



LUNAR BANQUET WELCOMES YEAR OF TIGER

By **Aubrie Williams '24**
Reporter

On Friday, January 28, the Choate Chinese Club held the annual Lunar New Year banquet in collaboration with the Choate Korea Friendship Association (CKFA) and with the help of various faculty members from the Student Activities Center, Arts Department, Global Programs Department, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task force. The banquet was the largest ever hosted on campus yet, complete with a variety of foods, performances, crafts, and games. The expansion was thanks in part to faculty members who were willing to provide funding for the event, which had previously been student-led and funded.

Ms. Ashley Sinclair, Adviser to International Students, helped in setting up the event. "I was new to helping with the event this year. I was one of several offices on campus considering ways to expand the number of students it could serve," she said. "I placed a catering order and picked up the food in New Haven, then helped set up the food. Many, many others did work from performances, setting up the Reading Room, loading up the car full of boba tea, serving the food, cleaning up..."

Claire Fu '22, vice-president of the Choate Chinese Club, added "It's really nice because now we have all of these teachers who have huge budgets for their department, and they're willing to use that money on the Lunar Banquet."

This year's Lunar Banquet was catered from Funju Noodle Bar,



Photos by Sophia Kim/The Choate News

Students celebrated the Lunar New Year with food, games, and performances.

a local Asian fusion restaurant in Wallingford, as well as from Seoul, a Korean restaurant in New Haven.

"I really enjoyed the food, the performances, and the people," said Kaya Tray '24. "Students are far from home, so it's nice to have a group of people or an event that feels like home."

Fu agreed, saying, "Coming from Hong Kong, my old schools have always had about two weeks off for Chinese New Year, because it's the biggest holiday in China. The Lunar Banquet is really meaningful to me personally because I get to recreate the same energy, even for just one night with my Choate family."

Many of the performers also enjoyed sharing their cultural music and dances with the community. Danny Yoon '24, who performed a popular Korean song "Aloha" at the Lunar Banquet,

said, "I wanted to sing a Korean lyric song that some people might recognize and feel familiar with." He continued, "I felt proud of my country's culture, and overall, just a great experience to represent my country and share Asian culture with the Choate community."

Sophia Kim '24 appreciated being able to reconnect with her Korean culture through the Lunar Banquet. "I had such a great experience getting Korean food, and I appreciate how all of the clubs got together to make the Lunar Banquet possible." For Kim, being able to watch Korean and Chinese music performances at the event was another add-on, which "made everything more special."

The Lunar Banquet was a valuable experience for all, even those who don't traditionally celebrate Lunar New Year. As someone who doesn't traditionally

celebrate Lunar New Year, Ixchel Hernandez '23 said, "I thought it was very fun to experience another culture. The two performances that I especially enjoyed were Wendy Huo's performances, and playing mahjong was a lot of fun."

Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers noted the importance of cultural events like the Lunar Banquet. "For our Asian and AAPI community members, I hope that this event feels supportive and uplifting of an incredibly important holiday and celebration," she said. "And for our other community members, I hope that attending this event or other cultural events helps lead to increased cultural appreciation in the community and expanded networks of friends."

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Student Council Announces New Initiatives

By **Sydney Alleyne '23**
Associate Editor

"Ameliorating the established model of the Student Council and improving student life and convenience" are the two major goals of the Student Council this year, according to Student Body President Abby Lu '22.

Amidst the pandemic, the Council has had the opportunity to take a step back from its typical agenda of constantly brainstorming and passing proposals to reassess how the group can best communicate the needs of the student body to the Administration. "The Council has been focused mainly on assessing the efficacy of our proposal generation system," said sixth-form representative Audrey Kaye '22. "We've discussed how issues arise when trying to get passed proposals enacted by [the Administration], and some ideas would be more effective as initiatives rather than formal proposals."

In addition to the restructuring of Council meetings and the proposal process, there has been a concentrated effort to bring in "outside experts" to sit in on Council meetings. So far, Council members have invited Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 and Director of Health and Wellness Services Ms. Alexandra Copeland to attend their Tuesday evening meetings. Fifth-form class president Ava Maha '23 said, "We are trying to reach out to the people who are the heads of influential programs and bring them to our meetings to get their real-time feedback." She continued, detailing two initiatives she is currently working on, "I'm ad-

vocating for full council meetings with the Administration and the deans' group at least once a term. Also, we are trying to organize a letter written by the entire Student Council to be sent out to the student body at the end of every term, outlining what we've done and what we plan to do."

While fundamental changes are being made to the Council, elected members are staying in touch with the current needs of the community. Fourth-form class president Amanda Benneh '24 recently launched an initiative to allow fourth and fifth-form students to receive new Choate ID photos and cards.

Kaye is also spearheading an initiative that she has been passionate about for months. "Writing and pushing initiatives, especially ones that address serious and pervasive systemic injustice at Choate, requires incredible tenacity." They continued, "I have one proposal designed to create a standardized misconduct reporting portal that I drafted in July — it's almost February and I'm still trying to get administrators to enact it."

As a whole, the Council is focused on enacting initiatives to better student wellness, such as reinstating the Lifelong Wellness curriculum for third and fourth formers by the 2022-2023 school year. "Recognizing the collective trauma suffered by our community during last year's pandemic and rise of racial hate crimes, most of our proposals this year focused on promoting student wellness," Lu said.

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CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON NEW FACULTY HOUSES

By **Ryan Kim '23**
Associate Editor

In the coming months, Hillhouse Way, a private, Choate-owned road located north of the Carl C. Icahn Center for Science, will be home to seven new faculty houses, opening up housing availability for faculty interested in living on campus. In addition, Debos House, a house on Hillhouse Way, is receiving internal renovations to improve housing conditions.

Interim Head of Student and Academic Life Ms. Katie Levesque explained that the motivation behind the new housing plans was to improve faculty living conditions and better their on-campus experience. The new houses are part of a larger effort to accommodate the rising number of new faculty members who want to live on campus.

Ms. Levesque also noted that although currently 90% of faculty live on campus, there are still a handful of faculty who live off-campus and hope to relocate on-campus as it is much more convenient. "[Living on campus] certainly facilitates me doing my job. It's obviously easier getting to classes, my office, and all those sorts of things," Director of Studies Mr. Kevin Rogers said. "It also provides a location to meet with students, or have my tennis team

or advisees over. That makes it super convenient." From an economic perspective, the School covers utility costs such as electricity, heating, and Wi-Fi for faculty living on-campus. Off-campus faculty are given raises to accommodate these fees.

In alignment with the School's interest in sustainable development, the seven new houses will use electric heating systems instead of traditional gas or oil-based heating methods. Solar panels will be installed on the roofs of the houses and all the street lights will be solar-powered.

Similar to boarding students, faculty have a detailed housing placement process outlined within the Faculty Handbook. Unlike students, however, the housing process for faculty is not a lottery, but is instead dependent on a variety of factors, including the faculty's family size, years of employment, and number of accrued housing points. These housing points are accumulated via service for the School and prior teaching experience; for instance, faculty residing in dorms receive more housing points than those who live off-campus.

"I think one of the strengths of our system is that the rules governing faculty housing are clear, fair, and transparent, so

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FIELD TRIP TO WASHINGTON NEVER LEAVES WALLINGFORD



Photo by Begum Gokmen/The Choate News

Students enrolled in the U.S. Government and Politics II listen to Mr. Timothy Barrett, Head of Strategic Communications with the DNI.

By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Associate Editor

Students in U.S. Government and Politics II gathered in Elman Auditorium on January 31 to attend the first 'D.C. in Wallingford' program, in place of the course's annual trip to Washington, D.C. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the two sections of the class couldn't make the trip this year, so the HPRSS department decided to recreate the excursion without leaving

campus. In previous years, the D.C. trip included tours of the capital's buildings, meetings with a variety of people in government-oriented careers such as lawmakers, civil servants, political activists, and staff members working in or with the executive branch.

Dr. Ned Gallagher, one of the teachers of U.S. Government and Politics II, noted that the program was supposed to replicate the feeling of the trip. "We lined up people either in person or on

Zoom to talk to our kids about careers in government," he said. "We tried to make sure we had a good representation in terms of the people we talked to, but getting the schedule right was tricky because you're asking some very busy people to give up time to talk to our kids." With only about a month to plan and a complex schedule to arrange, Dr. Gallagher and Mr. Jonas Akins, who also teaches US Government and Politics II, arranged a very

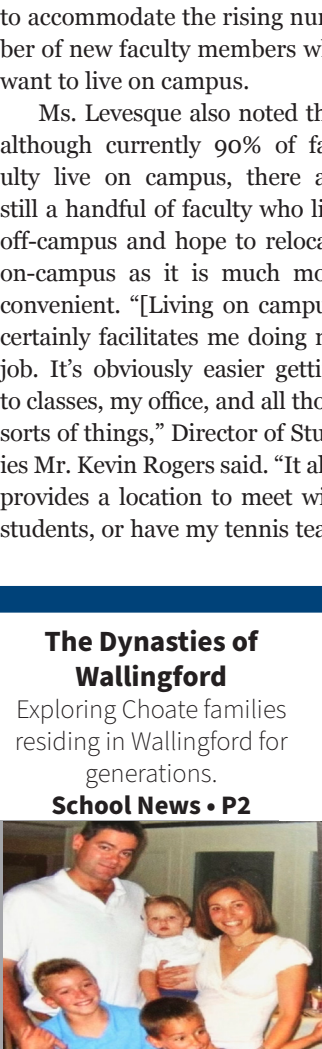
successful event. U.S. Government and Politics II student Alex Aronov '22 added, "Zoom calls in Elman were honestly a lot better than you might think, and while it certainly wasn't to the level of face to face, the Akins-Gallagher duo did a good job in making the whole things feel as authentic as possible." Along with lectures and Q & A sessions with highly accomplished speakers, the pro-

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The Dynasties of Wallingford

Exploring Choate families residing in Wallingford for generations.

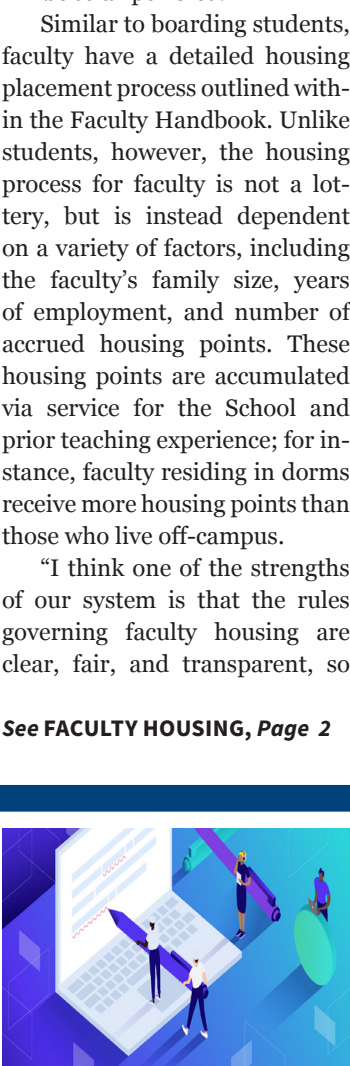
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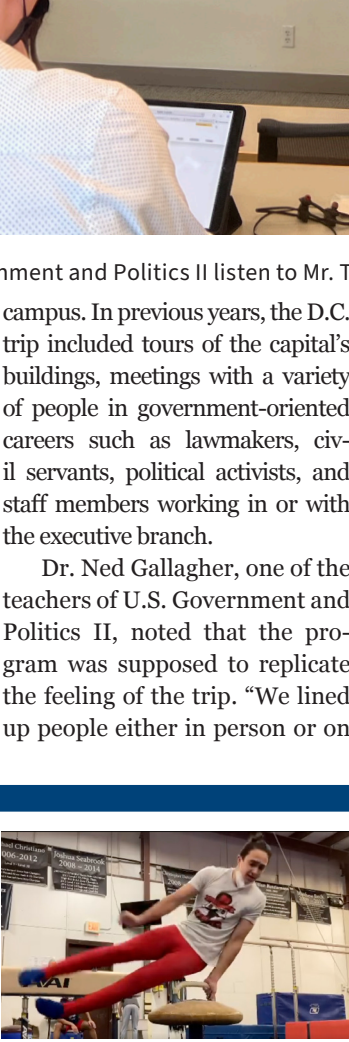
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Lonely Hearts of The News

Need a soulmate to fill the emotional void in your heart?

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Inside the Gym with Nathaniel Rogers '23

Nathaniel Rogers '23 excels at a sport not offered at Choate — gymnastics.

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NEW STUDENT CLUB TO WORK FOR EQUITY IN EDUCATION

By **Tess Taetle '24**
Staff Reporter

Equity in Education is a newly-founded nonprofit organization under the Community Service Club (CSC) with a focus on providing children in lower-income areas with access to better education. The idea was sparked in the summer of 2020 as Covid-19 was on the rise and the Black Lives Matter movement gained traction. Its aim is to bridge the educational resource gap between high-income and low-income communities, an inequity that has been perpetuated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The organization was established by Tiffany Xiao '23 and Annie Huang, a junior at Beckman Highschool, in Irvine, CA. Xiao holds the position of co-president, while Sydney Alleyne '23 and Alysia Jaster '23 serve as the Director of Communications and the Director of Finances, respectively. The increase in the social and political movement, particularly among the youth, proved to be eye-opening for both Xiao and Huang, and spotlight the blatant issue of education equity, especially as it pertains to students in marginalized communities, became apparent. Because of the expansive scope of such issues, Equity in Education hopes to expand all over the country, with the first branch starting at Choate in partnership with Fair Haven — a K-8 school in New Haven.

The organization focuses on three key methods for creating equity. First, through a one-on-one tutoring service, the team hopes to support these young students and create a solid foundation for learning. In addition, Equity in Education plans to hold monthly events for involved students to expose them to extracurricular activities at a young age. Finally, there will be monthly fundraising efforts to raise money or collect supplies in conjunction with a partner school. As a part of these fundraising efforts, the Choate community recently helped raise nearly \$700 dollars to provide winter jackets for Fair Haven students.

The organization strongly believes that every student deserves access to quality education and that



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

opportunities should not be limited due to financial restrictions. Jaster shared, “We don’t want students to feel limited by their finances, and we hope to help them pursue their passions. We hope that over time, students will be able to use the foundations from this program to pursue higher education and careers.” She remembers seeing an Instagram post about applying for a board position and feeling “really connected with the organization’s message.” Some of Jaster’s duties include planning fundraisers and communicating with other schools.

The organization hopes to accommodate the needs of all Fair Haven students. Along with a large population of Spanish-speaking students, the school has been met with a recent influx of Haitian and Afghani refugees. The group’s leaders want to emphasize a similar diversity in the selection of tutors. The founders are matching tutors with tutees based on compatibility, Jaster said, “We also hope to help Choate students who are simply seeking community service hours, as we believe this is a really good opportunity for students to create positive change while fulfilling their requirements.”

As a regular visitor to the Writing Center at Choate, Tatum Kent '24 feels that tutoring has

been a crucial part of her academic career. “It’s nice to feel like I can always get academic support when I need it because Choate makes it very accessible,” she said. Interested in becoming a tutor for Equity in Education, Kent hopes to make the type of support that has benefited her at Choate “more attainable for everyone, especially for younger kids.” Kent hopes to develop skills in tutoring, to learn different styles of teaching, and to accommodate to each student’s needs by recognizing their particular strengths and weaknesses.

As the adviser of Equity in Education, Fourth-form Dean and math teacher Mr. Zachary Kafoglis felt that the program “aligned with a lot of my views about changing historical inequities in education.” Prior to Choate, Mr. Kafoglis taught at a public school where he witnessed under-resourcing firsthand. “I see this as work to close the opportunity gap,” said Mr. Kafoglis. He believes the name really speaks to the message the founders want to pass on, to not just “[swoop] in donated money or [offer] support,” but “[to change] the conditions that contribute to these disparities.”

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STUDENT-ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE RESTRUCTURED AND RENAMED

By **Begum Gokmen '23, Michael Korvyakov '23, and Ryan Kim '23**
Associate Editors

On Tuesday, February 1, the Student Activities Office announced during School Meeting that it will be merging the Committee on Student Activities (COSA) and the Student Activities Center (SAC) Tech Crew to form the new Student Committee of Programming and Engagement (SCOPE). This new change will combine the responsibilities of the two organizations into one, meaning that SCOPE will be in charge of “planning, implementing, and promoting events, as well as providing advocacy and resources to improve the quality of club life at Choate Rosemary Hall,” said Ms. Colleen Kazar, Assistant Head of Student Activities Office and Faculty Adviser to COSA.

The change made in collaboration with the two previous organizations, COSA and the SAC Tech Crew, was inspired by a need for more efficiency in planning events. “COSA and Tech Crew were merged because we saw a disconnect between the titles of each group and their responsibilities,” Ms. Kazar said. “We believe these groups will work well under one umbrella organization.” Wylie Doak '22, President of the SAC Tech Crew, agreed that the new organization would have “more cohesion between the groups that support other clubs and student life.”

SCOPE will include three different branches: the Engagement, Marketing, and Event committees that will work individually to achieve the larger goals of the organization. Applications for the various leadership positions offered by SCOPE for the 2022-2023 school year will be on the Student Leadership Common Application, offered to 3rd, 4th, and 5th formers.

Within SCOPE, the Engagement Chair and Club Crew will manage club life. Ms. Alexandra Long, Head of the Student Activities Office, explained, “They will engage with existing clubs through training and leadership development and support new clubs through the club proposal process.”

The Marketing Chair and Media Crew will be responsible for public relations and advertising all SCOPE activities and

events. They will manage day to day operations such as running the committee’s social media account, being in charge of designing and distributing marketing materials, and promoting SCOPE, SAC, and club events.

The Event Chair and Tech Crew will support campus events through the planning and execution process. “They will contribute event ideas to the termly downtime, and will support the setup, implementation, troubleshooting, and breakdown of campus events,” explained Ms. Long.

As for their goals for the next school year, Ms. Kazar noted that “providing leadership development opportunities for SCOPE leaders, increasing communication, presence, and transparency for clubs, [and] providing a seamless event planning experience for the community” are few of the objectives for the committee going forward.

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McBride '23 Places Third in MLK Essay Competition

By **Ming Qin '25**
Reporter

“Is voting an effective vehicle for change?” That was the question posed before Noah McBride '23, who participated in the MLK Holiday DC Essay Competition this January. His award-winning essay pointed out issues within the country’s voting system and emphasized starting at the root of societal concerns in order to come to a solution. McBride won 3rd place in the competition.

McBride learned about the contest through the Marion Barry Youth Leadership Institute, a program dedicated to helping youth in DC learn to become active leaders in their community. “The goal of the competition is to get youth in DC engaged within politics, to understand the legacy of MLK Jr., but moreover, to build upon his legacy and approach reform issues — in this case, voting,” said McBride.

When asked about the message of his essay, McBride said, “I want to help people understand that there’s more to just voting and amending problems on the exterior — it’s deeper than surface level issues.” He continued on explaining that identifying the root of the issues and dismantling the corrupted system would be the only effective step toward change. “When you vote in a system that doesn’t necessarily support or prioritize your interests, you’re doing a disservice



Photo by Junho Lee/The Choate News

Noah McBride '23 examines the U.S. voting system for the competition. to yourself, the country, and the world,” he said.

McBride believes that simply having conversations can play an integral role in creating more equitable systems. In his essay, he hones in on the idea that effective societal change starts by evaluating the power structures in play. “A lot of times, we can get caught up operating within the system while trying to make change, but voting would never dismantle the system because it was created to support the whims and ideals of the wealthy elite. Only when we’re able to reshape the system from the core will we truly create effective change,” he said.

For McBride, the best part about the process was doing extensive research. “Learning facts, gathering information, drawing paral-

els between ideas that I’ve never even considered, and ultimately coming to a conclusion really is an enjoyable task,” he said.

In addition to the MLK essay competition, McBride won first place in the “East of the River Youth Voices for Statehood” competition for an essay supporting DC statehood last year. He plans to continue writing about similar topics in the future. In addition to his essays, McBride hopes to write poetry to share with the rest of the Choate community about what he believes, aspires, and hopes for in the future: a more equitable, progressive, and loving society.

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WASHINGTON COMES TO CAMPUS

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gram also included a luncheon in the Sally Hart Lodge.

Mr. Akins was able to use his connections along with Dr. Gallagher’s to bring in five speakers for the program. The first two speakers were Mr. Andrew McCabe P’20 '22, former Deputy Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Dr. Jill McCabe P’20 '22, a candidate for the Virginia State Senate election in 2015. Students also connected with Mr. Pete Meachum '91 who has an extensive background in political operations and has assisted in the 2016 Trump presidential campaign, and Mr. Riley O’Connell '14, a candidate in the 2021 Wallingford mayoral race. The last speaker, Mr. Timothy Barrett, current Assistant Director of National Intelligence and Strategic Communications, was a former colleague of Mr. Akins.

During the program, students were able to delve into the career path of each speaker. Students learned about their early careers, the various obstacles and challenges they’ve faced along the way, and experiences in their respective fields. Dr. Gallagher said, “Mr. Akins and I asked each of the guests to give their stories about how they went from high school students, the age of the kids in the room, to what they ended up doing in terms of how they ended up where they are.” After the speeches, students were able to interact with the speakers in a question and answer session. “I think our kids were very lively,” added Dr. Gallagher. “Some questions were about different policies, others were about career choices and advice they would give, but I think our kids stepped up and asked good questions.”

Students enjoyed the program, coming away from the day

with major takeaways. “I liked Mr. McCabe’s comments on turning hardship into success. It stood out to me that no one can really see a path in life and when one encounters a rocky part to be flexible, adapt, and success will come,” said Sophia Bruno '23. “I also liked when Mr. Barrett emphasized the importance of journalism. It made me have an appreciation for the media I am consuming, and made me analyze who is writing it and what the perspective of the piece is.”

Although students were not able to go on the trip to Washington, D.C., the event was a success, allowing students to have informative conversations with experienced people involved in politics — a career path many students in attendance aspire to pursue.

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SEVEN NEW FACULTY HOUSES

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everyone understands how it works,” said Ms. Levesque. “It doesn’t mean people aren’t disappointed if they don’t get an apartment they might want, but they should understand why [and] what the factors [considered] were.”

According to Ms. Levesque, the majority of Choate faculty are expected to live and advise in a dormitory at some point during their Choate career. These assignments depend on the housing availability in a given year which determine whether faculty live in a dorm residence or serve as adjunct advisors — dorm advisers living out-of-house. Faculty are given the option to request new

accommodations every spring during “housing season”, when all available homes are posted

“One of the strengths of our system is that the rules governing faculty housing are clear, fair, and transparent...”

Ms. Katie Levesque
Interim Head of Student and Academic Life

for faculty to consider. While faculty planning on staying in the same house do not need to apply again, all faculty looking

to relocate must reapply to an available house.

Ms. Meghan Healey, who has been an adviser in Nichols, Squire Stanley, and Clinton Knight, reflected on her experience with the housing process. “I really like it [the faculty housing process] as a whole,” she said. “I’ve been really happy with how things have turned out, and I’ve always been aware of what’s going on throughout the process and understand the outcomes.”

With the construction of seven new faculty houses underway, the School looks to help foster a more tight-knit Choate community with more faculty living on campus.

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Graphic by Brian Yip/The Choate News

SMALL TOWN POLITICS, BIG TIME PROBLEMS

By **Amelia Sipkin '25**
Staff Reporter

On Tuesday, January 18, the Wallingford Town Council appointed former Town Council member and former Wallingford Democratic Town Committee (WDTC) member Mr. Jason Zandri to fill the vacated Council seat after Democrat Gina Morgenstein resigned mid-term due to the stresses of the job. Mr. Zandri's appointment resulted in disorder within the town meeting: audience members of the open Council meeting booed, yelled, and many stormed out. The enraged spectators believed that Democrat Ms. Alexa Tomassi, the WDTC's unanimously endorsed candidate, and the runner up in last year's election, should have received the seat. Traditionally, in the Council, when a member resigns mid-term, they are replaced with a candidate of the same political affiliation. This is the first year since 1980 that the council has strayed from this convention.

Democratic Councilor, Mr. Vincent F. Testa, began the Town Council meeting with a statement in support of Ms. Tomassi. At the meeting, Councilor Testa encouraged everyone to, "follow the policy, the procedure, and the tradition." Councilor Testa also argued appointing Ms. Tomassi should be a matter of "common sense," because she was the recommended candidate of the WDTC and last year's runner up. As part of his statement to his fellow Council members, Councilor Testa said, "You don't have to justify it, but if you choose not to follow my nomination, you need to justify that."

The other Democratic-Councilor, Mr. Samuel Carmody, echoed Councilor Testa's sentiment, along with several town citizens. At the meeting,



Graphic by Yujin Kim / The Choate News

A January 18 Town Council meeting became heated as local politicians vied for an empty seat on the Council.

Mr. Carmody emphasized that it was, "the will of the people" to appoint Ms. Tomassi, citing that she had the right resume and energy for the job.

All six Republican councilors were reportedly silent throughout Councilor Carmody's statements. "They didn't want to speak on it, because they didn't really have much to say," said 2021 Wallingford mayoral candidate Mr. Riley O'Connell '14. "There was no real legitimate excuse for them to deny her nomination," he said.

In the end, the motion to appoint Ms. Tomassi failed: both Democrats voted to approve her while the six republicans op-

posed. The audience was outraged. Notably, gallery members yelled "boo!" and "shame!" Some of the audience stormed out as well. Mr. O'Connell believes their frustration stemmed from shock because many believed that Tomassi would be the appointee. Mr. O'Connell, however, was already aware of the alleged "background scheming" to nominate Jason Zandri prior to this meeting. According to Mr. O'Connell, the whole meeting "was clearly a bunch of backroom scheming and deals. [Republicans] are putting their own political party's agenda or goals. Above the greater good community and the bulk of the voters in the community."

The scheming that Mr. O'Connell alleged is in reference to a situation this summer that caused Mr. Zandri to leave the WDTC. Mr. Zandri was on the council for six terms as a Democrat until last year, when the WDTC decided to run a slate of six nominees, even though there were nine democratic candidates interested. Mr. Zandri was one of the three excluded, which he believes to be the product of a prejudice held against him by WDTC Chair Alida Cella. While planning to petition his way into the running for the seat, Mr. Zandri developed a viral heart infection and went into a coma, but he has since recovered.

Now, with the 2022 resignation of former Councilor Morgenstein, Republican Councilor, Mr. Jose Marrone, nominated Zandri, who is considered to be more politically moderate than Ms. Tomassi. Other Republican Councilors expressed their wish to appoint Mr. Zandri, using the argument that he would've won in the 2021 election cycle if he had been able to run. Despite the protest of the crowd, when Republicans presented the motion to elect Mr. Zandri, it passed with the six Republican votes and the abstinence of both Democrats.

Ms. Cella, chair of the WDTC, described this as a "gross injustice." However, Mr. Zandri has felt

antagonized by Ms. Cella since before she was appointed chair of the WDTC in 2020. In November 2019, a week before the council election, Mr. Zandri posted on his private Facebook a phrase from the 2018 "Overboard" remake: "Land of the Free, not Land of the Free Lunch." Mr. Zandri explained that "it was a cool saying in and of itself" and he thought the stereotype "role reversal" in the scene to be interesting. He described the scene as a "rich white male has amnesia, is working as a day laborer, and the Latinx crew chief says it to him." Mr. Zandri was asked by Democrats to take it down, but he refused.

Mr. Zandri believes the conflict to have been driven by Ms. Cella. Prior to being elected WDTC chair, she commented on his facebook post: "What you posted was a Republican/conservative talking point ... Do not continue this battle. It will not go well for you." Zandri argued that once appointed as WDTC chair, Cella had the power to carry out her "threat" by denying him the ability to run for another term on the council and not endorsing his election. "These were just idle threats from a citizen at the time they were made - as chair she had the power to carry them out," he explained.

Despite the contentions raised at the Town Council meeting, Mr. Zandri remains determined to honor the people of Wallingford through his service on the council. "I try to get up each day and be the kind of person my kids and my dog think I am. I fail at it, sometimes miserably. I truly believe I will never get there; I will never be as great as they think I am, but I owe it to them to never give up trying. So, I won't," said Mr. Zandri.

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THE DYNASTIES OF WALLINGFORD



Thompson - Wallingford.com



1913 photo on the back of a train coming out of New York City with Eddie's father, (who later would become the chief of police in Wallingford), on the right.

Photos courtesy of Paige Loughlin

The Loughlin family, along with the DiNatale family, have been in Wallingford for generations since the early 20th century.

By **Mwendwawangai Daisley '23**
Reporter

The DiNatale and Loughlin families are two of the most well-known families in Wallingford. Owning local businesses, land, and having a well-known and reputable law firm in the area are just some of the roles these families play in the town. The DiNatales and Loughlins have had historic influence through the generations that have resided here.

The DiNatales emigrated from Italy after World War II because, as Mr. Vincenzo DiNatale Sr. explained: "My grandfather came over here from Italy after the Second World War because Italy was not a place of opportunity for his two parents and four siblings at that time. Hard work is an essential trait that helped my family become successful in this country. ... They came here with no money at all."

The Loughlins also emigrated from Europe to the United States. "The first of my family to live in Wallingford came from Ireland in the 1800s, so we've been

here for a while. I am the seventh generation of Loughlins to live in Wallingford, so the history is just extensive," said Paige Loughlin '22.

While these two families immigrated to achieve success for the future of their families, they have always been significantly involved in the town and local community. Several Choate students serve as examples of how these well-established families are fixtures of the Wallingford community. Kayce Madancy '22, a Wallingford day student and close family friend of the Loughlins, said "My perception of them may be different to someone who isn't a family friend, but I do know they have a lot of influence in many different branches of the Wallingford community."

Chiara Vessichio '22, another day student from Wallingford, had a similar experience of growing up alongside a member of a Wallingford dynasty. "I knew of the DiNatale kids because my sister went to elementary school and middle school with the eldest son of Mr. DiNatale, Vincenzo DiNatale ['19], and I have gone to school with Pe-

ter DiNatale ['21], since elementary school," Vessichio said.

Peter DiNatale '21 explained how in the half century they have been in the area, his family has been able to create so many connections within the Wallingford community, "Naturally, they were able to meet with a lot of different families and people who ran many small businesses in the community. My dad also served on the Town Council and owns a liquor store in Wallingford, which allowed him to meet a lot of people, whether in the council environment or the community." He continued, "I think that my family's hardworking nature, paired with their dedication to their businesses in Wallingford, made for plenty of opportunities to meet the families in the community."

Loughlin attributed the Loughlins' wide ranging relationships in town to their commitment to the community, and shared that, "The real current reason for my family's prominence is fully credited to my grandfather and my dad. My grandfather was a prominent lawyer in

town and having really intricate connections to everyone in town made him a sort of figurehead. My dad then also came back to Wallingford after school and began his own firm, effortlessly maintaining that sense of genuine connection with the town and Wallingford residents that my grandfather did."

Mr. Dinatale Sr. explained that what gave the DiNatale family the foundation to become such a historic part of the town is an emphasis on ingenuity and overcoming seemingly insurmountable circumstances. "My grandfather and his siblings were able to get through math class at school, but anything that had to do with language, my grandfather was not able to understand. So, they were all pulled out of school and they worked, which was good. My grandfather and his siblings learned from an early age what it was like to build a business, a legacy, and a family name from a young age."

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WEATHER IN WALLINGFORD



Graphic by Yujin Kim / The Choate News

THE CHOATE NEWS



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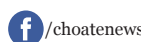
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Corrections

An article published in the December 16, 2021 issue misstated the role of Jessica Zhao '23 in Spectrum. They are the club's secretary-treasurer, not president. Jordan Azzinaro '22 and Kaleigh O'Leary '22 are the club's co-presidents.

The Choate News regrets these errors. To submit a correction, email thechoatenews@choate.edu

BOBA TEA IS A SIP OF MY CULTURE AT CHOATE

By **Yoyo Zhang '24**
Associate Editor

I was in third grade when I discovered the magic of boba. Known as *zhen zhu nai cha* (珍珠奶茶) in Chinese — literally, “pearl milk tea” — this nouveau drink has captivated me ever since my first sip. The silky, syrupy milk, refreshed by a touch of tea, has been impossible to resist — not to mention the iconic tapioca pearls at the bottom of the drink that add a sweet chewiness.

I remember how eight-year-old me, after being picked up from tennis on Sundays, would beg my parents to stop by the boba shop Yi Dian Dian (一點點) outside of our apartment. When you are eight and exhausted, a concoction of sugar, dairy, and starch is the key to happiness. The Shanghainese population indubitably agreed with me, judging by the chains of boba shops and long lines that quickly popped up around the city. The boba fever was an inevitable one: how could you resist the unmistakable blend of the rich flavors, the kick of dopamine as the liquid flows through your system, and the thousands of serendipitous combinations of flavors and toppings?

I never realized how prevalent boba was in my pre-teen years until I moved to the U.S. in seventh grade. Studying at a junior boarding school in Connecticut, isolated from the outside world, I missed the comfort of my favorite beverage. In a district so white and tiny that the nearest Asian restaurant was one town over, the prospect of boba, along with other delicacies from home, exited my life. I suppressed my cravings as a demonstration of “maturity” and “adaptability,” qualities my parents were proud of as they trusted me to thrive alone in a foreign place. Boba thus became a luxury I could only dream of, a special treat I could indulge in every summer, one that I could not take for granted.

When I discovered the Loose Leaf Boba Company in Wallingford, I was pleasantly surprised. I remember the

first time I ordered Hong Kong Milk Tea with Honey Boba and Lychee Jelly — I had to translate each item on the English menu to Chinese in my head because I had never thought of boba outside the context of my home. Despite being a little nervous about how the drink would taste, the first sip immediately brought back memories from home. It wasn't exactly the same as I remembered, but the sweet medley still pleased my palate as it always has. Ever since then, boba delivery is a frequent enjoyment among me and my Chinese friends at Choate. We order boba on the weekends, after a long school day, or whenever we're in need of the warm embrace that only this drink could offer.

Boba is a great remedy, especially when school has stressed out me and my friends. One instance, my friend noticed I was struggling and decided to order me a boba. I immediately lit up when they walked into my room with my favorite combo: a Strawberry Matcha Latte with Honey Boba and Cheese Foam. The sweet sips send messages of affection, sustaining me through even the most rigorous study sessions. Only when we are far from home does boba assume a value beyond its delicious taste. Sometimes my friends and I even use it as a curren-

cy. “I owe you a boba for waking me up for class,” I've said more than once to a friend. In a world where belonging can be hard, boba is how we build our own little society. It is a way to heal — a symbol of love.

In a recent *New Yorker* article titled “Chronicles of a Bubble-Tea Addict,” the writer Jiayang Fan described the concept of being a “boba liberal.” The term, coined by Twitter user @diaspora_is_red, is “someone who centers her Asian identity in buzzy cultural objects and ‘trend-chasing spectacle’ but lacks true engagement with the politics of her Asian identity.” I found myself feeling guilty reading this because, in some ways, I have engaged in the process of flattening Asian culture into a singular commodity. I've come to understand that, by indulging in this Americanized trend, I am exercising my commercialist privilege and perpetuating the stereotypes that belittle a rich culture. These days, when I look into the dark boba pearls, I see how much I've grown through experiencing the world. Boba is still as enjoyable as ever, but it now carries more weight than the paper cup I held in third grade.

Yoyo Zhang is a fourth-former from Shanghai. She may be reached at yozhang24@choate.edu



Graphic by Carolyn Chen/The Choate News

WRITING'S NOT EASY, BUT GRAMMARLY CAN'T HELP



Graphic by William Gao/The Choate News

By **Eva Swanson '25**
Opinions Writer

Whether for English classes or college applications, writing essays is a crucial part of the high-school experience. To aid us students in this task, we have access to a variety of writing assistant softwares, including, perhaps most prominently, Grammarly. Programs such as these give real-time feedback on your writing by helping to detect run-on sentences, eliminate passive voice, make sentences more concise, and much more. However, with such an intelligent tool at one's fingertips, the problem thus arises: Are we becoming too dependent on this digital tool for our writing?

Grammarly claims to “Take Your Writing from Good to Great.” With cutting-edge features, such

as a powerful spell-checker, a tone detector, a clarity checker, and readability scoring, Grammarly leaves no question as to why 30 million people use it daily. The powerful program simplifies the writing process, but along with the many advantages, these features come with a downside.

Being introduced to Grammarly in fourth grade, I have grown up using the software. Its accessibility and ease of use allowed me to use it without seeing the negative effects on my writing. (I am using it now, as I write this piece.) Looking back, however, I'm able to realize that allowing the program to finish my sentences and correct my writing did much more harm than good. Up until last year, I didn't know how to differentiate between “affect” and “effect,” since Grammarly would

always correct this issue for me. Even now, I still struggle to change my sentences from passive to active voice without rewording the whole paragraph.

Part of the strategem of Grammarly is that it is seemingly unobtrusive. Though numerous red underlines that indicate grammatical errors may appear, it is ultimately the user's choice whether to accept those suggestions. However, as those red lines accumulate, one can be pressured to accept all the suggestions without carefully considering each recommendation. Because of this, the user is not actually learning how to apply these grammatical suggestions on their own.

Furthermore, Grammarly's technology is still only a computer program, leaving room for errors.

Even as I type this, Grammarly is telling me to delete various words in the previous sentence, leaving it as a fragment. However, with the company claiming that 85% of its premium users have become stronger writers, many users download the tool without properly thinking over its effects.

As many of us know, writing is a learning process. Though many of us wish we could, one cannot just sit down and create a masterpiece. Instead, crafting papers takes planning, effort, and trial and error. Grammarly, though powerful and useful, forces us to rely on external forces instead of developing our own voice, ultimately harming our writing.

Eva Swanson is a third-former from New Haven. She may be reached at eswanson25@choate.edu

It's Okay to Change the Plan, Trust Me

By **Audrey Lim '23**
Opinions Writer

Ever since second grade, I've known that I want to be a writer. But I didn't think that high school would be the time to pursue that passion. In my mind, the purpose of attending a college-preparatory school like Choate was to, as the name suggests, prepare for college. So, I suppressed my desire to write until further notice. Instead, I thought I had my Choate career all figured out — I wanted to join the swim team, be principal cellist in the Symphony Orchestra, and participate in Advanced Robotics Concentration.

And yet, halfway through my first term at Choate, I already began shifting away from this plan. I quit Symphony Orchestra due to the extensive workload I felt like I had, leaving more time to focus on school and clubs. Little did I know that freshmen fall was only the tip of the iceberg.

For my afternoon activity freshman fall, I signed up to be the assistant stage manager for the production *Clue*. Funny how one email saying “I'll do it” could have such a lasting impact on my Choate career. Because of my work on that production, I grew to love theatre.

So, instead of joining the swim team in the winter like I had planned, I auditioned for the winter production. I couldn't pinpoint what exactly I loved about theater, but I knew that the sense of community I felt on the stage was greater than what I had found in any sport or other extracurricular. From that point forward, I decided to dedicate myself to Choate Theatre.

Still, I didn't love theater as much as I loved writing. Instead of seeking out more opportunities to practice what I loved, however, I blamed the little time I spent writing on the School, convincing myself that Choate didn't provide creative writers with enough opportunities to practice their craft. With that, I set the issue aside yet again.

Freshman spring came around, and in front of me sat a list of applications for Signature Programs. The way my prefects talked about it made it seem like participating in a



Graphic by William Gao/The Choate News

signature program made you cooler. There was more respect for people who were involved in them — at least that's what freshman me thought. So, I made it my goal to be accepted into a Signature Program.

Though I was passionate about it, I was doubtful about whether to apply to Theater Arts Concentration because I felt I wasn't a very skilled actor. My parents scratched their heads and said, “What is the future? Robotics and machine learning.” “Apply to ARC,” they told me, so I wrote the application.

One day, while catching up with Mrs. Doak, I told her I was applying to ARC. She looked me in my eyes and asked, “Why do you want to do ARC?”

I remember being unable to answer her. I remember rethinking my whole high school plan.

Then she asked, “What do you want to do?”

I knew the answer immediately. Writing. My roots were in writing.

I told her there weren't any creative writing programs at Choate. In response, she told me about the Playwriting Arts Concentration.

It was risky. I hadn't developed my creative writing skills or written for fun outside of class, but I realized that I'd already dropped swimming and Symphony Orchestra, the two extracurriculars I felt the most comfortable with. I might as well try something new.

What ultimately drove me to apply for Arts Con was the desperation to write. I've always known I was meant to do it. I had it wrong; I was thinking about writing like it was hanging photographs on the wall — a menial task that can be put off for later — but it requires skill and time, just like any art.

I wasn't able to pinpoint it then, but I can now: what I love about theater is the twist of reality to tell a story. I wouldn't have discovered my passion for playwriting and screenwriting if I hadn't tried something new. Looking back, I realize how essential it is to take risks. Choate is a wonderful place for that — you can try new things with tremendous support from the community.

And so, my Choate experience has looked nothing like what I had imagined. Instead of spending my afternoons at the pool or in the robotics lab, I've come to call the PMAC my home, where I've worked on mainstage theater productions. I'm now a part of Playwriting Arts Concentration, and I've loved every moment of it.

You might think you know what you want to do going into the next chapter of your life, but plans don't always work out. In fact, the only plan that doesn't fail is no plan at all.

Audrey Lim is a fifth-former from Livermore, Ca. She may be reached at alim23@choate.edu

COVID-19 PANDEMIC DISGUISES A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

By **Tyler Kuo '23**
Opinions Staff Writer

Not only did Covid-19 shut down schools and prevent gatherings, it also brought forth a crisis of mental health. The grief, anxiety, and depression that children have experienced throughout the Covid-19 pandemic is spreading into classrooms and hallways. Studies have shown increased crying and disruptive behaviors among younger kids and increased violence and bullying among teenagers. In 2020, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suspected suicide attempts increased by 31% from 2019. The closure of schools not only disrupted most students' learning, but also uprooted students' social networks and relationships with teachers.

As restrictions ease after the peak of Omicron, schools should consider ways to support students' social and emotional needs as they reacclimate to in-person learning. Schools should place more emphasis on utilizing their existing systems such as establishing new screening processes to better target students in need of emotional help. On a wider scale, countries should place a higher priority on mental health services, integrate mental health services into health systems, and increase funding to train counselors and social workers.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the pandemic has severely disrupted or even halted critical mental health services — even as the demand for these services has increased. Roughly a billion people live with some mental disorder, and in low-income countries, more than 75% of people with these disorders do not receive treatment. There are multiple reasons that mental health does not receive enough attention. The first is related to the stigma that mental health is seen as nonessential, and more like a luxurious afterthought. Other reasons include an outdated and fragmented service model or a shortage of human resources.

This mental health struggle is not just felt in the U.S. In Hong Kong, for example, where schools have closed due to the influx of Omicron cases, some children face serious challenges. In a recent Lancet article, Zanon Chiu, a registered clinical psychologist working with children and adolescents in Hong Kong, said, “Now that schools are closed, some lock themselves up inside their rooms for weeks, refusing to take showers, eat, or leave their beds.” In the face of this challenge, Hong Kong has delayed the university entrance exams; authorities made a last-minute decision on March 21 to postpone the Diploma of Secondary Education exams to April 24.

The impact of mental health is not only felt in the health sector but also throughout every sector of a country's economy. As a result, mental health links strongly with socio-economic agendas. The World Bank, an international financial institution that provides loans and grants to the governments of low and middle-income countries, has implemented a strategy to help countries achieve progress in Universal Health Coverage. In countries such as Cambodia, Niger, and Morocco, bank projects are supporting psychosocial interventions to help people combat negative emotional effects. In China, the National Planning Guideline for the Healthcare Service System promoted direct measures that include “the treatment and care of patients with serious mental disorders, improvement of mental health services and systems, and the dissemination of mental health education.”

The pandemic exposed healthcare systems across the globe as woefully inadequate. In fact, according to WHO, many countries have spent less than 2% of their health budgets on mental health. To combat this crisis, significant investments must be made. According to the WHO, every U.S. dollar invested in treatment for anxiety and depression yields four dollars in return for better health and ability to work. Mental health systems must be incorporated into

existing health systems instead of as a separate issue. Furthermore, students should be screened to ensure that those who need support receive it, and schools should expand on existing health systems. School-based mental health professionals can provide direct support to students at risk of emotional issues that were identified through the screening.

The need to invest and expand on our current mental health system is more serious than ever. The pandemic has severely heightened on-going mental health issues and created new ones, and there are minimal resources for young children to turn to. The current pandemic has severely disrupted our day-to-day lives. Pre-pandemic pleasures of gathering with friends without the need to social distance or wear masks are all but gone. Moreover, the pandemic has brought with it another major problem: mental health issues. Experienced most severely by children and teenagers whose social lives have been uprooted by the pandemic, there is a compelling need to invest and expand on our current mental health systems. Only through these changes can children and adults receive the treatment that they need and deserve.

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PANDEMIC EXACERBATES TURKEY'S ECONOMIC TURMOIL

By **Begum Gokmen '23**
Associate Editor

As we prepare to enter into a new year of the Covid-19 pandemic, what seems like a never-ending economic turmoil trails right behind us. Over the past two years, Turkey has been swept by a devastating currency crisis, which has surged inflation to its highest rates in almost two decades. As President Recep Tayyip Erdogan struggles to manage Turkey's deteriorating economy, the political tactics and authoritarian proclivity that have worked for him in the past seem like they won't be much help this time.

The blame for the intensity of the crisis undoubtedly falls on Erdogan, whose economic policy ushered the country into financial ruin over the tenure of his ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). The ramifications of the pandemic forced a reckoning on the government's inability to navigate the delicate economy. Erdogan's insistence on cutting interest rates stems from his unorthodox view that higher rates cause inflation, a belief that contradicts the suggestions of many seasoned economists.

Unfortunately, Turkey's current economic state has not backed up Erdogan's theory. The

aggressive easing cycle accompanied by rampant inflation has significantly eroded Turkey's national currency's purchasing power. The devalued lira has made everyday goods like food, fuel, and transportation even more expensive, forcing people to spend a larger share of their earnings on necessities. However, even as inflation reaches historical highs, losing 44% of its value against the U.S. dollar in 2021, Erdogan insists that the “problem” of inflation is only temporary and that the country's economic foundations are sound, especially compared to other countries experiencing similar crises around the world. “It is clear that there is a bulge in inflation, as in the exchange rate, that does not match the realities of our country and economy,” Erdogan told members of the AKP.

Since that statement, emergency measures taken by Erdogan and his new finance minister, loyalist Nureddin Nebati, have helped the lira recover some of its value. However, these initiatives haven't helped counteract the increase of fresh scrutiny of the president's years-long centralization of authority. Commenting on this accumulation of power, Hakan Kara, a former chief economist at Turkey's Central Bank and a professor at Ankara Bilkent University, explained to

The Washington Post that “the people appointed to top positions were selected from a very small pool,” raising concerns of political pressure being inflicted on independent institutions, such as the Central Bank, that are ordered to “follow instructions from the government very closely.”

This pattern of political pressure has intensified over the past decade as many bank policymakers, government ministers, and independent experts are dismissed for opposing Erdogan's economic policy of interest-rate cuts. As healthy checks and balances on Erdogan's growing power gradually disappear, it has become increasingly clear that the fate of the country lies in his hands.

Meanwhile, Turkish citizens have united through their experiences of hardship, and criticism of Erdogan's government has become increasingly bold despite their consistent efforts to suppress distress and opposition. Viral videos of long lines for subsidized bread or vegetable sellers dividing heads of cabbage into affordable chunks revealed the plight of Turkey's trembling economy.

“I just sold a quarter of a cabbage to a customer. Half of a half. And if there are still people saying that the economy is good then they should open their eyes and

look around,” the seller said in one of the video's that went viral.

In a recent poll released by Metropoll in December, about 75% of respondents said their trust in the Turkish government's economic policies had reduced since last year. This has raised the confidence of opposition parties who await the election of 2023 to possibly create a victory out of the lagging voter support for the Justice and Development Party.

“We are face-to-face with a ruling government that is nearing the end of its life. They are making mistake after mistake,” said Istanbul mayor and member of the Republican People's Party (CHP) Ekrem Imamoglu in an interview with The Washington Post.

However, an electoral victory as such won't be easy, especially following the eighth year of Erdogan's presidency who has undeniably garnered a fiercely loyal base of conservative Muslims and other supporters. Though clearly, Erdogan's inability to fend off the deteriorating value of the lira has cost him a significant loss of confidence. If his economic policies drive the recession into 2023, Erdogan's rule might actually see its end.

Begum Gokmen is a fifth-former from Boston. She may be reached at bgokmen23@choate.edu

Boycotting the Winter Olympics is Not as Straightforward as it Seems

By **Stanley Cho '25**
Opinions Writer

The 2022 Winter Olympic Games began in Beijing, from February 4, 2022 through February 20. While the focus of the opening ceremony means to introduce the elite competing athletes with grandiosity, the gathering of high-ranking politicians is an essential part of upholding the global credibility of the Olympic Games. Yet, government officials from countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia will not be attending the games in Beijing because of a diplomatic boycott in regards to China's violation of human rights.

Diplomatic boycotts effectively demonstrate geopolitical disputes without undermining the importance of the Olympic games and, therefore, should become more normalized. Still, while athlete participation in boycotts would make them more powerful, without athlete participation, there are no games. The question, then, is how can countries make political statements through the Olympic games without jeopardizing the events themselves?

Boycotting the Olympic Games is nothing new. One of the first instances of boycotting in the Olympics was in 332 BCE, in Ancient Greece, when Athens threatened to withdraw from the event after an Athenian athlete was accused of bribing his opponents.

More recently, in 1980, during the Cold War, the United States, China, and 44 other nations boycotted the Moscow Olympic Games, to protest the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This boycott prevented both diplomats and athletes from participating in the event. In response, the Soviet Union and its allies withdrew their athletes from the Los Angeles Olympic Games, in 1984. Experts note that while the boycotts were able to spread awareness about the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the boycotts were unsuccessful in changing Soviet policy and that its primary victims were the athletes who were prohibited from participating. The valuable lesson learned was the importance of separating sports and politics.

In fact, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has

worked for more than 40 years to ensure “political neutrality” between competing nations by “preserving the autonomy of sport.” However, the IOC's political neutrality has become a topic of controversy, as professional Chinese tennis player Peng Shuai disappeared following her sexual assault allegations against a former official of the Chinese Communist Party. Organizations such as the Humans Rights Watch have accused the IOC of covering for China, which has censored any information about Shuai.

The United States' solution was a diplomatic boycott of China this winter. The allegations that the U.S. have leveled against the host nation move beyond Shuai's disappearance to include a violation of human rights against Uyghurs, ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, and the suppression of democracy protests in Hong Kong in 2020. While diplomat-

ic boycotting may not be the catalyst to end violations of human rights in China, the spread of information through a globally recognized medium such as the Olympics can contribute greatly to the fight against human-rights violations.

On the other hand, allowing athletes to disapprove of the political ideals and policies of a country during the Olympics demonstrates the violation of political neutrality among the athletes. Despite the atrocities committed by countries participating in the Olympics, the home nation of athletes should not be criticized and ridiculed by athletes in an attempt to spread awareness. Instead, the IOC must look into banning countries from participating in the Olympics depending on their violation of widely-accepted global laws or treaties. For instance, the IOC banned Germany and Japan from the 1948 London Games for their roles in World War II, while South Africa was banned from the Olympics from 1970 until 1992 for its Apartheid regime. Similarly, it may be necessary for the IOC to look into banning China in an attempt to persuade the nation to cease its human-rights violations, but this should be a last resort in an attempt to spread awareness and prevent the detrimental effect that politics may have on the functionality of the Olympics.

Stanley Cho is a third-former from Busan, South Korea. He may be reached at scho25@choate.edu



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

CHOATE’S CULINARY CONNOISSEURS

By Jacqueline Yan ’24
Staff Reporter

New on today’s menu: Tang Kitchen and CRH Grilling. These two pop-up eateries, both entirely operated by students, have taken over the school’s non-SAGE dining scene via their three-course tasting menus and weekend cook-outs, respectively.

Tang Kitchen, run single-handedly by Kenny Tang ’22, is a “boutique restaurant” that operates out of the SAC’s kitchen. Tang’s passion can be traced back to the pandemic, when he found himself with more time to explore his passion for cooking. “I started cooking a lot during quarantine, because my family and I love to eat, and the pandemic limited our ability to get good food,” he said. “Cooking is one of the most rewarding and relaxing things that I do. It’s beautiful to be able to take raw ingredients and create a dish in my head while balancing flavors and textures on the plate.”

Although Tang Kitchen originated as a blog, increasing attention from students on campus allowed Tang to transform it into the “restaurant” that it is now — renowned on campus, with weekly tasting menus carefully tailored to fulfill every customer’s personal preference.

When asked about the inspiration for his recipes, Tang said, “All the recipes are my own, but I draw inspiration from different culinary ideas and chefs. I learned how to cook through watching YouTube and eating in different restaurants. The menu changes according to the guests, and I prepare different dishes for each one.”

Even as the business grows, Tang continues to showcase the delicacies he cooks up as well as the smiles of guests enjoying quality food regularly on both his website and Instagram account, @tangkitchen_.

“The website and account mean a lot to me. The Tang Kitchen account is also a way for me to get the word out about my cooking. It’s a great way to engage with the community and see what people think of the dishes,” Tang said.

The absolute reverse of Tang Kitchen’s classy five-star restaurant vibes is another student-launched organization,



Photos courtesy of Jack Dillon and Kenny Tang

The student chefs of CRH Grilling and Tang Kitchen dish up hamburgers and fennel scallops, respectively.

characterized by raucous late-night bonfires and lots of good meat, which has also made its way into the public eye: CRH Grilling.

CRH Grilling, run by co-owners Jack Dillon ’23 and Brooks Roach ’23, made its debut in the fall term of this academic year. The pair is now famous for their open Saturday night grill outs, usually located in the Bernhard-Tenney courtyard. They have also provided catering services for events at senior dorms such as Lewis and Homestead.

The group’s origin story has the same laidback, impromptu nature as their weekend grill outs. According to Roach, “I just remember a good quote that Jack said — ‘Let’s actually do something this weekend.’”

Dillon and Roach bought their very own grill, some burgers, sausages, and vegetarian options that week and hosted a simple grill out outside their

dorm, Tenney House, the first of many more to come. The surprisingly large turnout from that night turned into an incentive for the pair to make Saturday night grilling a Choate tradition.

According to Dillon and Roach, they plan the events on the Friday nights prior to their grill outs and source ingredients from local supermarkets. The next day, the meat (or vegetarian alternative) starts sizzling. As a self-proclaimed “underground organization,” CRH Grilling operates independent of Choate, relying mostly on student Venmo donations to help cover costs.

In thanks, the pair has established a thank-you system. “Similarly to how Choate names its buildings, we name apparatus after our donors. For example, we have the Varun Spatula and the Chesson Bucket of Truth,” said Roach.

Despite not advertising events, the group’s popularity amongst students always brings a busy night of grilling. The pair can also be seen donning their bright-pink cupcake aprons across campus, an indication of upcoming events.

Scrambling for the funding for ingredients, setting up the space, and spending the night behind the grill is hard work, yet when asked why they devote so much time and energy into organizing these events, Dillon said, “I love this whole grilling thing. I love being seen as the grilling guys on campus. But, at the end of the day, it’s all about the community that we have created. I’ve had people come up to me and say like, ‘Hey, you’ve got something special here.’ That warms my heart.”

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Microeconomics’ Market-Simulation Madness

By Tiffany Xiao ’23
Associate Editor

Imagine: it’s February, and you are sitting in the sophomore-junior section of the dining hall attempting to admire the snow flurries through the arched windows, but every few seconds, your serenity is interrupted by: “Shoot, I’m about to go bankrupt!” “Do you have RMUs? Please, I really need some.” “It’s September? Already?” Endless banter erupts between students in the different microeconomics sections as onlookers tilt their heads, puzzled by what sounds like a foreign language.

The microeconomics market simulation was created by economics teacher Mr. Ted Hartsoe in the winter of 1986, his second year teaching at Choate. Inspired by a board game he played in high school, Mr. Hartsoe began the simulation in hopes that “students would like some of the competitive element of it, but also learn a little bit about how markets function — the competitive nature, price setting, accounting, business strategies.” In 2001, Mr. Hartsoe also submitted the project to the NAS-DAQ-sponsored National Council for Economic Education and was recognized as a runner-up for the National Teaching Award.

The simulation, which takes place over the entire term and is comprised of twelve three-day simulation “months,” allows students to operate simulated corporations. Students make offers in raw material (RMU) and finished product (FPU) markets,

increase their production capabilities, and take out loans, while competing to make the greatest profit. Students collect their data in spreadsheets, which are later analyzed and culminated in creative annual reports that ask students to apply the abstract microeconomic models they’ve learned throughout the term.

When the simulation first began, students would run across campus before curfew to drop off slips of paper with their RMU and FPU bids every night into an envelope at Mr. Hartsoe’s house. While the simulation has since been adapted to a digital format, students may still break a sweat at the exciting and nerve-racking nature of the game.

While, in the past, the microeconomics classes would issue a final exam at the end of the term, the economics teachers collectively decided to remove that assessment due to time limitations from changes in the academic calendar and proportionally increased the effect of the market simulation on students’ grades. Currently, 150 of the 700 or 800 points in the term revolve around the simulation, though only 30 of those 150 points reflect corporation profitability. In addition, the lowest grade a student can receive on profitability is 15 points — even if they go bankrupt. Other graded aspects of the simulation include corporation audits, financial statements and statistics, and an annual report.

Tensions run high during the simulation, but most students find the experience fulfilling and enjoyable. “I think the micro simulation is a really good practice tool and learning device to be able to know what it’s like in the real market,” said Heidi Li ’23. From the simulation, she learned more about “taking risks and communicating with other people ... and business strategy in general.” Priam Alataris ’22 said, “I’ve had a lot of fun with it. I think it makes the class more engaging for me.”

In the simulation, people dedicate immense efforts to developing creative strategies, sometimes succeeding and other times falling short. A key component of these strategies involves off-market transactions. Christian Askar ’22 was one of the first people to send a mass email to all of the 50 or so microeconomics students this term, offering to sell some of his factories. “I thought it was an effective way to reach out to everyone, and I was able to build connections to people in the class. [Now,] when I need to work off-market, people will reach out to me,” said Askar. Some students grapple with balancing friendships and competitiveness in the simulation. Alataris reflected on one of his deals, where he bought an FPU from Gretchen MacLean ’22 for \$5000 (an exceedingly high off-market price). Although he admitted that the deal was “completely unnecessary,” he said that “it felt good to help someone out as a philanthropist.”

Current microeconomics students commonly reach out to students who have participated in the simulation in past years to more thoughtfully develop their strategy. Kenny Tang ’22, winner of the 2019–2020 spring market simulation, gave advice to those currently participating: “Always try to maximize your production and minimize your costs when possible. But, don’t be too greedy when selling your FPUS — or else, they won’t get sold.”

Not everybody relishes the competition. “I have always thought that it would be interesting for one of the psychology classes to observe the market simulation as an experiment in examining human behavior, and personality types,” said Mr. James Stanley, a microeconomics teacher. “There are some people who discover that they really don’t like competition, that the whole process of vying for raw materials with other students makes them profoundly uncomfortable. And other students love it, and get so wrapped up in it, that their sense of reality starts to get confused.”

Many students find the simulation so memorable that they bring it up in future conversation or even decades later, at alumni reunions. Mr. Stanley added, “Often, at term’s end, students say, ‘Okay, now I really get it. Can I do it again?’”

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the Lonely Hearts Club

Choate’s full of busy students, and the editors of *The Choate News* are no exception. As Valentine’s Day draws near, these sleep-deprived but lovable Newsies are seeking soulmates to finally fill their lonely hearts. After all, they’re soon to have much more time on their hands.



HENRIK TORRES, Editor-in-Chief ♥

This brain-wrinkle lover seeks an accomplice who will support his habit of pouring milk before cereal. A firm believer of “West Coast, best coast,” he will persuade you to try the newest trends on food YouTube. Binge-reading *The New York Times* with him is a must, at least when not taking his daily nap. Plus, inspired by his favorite *Star Trek* characters, he has an OOTD for all 365 days of the year: an orange jacket and jeans — perfect if you are into the traffic cone look.

♥ **RACHEL PITTMAN, Managing Editor**

Rarely spotted without a knee-length parka and two layers (minimum) of pants on, this Eckhart-enthusiast is always bundled up to protect her warm heart. When planning dates, remember she’s aggressively vegetarian but has many a fingerprint exception, i.e. her grandma’s chicken soup, Tuesdays, etc. A tip: don’t question it. A driver’s license and willingness to reenact *SNL* sketches are required — if only so she can show off her Bill Hader impression.



RENEE JIANG, School News ♥

A keen pessimist at first glance (don’t fret, she loves humanity), this double co-captain is looking for an optimist oozing happiness from every pore. Sunday nights must be spent vigorously skipping through scenes in rom-coms or reality TV. Looking for an environmentalist adept at taking an unearthly number of sunset pictures. Suitors must be extremely proficient in intense banter or remain on the receiving end of sarcastic commentary.

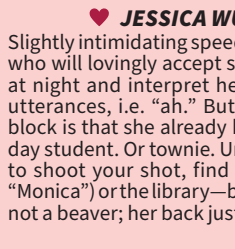
♥ **PRAJ CHIRATHIVAT, School News**

Thai student and School News aficionado is ready to ball at a moment’s notice. Boasting an impressive 290 lbs bench press and 500 lbs squat, he always carries when on the CS:GO 5-stack. He’s looking for a spunky jazz guitarist who will listen to Frank Ocean with him — and rumor has it, that he’s already found one.



ADRIENNE CHACÓN, Local News ♥

This literature-loving workaholic is seeking a partner fluent in John Mulaney and Marvel references. On a movie night, prepare for loud color commentary. Take her to the bookstore for boba and a discussion of Octavia Butler. If you’re a good hugger who can match her wit and warm energy, this is the girl for you. Additionally, if you’re Chris Evans in a sweater, you needn’t apply: the wedding has already been planned.



♥ **JESSICA WU, Campus Opinions**

Slightly intimidating speed-typer seeks a partner who will lovingly accept selfies of her crying late at night and interpret her various one-syllable utterances, i.e. “ah.” But be wary, word on the block is that she already has her eye on another day student. Or townie. Unclear. If you’re looking to shoot your shot, find her in her car (named “Monica”) or the library—but look twice. No, that’s not a beaver; her back just does that sometimes.



ANIKA MIDHA, Opinions Nation/World ♥

If you’re interested in this girlboss N/W Editor, you’d better buy a time Turner — she manages to be in at least three places at once at all times. But it’s worth the hustle; no one can match this mystery woman’s soothing voice, all-black ensembles, and academic weaponry. She may be short, but don’t come short-stocked on love — numerous *Revenge* marathons are a must.

♥ **KATE BAILEY, Features**

Quirky southern belle seeks partner to match her endless knowledge of Joni Mitchell lyrics and magazine ledes. But Marx my words, before you shoot your shot, brush up on your politics: her Chelsea boots may seem innocent enough, but she will persuade you to vote with her endless ethics bowl skills. You must carry a dual appreciation for wordplay *and* the AP Stylebook — after all, true love isn’t all puns and games.



ANGEL GUO, Arts & Leisure ♥

Killer whale obsessed girl looks for a smart, hip, city boy who can switch from sweetly watching K-Dramas with her one second to bossily telling her to start her work the next. Be warned — her heart already belongs to 100,000 corgis, so you’ll have to share her affection with these furry competitors. Plan a date to go watch the moon, but, wait, the moon isn’t real, or at least that’s what Angel’s beloved “science theory” videos tell her. Isn’t love a conspiracy theory anyway?

♥ **RICHARD CHEN, Sports**

With killer instincts from thousands of hours spent with COD Zombies and CS:GO, this Bostonian casually speaks Arabic and rambles about Vietnamese history. Obsessed with pronouncing Thai last names, he is not afraid to explore his roots in Asian culture. Any species who can help him eat leftovers from China King and can withstand the smashing of keyboards in matches is the right person for him. Also, make sure you’re prepared to listen to “Rubb’in’ Off the Paint,” by YBN Nahmir, on repeat.



LINDA PHAN, Layout ♥

This chaotic layout queen spends her two hours of sleep a night dreaming of the person who will accept her for her colorful, puffy jacket penchant. See her across campus, and you might wonder, “Is that a red tomato meandering across Mem field?” A self-proclaimed earth bender, she’s a confident and rock to many. Although she describes herself as a twin sister of a mushroom, never fear, in real life, she’s much more like a young flower, blooming into her mid-class naps and environmental rambles.

♥ **TIFFANY XIAO, Photography**

This ex-photography editor needs someone who can listen to sad music with her over shared audio. When she isn’t strumming a Dean Lewis tune, her poignant laugh can be heard across the dining hall. Must be able to endure long Broadway musical jam-out sessions, with an occasional Disney song. Even though she might look a bit distraught during her daily walk to the pool, no fear! This little puppy is all bark and no bite.



YUJIN KIM, Graphics ♥

Graphics editor with a strange attachment to the electric bass is on the lookout for a soulmate who echoes her belief in the magical nature of coincidences. A lover of comforting headphones that double as earmuffs during the winter, she longs for someone to support her through her endless nosebleeds. If you don’t mind pulling an all-nighter to complete a 10,000 piece puzzle, you’ve met your match.

THE FRINGE FESTIVAL TURNS TEN

By **Michael Korvyakov '23**
Associate Editor

The Fringe Festival, an annual student-run performance of skits, short films, spoken word, and stand up written and performed by Choate students, happened this Thursday, February 10 and Friday, February 11 in the Gelb Theater. This year marks the tenth anniversary of the festival.

The annual staging of student-written plays can be traced back many decades, though, to the 1990s. However, ten years ago, the Student Playwriting Festival was renamed to the “Fringe Festival” to encompass more genres and styles, such as short films, original music, spoken word or slam poetry, and later standup. The festival also became more reliant on student organization, as opposed to faculty.

“Every part of Fringe is done by students,” said Fringe Playwright Kenadi Waymire '22. “That’s what makes it so fun.” The change also led to the establishment of the Fringe Board, a group of students in charge of selecting submissions and organizing and running the production.

Over the course of the last ten years, “hundreds of student artists have developed their skills as



Behind-the-scenes of The Fringe Festival in the Gelb Theater.

writers, poets, musicians, comedians, designers, production technicians, directors, and performers in the Gelb as part of the Fringe,” said Ms. Kate Doak, the faculty adviser to the festival.

The name Fringe Festival harkens back to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, which began 75 years ago, when eight drama groups took advantage of the Edinburgh International Festival to showcase their styles of “alternative theater.” Choate embraced this idea, providing an alternative to the plays and musicals seasonally organized by the school. “It’s always been essential to

me that Fringe empowers students to create their own art at the same time that they support and develop each other’s work,” said Ms. Doak.

After an online performance last year, the Fringe Festival will return to a masked in-person performance. There will be five plays: *Demanding Demanders Make Demands of their Demanders*, written by Waymire and directed by Athena Liu '23; *Overboard!* written by Audrey Lim '23 and directed by Gavin Doak '22; *The Sleepover*, written by Mia Millares '22 and directed by Sophia Dubelde '23; *The Interrogation*, writ-



Photos courtesy of Kate Doak

ten by Margarita Blackwood '23 and directed by Tristin Hurst '24; and *Two Leaf*, written by Jordan Azzinaro '22 and directed by Gavin Doak '23. The actors were chosen through an audition process in late 2021. There will also be a short film called *Coffee*, written by Kaleigh O’Leary '22, and a few other acts that are yet to be finalized.

Waymire’s play, *Demanding Demanders Make Demands of their Demanders*, is a comedy about a lawyer, a doctor, and a veterinarian who set up shop in the same strip mall. Chaos ensues when three people find them-

selves needing help. Reflecting on writing the play, she said, “I just kind of worked on what I thought might be funny and finally settled on what I liked.”

In Lim’s play, the characters grapple with the question, “What would you jump overboard for?” and encourage the audience to ask themselves the same question. The process, Lim said, was tedious but enjoyable. “It’s revision after revision, draft after draft, until I think it’s ready.”

Lim’s favorite part of the process is watching the ideas come to life. “The best part is coming up

with the idea, because your mind goes crazy thinking of the ‘what ifs’ in regard to plot,” she said.

Hurst became a Fringe Festival director after being selected from an application in the fall. When asked why he applied, he said, “Writing and directing has always been a passion of mine.”

Having directed a film over the summer and getting ready to direct another one in the coming weeks, he was glad to have the opportunity to get more involved in the art. Thinking about the process he had gone through, Hurst said, “It’s been really fun so far. The actors were very committed from the beginning.” He continued, “I have a stronger sense of my vision as a director because of the process.”

Ms. Doak said, “This year we have definitely seen that students are so energized and joyful during moments they can be together as part of an in-person rehearsal process or audience, so that togetherness is what is making theater at Choate so special this year, despite the masks.”

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Student Directed Scenes Performed in the Gelb Theater



Photos by Sophia Kim/The Choate News

Fringe plays *My Body*, by Rachel Bublit (top), and *Cindy and Julie*, by Bruce Kane (bottom).

By **Alexis Lien '23**
Associate Editor

On January 28 and 30, Student Directed Scenes (SDS) — a production of short plays and scenes directed by members of the Honors Directing Class — took the stage for the annual performance in Gelb Theater. Performances were set to take place on both January 28 and 29, but anticipating a snow storm to hit Wallingford that Saturday, the second show was moved to Sunday, January 30.

The production opened with Kaleigh O’Leary '22 directing *Bite Me*, by Nina Mansfield, followed by Cristian Castro '22 directing *Bang for The Buck*, by Shari D. Frost; Oona Yaffe '23 directing the opening scene from *Glengarry Glen Ross*, by David Mamet; Gwen Madill '22 directing *Cindy and Julie*, by Bruce Kane; Mia Millares '22 directing *Domestic Violence*, by Frederick Stroppel; Jamie Houghton '22 directing *gam Wake Up Call*, by E.R. Schultz; Wylie Doak '22 directing *Post-its (Notes On a Marriage)*, by Winnie Holzman and Paul Dooley; and Lara Stone '22 directing *My Body*, by Rachel Bublit.

At the beginning of winter term, the class selected and discussed their scenes and held auditions for casting. With only several weeks to put together the production, the group worked grueling hours

outside of class to prepare for the showcase.

“The time commitment was rough. In the week leading up to the performance, we were in the Gelb from six to nine p.m. every single night, and I commuted in. The time constraint was also rough, because we had so much less time than we were supposed to,” Yaffe said.

Nevertheless, the process proved to be rewarding and eye-opening for the directors, as well as for the actors.

Noah McBride '23 acted in Yaffe’s *Glengarry Glen Ross*, which focused on the competition between a group of salesmen and tackles themes of masculinity and ambition. He said, “Working with a student director, the lovely Oona, was a new but exciting experience. I also really appreciate Oona pushing me as an actor and allowing me to explore a new, more morally gray character.”

SDS also provided an opportunity for directors to test their leadership skills. “I found that I’m a bit of an overbearing director. I have a very specific idea of what I want, and I wish I was better at just letting people act because it can be so great when people improvise, when people think things up on their own, and I need to step back a little bit on that,” said Yaffe. “I’m learning that as a director, what you’re looking for from actors is the ability to make choices, the ability to go beyond the

actual convention of what’s on the page. Nobody wants someone who is boring, and I don’t think that ever hit me the way it did when I was doing this.”

The community aspect to SDS also contributed to the success of the production and the positive experience the group had.

Ximena Castillo '24, who acted in Madill’s *Cindy and Julie*, a feminist take on of some traditional fairytales, said, “For the actors, it doesn’t feel like there is a lot of pressure. It just feels like a community, and we’re helping each other.”

Millares, who directed a darker piece called *Domestic Violence*, by Frederick Stroppel, about the downsides of a near-perfect spouse, said, “I think my favorite part is seeing everyone else’s shows because everyone else’s shows are so good, and I am so happy that I’m getting to look at what my classmates have been working on for the past month.”

Eager to witness the work of their peers, community members poured into Gelb, and many had to be turned away due to the limited capacity. The production was very well received. Cadence Secreto '23 said, “I could tell how much commitment and work went into the scene[s] from how excited the actors were to be out on stage performing.”

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GUEST MUSICIANS HELP TRAIN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

By **Erin Li '24**
Reporter

Last Wednesday, musicians of the Choate Symphony Orchestra were greeted with new faces when they stepped onto the stage for rehearsal. These new faces were professional musicians, there to work with members of the Symphony Orchestra in smaller sectionals every Wednesday, during the typical full orchestra rehearsal slot. For the next four weeks, Dr. Matthew Russo, a brass musician from the Hartt School of Music, and Dr. Alex Casimiro, a percussionist from the University of New Haven, among others, will be joining Choate musicians to impart their years of knowledge of music; the other two sections — strings and woodwind — will be led by Mr. Gene Wie, the Instrumental Ensembles Director, and Mr. Matt McLean, the Music Program Head and director of Wind Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble.

Mr. Wie added these additional sectional sessions with the goal of “students getting new perspectives on how their instrument functions,” he said. In addition, by inviting professional musicians specialized in each section, he hopes to focus on the individual needs of each instrument rather than the big picture that can be improved in rehearsals with the full orchestra. “It’s a chance to ask questions that can’t be answered in

full orchestra because they are specialized to their particular instrument,” Mr. Wie said.

He chose this time of the school year because he already has a comprehensive idea of how each section can be improved. Furthermore, the sessions are deliberately in a range of four weeks so students will “develop a working relationship with the musicians and see what progress is being made.”

Dr. Russo said the focus of their first session was “starting together and looking at each other while we play and focusing our ears to the lead parts” with the goal of “encouraging that collaborative spirit and developing a unified brass section sound by moving and breathing together.”

He praised the Choate brass section for their receptiveness and eagerness to learn new skills. Dr. Russo has enjoyed working with the brass section. “I especially appreciate their warm welcome to me as a new member of the Choate faculty,” he said.

Juliet Ainsley '22, a trumpet player and a member of the brass section, had a wonderful experience with Dr. Russo. She was amazed by the “bolder, brighter, and more beautiful sound,” after just a few notes from Dr. Russo. She also appreciated the opportunity for the brass section to spend the entire rehearsal focused on playing. Often, full orchestra rehearsals mean that some sections have

to sit out for prolonged periods of time. Ainsley added that “the individualized attention and feedback was extremely beneficial for improving the tone of the entire brass section.”

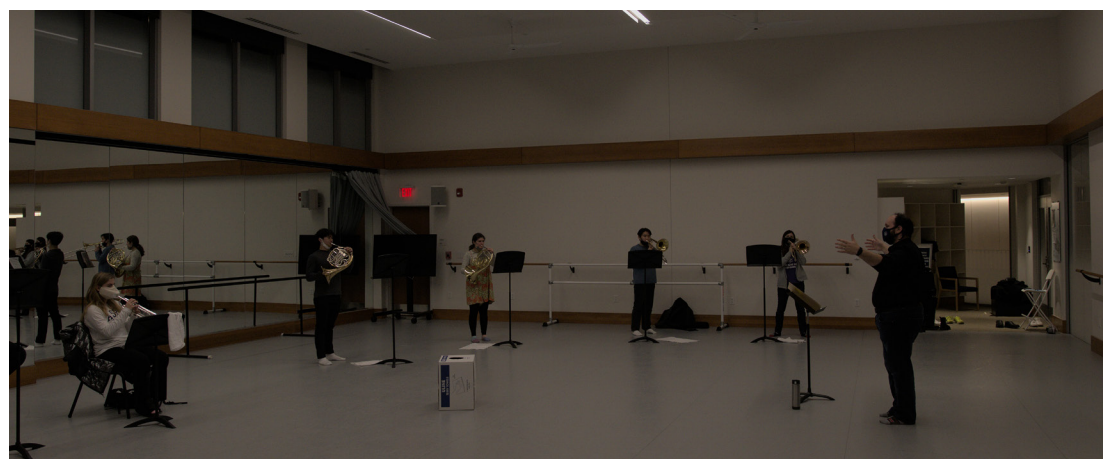
Gavin Boudreau '24, a clarinet player and member of the woodwind section, also appreciated the chance to play with woodwinds for the entirety of rehearsal. He said, “Due to the smaller number of people and because we generally play together, there is more of an opportunity to actually play.”

In the percussion room, Lauren Kee '24, Stanley Cho '25, and Sophia Kim '24 worked with Dr. Casimiro. Kim valued the sectional and individualized attention. She said, “In the sectional practice, Lauren, Stan, and I were able to focus only on our percussion parts of the pieces and spend time practicing our parts.”

Cho echoed this sentiment as he enjoyed having a professional percussionist and thought the session was helpful in “allowing the percussionists to learn about how to play specific instruments in an effective and efficient manner.”

The Choate music faculty and the student musicians say they look forward to the next four weeks and seeing what improvements they can make with the guest teachers’ instruction.

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Photos by Garrett Curtis/The Choate News

Symphony Orchestra students practicing with Dr. Matthew Russo (top) and Dr. Alex Casimiro.



FIELD REPORT

Choate Winter Record
66 - 58 - 4

Varsity Games

Boys' Basketball (8-6)
vs. Trinity-Pawling, 47-65

Girls' Basketball (10-2)
vs. Taft, 64-30

Girls' Ice Hockey (8-5-3)
vs. Northfield Mt. Hermon, 5-1

Boys' Ice Hockey (5-10-1)
vs. Hotchkiss, 3-2

Boys' Squash (7-6)
vs. Salisbury, 7-0

Girls' Squash (7-3)
vs. Kent, 6-1

Wrestling (0-5)
vs. Trinity-Pawling

J.V. Games

Girls' Ice Hockey (1-0)
vs. Pomfret, 6-3

Boys' Ice Hockey (2-5)
vs. Loomis, 6-2

Girls' Basketball (5-3)
vs. Taft, 34-13

Boys' Basketball (2-6)
vs. Trinity-Pawling, 30-44

Girls' Squash (3-2)
vs. Kingswood-Oxford, 8-0

Boys' Squash (9-1)
vs. Salisbury 8-1

Thirds Games

Girls' Squash (2-1)
vs. Taft, 7-0

Boys' Squash (2-1)
vs. Westminster, 6-1

Boys' Basketball (7-1)
vs. Taft, 51-48

Girls' Basketball (0-2)
vs. Suffield, 12-32

COACH PROFILE

Introducing Mr. López — Archery Coach and Enthusiast

By **Bryant Figueroa '23**
Reporter

Life can lead us into beautiful experiences if we give something new a shot — for Choate Archery team's head coach, Mr. Sergio López, that shot came out of a bow and arrow. Although Mr. López, who has taught Spanish at Choate for three years, was always interested in trying out archery, he never got the chance before coming to Choate, as the sport requires expensive equipment and a large open space.

Choate provides students the opportunity to participate in this sport that “teaches you about concentration and how to deal with your anxieties, how to focus on the target and not let one bad shot affect your next few,” elaborated Mr. López.

“As soon as I began working here, I contacted the head coach at the time, Mr. Marq Tisdale, and began working with him as assistant coach for the program,” Mr. López recalled. After improving his skills with the bow under Coach Tisdale for a short while, Mr. López stepped in as head coach during the 2020-2021 academic year. This year, Choate's archery team returned to playing against other clubs; however, due to the surge



Photo by Ava Persaud / The Choate News

Mr. Sergio López poses for a photo in front of Steele Hall.

of Omicron cases this winter, the archery team was unable to compete until Wednesday, January 26, 2022 — its first meet in two years. With preparation and renewed energy, Mr. López was able to lead the Boars to a victory.

Although Mr. López and the archery team are expected to have

only one other meet this year due to Covid-19, he is still overjoyed to be coaching this diverse group of students. “The athletes, the students we have on our team — they are the best part about the coaching experience. They are a very fun group of kids to work with,” Mr. López said. Drawing on the

variation in experience and skill level within the co-ed team, the athletes “are all fun, and so we have a really good time together.” Unfortunately, the team has had to make numerous cuts due to limitations influenced by the size of the Maguire Gym, where the archery team practices. “When

you are practicing, you are using 80 percent of the space to actually shoot, and so it is unfortunate that we can't physically have a bigger team due to the size.”

Mr. López has left a positive impression on the team. Archery Co-captain Elton Zheng '22 noted, “[Mr. López] is always supportive and encouraging, especially with the less experienced players.” Zheng, who takes Spanish at Choate, noted that he also sometimes practices his Spanish speaking skills with Mr. López during practice. “A few of [us] are really looking forward to [Mr. López] taking us to nationals soon.”

Mr. López's interest in coaching archery may not have been rooted in childhood or previous experiences of playing the sport, but it has been a positive experience for him “Three years ago, when I first came to Choate was the first time I actually shot an arrow,” he said. Mr. López has come a long way in his own improvement of the sport and recommends that students take advantage of this unique opportunity because that is what Choate is all about: fostering old passions and discovering new ones along the way.

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PLAYER PROFILE

NATHANIEL ROGERS, FLIPPIN' AMAZING



Photo courtesy of Nathaniel Rogers

Nathaniel Rogers '23 performs on the parallel bars.

By **Rajeev Roy '23**
Reporter

Beyond the courts, fields, and rinks of Choate's campus, some athletes find ways to succeed in sports that the School does not offer. One such athlete is Nathaniel Rogers '23, a highly accomplished gymnast and nationals qualifier.

“Like a lot of other kids, my parents signed me up for a lot of [sports] classes at a local gym,” Rogers explained. He picked up gymnastics at the age of three and has not stopped since. “I was always interested in learning new things, and so I just got into it and never really got out of it.” Rogers, a day student, picked up the sport at the Connecticut Gymnastics Academy in Wallingford. He then started his official training at American Gymnastics for six years and now trains at New Era Gymnastics, where he is a level 9 gymnast, the second highest level in the USA Gymnastics Junior Olympics Program.

For Rogers, being a gymnast is about more than just prowess on

the parallel bars or agility while in the air: “It is a good way to manage my mental and emotional health and give me people to talk to.” He mentioned that the club he trains with allows him to develop relationships with people outside of the Choate community whom he can trust and communicate with.

Logistically, this intense year-round training required Rogers to make some special arrangements with the Choate administration. “I use gymnastics to satisfy my [sports] requirement all three terms of the year,” he explained. “Every weekday evening, I go to Hamden [to] practice and train for a few hours.” Rogers estimates that training alone takes up approximately 18 hours of his week. “With all that practice though, you get a lot of tangible improvements.” On the weekends, Rogers likes to use Choate's fitness center to do gymnastics-related strength and conditioning.

Like many athletes, part of Rogers' gymnastics career was derailed due to Covid-19. Luckily, during that time, he was able to

participate in virtual meets where gymnasts set up cameras to record their movements on film. He noted that now the season is essentially back to normal.

Beyond high school, Rogers hopes to compete in gymnastics at the collegiate level. However, he noted the challenges of recruiting: “Especially on the men's side, opportunities for collegiate gymnastics are limited. There are only about a dozen NCAA mens' gymnastics programs in the country, which are [all] hugely selective.” Yet, there is also another conference for mens' gymnastics called GYMACT, which some colleges are part of.

Throughout his career, Rogers has been awarded multiple Connecticut State Championship titles and has qualified for the National Championship. Only time will tell how much he will achieve as he positions himself to dive headfirst into his next competition.

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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME COURT

By **Meredith Syms '23**
Associate Editor

Take your pick: you can play a sports game on your home field, court, or rink with a wave of fans cheering your name — or, you can play at an unfamiliar venue without any fans. For many Choate athletes, the choice is obvious.

There are many factors that influence the outcomes of athletic competitions. Of course, skill is a must, but having a passionate fan base can shift momentum and put pressure on opposition teams. Especially in close games, chants and excitement from fans can influence on the energy of the players and the crowd — sometimes it's the difference between a win or a loss.

Choate Varsity Hockey player Thomas Plamondon '23 said, “When playing in the REM [Remsen Arena] we obviously feel more comfortable since we practice in the space everyday.” In contrast, he says, “Playing on foreign ice especially when the school has a passionate fan base can be challenging but also motivating at the same time.”

After an away game, Boys' Varsity Soccer player Oliver Scott '22 noted, “It's super hard to score a penalty kick when you have a whole student section booing you.” Teammate Oscar Hellansvik '22 agreed, “It's like a mind game, at times.”

Fans expressed similar sentiments. For example, when Choate students traveled to rival Deerfield Academy in celebration of Deerfield Day, many students noted the energy of both student sections. Chloe Crowell '25, who attended Deerfield Day as a fan, reflected on this point stating, “As fans we felt eager to show our support but also it was hard because we were the visitors.”

Yet, home games don't always provide an advantage. For example, several faculty members had to keep fans from stepping onto the court and incurring a technical foul for Choate during the Boys' Varsity Basketball Game against Loomis in early January. “The energy from the crowd was unbelievable as the teachers withheld students from stepping onto the court,” noted Lex Njomin '23, who was at the game. “On the play we finally took the lead, the teachers themselves were nearly pushed onto the court.”

Nonetheless, in most cases, the upper hand of playing at home outweighs potential disadvantages. Oftentimes, the home court lead is often only associated with athletes but the reality is that being home or away impacts everyone — fans, coaches, and athletes. Plamondon said, “At the end of the day we want to win and playing at home is sometimes the extra factor we need in order to come out on top.”

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Students celebrate after Choate scores on Deerfield Day 2021.