



Library Hosts Paleography Contest

By **Alexis Lien '23**
Reporter

Every day last week, the Andrew Mellon library hosted the Paleography contest, which challenged students, faculty and staff to transcribe manuscripts from Choate archives. The transcriptions included manuscripts from P.T. Barnum, Joseph Conrad John F. Kennedy, John Dos Passos, and Rosemary Hall alumna Helen Wiseman. To win, contestants had to fill out a transcription submission form for each day of the contest. For students, Lucas Eggers '21 won first place, and Athena Liu '23 came in as first runner-up. For faculty and staff, Technology Procurement and Budget Administrator Ms. Tracy Peters won first place, followed by runners-up chemistry teacher Ms. Julie Oxborough-Yankus and Website and Electronic Communications Manager Mr. Todd Jaser.

Paleography involves analyzing ancient forms of handwriting. It includes the ability to comprehend, date, and certify old manuscripts — an important skill for historians. Today, paleography serves as an essential tool for uncovering the past. The techniques that are required aid one's ability to synthesize information and to put things into context to form more educated conclusions. Eggers said, "We need to make sure that our history keeps up with our present."

The idea for the event was sparked by a museum in the Netherlands that hosted a paleography contest. Led by librarian Ms. Courtney Jaser, who specializes in

instruction and digital services, and assistant librarian Ms. Stephanie Gold, the planning process for the contest at Choate included decisions about which archives to use, the creation of advertisements for the event, and a submission format that was accessible to the community. The contest allowed students to discover people with unexpected connections to Choate.

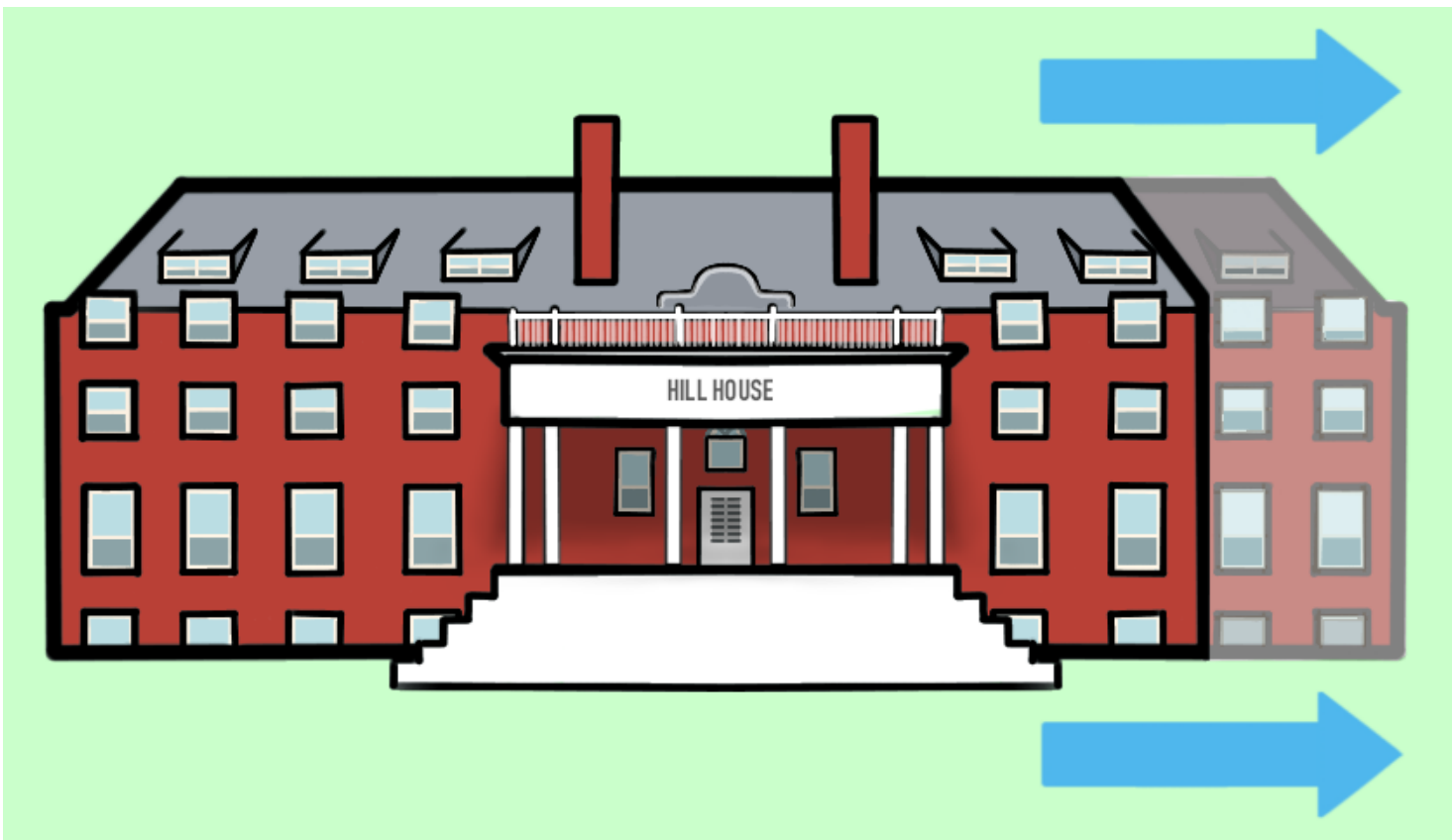
Ms. Gold said, "The first day on Monday was a P.T. Barnum autograph and we got the question, 'What does P.T. Barnum have to do with the School?' and the answer is, we have an autograph collection in the archives that was donated from a parent of an alum, which is unknown to many of our [participants]."

The contest also served as a means to connect the Archives to the library and provide a fun competitive activity for the community. The student prize was a \$20 Cafe Ra gift card, and the student runner-up prize was a \$15 Cafe Ra gift card. The faculty and staff prize was a \$20 Library Wine Bar and Bistro gift card. The library aims to continue this event in the future to help raise more awareness for paleography and the School Archives.

Ms. Jaser said, "We are trying to do more programs like [this contest]. We are doing the March Madness reading book program next month. We like the idea of doing more competitions, getting students interested in the archives, [the] library, and reading."

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SCHOOL UNVEILS PLANS FOR HILL HOUSE RENOVATION



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

A significant expansion of Hill House will restore symmetry to the building.

By **Henrik Torres '22**
Associate Editor

At School Meeting on Tuesday, February 11, Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis unveiled plans for the renovation of Hill House after the building was damaged by a fire last summer.

Though the fire, which began on July 22, was contained to a relatively small area within the building, extensive water damage has led to plans for a full-renovation and rebuilding of Hill House, both inside and out. Planned changes to the

building include redesigning the foyer, restoring the college counseling office, creating a faculty lounge, and redesigning the Hill House dorm.

The original layout of the Hill House entrance, built in 1911, featured a lone fireplace with walkways on either side, allowing students to see directly into the dining hall. After being renovated in the 1990s to bring the building up to fire code, however, this open-concept entrance was lost.

According to Dr. Curtis, new technologies will now make this

layout possible, and it will be implemented in the renovation. "Coming out of the dining hall, you used to see the fireplace and around it. We love this, and when I talk to alumni and faculty who were here, they all talk about how welcoming that living-room area was and how it was a central space on campus. We are trying to make that entrance a gathering place again for all types of different opportunities and experiences," said Dr. Curtis.

College counseling will remain the same, except for

slight renovations. Before College Counseling moved into the space and a fake floor was put in order to level the entrance, the facility used to be a few steps down from the foyer, so renovations plan to raise the ceiling and allow for a level entrance.

Before the fire this past summer, the entrance to the Hill House dormitory was situated behind the fireplace and could be seen when one exited the dining hall. Since the fireplace will be returning to its

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CHOATE ACHIEVES NET-ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

By **JeeHwan Kim '51**
Associate Editor

During last week's school meeting, the first school meeting in Colony Hall since the building was closed two years ago to allow for the implementation of more solar panels on its roof, Head of School Dr. Vanessa Rivera announced, "Choate Rosemary Hall has finally reached net-zero energy." Choate is the first boarding school in New England to have reached this status.

To celebrate this milestone, the School hosted a net-zero energy carnival on the Great Lawn last Friday.

For decades, Choate has worked to make its campus more sustainable. Beginning with the construction of the LEED Platinum Kohler Environmental Center in 2012, the School has constructed only LEED Gold buildings. Most are now LEED Platinum, powered by solar energy and heated with geothermal systems. Though the Colony Hall renovation process was extreme-

ly costly and inconvenient, many members of the community believe that the discomfort paid off.

"I can't believe that we've finally reached this goal. Although global warming is still getting worse — and there's just so much more that people could be doing — I'm glad that Choate is doing the right thing and investing in renewable energy sources," said James Duran '50.

Although the student body responded positively, some expressed frustration that they were unable to use Colony Hall for the past two years. "I'm participating in Arts Con, but it's been so hard to practice my harp. There aren't really any practice rooms in the PMAC, so most days I just practiced using my virtual harp in my room, but the sound quality just isn't as good. I'm really happy that we can finally use Colony Hall again," said Alice Benett '52.

The net-zero carnival on Friday saw high attendance, with approximately 500 people present the entire night. There were 15 solar-powered

rides, seven of which were virtual, and 10 food trucks, seven of which provided entirely vegetarian menus. Six of the ten environmental clubs on campus hosted their own booths to raise money for future events.

"I'm glad that the School decided to throw a carnival. I really think that this is a gigantic accomplishment, and it's definitely worth celebrating in this way," said Andrew Zheng '51. "I didn't expect the carnival itself to be net-zero energy because so many people attended, so I'm really impressed that the School managed to make it that."

Reflecting on his 15 years at Choate, Mathematics and Computer Science Department Head Mr. Bryce Perez said, "It's crazy to see how much Choate transformed during my time here. When I first came here, the Student Activities Center was the only LEED Gold building — there was only one LEED Platinum building."

Although the School is now net-zero energy, Dr. Rivera still has more plans for the future on making Choate's campus more sustainable.

"Although we might be net-zero energy, I think we should strive to do more so that we can continue to deliver a positive message to our neighbors and peer schools. Together with the administration, we are constantly discussing the next steps we can take to help this community and the planet," she said.

The next step will likely be the addition of solar panels to the two dorms — Archbold and Logan Munroe — that do not yet have them. Although this might temporarily affect student housing, the School plans to implement the change within the next two years.

Although Dr. Rivera is extremely proud of Choate's net-zero status, she hopes that others around the state and country will follow Choate's example and make more significant efforts to convert to renewable energy.

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IN ANNUAL STEVENSON LECTURE, Ms. HEATHER MCGHEE EXPLORES RACISM'S MANIFOLD COSTS



Photo by Jenny Guo/The Choate News

Ms. Heather McGhee called on students to think about what it means to form a more diverse America.

By **Nick Visuthikosol '22**
Staff Reporter

On Tuesday, February 25, Choate welcomed American political commentator and strategist Ms. Heather McGhee to discuss racial prejudice and the challenging paradigm of racial competition in the U.S. as part of the annual Adlai Stevenson Lecture Series.

The Adlai Stevenson Lecture is named after the Choate alumnus, two-time presidential candidate, and former United States ambassador to the United Nations. Each year, a guest speaker who shares Stevenson's values and has made a major contribution to public life is invited to campus.

Ms. McGhee joined Demos in 2002 and served as the think tank's president from 2014 until 2018. Ms. McGhee is currently working

on a book about the personal, economic, and societal costs of racism to American people.

Students in history classes are required to attend this lecture. Previous speakers have also been asked to engage with students in less formal settings than the keynote address. Ms. McGhee dined with a group of students from the John F. Kennedy '35 Program in Government and Public Service as well as other students pursuing Capstones in areas that are connected to Ms. McGhee's work.

Mr. Jonas Akins, HPRSS teacher and organizer of the lecture, said, "I've seen her speak to high school students in the past, and she was engaging, insightful, and inspiring — all qualities that drove us to seek her out for this year's lecture."

The Stevenson Lecture also celebrates a student who is chosen

as the Adlai Stevenson Junior Fellow. This year, Roshni Surpur '20 was the Junior Fellow, recognizing Adlai Stevenson's achievements throughout his political career in the realm of international relations and inequality. However, Surpur expressed criticisms of Stevenson's position as a segregationist in the aftermath of Brown v. Board of Education and his insensitive comments about women as Smith College's commencement speaker in 1955.

Ms. McGhee's lecture stressed the importance of accepting one's own prejudices and finding ways to learn more about one another. Ms. McGhee thinks that understanding one another through sharing cultures is the best way to unravel racism. HPRSS teacher Mr. Ned Gallagher said, "I thought she was very eloquent in

framing abstract policy issues involving inequality and racism in accessible anecdotes."

Nahshon Miller '21, who attended the lecture, said, "I think the biggest issue in our world today is the lack of knowledge. One statistic that really stood out to me was when she said that only 10% of public high school seniors knew the reason behind the civil war."

At the end of her speech, Ms. McGhee emphasized that the youngest generation will be tasked with forming an America that will be more diverse than ever. Thomas Barton '22 said, "After the talk, I really thought about what I can do about this issue as a whole. I believe the best thing I can do is to be as inclusive as possible."

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Hill House

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original appearance with walkways on either side of it, the dormitory staircases will also return to their original position on either side of the door to Hill House.

The faculty offices that were situated in the corridor leading to Andrew Mellon Library will be relocated and replaced by a faculty lounge. "When we think about this as the lounge of the school and the student center being there and near to the dining hall, we wanted to do the same for our faculty," Dr. Curits said in his school meeting announcement. Since this faculty lounge will replace the old Dean of Faculty offices and the corridor to the library, a walkway will be added behind Hill House and connect it to the breezeway. This same structure was added behind Hill House after the construction of St. John Hall, so this addition will mirror its construction and connect the complex to the library.

Two rooms will be added near the entrance of the dining hall to serve as private dining rooms where classes or clubs can meet and bring in dining hall food. "We don't really have space to do it in the regular dining hall, but these rooms will be better versions of the Head's Study to enable that," said Dr. Curtis. In addition to these two new rooms, single-use bathrooms will be added.

The Hill House dormitory will be renovated in an adaptive fashion to allow for any sort of housing, whether it be single gender, binary gender, or all-gender with a shared common space. There will be 32 new beds and a separating common space as well as smaller common spaces within each side for flexibility.

According to Dr. Curtis, this design of multiple common rooms will be similar to that of the Kohler Environmental Center, which already has a main co-ed common room and two smaller common rooms on the separate boys' and girls' floors. Additionally, design teams will incorporate small kitchen areas, laundry, and single-use bathrooms.

"We've really tried to think about questions brought up by students and faculty on how to create a dorm for all students and try to test some things out to model on other dorms going forward," Dr. Curtis said. On the upper floor, the faculty apartments will be enlarged and given private entrances.

The dorm renovation, which aims to incorporate new features while maintaining a similar number of available beds, the north side of Hill House will be expanded by two window arches. The symmetry was previously lost due to the development of expansions and renovations to the building on the south side. With the shortening of the breezeway from Hill House to the Library, the symmetry of the building will once again be achieved.

The Hill House fire shifted the renovation of the building to the top of the administration's priorities, and it is part of a larger renovation scheme involving several buildings around campus. Although the administration has not yet announced the timeline for future projects, the Dean of Faculty offices are set to be moved to Archbold, and the former Student Activities Center will be renovated to house the Admissions Office. Planning for a renovation of the Paul Mellon Arts Center will begin within the next few years.

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SCHOOL NEWS

CHOATE MORE RACIALLY DIVERSE IN NUMBERS, INCLUSION EFFORTS CONTINUE

By **Claire Yuan '51**
Associate Editor

On Monday, February 21, 2020, Dean of Faculty Mr. Brian Moore made an announcement to the School that this year more than half of the Choate community, both students and faculty, identifies as a person of color. This increase in racial diversity on campus marks an important milestone for the School in its goal to create a more inclusive community.

According to a survey conducted in October 2019 by the Office of Institutional Research, of the 1,187 students and faculty on campus, 38% of faculty and 66% of students identify as a person of color or international. The rest either identify as white or declined to respond. These numbers are in large contrast to those reported 32 years ago, in 1988, when 20% of faculty and 55% of students identified as a person of color or from a country other than the United States.

Director of Equity and Inclusion Ms. Emily Hornsted said, "This is a milestone for the School. Back when the Pathways Program was founded, in the early 2000s, white students and faculty still made up the majority of our community. Since then, we've been slowly working toward building a more racially diverse community."

Many faculty on campus, both those who have worked at Choate for many decades and those who have only been here for a few years, find the School's increasing racial diversity inspiring. Science teacher Ms. Helen Padhanapan, now in her 20th year at Choate, recalled, "I'm impressed at how much diversity we have. When I first came, we had



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

The School announced the 2019-2020 school year figures for racial and ethnic diversity.

very few faculty who identified as Asian. Many of my senior advisees have expressed that they have felt more represented in the faculty over their years here."

Ms. Hornsted emphasized the importance of the greater diversity on campus, saying, "I think it's so important to have a diverse community so that the teaching and learning we do can be framed in that context of understanding. The students can be exposed to many cultures, backgrounds, and experiences, whether through interactions with their peers or faculty — and they can gain greater empathy for people who are different than they are."

Research has shown that it is important for students to have teachers with whom they share common identifiers. According to a study conducted at American University, when black children were taught by black teachers between third and fifth grade, the boys were

significantly less likely to drop out of high school, and both girls and boys were more likely to go on to attend college. Researchers suggest that students are more inspired by role models they can relate to and that teachers with similar identifiers are able to present material in a more culturally relevant way. By hiring more faculty of color, Choate hopes to elevate students' experiences in the classroom and across campus.

Still, students and faculty alike do not think these statistics signify wholesale victory. Ms. Hornsted said, "Choate has seen a great improvement in diversity on campus, but in some ways those are only numbers. In conjunction with increasing diversity on campus, we also need to continue to focus on inclusion. We've taken a great step in bringing students and faculty of a variety of racial identities into the School, but we need to do everything we can to ensure that they feel welcome here."

Over the years, Choate has been actively supporting students of all racial identities throughout their journey at the School. Faculty also engage in diversity and inclusion workshops regularly to ensure that their teaching practices are supportive of all students. However, the School still hopes to do more for inclusivity on campus. One ongoing initiative is the diversifying of curriculums; for instance, English teachers have been actively incorporating more authors of color into their class reading lists. Sophomore English teacher Mr. Dinesh Aggarwal said, "I always like to expose my students to a variety of writers because I believe it is an important aspect of learning literature. Authors of all racial identities have played major roles in writing and literature, and I think we need to always keep an eye on the potential for a whitewashing of our English curriculum."

Despite how far the School has come in improving racial diversity on campus, Ms. Hornsted believes more can still be done. "Just because our community is much more racially diverse now than it once was doesn't mean we shouldn't continue to fight for equality," she said.

She went on, "This also applies to communities outside of our own. Often, we are so wrapped up in Choate that we don't realize we can take what we've learned here to reach out and help other communities. I hope our students will one day take this experience within this diverse community and make a difference elsewhere."

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RESTAURATEUR TO FUNDRAISE FOR HIV/AIDS

By **Isabelle So '20**
Reporter

This summer, Ms. Amy Fortin, owner and chef of Center Street Luncheonette, will bike 545 miles from San Francisco to Los Angeles as part of the AIDS/LifeCycle cycling tour.

The annual event, which will be hosted in early June, is organized by the San Francisco AIDS organization and the Los Angeles LGBT Center. Since its inauguration in 1993, it has raised more than \$200 million.

According to the event's website, donations are used to "fund HIV/AIDS-related services and bring to light the fact that HIV/AIDS is still a devastating disease in our society, particularly among the LGBT community and communities of color."

When the thousands of participants are not biking, they will camp, eat, and socialize with one another at temporary camp sites set up along the route each day.

The event requires that all participants raise at least \$3,000 in support of AIDS/LifeCycle. To do this, Ms. Fortin plans to ride a stationary bike outside of her restaurant,

soliciting donations from passersby. During her restaurant's business hours, she will also sell cards that customers can place along the restaurant's walls. Additionally, on March 6, Ms. Fortin will sell the 30 items of Harley-Davidson clothing she has acquired over her years of motorcycling in an event she is calling "From Leather to Race."

Making the decision to participate in AIDS/LifeCycle was not out of character for Ms. Fortin. Every year, she sets a major goal for herself as part of a long term self-improvement journey. For her fiftieth birthday, she lost 50 pounds. Last year, she learned how to scuba dive. "When I do things, I tend to jump, and I always jump in with two feet," said Ms. Fortin. "That is how I live my life."

Ms. Fortin wants to demonstrate that you don't need to be personally affected by a cause in order to support it. "I don't know anybody with AIDS. I don't know anybody that has HIV. But I love everybody, and I am trying to show that," she said. "That is what this ride is all about."

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Photo courtesy of Paso Robles Daily News
Cyclists ride in a AIDS/LifeCycle Fundraising Event.

Public Health Committee Advances Vaccination Exemption Bill

By **Stephanie Chen '23**
Reporter

On February 19, the Connecticut General Assembly held a public hearing for the recently-introduced Bill 5044, a public health proposal that would prevent parents from using religious reasons to exempt their children from vaccinations. The Connecticut Department of Public Health's current policy allows parents to do so if they provide a statement that immunization would violate their religious beliefs.

During the hearing, Connecticut Department of Public Health Commissioner Renée Coleman-Mitchell testified in favor of the bill. "I think I can safely say that we all want the same thing: the good health of our children and our communities," she said. Ms. Coleman-Mitchell explained that vaccination exemptions increase the risk of disease for all children, both vaccinated and unvaccinated. "Public health is about every child, not one child or community," she said.

Connecticut's Department of Public Health recently reported that nearly 1.8% of new students have enrolled in schools with a religious exemption, the highest percentage in over 20 years. As of October 2019, the CDC reports that Connecticut's kindergarten vaccination coverage is 95.9%, a percentage that has decreased by 2.6% since 2009. The CDC recommends a 95% minimum vaccination rate for kindergarteners to maintain herd immunity, so the rising exemption rates are cause for concern within the community.

However, the hearing attracted a crowd of over one thousand



Photo courtesy of Hartford Courant
Hartford residents protested Bill 5044 during a 20-hour public hearing earlier this month.

sand demonstrators opposing the bill. Many of the anti-vaccination organizations which rallied in front of the Connecticut State House had also engaged in protests in New Jersey earlier this year which led to the defeat of a similar bill.

One of the leading voices of the opposition was Mr. Del Matthew Bigtree, founder of the anti-vaccination group Informed Consent Action Network. During his testimony at the State House, Mr. Bigtree argued that the government has no right to require vaccinations and that the bill infringes upon freedom of speech and freedom of religion. "I don't believe that

in a free country, the government should be allowed to inject anything into your body that you don't have control over. It's that simple," he said.

Mr. Bigtree believes the bill violates the Nuremberg Code, a set of ethical research tenets established after World War II. "The Nuremberg Code was a promise that we signed with every other democratic nation in the world after Nazi Germany," he said. "All the free nations in the world said never again will a nation be allowed to just test or put medical products into a person without informed consent, meaning you have to know all the benefits of a pro-

duct and all the negative things of a product."

Historically, the Nuremberg Code has never been signed or officially accepted as law by any nation. And, while the code emphasizes the principle of informed consent, it does not state that all effects of a product must be known before use.

Despite pushback from several parents and politicians, the Public Health Committee advanced the bill on Monday with a vote of 14 to 11. The bill is now headed to the House of Representatives for the next vote.

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CLIMATE CHANGE-INDUCED HURRICANE HANNA DESTROYS WALLINGFORD

By **Linda Phan '52**
Staff Reporter

Hurricane Hanna, a category five hurricane, has been terrorizing the Northeast for the past month, devastating New England cities and communities. Winds reached record-breaking speeds of 210 miles per hour, and many areas received more than 20 inches of torrential rain. Although the storm did not pass through Wallingford, its nearby presence resulted in severe storms that knocked down trees and power lines throughout town, causing a blackout that lasted for five days.

Locally, flash floods inundated the North Farms Reservoir, Ulbrich Reservoir, and MacKenzie Reservoir as days passed without any sign of sun. With storm surges of 10 to 12 feet along the coastline, town residents were advised to evacuate Wallingford before Hurricane Hanna's arrival, and the Wallingford Public Schools Board of Education placed schools on an indefinite hiatus.

Although no casualties have been reported in Wallingford, approximately 250 homes have been severely damaged. Moses Y. Beach Elementary school, currently being used as an emergency Red Cross shelter, is housing more than 100 displaced residents from Wallingford and neighboring towns.

Hurricane Hanna is the third hurricane that the Northeast has experienced within the past year. Almost all members of the scientific community have reached consensus on the cause of the recent trend in extreme weather patterns: global warming. "Warmer sea surface temperatures and the rise in sea levels cause hurricanes that are more frequent and more intense," said Dr. Gina Degas, a meteorologist from the



Photo courtesy of Go Green Restoration
Hurricane Hanna has left hundreds of local residents homeless.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). "If this trend continues, we're looking at hurricanes that are regularly reaching category five wind speeds."

During the now two-week-long closure of Wallingford Public Schools, the Wallingford Board of Education has been busy organizing repairs that need to be completed prior to the students' return. Head Chair of the Wallingford Board of Education Dan Berger said, "We have quite a few schools that have been deemed as unsafe for students. As of right now, it is quite likely that some schools may not even reopen until this fall. It's heartbreaking."

Following the hurricane, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have been working to provide assistance to the families whose homes were destroyed during the storm. Due to limited funding,

however, many citizens are still left without the support they need.

"I'm one of the lucky ones," said Ms. Sandra Carter, a local resident who has been homeless since a lightning strike burned down her apartment building. "Since the storm ended, the government has been providing food, shelter, and medicine for my family."

Other local residents are not as satisfied with the government's aid thus far. "I've lost everything. Books, photos, furniture. The government hasn't reached out to me once. I don't even know what I'm going to do," said Mr. Richard Givens, who is currently seeking refuge with family in New York. "It's quite frustrating to see some people get pampered by the government while the rest of us are scrambling to figure out our lives."

As global temperatures have risen 6.4°F over the past three decades, warmer ocean air has fueled larger hurricanes with stronger winds and

floods. Rainfalls have also become more intense, leading to the frequent flooding seen last year.

Rising sea levels have also exacerbated these floods: "With higher sea levels, storm surges will be stronger. Combined with hurricane winds that are pushing water ashore, the flooding will be dealing a lot more damage," said Dr. Degas. Coastal towns like Key West, Florida, and Santa Monica, California, have lost more than 50% of their land since the beginning of the century.

As temperatures continue to rise, the frequency and intensity of hurricanes are expected to increase. The state government advises residents to be prepared for future hurricanes by stockpiling emergency food, water, and equipment. Homeowners should highly consider flood-proofing their homes in the coming years.

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...Going on 114

THE CHOATE NEWS



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Letter from the Editors

A Glance Into 2050

Dear reader,

By now, you've probably noticed the unique design of this issue of *The Choate News*. The bottom half of each page has an entirely redesigned layout, featuring dark blue backgrounds, sans serif fonts, and articles that seem, at first glance, to make little sense. You might be wondering: Why?

All of the articles in the redesigned bottom halves of pages belong in 2050 — that is, they are news articles as we envision them being written exactly 30 years from today. We asked our reporters — all young people preparing to inherit the world — to envision a future they predict, fear, or want to live in thirty years from now. Whether extreme weather will ravage New Haven county or whether Choate will introduce virtual reality in place of outdoor activities, one thing remains true: at the rate today's world appears to be changing, anything — miraculous or destructive — seems possible.

It is our parting goal as a masthead to call attention to the future. Climate change. Political polarization. Digitization of society. We are at a pivotal point in history, one in which headlines bring new surprises every day. We hope that our final issue will inspire our readers not only to create the world we hope to see but also to take meaningful action against the one we fear.

Turn to School News for a preview of a net-zero campus. Flip to Local News or Features to consider the impending effects of climate change on life in Wallingford. Read over the Arts and Sports pages for predictions of how campus life will change — an expanded cappella program, a new state-of-the-art athletics facility.

As we, the 113th masthead, move out of the Newsroom and into senior spring, we want to call your attention to the future. We're hopeful; we're anxious; and we're thinking — actively and deeply — about the world we're soon to inherit. We're concerned with the problems that will likely emerge, yet we remain optimistic that our generation can create the world in which we want to live. We hope, after reading our final issue, that you will believe this, too.

CORRECTIONS

School News

A *School News* article on February 14 about the College Counseling Office contained several errors. It misstated the number of counselors; there are seven, not ten. The article also misstated the number of students assigned to each counselor. Most counselors are responsible for 36 students, not between 20 and 30. Additionally, the piece misstated the number of students in each of the counselor's seminars. Most seminars have 36 students, not between 25 and 30.

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



Graphic by Chandler Littleford/The Choate News

OPINIONS

CAMPUS

Dear iDiary: Inside the Mind of a 2050 Teen

By **Rachel Pittman '52**
Associate Editor

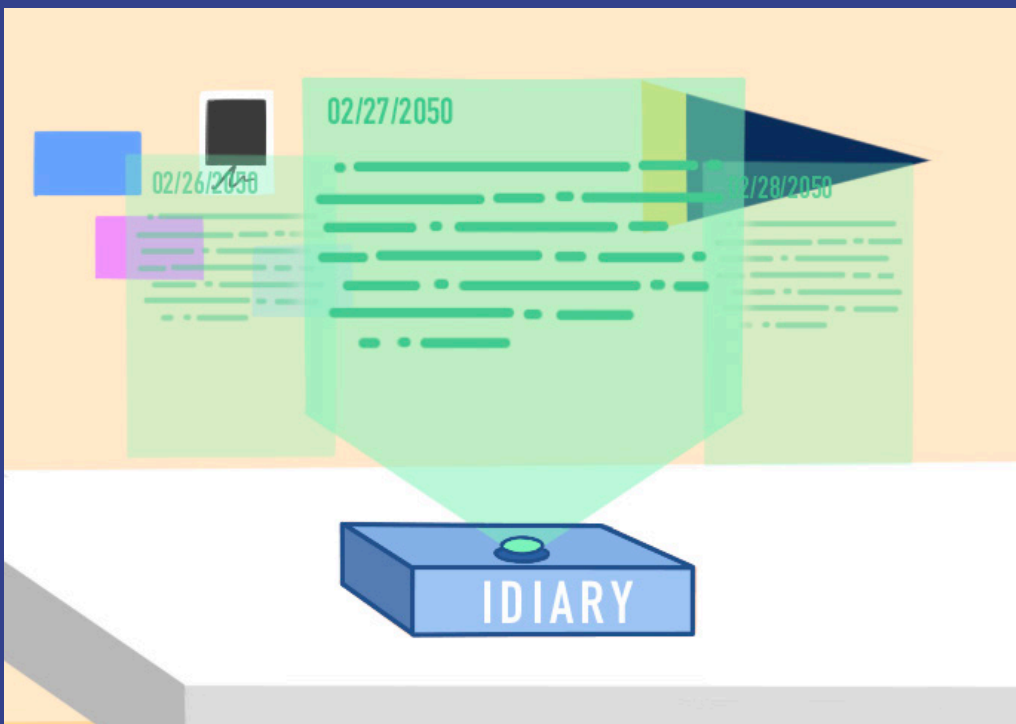
Monday

Today after my Java 750 class I was walking to Journalism in a Paperless World 200 when I realized that I forgot a citation in my essay. My hands started to shake. Every nerve, muscle, tendon was electric as if trying to defy the suppression of my skin. It reminded me of what I read in history, about how kids used to play a game called “tug of war.” They would pull backward on a rope, feet digging into the sand, the syrupy blackness of the night air laying a delicate film over the moment. Their pruney fingers would slip and rip as one team plunged forward, and the other landed on the damp sand with chuckles. That's what my hands were doing today: tugging and warring. Except the light crack of guffaws were replaced by my overwhelmed yelps. The sparkling, soupish air by the assaulting daylight. As my hands began to shake more vigorously, appearing on the verge of snapping off from my wrists, knuckles flying like buttons on a too-tight shirt, I finally reached Humanities and ran into the bathroom. A wall between myself and the eyes of my schoolmates, I could panic in solitude.

Convulsing in CT,
Pixel Pittman

Tuesday

Today at School Meeting, the Administration announced that “to ensure that each student produced from this fine institution is well-equipped to face the demands of the real world, Choate will be disbanding all clubs, ensembles, and non-academic organizations on campus.” They



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

said it's so that we can focus. After the meeting, I caught some of the reactions to the new policy: “I'm glad we're finally focusing on what's important at this School. I can't believe they didn't do away with that hobby nonsense earlier.” I'm going to be forced to sell my iFrenchHorn and my virtual softball bat soon. I'm going to have to start hiding you under my bed, iDiary, so you're not confiscated too. I hope you won't be insulted. Maybe this policy will stop my hands from shaking. Without the distractions, I can focus on what's important.

A newly focused,
Pixel Pittman

Wednesday

During my math test today, I wet my pants: I sat there staring at the first problem. “Complete

the square.” I think back to my studying last night/this morning (thank God study hours have been extended to allow Wi-Fi and extra help 24/7). How do I complete the square again? B divided by two squared? B. B... P. Pee. I need to pee. Not now, Rachel. B divided by two squared. Pee divided by two squared. Pee! I. Need. To — Focus, Rachel! Why do you need to pee anyway? You've only had five cups of coffee the past two days. You shouldn't need to pee. Urination is for the weak! Now, complete the square. I feel a warm, stinging sensation trickle down my leg. My pride stains my pants, but as I sign the Honor Code like the students before me — “fidelitas et integritas” — I am proud. At least I completed the square.

Dishonored honor student,
Pixel Pittman

Thursday

I can't breathe. My lungs have collapsed! Who did it? Who plugged in the vacuum? Who stuck its nozzle down my throat? Who flipped the switch? Who turned the volume up that loud? And who can give me a hand? iDiary, I'm scared, I don't think I will breathe again! The air is too thick. It gets stuck in my throat and flutters out in protest. Its flag flaps in the wind. (“Do you hear the people sing?”) And I bite the air, teeth jagged and desperate. I am a barking dog to a deaf person. I claw at my chest, skin under my fingernails, desperate for space in my lungs. But it doesn't work, and I'm still not breathing. Does that mean I'm dead? Who dictates these gray matters? Who and who and who...

SOS,
Pixel Pittman

Friday

Something scary happened today: I breathed again. It wasn't dramatic like I'd hoped it would be, like when you finally burp after the pressure in your chest becomes unbearable. It wasn't like that at all. I was trying to memorize an acronym for PV=nRT when the air slipped in again and my lungs tiredly responded, “Okay, air. Truce. I'm too tired to fight. Too tired to care.” I didn't wash the skin from under my fingernails before I laid down to sleep. I forced myself to lie perfectly still, to blend in with the thick gray of night, hoping for the sweet tide of sleep to wash over me and pull me under for a while.

The full empty glass,
Pixel Pittman

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Hope Lies in Mayor Pete Buttigieg

By the editors of *The Choate News*

We need to defeat Trump. In the three years as our nation's leader, President Donald Trump P'oo has spread propaganda, promoted extremism, attacked career civil-servants, and discredited the journalistic institutions that attempted to hold him accountable. These actions have all contributed to the growing polarization of American politics, enabling a political environment where even the most well-intentioned politicians have no chance at carrying forward their agendas. In a political climate like this, we cannot afford to choose our next Demoratic candidate based solely on policy. We need somebody who can bridge the gap between conflicting ideologies, speak for the common American, and adapt to our ever-changing world. Only then will we have someone who can go head-to-head with Trump and come out on top.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg is the one to do so.

At 38, Buttigieg is the youngest and first openly gay candidate for the Democratic nomination. A Rhodes Scholar, Harvard graduate, and the current mayor of South Bend, Indiana, Buttigieg has launched a competitive campaign so far, earning the most delegates in the Iowa and New Hampshire caucuses.

While Buttigieg's policies speak to the needs of our generation, his biggest asset is his electability. Buttigieg is not Joe Biden, who has historically launched competitive presidential campaigns that lost momentum over time. He is not Bernie Sanders, whose proposal for an extremist Medicare for All policy will only exacerbate the political divisiveness brought about by the Trump administration. Buttigieg



Pete Buttigieg speaks at an event in South Carolina.

is not Elizabeth Warren, whose anti-corruption plan is inflexible and extremely progressive, which will only dissuade swing voters and Republicans disillusioned with their party. He is not Amy Klobuchar, whose campaign effort — while promising — has remained small and relies on support from voters in the Midwest. He is not Michael Bloomberg, whose credibility as Mayor of New York is often overshadowed by his stop-and-frisk policing.

Although it is easy to see Buttigieg as a moderate in comparison to some of his more left-leaning opponents like Sanders, the policies he has proposed are far more progressive than those supported by presidential candidates of the past. Among other socioeconomic policies, he has endorsed instituting a \$15-an-hour federal minimum wage, quadrupling the earned income tax credit for

single adults, paving a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, and instituting a single-payer health care system which he's coined as "Medicare for all who want it." He addresses arguably the most pressing issue of our generation: environmental sustainability, laying out a "Green New Deal" which includes a goal to reach net-zero emissions nationwide by 2050.

What's more: he aims to tackle sweeping institutional toxins that undermine our democracy, including an expansion of the Supreme Court to eliminate partisan rulings and the dissolution of the electoral college. His ideas are undeniably progressive, yet he appeals to voters on all ends of the political spectrum and is thus capable of striking a balance between clashing viewpoints.

As a young politician, Buttigieg can be the voice of our generation. A central component of

his platform is his idea of "generational change." He strives to pave the road for an era of political activism and discussion that encourages new, diverse voices in politics — a field often dominated by older, rigid, and narrow-minded politicians.

Buttigieg acknowledges that his ideas cannot all be accomplished in four years, and many of the issues he hopes to tackle, such as climate change, require drastic structural overhauls. But he will set a tone and establish crucial precedents for coming generations.

Of course, Buttigieg is not the perfect candidate. He remains largely unpopular among people of color in states like South Carolina or Nevada, whose African-American and Hispanic voters generally support long-standing, familiar politicians like Biden or Sanders; a Quinnipiac University study showed that he was polling at less than one percent with black voters

while a Telemundo poll showed that only around two percent of Latinx voters support him. And, in terms of serving in public office, he is inexperienced compared to other candidates — his prior involvement is limited to his mayorship of South Bend — and is thus less attractive to voters who view extensive experience in government as a necessary qualification for president. Buttigieg is making strides to remedy both situations. For instance, he has proposed his Douglass Plan on his website, which will "implement a health policy package that emphasizes anti-racism and is supported by a corresponding investment in education and sustainable infrastructure to enable it all."

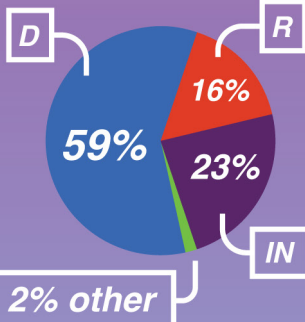
As high schoolers, our voices are often pushed aside. Buttigieg is a break from a long line of old, ineffective leaders who have proven to be incapable of employing initiatives to solve the issues that affect the generations that follow them. He is charismatic, articulate, and, maybe most importantly, young. We trust that he will combat partisanship in government and reestablish American commitment to justice.

It's time to support a candidate who acknowledges the interests of the collective, whose moderate stance will heal our polarized political environment, and whose electability will disband President Trump's intolerant administration. Buttigieg is a spokesman for young generations and the candidate that will stand the best chance against Trump's reelection. It is for these reasons that the editors of *The Choate News* endorse Pete Buttigieg for President of the United States.

Choate
2020

21.4% support **Sanders**
19.6% support **Buttigieg**
17.5% support **Warren**
16.0% support **Trump**
9.3% support **Bloomberg**
6.0% are undecided
5.7% support **Biden**
3.0% support **Klobuchar**
1.5% support **Yang**
(psst, he dropped out)

Which political party do you affiliate with?



How do you stay informed about the 2020 election?

"I attend Young Democrats meetings every week, I listen to NPR and read *The New York Times* every day."

"FOX and CNN. I try to watch both, to get different points of view, but I'm getting really sick of the people on CNN."

"Candidate website, debates, discussions w/friends & family, *The New York Times*, NPR, PBS, Politico, iSideWith.com."

"Videos by Tim Pool, Ben Shapiro, and Steven Crowder and their takes on what the media is saying."

There were 332 responses to the survey. 72% of respondents were students. 28% of respondents were faculty or staff.

66% of faculty and staff are Democrats, while 30% are Republicans and 4% are independent.

56% of students are Democrats, 21% are Republicans, and 23% are independent.

President Christopher Florris Turns A Blind Eye

By Sabahat Rahman '51
Opinions Staff Writer

President Christopher Florris is stuck at a crossroads; if he has any hope for reelection in the 2052 Presidential Elections, he must radically shift his policies to appeal to public interest. By taking initiative in the climate crisis, steadily demilitarizing the United States, and tackling the outbreak of gun violence, Florris can tip the political balance in his favor, and bridge the rapidly widening gaps between different political parties' ideologies.

When Florris was elected in 2048, he broke all past precedents, advertising himself as both America's first Libertarian president and the world's youngest billionaire as of 2025, after developing the top social media platform: Split. Critics speculate that Florris's social media outreach got him into office: he spent \$600 million dollars funding campaign ads through Split and other networking apps, reaching a worldwide audience. His natural charisma and familiarity with the business world made him beloved by many industries. However, Green, Democratic, and Republican voters were hesitant, and continue to express concerns about his legitimacy in office. Without their votes, Florris is in no position for reelection.

In our polarized political climate, it's difficult to find common ground between the goals of the Green, Democratic, Republican, and Libertarian parties. However, the climate change crisis has moved to the forefront of each party's agenda. This is a relatively new and, for some, unexpected

shift catalyzed by the 2047 flooding in Louisiana, informally referred to as "The Return of Hurricane Katrina." The casualties were cataclysmic: 500,000 people had their homes ravaged and destroyed, 6,000 people died, and the economy crashed. Even three years later, Louisiana is still reeling from the disaster. The flood changed Americans' attitude towards global warming, once ridiculed as "liberal propaganda." To reach voters, Florris must push forward proposals limiting carbon emissions and adequately preparing Americans should more natural disasters arise — as they are expected to do.

Additionally, all Americans, regardless of their political stance, are calling for global nuclear demilitarization. The nuclear incident of 2045 — when North Korea launched a nuclear missile at the island of Kahoolawe, a speculated "test run" before they would move on to attack Israel — is still fresh in the public's mind. Looking ahead, if Florris wants to be reelected, he needs to lead the nuclear demilitarization movement in both the United States and abroad. As empirically shown, this can be done: France and Britain were able to abolish 100% of their weapons ten years ago.

Finally, Florris must address gun violence in the United States, which is at an all-time high. In 2049, more than 65,000 Americans died from gun violence, and studies show that over 50% of the American public is terrified to leave their homes. Andrea Smith, born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut, spoke on the issue: "When I was growing up in New Haven, I'd go out and

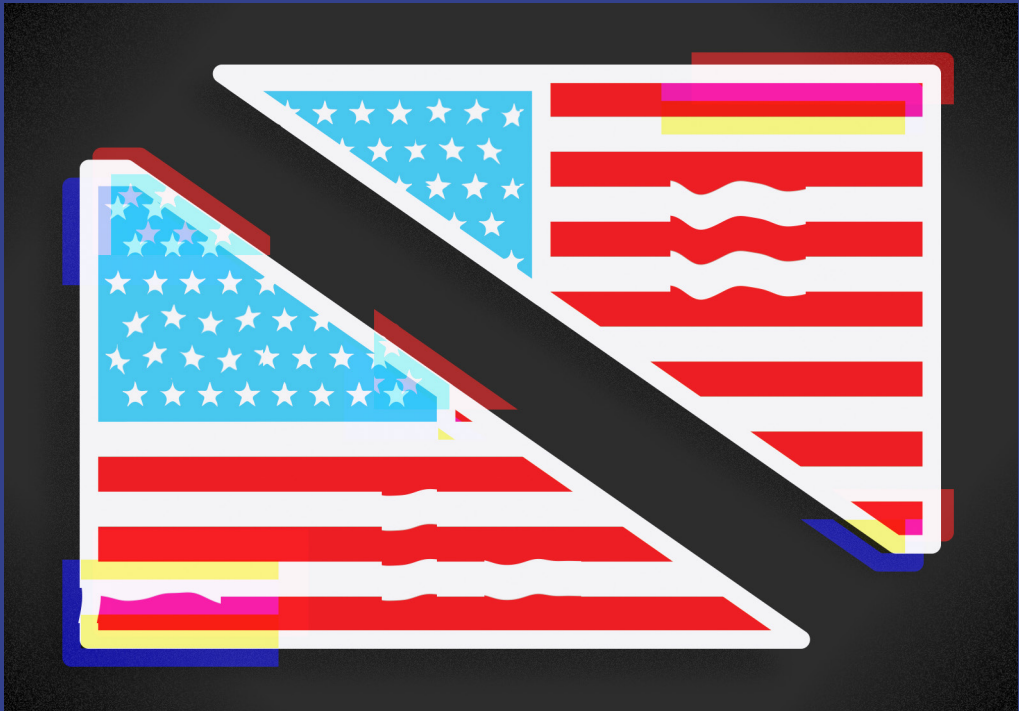
get ice cream with friends, see a movie, and bike to school. Today, I'm scared to go to the supermarket alone, and I'm 40 years old. I can hear gunshots from my house in the middle of the night. I don't recognize my neighborhood anymore."

In response to the high crime rates, corporations such as Amazon have expanded. Their delivery services have adapted to accommodate Americans who live in areas where it's too dangerous to go outside. Since his election, Florris has exacerbated the issue, ignoring gun violence and instead directing his attention towards letting these corporations grow, bolstering the economy at the expense of American lives. Limitations on gun ownership still remain a deeply partisan issue. Historically, Libertarians have not wanted to place harsh regulations on gun ownership, but Florris must

realize what many Americans have known for decades — our arcaic gun policy has simply been outrun by violence.

In 2037, Florris said, "Despite recent hardships, I remain hopeful — no, certain — that one person alone can make a difference." This might have been true when Florris was a young adult, climbing his way up the ladder in the world of technology and business. However, as president of the United States, Florris is the person who can "make a difference." Florris has so far not shown a desire to enact the meaningful changes Americans need. Looking to 2052, he must start focusing on the issues that are most important to Americans.

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President Christopher Florris has divided the United States.

Graphic by Chandler Littleford/The Choate News

Students for Students Fund Divides Senior Class

By **Natarsha Yan '21**
Staff Reporter

This year, fundraising for the Senior Class Gift Campaign, which asks members of the current senior class to donate money as a gift to the School, ran from February 5 to February 14. The campaign, given the name Pay it Forward 2020, was organized by Ms. Sheldon Keegan, Assistant Director of the Annual Fund, and the Choate Philanthropy Council, a group of 15 seniors appointed by the School.

Since 2014, the Senior Class Gift has been one source of donations to the Students for Students fund, which was created in the 1980s to support students who need assistance with extracurricular costs. The money that Students for Students receives from sixth-formers will support current fifth-formers next year, when they themselves are seniors. More than 85% of the Class of 2020 donated to the campaign, a decrease from the Class of 2019's participation rate of 97%.

During the campaign, some members of the senior class questioned the campaign's purpose and its participation-based philosophy of donating. Sixth-formers were encouraged to donate any amount to fund, no matter how small, as long as they did, in fact, donate. The goal was to achieve a 100% rate of participation.

Some sixth-formers saw that approach as detrimental to school spirit, largely because they were criticized by their classmates after declining to



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

Seniors debate the purpose of the Students for Students fund: Should it be based on participation or amount raised?

donate. Some students reported being labeled as “ungrateful.”

“I think that the fund is an important step in showing that students want to help their fellow students with any extra expenses they may have,” Abraham Goodman ’20 said. But, he added, “the focus [became] tearing down our fellow students instead of coming together to help the next class.”

Luis Romero ’20 agreed. “The fund has the potential to be a super helpful fund that can support younger students,” he said. “However, the way that it was advertised achieved the complete opposite. There was too much emphasis on class

participation and not enough about the importance of actually donating.”

"It is the intention, and not the value of the money, that is most important."

Laura Solano-Florez '20

Romero said that some students have donated in the name of others who consciously chose not to contribute. To Romero, this exemplified a

perversion of the campaign's purpose.

“There are many factors that go into whether or not someone wants to donate, not just if they believe in the fund or not,” Goodman said. “They simply might not have enough money to give, or maybe want to give the money directly to someone they know needs it.”

He continued, “And even if the reason for someone not donating is because they dislike the fund, that is their own opinion. I am not going to try to force a student to donate to something they do not support.”

Ms. Keegan said that her office instructed members

of the Philanthropy Council to emphasize to their classmates the importance of participation over the amount of dollars donated. She also told them to readily accept no for an answer.

According to Anjali Mangla ’20, a member of the Council, the students trying to persuade their peers to donate were not officially affiliated with the campaign. “Interestingly enough, I don't think the people pressuring students to donate were even on the Council, which is why I was confused as to why it escalated,” she said.

To many sixth-formers the campaign is critically import-

ant. Laura Solano-Florez ’20, a member of the Philanthropy Council, said, “It helps financially-burdened rising seniors remove financial difficulties in their senior year.” These costs can include team items, weekend trips sponsored by the Student Activities Center, and Last Hurrah tickets.

“I think that this fundraiser is an important tradition with the intention of bringing the senior class together. Choate seniors put a lot of work into the Philanthropy Council, and it is important to support your peers,” said Solano-Florez.

Raine Williams ’20, another member of the Philanthropy Council, agreed. “It's just to help others,” she said, “so even a little amount can make a difference. It's better than not donating at all.”

Many other students have stood up in defense of the fund and agree that class participation should be emphasized in order to promote a sense of unity. To them, this spirit exceeds the value of the actual money raised.

“It is the intention, and not the value of the money, that is most important,” Solano-Florez explained.

Williams added, “This fund is not just about donating for participation. It's about donating as a community effort to give to those in need. It's to show unity as a class.”

In the end, Solano-Florez says she is “very proud of our form for being able to reach around 85% participation.”

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FEATURES

LOST TRADITION OF SENIOR SLEDDING RETURNS IN DIGITAL FORM

By **Bianca Rosen '51**
Associate Editor

On February 19, 2050, Choate revived the long-cherished senior sledding tradition through Virtual Reality (VR), a tradition lost to the climate crisis of the 2020s that caused global snow loss and raised seawater levels.

The VR industry has gained momentum over the last 30 years, and it has come to define the cornerstone of American life, vastly influencing entertainment, medical, and technological industries. Choate's emphasis on adopting the newest technologies to optimize students' academic and interpersonal experiences has been a core element of the School's philosophy, tracing back as early as 2012 with the debut of the one-to-one iPad program. Now, the VR initiative expands upon those core ideals. Working in tandem with the newly constructed Kennedy Wellness Center (KWC), Choate hopes to bring back this ancient tradition for students to enjoy and destress. According to the School Archives, the last real-world senior sledding occurred more than three decades ago, in 2018.

When Dean of Students Ms. Alice Chang announced on February 15 that Choate would bring back senior sledding by investing in VR headsets, the student body couldn't believe it. “I was so excited. I've never been sledding. I've never even seen snow!” said sixth-former Adam Ross ’50. “I was born and raised in Connecticut, where the temperature is never below 70 degrees Fahrenheit.”

Most Choate students have never experienced winter, and senior sledding was merely a faded dream

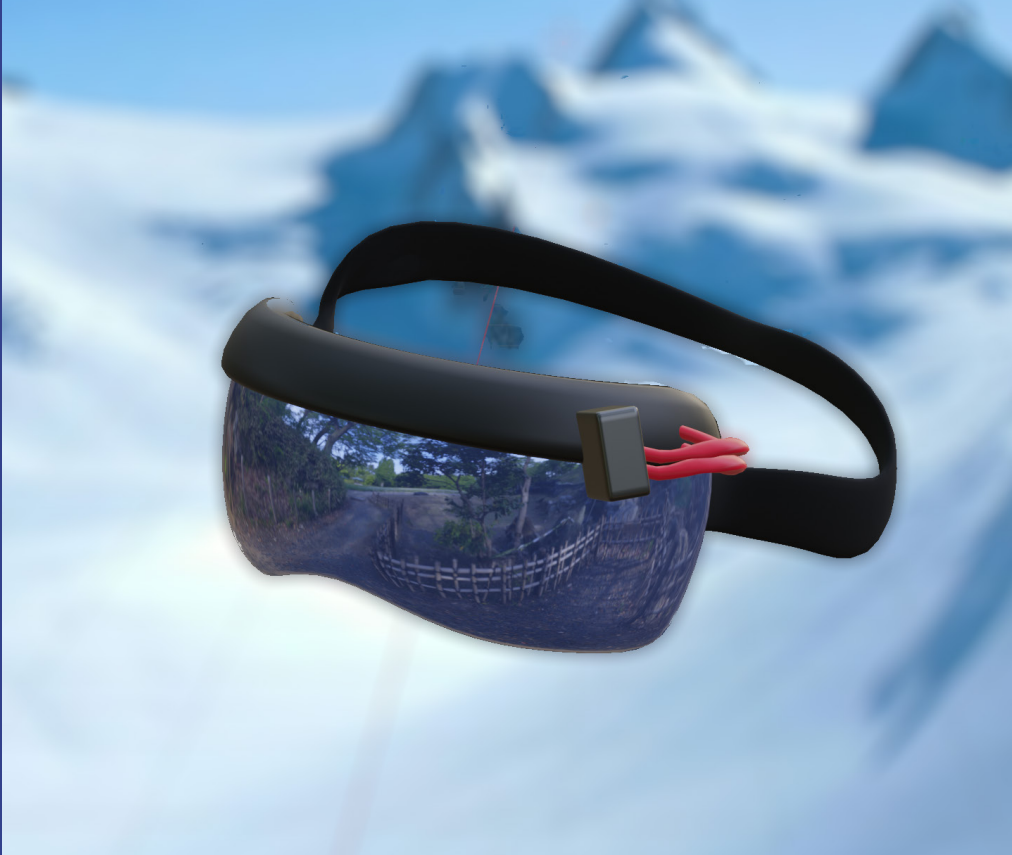
raved about by alumni teachers. Even so, said Larry Nelson ’50, students “always heard whispers about senior sledding someday returning, especially because of the new VR technology announced by M.A.G.” (M.A.G. was created in 2030 when the merger of Microsoft, Apple, and Google monopolized the technological world.)

When Saturday rolled around, seniors trickled into the KWC at noon. “When I walked into the common area, I saw rows of shiny bodysuits, gloves, and goggles,” said Anna Lucas ’50. The gear was central to enhancing the three dimensional experience for students.

Dr. Elisa Reynold, the leader of the KWC and mastermind behind

the event, said, “The combination of the suits, gloves, and goggles allow students to feel connected to their environment. Ideally, they are able to touch the snow, feel the wind as they are sledding, and are transported to the moment. Students have enjoyed our cybernetic implants for virtual entertainment, but we are hoping that this event will allow for all community members to immerse themselves in the extinct New England winter.”

Brimming with excitement, seniors made their way up to the second floor of the KWC. Instead of the usual reading pods and couches, black leather seats and game consoles were arranged in perfect rows. As students prepared for VR immersion,



Graphic by Elton Zheng/The Choate News

Choate used Virtual Reality to bring back senior sledding, a tradition last seen on campus in 2018.

Dr. Reynolds explained the basic instructions. Within five minutes, seniors had their goggles on, hands poised over their consoles, and were ready to launch into the simulation.

Students were transported to a digitally-rendered version of the field at Gunpowder Creek, where senior sledding used to take place. The sky was bright blue and the sun was shining. It was 25 degrees Fahrenheit — a temperature unheard of since the year 2035 when all the ice caps officially melted. Birds were chirping, hidden under the shroud of the trees, and the air was crisp and smelled faintly of the holidays. “It was straight out of a fairytale,” said Grace Meridin ’50.

Seniors were shocked by how “real” the experience was. “I could physically touch the snow, feel my stomach flip as I slid downhill, and gawk at the mountaintops encircling us. I was mind blown, and so was everyone else,” said Mark Robin ’50.

Adding on, Ella Lang ’50 said, “Erin [Thornton '50] jokingly threw a snowball at me and I couldn't help but scream — not because of what she did, but because I felt the burst of cold when the snowball collided with my skin.”

“I'm glad the students enjoyed the experience,” Dr. Reynolds said. “We want Choate to utilize technology like this in the future. By using VR, we hope not only to teach our students a comprehensive view about the past but also provide them with more opportunities to focus on their own personal wellness in an uncertain world.”

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SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAPERFORMS AT KENNEDY CENTER, NEW FUND TO SUPPORT ORCHESTRAL TRAVEL ANNOUNCED

By **Lara Selçuker '21**
Reporter

On Presidents' Day, the Choate Rosemary Hall Symphony Orchestra (CRHO) traveled to Washington, D.C., to perform at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The CRHO was one of four youth orchestras performing in the Capital Orchestra Festival, an annual event organized by Music Celebrations International (MCI) featuring prominent youth orchestras from across America.

At the concert, the maestro meticulously planned his repertoire to celebrate the birthdays of Ludwig van Beethoven and President Abraham Lincoln. The orchestra played Aaron Copland's "Lincoln Portrait," and Beethoven's "Symphony No. 5." Choate alumni, family, and teachers reunited for the monumental performance, including Reginald Bradford, who taught in the Visual Arts Department at Choate for 38 years, who returned to narrate "Lincoln Portrait."

This year marks Mr. Ventre's 50th year at Choate as well as the 50th year since the founding of Choate's Symphony Orchestra. The CRHO's recognition as one of the four best high-school youth orchestras at the Kennedy Center can be attributed to Mr. Ventre's half-century of dedication.

Head of School Dr. Alex Curtis announced the Kennedy Center trip to students after the Orchestra's fall concert. MCI's invitation recognized CRHO as one of four best high school youth orchestras in the United States. "I responded without hesitation," Mr. Ventre said. "Of course, what an honor!"

Though he initially thought that there would be concerts all weekend, Mr. Ventre was pleased to find out that the performance was just one day long. The day-long performance gave students the opportunity to sightsee. Many students visited the Lincoln Memorial and Vietnam and Korean War Memorials before heading to the concert venue.

French horn player Jayden Khuu '21 said, "We spent around an hour visiting four memorials. It was pretty eye-opening and it was very touching to see the Lincoln Memorial when we were playing a piece dedicated to his life in public service."

Performing at the Kennedy Center will be an "eternal memory."

*Mr. Phil Ventre
Orchestral and Jazz Ensemble Director*

Students, families, and alumni gathered for an alumni luncheon at the Kennedy Center after the performance. In recognition of Mr. Phil Ventre's devotion to the school, Ms. Kalya Yannatos, Director of the Arts Department, announced the establishment of the Ventre Fund during the luncheon. The fund will provide every child who wishes to go on a tour the opportunity to do so, regardless of which ensemble or what financial situation they are in. The fund was established to broaden accessibility to more students who hope to participate in the musical tours. "Now they don't have to worry," Mr. Ventre said.

Mr. Michael Welles '72, Ms. Mari Jones, and Ms. Leslie Welles played crucial roles in establishing the fund. To ensure the fund remained a surprise, those involved kept it a secret from Mr. Ventre.

After the announcement, Mr. Ventre shared his great appreciation for the Welles family for their continued support of the orchestra. Mr. Michael Welles was also invited to play as a guest artist for the French horn section during the performance at the Kennedy Center. "The French horn players love him!" Mr. Ventre said.

Along with the support from the Welles, the fund was set up by trustees Ms. Buffy Cafritz, a member of the Rosemary Hall Class of 1947, Ms. Jacqueline Mars GP'18, and the Jones family. Mr. Ventre believes music tours are important because they contribute to the orchestra's legacy, and hopes that his choice of songs for the repertoire have strengthened CRHO as a group.

"I felt really comforted and grateful to find out about the Ventre Fund. I had an incredible experience in Italy so I was very glad to hear that many more students will be able to experience what I had," Khuu said.

He told the symphony orchestra players that the experience of performing at the Kennedy Center will be an "eternal memory." Mr. Ventre's passion and dedication for nurturing Choate musicians year after year will always be remembered through his namesake Ventre Fund.

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Photos by Derek Ng/The Choate News

The CRHO was one of only four elite youth orchestras invited to perform at the Kennedy Center.

ARTS AND LEISURE

FIESTAS & SIESTAS: A CAPPELLA IN 2050

By **Tony Lee '51**
Associate Editor

Fed up with the limited a cappella performances during the school year, the a cappella groups on campus recently coordinated with Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long to create a two-part event: Aca-Fiesta and Aca-Siesta. Scheduled for March 1 and March 3, 2050, the two performances will aim to join the ranks of Parents' Weekend, Holiday Program, and Acapalooza as the most celebrated a cappella events on campus.

Kicking off the upcoming winter term-end experience during the Monday reading period will be Aca-Fiesta, when a cappella groups will perform EDM songs in the main lobby of the SAC while head-bashing and engaging in intensive choreography, according to Ozzie Potter '50, President of the British international students-only group Óctaves.

Potter said, "We're trying to avoid it looking like a SAC dance where only seven people show up. After dedicating months to grueling practices in the PMAC, I have finally managed to count the number of members in our group, and I can confidently say that our Aca-Fiesta performance will at least resemble a SAC dance where eleven people show up."

Sam Guo '51, the other Co-President of Óctaves, added that Óctaves will not attempt any form of organized choreography and that members are instructed to "dance like your dean pushed you onto the dance floor during Hol Ball."

Óctaves plans on taking full advantage of the iPad live-streaming app to broadcast the groups performances. Because of a sharp decline in student interest in attending performances in-person, a cappella groups like Óctaves rely heavily on technology for publicity and outreach.



Graphic by Sage Setty/The Choate News

Today, holograms are vital to a cappella performances.

Newly established a cappella group Silent Night, which has received criticism from the Arts department as well as COSA for its unique approach to a cappella with minimal singing and heavy emphasis on miming, dancing, and lip-syncing, spearheaded the event planning process for Aca-Fiesta.

President of Silent Night Melon Wheeler '51 said, "Dance and EDM are where we shine. Whereas for Parents' Weekend we really have to stick to conventional ideas to what a cappella is, we have found a way to break the mold and defy society's definition of a cappella in this new Aca-Fiesta. We will dance so hard that people won't even know what song we're performing — they can just interpret from our movements."

Silent Night also led the movement on campus for the use of holograms in a capella performances due to the student body's lack of interest in physical activities, borrowing technology developed by members of the student organization Choate

Students for Holograms.

"Everyone just wants to stay in their room and be on their computer or iPad. Not only are people not showing up as audience members, but our own group members don't want to come perform either," Wheeler said. "We're trying to make physical attendance in performances mandatory, but we've been facing a lot of backlash from students. Until then, we have to use hologram substitutes for group members."

Guo revealed that attendance has also been an issue for Óctaves, and referred to the short-lived Aca-Field Day — an annual spring term event where a cappella groups competed for the title of Most Athletic A cappella Group in games of three-legged-race and pin-the-tusk-on-the-boar — as an example of school events that have been canceled due to low student participation.

"Why play field games when you can play on your phone? Why walk across campus to see a cappella groups perform when you have the Internet?"

I hope Aca-Fiesta and Aca-Siesta can wrestle some popularity back from having fun with technology to doing things in person," Guo said.

Aca-Fiesta will be followed by Aca-Siesta, a slumber party where a cappella groups sing lullabies to drowsy students studying in the library during the Wednesday overflow block. According to Wheeler, Aca-Siesta will be a quiet, distraction-free event that Wheeler said, "will really let our lip-sync and dance skills shine."

Black Velvet, a new a cappella group that COSA has denied official status from due to their use of music backtracks, also fully supported the introduction of Aca-Siesta. With a focus on performing KPop songs, Black Velvet has consistently drawn the lowest number of viewers on the iPad streaming app, which Co-President of Black Velvet James Yan '51 attributed to new tastes in technological music.

"People are always telling me that they think KPop is so boring that they want to go to sleep whenever we perform — they want extremely bass-boosted songs with all sorts of newly developed sound effects used in all the high-tech music studios," said Luna Li '51, the other Co-President of Black Velvet. "Our performances can't shine when we're competing against all the snazzy new song genres, but now we can embrace our calm, retro music in Aca-Siesta."

Black Velvet has been banned from Acapalooza in recent years for persistent usage of voice-enhancement and auto-tune mouthpieces. Li promised that the group will refrain from using such equipment in Aca-Fiesta or Aca-Siesta. "We do use a little auto-tune here and there. But hey, it's 2050!" Yan said.

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VARSITY SWIMMING DEFEATS HOTCHKISS

By **Alex Skrypek '23**
Reporter

During their senior day last weekend, Boys' and Girls' Varsity Swimming and Diving beat the Hotchkiss School. Both Choate teams had winning records entering the meet, and each wanted one more victory before heading into the end-of-the-season championships.

"Our senior day really couldn't have gone any better," said Assistant Coach Abby MacCarthy. "Everyone swam very well — especially all of the seniors in their last meet."

The meet started off exceptionally well for the girls' team, as they placed first and second place in the 200 Medley Relay event. The winning team of captains Sam Scott '20 and Isabelle So '20 with Zoe Tray '21, and Mealy Cronin '23 claimed a new school record in the event with a time of 2:03.63. The boys also had a successful start to the meet as they claimed first and third in the 200 individual medley (IM) Relay.

In the next event, the 200-meter freestyle, Grace Zhang '20 and Martha Chesson '22 placed first and second. The boys faced tougher competition, but Andrew Chang '21 swam a fast second half of his race to win the 200-meter freestyle for Choate.

In the 200-meter IM event, Choate took home first place for both girls and boys after strong swims from Tray and Ben Cho '22.

In the final swimming event before the diving competitions, the 50-meter freestyle, the Choate girls managed to pull off first, sec-



Photos courtesy of Sam Brown

Scott '20, So '20, Tray '21, and Cronin '23 set a new school record in the 200 medley relay on Saturday.

ond, and fifth place, putting them well ahead of their competition ending the half. The boys finished second, third, and last place but still held a sizable lead of eight points over Hotchkiss.

Hotchkiss had strong divers on their girls' team and earned first and third place, but freshman Catherine Cronin '23 secured second for Choate. On the boys' side, Choate swept in diving, receiving first, second, and third place.

Going into the second half of the meet, both Choate teams were securely ahead of Hotchkiss. However, the Wild Boars didn't slow down and won the next four events

of both boys' and girls' 100-meter butterfly and 100-meter freestyle.

In the longest event at the meet, the 400-meter freestyle, the Choate girls finished first, third, and fourth, continuing their streak of first-place finishes. The boys managed a third, fifth, and sixth-place finish.

With first-place finishes in the 200-meter freestyle relay, Choate cemented its victory. The girls' relay of Allison Opuszynski '20, Zhang, Claire Yuan '21, and Chesson and the boys' relay of Parker Scott '20, Chang, Jack Sun '21, and Cho both beat the Hotchkiss teams by several seconds.

In the last event of the meet, the 400-meter freestyle relay, the Choate girls' team was able to finish in first and third, while the boys' team took second and third place.

The meet ended with Boys' Varsity Swimming winning 99-84 and Girls' Varsity Swimming winning 100-78. The swimmers will use these positive results as momentum as the team prepares for the Founders League and New England Championships on February 29 and March 7-8.

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VARSITY SQUASH COMPETES IN NATIONALS

By **Sam Anastasio '23**
Staff Reporter

On Saturday, Choate Boys' and Girls' Varsity Squash competed in the U.S. High School Team Squash Championships. The boys traveled to Wesleyan University and placed 8th in the Division III Championship. The girls went to Trinity College, where they placed 15th overall in Division I.

The girls' team has had an exceptionally good season so far, entering Nationals with a record of 12-2. Strong performances from players Meagan Best '20 and Nicolina Tessitore '21 led the team from the first two spots on the ladder. However, two days before the tournament, the team learned that its number four player, Rachel Miller '23, caught the flu and could not play. This meant players 5-7 on the ladder would move up one spot, and the players at the bottom of the ladder now had to play tougher opponents.

In the first round, Girls' Varsity Squash lost to the Lawrenceville School 3-4 and faced more hardship when their number one player, Best, got diagnosed with a concussion, sidelining her for the tournament. Everyone on the ladder moved up one additional spot, leading to a tough 5-2 loss against the Pingry School.

They then played the William Penn Charter School in which they lost, 6-1 but won a close contest against the Westover School, 4-3.

"It was disappointing that we lost two players for the tournament, but I'm proud of the way everyone stepped up," said

captain Aurelie Tamsamani '20. "It was especially impressive for Nicolina to play number one in the Westover match and even though she lost, she played very well."

The boys' team, which had a record of 10-13 before Nationals, were looking to advance deep into the tournament. "We expected to do really well at Nationals. Every year we thought we would do really well and win but anything can happen," said captain Sam Curtis '20, who has been sidelined the whole season with an ACL injury.

The weekend started off well for Boys' Varsity Squash, with a 5-2 win against Blair Academy. In the second round, the team faced a tough opponent, Harriton/Lower Merion, and lost 4-3. The team then fell to Noble and Greenough School 5-2 in their 3rd match. "If we had played the two teams on any given Saturday or Wednesday we would have beaten them but after playing a couple of matches it's hard to stay focused and not be fatigued," Curtis said.

In the end, after suffering another loss to the Tabor Academy Boys team, the team placed 8th overall. Although both teams expected to perform better, they both had some strong showings throughout the weekend, even when plagued by illnesses or injuries. With New England Championships this weekend, both teams will look to rebound and finish the season strong.

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RONNEY EFORD ATHLETIC CENTER OPENS IN PLACE OF WJAC

By **Greer Goergen '51**
Associate Editor

This weekend, the Roney Eford Athletic Center will open, hosting a variety of new features with the purpose of making fitness more accessible to the entire campus. This marks the latest edition in a series of new athletics facilities over the last few years including new indoor and outdoor rinks and an indoor tennis court facility. These new facilities have been constructed in response to students' concerns over the disconnect between sports and the rest of campus life.

To address these issues, the School incorporated new facilities into the complex, including a vastly expanded space for exercise equipment and machines. This new space comes with a robust team of individual personal trainers who are available to guide Choate students in developing their fitness plans. They aim specifically to cater to students who don't consider themselves athletes.

"I've never been very good at sports, but when I came to Choate, I was really determined to make my physical fitness a priority. I went to the gym during my first week of school, but it was intimidating and a little discouraging having to work out around all these varsity athletes that seemed to know their way around the machines much better than I did," Poppy Milton '52 said. "Now, I feel more confident exercising with the help of the training staff."

The complex features several high-tech improvements to give Choate athletes a competitive edge. Rowers can expect vast improvements with the new erg room, which incorporates virtual



Graphic by Stella Dubin/The Choate News

The new athletics center includes a virtual reality Erg Room and Golf Simulator.

reality into workouts. Athletes can now use VR erg, which simulates rowing on an actual lake with temperature, humidity, and wind controls. "The new rooms will be very helpful for students to practice techniques, especially when we don't go out on the water," said Choate's Head Crew Coach Ms. Eleanor Sato. "But I am a little concerned about how large a role technology has come to play in athletics — especially as we all know how addictive technology can be. Students already spend enough time staring at pixels on a screen, and now, even sports — which we all typically think of as a screen-less activity — involves technology so heavily."

Co-captain of Choate's Varsity Golf Team Felix Fairchild '50 said that the team will greatly benefit from the new golf simulator. Both the girls and boys teams of every

level will have access to the room, as well as those who wish to play for fun in their spare time. The simulator will be particularly useful "when the weather conditions outside are not agreeable," said the coach, which makes this technologically-advanced form of golf all the more needed.

While many rowers and golfers enjoy the convenience and effectiveness of the new, technologically advanced facilities, some athletes are wary about their implications in the direction that the sports are moving. "The VR erg is fabulous — very realistic ... But I can't help but feel a little nostalgic for when freshmen were introduced to rowing for the first time on the actual water. Some of the best bonding times on the crew team for me have been when I was a new rower and helped carry the boats with my teammates," said Eden Sasani '50. "With all this new technology, we can get a lot more

practice in, but I'm afraid we're missing out on some of these interpersonal experiences which are especially important to sports teams."

The new facilities also demonstrate the School's commitment to athletics at a time when some prep schools are devaluing the activity. In the past few years, other NEPSAC schools like Hotchkiss and Loomis have added esports to substitute traditional sports as afternoon activity requirements. Those schools made the decision to do after esports have surpassed the popularity of conventional sports like football and soccer. Through the new buildings, Choate wants all students — not just varsity athletes — to participate in athletics and experience the benefits of exercise.

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