



NEARLY 400 CHOATE STUDENTS GET COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Choate students sixteen years of age or older received vaccine shots at the Pratt and Whitney Airfield in East Hartford.



Photos courtesy of Linda Phan, Tiffany Xiao, and Ben Small

By **Ryan Kim '23**
Staff Reporter

On Sunday, April 25, nearly 400 Choate students boarded eight buses from the School's Worthington Johnson Athletic Center and rode to the Pratt and Whitney Airfield in East Hartford, where they

received a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine.

For many students, receiving a free vaccination brought great relief amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and many expressed how strange it felt to leave campus for the first time in weeks.

Of the three Covid-19 vaccines that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has authorized for emergency use, Pfizer is the only one approved for young adults sixteen or older. Individuals receive two shots three weeks apart. Some of the students who traveled to East Hartford were receiving their

second dose, but many will need to return on May 16.

Although Nathan Nicholas '23 was anxious that morning, he was happy that he could finally receive a vaccine. "I was very nervous about the shot itself," he said. "What was exciting was the hour I spent on the bus, which was the longest car ride

I've had in the last six weeks. Social distancing came in handy, as I had two seats to myself."

Kenadi Waymire '22, whose family lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was also excited to receive the vaccine. "Getting it in Indiana would be a pain, so knowing that I'd finally be covered was very relieving," she said.

Students reported that the day went smoothly, and they credited the careful planning of Dr. Miriam Cohen, Choate's Medical Director, and Ms. Libby Peard, the School's Director of Health and Wellness Services. "Moving 400 students to a vaccine clinic was a major team effort. Ms. Cullinan made arrangements with B and B Transportation for 8 buses to be available throughout the day on Sunday. Fourteen remarkably dedicated faculty and staff members stepped up as chaperones, some for multiple trips to East Hartford. We had a few bumps that resulted in delays at the clinic, but each successive trip was easier," said Ms. Peard.

Fourth-form Dean Dr. Katie Jewett was one of 14 teachers who

chaperoned the trip. "We showed up at a site with several busloads of people," she said. "The National Guard members who were there were incredibly effective and organized, which allowed for a very streamlined process." Dr. Jewett was also impressed by the patience and politeness of the students, a group that totaled 396 people.

Many hope that the first round of vaccinations marks a step toward a return to normalcy on campus. Dr. Cohen said, "The more people we can get immunized, the more control we have over the pandemic and the development of variants — and then, ultimately, the more we can safely do on campus together."

Students have expressed their gratitude to the School for providing free vaccinations. Nicholas, who is from Switzerland, said, "I am very happy that the logistics worked out for all Choate students to be offered the vaccine. As an international student from a country where I would not normally be eligible for a vaccine, this was an especially hopeful moment."

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PRATT-PACKARD TRADITION ADJUSTS TO CAMPUS HEALTH GUIDELINES

By **Isabel Maida '23**
Reporter

On April 19, the School held the Pratt-Packard Declamation Contest. The competition concluded with Adrienne Chacón '22 winning first place, Julian Hurley '22 winning second, Simone Johnson '23 winning third, and Kenadi Waymire '22 winning fourth.

The Pratt-Packard Declamation Contest is an annual speech competition named after two former teachers: former Dean E. Stanley Pratt and former History Department Head H. Jeremy Packard '55. The competition honors these two teachers and the passion and commitment to public speaking they brought to the community.

The contest is open to all fourth, fifth, and sixth-formers. Each participant composes a five-minute speech on a topic of their choice. Pratt-Packard gives students the opportunity to share their experiences, opinions, and quandaries with the entire Choate community. The winners are chosen based on the SPATE criteria, which stands for stance, projection, articulation tone, and eye contact.

Ms. Victoria Pierotti, one of the judges of the initial qualifying rounds, praised the contestants' willingness to share their hidden stories. "What I admire most is how willing Choate students are to be vulnerable with their community and share their past experiences in order to help others learn."

This year, the contest was exceptionally competitive, with twice as many entries as the previous year. After a rigorous deliberation process, four finalists were chosen to recite their speeches to the Choate community: Chacón, Hurley, Johnson, and Waymire. Each of their speeches connected to their experiences in discovering themselves and their identities.

Before the pandemic, students would convene in Colony Hall to listen to the finalists' speeches during school meeting. However, because of physical distancing guidelines, each contestant was allowed to invite five other students and their adviser to watch the speeches in Colony Hall, while the rest of the community watched on Zoom.

Chacón discussed her struggle to connect with other Black peo-

ple in her community and seeing "Blackness" as separate from her; Waymire articulated her family relationships and the challenges she has encountered growing up; Hurley spoke about the struggles of accepting his height and the toxic masculinity present in society; Johnson explored the intersectionality within her identity and experience as a Black woman. "[It was] a topic that I have been thinking about for a really long time, and it was something that a lot of people told me that they resonated with," said Johnson. "I thought that it was important to share and have other people learn about it and understand the feelings behind it."

Brooke Edwards '22, who watched the speeches in-person, appreciated the way the competition shows students in a different light, beyond the image that they present in the classroom and on campus. "It was just really fascinating to hear people's personal stories through their speeches, and discover their backstory," she said.

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Class of 2021 to Graduate In Person, With Families

By **Begum Gokmen '23**
Copy Editor

After a school year marked by quarantines, remote learning, and a closed campus, students and their families welcomed the news two weeks ago that Choate will hold the commencement ceremony in person for the Class of 2021. The School will allow students to invite guests to Wallingford to observe the year-end tradition. However, many changes are taking place to adhere to Covid-19 guidelines revolving around masking, distancing, gathering sizes, etc.

Seats will be distanced for all individuals participating in the ceremony, and families in attendance will be assigned to their designated spots on the Great Lawn. To lower the size of gatherings, underformers will not be allowed at the event.

This year, due to personal concerns regarding Covid-19, faculty attendance is optional, which many students find disappointing. "It is really sad to think that those who have

mentored us and shaped our Choate experience would not be there at our graduation," said Naina Sharma '21.

"The goodbyes will be bittersweet, but I know this will be a cherished memory for a long time."

Naina Sharma '21

While not everyone in attendance will be fully vaccinated, "It will be reassuring to know that the event will be much safer for everyone because so many people are vaccinated," said Medical Director Dr. Miriam Cohen.

This year, Trevor Noah, the host of The Daily Show on Comedy Central, will be holding a Q&A session with the students through Zoom. "Given all that the Class of 2021 has endured with great resilience and grit over the past four terms, the idea of exploring a celebri-

ty speaker was launched," said Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00. "After some searching, the individuals involved were able to work with Mr. Noah's management team to secure the engagement."

Though disappointed to be leaving campus, students of the graduating class are looking forward to celebrating their Choate experiences on this final day. "The goodbyes will be bittersweet, but I know this will be a cherished memory for a long time," said Sharma.

With all the changes the administration is taking to ensure a safe ceremony, the Commencement will mark a milestone for many students and an important transition to their post-Choate careers. Mr. Velez said, "Every member of the Class of 2021 has been profoundly changed in some way during their time at Choate and, at the same time, they have altered the essence of the School itself."

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Guilty Verdict in George Floyd Trial Brings Relief and Reflection to the Community

By **Simone Johnson '23**
Reporter

On Tuesday, April 20, the world watched with bated breath as the verdict in the trial of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was announced. A diverse jury — including an equal number of Black and white adults — declared Chauvin guilty of second-degree murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter, for last year's killing of George Floyd. On campus, tears of relief flowed, loved ones embraced, and triumphant songs of Black power rang out.

The verdict marked the end of a year of tumult following Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020. "I didn't realize how much I was holding my breath, watching and waiting for the verdict. I felt a sense of relief come over me when the judge declared Derek Chauvin guilty," said Ms. Brienne Ellis, the Associate Director of Admission and Multicultural Recruitment.

Adama Sowe '23 had a different reaction. "When the verdict first came out, I didn't feel anything," she said. "All I could think about was how this should have been the bare minimum for African-American lives in America."

On the evening the verdict was announced, approximately 200 Choate community members, including both students and faculty, attended a "celebration of life and justice" on the lawn in front of St. John Chapel. The event began with words from Director of Spiritual Life Reverend Aaron Rathbun and continued with statements from Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers and other faculty members.

After the faculty speeches, the microphone was opened to students. Sowe was one of the students who decided to speak. "For a split second, it felt as though the era of oppression would never end

and I needed someone to tell me that it will be over. If I needed the love and support, so did every other person of color here at Choate. I just said what I wanted to hear because no one else was going to say it for me. I said it for my friends, family, ancestors, and George Floyd," said Sowe.

Following the cancellation of classes the next day, programming and other resources were offered to the Choate community. Starting at 12:00 p.m., programming included Black, white, and BIPOC affinity spaces, a community art project, guided

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Photo courtesy of Yaser Robles

After the verdict, Choate gathered at the St. John Chapel.

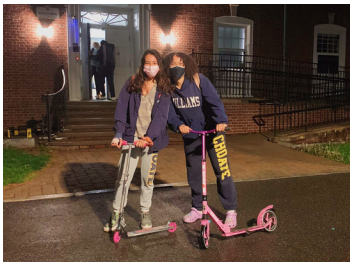
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prayers, poem recitations, and a reflective hike. This lineup came out of suggestions that the Equity and Inclusion Office received from student leaders on campus.

“About a week before the results came out, I met with students to try to anticipate — if this happens, what would you need, what would you want?” explained Associate Director of Equity and Inclusion Mr. Filipe Camarotti. He shared those suggestions with the School’s Current Events Resource Group, which ultimately designed the day’s programming.

Mr. Camarotti, who joined a BIPOC affinity space, found the day productive. “I think I needed to process with people,” he said. “I realized that there was a lot I was just holding in.”

Sarah Markley ’23, who attended the white allyship workshop, said, “It was interesting to

hear how other white students are using their privilege to support Black people and fight against racism in America.” She continued, “I learned many effective ways to fight racism as a white ally in my community, both at Choate and at home.”

Although many students were relieved by the verdict, they acknowledged that Chauvin’s conviction is a small victory in a larger fight. Patrick Finnerty ’21 said, “The trial set a precedent in that cases like these are finally being performed as they should be. Hopefully, there will continue to be awareness around cases of police brutality in ensuring diverse representation among juries and other forms of the judicial process that should be normal but all too often aren’t.”

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Graphic By Yujin Kim/The Choate News

CHOATE CELEBRATES EARTH WEEK



Photo courtesy of Joseph Scania

Students at an invasive species removal event, a community service activity for Earth Week.

By **Yoyo Zhang** ’24
Reporter

This year on April 22, to celebrate Earth Day, Choate’s Conservation Proctors (C-Proctors) arranged various activities spanning four days. From Thursday, April 22, to Sunday, April 25, students participated in Earth Day trivia, stargazing, a screening of the 2012 film version of *The Lorax*, Trashion Show, Project eARTH, and various community service programs.

Mrs. Lena Nicolai, one of the advisers to C-Proctors, explained the process of coming up with these activities. “C-Proctors created programming for Choate’s Earth Week over the course of several years,” she said. With a list of options from previous years at hand, the C-Proctors chose the activities that were the most feasible taking into account

Covid guidelines. In addition, they also had to “coordinate with other groups on campus to support the events.”

Amanda Benneh ’24, an Eco-Rep in Nichols, participated in both stargazing and *The Lorax* screening. “On Earth Day, we emphasize the need for a more protective and sustainable environment around us,” she said. “We can truly recognize the beauty of nature and be motivated to take care of it.” At stargazing, Benneh and her friends “were able to relax and truly see the beauty in the sky.”

Another popular event was trivia, in which teams of students raced to answer environmental-themed questions. Sunny Vo ’24 said that she learned a lot of “surprising facts and statistics on human consumption and waste, the movement against climate change and pol-

lution, and nature as a whole.”

Community service opportunities allowed students to farm and garden on and off campus. Eco-Rep Jasmine Khuu ’24 said, “I had fun gardening at Paddock Farm and playing with the chickens.”

Choate’s Sustainability Committee continued its yearly tradition of “Sustainable Swag Give-away” by giving away reusable bags from Bagito, made from 100% recycled plastic, to new students.

Ms. Nicolai believes that Earth Day is significant in multiple ways, including for its commemoration of a movement and for building awareness for a cause. She pointed out that Earth Day marks “the outcome of many months of organizing and activism on the part of young people, labor unions, scientists, and activists.”

Wendy Huo ’23 shared this sentiment. “I think it’s import-

ant for us to appreciate everything that Choate has offered, a big part of it being the beautiful campus. We should celebrate our existence and cherish the resources provided by Mother Earth.”

To embrace the message of Earth Day, Benneh suggested the Choate community should “continue to compost, pay attention to the usage of water and electricity, and spread awareness about our global emissions every day.”

Ms. Nicolai also highlighted the importance of “checking one’s needs against one’s wants, actively choosing to be aware of the implications of one’s choices, and having conversations with others about our collective choices.”

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Mr. Kafoglis and Ms. Howland Named Class of 2024 Deans



Photos by Sedi Agyeman and Rachel Pittman/The Choate News

Mr. Kafoglis (left) and Ms. Howland (right) join the Deans’ Office.

By **Lauren Kee** ’24
Copy Editor

As the end of the academic year approaches, the Deans’ Office announced that for the next three years, math teacher Mr. Zachary Kafoglis and HPRSS teacher Ms. Amy Howland will serve as the Form Deans for the Class of 2024.

Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez ’00 said, “Ms. Howland and Mr. Kafoglis have demonstrated cultural competency and will bring a commitment to inclusive practices and student advocacy to the Deans’ Office.”

Mr. Kafoglis, who has worked at Choate for six years, lives in Hall, a fourth- and fifth-form girls dorm. In addition to teaching math, he works closely with the Peer Educators, is a member of the Current Events Resource Group, and coaches Boys’ Soccer and Baseball. “One of the parts that I appreciate the most from Mr. Kafoglis’s class is how he cares about us so genuinely,” said Faer Son ’24. “He is understanding and flexible with our class schedule and always willing to provide extra help.”

Ms. Howland has been teaching at Choate for four years. She co-

leads the Self-Defense for Women intramural activity and coaches track and field in the spring. Ms. Howland lives in McCook, a fourth- and fifth-form girls dorm, with her two kids and dog. “I always appreciate that she remembers the little things — birthdays, weekend plans, academic endeavors,” said Bianca Rosen ’21, who is a three-year advisee of Ms. Howland.

To become a dean, applicants wrote letters of interest to Mr. Velez and were interviewed by current members of the Deans’ Office.

The main responsibilities of a form dean include helping students with schedule changes, keeping track of absences, maintaining communication with teachers, and keeping families in the loop on their students’ experience. Ms. Emily Osterhout, one of the two current Third-form Deans said, “The Fourth-form Deans will be responsible for shepherding their class through the next three years of their Choate career, guiding them on their path to graduation.”

Both deans are looking forward to working with the same group of students from their fourth to sixth-form years. “On the rare occasion when I get to teach a student two or three times in Con-

temporary Issues, U.S. History, and Women’s Studies, it’s always so cool to see their progression and growth,” said Ms. Howland.

“The job will look a bit different next year than in the past, simply because our rising fourth-formers haven’t had a typical first year,” said Ms. Osterhout. Third-formers still have not had the chance to learn how certain off-campus privileges, like signing out for the weekend, work. “I think that it will be a continued learning process for all of us,” said Mr. Kafoglis.

Ms. Howland hopes to be an advocate for her students so that they feel as though their voice is heard by the School. “I try really hard to listen to what the students are talking about and what they’re concerned about,” she said. “I want my door to be really open, and I want students to feel really comfortable coming to chat with me.”

Mr. Kafoglis hopes to create an atmosphere where the Class of 2024 feels as though they can be themselves. “I’m excited to see all of the wonderful things that they’re going to do for Choate, for themselves, and for each other,” he said.

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Mr. Gosztyla and Mr. Fuentes Appointed Department Heads

By **Sam Anastasio** ’23
Copy Editor

Choate recently announced changes to two of its department faculty heads, to take effect at the beginning of the 2021-22 academic year. English teacher Mr. Mark Gosztyla will replace Ms. Ellen Devine as English Department Head, and Spanish teacher Mr. Charlie Fuentes will replace Mr. Georges Chahwan. Both were selected by Dean of Faculty Ms. Katie Levesque with guidance from members of their respective departments.

Department heads manage the day-to-day business of their department. They collaborate with department members on curriculum initiatives, and organize professional development.

Mr. Gosztyla has been an English teacher at Choate for five years. He teaches sophomore English and a variety of senior English electives. Outside of the classroom, Mr. Gosztyla coaches cross country and track and field, advises a cohort of day students, and is an adjunct adviser in Lowndes. Mr. Gosztyla said that he was excited to continue the initiatives begun by Ms. Devine, as well as to start some of his own.



Photos by Rachel Pittman and Sam Anastasio/The Choate News

Mr. Gosztyla (left) and Mr. Fuentes (right) are the new English and Language department heads, respectively.

Ms. Victoria Pierotti, a fellow English teacher, said, “Mark works well with everyone. He has a great sense of humor, and I am looking forward to him changing the old idea of what is proper and should be taught at boarding schools.”

Mr. Fuentes has been teaching a wide range of Spanish courses for the past six years. He also coaches Boys’ Varsity Soccer. Mr. Fuentes, he said, “concentrated on the SP400 series, working to decolonize the study of Latin American History while making connections to the Latinx Experience in the US [and] continuing to help students improve their language skills.”

Ms. Diana Beste, the Interim Head of the Language Department, said, “Charlie Fuentes is a great educator, a good listener, and a wonderful colleague. I am especially happy because it’s been a while since we had a department chair from the Spanish section, the largest language section at the School.”

Chinese teacher Dr. Carol Chen-Lin shared similar views, saying “[Mr. Fuentes’s] rich experience in diversity and inclusion and insights on the practices of language teaching are wonderful assets for our department.”

Both of the new heads are passionate about making their departments more inclusive for students, in line with the School’s wider efforts in diversity, equity, and inclusion. One of Mr. Gosztyla’s primary goals is for the curriculum to “take more of an anti-racist approach.” He imagined that changes would begin to occur at every level of the curriculum, from texts to writing assignments. “Hopefully, like the English language, the English department will keep changing,” he said.

This sentiment was echoed by Mr. Fuentes, who remarked, “We’ve started work on many things that I believe are essential to language learning through equitable and inclusive practices that I am very much looking forward to continuing to incorporate.”

He added, “I am really looking forward to the opportunity to support both students in their language journey and colleagues in the department as they continue to look for innovative and engaging ways to present language and culture.”

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GUN VIOLENCE FORCES RECKONING IN HARTFORD

By **Sydney Alleyne '23**
Copy Editor

On Saturday, April 10, three-year-old Randell Jones and 16-year-old Ja'mari Preston were killed in separate incidents in Hartford, only blocks apart.

As Hartford police have begun to investigate the shootings, speculation that the two shootings are connected has sparked fear in the community that a new wave of local gun violence has begun. Officer Steve Austin, a member of the Hartford Police Department and former supervisor of a special operations group with a specialization in gun violence, knows the family of Randell Jones. He said, "Gun violence in Hartford is really localized to a few bad actors. We have a certain few guys who commit about 85% of our gun violence."

Ms. Artisena Hill, a Hartford resident who describes herself as "a concerned citizen," said, "People come together, and they show their concern and they grieve and mourn together, and yet it's not enough to keep it from happening." She went on, "It's an unfortunate thing that it does happen a little too often. We almost get numb to it."

In December, after it was revealed that several veteran officers had been betting on where the city's first homicide of the new year would occur, residents of the city began to lose trust in their police department. After the events of April 10, lawmakers and other community leaders decided it was time to take considerable action.

Senator Christopher Murphy, a Democrat, recently released a statement in which he pledged to

continue working on passing a bill that requires background checks for gun buyers. The statement read, in part, "My heart breaks for Randell Jones, Ja'mari Preston, their families, and the Hartford community. Every death that results from gun violence is a preventable tragedy, and the loss of these boys at such a young age is both a gut-punch and a reminder that lawmakers must act."



Photo courtesy of the Associated Press

Solmary Cruz mourns her three-year-old son Randell Jones with friend Jenzalee Quiroz at vigil.

In a similar statement, Democratic Congressman John Larson emphasized that "we must come together to tackle the systemic issues that lead to this violence." His plan calls for collaboration with groups such as Mothers United Against Violence (MUAV) and Hartford Communities That Care (HCTC), two prominent local organizations that aim to provide frontline resources and services to the

communities in the wake of tragedy.

Mothers United Against Violence is a "faith-based voice of hope bringing families spiritual support and advocating for justice." Founded in 2003 by Reverend Henry Brown and Henrietta Beckmen, the organization works to combat violence, poverty, and undereducation in the Hartford community. Reverend Brown said that in his nearly twenty years of working with the organization, the recent shootings are the worst he has witnessed in the community.

Hartford Communities That Care is a violence prevention program whose mission is to create a non-violent and drug-free community for city residents. The non-profit has a partnership with St. Francis Hospital in order to be among the first responders to violent crimes. To address violence in Hartford, the organiza-

tion provides resources regarding what to do in the aftermath of a fatal event, mental health and trauma counseling, education, and academic and workforce needs of community members.

Both organizations were present at a candlelight vigil held for Randell Jones on April 12. More than 100 people gathered in front of a storefront in Hartford's historic North End neighborhood to commemorate his life.

Although she wasn't in attendance at the vigil, Ms. Hill said, "You always see some type of memorial on the side of the road wherever things happen. People will put balloons and flowers and candles and all of that, and yet it doesn't seem to stop them from happening."

Reverend Brown spoke at the service, saying, "We've been talking about people dying in these streets for 20 years and people are still dying." He added, "We have to stand up and say 'no more,' we can't stand this no more ... If this doesn't bring us together then nothing will."

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Ice-Cream Truck Safety Bill, "Tristan's Law," Passes

By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Copy Editor

On April 14, a bipartisan bill to protect children from oncoming traffic near ice cream trucks, nicknamed "Tristan's Law," passed the Connecticut State Senate. Next, the bill will go to the Connecticut State House, where it is also overwhelmingly supported. Finally, the bill will reach Governor Ned Lamont, who has the power to sign it into law. The need for the bill arose after accident during summer 2020 involving ten-year-old Tristan Barhost of Wallingford. Barhost had just bought ice-cream at a truck in a high-traffic area in Cheshire when he attempted to cross the road and was fatally struck by an oncoming vehicle.

Barhost's death was caused, in part, by the safety hazards ignored by the ice cream truck and driver of the other car. The ice cream truck driver admitted to not putting out a stop sign arm, and the truck itself was so large that it blocked Barhost's view from oncoming traffic.

"Tristan's Law" focuses on enforcing safety measures, so that ice cream trucks are visible when they are serving customers. The bill, titled "An Act Concerning the Safety of Children When Buying Ice Cream from a Frozen Dessert Truck," calls for equipment updates on ice cream trucks such as signal lamps, a stop sign arm, a front crossing arm, and a convex mirror. The bill also prevents ice cream trucks from selling in high-traffic areas and requires drivers to give ice cream trucks a perimeter of ten feet when the truck is flashing its signal lights and extending its stop sign.

In hopes of preventing future tragedy, "Tristan's Law" unanimously passed the Connecticut State Senate, 33-0. Once the bill was proposed, senators, representatives, and attorneys worked together on the language of the bill



Photo courtesy of Erik Pendzich

CT Lawmakers support a bill to increase ice-cream truck safety.

and assisting in the process. On the Senate floor, Democratic State Senator Will Haskell said, "This is one of those special days in the legislature when we can be proud that our government is responding in a bipartisan way. I'm thinking about Tristan and all those young people as I cast my vote in favor of this legislation." Republican State Senator Paul Cicarella added, "I think it was something that needed to be done to protect children, and it was a way of honoring Tristan's legacy. Hopefully this will allow people to be more knowledgeable about slowing down when seeing an ice cream truck or car on the side of the road. I do hope this prevents any future injuries for pedestrians and children."

Although the bill will not go into effect until May 1, 2022, the Connecticut State Senate is still hoping to make an immediate change. Starting from mid-May, 2021, a safety guide covering child safety when purchasing from an ice cream truck will be handed out to schools across Connecticut.

Yet, many local ice cream truck businesses remain unaware of the changes. Jim Malin, owner of Jim's Ice Cream Truck, said, "I was not aware of [the bill]. Since I'm not in the Wallingford area, it doesn't really affect me." Although the Con-

necticut State Senate hopes that all ice cream trucks will comply, actually enforcing these standards will prove more challenging. For example, in Barhost's accident, the ice-cream truck that Barhost bought from was equipped with a stop sign but failed to use it. Mr. Malin suggested that the burden to protect children should not fall solely on vendors: "I already try to do things very cautiously, especially by avoiding high traffic areas. Aside from that, parents should also definitely be careful when letting their children run out to the streets."

Despite these concerns, the bill shows signs of being well received, as many local ice cream truck businesses are aware of the accident and hope to prevent future ones. The bill's passing also raises questions concerning child vehicular safety. The regulation only applies to local ice cream trucks and does not include moving vendors in general. Senator Cicarella concluded, "Tristan wasn't the only child that was injured or killed in this type of situation. It happens every year throughout Connecticut, and so this legislation really should've been brought forward a long time ago."

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NORWALK HISPANIC COMMUNITY PROTESTS RACISM

By **Emma Hermacinski '22**
Reporter

In March 2021, when Ms. Laura Garcia, a 29-year-old resident of Norwalk, Connecticut, received a racist text message from her landlord, Mr. Allen Fedor, protests within Hispanic communities occurred across the state.

From November 2019 to March 2021, Ms. Garcia lived in a multi-family home owned by Mr. Fedor, a Norwalk landlord who also owns Fedor Auto Body Works. During Ms. Garcia's negotiations for regaining her security deposit in advance of moving, Mr. Fedor informed Ms. Garcia via text message that he would not return the deposit because of wall damage in the apartment. Ms. Garcia, who denied that she damaged the wall, replied to Mr. Fedor with a list of issues that she claimed he had not resolved in her time in the apartment, including a mouse infestation. When Mr. Fedor wrote back, he called Ms. Garcia a "dirty, Mexican illegal," and allegedly threatened legal action against her.

Ms. Garcia, who was born in Guatemala and has been a United States citizen for seven years, saw this comment as a sign to seek help from the larger Hispanic community. On March 22, Ms. Garcia recounted these remarks and threats in Spanish to the activist organization of which she is a member, Unidad Latina en Acción (ULA), or "Latiné United in Action."

ULA is a New Haven-based activist group that advocates for immigrants, workers, and Latiné community members across Connecticut. In response to the incident, ULA members orga-

nized protests on March 31 and April 6 in Norwalk, calling for a boycott of Mr. Fedor's business and requesting for the involvement of the City of Norwalk in resolving the issue. At the April 6 demonstration, the leader of ULA, Mr. John Jairo Lugo, invited the mayor of Norwalk, Mr. Henry Rilling, to take up Ms. Garcia's cause instead of the mayor simply "calling himself a friend of immigrants because his wife is of Ecuadorian descent," said Mr. Lugo.

I spoke up because when I spoke, others were willing to share their stories.

Laura Garcia
Norwalk Resident and ULA member

As the second protest continued, another allegation against Mr. Fedor surfaced, this time from a man who identified himself only as Abel — for fear, as he said, of persecution by immigration control — claiming that Mr. Fedor refused to pay him for his gardening work. In his testimony at the rally, Abel said that he had worked for Mr. Fedor for ten years, but was paid in checks that Mr. Fedor had voided, preventing Abel from being paid. Abel claimed that when he approached Mr. Fedor about the issue, Mr. Fedor stated that Abel would never be paid for his work and that if he continued to question this choice, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) would be called.

Abel was accompanied by about two dozen members of

ULA and other activist groups at the April 6 protest. Ms. Garcia stated that numerous other immigrants and people of color had suffered wage theft and work abuse under Mr. Fedor, and that she was glad to hear Abel's testimony. "I spoke up because when I spoke, others were willing to share their stories," Ms. Garcia said.

In an interview with Connecticut Hearst Media, Mr. Fedor apologized for his comments and said, "I kind of feel discriminated against because I happen to be white and a landlord." Mr. Fedor has not commented on Abel's accusations of wage theft.

Following discussions with ULA and both protests against Mr. Fedor, Ms. Garcia decided to file a complaint with Norwalk's Fair Housing Advisory Commission, threatening legal action against Mr. Fedor should he refuse to return her security deposit. Mr. Fedor agreed to pay back the money within thirty days, but ULA has not decided to lighten its pressure. In addition to continuing to protest, the group is in the process of establishing a Norwalk branch.

What began as a protest against a single landlord has grown into a movement to highlight the larger challenges faced by immigrants. In a speech at the April 6 protest, Ms. Garcia said that, in regard to the landlord's remarks against her, "I don't think we need that in Norwalk. We need unity, love, and peace."

Emma Hermacinski may be reached at ehermacinski22@choate.edu



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

By **Lauren Kee '24**
Copy Editor

Founded in 2002, Unidad Latina en Acción (ULA) is a community organization located in New Haven. It fights for the power, voice, and dignity of immigrant workers and their families in hopes of overcoming

racial and economic injustices. ULA's goals include holding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) accountable for civil rights violations,

freeing detained children and reuniting them with their families, and providing Covid-19 relief efforts for immigrants. To learn more about ULA and how to support the group's cause, visit <https://ulanewhaven.org/>.

Unidad Latina en Acción (ULA)

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Photo courtesy of Hearst Connecticut Media

Protesters demonstrate outside the business of Allen Fedor, a local landlord accused of racism.

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One Shot Closer to Normal

By **Ryan Kim '23**
Opinions Staff Writer

The steady hum of the bus pierced my thoughts. The ride felt unusually rough that day, though perhaps that was just the feeling of my heart pounding with anticipation and trepidation. Outside the window, I saw the familiar flashes of Wallingford — the subway that took me an hour to find last year and the convenience stores that seem to line every corner. Those are places that I had missed so much before coming back to campus, yet in this moment they felt so eerily different. Barren shops and sidewalks littered the roads to my left and right, and their emptiness was a reminder of how long and devastating this pandemic has been.

Sitting alone in my bus seat on the way to the vaccine clinic, my head swam with excitement and worry. On one hand, there was the excitement of finally getting my first vaccine shot. Soon, I would be protected from the deadly Covid-19; a critical first step in returning to a normal lifestyle. But also, I had worries. I was afraid of how severe the side effects would be, and I couldn't help but to feel a little uneasy about how short the vaccine development time had been.

Rolling into the vaccination site, I was startled to see an airfield and that we were to be vaccinated on our bus. Around us, the National Guard and volunteer medical staff quickly entered our bus and checked our identification. Watching them out there in the rain, I felt immense gratitude and respect.

Seeing the needle in the nurse's hand, I had a sudden feeling of extreme relief, security, and hope — a feeling that

normalcy might finally return and that a burden had been lifted. I had never felt that way about a shot before. The vaccinations went surprisingly smoothly given our large numbers, and I appreciated how the School managed to streamline the process.

As the dull pain on my left arm subsided, however, I began to feel guilty about how I was fortunate enough to get this shot, while so many people around the world are not.

Still, I convinced myself that getting the shot was the right thing to do. Getting vaccinated was my responsibility, an action that I took not only for my sake but also for the sake of the community around me. It was for the family members I wanted to embrace, the friends I wanted to talk maskless with, and the restaurants I wanted to dine in. By vaccinating our population as quickly as possible, we can achieve the threshold for herd immunity sooner, which will in turn protect those who cannot be vaccinated and shield ourselves from future variants of the virus.

The ride back to campus felt shorter and more light-hearted. As we laughed our way through Dr. Chris Hogue's trivia questions, it felt as if everything was back to normal again. It was almost like the trivia I used to do with Mr. Ned Gallagher while heading to squash games. The scene made me hopeful that this nightmarish pandemic would finally be coming to an end. Again, my heart was pounding, but this time it was from the anticipation for a safer future.

Ryan Kim is a fourth-former from Seoul, South Korea. He may be reached at rkim23@choate.edu

Correction

An opinion essay in the April 26 issue about Choate's Hispanic Latiné community referred incorrectly to Hispanic Latiné identity. It is an ethnic group, not a racial one.

The Choate News regrets this error. To submit a correction, email thechoatenews@choate.edu

BALACING SOCIAL LIFE AND MENTAL HEALTH IS HARD BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

By **Cassatt Boatwright '24**
Opinions Staff Writer

After months stuck inside because of the pandemic, with no one but my family to talk to, coming to Choate was a breath of fresh air. I went from sitting through dull dinner conversations and watching YouTube in my room to socializing with different people my age — people I could relate to and connect with. Yet, despite all the good that has come out of attending a boarding school, the abrupt and drastic social transition left me feeling overwhelmed and paranoid.

I have always been a big extrovert. When I was younger, I was constantly running around all day with my friends, meeting new people and exploring new places. If I needed a break from socializing, I could curl up in my bed at home and recharge in my own little safe haven. My friends were always at school the next day when I was ready to see them.

The thing is, at boarding school, there is no safe haven

to go back to. I wake up at 7:00 a.m. to go to breakfast and stay out until 8:30 p.m. for my evening class. On weekends, I leave my dorm room just as early and return even later. When I come back, my room is not just *my* room and the dorm is not just *my* home; they're places full of people and the constant hum of social interaction. After a tiring day, I still have to keep a smile plastered on my face while I talk to my advisers, prefects, and dorm mates. I felt like no one could know how much I was struggling to balance my mental health and social life.

I began to go to sleep later and later, not only so that I could have more time to talk to friends, but also so that I could finally catch a moment for myself. It was unhealthy for both my mental and physical state. Still, as I nodded off in the middle of my physics class and bought too many AriZona iced teas from the school store, I ignored these obvious symptoms of my sleep deprivation. I told myself that high school is a time for living

life to the fullest — and that meant not missing anything.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as not missing anything. Different friends make different plans at the same time, leaving me questioning whom I should hang out with. Who have I not seen in a while? Who would be upset if I didn't come? What will people think if I hang out with this person instead of someone else? Do I have an assignment to do or a meeting to attend? The questions took control over every decision I made, and I was scared of choosing incorrectly. My decision could never satisfy everyone, let alone myself.

I could no longer handle this doubt and, feeling more exhausted than ever, I finally decided to go to the Health Center. I was done being overwhelmed and tired, and I had heard from my friends that if a student was having a mentally taxing day, they could get a private room there to rest. Laying on the bed alone and listening to music, it finally felt like I was back home in my safe haven. Going to the Health Center gave me space and time to process how my life at Choate had

gone so far and what I wanted to do moving forward. I love hanging out with my friends, but it felt like my peers were watching my every move. I needed time alone. I needed a break. For the next few hours, I rested in the Health Center.

As I near the end of my freshman year, I still haven't found the perfect balance between these two struggles. I still over-analyze my decisions, but I've developed some tactics that have helped improve my relationships and mental health. I now hang out only with the people I actually want to spend time with and say no when I am busy. My new mindset is that if I miss something fun, I can still hear about it later and try to make it the next time. I am not wasting time when I take a nap or go to my dorm to relax. I try to do what is best for my mental health and not what others want from me. I chose myself over the fear of missing out.

Cassatt Boatwright is a third-former from San Francisco. She may be reached at cboatwright24@choate.edu

THE REALITY OF FACE BLINDNESS

By **Celeste vanDokkum '23**
Opinions Writer

I'm waiting in the passenger seat of the car, staring into the side mirror at a gas station. I get confused; I see myself moving in the mirror, but I'm sitting still. It isn't until the person in the mirror gets into her car and drives away that I realize that I'd been mistaken. It hadn't been me that I had seen in the mirror but another person at the gas station.

I have induced prosopagnosia, also known as face blindness. I can remember a few faces from years ago but, unfortunately, the more recent faces of my friends, family, and even myself have all aged beyond recognition. I can't even find myself in photos or on Zoom, unless I recognize my clothing or background. I can't use Instagram because I have no idea who I'm looking at, and I can't watch movies with too many characters with the same hair color or I'll have no idea what's going on.

Facial prosopagnosia used to be the root of my anxiety — the act of constantly running into friends and classmates and pretending I

knew who they were. Each time, their faces fell as they had to remind me of who they were. Awkward. "I have face blindness," I explained clumsily, stumbling over the words in my embarrassment. "Oh, I'm bad with faces, too," they sometimes said. Then, we would part ways, both of us feeling slightly worse than when the encounter began. It's always a nightmare to know that I might have caused them to feel like they weren't interesting enough to be remembered.

And I tried so hard to remember. When I would meet someone and have a wonderful conversation with them, I tried desperately to form some sort of a memory of what they look like. But without fail, when we headed off to class, their image blurred into nothing. I was left with a vague idea of their hair color, but I couldn't even remember the length. It felt like I had lost something.

After enough of these encounters, I launched myself into a series of coping mechanisms and strategies. I no longer wandered through the dining hall, hoping my friends would call me over because I couldn't find

them on my own. I memorized backpacks, phone cases, favorite hoodies — anything I could use to find out who I was talking to. I felt like a stalker, finding personal details and exploiting them.

Another strategy I tried was telling my friends about my facial prosopagnosia. It went worse than I had hoped. "Wait, you think I'm someone else when you see me?" "Actually, I mostly think other people are you," I quipped. Eventually, they began to understand, but it took time.

When I explained myself, I generally got the same question. "What about race? Can't you remember that someone is Black?" Yes and no. No, when I meet someone casually and have a conversation with them, I will not remember their race. It is only when I'm desperately trying to find something memorable about the person that I may be able to remember their race, and even then it's difficult.

Last year, a friend of mine mentioned that she wanted to go to Chinese Club more to connect with her heritage. "You're Asian?" I responded. She and

our mutual friend gawked at me. Apparently, she was Asian.

Coming into the school year, I came up with a new plan: defining myself by my disability the moment I meet someone. I announced my condition to my classes at the very beginning of the year, and now everyone I meet gets a mini monologue about prosopagnosia. Everyone is happy and willing to accommodate at first, but sometimes they forget, and they are disappointed when I can't recognize them. There's not a lot I can do about that. I don't mind that people forget; I only tell them to spare their feelings anyway.

This year, I have gotten the quiet satisfaction out of knowing that everyone is suffering as I have, at least to some degree. "It's so hard to recognize people with masks," they complain. Trust me, I get it.

Then, there's the Zoom issue. As a remote student since the beginning of the school year, I started in the fall by recognizing everyone from their Zoom backdrop. When we switched to hybrid learning, and many students returned to campus, I lost any and all chance at knowing who anyone was. My brain is filled with the names I hear — I can list all the members of my classes, but I don't know which faces they belong to. If they speak to me, I smile, wave, and pretend. I never, ever use someone's name. There's never a guarantee that it's them.

Nowadays, I've accepted that I will never know whom I'm speaking to merely by seeing their face. So, I simply introduce myself with a disclaimer, and I try to stop stressing about it. On the bright side, I'll never have any issues with self-image. You need an image to do that.

Celeste vanDokkum is a fourth-former from New Haven. She may be reached at cvandokkum@choate.edu



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

THE SYRIAN WAR IS A NEEDLESS PROXY CONFLICT

By **Mealy Cronin '23**
Opinions Writer

Sarfama Ala Europa, a song every Syrian child knows by heart, is rhythmic, upbeat, and pop-inspired. The lyrics, however, depict the suffering and fear of the weary refugee. One doesn't need to know Arabic to understand the song's meaning, nor the effect of the decade-long Syrian conflict on its people. What began ten years ago as an internal struggle, has evolved into an international chess match — different players with varying strategies using the Syrian people as pawns. On May 26, the current Syrian President Bashar al-Assad will attempt to secure another term in office; this will be his second election since March 2011, when pro-democracy demonstrators took to the streets of Daraa, Syria in an attempt to end 40 years of repressive rule. While the Arab Spring uprisings led to government collapses in Egypt and Libya, Syria's President Bashar Assad refused to capitulate, thus beginning a protracted civil war between the insurrectionists and the al-Assad-led Syrian regime.

Over the past ten years, support from the Sunni in the Syrian cities of Aleppo and Damascus bolstered President al-Assad's brutal hold over Syria. However, the neighboring countries, world powers, jihadists, and the Islamic State (ISIS) have been the ones fueling the war — with al-Assad, himself, being the only beneficiary. The U.S. involvement in the region is primarily focused on ISIS which formed as a subgroup of Al Qaeda but broke away following internal disagreements. U.S. allies, however, have other non-ISIS priorities. Each for their own reasons, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the US. back the insurgents, while Iran and Russia support the Assad regime, resulting in numerous proxy wars fought on Syrian soil:

Israel v. Iran; Turkey v. Kurds; US v. Turkey; Russia v. US; and Secularists (Russia/US/UAE) v. Islamists (Turkey/Iran/Qatar).

And what of U.S. involvement? In June 2013, the U.N. reported that approximately 90,000 people had been killed since those initial protests. In reaction to President al-Assad's 2013 use of chemical weapons against his own people, President Barack Obama signed an order authorizing the C.I.A. to train the Syrian rebel forces. By August 2015, the number of deaths reached 250,000. In 2017, al-Assad, again, used nerve gas against the rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun. In response, the new U.S. president, Donald J. Trump P'oo. fired dozens of cruise missiles at Syrian Air Force bases. Today, an estimated 500,000 people have been killed or are missing. Clearly, the U.S. response to date — military strikes or threats of strikes — has been ineffective.

WorldVision, an international Evangelical Christian humanitarian organization, estimates that there are 5.6 million Syrian refugees — the majority having escaped to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt — and 6.1 million people displaced within Syria. People who are virtually trapped in their war-torn country are witnessing daily horrors and struggling to stay alive in a country with an annihilated infrastructure and devastated economy. At last count, over 11 million people are in need of humanitarian aid and roughly half of those are children. No longer able to attend school, Syrian children have fallen behind in their studies and experienced delayed developmental growth. Many are drafted into the conflict or captured trying to find a safe harbor.

The decade has seen the destruction of Syrian hospitals, schools, and necessary civilian infrastructure such as water systems and utilities. The ability

of the Syrian people to locate and procure the most basic of necessities — food and clean water — has become tenuous at best. To date, 80% of Syrians are living on less than \$1.90 a day. The challenges of poverty and unemployment have only been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic where overcrowded refugee camps make it impossible to practice safe distancing and good hygiene. Aid groups like the UN Refugee Agency have been providing shelter, supplies, and medical care to those who have been displaced, as well as trying to support the Syrian children with educational instruction and mental health support.

In September 2013, two years after the start of the conflict, Antonio Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said, "Syria has become the great tragedy of this century — a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history." Ten years later, I am reminded of the quote, "The only thing worse than a tragedy is when you can't do anything about it."

Recently, Mr. Guterres spoke of our collective responsibility to end this war and has raised and pledged another \$6.4 billion to support those affected. As for U.S. responsibility? The U.S. must acknowledge "there is no military solution in Syria," and throw its full support behind the U.N. to use international law and diplomacy to settle this conflict. As long as foreign powers aid the two Syrian factions, there is no end in sight to this war.

To support Syrians, consider donating to the Syrian American Medical Society (SAMS) — a healthcare relief agency that works to treat the sick and injured.

Mealy Cronin is a fourth-former from Alexandria, VA. She may be reached at mcronin23@choate.edu



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

COVID SPIKE IN INDIA STEMS FROM GOVERNMENT FAILURE



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

After inoculating healthcare workers, India began a vaccine rollout for those over 60.

By **June Lu '22**
Opinions Staff Writer

Amid the rapid arrival of a new variant and relaxed restrictions, India has become the new epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic, surpassing 400,000 confirmed cases in a single day. Hospitals and crematoriums in Delhi, Mumbai, Lucknow, and Pune, have run out of space due to the exponential death toll, forcing many funerals to be carried out in parking lots. As the nation grapples with a second wave, drastic underreporting of infections and deaths due to a lack of data and monitoring in rural areas has left countless oblivious to the severity of the outbreak. Many in India believed the country had conquered the worst of the pandemic during the first wave of the virus, so what caused the unexpected second Covid-19 surge?

Loosened restrictions, a lack of pandemic preparations, and poor leadership decisions by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are to blame; Modi sold the narrative that India had conquered Covid-19 and impulsively relaxed restrictions on all gatherings, allowing weddings, religious gatherings, and political rallies. Kumbh Mela, a major pilgrimage in Hinduism, drew at least six million people this past April, all of whom gathered to bathe in the Ganges river. As a result, hundreds of Hindu devotees — including nine top saints — have tested positive for Covid-19. And, Modi himself drew a crowd of thousands to promote his re-election when upwards of 200,000 Covid-19 cases were being confirmed daily.

Another catalyst for the rise in infections is the Covid variants recently discovered in the country: scientists have found that variant B.1.1.7, known as "the U.K. variant" because of its origins, is now the dominant variant in the Indian state of Punjab. B.1.1.7 is 40 to 70 percent more contagious than

earlier strains. Variants originating from Brazil and South Africa have also been detected in the country.

Even though India is the world's largest vaccine-producing nation, the nation has turned to the global community in search of vaccines. Just a few weeks ago, more than 70 countries worldwide received a total of 60 million vaccines made in India. But because India produces 60% of the world's vaccines, the nation is running out of raw materials to make the 1.3 billion vaccines needed to immunize its own population. The Biden Administration has begun sending India supplies, including therapeutics and oxygen, to overcome this new wave. It has also committed to sharing as many as 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, as vaccine rollout in the US is slowing down, with many states already having a surplus of unused shots.

Modi has shown immense disregard for the severity of the pandemic in the face of increasingly lethal variants and transparency with disease data. He has taken steps to censor information regarding the pandemic on the internet, an incredibly insensitive crackdown given the devastating consequences of the virus. This is part of a broader pattern where the government has turned to restrict informative content amid social unrest. A blatant attack on the democracy and right to freedom of speech comes at a time where a spread of accurate information is critical to the global fight against the pandemic. Various news sources have reported Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube taking down posts critical of the administration's handling of the second wave. In response, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology stated in an unsigned document to the press that the government "welcomes criticisms, genuine requests for help as well as suggestions in the collective fight against Covid-19 [but] it is necessary to take action against those

users who are misusing social media during this grave humanitarian crisis for unethical purposes."

The severity of the pandemic cannot be understated; cremation is the most important part of Hindu funeral rites, stemming from the belief that the physical body must be destroyed for reincarnation to take place. Yet, due to the rapidly growing death toll, funeral pyres have been forced to burn through the night so families may mourn the loss of their loved ones. The number of bodies cremated has caused the nation to plunge into a shortage of timber. Hospitals are turning away Covid-19 patients, despite pleas for oxygen cylinders and treatment on social media. Patients have flooded New Delhi in search of hospital beds, and those who have been denied have turned to the flourishing black market for medical supplies.

There are many factors that have contributed to India's crisis: an underestimation of the pandemic, a lack of resources, and an abysmal attempt by the Modi administration to protect its citizens. There is much to be done to aid India in its effort to combat the deadly surge of the virus, not just through foreign aid but also through initiative by the Modi administration. Modi must rise to the challenge and remember the democratic principles upon which India prides itself. Government censorship on social media is inexcusable, and should not be his administration's main concern; rather, the government should take responsibility for the livelihoods of the 1.3 billion Indian citizens who are in constant fear of the virus.

To help, consider donating to Care India, an organization dedicated to providing PPE and essential healthcare services in India.

June Lu is a fifth-former from Vancouver, Canada. She may be reached at jlu22@choate.edu.

BIDEN SCORES HIGH IN HIS FIRST 100 DAYS

By **Semilola Obayomi '23**
Opinions Writer

President's first 100 days sets the expectation for their remaining time in office. President Joe Biden's first 100 days, which ended on April 28, were spent addressing the two biggest crises in the US: the coronavirus pandemic and the economy. His intention has been to boost government aid and regain trust while keeping his policies equitable. While Biden fulfilled all the areas mentioned on the scorecard, his mediocre response to the crisis at the US-Mexico border is concerning. But, there are still three years remaining for Biden to make progress on pressing issues and changes that will affect America for generations to come.

The Biden Administration made remarkable progress in speeding up the vaccine rollout started under President Trump P'oo and more than doubled the goal of getting 100 million Americans fully vaccinated by the 100th day in office. The Defense Production Act was put to good use in speeding up Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna

vaccine production and increasing the availability of at-home Covid tests and critical medical equipment such as masks, gloves, and shields.

In March, Congress passed a \$1.9 trillion relief package — the American Rescue Plan — that allocated \$160 billion to the mass vaccination program with \$10 billion invested in building vaccine confidence and expanding its access to high-risk communities. This is crucial to helping communities of color, especially Black and Hispanic communities, who have suffered the most during the coronavirus. The next goal is to vaccinate 300 million Americans by early fall, something the Biden Administration has indeed proved their ability to do, leaving individuals, states, and citizens to finish the job.

The American Rescue Plan had an extensive economic objective that allowed millions of working Americans to receive \$1,400 stimulus checks. The eligibility of the unemployment insurance was extended, and states, local governments, and schools would receive financial assistance. \$170 billion went to K-12 schools and institutions

of higher education, with \$130 billion allocated to help schools reopen. Biden plans to further combat unemployment and the climate crisis through the building infrastructure with the help of the American Jobs Plan. The administration counts on increased taxes on wealthy Americans and investment into the IRS to pay for these projects. Although Biden's plan looks good on paper and seems to be boost-

ing economic recovery, time will be the only indicator of success.

On his first day in office, Biden took swift action to address immigration, but his progress has slowed since. On January 20, Biden signed multiple executive orders reversing Trump's immigration policies, one of which required noncitizens, including undocumented immigrants, to be counted in the US Census. On February 20, he created a task force

President Biden's 100 Days Scorecard

1.	Implement a \$20 billion federal program to oversee vaccine roll-out, with the ultimate goal of vaccinating 100 million Americans by the Biden administration's 100th day.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Launch an economic stimulus package, which would extend unemployment insurance, allocate \$130 billion to schools to help them reopen safely, and give \$15 billion worth of grants to small businesses.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Reverse former President Donald Trump P'00's immigration policies, including his policy that attempted to exclude undocumented immigrants from the Census. In addition, Biden is assembling a task force charged with reuniting the 600 plus children that were separated from their parents after they crossed the U.S.-Mexico border under Trump's "zero tolerance" policy.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Prioritize pandemic relief for low-income communities of color by investing in small, minority-run businesses and expanding community health centers.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Rescind Trump's anti-environment policies and stimulate demand for green products.	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

charged with reuniting children with their parents at the border. Since then, as many predicted, a large number of migrants crowded at the US-Mexican border. This surge has caused a crisis, with the solution being a risky overhaul of immigration policy and addressing the core issues causing mass migration. Biden must pay the same attention to this issue as he has to coronavirus and the economy due to the more than 100,000 migrants who need urgent help and long-term solutions.

Biden has done his part to help small businesses. The American Rescue Plan had devoted \$15 billion to help small businesses, especially minority owned ones in low-income areas. The Paycheck Protection Program was improved to prioritize the smallest, rural, and minority owned businesses and its deadline was pushed to May 31. The Biden Administration has also increased vaccine distribution to community health centers. This is crucial for those living in poverty, ethnic and racial minorities, or the under and uninsured, who community health centers serve. Biden's action towards small businesses

and community health centers is a starting point towards his commitment to serve all Americans, not just the middle or upper class.

Biden has not fallen short on his commitment of prioritizing the climate, either. He has rejoined the Paris Climate Accord, canceled the Keystone XL pipeline, and filled his environment team with experts and advocates willing to take bold action. From Day One, he began reversing Trump's anti-environment policies through executive orders aimed at reducing drilling on federal lands, and will soon replace his rule on methane pollution with a stronger one. He has also announced his goal of cutting greenhouse gases below 2005 levels by 2030, an ambitious plan that will be achieved by the American Jobs Plan, which will provide funding to climate research and solutions. The Biden Administration will need to continue this speed throughout the term to combat this issue.

Semilola Obayomi is a fourth-former from Milford. She may be reached at sobayomi23@choate.edu

FEATURES

SENIORS SCOOTER THROUGH SPRING



Photo by Natalie Wolf/The Choate News

Pau Alvarado '21 and Ula Lucas '21 show off their new rides.

By Meredith Syms '23
Staff Reporter

Although this year has been unlike any other, seniors have been making the most out of their last weeks on campus — including, it seems, their last trips across campus. Recently, it has become more and more common to see seniors zipping around the School on scooters. Scooters aren't only a fun way people can connect on campus — they are also a practical method of cross-campus travel. Bradley Wang '21, one of Choate's scooter jockeys, said of his ride's practicality, "It wasn't until this year that I started riding it a lot more to get to places faster."

The Class of 2021 didn't exactly create the scooter trend at Choate. Many seniors remember their peers in the grades above them riding scooters. Wang said, "My sophomore year prefect had a scooter and gave it to me after he graduated, so I have had it since junior year and been riding it around." But scooters aren't only practical — "scooter" has also become a popular activity for seniors who are looking to have fun during the their final term on campus. The prospect of fun is why Pau Alvarado '21 roped her friend group into getting scooters. She said, "I started convincing all of my friends to buy scooters so that we could go scootering all together." As more and more of her friends began to scooter, the group began having, as she put it, "weekly scootering adventures."

On the other hand, there are seniors who caught onto the

scooter memo much earlier in their Choate career. Mohammad Khokha '21 started scootering nearly four years ago. "I started scootering during freshman year, because I thought it would be very efficient getting to and from the SAC," he said. His plan didn't go perfectly, as "it turned out that going up the hill was horrible, so I stopped after freshman fall." Khokha decided to bring his scooter back during his last term at Choate for the sake of "nostalgia."

Perhaps the most humorous part of this scooter phenomenon is the fact that many of the scooters don't quite fit the size or age of their riders. Alvarado said, "The funny thing is that most of our scooters are child scooters." In fact, she admitted that the scooters she and her friends own "are not recommended for people over the age of 12."

Not only have seniors been able to ride around on scooters to spend time with friends, but they've also upheld most senior traditions even in the time of Covid-19, as they're eager to take any opportunity to spend lost time together as a class. During the winter term, seniors were able to go sledding. Now, in their senior spring, the annual Senior Assassin game was revived, and Last Hurrah and Garden Party proposals have abounded as Covid-safe versions of the events draw near.

Lulu Louchheim '21 said, "With such a weird year, we all appreciate the chances that we get to come together as a class more than we would appreciate them in a normal year."

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Ungendered and Unrestricted, Dress Code Revisions Remain Popular Five Years On

By Reagan Colton '24
Staff Reporter

The student body interacts with the Choate dress code on a daily basis. A revision of the dress code in 2016 was largely student-initiated, with goals to more accurately reflect the culture on campus and remove gendered guidelines.

Since the change in dress code five years ago, the meaning of "dressing for success" has changed quite a bit at Choate, with previously banned items like hoodies and sweatpants becoming an increasingly common sight during the class day. Despite the new dress code's more relaxed rules, some community members still believe that the idiom, which postulates that dressing up will lead to better work, holds true and that students should put on more formal clothes for classes.

Chemistry and biology teacher Mr. John Ford said, "I believe that you need to take a little time on your appearance in the morning before school or work, that that is going to improve your performance, that it's going to make a difference in how you do in class or as a teacher."

On the other hand, HPRSS teacher Mr. Jesse Minneman, who chaired the student-faculty committee that suggested the revisions to the dress code, felt differently. Although he felt that there is some value in getting ready in the morning, he said, "A student can succeed in sweatpants and a sweatshirt." Likewise, many students believe the notion of dressing for success is outdated, and that success is attainable in any attire, whether that be freshly ironed dress shirts or pajama pants freshly picked off of a dorm room floor.

Over the past decade, fashion has only become a more preva-



Graphic by Yujin Kim/The Choate News

lent way of expressing oneself. The previous dress code did not allow for this same self-expression, and many community members believed that suppressing students' personal style had a negative impact on campus. Mr. Minneman said, "The way you dress is so tied to identity."

Many students feel that the freedom of expression that the new dress code currently allows them is incredibly beneficial to their learning environment. "Allowing students to express themselves shows their individuality, so not everyone looks the same," said Gideon Reiter '21.

Another part of the new dress code that has become more popular among students is its gender neutrality. The previous dress code was heavily gendered, with separate guidelines for male and female students, including separate lists of attire deemed "not acceptable." While both lists prohibited common kinds of informal attire such as ripped clothing or athletic wear, only the girls' list — which was twice as long as the boys' list — included restrictions on which body parts to not show. It instructed only girls to not wear "clothing that

exposes the midriff, bares the back, or has a plunging or low-cut neckline." Many believed these unbalanced requirements objectified and overtly sexualized female students.

"It was very difficult for a male-identifying student to be out of the dress code, while it was much easier for a female-identifying student to be penalized for the way that they dressed," said Ms. Catherine Velez, a registrar who was also a member of the 2016 Dress Code Committee. This discrepancy promoted a culture of policing girls' bodies. With the fight against the objectification of women becoming increasingly prevalent in nationwide discourse on equality over the past decade, the new dress code "reflects changes that were happening anyway," according to Mr. Minneman.

Even those who don't quite favor the switch to a less formal standard of class attire agreed that female and male students need to be treated the same. "I agree we always had trouble specifically defining parameters for girls' dress; we didn't have as much trouble defining those parameters for boys," said Mr. Ford. Still, he believes that there are better solutions

to this problem than overhauling the former dress code completely.

Furthermore, the world has slowly become more accepting of nonbinary gender identities and gender fluidity, an evolution that is reflected in the Choate community. One goal of the gender-neutral dress code reform was to make students, especially gender nonconforming ones, more comfortable.

"It is harder to support gender fluidity and identity with a stricter dress code," said Ms. Velez.

Reiter also supports these genderless reforms. He said, "Not being explicitly gendered is tremendous." He believes that stepping further away from the gender binary allows students to express themselves more comfortably and more fully.

During a time when facial expressions cannot be read under the cover of a mask, clothing has only become a more effective means for students to show off their identity. Without the major change in dress code five years ago, Choate's student body may not have the visual variation in identity and style that it does today.

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PADDOCK FARM IMBUED WITH LIFE AGAIN

By Prim Tangkaravakoon '24
Reporter

Any Choate student will tell you that campus is far from a bore, with two I.M. Pei-designed buildings, a five-kilometer cross country course, and a three-story student activities center. What many students don't know is that Choate is also home to a farm, known as Paddock Farm, located near the Kohler Environmental Center and distinguishable by its big red barn.

Paddock Farm is managed by Mr. Erik Freeman, his wife, Catherine, and their two daughters, Chloe and Nora. This year is the family's fifth tending to the farm, which is always bustling with a vast array

of life, including chickens, ducks, bunnies, an apple orchard, and a plethora of flower beds. The farm was even home to fox kits that grew up underneath the barn.

In this highly unusual year, managing the farm has been refreshing for Mr. Freeman and his family. "It's better than *not* living on a farm during a pandemic because we have a lot of space and fresh air," he explained. "We would just go out and work [on the farm]. It was an ideal scenario for me and my family."

In a typical year, Paddock Farm is filled with energy. Classes take advantage of the ideal outdoor learning environment. Many students choose to visit the

farm to enjoy the peaceful surroundings or to do community service projects such as removing invasive species or gardening. But because of Covid-19, the farm has been unusually quiet throughout the past year. "Events that bring the community up [to the farm] have been much more limited," said Mr. Freeman.

However, the farm is slowly starting to feel as lively as it had been before the pandemic. On Friday, April 23, and Saturday, May 2, students were given opportunities to complete community service on the farm, where they helped plant potatoes, move rocks, and spread mulch. It was the first time students

visited the farm for community service in more than a year.

Mr. Freeman is also hoping for a good season for apple growing, and he plans to invite the Choate community to pick apples and make apple cider at the farm, which wasn't possible last apple season.

"Every time people come up to the farm, they love it," he said. "People don't really think about using Paddock Farm. But people are more than welcome to come to visit. We want them to know that it's a space available to them. We're happy to have anyone up there."

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Freshman English Class Challenges Traditional Prep-School Narratives

By Mikayla DaSilva '24
Reporter

Have you ever wondered what Choate was like 10, 50, or 100 years ago? This spring, Ms. Ellen Devine's freshman English class is incorporating the Choate archives, movies set at boarding schools, and contemporary novels to study the history of Choate and college-preparatory schools in general.

Ms. Devine, who is the English department head, said, "We tend to associate schools like Choate with great opportunities and a great education [but] it is not an ahistorical experience. This school has not always looked the way it looks now, and it has not always admitted all the people that it admits now."

By teaching this unit on the history, purpose, and evolution of boarding schools, Ms. Devine hopes to showcase both the common perception of the prep-school experience, as well as the modern, more diverse yet imperfect experience.

In the fall term, she started on a path that led to this unit by having students connect the journey of Odysseus in *The Odyssey* — the ancient Greek



Photo courtesy of the Archives

Ms. Ellen Devine's EN100 class is exploring the cultural history of elite prep schools like Rosemary Hall, above.

epic poem that every Choate freshman reads — to their own journeys to Choate. "In many ways, *The Odyssey* is a story about journeying home, but that story couldn't have existed without Odysseus leaving home and then trying to come back," she said.

With this lesson of traveling away from home in mind, students advanced to the spring term of their English

class, examining, according to Ms. Devine, "dominant narratives about boarding school and prep school and then disrupting those dominant narratives by looking at alternative or marginalized narratives."

This expedition into the past started by exploring the stereotypical narrative of the "elitist, male, prep school in New England." A key resource Ms. Devine used to investigate this image was

the 1989 film *Dead Poets Society*, which is set at a fictional all-boys boarding school in the 1950s. In addition, her class read short stories such as "Smokers," by Tobias Wolff, which takes place at Choate, and "The Lie," by Kurt Vonnegut, which is set at a fictional boarding school.

After getting a picture of the "traditional" New England boarding-school experience, students dove into "marginalized



Photo courtesy of Ellen Devine

Scavenger hunt on school history.

narratives" through the novel *Piecing Me Together*, by Renee Watson, which according to Ms. Devine, "is about a young woman who comes from a less socio-economically advanced family, who also identifies as Black and is in a predominately white, wealthy, elitist institution."

To supplement their survey of boarding-school experiences, Ms. Devine's students will also have the chance to examine the

Choate archives. Ivie Ojior '24, a student in Ms. Devine's class, said, "I'm very excited. We are going to look at the old uniforms from Rosemary Hall, the different newspapers, and yearbooks."

The class materials made Brandon Ma '24 realize how far boarding schools have progressed. "I knew private and boarding schools from the past were strict," Ma said, though he learned that "it was scary how much they tried to shape [students] into a mold they didn't want to be in."

Victoria Layden '24 is looking forward to using the archives to learn more about girls' boarding schools of the past, including Rosemary Hall, "to see how different [boarding schools] were back then and what prompted them to unify the two schools." She said, "I think it's totally important to learn about the history of the school you're going to."

That's just the sentiment Ms. Devine hopes her students get out of this unit. As freshmen begin to make Choate their second home, she said, they gain "a deeper understanding of what this home is built on."

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Dance Ensembles Persevere Through Pandemic Restrictions

By **Lauren Hsu '24**
Reporter

Every Sunday, the arts buildings on campus bustle with activity from Dance Company, Step Squad, and Hip Hop Club. Dancers meet throughout the day to choreograph, learn, and rehearse the pieces they plan to perform in the Spring Dance Concert. This year, the annual concert will consist of thirteen pieces, all performed outdoors. Five were choreographed by faculty members, two by Hip Hop Club and Step Squad, and six by students selected through an audition process.

One such student choreographer is Laura Jiang '21. She has worked all three terms this year, choreographing her piece on Saturdays and teaching it to her dancers on Sunday mornings. Jiang's inspiration for her piece arose from her experiences during the pandemic, including pressure to chase achievements, the change in the pace of life, and love. In addition, Jiang took a dance composition class that supported her growth as a choreographer.

Despite all the preparation, being a student choreographer during an unpredictable year

has been challenging. "There's been no rehearsal where everyone shows up," Jiang said, in large part because of remote learning circumstances. In addition, dancers must wear masks, so Jiang has had to consider the physical difficulty of the piece while choreographing. On top of that, partner and contact work cannot happen this year due to social distancing protocols, minimizing opportunity for duets and group performances.

Another change that this year's dance concert brings is outdoor performances, rather than performances in the PMAC. As a result, there will not be stage lights during the performance. "The magic that that layer of production brings to dance will be missing," said Arts Department Head Ms. Kalya Yannatos. However, dancing outside may bring a new, interesting dimension to the performance.

Laya Raj '24 is one of the dancers who will be performing outdoors. Raj has been practicing the dance pieces all year. In September, the dance faculty began to share dance sequences and choreography with the students involved. To execute the choreographers' vision of the piece, Raj thought about what

inspired the choreographers and expressed that interpretation through her body language. She sees dance as a way of storytelling. "Over time the piece finds its own meaning," she said.

Jenny Guo '21, Co-President of Dance Company, said, "All dancers have very different stories that they're telling." This year, the challenges of the pandemic have influenced the meaning of many performances. Ms. Yannatos said, "The piece that has come through me is a bit heavier than what I might normally make."

In spite of the myriad of challenges dancers and arts faculty have faced, the excitement for this performance did not wane. Guo, who will be performing for the last time at Choate, is eager to "have that experience being in the dressing room with friends, changing before performances, doing all our warmup rituals together."

All year, Choate's dancers have been working tirelessly to put on a show that explores a variety of themes, styles, and skill levels. As they go into their last weeks of rehearsal and preparation, it is clear that they haven't let new circumstances slow them down.

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With Arts Fest just around the corner, Choate's musicians, artists, and actors put final touches on their pieces.

ARTS CONCENTRATION SENIORS BID FAREWELL

By **Audrey Lim '23**
Staff Reporter

With May comes a flurry of activity in the Arts department, as seniors prepare for the annual senior recitals. For the seniors in the Arts Concentration Program, these recitals are the final chance to share their craft with the rest of the community.

Sesame Gaetsaloe '21 (dance), Senching Hsia '21 (visual arts), and Nick Madon '21 (music), among others, will soon present their final recitals in Arts Fest.

The seniors in Dance Arts Concentration collectively choreographed a group recital in addition to their individual solo pieces. During their first rehearsal, the seniors decided upon a cheerful but cinematic song to signify an ending to their dance journey at Choate. "We also incorporated choreography techniques that we learned in dance courses and fun elements from previous dance concerts," said Jenny Guo '21, Co-President of Dance Company.

For her solo piece, Gaetsaloe will be dancing to the song "I Hear a Symphony" by Cody Fry. "I hope to embody the emotions behind the grandiose orchestra,"

she said. When choreographing, Gaetsaloe likes to immerse herself into the song by improving to the music. Afterwards, she will look back at her improvisation recording and find the distinguishing moments. "I would normally get one really good moment, which will become the centerpiece of my dance, and I would then build my beginning and end around that moment," Gaetsaloe said. Having choreographed for many somber songs, Gaetsaloe embraced this senior recital as an opportunity to create a lighthearted and joyful piece.

As a visual artist, Hsia joined nature and art together in her senior exhibition. Her exhibition consists of an extinction series, ceramic tiles, paintings of birds, a scratchboard collection, a mixed media piece, and a larger installation piece. The last piece involves ceramic cicadas and letters written by her, in which she unreservedly expressed her beliefs. "I'm going to be taking these letters and handing them out to people, even strangers, who come to my senior recitals," Hsia said. "I'm much more expressive in my writing than I am

in person, so it's a way for me to overcome that fear of being judged, and be vulnerable without overthinking."

In each of her pieces, Hsia uses nature as a means to explore her own internal struggles. "I use nature as a lense to explore self-identity and self-reception, as a way of exploring my own emotions," Hsia said.

Madon chose defiant music for his senior recital, including the first movement from Dvorák's "The Cello Concerto in B minor" and the prelude from Bach's "Cello Suite No. 3." Most of these pieces are from Madon's favorite era, the Romantic period, which lasted from roughly the 1830s until 1900. The period's dramatic dynamics and intense melodies stress emotion while leaving room for interpretation.

Madon hopes that these pieces will show his love for music and inspire fellow artists to appreciate expression, no matter the discipline of art they practice. "Don't fear being outgoing," he advised. "Art isn't inherently perfect."

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Arts Fest Features Choral and Instrumental Concerts

By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Copy Editor

Spanning from May 15 to May 23, Arts Fest will feature the hard work of many Choate artists, including that of the choral and instrumental ensembles. This year, these ensembles as they were only able to hold limited in-person rehearsals in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines. These restrictions also affect how ensembles will be showcased during Arts Fest, as only members of the Choate community — no families — may be a part of the audience. Despite these challenges, the ensembles have been able to adapt to guidelines and remain optimistic about their performances.

Chamber Chorus, for one, will be performing on May 23. A highlight of the Chamber Chorus concert features a piece composed by Varun Ramamurthi '22. "Composing music is one of my passions," said Ramamurthi. "I have a long history in choral music, and I felt like I could utilize that to make a song for the community." The piece, titled "In Paradisum," was inspired by a requiem of the same name. The lyrics of the piece are derived from the final movement of the requiem, when a man as-

cends to heaven and is welcomed by angels. Ramamurthi's piece is dedicated to the people who have lost their lives to Covid-19, their families, and their loved ones.

"It feels great to have an idea coming to fruition," said Ramamurthi. "I had to teach the choir the piece, which was interesting since I had to conduct them through it, and [it's] also an area of improvement for me as a composer."

Sofia Munoz '23, an alto in Chamber Chorus, added, "It was really helpful because we were having trouble with the key changes and figuring out the tempo with the sopranos. With Varun there, he was able to set a general rhythm and give us an idea of what the piece should sound like."

Another ensemble that will be performing is Symphony Orchestra. The concert, originally scheduled for May 15, coincided with the second vaccination date for many students and had to be pushed back to May 22. The repertoire for the concert features a variety of composers. "We're trying not to play just popular classical music, but also present works by composers who aren't part of mainstream classical music," said Instrumental Ensembles Director Mr. Gene Wie. One piece the Symphony Orchestra

will be playing is "Colas Breugnon Overture," by Dmitri Kabalevsky.

"Kabalevsky doesn't get as much airtime as a lot of the other composers do, and a lot of his music is now locked up in copyright," said Mr. Wie. Fortunately, the Symphony Orchestra has been able to use Choate's own copy of the music after a past director bought a set of parts 50 years ago.

Another piece the Symphony Orchestra is performing is Joe Hisaishi's "Tonari no Totoro," from the Japanese animated film *My Neighbor Totoro*. Mr. Wie said, "A lot of people don't take film music seriously. People look at this and go, 'Why would you play music from a cartoon? It's not serious music.' But it's time for school orchestras to play this and not stick to the traditional Eurocentric standards of music."

Mr. Wie concluded, "We have always learned orchestral music in a very narrow path, and as a conductor, I've tried to introduce new things to my ensembles over the years. As awful as the pandemic is, it's also helped to trigger a revelation of why we teach certain kinds of music to our groups."

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Rehearsals Begin for Spring Musical

By **Isabella Grau '22**
Reporter

During a normal school year, mentions of the spring musical conjure up images of students singing, acting, and dancing in the PMAC with intricate sets and bright lights. However, this year, the production has faced challenges due to Covid-19 guidelines. Still, the cast and crew of the musical have found new ways to deliver their performances while recognizing the restrictions. The biggest change is that the musical will be performed on an outdoor stage built behind the PMAC.

The selection of the upcoming spring musical was not an easy task. "We had to think about physical distancing plus putting masks on, and the challenge of avoiding human contact. But also, the rights to many of the shows we considered were unavailable for streaming to parents and those abroad," said Ms. Deighna DeRiu, the director of the spring musical.

Urinetown, the chosen piece, is a satirical comedy that examines themes such as capitalism, greed, and corruption. The plot follows a society in which water consumption is controlled due to drought,

and people must pay to use public restrooms. After seeing his father get arrested, the main character, Bobby Strong, played by Will Flamm '21 and Ho Jin Jang '21 (the production will employ two, rotating casts), starts a revolution to allow people to urinate for free.

In accordance with social distancing rule, *Urinetown* was double cast. This means that there are two casts, nicknamed Blue and Gold, who perform on alternating nights. By double casting the show, social distancing was made easier, and more students were able to participate in the musical. However, actors who are in both casts oftentimes have to take on two different roles — they could be dancing as the main lead in one cast and in an ensemble in the other, thereby requiring them to remember two sets of blocking and dance numbers.

With the addition of double casting and social distancing, detailed blocking of the musical became even more important than usual. "We are also, of course, making sure people are six feet apart," said Lara Stone '22, the stage manager of *Urinetown*. "We're sort of taking creative liberties with stage directions and find

ways around physical contact, but we still get across the same message and insert some comedy."

With the importance of maintaining physicality between characters, physical distancing has changed how the actors interact with each other on stage. Although their physical movements have been restricted, the actors have found ways to connect with one another and produce entertaining performances. Sabrina Carlier '21, who plays the role of Penelope Pennywise, finds that, even from a distance, the cast has grown close, allowing for chemistry on stage.

"We've done many bonding activities and warm-ups that have allowed us to get to know each other and stay connected," she said. "The more people are able to connect during those moments before and during rehearsal, the more you can have fun on stage. We have actually also included some jokes about keeping our distance, so we play into these restrictions."

Urinetown will open on May 14 on the behind the PMAC.

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Art and photos courtesy of Senching Hsia. Photos by Lauren Kee, Tiffany Xiao, Linda Phan, and Deighna DeRiu/The Choate News



A SEASON WITHOUT GAMES: HOW TEAMS ARE STAYING COMPETITIVE



Photo by Tiffany Xiao/The Choate News

Boys' Varsity Volleyball prepares for its weekly intra-team scrimmage.

By **Bo Goergen '22**
Staff Reporter

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, Wednesdays and Saturdays for Choate's athletes brought carb loading, game-day playlists, and bus rides to competitions. Although teams no longer compete on Wednesdays, most varsity teams are still able to compete on Saturdays. However, Boys' Volleyball, Girls' Water Polo, and both Boys' and Girls' Crew do not have any interscholastic competitions this spring.

"There isn't really anything we can do about it," said Co-Captain of Boys' Varsity Volleyball Patrick Finnerty '21. "So we're disappointed, sure, but we're trying to make the most of it. We also have a couple of seniors who are playing for the first time this year, so we're all trying to have as much fun as possible while making sure to challenge and improve the younger players."

In the place of league games, Boys' Volleyball has been scrimmaging every Wednesday and may even start

scrimmaging twice a week. Even on intra-squad teams, the players have developed a spirit of healthy competition. Finnerty said, "We all get really into the games, and it was fun to have some fans in the stands last week. So, there's plenty of bonding, even if that high-pressure aspect isn't there as much as it would be in a normal season."

Girls' Water Polo is also not participating in interscholastic games. However, like Boys' Volleyball, they are making the most of this unusual year. The girls hold frequent scrimmages and have played a few five-on-five games. Co-Captain Macie Simmons '22 said, "It's not quite a normal experience, but it's definitely better than nothing and has given us valuable time to practice as a team."

Without games or long team bus rides, the team has bonded in other ways. Co-Captain Martha Chessen '22 said, "It's a great vibe just getting to walk onto the pool deck with the girls blasting music and having such high energy, ready to compete against each other." As a young

team with many new underclassmen, Chessen hopes that the energy, unity, and skill the squad has developed this season will carry over to a strong season next spring.

Although both Boys' and Girls' Crew cannot row against other schools this season, the coaches have gotten creative to make practices productive and fun. During practice, athletes are split up into different ergs and compete in relay races with each other.

Ella Sklar '22 said, "These relays are actually really fun and competitive. It is reasonable to assume that my teammates may be unmotivated. However, this is not the case. I am also really impressed with the effort the younger kids have put into learning the sport."

Along with these relay races, the crew teams have competed in a few "triathlons" that incorporate running upstairs and erging. "Our practices are very beneficial to our conditioning and ensure that we will all be fit for next season," said Oliver Scott '22.

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PLAYER PROFILE

On the Water with Andrew Kim '21

By **Naomi Fleish '22**
Staff Reporter

Although Co-Captain Andrew Kim '21 is remote this term, he is still finding ways to be a leader for the Boys' Crew Team. Next year, Kim will join the Columbia University Crew Team as a lightweight rower. Recently, Naomi Fleish '22 sat down with Kim to learn about how crew has affected his life, his recruitment experience, and his advice for novice rowers.

Naomi Fleish: When did you first start rowing?

Andrew Kim: I started rowing when I first came to Choate in [my] freshman year. I played hockey in Korea for nine years, and I didn't even know what rowing was. Not knowing that I had to do all three seasons of sports, I was looking for a fall and spring sport that would prepare me for the hockey season. My adviser told me that rowing was the only sport with both fall and spring seasons, so I thought I'd give it a shot.

NF: What initially drew you to the sport?

AK: Every year, on the first day of [the] fall season, the novices go to the erg room to see the team do a piece together. I still vividly remember stepping into that erg room and seeing Tristan Jamidar

'18, Oliver Brown '18, Scott Herman '19, and many other huge varsity guys giving it their all and nearly passing out in the end. Although the on-water aspect is just as amazing, the drive and determination I saw in that erg room were what initially drew me into the sport.

NF: What is a lesson that crew has taught you?

AK: The most valuable lesson I learned from crew is dedication. I quickly realized that I got out what I put into the sport. The more I practiced and trained on a daily basis, the more I improved on and off the water. Even though there were times I plateaued, I remained patient and dedicated to my goals. Most of the work and training is done when no one's watching, so it can often feel dull and unflattering. However, through this process, I learned that persistence and perseverance is the key to success.

NF: What is the hardest part about the sport?

AK: The hardest part about rowing is the daily grind. To be successful in this sport, you have to make sacrifices and good habits in your lifestyle. Since rowing is an endurance sport, it is very dependent on the amount of volume you put in on a consistent basis. If you lose consistency, it is very easy to lose fitness, and

it instantly shows on the erg. It's also one of the best parts of rowing because it's so fair.

NF: What was navigating the recruiting process during Covid-19 like?

AK: Since the recruiting process for rowing is relatively later, I had scheduled a few unofficial visits during March of 2020. To this day, I haven't been able to visit any of the schools, even Columbia, where I will be attending in the fall. The entire recruiting process was virtual, but the college coaches were very flexible and tried to make the best of the situation. As I made big improvements during lockdown training, coaches reached out to me through email and Zoom over the summer. The official visits were substituted by countless Zoom calls with current student-athletes and offers were given out shortly after.

NF: Do you have any advice for novice crew athletes?

AK: My biggest advice would be to trust the process. Allow the sport to change your lifestyle for the better and stay dedicated to your goals. As I mentioned before, the sport is very fair and sometimes brutally honest. You get what you put in.

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Photo by Garrett Curtis/The Choate News

Andrew Kim '21 on the water.

Choate Boars Take on Loomis Pelicans

By **Oliver Howard '23**
Reporter

Choate sports teams competed against Loomis on April 24.

Varsity Baseball

Varsity Baseball hosted its annual Senior Day against Loomis. Second baseman Eli Levesque '23 said, "It's a game

we'd looked forward to for quite some time, and we practiced hard for it." Solid pitching from Ryan Sweeney '21 and Glenn Halladay '21 kept the

Boars in the game. Jaxon Carroll '23 commented, "It's a relief that the seniors got to have their day, given the degree that Covid-19 has impacted us so far." After the difficult game, the team hopes to bounce back in its second game against Loomis on May 8.

Boys' Varsity Tennis

Boys' Varsity Tennis hosted a nail-biter against Loomis that came down to the final match. Nineteen players from both squads faced off against each other in both singles and doubles matches. John Henderson '23 and Will Ji '23 took on the top-ranked doubles team. "Loomis was a team we knew would be a close one," Henderson said. "For us, it was all about staying calm and playing each point like it was the last." Strong serving and consistent groundstrokes led the Boars to many singles and doubles wins, and they hope to carry this momentum through the end of the season.

Boys' Varsity Golf

Boys' Varsity Golf played Loomis at Wallingford Country Club. Golfer Tynan Davidson '23 described the season thus far as "a wonderful experience," and noted that "there aren't many Covid-19 rules other than wearing a mask and watching your distance between opponents." Co-Captain Vasily Konachenkov '22 played an exemplary round of

golf, shooting the lowest score of the team at 38.

Varsity Softball

Varsity Softball matched up against Loomis for its third game of the season. Choate's explosive offense dominated, with Alex Hassett '23 hitting a three-run home run in the first inning. Behind the plate, Lexington Secreto '21 threw out three runners at second. Jordan Wallace '24 said, "The energy from the bench was really there today, and I'm proud of all the girls this season." The Boars aim to continue their dominant play as they head into Senior Day.

Girls' Varsity Tennis

Girls' Varsity Tennis faced off against Loomis for its mid-season game. Although Loomis offered a tough challenge, many Choate athletes stepped up on the courts. "With lots of hard work we were still able to come out with [some] big wins. Many of our players stepped up and won both their singles and doubles matches as well," said Captain Greer Goergen '21. A highlight of the match was Zeynep Orucu '22's second singles match win of the season.

Girls' Varsity Lacrosse

Girls' Varsity Lacrosse played a strong game against Loomis. Choate's defense excelled throughout the game, refusing to fold despite tough attacks by Loomis. Boars' offense was bol-

stered by goals from Lindsay Spears '22 and Blake Bertero '22. "We had a lot of teamwork and our transitions looked super good. It was great to see the things we worked on in practice executed in the game," said Bertero.

Girls' Varsity Golf

Girls' Varsity Golf had an unorthodox away game on Loomis's course. "We had fun playing the match in the 'Scramble' way, a type of golf game where players on each team play with their best shots," said Summer Xu '22. Keeping with the scrimmage nature of the match, the "Scramble" game-mode allowed golfers on both teams to enjoy the greens while practicing essential golf skills.

Track and Field

Choate Boys' and Girls' Track and Field continued its virtual season in a meet against Loomis. Andrew Jean Baptiste '24 and Sean Dallaghan '23 put up great times in the 4x1 relay. Payton Garcia '23 reflected, "We came together as a team even though there was nobody to physically race against. It's a tough obstacle to get past, but we have been able to overcome it." The girls' team performed admirably as well. "The team did very well against Loomis with many girls [breaking personal records] in their events. We are super excited for our last meet on the [May] 15," said co-captain Alicia Xiong '21.

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Photo by Ramsey Scott/The Choate News

Pitcher Glenn Halliday '21 prepares to throw a fastball on the mound.