



## ASSOCIATE HEAD OF SCHOOL KATHLEEN WALLACE TO RETIRE

By **Alexis Lien '23**  
Staff Reporter

After 39 years at Choate, Associate Head of School Ms. Kathleen Wallace will retire at the end of the school year. From teaching to coaching to advising, Ms. Wallace has served in many roles in her time at the School. Over the years, she has been the Dean of Academic Affairs, Science Department Head, a science and French teacher, a form dean, and a coach to both field hockey and basketball. She was appointed to what is now known as the Associate Head of School in 2008.

She has played a role in the creation of multiple signature programs, including the Science Research Program (SRP), the Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies (AMES) signature academic program, and the Environmental Immersion Program (EIP) at the Kohler Environmental Center (KEC).

Ms. Wallace said, "It felt really good being impactful, making positive changes on the academic program at Choate, in a way that still exists today and sets an example for other institutions."

In recent years, Ms. Wallace has also served as the Choate community's primary contact for reports of sexual misconduct.

Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis said that it "takes a very

special person to make a safe place for people who have lost trust and faith in this school." He added, "I don't know that anyone will ever know how much she did in that capacity and how much we owe her, as an institution, for that work."

Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 commended Ms. Wallace's composure and her indefatigable work ethic. "She has been a source of consistency and reliability in all the roles she has served," he said. "As the school pivoted in several directions, she has been a steady force."

Ms. Wallace has long balanced her administrative duties with those in the classroom. If she isn't leading dissections in her anatomy classes, she might be advising day students or students living at the KEC.

Alua Tulbassova '21, who studied anatomy and physiology with Ms. Wallace during the 2019-2020 school year, said, "She was super encouraging in terms of speaking up even if you're not one hundred percent sure of the answer, and I think it helped me in how I approached all my other classes." She went on, "I just genuinely felt like she cared."

Many former students declared her their role model.

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Ms. Kathleen Wallace has served in multiple roles throughout her 39 years at Choate.



Photo courtesy of the Choate Archives

## SCHOOL TURNS HOPEFUL EYE TO SPRING TERM

By **Ryan Kim '23**  
Reporter

With the beginning of spring term, March 22, quickly approaching, the School's administration has been working to formulate a plan for return that mimics as closely as possible the pre-pandemic Choate experience while ensuring the safety of the community.

According to Medical Director Dr. Miriam Cohen, the spring term will likely be similar to this school year's fall and winter terms, with mitigation strategies such as masking, social distancing, and handwashing in place, but more specific guidelines will depend on the spring Covid-19 statistics and trends in Connecticut. After a mandatory quarantine period, students will resume the same freedoms in the winter term. For instance, after two weeks of negative testing on campus, students within the same family unit will be allowed to enter each other's dorm rooms without masks, and more students will be allowed in rooms at the same time. In addition, day students will again be allowed to commute to campus from their homes but will be restricted from entering the dorms.

Dr. Cohen said that although Choate staff might start receiving vaccinations sometime in March, the timeline for students may differ depending on their home state and the state of Connecticut. Dr. Cohen has communicated with the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH) regarding the possibility of giving vaccines on campus, but the vaccine supply from CT DPH remains uncertain. Once vaccinations are approved, the Health Center may be able to administer vaccines for students in Connecticut.

As the School sought a balance between campus safety and student life, many traditions this year, such as Holiday Ball and First Hurrah, have moved to a completely virtual format over Zoom. The School, however, is determined to ensure that the traditions of senior spring occur in some physical form for the Class of 2021. Dr. Cohen said that, as long as activities can be held safely and in accordance with Choate Covid-19 guidelines, the usual senior-spring rites like Last Hurrah, Garden Party, Senior Dance Lessons, and Commencement will occur.

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## Senior Sledding Tradition Resumes After Three Balmy Years



Photo courtesy of Dey Wallace McKinstry

Seniors participated in senior sledding to celebrate 100 days till graduation.

By **Renee Jiang '22**  
Associate Editor

On Friday, February 19, seniors convened near Gunpowder Creek for the first senior sledding event since 2018. Due to a lack of snow, the senior sledding tradition was paused for the past two years. However, the consistent, heavy snow experienced these past few weeks have allowed sixth-form deans Ms. Julia Brown '83 and Ms. Mb Duckett Ireland to bring back the tradition.

This year's event differed from previous years because of health restrictions from Cho-

ate's Safe and Sounder plan. Seniors learning remotely were also unable to participate.

According to Ms. Brown, "SAGE is not doing any catering so we ordered local pizza and passed that out ourselves with rubber gloves on, of course. Also, we only handed out 50 sleds at a time so there would not be too much of a backlog on the top of the hill."

In a comprehensive set of rules written by Ms. Duckett Ireland, students had to remain six feet apart at all times, only one person was allowed on each sled, and no sled chains were permitted.

Despite the strict safety guidelines, students relished the

opportunity to be outdoors and enjoy the snow as a collective senior class on the 100th day before graduation. "So many seniors are sad that we don't get to participate in the many school traditions and senior privileges, so it was really great to have this tradition upheld this year," said Nneoma Iloeje '21.

Given the new 10:00 p.m. curfew for the winter term, seniors were also given the privilege of extended curfew until 10:40 p.m. After a night of sledding in the cold winter air, seniors were able to enjoy hot pizza to finish off the event. Anna Bonem '21 said, "I enjoyed play-



Photo courtesy of Sabrina Kim

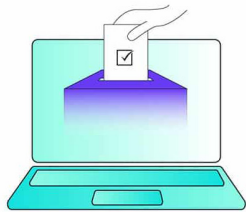
The event took place behind the Girls' JV Soccer field.

ing around in the snow with my friends while surrounded by music and laughter. This was the first time most of the senior class got together in one specific time slot, so it was definitely a memorable experience."

Ms. Brown echoed this sentiment. "As deans, it was really wonderful to be able to mix with the students and to see them all enjoying each other and the snow. The campus looked beautiful. Six party-size pizzas were demolished in no time! Almost all of the six formers on campus attended."

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## GREEN CUP CHALLENGE ADAPTS TO VIRTUAL SETTING

By **Heidi Li '23**  
Reporter

The Conservation Proctors (C-Proctors) kicked off their 15th annual energy conservation challenge, the Green Cup Challenge, on Monday, February 15. Like many events this year, the 2021 Green Cup Challenge has undergone changes to accommodate Covid-19 restrictions. Rather than hosting the normal four-week challenge, the group compressed the event into a single week that ended on Monday, February 22.

In past years, each dorm has created a Green Cup video emphasizing, often in a humorous way, the importance of conserving energy and ways to do so. In an effort to win prizes and be featured on the C-Proctors' social media, dorms would rally together in their common room or go into students' rooms to film various clips such as flipping the lights off or turning the heat down. With Covid-19 restrictions, however, dorms had to get creative. Library, for example, produced a video in the mode of the reality-TV show "The Bachelor" with individual interviews to maintain social distancing guidelines.

Additionally, to provide alternatives to a dorm video, the C-Proctors encouraged dorms to create graphics and artwork to show in their videos. Archbold constructed a graphic featuring Angry Birds yelling at people practicing unsustainable habits.

Sofia Muñoz '23, a C-Proctor and a judge for the video challenge winner, said, "We decide based on creativity, humor, and overall education of the topic."



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

Following the end of the Green Cup Challenge week, the dorms that reduced their energy consumption will win a mug night.

In addition to working on the Green Cup Challenge, C-Proctors have continued other projects throughout the year. The group moved their meetings to Zoom, with subcommittees working in different breakout rooms. Muñoz said, "For the most part, technology makes it easier to plan meetings and share notes to plan for C-Proctor events." She continued, "The meetings held in Zoom format are pretty much seamless. It's been a great experience getting to work with different head C-Proctors and helping educate the community, despite it being virtual."

The C-Proctors have also been uploading information to their social media platforms, especially the Choate C-Proctor Instagram (@choatecproctors). According to Muñoz, the media subgroup "has been striving hard to make engaging and simple posts that promote

sustainability and new information to interested viewers."

Furthermore, the C-Proctors shifted their focus to virtual events and dorm activities. One such event was dorm bingo, which aimed to educate dorm members on waste management during quarantine. The C-Proctors also produced a video showing students what goes into recycling, compost, and trash.

In the fall, the C-Proctor outreach group was even able to host an in-person event for faculty children to teach the basics of sustainability. The workshop centered on waste management and gave children an opportunity to plant seeds in a used plastic container.

The C-Proctors plan to continue to host dorm challenges and other events. Looking to the spring term, the annual Hydro Cup Challenge will be aimed at educating community members on water conservation.

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## Community Gathers for Second Conversation on Pan-Asian Identity

By **Tiffany Xiao '23**  
Reporter

On February 19, the School came together over Zoom for a Community Conversation on Pan-Asian identity. Students and faculty were required to attend the event.

The topics discussed included questions about whether Pan-Asian-identifying members of the community have experienced increased anti-Asian and xenophobia after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic; whether asking about people's names in their native language is offensive; and why conversations about Asian identity often center on East Asian ethnicities.

Many students and faculty expressed positive feelings about the event. Rhea Shah '22 thought the conversation provided a helpful reminder that "Asia is a continent, and all Asians are not the same."

The event follows a February 3 Community Conversation on the same topic, although attendance at the first event was optional, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the Choate com-

munity. Attendance to conversations in the fall, including ones on Black and queer identity, had been required. The lack of a similar stipulation for the February 3 event felt like a microaggression to many members of Choate's Pan-Asian community.

"It rubbed me the wrong way," said Hugo Chung '22. "I think when the first one wasn't required, it sent a certain message to the Asian community at Choate. It felt a little contrived that the second one was happening now."

To Sofia Galarza '23, the chain of events made it feel all the more important for the School to continue facilitating Community Conversations. She said, "The reason we have conversations like this, because people unknowingly do things that are offensive and that hurt others."

Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers has said that scheduling the first conversation so that it did not overlap with other school events — and so that all students and faculty could attend it — was "immensely challenging."

Dr. Myers said that she "completely understood" the pain some community members felt by the

guidelines of the first event, adding, "It was hard personally to hear that some took it as me being anti-Asian or not fully supportive of all identities in our community." She promised "to uplift shared conversations and understanding of all identities" on campus.

Still, Dr. Myers said, not all future Community Conversations will be mandatory, especially when they begin to occur in person. "When I designed this program, it was designed to take place in person," she said. Anonymously asking and answering questions in real time is not only logistically difficult but fraught with emotional risk. "I feel it would be harmful to force people who are being vulnerable and honest in a space to have to look around at people who would rather be anywhere but in that space," she said.

Upcoming Community Conversations, which students and faculty will be required to attend, include one in March to be centered on Jewish identity and another in May focusing on mental health.

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## WALLACE ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

*Continued from Page 1*

Aarthi Katakam '21 said, "Ms. Wallace's anatomy class was the best class I've taken at Choate." She recalled an evening chatting casually with Ms. Wallace at the KEC. "She really listened to my thoughts about a future career in lab science, and she was very encouraging," Katakam said. "Something I lacked growing up in elementary and middle

school was female STEM teachers and having Ms. Wallace be such an advocate for women in STEM and kids in STEM was really nice."

As Ms. Wallace prepares to bid farewell to Choate, she says she will miss the students who have shown incredible dedication to their studies and the faculty and staff who have displayed tremendous excitement for their work on campus. Ms.

Wallace says that she plans to take some time away from the business of boarding school life to relax with her family, catch up on reading, and pick up soccer again.

"I love Choate, and I love working here," she said. "I'll miss the place, but I'm looking forward to what comes next."

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## ABBY LU ELECTED STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

By **Yoyo Zhang '24**  
Reporter

On February 8, Choate held its first-ever fully virtual Student Council election. In previous years, students not only listened to candidates' speeches in-person in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) or Colony Hall, but they also filled out their ballots in the dining hall. This year, however, both parts of the election procedure were conducted online to accommodate remote learners and social distancing guidelines. Following the 36-hour voting period, Abby Lu '22 and Gavin Doak '22 were elected President and Vice-President, respectively.

Despite the challenges posed by virtual voting, there were some benefits that came with the new format. "Online voting resulted in a higher turnout rate because it's more convenient," said Lu. "People don't have to walk to the dining hall anymore."

Also, for some candidates, sending in a prerecorded video was less nerve-racking than standing behind a lectern in front of the student body. "Public speaking can be intimidating for many," Lu said. "Hopefully, that video aspect took away the intimidation."

For Lu, however, interacting with the crowd and feeding off its energy inspires her public speaking. Likewise, Ula Lucas '21, the current Student Body President, found it "quite awkward" to record her speeches throughout the year because there was no way to tell how the audience was receiving the content.

To Mino Sun '22 found this year's voting experience to be

very different from last year's. A "virtual format provides candidates more options to showcase their skills and goals, but in-person presentations can be more engaging with the voters," he said.

The election's virtual format also led to some technical issues; soon-to-be-graduating seniors, who traditionally do not vote in student council elections, were able to cast votes. "The link was sent out to all Choate students, and some people reported voting more than once," said Lucas. "However, in the final count, every student only received up to one vote per candidate, and seniors' votes were not counted."

Some members of the community believe that seniors should always be allowed to vote in the election for president and vice president. "Having seniors as part of the process makes it more objective and less of a popularity contest," said Hannah McMurtrie '21.

On the other hand, Lu remained skeptical that seniors' would vote sincerely in the election determining leadership for the following year. She said, "Since the result has no effect on the seniors, they might turn to cast joke ballots that do not benefit the community."

Lucas predicted, "Since we have the data this year to see how the senior class voted, it might be really interesting to see if our votes would have swayed the results in a significant manner. Depending on how that data ends up looking, there might be a stronger case for giving seniors the right to vote."

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## Head of Student and Academic Life Position to Replace Associate Head of School

By **Sabrina Wang '23**  
Staff Reporter

With the announcement of Associate Head of School Ms. Kathleen Wallace's retirement, Choate has created a new role, the Head of Student and Academic Life, to replace the Associate Head of School position.

The Head of Student and Academic Life will form a bridge between the administration and students. "Administrators will have the autonomy that we have always had and at the same time have a direct point of contact who is going to be given the agency to make decisions for the best interest of the School," said Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00.

The primary role of the new position will be to work with the

Dean of Students, the Dean of Faculty, the Director of Equity and Inclusion, and the Director of College Counseling, while Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis connects with outside groups such as parents, alumni, and trustees. One of the future Head of Student and Academic Life's main goals will be to increase the speed with which the School responds to campus issues, particularly when Dr. Curtis is traveling.

The search for candidates to fill the new position has already begun. A search committee composed of Dr. Curtis, Mr. Velez, Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers, and HPRSS teacher Ms. Tiffany Rivera, as well as members of the Board of Trustees, will meet prior to spring break. Two weeks ago,

faculty and staff were given the opportunity to share feedback on the new position and the search process with Dr. Curtis.

The committee will work with an outside executive search firm, Storbeck Search. "Storbeck does a lot of the digging, recruiting, and outreach to a number of different places to help find the candidate you want," said Dr. Myers.

The administration chose Storbeck Search for its reputation for identifying a diverse pool of candidates in their searches. "They have a proven track record if you look at the statistical analysis of the number of BIPOC candidates that they put forward and their hiring percentages," said Mr. Velez. Together, Storbeck and

the search committee will write a job description and identify viable candidates.

"I'm hoping we find someone who has commitment to the same values we've established as an institution. Someone [who], when going through the process, develops a level of love and appreciation for the School and is ready to work to make positive change," said Mr. Velez. "They're coming into the role on the front end of a strategic plan, so hopefully they will bring an open-mindedness to the role and offer support in a way that will enhance the overall experience of students, faculty, and staff."

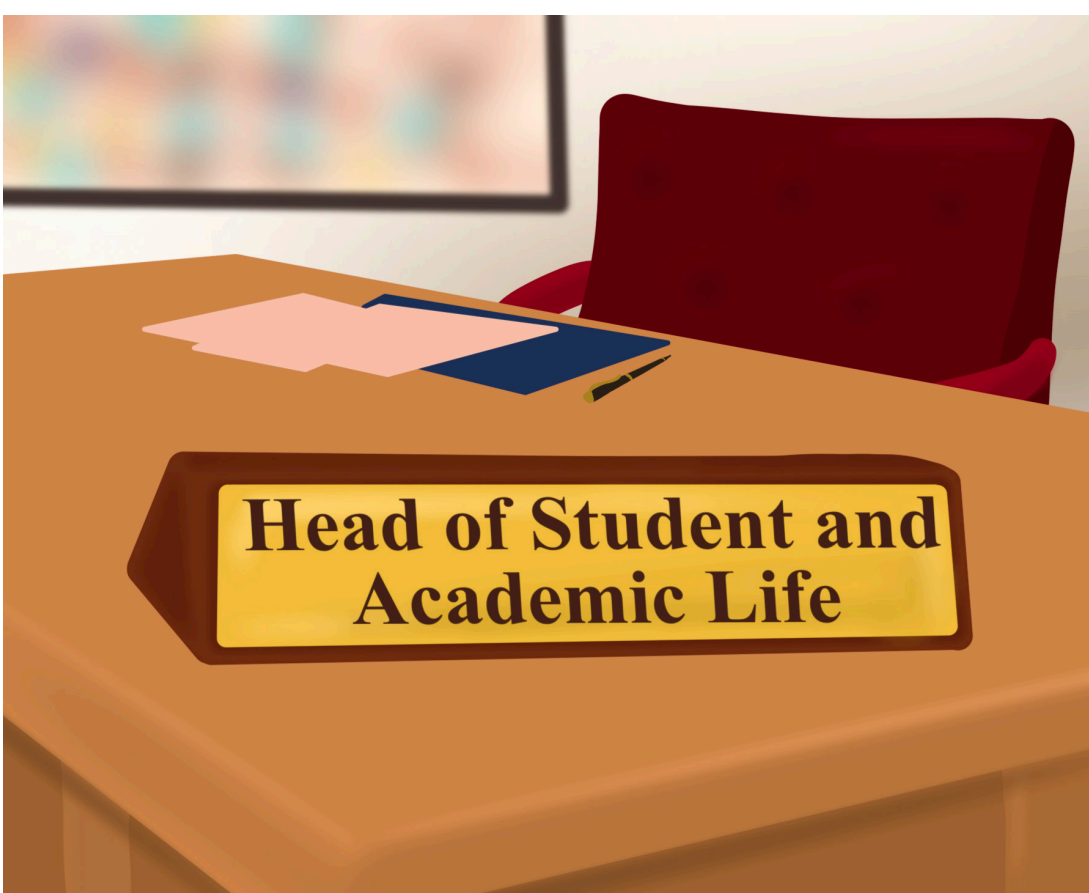
Dr. Myers added, "You have to have someone with quality leadership skills and a confidence in decision making. You want someone who has trust in themselves and values collaboration, who is a strong leader but also a flexible leader."

Because the search for Head of Student and Academic Life will not conclude until the fall of 2021, Dean of Faculty Ms. Katie Levesque will serve as the interim Head of Student and Academic Life for the next school year. An interim Dean of Faculty to temporarily replace Ms. Levesque has not yet been named.

"I'm excited to learn some new things, do some new things, and continue to contribute to Choate," said Ms. Levesque.

Ms. Levesque does not yet have specific goals for next year. She said, "We are in a strategic planning process, and I will be taking direction from the strategic priorities that the School has set."

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Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News



## HUMANS OF WALLINGFORD

By **Adrienne Chacón '22, Linda Phan '22, and Eva Li '24**  
Associate Editor, Associate Editor, and Reporter

Over the past few decades, Wallingford has evolved from a rural farm town into a home for many small, family-owned businesses. From barbers and flower shops to restaurants and breweries, Wallingford is now recognized by local residents for its wide range of unique establishments, all of which contribute to a tight-knit community. Behind the doors of each small business lies a story of how ordinary people transformed their passions into livelihoods.

### BEAUMONT FARMS



Photo by Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn/The Choate News

*Mr. Billy Beaumont is the current owner of Beaumont Farms, a family-run business with a vegetable and dairy farm, an on-site farmer's market, and multiple greenhouses. The farm is a well-established Wallingford business, supplying the community with produce since 1899.*

"This farm has always been here, but my great-grandfather also came to it from the Beaumont Dairy Farm from the other side of town, [which] had been started in the 1870s. All farming has got its moments — either too cold, too warm, perfect weather, you never know. We lost most of our greenhouses to Hurricane Sandy in 2013; you never know what's going to be your obstacle of the year.

Me taking over the farm was just one of those things. My real

trade is tractor repair. While other kids are riding bikes, you're riding a tractor in this family. Since it is a family business, I took over the farm when my father passed away and have run it ever since. We're not sure where the farm is going from here, but we're planning on farming as long as we can.

Something I started doing was Christmas displays. The Christmas events have gone on for the last 16 or 17 years. It started with Santa driving

the truck with the reindeer on it. Now we've branched out into pretty big displays on top of the truck. Last year was a Charlie Brown Christmas. We've been doing 'em all, and we're already working on next year. It's the public that makes me the happiest: the smiling faces, little kids going out to get their first flower to plant, or people having the best time at the Christmas corner. Seeing people having a good time is my biggest joy."

### NEW ENGLAND CIDER COMPANY

*Mr. Miguel Galarraga is the owner of New England Cider Company — a Wallingford brewery, bar, and tasting room that sells beer and hard cider to bars, restaurants, and package stores throughout Connecticut.*



Photo courtesy of @NewEnglandCider on Twitter

"My partner at the time and I started making beer first. Then, someone gave us an idea that we could make hard cider with apples. On a homebrew scale, we didn't want to spend a lot of money on equipment, so this seemed like a feasible route to not spend a ton of money; it just kind of spiraled into what it is now.

There was a lot that we learned in the beginning. We took some courses because neither myself nor my partner at the time had a business degree — we were both mechanics. What drove my interest in business ownership was that I always wanted to do something else. Ten years ago, it might

not have been cider, but I was definitely looking at getting out of being a mechanic. We took some business classes at the University of Hartford and fine-tuned our cider skills.

We started off making cider that we were really happy with and that we really enjoyed drinking. It was dry, more like wine or champagne-style cider. Customers weren't so crazy about it — they wanted something a

little more apple-y, a little more sweet. So, we changed some of our formulas to suit our customers' needs. We're always evolving and trying to change with the demand that's being placed on us.

There's ups and downs to being a small business. In this industry, having customers come in and enjoy the product that you're making has definitely been the most rewarding part about this business."

### WORDS ON WOOD



Photo courtesy of Words on Wood

"Words on Wood actually started by accident. In 2016, when my daughter moved to China to teach English for a year, I was just super sad and missed her, so I decided that I wanted to do something to keep me busy. After I made a wood sign for another girl who was also away, I fell in love with the process. I created more signs, and people's friends eventually started asking to buy them. Months later, we had a little sign party at somebody's house, and the very next day, I had six parties booked!

Sometimes people come in and buy signs; you can or-

der something custom-made, or you can make something by yourself at the studio. Now, due to the pandemic, we also offer DIY kits that people can buy and make themselves at home. As a former teacher, I have the skills to be able to instruct customers step-by-step through the process. Apart from the many parties that we've hosted, the fundraisers have always meant so much to me. I love them because it's always so wonderful to have people come in to have fun and enjoy the process, but then we get to write a big check to the charity organization, and that's very, very rewarding.

It's very much a family business. My daughter works as our creative director, and my husband is her carpenter. We live in Wallingford, and we are very much rooted in our community. Every year, we always love to do things to give back. We participate in all the town-wide events, including the holiday stroll. We hire Santa to come in every year, and we do free photos, giveaways, and food and drinks. We're always very involved, and even though we now have parties in other states and places, and hope to keep growing, we love being here in Wallingford. We love our town."

### THE TIMEKEEPER

*Repairing everything from pendulum clocks to wristwatches to antique music boxes, The Timekeeper has attracted customers from around the world. The shop's founder and owner, Mr. Garry Craig, has dedicated 36 years to his fascinating trade.*



Photo courtesy of Nick Westcott

"I started off as a collector of antique clocks — probably 35 or 36 years ago. I majored in mechanical engineering in college, and I worked for Alcoa as a mechanical engineer for about five years. Then, somewhere in the back of my mind, something made me want to figure out what makes these old antique clocks work. What makes them keep running and shining?

I ended up buying my first antique clock probably 36 years ago, and it didn't work. So, I cleaned and serviced it, and now it's been running nicely ever since. It kind of launched a new career for me. You have to be a real problem solver and

an open-minded thinker in this profession. Even though I've been doing this for nearly 36 years, every great once in a while, I run into something new that I've never encountered. It's a lot of commitment, a lot of tenacity. There's been many times when I lay in bed thinking about a tiny piece, and then all of a sudden, a brainstorm comes to me. When I go into the shop the next day, I try it, and it works!

I've also been a dues-paying member of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors

for 24 or 25 years now, and I keep receiving a lot of reference materials and literature from them every other month, and I keep all of it as a resource library. I've also been getting people sending and mailing me clocks and watches all over the world and the country — like California, Massachusetts, Michigan. A lot of it is the personal satisfaction I get from my customers when they pick up the timepiece that hasn't run for a lot of years."

### DREISSEN ELECTRIC

*Mr. Gary Dreissen learned the electric trade from his father, and now he has worked as an electrician for the past 35 years. He and his crew answer house calls, fix power outages, and do other repair work.*

"My father was an electrician, so after school, I used to work on different jobs with him as I grew up. As I got older, I went to trade school at Wilcox Tech in Meriden and went through the apprentice program. I decided I liked electrical work after I went to trade school, so I went on my own and started my company around 1985. I've been in business for about 35 years serving the Wallingford area.

Our type of work is a lot of service work. Something breaks, you call me, we come out, we diagnose it, and we fix the problem. Running a business and being the owner is rewarding in the sense that

it's your name, your business, but it's also a responsibility. If you're an employee, you show up nine to five, you go home — you don't get called in the middle of the night for a service call or on the weekends. That's the difference between working for someone and being the owner.

Things have also evolved a lot better for communication between me and my employees; years ago, you'd have to speak to a part supplier in the morning on their home phone because they didn't have a work phone. Even a customer would be calling you on a home answering machine, so it took a lot longer. Nowadays, with phones and the internet, it's a lot easier.

er. It cuts down on lost time for when you're doing a job.

Electrical work does change with the different national and electrical codes. We go to school for that and get updated every year — who knows what the new product ten years from now is gonna be? I've been fortunate over the years that most of my business is within a ten mile radius of Wallingford. I stay local a lot because we have enough service and business work right in this area.

For the work we do, our name's on the door for workmanship, so we feel responsible. If things don't get done, we have to finish them and show up on time, because it's our neck out there."

### TATA'S RESTAURANT

*Tata's Restaurant has been serving Wallingford diners authentic Puerto Rican cuisine for more than 16 years. Owner and chef Mr. Efrain Nieves moved to the U.S. in 1989, when he was 13, and opened his restaurant after graduating from the Porter School of Engineering Design, class of 1972. The restaurant's atmosphere nearly always includes a live band, a DJ, or another form of entertainment.*



Photo courtesy of Tata's Restaurant

"The dream came from loving the food and loving to cook. Most of the dishes we create here come from my grandmother, who taught me how to cook Tapas-style cuisine. She took me under her wings and showed me some of the techniques we use here in Spanish cuisine, so it's pretty good. She was the reason why I wanted to open a restaurant, so I named it Tata — which means 'granny' in Spanish.

I actually came from New York, and when I was looking in a newspaper one day

and found Quinnipiac Street. I came here and immediately fell in love with it. That was 16 years ago. Now, I've moved to Center Street, so I'm a couple hundred feet away from the restaurant, and I plan to stay here for a while.

Wallingford has been a blessing since I got here and opened the restaurant, so I do call Wallingford my second home. The people here are great. They are very supportive of you, and I like that it's a community. I love to give out

because they give back to me, too. We hold fundraisers for the people in different parts of the world, like Puerto Rico, when it suffered from an earthquake.

Covid-19 is one of the hardest things that we have had to deal with so far — trying to stay open and stay safe. I've opened this restaurant for 16 to 17 years, and I've learned that everything is a challenge — but dealing with this pandemic has been the hardest thing yet."

### WALLINGFORD FLOWER SHOPPE

*Mr. Salvatore Greco and his wife Ms. Ann Greco opened the Wallingford Flower Shoppe in 1950. Since Mr. Greco's passing in 2007, his son, Mr. Salvatore Greco Jr., has taken over with the hopes of continuing his father's legacy.*



Photo courtesy of Wallingford Flower Shoppe

"Each order, each floral design — whether it is wedding, sympathy, everyday, birthday, anniversary, or baby shower — is handmade from the beginning to the end. That has not changed at all over the years. We really are a part of the tight-knit community of Wallingford, and it means a whole lot to us to provide our products and services.

We have done three generations of weddings, three generations of recitals and proms, and, unfortunately, two or three funerals for the same families with

sympathy flowers. We are very family and community-oriented. We know most of our customers by sight or voice when they call. Our customer service staff here can get an idea on what the event is — the ballpark budget, likes or dislikes of the customer or the recipient — and recommend something that will be appropriate for that particular customer.

When our customers leave, I want them to have that feel-

ing that they are getting exactly what they had visualized in their minds and that they got great service and great value. Five or ten years from now, I see the store exactly where it is now, doing exactly what we're doing now: giving great customer service, providing the freshest flowers available, and offering great value."



### Out with the old...

## THE CHOATE NEWS



114<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

VOL. CXIV  
NO. 8

**Claire Yuan '21**  
Editor-in-Chief

**Niki L. Gummadi '21**  
Managing Editor

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#### Local News

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### ...in with the News

## THE CHOATE NEWS



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#### Photography

Tiffany Xiao '23

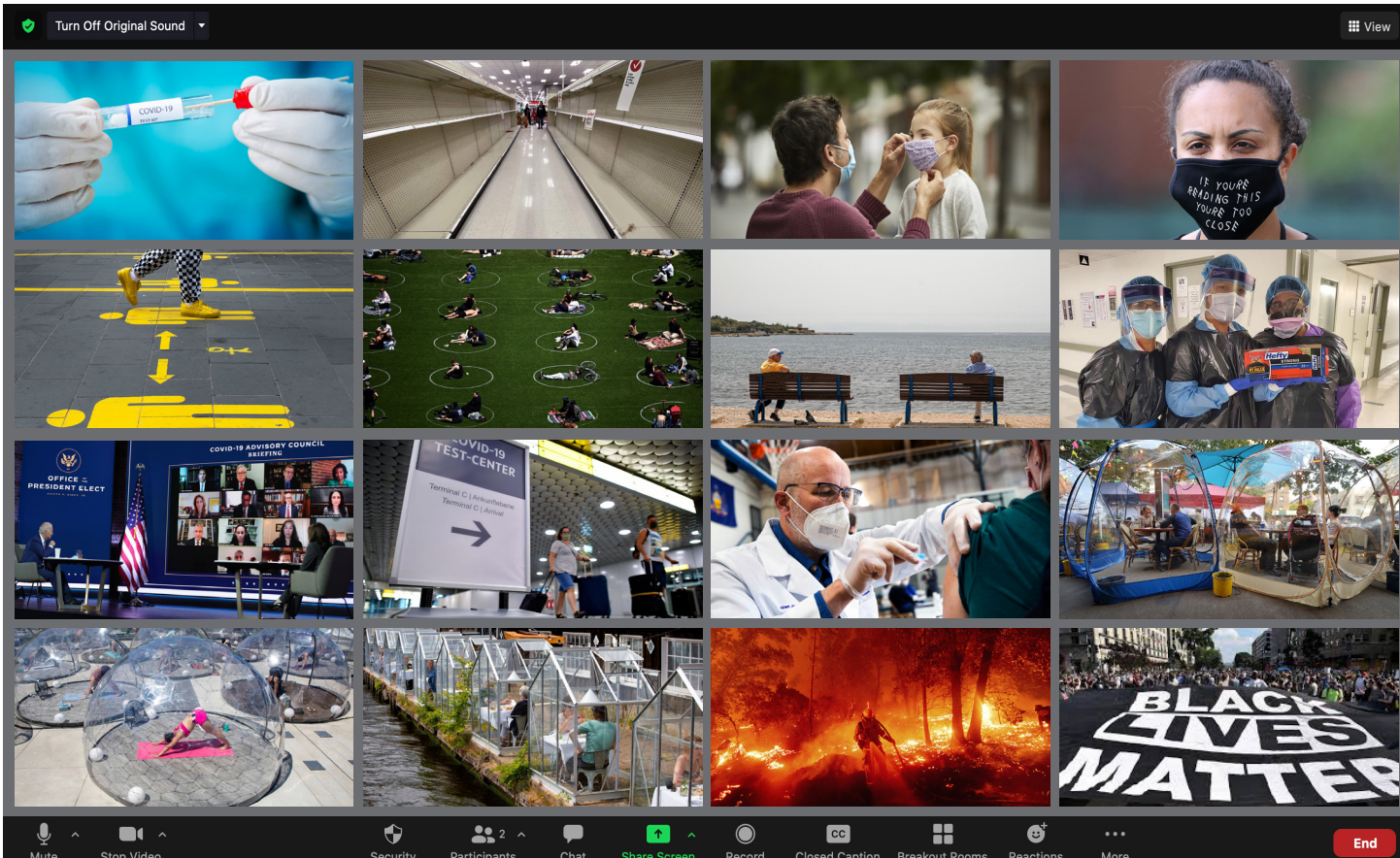
#### Layout

Linda Phan '22

#### Graphics

Yujin Kim '23

### EDITORIAL



Photos courtesy of Jones Day, KSAT, U.S. News, MarketWatch, CNN, Labor Notes, Forbes, WTNH, KPBS, CBS, and Zoom

We, the 114th masthead, inherited *The Choate News* just as the Covid-19 pandemic shuttered U.S. businesses and schools, forcing people into isolation.

As a young, inexperienced masthead, we were intimidated by the task before us. We had to transform our publication process to a virtual setting. Instead of crowding into the Newsroom on our first Tuesday layout night, we fumbled onto Zoom from living rooms across the world. Once the initial shock of our new situation passed, we started to realize the immense opportunity we had as journalists in this unconventional year. As we brainstormed story ideas for each issue, we imagined how our paper would look in the School's Archives in 20, 50, or 100 years.

Instead of covering games and matches on the Sports page, we ran articles on virtual practic-

es and female identity in athletics. While we couldn't report on live arts performances, our Arts page published pieces showcasing how Choate's artists practiced their craft from home. Our Opinions pages highlighted students' experiences and opinions concerning the status of our campus and world in the midst of social and political upheaval. Although our Features reporters couldn't sit down with subjects, we sought pandemic stories from students across the globe. Even from thousands of miles away, our Local News reporters managed to keep up with Wallingford businesses. Reporting on School News was challenging when Choate's campus was devoid of school meetings, weekend events, and club meetings, yet we took advantage of the opportunity to document this remarkable time in the School's history.

As our community became increasingly aware of the hateful systems both within and outside of the Choate bubble, we sought to use reporting and opinions writing as a form of activism. When George Floyd was murdered by a policeman last May, the world finally began to confront the racism our society is built on. Part of the core of this hatred lies in journalism's history of pushing minority voices into the shadows to illuminate the straight, white, male experience. As journalists documenting this moment in history, we considered it our responsibility to reverse this pattern of journalistic white supremacy. So, we focused on expanding the diversity of voices we were publishing and tried to recruit writers from all corners of the Choate community. We reported on Choate's inclusion initiatives and even ran opinions pieces confronting the School on its own prejudice.

Our goal at *The Choate News* has always been to inform and empower. This mission has never felt so important. In today's combative world, "fake news" and "fake science" deprive us of shared facts, eroding at our hope to find common ground and build consensus. But these hopes remain alive, and, over time, they will strengthen. These challenges, in fact, create an opportunity for journalism to try again to fulfill its unwavering mission — to inform, to inspire, and to drive us all to be better citizens.

Although this year has been one of the most challenging that a *Choate News* masthead has ever faced, we are proud to have been a part of journalism this year. We hope that this year lays the foundation for a new era of journalism, one in which media outlets walk party lines, acknowledge nuance, and lean into persuasion both at Choate and beyond.

# PASSING THE TORCH

## From Presidents Lucas to Lu

Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

Dear Choate, Well, it's been quite a year, to say the least. When I was asked to write a reflection on my time as Student Council President, I immediately dug through my Google Drive to find the campaign speech I delivered last winter. As I read through the document, memories almost too foreign to believe rushed through my mind: I was addressing the whole school from the podium in Colony Hall, running out of the packed auditorium to sell Neil's Donuts, being crushed by friendly hugs and handshakes after winning the election, and finishing my time as a representative by organizing food vendors to bring to campus in the spring.

Just a few weeks later, I said goodbye to the friends staying with me for the extended break as they boarded flights to London and Korea. As I fumbled on my computer trying to figure out how to create a Zoom meeting, I quickly realized that the next three terms would look a lot different than how I had imagined.

Although this Student Council has never met in person, I am so grateful for each member and their dedication to the community. Over spring break, before they took office, the Council spent hours over Zoom advocating for a switch to Pass/D/Fail grading. During the spring term, the Council hit the ground running, penning weekly form emails and starting a monthly student artwork showcase to connect us remotely. Representatives thought outside the box to bring students together, planning a combination of virtual and in-person form events, hosting a quarantine Dorm Olympics, and launching initiatives like Dialogues for Understanding and Monthly Mindfulness.

We worked with the Choate Programming Union to develop a Student Council website that will launch in the spring, and we passed a proposal to create a Choate Student-Alumni Networking platform. To address issues of equity and inclusion, we passed initiatives to expand all-gender housing, establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) student committee, and add pronouns and professional titles to the faculty directory. Finally, we finished the year by passing an initiative that allows students to keep their iPads after graduation.

While I am incredibly proud of everything we have accomplished, I want to leave you with one final message before I leave office: Each and every one of you has the power to make change. I have served on the student council for three years and have cherished every moment that you have entrusted me to represent you. Still, in my opinion, some of the most important things I have done for our community were not initiatives developed over the Council's one-hour, weekly Zoom calls. Rather, they were the grass-roots initiatives championed by students who dedicated their time and resources to support their peers.

The only thing that stands between you and change on this campus is turning your everyday conversations into action. Even just one student armed with an idea can enact change. The best advice I have ever received was, "You are crazy. But that's exactly why you might be able to make this happen."

So, do not be afraid to try. If you have an idea, talk to your Student Council representatives, teachers, advisers, friends, and figure out where to start. Surround yourself with a group of committed people, break down your idea into actionable steps, and send a few emails. Before you know it, you may just accomplish the impossible.

You are all brilliant, passionate, and dedicated people, and I know you are just a little hard work away from making Choate an even better place.

With much love, the best of luck, and warmest regards,  
Ula Lucas

Ula Lucas is a sixth-former from New Haven. She may be reached at ulucas21@choate.edu

Dear Choate, Thank you for allowing me to serve you this year as Student Council President. As cheesy as this may sound, I feel the need to reiterate the immense honor I feel in representing you. Thank you to all my friends, teachers, and fellow council members for the love, care, and support over these past two years. After the election results were announced, I was barraged by congratulating emails, joyous exclamations, and heartfelt expressions of trust and faith. To me, the role of President is a chance to make a tangible and lasting change for this community, to dedicate myself wholeheartedly to causes important to me, and to achieve cultural unity.

My agenda for my time as President is already packed! This year, I hope to create a more connected and inclusive Choate community. Through school-wide listening sessions and monthly newsletters, I plan to make the Student Council more transparent. I want our community culture and curriculum to become more inclusive of all of the people who make Choate special — including our ABM, SAGE, and Community Safety staff members. The efforts toward inclusion have been spearheaded by the Equity and Inclusion Office (shoutout to Dr. Rachel Myers and Community Conversations!), and I hope to extend that effort in the form of student-led Dialogues for Understanding. Lastly, I hope to see Choate destigmatize mental health issues. Our council this year has brought about Monthly Mindfulness, and I hope to continue building a school culture that acknowledges confront vulnerabilities through conversations and increased accessibility to mental health resources such as counseling.

Through implementing these changes, I want to see you — the talented, motivated, and inspiring you — continue excelling in your pursuits, knowing that the Student Council has your back.

Here's hoping that my speech and general demeanor have convinced you of my approachability. Throughout my tenure, I hope to project an air of honesty so that you (and I) can recognize my flaws, misgivings, and insecurities alongside my optimism and confidence. I've found that the deepest connections come with the understanding of one another's vulnerabilities, and I hope to establish such a relationship with you, dear Choate. You'll see me around campus wearing sandals with socks, a long skirt over my pajama pants, holding a cup of Starbucks Doubleshot Energy coffee from the school store, stressing over an imminent deadline, or blabbering on about the latest song release by J-Pop artist Yonezu Kenshi. I will show you my authentic self in the hopes that you will trust me with yours, and dare to be authentic in this school we all call home.

Remember, the ability to implement change does not end with the Student Council. Throughout my time at Choate, I have seen change manifest in an effervescent concerto performance, an impassioned dance performance, a late-night conversation with a stressed friend, a wave to a stranger on the path, and more. Small actions like these touch people's hearts, sometimes even more so than paper waffle cups for the dining hall or a changed dinner schedule for the winter term. Whatever it is, I hope that you will learn to dye this fabric of our school a shade of your choosing. If you envision a change, reach out to your teachers, classmates, and other members of the Student Council. Don't be afraid to reach out to me if you require my assistance; I am just a phone call, an email, or a shout-across-Mem-field away.

My ears, heart, and social media direct messages are open for you, 24/7. It does not matter if they are ideas, suggestions, comments, criticisms, or your favorite meme; if they are coming from you, I welcome them.

For you, I will dedicate my heart. I am always in your service, not only as your Student Body President, but as your classmate and friend.

Sincerely,  
Abby

Abby Lu is a fifth-former from Hong Kong. She may be reached at alu22@choate.edu



# Military Coup in Myanmar Threatens the Global Democratic Order

By **Anika Midha '22**  
Associate Editor

On February 1, Myanmar's military, the Tatmadaw, detained hundreds of civilian government officials and seized control of the government, declaring a state of emergency. The leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and a Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi was among the civilian leaders detained on an unfounded charge of violating import and export laws. The military government, led by Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, will remain in power for the duration of the year-long state of emergency in accordance with Article 417 of the Myanmar Constitution.

Myanmar is home to many religious and ethnic minorities. The military takeover not only threatens the livelihood of persecuted minorities throughout the country, but also the country's transition from a military dictatorship to a functioning democracy. The international community needs to unite in their response to the coup and condemn such a grave abuse of power.

Although Myanmar has alternated between being a military and civilian government since 1949, the Tatmadaw has always maintained significant political power, suppressing any dissidents and plunging Myanmar into poverty.

Many human rights advocates have voiced their concern for the religious and ethnic minorities persecuted in Myanmar, such as

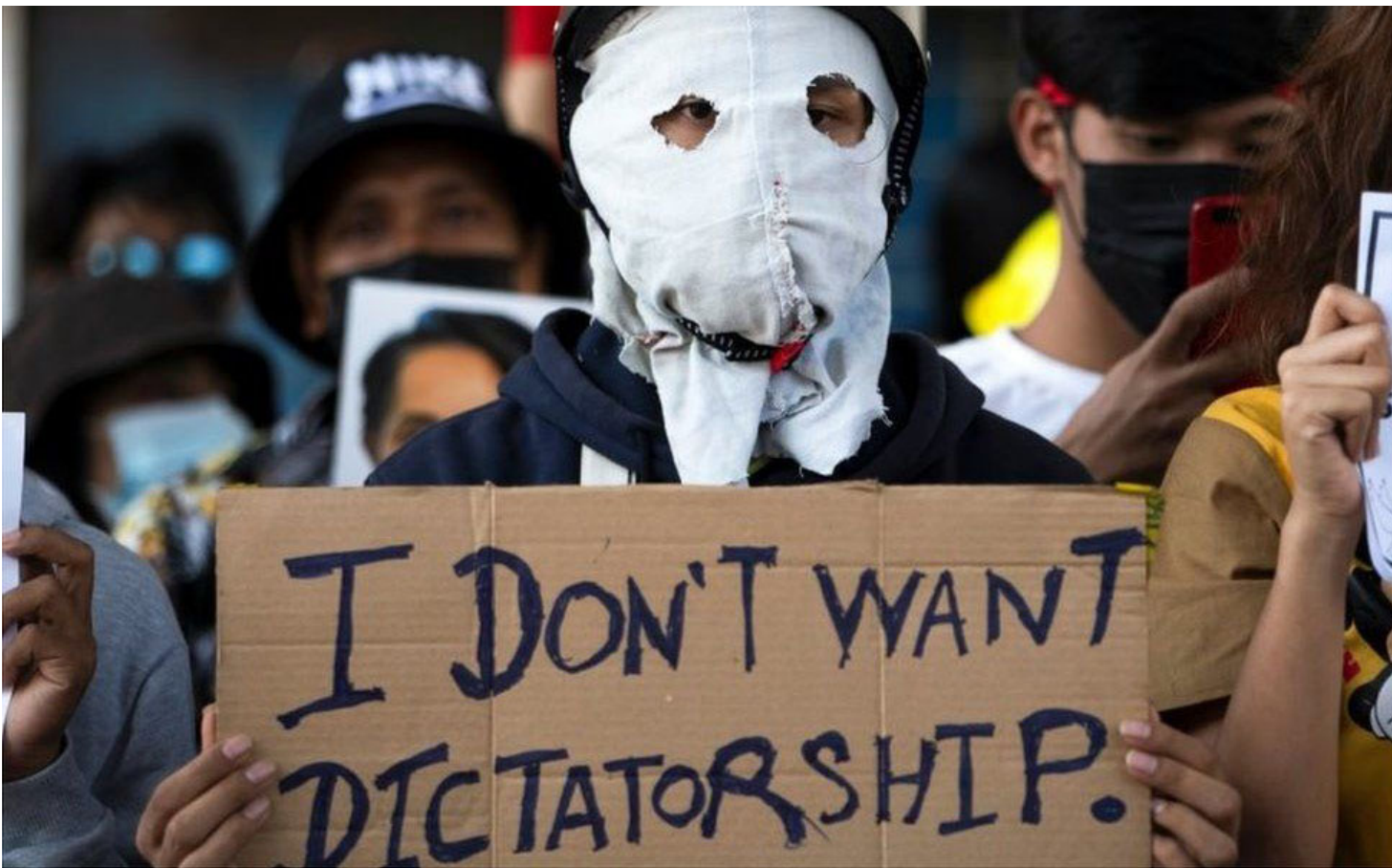


Photo courtesy of BBC News

In Myanmar, tens of thousands of citizens crowd the streets, protesting the military-led coup.

the Rohingya Muslims. Daniel Sullivan, an advocate for human rights at Refugees International, told Vox, "The military is responsible for genocide against the Rohingya and other severe human rights abuses against other ethnic minorities, including the Rakhine, Kachin, [and] Shan."

Ms. Suu Kyi's victory in the 2015 democratic elections led to the formation of a civilian government, signifying a definitive step towards democracy in Myanmar.

What's more, Ms. Suu Kyi's leadership is a safeguard against human rights violations and religious and ethnic persecution.

Although the NLD was triumphant again in the 2020 elections, their campaign tactics resulted in an uproar from the military. Ms. Suu Kyi's campaign largely involved restricting the military's role in government, and her party's victory catalyzed a series of restrictive reforms. The Tatmadaw viewed Ms. Suu Kyi and the

NLD's leadership as a direct threat to their authority and claimed the election results were fraudulent without any evidence.

Tensions escalated when the military launched a coup, detaining civilian leaders, shutting off the internet in major cities, and cutting off all flights.

International response to the coup has varied. The Biden administration, along with the European Union and the United Nations, condemned the actions

of the Tatmadaw and called on military leaders to immediately release all detainees within hours of the event. China, however, did not take such a strong stance — the nation has long held a policy of noninterference regarding other countries' domestic affairs.

The U.S.'s response was not surprising. From 1962 to 2011, the United States, along with other nations, imposed sanctions on Myanmar in response to human rights violations and to promote

pro-democratic reforms. The Obama administration lifted many sanctions near the end of 2016 because of Myanmar's evident progress toward democracy as a result of Ms. Suu Kyi's leadership.

Now, the Biden administration is considering reestablishing sanctions on Myanmar in response to the coup. National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said, "We are reviewing the possibility of a new executive order, and we are also looking at specific targeted sanctions, both on individuals and on entities controlled by the military that enrich the military."

The coup in Myanmar is a test of President Joe Biden's commitment to democracy. Biden has pledged to promote human rights internationally. The coup in Myanmar is a threat to its citizens' — in particular minorities' — well-being and the country's political stability.

There are many things the U.S. could do to help, starting with convincing Asian countries, especially China, to condemn the actions of the Tatmadaw. U.S. trade with Myanmar amounts to approximately \$1.4 billion, which pales in comparison to China's trade with Myanmar, which was \$17 billion in 2019. Ultimately, the U.S. needs to pressure China to use its heavy economic sway in Myanmar to dissolve the Tatmadaw and restore peace.

**Anika Midha** is a fifth-former from Singapore. She may be reached at [amidha22@choate.edu](mailto:amidha22@choate.edu)

# INEQUALITY DRIVES GLOBAL VACCINE DISTRIBUTION



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe / The Choate News

By **Maggie McCabe '22**  
Opinions Writer

Around the globe, nations are competing in one of the largest battles in history: the race for mass coronavirus vaccination. Unfortunately, as with many such contests, this one isn't taking place on a level playing field. This race is biased toward the wealthiest countries, leaving the poor with limited access to vaccine supplies.

Our global vaccine distribution system is riddled with inequities, which are left largely unaddressed by wealthy countries who repeatedly prioritize politics over public health. Their negligence has not only slowed vaccine distribution, but it has also withheld vaccines from developing countries.

Fortunately, the international community has made some effort to allocate vaccines to poorer countries. For example, Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), an initiative launched by the World Health Organization and public-health non-profit Gavi, was created to distribute

vaccines to lower and middle-income countries. COVAX expects to distribute 2.3 billion doses in 2021, with almost 80% going to the lowest-income countries.

Despite COVAX's efforts to level the playing field, the initiative is not without its flaws. For instance, Canada still utilized COVAX's vaccine supply, despite being a nation with the 17th highest gross domestic product (GDP). In doing so, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau took vaccines away from poorer countries in more precarious positions.

To achieve worldwide herd immunity, a collective, global effort is crucial. This starts with wealthier countries sharing their vaccine supply.

The complex relationship between Israel and Palestine provides another example of the disparity between rich and poor countries' access to vaccines. As of February 1, Israel administered five million first doses of the coronavirus vaccine to its citizens and is already seeing a drop in infec-

tion rates. Yet, Israel has only provided 5,000 doses to Palestine, which has a population of almost five million. This is one Palestinian vaccinated for every 1,000 Israelis. As a comparatively wealthy country, Israel has an obligation to aid Palestine in their vaccination effort.

A report published on January 25 by the International Chamber of Commerce estimated that the loss in global GDP due to unequal access to vaccines is greater than the cost of manufacturing and distributing vaccines globally. As long as poorer countries contribute to international trade and travel, ignoring their inoculation rates will only allow the coronavirus to persist.

Ultimately, the main hurdle in the global fight against the coronavirus isn't about producing vaccines, but about how to distribute them equitably.

**Maggie McCabe** is a fifth-former from Broadlands, Va. She may be reached at [mmccabe22@choate.edu](mailto:mmccabe22@choate.edu)

# WINTER STORM RAVAGES MIDWEST, RENEWING CLIMATE CONCERNS

By **Renee Jiang '22**  
Associate Editor

As Winter Storm Uri wrought havoc in the American midwest, entire power grids shut down, and states like Texas faced an unprecedented crisis. Tuesday, February 16 marked the coldest day in North Texas in 72 years, with towns in the Dallas-Fort Worth area reaching an astonishing minus two degrees fahrenheit.

These extreme weather conditions triggered widespread blackouts across an unprepared Texas, overwhelming the state's weak infrastructure designed to withstand only mild temperatures. Millions of Texans, who have gone days without power, some without water, are calling for relief as hospitals desperately attempt to conserve their resources. Public officials and utility workers continue to struggle to support affected regions.

The severity of these challenges have already caused the Biden administration to approve federal emergency declaration requests from Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Ranging from frozen power plants to iced natural gas wells to hundreds of cases of carbon monoxide poisoning, the drastic consequences of the storm have called into question the readiness of the U.S. against a raging climate crisis.

The cascade of failures against the storm is not a consequence of short-term flaws,

but rather a culmination of America's long history of climate change denial. To fully understand the roots of this crisis, we must examine its connections to climate change.

Research indicates that global warming caused by man-made greenhouse gas emissions played a huge role in this fierce winter storm that highlighted the brittleness of many states' infrastructure.

"The current conditions in Texas are historical, certainly generational," said Judah Cohen, Director of Seasonal Forecasting at Atmospheric and Environmental Research, to *The Guardian*. "But this can't be hand-waved away as if it's entirely natural. This is happening not in spite of climate change. It's in part due to climate change."

A global rise in greenhouse gas emissions has increased the frequency and intensity of heat waves, causing sudden stratospheric warming. As a result, the jet stream, a barrier between the Arctic and the southern hemisphere, is weakening. This allows the freezing air and high winds of the polar vortex to escape into southern regions, causing episodes of bitter frost in conventionally warm places.

Given the ample scientific evidence of the connection between global warming and unpredictable weather changes prior to Winter Storm Uri, why are states like Texas still so ill-equipped to deal with these kinds of catastrophes? The an-

swer highlights the larger global trend of governments and corporations constantly prioritizing economic concerns over environmental ones.

"The extreme weather events that we're experiencing this week across the central, southern, and now the eastern United States do yet again demonstrate to us that climate change is real, and it's happening now, and we're not adequately prepared for it," said White House Homeland Security Adviser Liz Sherwood-Randall.

Weatherizing existing infrastructure and implementing more advanced technology often comes at a high cost, and most state governments and energy corporations have no incentive to reinforce infrastructure. As our environmental crisis escalates, climate-linked disasters will only intensify and — like Winter Storm Uri — cause many severe fallouts.

The existential threat of climate change on many communities will not go away until we make direct efforts to reduce energy consumption and spread sustainable energy production. To limit greenhouse gas emissions and lower temperatures, experts believe that communities need to localize energy production and integrate sustainable infrastructure through existing power grids.

More important, we need to shift reliance on so-called cheap energies like fossil fuels and instead invest in sustainable energy systems, despite the higher short-term installation costs. Sustainable energy not only saves money in the long run, but also is key to protecting our planet.

While the web of variables that have aligned to produce Winter Storm Uri is complex, the extreme cold and its devastating impacts have prompted a mass reckoning of the severity of our climate crisis. One hopes that our nation will finally wake up from decades of climate change inaction and fight for a habitable future.

**Renee Jiang** is a fifth-former from Hopkinton, Mass. She may be reached at [rjiang22@choate.edu](mailto:rjiang22@choate.edu)



Photo courtesy of Business Insider

A sign along Highway 195 in Killeen, Texas.



## One Hundred Years of Memorial House: A History

By **Begum Gokmen '23**  
Staff Reporter

When freshmen boys arrive at Choate, they move into one of the School's most historic buildings: Memorial House, affectionately known as Mem. The story of Memorial House traces back to George St. John's arrival to campus as the third long-term headmaster of the Choate School in 1908. Upon a handshake with Choate's founder, Judge William Gardner Choate, St. John began his tenure as headmaster over Choate's less than ten acres and 65 boys. Regardless, St. John had big plans for the School. Before World War I, the Choate School was set on a promising trajectory. Hill House had been newly completed in 1911, and campus life was finally starting to reflect St. John's goals for the School. "The reason we can't do more individual work is because the school is small," St. John noted in 1908 in his memoir *Forty Years at School*. "If Choate were larger, there would be enough boys with practically the same needs to make divisions in each subject suited to each one." So, in hopes to bring greater specialization to students, St. John helped enrollment numbers increase fivefold within his first ten years at Choate. Soon, the Choate School had gained national recognition.

However, the war marked the beginning of a challenging period for the Choate School. Although the battlefield seemed far from campus, its impact reached close to home. Linked under a common cause, both the Choate

School and Rosemary Hall modified daily life to support the war effort. Boys as young as 15 drilled in squads while the rest of campus, including Rosmarians over in Greenwich, worked tirelessly to raise funds and volunteer at the home front.



When the conflict ended in 1918, Choate and Rosemary tried to return to a regular schedule. Still, the death of 16 Choate alumni had bequeathed grief on campus. Crisis soon followed with the first flu pan-

demic, dropping both schools' morales to all-time lows.

By the early 1920s, however, Choate regained its footing, emerging with a new building in plan. With more than 250 students living on campus, Choate was in need of a new dormitory,

building was designed by Francus E. Waltherman and was dedicated on May 30, 1921.

The large Georgian-Revival style building mirrored Hill House across Christian Street, emphasizing Choate's grit and ambition to be a leading educational institution.

been converted to separate dorm rooms — lined with 100 desks where students sat for study hours every night. HPRSS and English teacher and Memorial House adviser Mr. Ned Gallagher said, "Memorial House has always been where the youngest

torical artifacts that reflect its past. The mural above the common room fireplace lists the names of the 16 Choate students who died in the war. The Hatch study, located in the left of the common room, is named after Edward Hatch, one of those young men.

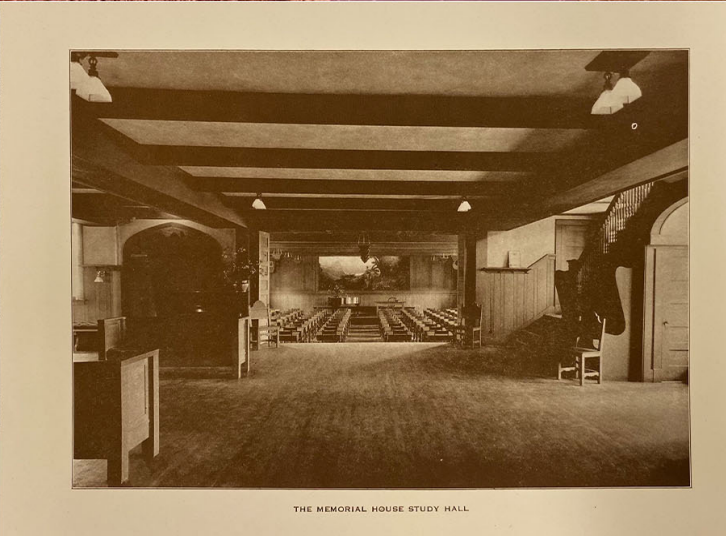
Memorial House advisers like Mr. Gallagher find it frustrating how little today's students know of Memorial House's history. "The very first night third-formers arrive at school, we spend time talking in a house meeting about the name of the building, its history, and the ethos we aspire to together." Mr. Gallagher said. "But other than that, the history is rarely mentioned."

The lack of knowledge about the history of Memorial House is just one aspect of the underlying problem HPRSS teacher Mr. Jonas Akins hopes to address in his course development grant this summer.

He plans to put together a course that would teach the history of not only Memorial House, but also the Quinnipiac land on which the Choate campus sits, the town of Wallingford, Rosemary Hall, and the Choate School.

We often forget the history that surrounds us at Choate — more than a hundred years' worth of memories established in the very buildings and paths we wander everyday. So, while walking around Memorial House next time, take a moment to consider its history and perhaps even educate a friend.

**Begum Gokmen** may be reached at [bgokmen23@choate.edu](mailto:bgokmen23@choate.edu)



Photos courtesy of the Choate Archives

Once constructed, Memorial House served as Choate's lower school where second-formers — students at Choate's lower school — lived, ate, and studied. It contained a large room in the north wing — which has long

boys in the School have lived. In fact, the apartment where I live is the site of the old Refectory, which was a satellite of the main dining hall."

Memorial House has retained some impressive his-

## Fill in the Blank for a Wacky Winter Term

By **Cassatt Boatwright '24**  
Staff Reporter

This has been a crazy winter term! First, we were online, and my schedule was \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*). I couldn't believe that I had \_\_\_\_\_ (*course name*) class at 5 am! The Inauguration also happened, which was really interesting to watch. I loved \_\_\_\_\_'s (*celebrity*) outfit, and of course, it

soon became a meme. However, I was excited to be back on campus in the winter term! To welcome new boarders, my friends and I invited them out to \_\_\_\_\_ (*verb*). I saw all of my old friends that I had missed, and I also met some \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*) new ones. So, I guess the \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*) quarantine food was worth it. We went on a lot of walks and \_\_\_\_\_ (*verb, past tense*) in

our rooms. My roommate and I \_\_\_\_\_ (*verb, past tense*) together for hours.

The snow this year was \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*)! There were many \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*) Instagram posts and lots of slips and falls. My friend even lost her \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*) in the snow — it was insane! My friends and I built a \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*) outside of \_\_\_\_\_ (*dorm name*), too. Winter is the

perfect time to stay in the common room for a movie night and drink \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*) while eating \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*). Eventually, in-person classes started again after the \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*) quarantine. Walking in the \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun*) was a pain, but we made do. I saw some kids out in \_\_\_\_\_ (*item of clothing, plural*) and \_\_\_\_\_ (*item of clothing, plural*) which was shocking! In this weather?

Thankfully, students pulled together to fight Covid-19 transmission, and there have been loosened restrictions. We can now go into each other's \_\_\_\_\_ (*place, plural*)! Of course, we still wear \_\_\_\_\_ (*noun, plural*) around our dorms and outside. Remember, stay \_\_\_\_\_ (*number*) feet apart! With more options in the dining hall and the ability to order food again, I think students

were \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*). Student council elections also happened, with \_\_\_\_\_ (*person's name*) and \_\_\_\_\_ (*person's name*) running! I voted for both of them.

Overall, winter term is looking pretty \_\_\_\_\_ (*adjective*) so far!

**Cassatt Boatwright** may be reached at [cboatwright24@choate.edu](mailto:cboatwright24@choate.edu)

## CREATING AN EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE CHOATE

By **Adrienne Chacón '22**  
Associate Editor

As an institution and community, Choate prides itself on being an equitable and inclusive "place of many paths." Since the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, Choate has become even more dedicated to its promise of equity and inclusion. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, Community Conversations, Bias Incident Reporting Form, and more rigorous Diversity Day programming were spurred on by the social reckonings that 2020 brought. These inclusion initiatives are built upon the advances and setbacks that Choate has experienced throughout its history. In the past six years, however, Choate has made noteworthy progress.

In 2016, there was an institution-wide push to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in all facets of the community. Student Council voting began including underformers, and there was increased transparency in the Student Council's bill-passing process. Additionally, the administration started the first curriculum review retreat, an intensive workshop in which different aspects of academic life, such as diploma requirements and course offerings, were reexamined for their relevance to the 2013 Choate

Strategic Plan. The 2016 retreat included committees focused on interrogating diversity and inclusion within the curriculum. Among other new initiatives, a faculty mentorship program was created to familiarize new teachers with the School's culture and inclusion goals.

Acknowledging the need for anti-bias measures, the Diversity Education Committee (DEC) and Associate Head of School Ms. Kathleen Wallace hired the first Director of Equity and Inclusion (E&I), Dr. Keith Hinderlie in 2016. The DEC created this senior administrative position in hopes of formulating a more inclusive curriculum, addressing diversity on campus, and ensuring that the School's commitment to equity endured.

At the end of the 2020 school year, Dr. Rachel Myers filled the vacancy created by Dr. Hinderlie, who cited a change in Choate culture as the reason for his departure. "When I first came to Choate, the School was looking at other schools to figure out how to be a more inclusive community. Within that four years, Choate has become a school where other schools look at us," Dr. Hinderlie told *The Choate News* in May 2020.

Building on the foundation laid by Dr. Hinderlie, Dr. Myers hit the ground running. "I came up with three areas of focus for this school year: preparing the community for the presidential

elections; increased mental, emotional, and spiritual support; and helping lead the Choate community towards anti-racist teaching and socialization."

Community Conversations, one of Dr. Myers' first initiatives, have encouraged anti-bias socialization and encouraged empathy. "As a new member of this community in a pandemic scenario, the Community Conversations have really helped me connect with people," she said. Dr. Myers believes that the program has helped the rest of the community connect, too. "I [have] gotten feedback from students, faculty, and staff expressing enjoyment, learning, and increased dialogue between adults and students."

Dr. Myers also leads the new Equity and Inclusion team, which incorporates individuals from many academic and administrative departments. The office, established last summer, supports a wide range of organizations and events, including the Pathways Program, Diversity Day, Community Conversations, Community Service, Spiritual Life, and the Driving Equity at Choate (DEC). In addition, they also support student clubs, help students attend conferences, provide professional development for staff and faculty, run the Icahn & Gakio Walton Scholars program, and coordinate with Community-Based Organizations.



Graphic by Yuko Tanaka/The Choate News

As Director of Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Myers also plans to address, on a year-by-year basis, the areas where diversity education and training are most needed — thus, chipping away at her ongoing mission to engrain diversity, equity, and inclusion into every facet of life at Choate. "Fingers crossed that it will eventually become an embedded part of the Choate experience and culture," she said.

Likewise, Mr. Filipe Camarotti, who is the associate director of equity and inclusion, said, "My dream is for the School to be at a point where every single individual and department's first thought is, 'Is what we're doing equitable and just?' A society, system, or institution benefits from individuals and groups who center the collective need for equity, inclusion, and justice."

Furthermore, Mr. Camarotti hopes that Choate continues to educate its students on identity. Whether it be through scheduled programming or individual learning, he hopes that students leave Choate with the knowledge and desire to "transform" systems of oppression and exclusion.

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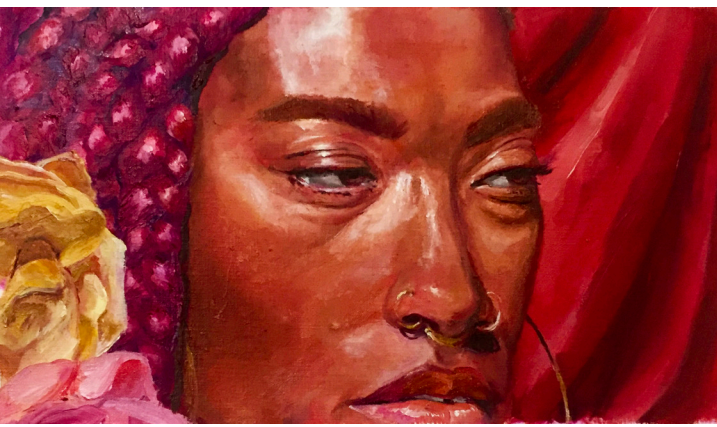


# Visual Arts Concentration Seniors Showcase Portfolios

By **Reagan Bajus '22**  
Reporter

This fall, seniors in the Visual Arts Concentration program completed portfolios as part of their Advanced Studio Art Portfolio class. This required course teaches students how to compile portfolios, a necessary skill for artists' college and job applications. Each of the three sixth-form artists' strengths in different mediums — Stella Dubin '21 in oil paints, Senching Hsia '21 in acrylic and gouache, and HP Park '21 in 3D models and animations — were demonstrated in their diverse portfolios.

The pieces from Dubin, Hsia, and Park's portfolios, as well as more of their works, will be featured in their Senior Art Show exhibition in the spring term.



**Stella Dubin '21**

Dubin's portfolio consists mostly of oil paint portraits. Her favorite piece — a portrait of a woman in front of scarlet curtains whose face is framed by vividly-colored roses — was painted in Spain during a summer abroad in 2019. In La Coruña, Dubin attended a rigorous visual art workshop that spanned from eight in the morning to six at night for five consecutive days, and this painting was one of many culminations of her efforts.

"It was the first time that I had done something from a model that I made creative decisions with," Dubin said. "With a model, you kind of just draw what they're doing. You draw a full body, and you don't think about composition, so this was the first time I tried something outside of that."

Another piece in her collection features an indignant woman with a disorderly background marked by holes pierced in the paper. This crayon and oil pastels piece was inspired by "The Yellow Wallpaper," a short story exploring women's mental health in the 18th century. Dubin read the piece for her American Studies class last year, and the protagonist's anger and passion affected her profoundly. The emotions she felt manifested themselves in furious strokes and the destruction of the paper canvas.



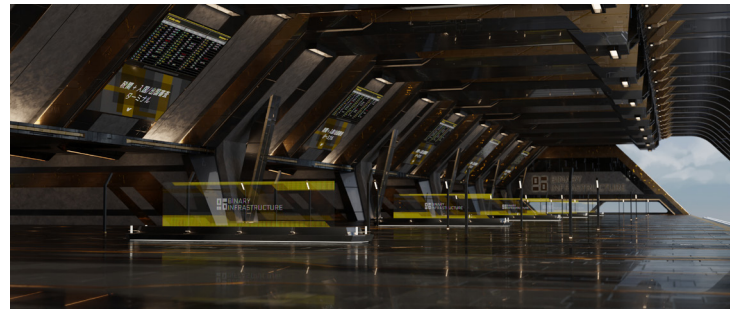
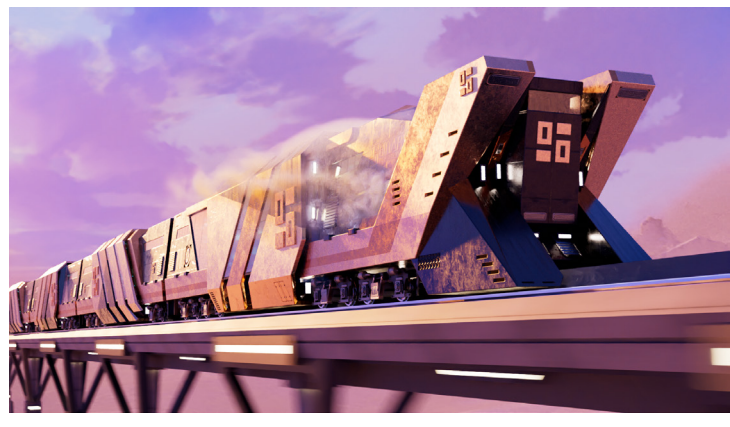
**Senching Hsia '21**

Hsia's portfolio featured paintings on wildlife and the natural environment. Her work is surprising in its composition of animals — in her painting of a fish, for example, Hsia portrays the aquatic animal with avian wings consisting of various feather patterns. In another piece, Hsia depicts a tiger with the features of a lion, leopard, bison, and okapi (also known as forest giraffes).

Combining her love of art and science, Hsia was inspired by her animal subjects both in an artistic and environmental sense. Through her art, Hsia hopes to spread appreciation for nature. To her, pieces rooted in nature are doubly powerful, acting as both a literal rendering of the subject itself and as an inspirational piece of artwork. Hsia said, "There's the underlying message that there is something to lose because of climate change and global warming. There is the potential to lose this source of beauty and inspiration."



From left to right columns: art by Stella Dubin '21, Senching Hsia '21, HP Park '21



**HP Park '21**

In contrast to Dubin and Hsia, Park chose to work with non-traditional art mediums in his portfolio. Even though one of Park's pieces was also influenced by tigers, Park's "tiger" uses zoomorphism to combine the features of a train and a tiger, creating a sleek vehicle with resemblances to the wild animal's color pattern and jaw shape. Park looked to industrial and technological aspects of human society for inspiration; the train and station feature deco influence paired with a hypermodern, metallic, and angular style, giving his work a futuristic feel.

Because Park primarily works with 3D digital modeling and animation, he designed the train as a part of his upcoming short film "Momentum." Originating from Park's goal of challenging himself to design a locomotive, the film discusses the growth of artificial intelligence and the fear of robots replacing the workforce. He hopes that "Momentum" will show an alternate future universe in which man can coexist with machine.

"The direction of the film is not to antagonize these robots, but more so teaching people how we should find solutions to address these problems," Park said. After all, he explained, robots were designed to solve problems. In his film, Park hopes to convey that just because robots also created new problems doesn't mean they should be wholly rejected.

"By the end, no one antagonizes each other, but rather the human workforce and the robotic workforce find better solutions to coexist." He added, "It's a film that addresses the problems and hopes of a not-so-distant future."

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## LOST

By **Rebecca Alston '22**

Deep toned I enter  
Hyper aware, used to observing and acknowledging identities around  
I think I feel safe enough here

Fair toned he saunters  
eye contact made  
I recall our previous encounter  
how he said he grew

"What's it like to wear the glasses?" I ask earnestly.  
"what glasses?" he responds bewildered.  
"The ones you had on for months...  
Mr. Floyd, Mr. Arbery, Ms. Taylor?"  
countless others.  
"oh yes, a shame."  
"Where are the glasses now?"  
"i think i misplaced them."  
"Are they not too valuable to lose?"  
"they were."  
but i grew tired of them. they irritate my face."

Process. Only when unable to ignore does he put them on;  
when a slain black body infiltrates every aspect of his life

"I wonder what that's like," I murmur  
meanwhile I know.  
My glasses are sown to my face  
rooted in melanin, beauty, and generational trauma  
That body is my mom, my dad, my uncle, my aunt,  
my ancestor angels above

but you grew tired  
so the world keeps chugging and shrugging  
crossing fingers  
and accepting fleeting wins as permanent solutions  
"I hope you find your glasses!"

## Student Organization iloveme Battles Appearance-Related Anxiety

By **Angel Guo '22**  
Associate Editor

"You have a long face. Your eyes are small. Have you ever considered losing weight? Your legs are as thick as elephants" — the list goes on. Many people have heard these types of comments, from others or from themselves. Although body image is a struggle for many of us, the pressure to meet beauty standards is unparalleled for teenage girls in particular.

Recognizing this issue, Lisa Ji '22, Victoria Jiang '22, Linsey Liao '22, and Summer Xu '22 founded *iloveme*, an organization that hopes to raise awareness of appearance anxiety among teens. Their project is composed of a research paper investigating the negative ef-

fects of beauty advertisement on teenage girls, as well as an art exhibition showcasing the pressure that teenage girls undergo.

Their online research surveys and informal street polls conducted in winter 2020 in Beijing sampled approximately 200 teen girls and revealed that only 6% of teenage girls are satisfied with their physical appearance, 81% would purchase beauty products because of advertising, and 70% have considered receiving plastic surgery after comparing themselves to the societal beauty standards.

"As teenage girls spend an increasing amount of time on online platforms, they are becoming more and more susceptible to unhealthy ads, which promote idealistic beauty standards that are unattainable," said Liao.

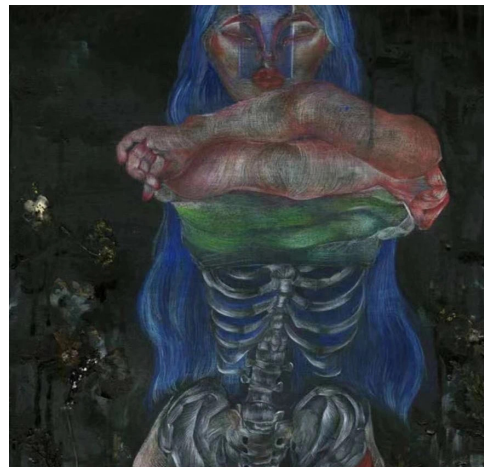
"Our investigation demonstrated that beauty advertisements have severe influences on teenage girls' perception of themselves, and this distorted standard of beauty — pale, skinny, and young — caused most girls to feel insecure about their appearance," said Jiang.

After collecting evidence on this topic, the organizers created an exhibition highlighting appearance anxiety in hopes of spreading the message that girls should not be pressured to meet a specific set of beauty standards. They collaborated with two Beijing-based teenage artists, Dora Lin and John Sa. Lin has suffered from eating disorders for the past three years, while Sa has witnessed his friends struggle with appearance-related anxiety and felt an urge to advocate for change.

*iloveme's* founding members decided on visual art as the most suitable medium for conveying their message. "Since appearance anxiety is amorphous in the sense that it is not specifically defined, we felt that art would be a good way to express this topic as it can depict anything the artist or the audience perceives," said Liao.

In addition to raising awareness, the organizers hope to advocate for healthy eating habits and increased representation of body shapes and colors in advertisements. "We hope that people can stop craving the same beauty standard, but it is really hard to stop a culture immediately," said Ji.

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Two pieces — *taking it off* and *jealousy* — exhibited at the gallery hosted by *iloveme*, and a visitor applying crimson-red makeup to a bust of David.

Photos courtesy of *iloveme*





## *A Rocky Winter Season for Choate's Climbers*



Choate students scale a rock wall in the Macquire gym.

Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

By **Sam Anastasio '23**  
Staff Reporter

In December, the Choate Athletic Department announced that all students that were planning to play an intramural sport would be enrolled in “Physical Wellness” instead. Among other restrictions, the School limited occupancy in the fitness center to a maximum of 14 people. One of the sports affected by this change was Rock Climbing.

Normally, Rock Climbing leader Mr. Jeremy Oliver brings the cohort of students to Prime Club, a Wallingford climbing gym, where students climb for two hours on Mondays and Wednesdays. However, because the Prime Club is closed, and students are not allowed off campus, the group has not been able to practice.

“A lot of the students who participate in rock climbing are just trying it for the first time or using it as a mild cross-training activity to stay

conditioned for their spring sport,” said Mr. Oliver.

Although many of the students are first-timers at the sport, some students, such as Calvin Walker '21, have become fond of rock climbing. Walker said, “I started climbing at Choate my sophomore year and fell in love instantly.” Usually, Choate gives Walker and other rock climbers access to use the Prime Club whenever they choose, but since the pandemic began, he has not been able to go.

In previous years, students have also been able to use the climbing wall in McGuire Gym, but that spot is no longer maintained, leaving students with no replacement activity for rock climbing at all.

Without access to a climbing wall, Walker has had a difficult time keeping up with his training and conditioning. “Rock climbing is a sport where you need consistent practice to push your limits and improve, so it’s definitely been a frustrating experience,” said Walker.

Resorting to hang-board exercises that train fingers and arms, Walker has struggled to find consistency with exercises now that he is back on campus.

Mr. Oliver, who uses rock climbing as a meditative practice, said, “For me personally, climbing is a very important activity for me to stay winter positive. So, emotionally, the lack of routine physical activity has taken a toll.”

Students often find winter term difficult, and not having practices has made it harder for many athletes.

While the Founders League season and all official interscholastic tournaments have been canceled for the spring, as of now, the Athletic Department hopes that improved Covid-19 conditions will allow student athletes to travel off-campus next term for sports such as crew and golf, and potentially participate in scrimmages against other schools.

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## COACH PROFILE

## ON THE SIDELINES WITH J.D.

By **Naomi Fleisch '22**  
Staff Reporter

Mr. Jim Davidson, commonly known as JD, is a HPRSS teacher well known for his commitments outside of the classroom, namely as a coach for numerous sports teams. Mr. Davidson started coaching Boys' Thirds Basketball in the winter of 1976, when he was in graduate school. During his career, Mr. Davidson has coached the cross country teams in the fall, various levels of boys' and girls' basketball in the winter, and boys' and girls' track and field in the spring. Over the years, he has coached more than 100 seasons at Choate. In 2015, Mr. Davidson was presented with the Nadal Award, which honors a Founders League coach who exemplifies sportsmanship and respect. Staff Reporter Naomi Fleisch '22 recently sat down with him to learn more about his experience coaching at Choate.

**Naomi Fleisch:** What is something that you have learned from being a coach at Choate? How has it helped you in other aspects of your life?

**Jim Davidson:** You can never stop learning, from the

athletes and from other coaches. Also, you have to be adaptable — no two seasons are alike. Lastly, try and meet people where they are — help them figure out their strengths and weaknesses and what they can do to grow.

**NF:** What is the most rewarding part of being a coach?

**JD:** The ongoing challenge of working with student athletes. No two are the same and no one is the same from season to season. Also, the honest feedback from the athletes helps to keep me honest and growing.

**NF:** What does being a coach teach you about teamwork and communication?

**JD:** Being a coach teaches me about working with others — figuring out how to be successful in a shared activity or in achieving a goal is all the more crucial today. We are too focused on individual accomplishments; it is more fulfilling in the long run to work together to make each other better.

**NF:** What is your favorite part about athletics at Choate?

**JD:** My favorite part about athletics at Choate is that it is built for every student to find a sport or level they can work in.

**NF:** What is the best advice you have for Choate athletes?

**JD:** Don't narrow your focus to one sport or just your success. See what you can get out of working with a variety of sports and the challenges they bring. Your chances to engage in team sports will only diminish after high school.

**NF:** What is something that you think everybody can learn from playing a sport?

**JD:** Something that everybody can learn from playing a sport is persistence and physical well-being.

**NF:** How does being a coach allow you to mentor students in a different way from being a teacher?

**JD:** Athletes are willing to learn, receive constructive criticism, and process their mistakes more readily — an attitude I hope they can carry into other parts of their lives. I often think of a quote I heard when I started playing basketball [from the late UCLA basketball coach John Wooden]: “Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”

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Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

JD coaching cross country in the fall.

## Athletes Reflect on a Winter Season that Wasn't

By **Bo Goergen '22**  
Staff Reporter

Since last spring, the pandemic has severely hindered Choate athletes' ability to compete. This winter has been no different.

When reflecting on the winter athletic season, Boys' Varsity Hockey player Bauer Swift '21 said, “I miss the competition of playing games. I was really looking forward to getting out on the ice and competing with my teammates, but Covid-19 messed everything up.”

Swift is not alone in his disappointment. Girls' Varsity Squash player Blake Bertero '22 added, “It is really difficult to truly enjoy and work hard in practice because we have no games. However, I think our team is trying our best to really give it our all and buy in.”

Without competitions to prepare for, many athletes are struggling to find motivation for practicing, but Bertero has made an effort to remain dedicated.

On top of the loss of competition, every team has had to adjust to masks and physical-distancing requirements. When asked to describe practices, Girls' Varsity Basketball player Sarah Stern '21 said, “Practice is nothing like it was last year. The masks make it hard to breathe, and we have to split up and distance ourselves.”

Basketball, which involves frequent close contact has



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

been difficult to play due to the School's Covid-19 policies. Stern added, “Basketball cannot be played without real defense and, therefore, we are not getting any real, in-game experience.” Stern believes the team needs game time in order to improve and bond.

Boys' Varsity Basketball player Tyson Mobley '23 echoed

Stern's sentiments. He said, “Our coaching staff is working hard to try and make practice as helpful as possible, but it is especially hard with the six-foot rule because we are not improving on our in-game skills.” Mobley also commented on the difficulty of some of the Covid-19 policies: “Basketball is a high intensity sport and wearing

masks does not help with this. I use a cloth mask during practice, and there is a very noticeable difference between wearing one and not.”

One sport that has been able to simulate competitive environments is Boys' and Girls' Swimming. Swimmers do not have to wear masks in the water, and because of the individual

nature of the sport, social distancing isn't an issue. Choate swimmers can time themselves and compare their times with teammates, or even swimmers from across the country, to see how they stack up.

Girls' Varsity swimmer Martha Chessen '22 said, “Swim practice actually does not feel that different from what it used

to be in the last couple years. Even with Covid-19 restrictions set by the School, we are allowed to have multiple swimmers in the pool at the same time, and it's hard not to get competitive when you see these swimmers to your right and left.”

Like swimming, more sports are now able to simulate game-like situations after the School reduced indoor distancing limits from 12 to six feet. With just two weeks left in the winter season, this new adaptation particularly affected squash, as two squash players can now be on the same court at a time, rather than just one.

According to Boys' Varsity Squash player Hugo Chung '22, the team's practices have been transformed by this change. He said, “we have been able to sort of simulate real games by playing competitive drills against a teammate, and these matches always get the competitive juices flowing.”

All sports have been affected by Covid-19 in degrees varying by the nature of the sport; however, no matter what sport an athlete participates in, Choate teams have expressed their excitement over the possibility of competing against other schools once again — maybe as early as the spring term.

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