrivaled as the best seats in the dining hall.

One of my favorite quotes from *The Lion King* is "Everything the light touches is our kingdom." In the back of the

freshmen section, I feel like Simba, a little lion cub forced to fend for itself after being abandoned in Wallingford, Connecticut, two and a half years ago. You can see everyone — your math teacher who just walked out with their to-go box in hand, your friend obsessively scrolling through TikTok, or your classmate scrambling to finish an essay due next block — a perfect location to avoid sneak attacks or unwanted awkward small talk. Then again, if I want to socialize, I'll just walk over to my friends, or my preference, text people to come to me. See? The dining hall is my kingdom.

With my computer open, sitting in a horrifically slouched posture, I plug my earbuds in and, boom, it's my main character moment. Though, now that I think of it, perhaps I feel cool only because I idolized the upperclassmen who sat in the freshmen section of the dining hall when I was a freshman. I don't think anyone really notices my presence in the freshmen section. I guess there's peace in anonymity.

Whether I'm genuinely doing work or just pretending to (likely the latter), I love the quiet chaos of the freshmen section. Even when I can barely keep my eyes open from sleep deprivation, the freshmen have a sense of rowdiness, but also a refreshing energy and excitement. I need some of that on a Monday afternoon as I sit and look ahead at my hectic schedule for the week.

For me, the freshmen section holds those cute, warm and fuzzy memories — many of my "firsts" at Choate. My first year. First dining hall class. First Choate omelet. First team dinner. First Whimsgiving. During free periods when I sit there alone, the air feels familiar and comforting. Maybe that's why I love it so much. When everything else is speeding forward, the freshmen section is always there and the same. I can go back, search up a YouTube video, and allow myself to feel like a freshman again.

Tiffany Xiao is a fifth-former from Irvine, Calif. She may be reached at txiao23@choate.edu.

Let's Streamline the Process of Receiving Test Accommodations

By **Sofia Muñoz '23**
Opinions Writer

In fifth grade, my math class studied fractions. I knew a test awaited me at the end of the unit, so I proceeded to do what I'd always done as a student: pay attention in class, take careful notes, ask questions, and do the homework. However, when I got to the test, my brain froze. Suddenly, all the lessons and practice problems left my head. I couldn't even recall how to simplify a fraction. I turned in the test half blank, ashamed that I couldn't remember a concept that had never been even remotely difficult for me. And so, my journey with test anxiety began.

Throughout the ensuing five years, I had on-and-off bouts of severe anxiety. Sometimes, I would begin crying, and other times I experienced nausea and cold sweats. But, it wasn't until this year that the anxiety began heavily and repeatedly interfering with my ability to perform on tests.

After taking a general anxiety test administered by a psychiatrist, I discovered that the symptoms I'd suffered since fifth grade were, indeed, those of anxiety. More often than not, adults shrugged off my concerns, saying that I just needed to breathe deeply or that my bad test results were because I hadn't studied enough. With a diagnosis to define my experiences, I felt validated. However, the process of receiving accommodations from Choate, which follows the College Board's official "Documentation

Guidelines," has proved to be both time-consuming and expensive.

After receiving my diagnosis, I realized that receiving extra time on tests could help me perform in a way that aligns with my knowledge and my preparation. I felt like I wasn't asking for too much: a bit of extra time so that I could perform a few techniques to mitigate my anxiety and review my answers, rather than simply concentrating on the ticking time.

I soon discovered that the process of getting an accommodation was demanding. For one, I needed to undergo hours of testing administered by private institutions beyond Choate. The testing was designed to confirm that my diagnosis impedes my ability to learn, and it would cost my family thousands of dollars. Ultimately, I needed to submit a six-page report detailing my anxiety and its effects on my academic performance. All of this needed to happen before Choate's Committee on Special Accommodations would consider my request for extra time on assessments.

As it stands, I still haven't completed all of the testing required by the College Board, since I'm still in the process of finding a therapist to administer it. Choate does not have specific funds set aside to help support students who need help in covering these expenses, and the Health Center is not designed to perform educational testing. Even so, the Teaching & Learning Center has allowed me to have up to 50% extra time on assess-

ments through what is known as temporary accommodations.

Choate, of course, has an obligation to manage its students' requests for accommodations responsibly. According to *Forbes*, students at colleges and other prep schools have forged test results to gain time on standardized tests. Choate chooses to follow the College Board's guidelines because many of its students who receive accommodations seek similar accommodations on the Board's standardized tests. The School feels it sensible to avoid dueling sets of criteria.

Still, how can I not wish that this process weren't so onerous or costly? However unwittingly, the College Board's guidelines hurt students who don't have the resources, or time, to complete what can be burdensome testing, especially when it comes on top of medication and therapy.

I know that Choate's Committee on Special Accommodations is committed to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to learn, and that the Health Center will always support students facing mental challenges, and yet it feels time to streamline the educational accommodation policy. Choate should consider how it can make the process of documenting and approving the need for academic accommodations faster and more affordable.

Sofia Muñoz is a fifth-former from Bogotá, Colombia. She may be reached at smunoz23@choate.edu

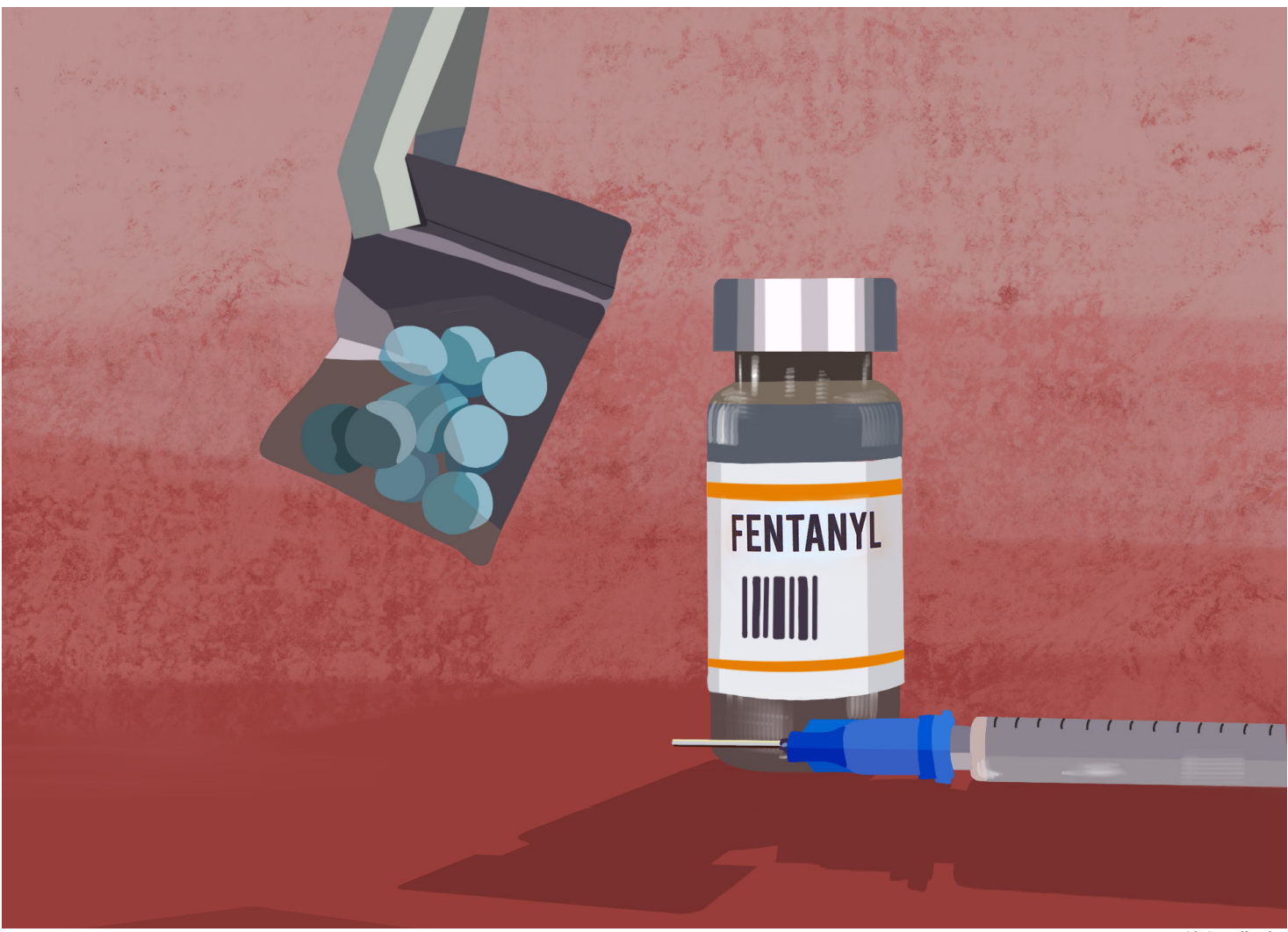


Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

The Deadly Effects of Desensitizing Drug Use in the Media

By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Associate Editor

While Covid-19 related deaths dominated headlines in 2020, fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, is taking more lives than ever before, yet has received much less coverage. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2021, more people aged 18-45 in the United States died from fentanyl overdoses than from Covid-19, suicide, and car accidents combined. The number totals around 79,000 Americans. What's even more concerning is that a large concentration of these deaths are composed of a younger demographic. According to an analysis of California state data by *The Guardian*, fentanyl deaths were rare just five years ago, but now, a person under the age of 24 overdoses on the opioid every 12 hours — a 1,000% increase from 2018. The current fentanyl crisis is tied to a larger issue — an ongoing opioid epidemic. In response, major pharmaceutical companies have tightened their grip on prescription pill regulations following legal pursuits, making these pills less prevalent on the black market. The synthetic opioid was previously popular because it is up to 100 times more potent than heroin and a lot cheaper. Furthermore, the substance can be mixed with traditional street drugs such as heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, and marijuana, and also can be cut into millions of pills that mimic traditional pharmaceuticals. The danger of the camouflaged fentanyl lies in its potency: consumed correctly, it can give users the sensation of euphoria and relieve extreme



Graphic by Yujin Kim

pain; consumed incorrectly, an amount the size of three grains of sand can be fatal. In addition, the opioid itself is easy to attain compared to other drugs, as it can be made in illegal labs that are directly available to dealers. This gives sellers an irrefutable opportunity for profit, which, to them, outweighs the deadly cost. What has encouraged the recent rise in the consumption of fentanyl and other substances among the younger demographic? Whether it's attempting to seem "cool" or "edgy" or to showcase the detrimental effects of drug usage, the media marketed toward teens,

such as popular shows including "Euphoria," "Shameless," "Skins," and countless others, have begun exhibiting a more prevalent theme of romanticizing drugs use in their content. In "Euphoria," the main character, Rue, is close friends with a drug dealer, Fezco. One of Fez's friends offers a portion of fentanyl served on the tip of a blade. Rue consumes the substance, fading into oblivion and murmuring about how happy she is. Fez immediately goes to grab Narcan, a drug that prevents opioid overdoses from becoming fatal. Although the showrunners of *Euphoria*

claim the vivid depiction of the effects of drugs are instilled in order to desensitize users to the detrimental impact of drugs, portraying drugs as a trend sends the wrong message to young viewers. For teenagers who may not be able to grasp the intended meaning behind the show, the content could prove detrimental. The impact of media on drug usage doesn't stop in popular fiction. It is commonplace among social media influencers and celebrities as well, who are supposed to be seen as role models to their younger audience. Whether it is a one-liner

in their most popular album or a social-media post depicting themselves consuming substances, the casual exposure has the same detrimental influence. Social media is also a way for sellers to reach a wider customer base than on streets and alleyways. They are able to advertise their pills to vulnerable social media users — most of whom are teenagers — and sell their pills in a more efficient manner. This is where the danger lies. Only a number of people who overdosed on fentanyl actually knew what they were consuming. Most thought it was Percocet or Xanax, un-

aware that the pill in their hand was a dose fatal enough to kill four adult men. The opioid crisis has been ongoing for decades. While completely cutting off drugs from the source does not seem like a practical short-run solution, censoring what young people are able to consume via media is viable. Jennifer Park Stout, vice-president of global public policy at the social media platform Snapchat, said in an October Senate hearing that Snapchat was "absolutely determined to remove all drug dealers" from its site. "What is happening on our platforms — and all across social media and technology platforms — is that young people who are suffering from mental health and stress induced by the pandemic ... are reaching for substances, oftentimes pills and opioids," she said. "But these substances are laced with fentanyl, enough fentanyl to kill them." In order to keep the next generation safe, it is important for people in control — whether it be the CEOs of internet companies, influencers, celebrities, or show runners — to thoroughly consider what media content they want to expose to young audiences and how these audiences are consuming it. It is especially important for the government to tighten the rein on highly toxic and addictive substances like fentanyl by enforcing strong regulations. Otherwise, the inconspicuous production and distribution will continue, and the already high numbers of deaths from overdoses will continue to climb. **Sabrina Wang** is a fifth-former from Princeton, NJ. She may be reached at swang23@choate.edu

WHAT CHILE'S AMENDED CONSTITUTION MEANS FOR THE U.S.



Photo courtesy of Al Jazeera

Protestors in Chile gathered to call for "constitutional assembly for more democracy."

By **Stanley Cho '25**
Opinions Writer

While, one of the world's largest suppliers of natural resources, has been faced with public opposition due to its contribution to pollution and climate change. In response, the nation has appointed 155 Chileans to rewrite its Constitution to address the "climate and ecological emergency" caused by the abrupt growth of the lithium mining industry. By doing so, Chile has set a precedent of altering national policy in response to a crisis that endangers the well-being of its people. One hopes that this action will motivate U.S. lawmakers to modernize the American Constitution. Thanks to its abundant supply of natural resources, Chile was able to establish itself as one of the most prosperous nations in South America. To maximize its margin of profit, Chile focuses on the resources with the highest demand and produces them efficiently. Lithium, a component of batteries, has recently received a surge of interest as the world continues to find eco-friendly alternatives to fossil fuels. In response, the Chilean mining industry has significantly bolstered its production of lithium. While lithium has helped

Chile maintain its opulence and expedite the process of developing green technology, the mining industry has severe environmental and ecological impacts. Companies must extract great amounts of underground saltwater to excavate enough lithium, a process that has been traced to hotter temperatures, harsher storms, and dryer soil. In addition, lithium mines have disregarded the wellbeing of the Indigenous communities of Chile. Following the public outrage over the mining industry's toll on the environment and well-being of citizens, newly-elected president Gabriel Boric promises for drastic, progressive changes. Boric aims to unravel the extreme economic model Chile created during its dictatorship through decentralization: the implementation of a welfare state, the expansion of the social safety net, the increase of royalties related to the mining industry, and the revision of the Chilean Constitution. Chile's response to environmental concerns demonstrates that other nations must update their laws to combat modern problems. In the United States, it has become increasingly difficult to address the current environmental crisis. Despite creating a multitude of policies to ensure the maintenance

of a clean, safe environment, the United States has shown that it is unable to uphold these policies without the assistance of a constitutional amendment. The lack of amendments that address the ecological effects of the rapidly advancing manufacturing industry will only exacerbate the climate crisis. To make matters worse, the Trump Administration orchestrated more than a hundred rollbacks of environmental policies, including withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement and severely weakening the restriction on greenhouse gasses. Influenced by late-stage capitalism and political corruption, the United States has been inefficient in its methods of dealing with the intense damage done to the environment. To effectively combat the deterioration of the environment, it is essential for the United States to pass more amendments, in turn securing environmental prosperity and the health of its people. It is important for the U.S. to maintain its core ideals, but it should also follow Chile's lead and amend its constitution to solve the concerns of the modern world. **Stanley Cho** is a third-former from South Korea. He may be reached at scho25@choate.edu

West Virginia v. EPA May Become Climate Change Disaster

By **Tyler Kuo '23**
Staff Writer

Established almost six years ago under the Obama Administration, the Clean Power Plan (CPP) was arguably the administration's boldest move against anthropogenic climate change. The plan sets guidelines for each state to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the nation's power plants by installing more efficient coal-burning systems and making an overall shift toward cleaner, renewable methods of generating electricity. At the base of the Clean Power Plan is the Clean Power Act, which allows the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine the "best system of emission reduction" for each pollutant. However, the CPP is facing its biggest challenge yet. Next month, the Supreme Court will hear arguments in *West Virginia v. EPA*, which, though relatively unknown outside of legal circles, will have serious ramifications should the EPA lose. The EPA's job is to study changing technology, determine whether a breakthrough technology should be adopted, and issue orders for power plants to implement that technology through binding regulations. Thus, by losing this case, the EPA would lose much of its power to fight climate change and Congress's ability to protect the environment would be severely inhibited. An environmental issue with implications this profound should not fall under the jurisdiction of nine justices; rather, qualified institutions like the EPA should determine the course of action. At the heart of this case is a conflict between a policy championed by the Obama Administration and one by the Trump Administration. During the Trump Administration, the EPA replaced the CPP with the Affordable Clean

Energy (ACE) act. This act urged coal-powered plants to install new equipment to increase their efficiency, an approach that researchers concluded would have increased overall carbon dioxide emissions. Eventually, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit struck down the ACE, stating that it was based "on a mistaken reading of the Clean Air Act." The Clean Air Act relies on a structure of governance in effect throughout the federal legal system. Congress advances a broad policy — in this case, power plants that must use the "best system of emission reduction" — then delegates the task of implementing this policy to the EPA. Many other federal laws rely on this structure. The Affordable Care Act, for example, mandates that health insurers provide certain treatments for free, such as birth control, vaccinations, and cancer screens, and delegates the task of determining which treatments belong in this category to the Department of Health and Human Services. This type of system is ideal for several reasons. Delegating power to agencies ensures that decisions are made by professionals. This also protects important decisions from political interference. For example, the decision of whether or not to implement a new drug may become influenced by personal biases when lawmakers want the manufacturers to be

in their home state, whereas the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) aims to be impartial. Unfortunately, a majority of the Supreme Court is opposed to the idea that federal agencies should be allowed to set policies. At least five justices have indicated they want to revive a constitutional doctrine named "nondelegation," which states that the Constitution limits Congress's ability to delegate power to federal agencies. The Supreme Court doctrine has cited the doctrine only once, in 1935, to strike down New Deal policies that would have given President Franklin D. Roosevelt vast amounts of power. The nondelegation doctrine has remained dormant ever since. However, during the Obama Administration, the Supreme Court's right flank began to advocate for limits on federal agencies' authority. This approach could have profound implications for *West Virginia v. EPA*, as Congress might not have the power to delegate tasks to the EPA. Congress has not passed a significant piece of environmental legislation since 1990. A nondelegation doctrine, especially for a case as significant as the *West Virginia v. EPA* case, could potentially endanger the planet's future. Should the EPA lose this challenge, the Biden Administration and Congress's abilities to implement effective environmental changes would be seriously hampered. With our current emissions continuing to climb and countries across the world still failing to meet the COP 26 goals of global net-zero emissions by mid-21st-century, this case is essential to the global fight against climate change and the future of our home. **Tyler Kuo** is a fifth-former from Hong Kong. He may be reached at tkuo23@choate.edu

An environmental issue with implications this profound should not fall under the jurisdiction of nine justices; qualified institutions like the EPA should determine the course of action.

2021: A YEAR OF VIBES

By Yoyo Zhang '24
Associate Editor

Archbold gives off good vibes. This English class is vibey. Those two vibe as best friends. In the daily conversations of Choate students, the word “vibe” is dropped casually as a noun, an adjective, and even a verb.

Recently, in *The New Yorker*, the writer Kyle Chayka defined “vibe” as a “placeholder for an unplaceable feeling or impression, an atmosphere that you couldn’t or didn’t want to put into words.” Thanks to social media, “vibe” has become a ubiquitous slang — a linguistic phenomenon that encapsulates Gen-Z energy, or vibe, if you will. In a year in which nothing was normal yet everything seemed to be normalized, no single sentence can capture this year’s many discrete moments. So, inspired by Chayka’s work, here is an attempt at capturing, on paper, some of Choate’s ineffable feelings — its vibes — of 2021.

“Resisting the Urge to Shake Hands on Gold Key Tours” Vibes

Choate life has, in many ways, begun to feel a little more normal, especially given the arrival of outside visitors. Yet, as Gold Key tour guides take tours around the revitalized campus, the prohibition of handshaking widens the interpersonal distance. *Safety precautions precede social courtesies*, we repeat the mantra in our heads.

The flustered retrieval of a half-extended hand is yet another reminder of our unfulfilled desire for the post-pandemic connection.

“Singing in Front of the Bathroom Mirror Alone at 2 a.m.” Vibes

Solo karaoke in the dorm at 2 a.m. is perhaps *the* definition of vibe in its verbal form. After being in isolation for so long, our survival mechanism seemed to have figured out the appeal of being alone. After the building has fallen asleep, belting out “Heartbreak Anniversary” in front of the bathroom mirror turns into a guilty pleasure, a defiance of society’s decree that a party must consist of more than two. For a moment, no inhibition looms over your mind — there’s only you and your reflection vibing into the night.

“A Rapidly Depleting Greek Alphabet” Vibes

An unusual symptom of Covid-19 is the depletion of the Greek alphabet. From Alpha to Omicron, we have already gone more than halfway through the alphabet by naming the additions to the Covid-19 family — the new variants. As Omicron put a halt on our post-vaccine freedom after winter break, we are now strung up with the uneasy vibes of a tightrope walker, fearing a fall at any moment. *What happens when all the letters are exhausted?* Our anticipation for the linguistic creativity of scientists is just another expression of our subdued hope.

“All Too Well (Ten Minute Version) (Taylor’s Version) (From The Vault)” Vibes

A centerpiece of Choate’s Red (Taylor’s Version) listening party in November, this loftily titled song is full-context, full-disclosure, full-emotions — just like the year 2021. The soft-rock ballad recounts a particular heart-wrenching relationship circa 2012, the year of its original recording — but now, this ache can also be found in the bonds broken and barriers bolstered by the pandemic. The extended cut’s unapologetic sprawl speaks to our 2021 vision of pain. As the song’s guitar fades out, Taylor Swift’s mellow voice lingers: “Sacred prayer, I was there, I was there / It was rare, you remember it all too well.” Yes, yes we do.

“Everything” Vibes

In the Internet Age, *everything* refers to something so precious that it’s all one could ask for. This mocha frappe from Lanphier is everything. The recital last week was everything. Faculty dogs are everything. This omnipresent shortcut, just like the word “vibe,” gets dropped in our daily lives like packets of syntactic sugar. That romanticism in our language reflects the way we humans placate ourselves even amid the harsh reality of the outside world.

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Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

Mr. Proulx Rewrites the Math Test



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Students may work with other Choate students when solving Mr. Dan Proulx’s take-home problem sets.

By Aria Ramnath '24
Reporter

Every Choate student has experienced the drumming of pencils on paper while the 70 minutes that comprises a math test ticks by. But, what if there was another way for students to be assessed in their math class?

That’s the question Mr. Dan Proulx, currently an Honors Algebra II and Honors Precalculus teacher, has set out to answer. Soon after he arrived at Choate in 2017, Mr. Proulx began to use collaborative problem sets, sometimes known as “take-home tests,” in place of traditional in-class tests in his math classes.

Mr. Proulx first implemented problem sets as a testing strategy in his linear algebra and modern math classes. He said, “My view was that I should start preparing them for college ... In my college experience, I had more problem sets and more collaborative learning.” The logical conclusion, he explained, was to assess his students, who were already learning college-level math, using problem sets, too.

The problem sets, since expanded to his algebra and precalculus classes, cover the same content that an ordinary test would, but students have around a week to complete them. However, in

exchange for the extra time, the questions are far more conceptual and lack obvious answers.

The hallmark of the problem sets, of course, is the fact that students are encouraged to work through the problems together; in addition to their classmates, students can also work with students from other sections or even those in higher-level math classes. Additionally, the problem sets are completely open-note. The caveat? Students must “cite their sources,” by denoting by name when another student came up with a part of their final solution.

Lauren Hsu '24, a student in Mr. Proulx’s Honors Algebra II class, said, “I think problem sets allow students to focus on learning the material instead of worrying about their grades. The great thing about problem sets is that you learn a lot while you’re doing them.”

Some students also note that problem sets foster a different kind of learning. “I think I learn better short-term for tests, but for my long-term memory, problem sets are better,” said Nathan Lang '22, a student in Dr. Jessica Pfeil’s multivariable calculus class — another that has adopted the problem-set method.

However, Mr. Proulx hasn’t completely thrown traditional tests out the window. When he

teaches his algebra and precalculus classes, he uses problem sets in tandem with timed testing. When planning those classes, “If I think about what I’m trying to prepare you for, it’s future years and also standardized testing. There’s value in doing the timed, sit-down-take-a-test thing, so you get practice knowing what that feels like,” said Mr. Proulx. On the other hand, upper-level math classes like multivariable calculus exclusively use problem sets.

Regarding whether problem sets might expand across Choate’s math department, Mr. Proulx said that, though he can’t speak for other teachers, he’s noticed that others are also exploring the method. For instance, Mr. Zachary Kafoglis, who currently uses problem sets in his Algebra I classes, said, “I think it’s a really effective method of both having students collaborate and work together but also demonstrate their learning.”

Mr. Proulx believes that these problem sets help get at a crucial part of mathematical learning in general. “I think math is collaborative by nature,” he said. “I want assessments to be me giving you feedback, as well as assessing where you are at that moment.”

Aria Ramnath may be reached at aramnath24@choate.edu

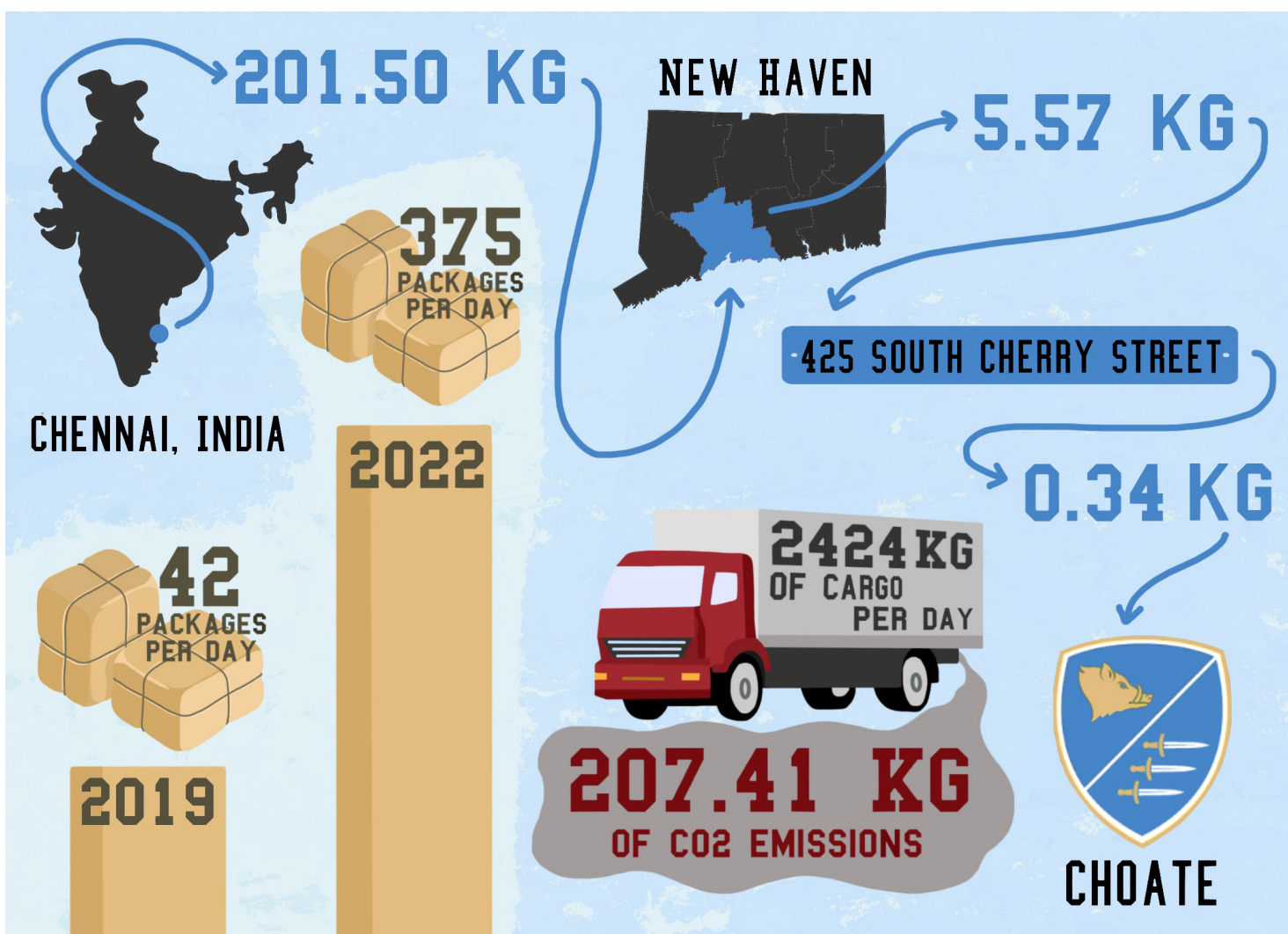
Unboxing the Climate Impact of Choate’s Online Ordering Habits

By Lauren Hsu '24
Staff Reporter

Online shopping surged by 32% in 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This trend has reflected in Choate’s mailroom, as the number of packages that the School receives each day has skyrocketed since the start of the 2020–21 school year.

In October 2019, the mailroom received an average of 42 packages daily. Just a year later, but well into the pandemic, this number increased by some 620% to an average of 260 packages per day. Now, after two years of the pandemic, the number of packages has shot up even more. Between January 11 and 12, the mailroom, which serves 667 boarding students and over 100 faculty members, received 750 packages. Typically, packages surge at the start of the school year, before the December holidays, and around Valentine’s Day.

For many, online ordering is simply safer and more efficient than going out to a store. Ella Mulhearn '24 orders snacks and toiletries from Amazon, in part because she can no longer shop at Walmart due to Choate’s ongoing pandemic restrictions. Conveniently, her orders from Amazon arrive within days. “The dining hall has more options than last year, so I’m not ordering microwavable mac ‘n cheese and other things like that, but I still order a few snacks,” on a regular basis, she said.



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

In a similar vein, Dr. Amber Hodge’s online ordering has been affected by the shutdown of many independent businesses. Dr. Hodge most commonly orders books and some household items from Amazon. “That’s been a really big impact as an English teacher, because I really like supporting independent bookstores — a ridiculous amount have had to close and

many have reduced their hours or limited their inventory,” they said. According to the American Booksellers Association, more than 50 of their member bookstores shut down in the first year of the pandemic.

Still, as the School’s individual orders accumulate, a sizable carbon footprint is left behind. Ms. Sarah Case, a mailroom associate, estimated

that 95% of packages that the mailroom receives are from Amazon. Each of those packages weighs 15 pounds, or 6.8 kilograms, on average — adding up to a cargo weighing 2424 kg. From there, one can attempt to trace each package’s journey, from production to delivery, in order to determine the total amount of carbon emitted. Say that Choate’s Amazon packag-

es originate in Chennai, India, where Amazon manufactures their house-brand products. A cargo of that weight’s trip from Chennai to New Haven would emit about 201.50 kg of carbon dioxide. A second trip to Amazon’s Wallingford warehouse would emit 5.57 kg. Finally, the delivery-truck drive down Route 5 to Choate would add 0.34 kg. Add that up, and of

the 375 packages delivered on a single day this January, it took approximately 207.41 kg of carbon dioxide to transport those Amazon packages from the factory where they were made to the Choate campus.

To put that in perspective, a single day of Choate’s online package-ordering emissions equals those of four trees emitting carbon for ten years, according to a greenhouse-gas conversion by the Environmental Protection Agency. Around two and a half years ago, though, one day of shipping Choate’s Amazon orders emitted around 24.49 kg of carbon dioxide — an 88% decrease from this year’s number.

However, a single number doesn’t reveal the full extent of the effects of online orders. Transporting the finished product to customers is only one of many environmentally unfriendly steps that come along with online ordering. Other parts of the supply chain churn out greenhouse gases, such as cutting trees down to make packaging.

Even though it is complex to determine the precise environmental impact, there are ways to minimize carbon emissions from online ordering, such as ordering items in bulk to reduce ordering frequency. The first step, of course, is simple awareness that small habits can multiply to create a significant environmental impact.

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5.6.7.8! Choate Dance Shines

EMBRACING THE BODY AS THE INSTRUMENT OF DANCE

By **Sydney Alleyne '23**
Associate Editor

Painters can clean their brushes, put their canvases on the drying rack, and walk away once they're satisfied with their work, making their art piece as personal or as impersonal as they want. Dancers, however, cannot walk away from their artistic device — they cannot escape their own body — thereby constantly living under the shadow of maintaining their best physique.

Dancers, similar to athletes, need their bodies to be in peak physical condition in order to execute what is expected of them. Mrs. Sandra Parks, Head of the Arts Department, said, "If you talk to a professional dancer, it doesn't matter what form they practice, they will tell you that they have a very strict routine. What time do they go to bed? What time do they wake up? What do they do when they wake up and all that? It's very ritualistic."

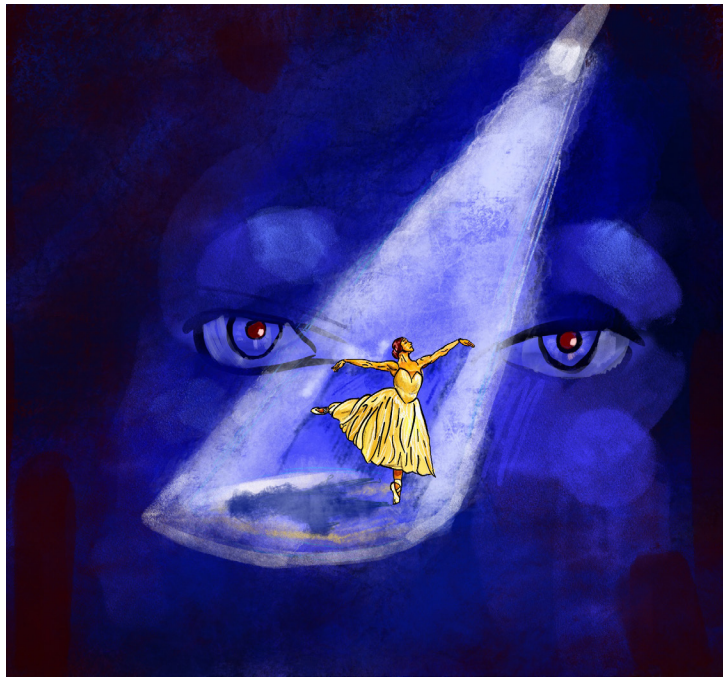
To be a dancer, you must not only have the artistry of the

world's foremost pianist but also the athleticism of an NBA player. Even more, dancers' bodies are constantly scrutinized in search of perfection.

Ballet, in particular, was designed to accommodate an ideal dancer: thin, white, with an excellent turnout, long legs, and as flexible as a newborn baby. "Because it was designed by that certain standard, if you don't fit in that aesthetic, it can be hard to feel like you belong in this world," said Mrs. Parks.

While progress is being made toward dismantling the exclusive aspects of this aesthetic, with some of the world's largest ballet companies hiring dancers who don't fit into this restrictive mold, the deep-rooted history of exclusion in the ballet community cannot be overlooked.

Adia Decker '24, who grew up doing ballet before coming to Choate, said that she has always felt insecure. "I'm built curvier than most people. It's something that I've been trying to unlearn, but ballet has not really helped with that. When



Graphics by William Gao/The Choate News

you're constantly looking at the mirror, surrounded by these stick-thin people around you, you're like, if I was that thin, maybe people would perceive me as a better dancer."

In many ballet schools, particularly those in Europe, children are measured and examined at a young age to assess their

bodily potential in the art form. Recounting an experience from her childhood, Mrs. Parks said, "I watched a documentary on the audition process for the Paris Opera Ballet School, and then right away, I went back and measured myself. I realized I wouldn't have gotten in, but did that stop me from doing ballet? No."

This toxic culture around body image leads a lot of young dancers to have a distorted sense of self that permeates through all aspects of their lives. Sophie Yang '22, who grew up in the world of competitive dance, said, "It's difficult to ignore because we can't really, escape from it. It definitely gets to your mind, and I feel like it even impacts decisions you make outside."

Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22 has a different relationship between dance and her body. Having grown up doing flamenco, she was never taught to consider her body an instrument. "I consider dance to be poetry, but I've never thought about the body as the pen," she said.

Commenting on how different dance styles can alter one's perception of their body, Decker said, "With hip hop, it's kind of like, everybody's welcome to this. And the same with jazz. When I pull off moves in hip hop, I feel good about myself. I never think, 'Oh, I would be doing this better if I was skinnier.'"

What makes it so difficult to be a dancer, and to constantly be aware of every aspect of one's body, is that certain things cannot be changed about one's appearance. Exercises can increase flexibility and strengthen parts of the body, but, ultimately, one cannot control one's body type. Just as certain musical instruments are used to produce specific tones, all bodies have limitations. "[For] certain techniques or certain forms, you have to have certain abilities in the body. For example, [in] classical Indian dances, there are a lot of hand gestures. I cannot bend my hands in the way that's required for the style — I physically can't," said Mrs. Parks.

Despite the pressure of your body being criticized like it's a piece of music or the cinematography of a film, it's the unbridled love that propels dancers forward. As Decker put it, "I definitely think my body is like one of my favorite instruments."

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Choate dancers recently practiced in an afternoon multi-level class.

Live Music Returns to Colony Dance Studio

By **Laya Raj '24** and **Sophia Pandya '24**
Reporters

If you happen to step into Colony Hall in the afternoons, you may hear the harmonious melodies of a piano in simultaneous rhythm with the pattern of moving feet. After a year and a half, live music has returned to Ms. Pamela Newell's ballet classes. Now, the studio has electrified with the piano bench occupied by Ms. Newell's husband, Mr. Bob Newell, a musician and dancer himself.

Mr. Newell plays along with the ballet students, interpreting the feeling of the movement to find a suitable tempo. Though often overlooked, live music has a significant impact on the dancers. The collaborative nature of music and dance initiates an artistic conversation in which the performers bounce off one another and give rise to infinite possibilities. "It's not just the teacher and the musician, but it's actually the whole creating all these little miniatures," said Mr. Newell.

Echoing the same sentiment, Ms. Newell said, "I think it just fills up the room in a way that recorded music doesn't. I feel it surrounding me and supporting me. I'm more aware that there's a person, that there's a partner with me dancing."

The partnership between the choreographer, musician, and dancers encompasses improvisation, variation, and communication. With joint effort, even the "little exercise at the barre turns into a work of art," Mr. Newell said. Libby Dai '25, a participant in Choate's dance program, agreed that "live music allows you to appreciate music, not just as something in the background, but as part of the dance."

With different tones and tempos, live music can foster distinct atmospheres and induce varying sentiments. "It can create a certain emotion to how you are dancing," said Arissa Lee '25. She further noted that Mr. Newell's dedication to the performance has helped her to better recognize the emotions associated with each piece.

Dai, similarly, enjoys live music for its ability to enrich the dance experience. She recalled that when practicing slow and graceful movements, the music would be in adagio (slow tempo), and when training to petit allegro (small jumps), the music would become faster and more upbeat to accompany the quick footwork. When improvising, Dai lets the music guide her movements.

Maya Bashawaty '24, another participant in the Choate dance program, believes that music determines the mood of the dance, thereby requiring the musician to observe the dancers and how they choose to interpret the piece. Bashawaty appreciates the constant communication between the dance teachers and Mr. Newell throughout the class to ensure

that the music fits the movement's tempo and mood. More importantly, by reading the room, Mr. Newell sometimes plays in accordance with the emotional atmosphere or completely contradicts it. Bashawaty recounted how, for instance, when the energy in the room is particularly low, Mr. Newell plays an upbeat tone to keep the dancers on their toes.

Dai further noted the versatility of Mr. Newell's playing as he effortlessly switches between multiple instruments to complement different types of dance. "When we're doing grand allegro, he might play the drums; when we're doing adagio, he might play on the piano." As a violinist, Dai admires Mr. Newell's ability to play different instruments in various time signatures from memory to fit specific ballet compositions. "It's a really good experience listening to him and admiring him while also contributing to the performance," she said.

For Bashawaty, when the drums are played in class, her attention will shift to the beat

of the music, and her dance, in turn, becomes more rhythmic. When Mr. Newell changes music, Bashawaty said, "It teaches me how to keep up with the counts and adjust to him in real time." This differs from when the piano is played, and she is inclined to move in a more fluid and emotional way. "I enjoy trying to take all the little details of what he's playing and encapsulate them in the mood that I express," she said.

Dancing to live music has special meaning to Choate's dancers since they have not had the experience since the pandemic began in the spring of 2020. "It just livens everything up, brings joy, simply, really. Covid-19 took away those simple, joyful moments of being all together, working with musicians," said Vicky Grechukhina '23. "I really missed it, and I feel like I won't ever take for granted the chance of hearing music while performing."

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Photo by Rajeev Roy/The Choate News

Students dance at the barre to Mr. Bob Newell's music.

FIELD REPORT

Choate Winter Record

43 - 31 - 3

Varsity Games

Boys' Basketball (6-2)
vs. Exeter, 50-61

Girls' Basketball (5-2)
vs. Marianapolis, 37-56

Girls' Ice Hockey (5-3-3)
vs. Worcester Academy, 5-2

Boys' Ice Hockey (4-7)
vs. Salisbury, 0-4

Boys' Squash (3-4)
vs. Salisbury, 7-0

Girls' Squash (4-1)
vs. Deerfield, 1-6

Wrestling (0-4)
vs. Deerfield, 12-46

J.V. Games

Boys' Ice Hockey (1-2)
vs. Pomfret, 5-2

Girls' Basketball (3-1)
vs. Westminster, 43-10

Boys' Basketball (2-2)
vs. Exeter, 41-39

Girls' Squash (2-2)
vs. Hopkins, 7-0

Boys' Squash (6-0)
vs. Hopkins, 8-1

Thirds Games

Boys' Squash (1-0)
vs. Canterbury, 5-2

Boys' Basketball (1-1)
vs. Loomis, 44-45

PLAYER PROFILE

Morgann Skoda '22 Excels on the Ice — and the Field and the Court

By **Lauren Kee '24**
Associate Editor

Tri-varsity athlete, four-year senior, and Montréalér, Morgann Skoda '22 is a force to be reckoned with on the rink, the court, and the field. She is a Co-Captain for Girls' Varsity Ice Hockey and Girls' Varsity Volleyball. Her notable launch into the Girls' Varsity Lacrosse as a freshman without ever having played the sport before, awarded her the third and fourth-form Female Athlete of the Year as well as most the award for being the most improved player on the lacrosse team. She also managed Varsity Softball in her junior spring.

On a cold Thursday evening, she spoke with me from her quad in Bungalow over Zoom, where her roommate taped a clipping of *The Choate News* that Skoda was featured in on the wall, while waiting for her Chipotle order.

Skoda began playing ice hockey when she was three years old, and it is now her main sport. Her entire family, whom she considers her biggest supporters, also plays hockey. She joined the hockey team during her freshman year at Choate and plays forward. "You've got



Photo by Sabrina Wang/The Choate News

Morgan Skoda '22 on the ice against Pomfret on Saturday, January 15. all these leaders that are there, and they're your pillars. Each year, they all graduate and they leave Choate, and I myself have become a pillar for others," she said. Following in her predecessors' footsteps, Skoda helps her teammates "be one percent better every day," which is their team's motto. Before every game, she likes to put her earbuds in and tape her stick by the rink to get into the zone.

One of Skoda's memorable moments from her Choate hockey career is the Senior Day game against Cushing Academy in her sophomore year.

"We were scoring, they were scoring — it was a super intense game, and I remember having so much fun playing it," she said. Little did she know that following the playoffs the week after, the entire school would be sent home for the remainder of the school year, and she would not see most of those seniors again.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when she wasn't on campus, Skoda stayed in shape by practicing on the ice with her coaches at home and going to the gym. The hardest part for her was not being able to

play any games last year. "Not being able to compete was a little heartbreaking, but I'm just glad that we get to do it now," Skoda said.

As an athlete, Skoda has learned to not be too hard on herself, and to "be a goldfish," which is one of her favorite sayings. "I try to forget, really quickly, the things that happen on the ice or on the court and move on to the next day. Be in the present and keep your focus. Don't let your emotions get the best of you," she said.

Beyond hockey, Skoda also plays volleyball. Last year, she was selected for the 2021 New England

Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) All-League team for the sport. On Deerfield Day 2018, Skoda played as a freshman on the varsity volleyball team. Every time she swung at the ball, the cheering Boars would chant, "She's-a-Freshman!" After their winning set, the crowd rushed onto the court and began belting the school song. "It was the most exciting, most terrifying, moment of my life, because we were getting trampled in the middle," she said.

After graduating from Choate, Skoda plans to attend a post-secondary, pre-collegiate program in Québec where she will continue playing hockey. "I think it's gonna be a very cool experience. And then obviously, the dream is to play Division I hockey, so we'll see where that leads me," she mused. For Skoda, the college recruiting process was quite stressful, especially with rule changes and the pandemic. However, she offers these words of wisdom and inspiration: "For anybody else struggling, I would encourage them to power through and keep going. If it's something you truly want, don't stop believing."

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GIRL'S VARISTY HOCKEY TIES WESTMINSTER

By **Matthew Yeo '23**
Reporter

After nearly a month without a game on their home rink, the Girls' Varsity Hockey team finally got to face off against Westminster last Wednesday. The game was a constant tug of war, eventually ending in a tie, 2-2.

At the start, Westminster immediately transitioned into an unsuccessful attempt on the goal. Possession of the puck bounced back and forth for the next minute, ending in a face off on the Boars' side of the rink. Another shot was made by Westminster on Choate's goal but was successfully blocked by goalie Mac Donovan '22.

Minutes later, the Boars were able to build a push against Westminster. Nani Keyes '25 was stick tripped, shutting down Choate's momentum and giving Westminster their first penalty of the game. The Boars seized the opportunity to make a push onto Westminster's side of the rink. The puck ended up moving between goal posts, with Choate's team maintaining strong offensive control. Eventually, Choate crammed the crease in an unsuccessful attempt to score. An attempt on the goal by Sophia Rodham '23 was close, but not successful.

Later in the first period,

Westminster recovered puck control, but a block from goalie Donovan returned control to Choate. Minutes later, Donovan caught another puck, sending the game to a face off. With control back to the Boars, the team quickly skated to take advantage of an out of place defense. A shot from Co-captain Morgann Skoda '22 led to a rebound to Co-captain Maddie Dubrinsky '22 who buried the puck for a successful goal, the first of the game, making the score 1-0, Choate, with five minutes left in the first period.

During the second period face off, Caroline Holm '24 gave puck control to Choate, resulting in a quick push against Westminster. Puck control oscillated between teams for the next three minutes, with neither side gaining a substantial advantage. Unfortunately, a penalty by Cadence Secreto '23 against Westminster left Choate down a player for the next minute-and-a-half. With eight minutes left in the second period, Westminster scored on Choate, leveling the score, 1-1.

A face off gave control to Westminster, but the Boars were quickly able to regain control. Another penalty left Choate down a player with five minutes left in the half; however, the team was able to fill the gap, with

their defense remaining strong. A block by Donovan, with five seconds left, secured the rest of the period, leaving the score 1-1.

A fast push by the team after a successful third period face off by Holm gave Skoda a clear shot, allowing her to score early in the period. At this point, the score was 2-1, Choate.

Boars defense remained strong for the next three minutes. Unfortunately, however, Westminster was able to capitalize on a fast turnover, scoring against Choate and leveling the score again, 2-2. The rest of the period remained a tug-of-war between the two teams, each looking to get an advantage on the ice. The period ended without another goal, making the final score a tie, 2-2.

Reflecting on the game, Brooke Edwards '22 said, "I think it was a hard fought game. [Westminster] kept us on our toes the entire time, but it was a testament to our determination and unity as a team." With their recent win against Worcester Academy, the Girls' Varsity Hockey team record now stands at 5-3-3. The team hopes to increase their lead with upcoming games against Deerfield and Canterbury.

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Photo by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

Caroline Holm '24 chases after a rolling puck against Westminster on Wednesday, January 12.

POSTGRAD PROFILE

From Ireland to Wallingford: Killian's Basketball Journey



Photo by Garrett Curtis/The Choate News

Killian Gribben '22 fights for a jump ball against Taft on December 5.

By **Sam Anastasio '23**
Staff Reporter

Whether you are walking through the dining hall or strolling down the paths, you will surely notice Killian Gribben '22. Gribben, a 6' 10" post graduate student from Ireland, plays on the Schools' Boys' Varsity Basketball team. The team and Gribben are off with an impressive 6-2 record in their first eight games.

Gribben started playing basketball from the age of four, along with other sports, such as soccer and Gaelic football. At the age of 16, he stopped playing other sports and began focusing on his dream of playing basketball in America.

Citing his parents as his biggest influences, Gribben has a lot of gratitude for them. "They both played basketball in high school, and I thank them for also giving me the gift of height. My dad being 6-foot-6 and [my mom] being 6 foot, there was no wonder that I grew to be 6-foot-10," he said.

Like many athletes, Gribben's ability to compete in athletic competitions was significantly impaired by the Covid-19 pandemic. He was selected for the Irish U18 Basketball team and was preparing to compete in the European Champion-

ships in Romania during the summer of 2020. When the tournament was eventually canceled due to the pandemic, Gribben turned to his backyard basketball hoop and continued to train on his own.

Although Irish Basketball has very minor rule changes, the difference in speed of play was quite drastic for Killian. "The game is a lot faster and the players are a lot more physical over here. In Ireland, I never encountered a player that [was] close to my height. In the US, I will be playing boys my height or even taller than me every game." That said, Gribben and his teammates have already begun to develop a solid chemistry. "We have such a strong bond as a team, and I feel like I have been a part of this team for years," he said.

Gribben's goal of playing basketball doesn't stop in high school. Collegiate level basketball is a priority for him. Recently, the Boys' Basketball team participated in the Zero Gravity Basketball tournament in Massachusetts, and he regularly participates in showcases. While not being able to play basketball in his home country, Gribben appreciates the new experience and is looking forward to what's ahead. Though Gribben may be 6' 10", for him, the sky's the limit.

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