



ITS Introduces New Cyber Security Training

By **Aubrie Williams '24**
Staff Reporter

To kickstart Cyber Security Awareness Month, Choate's Information Technology Services (ITS) department is taking strides to improve the community's online safety.

Although only the month of May has been officially designated as Cyber Security Awareness Month, online safety is an ongoing issue for ITS. As the world becomes increasingly digital, being careful during online interactions is essential to personal and school safety. The department therefore set forth to improve the community's ability to differentiate between harmful and harmless emails, and increase overall cyber security awareness.

In collaboration with Director of Operations Mr. Bill Wright and Ms. Heather Lafontaine from the Financial Office, Director of ITS Mr. Andrew Speyer is spearheading initiatives for cyber security. This year, all students, faculty, and staff will be participating in these initiatives, including a program called KnowBe4, a security awareness training platform that can simulate phishing by sending mock scam emails to community members, helping students manage cyber awareness.

"ITS has created a video with an introduction to types of hacker activity. It is posted on the website," explained Mr. Speyer. "All faculty, staff, and students will be required to enroll in two short online courses from the company KnowBe4."

The Library will also be collaborating with ITS to spread awareness about cyber security. Mr. Speyer added, "The Library is creating additional resources for anyone interested in learning more. We have a partnership between the Library, Mr. [Morgan] Harris, and IT to provide more help to students through the Library with expansion of loaner equipment, better service hours at the Library, and the hope to create a student-run "Genius Bar" in the Library."

While this is a new initiative at Choate, members of the ITS department are confident that these programs should continue, especially as Choate increases its dependence on technology.

Mr. Speyer said, "This is the first time the School has engaged in a campus awareness program and our hope is to establish an annual focused period on this very important topic." He further explained, "I have always advocated that the number one risk to the School is not an outside event requiring, off-campus experience, or it can be exploring a topic

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FROM AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TO PEPE THE FROG: THE 2022 JFK PRESENTATIONS

By **Erin Li '24**
Copy Editor

Seniors in the John F. Kennedy '35 (JFK) Program in Government and Public Service finalized their experience in the program in a series of lectures to the student body. On May 3, 10, and 17, community members gathered in Getz Auditorium to listen to the hard work of these students.

Since joining the Signature Program in their sophomore year, students in the JFK program have experienced well-rounded education in politics through internships, courses, and seminars. In a final lecture to showcase their knowledge and dedication to politics, government, and public service, JFK students are required to give a TED-talk-style presentation on a topic of their interest related to the program. This presentation allows students to share the culmination of their work with the greater Choate community.

Director of the JFK program, Mr. Ned Gallagher, said, "It's a chance for them to draw some broader conclusions because the topics of their talks can be drawn from the coursework they've done — the required courses, electives, off-campus experience, or it can be exploring a topic



Photos by Toffy Prikittiphoom '24/The Choate News

Marcus Amine '22 (top) and Bo Goergen '22 (bottom) deliver their speeches as part of the JFK Program.

that was covered in the tutorial in greater depth."

Reflecting the numerous interests of JFK students, the

topics of the presentations consisted of diverse perspectives. Clarence Liu '22 presented on the court case of Students

for Fair Admissions (SFFA) v. Harvard. In his speech, he discussed the impact of the case on the college admissions process. See **JFK PRESENTATION**, Page 2

LINGUISTICS CLUB AND CHOATE AFFINITY GROUPS HOST CALLIGRAPHY NIGHT



By **Sundari Von Wetzel '25**
Reporter

On the night of Friday, May 6, students were invited to the Student Activities Center (SAC) to learn to write their names in a variety of languages during an event organized by the Linguistics Club.

"I think Choate really focuses a lot on multiculturalism and international perspectives," said President of Linguistics Club David Garsten '23. "This event is a really good way for people to appreciate other cultures and learn about them." The event was held in collaboration with many clubs representing diverse languages and cultural backgrounds. Africanah, Chinese Club, Choate Korea Friendship Association

(CKFA), Hillel, Hispanic-Latinx Forum (HLF), Japanese Club, and Middle Eastern Northern African Club (MENA) all hosted tables at the event.

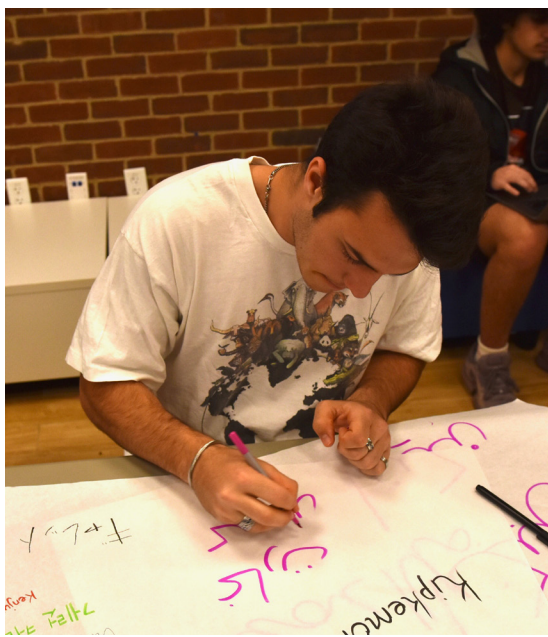
In proposing the event, Garsten was inspired by Harvest Fest back in October. He opted for a similar format for his club by creating an event that could be held in conjunction with other clubs. He noted, "We thought we should try to organize something like that huge event; it'd be really cool."

Garsten hoped that those who attended the Calligraphy Night understood that "it's not just transliterating your name, but that each culture has different naming customs." Whether it's the order of each of their names, or which parent's last name is taken, he wanted students at the events to learn "dif-

ferent customs in addition to just different sounds and scripts."

Katherine Chong '25 and Fiona Fu '25 manned the Chinese Club booth together. "[One thing] we as people just need to work on in general is being more open-minded and learning about other people's cultures instead of being so focused on the monolith of our own culture," said Fu. "Events like this [show] how people have been inspired to learn about other cultures."

Chong added that despite the wide variety of cultural backgrounds represented at Choate, "[oftentimes,] we get simplified to stats on the website, and there isn't a real representation of what that culture can entail inside our school. This is one of the times where we manifest as being more than a number."



Photos by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News

David Hallal '23 (right) writes his name in Arabic.

Chong also touched on the challenges of accurately capturing the cultural significance of names in different languages. "When you try to translate a name, it's hard to get both the meaning and the resemblance from the original culture." This fact makes it difficult for the translator. "Directly translating someone's name is not very simple," said Fu. While translating into Chinese, she had to "try and take characters that don't really have any specific meaning so that you're not transferring [bad] energy into their name." She hopes that having more events like this in the future will "open up more doors to communication and opportunities to share."

While Keegan Hennessy '25 enjoyed having her name

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New Wellness Initiatives Proposed

By **Nilan Kathir '25**
Reporter

While there are many resources available on campus to help improve student mental health, such as confidential and free counseling for students struggling with mental health and an on-campus psychiatrist for those who may benefit from medications, members of the Wellness Committee understand that students still may be hesitant to meet with a counselor. The Wellness Committee is a student group led by adviser Ms. Alexandra Copeland dedicated to creating a healthy environment at Choate by promoting wellness and balance in the community.

One of the main mental health issues that the Wellness Committee identified amongst students is stress. This can come from many areas, including academics, athletics, extracurricular activities, and personal problems. Students who are struggling with stress-related problems and issues can always receive aid from members on the counseling team and the Wellness Committee.

Even with the systems of support in place, many students believe that more support institutions are needed. James Stuber '24 said, "I think there is a lack of support for athletes at this institution. If you're doing Orchestra or another ensemble, it is impossible to play a sport, go to rehearsal, and eat dinner everyday. I haven't had enough time and support to do everything I've wanted."

Co-leader of Wellness Committee Maddie Chia '23 added, "I think overall consensus is on the more negative side. Choate as an institution fails to support most students mentally while simultaneously putting an unhealthy amount of stress on them. I think there are resources Choate has that could be super helpful, but they either aren't publicized enough or they aren't implemented to be as helpful as they could be."

Especially now, during Mental Health Awareness Month, change to better support students is necessary and in the process of being implemented. Dr. Lopez noted, "Although I believe that what we offer is helpful to students, I am aware that we can continue to do better." For example, The Wellness Committee is working hard on making Mental Health Day readily accessible to all, especially to those who may feel overwhelmed and are seeking a day off.

Ms. Copeland added, "We realized that counseling services were in high demand for students this year. To meet this demand, we added a part-time counselor for this school year to ensure there was not a waitlist for students to access services. We are currently in the process of hiring another full-time counselor for next school year. We want to make sure that there are no barriers or waitlists in accessing counseling services. We are also revamping

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Read it, then recycle it.

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Javits Prize Honors Work in Humanities

By **Zoe Dieringer '25**
Reporter

Henry Kops '22 was awarded the HPRSS's Javits Prize for his outstanding performance in humanities. Named after ambassador Eric M. Javits '48, the award is given to a student who demonstrates their excellence in the topic of American foreign policy. The prize includes a series of books on current issues and important personalities in American politics. Among the rest of the nominees, Begum Gokmen '23 and Gonzalo Castillo-Nunez '22 received honorable mentions. Castillo-Nunez's essay focused on the 1953 CIA intervention in Iran, where the CIA overthrew the government after it took away Western Oil Well control. Castillo-Nunez picked this topic because he knew from the start that he wanted to do something about espionage and covert operations; hence, he started researching the CIA. "I ended up choosing the one in Iran because I love learning about different cultures, and I knew next to nothing about Iranian history," he said.

Gokmen's essay explored risk mismanagement as the greatest threat to American national security. She was drawn to this topic after noticing a recurring theme within American foreign policy to prioritize economic and political interests over effective diplomacy. Focusing on both the domestic and international factors that enable risk mismanagement, she specifically highlighted the core influences of American exceptionalism and domestic political polarization that continue to shape the formation of policy targeting America's existential risks.

Kops's essay focused on the Cold War Jazz Ambassadors. These ambassadors were some of the most famous jazz musicians, and they were hired by the US to travel across the world as cultural diplomats. Yet, there was controversy around whether the government exploited the musicians, who were primarily

African Americans, to cover up the racism in America, or whether the musicians were using their platform to incite change.

Kops chose the topic because he knew it would sustain his interest throughout the months of reading and writing. "It was during a normal homework reading that I was confronted with my idea. It was one sentence that said something like, 'The US used cultural diplomats during the Cold War, such as pop stars, jazz musicians, and other artists.'" Kops's inner jazz musician became curious, and after he watched a 2018 National Public Radio documentary titled "The Jazz Ambassadors," he knew that the ambassadors would be his perfect topic. After a long and arduous drafting process, he finished the essay that went on to win him the prestigious prize.

HPRSS Department Head Ms. Kyra Jenney explained their decision to award Kops's essay the prize. She said, "Henry's essay stood out because of its effective balance of evidence and analysis. He had strong arguments that dug into key aspects of the history of the Cold War Jazz Ambassadors program. She emphasized the one-of-a-kind connections he made between the Cold War and the music of that time period, such as specific song lyrics and performances of different Jazz Ambassadors. "He presented a nuanced analysis of this program that looked at how it was both exploitative on the part of the U.S. government while also effective in that the Jazz Ambassadors were able to share, on the global stage, the realities of U.S. life, and particularly the Black experience at the time," said Ms. Jenney.

Serving as the ultimate recognition for outstanding works in humanities like Kops's, the Javits Prize has encouraged students to take initiative in exploring and researching more about American foreign policy.

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Calligraphy Night Integrates Many Languages and Cultures

Continued from Page 1

written in various languages, she wished she could have had more opportunities to learn about the cultures represented. Olympia Wolff '25, who attended the event, appreciated learning about different characteristics of various languages. She mentioned how Hebrew names include "son/daughter of," suggesting familial importance. Wolff added that she "[hoped] to see this event in a more organized manner, with more space. It would be great if they'd include a table set up with artifacts and other objects to encourage and entice attendees." Overall, however, she enjoyed the event. "The

most fun part was seeing a colorful sheet of my name written in various languages and comparing it with others who also visited each station," she said.

Calligraphy Night provided opportunities for students to learn about other cultures while also sharing their own with peers. In addition to making memories on the fun night, attendees experienced the exchanges of a diverse range of backgrounds and perspectives right on campus, helping to develop more awareness to the rich culture and community present at Choate.

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Photo by Garrett Curtis '24/The Choate News

Students enjoy Calligraphy Night.

CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH BRINGS NEW ONLINE SAFETY MEASURES

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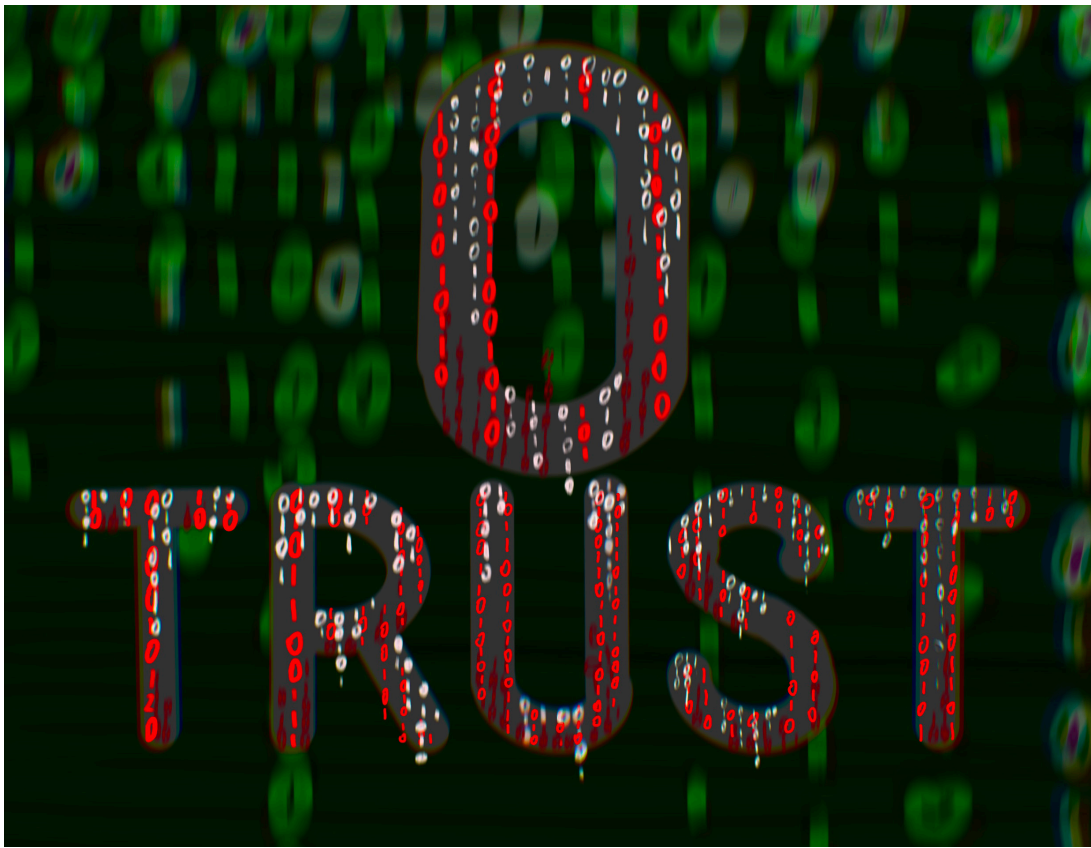
ing a lock down, it is the hacker trying to gain financial and sensitive data from our systems."

These initiatives come from increased cyber security concerns in various communities, especially in high schools and colleges. Scams are of highest concern to both ITS and Choate's administration. Mr. Speyer explained, "Prevention starts with education. The more people question the source and content of information the safer we become."

Mr. Wright added to this sentiment, saying, "[Mr. Speyer]

is trying to make us recognize the sender, where it's coming from, and understand when to actually click on these links." He continued, "It's easy to click on these links with viruses embedded in them, and that can bring these viruses into our network."

This issue is constantly on the minds of the ITS department, and not only in the month of May. As the world gets increasingly digital, being careful of who one interacts with is essential for personal and school safety. This program aims to improve the community's ability to differentiate between harmful and harmless emails.



Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News

WELLNESS COMMITTEE SETS FORTH NEW PLANS

and redeveloping our wellness curriculum, which will include mental health components."

The administration, form deans, and wellness advisers are all also regularly discussing ways in which student health and experience can be improved at Choate. "I think there are three things that could help the mental health support system for students at Choate: First, providing more educational opportunities to students around mental health and making sure it is included in

our wellness curriculum that is being developed. Second, having designated wellness spaces for students, and third, providing more safe spaces for individuals struggling with mental health to be able to process and connect with others. Most of these things are discussed and in progress."

It is important that mental health at Choate is discussed and that awareness is present, and it is necessary that the School implement more support systems to improve students' mental health.

Dr. Lopez believes that "mental health awareness should be widespread," and it is vital to "not only provide education, but to also provide opportunities to engage in activities that would enhance wellness" to truly improve the well-being of Choate students.

Ms. Copeland concluded, "Many times, people get mental health confused with mental illness. Everyone has mental health, just like they have physical health, but not everyone has mental illness,

just like not everyone has a physical illness. Talking more about [mental health] lowers the stigma around individuals accessing help and helps us to promote support systems." Thus, the Wellness Committee hopes to highlight the importance of maintaining one's mental health through conversation, structured education, and new policies.

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JFK Students Kickstart End-of-Year Presentations

Continued from Page 1

cussed the Affirmative Action Policy, which was established as an effort to improve employment and opportunities for minority groups. He described how SFFA, an anti-affirmative-action organization, challenged Harvard University on the subject of discrimination toward Asian applicants.

Liu was inspired by a case he read in his JFK tutorial class, leading to his decision to delve deeper into the field of Supreme Court cases. During his presentation, Liu touched upon the dramatic changes that this case could have on college admissions, such as a decrease in the percentage of Black and Latiné students admitted, aiming to answer the question: "Does diversity merit discrimination?" With this presentation, he hopes that students will "keep up with current events, politics, court cases because those all have a really big ability to affect you no matter who you are."

Honor O'Donnell '22 presented on "Constitutional Infringement and Witch Hunts: America's Cultural War." In her presentation, she spoke on various cases that involved hy-

per-surveillance and vigilantism, exploring three pieces of legislation — the Texas Heartbeat Act, Parental Rights in Education Act, and California's Real Public Safety Plan. While brainstorming for her presentation, O'Donnell noticed the "political loophole where laws that are enforced by citizens can directly bypass amendments." She studied how each legislature involved the undermining of the constitution and incentivization to act against citizens. O'Donnell hoped that the audience would "genuinely think about whether their personal politics are worth eradicating bipartisanship and turning ordinary citizens into informants."

Tigo Ponce de Leon '22 discussed the use of art in social media and politics through his presentation, "The Ascendancy of Pepe the Frog: A Window Into the Political Echo Chambers Incubated on Social Media." Leon discussed the role of Pepe the Frog in the media. Particularly, he elaborated on how it started as an innocent drawing and is now used as a hate symbol. Drawing inspiration from the documentary Feels Good Man, Leon chose his topic for its humor and lightheartedness. He said, "I just knew that I'd be

spending a lot of time with the content, so I wanted something that was not very dry but had a bit of color to it."

In this digital age, Leon also hoped to find something that would be relevant and relatable. He said, "Being a teen of the digital generation, I can relate to the pressing issue that is social media and the way in which it's impacting our lives." In his speech, he expressed this concern, giving examples of how Pepe the Frog has been used and abused in politics. He was pleased with his performance and appreciated the support of his peers. The audience enjoyed the humorous aspect of his speech and was amused by his interpretation of Pepe the Frog.

The well-researched and engaging presentations of this year's seniors inspired all of its audience members — especially younger students involved in the program. Muñoz, who is also a member of the JFK program, said, "This really gives me inspiration for my TED talk, which I will have to complete next year, and it gives me inspiration for topics that I might want to delve into deeper during the seminar that we all take in the winter."

Another JFK student, Melody Qian '24, also appreciated the opportunity to learn about the issues that were presented and get an insight into her future as a member of the program. She said, "I'm looking forward to taking all the electives and being a lot more informed so that I can pursue my passions and government and politics because I feel like it's pretty rare to have the opportunity to be able to access so many electives in this field, and I'm really excited to take all those classes and see where they lead me in terms of my final project."

By gaining a deeper understanding of various political and world views, the seniors in the JFK program have learned to be respectful and open to different perspectives, thus increasing their political experience. Through this signature program and the culminating final presentations, JFK students end their time in the special program but will finally take their first steps into the demanding but rewarding world of public service, expanding their intellectual horizons and building upon the legacy of President Kennedy.

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CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY UNITES BEHIND EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS

By **Eva Li '24**
Copy Editor

Across the state of Connecticut, local towns and committees have worked hard these past months to organize community events in celebration of Earth Day. On April 23, the Town of Branford and Living Wisely and Well on Planet Earth co-sponsored “Spring Into Action,” an Earth Day fair on the Branford Green that occurred from 9 a.m. to noon. “One of the themes of the fair was to celebrate the many steps already taken by the Town of Branford to reduce its carbon footprint,” explained Ms. Margaret Sipple, a member of the committee responsible for organizing the fair.

This year’s Branford Clean Up Day also took place on April 23. Using trash bags, litter pickers, gloves, and safety glasses provided by the Environment Commission, residents spread out across town to remove litter.

“I hope the event raises awareness of how much trash is strewn about, which might lead to individuals disposing of litter responsibly and might lead to our community addressing litter as a community issue,” said Ms. Heather Sweeney, a member of the Branford Conservation Commission. She further expanded on the importance of celebrating Earth Day, stating, “I think it’s easy to slip out of good habits, including habits that are good for our planet. I think having an annual day reminding us to



Graphic by Je-Won Im '23/The Choate News

do better environmentally with our choices is very powerful.”

The fair included a myriad of engaging activities and informative resources for all age groups. Volunteer organizations, environmental-related companies, and town commissions, such as the Branford Garden Club and the Inland Wetlands Commission, were present to showcase their contributions to reducing the carbon footprint. In addition to the exhibits, the committee also designed four activities specifically intended for younger attendees. Children had the option to make art projects using recycled materials, play earth-related

games, compete in an environmental challenge presented by the Connecticut Experiential Learning Center (CELC), or participate in a toy swap. For the toy swap, Ms. Sipple noted, “My husband served as Mr. Fix It so that if anybody borrowed broken toys, they could get it fixed. The main idea was to get children to get used to the idea that they could have a lot of fun with a previously used toy.”

While saving the planet has been a consistent theme of the fair for the past decade, the committee placed a great emphasis on publicizing the town’s accomplishments this year. “We believe that if people can focus on solutions and celebrate

what’s already been done, they’ll feel energized to do more ... That was definitely a new goal of this fair,” said Ms. Sipple.

Similarly, the Office of the Mayor of Hamden and the town’s Earth Day Committee also co-hosted their annual Earth Day celebration at Hamden Middle School.

“Earth Day has been important for over 50 years. Now we are in an environmental crisis, and paying attention to our environment is a matter of life and death on our planet as we know it ... Every day should be Earth Day in our thoughts and hearts,” Ms. Hoffman said.

This year, the Earth Day Committee planned a series

of engaging events, including presentations by nearly 60 social and environmental exhibitors to educate and inspire residents to live in harmony with the earth. Other popular activities included high school student environmental activism training, the Youth Climate Movement, and the Magitricity-Environmental magic show with Cyril the Sorcerer.

Every year on April 22, countries worldwide celebrate Earth Day in support of environmental protection. Originating in 1970, Earth Day gained traction as more people in the United States and across the globe became aware of the environmental crises humans

have caused. Resulting from the lack of legal mechanisms in place to protect the environment, catastrophic events, such as the 1969 fire on Cleveland’s Cuyahoga River, helped shed light on the problem of air and water pollution.

Inspired by the idea of anti-Vietnam War “teach-ins” taking place across college campuses in the United States, Senator and former Governor of Wisconsin Gaylord Nelson announced the concept of an ‘Earth Day’ in the fall of 1969. Nelson received mass support from the public on his plan for a large-scale, grassroots environmental demonstration “to shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda.” On April 22, 1970, Nelson officially established the first Earth Day, when an estimated 20 million people nationwide participated in inaugural events at tens of thousands of sites across the United States.

Now, as the ravages of climate change are becoming more visible with each passing day, it is even more important to celebrate Earth Day. “Progress has slowed, climate change impacts grow, and our adversaries have become better financed,” stressed Ms. Kathleen Rogers, the president of Earth Day Network, in an interview in 2020. “We find ourselves today in a world facing global threats that demand a unified global response.”

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Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

DESEGREGATE CT FIGHTS FOR ZONING LAWS REFORM

By **Brian Harder '23**
Staff Reporter

For decades, Connecticut has faced persistent housing inequality issues, leaving many minority groups with limited access to affordable housing in towns such as New Haven, where neighborhoods are often dominated by a single race.

Zoning laws restrict the type of housing that can be built on a plot of land and can stipulate requirements for dwellings built. This legislation has been a key driver of the state’s housing inequality because zoning laws can be used as a tool to create unaffordable housing in targeted areas. Connecticut, for the most part, only allows single-family homes to be built, but options like apartments or multi-family homes would increase affordability for many people.

In response to this inequality, an organization called Desegregate CT was founded in June 2020, at a time when deep societal inequities were once again brought to the forefront of people’s minds. Desegregate CT’s mission is to “pursue statewide zoning reform and to organize for the creation of more diverse types of housing,” explained Outreach Coordinator Kevin Kurian.

The group’s work mainly involves creating proposals for legislation that can facilitate zoning reform. For instance, the recent-

ly passed bill HB 6107 legalized “accessory dwelling units, which is a type of housing that’s a small apartment enclosed within a larger single-family home.” The organization is also working to ensure that local commissioners receive adequate training before granting the ability to make zoning decisions.

Kurian highlighted some of the hurdles faced by Desegregate CT, such as the fact that many individuals believe that the group is planning on constructing high rises in their town, even though the organization’s goal is to create affordable suburban housing. “People are really afraid of change and when you’re talking about something not very well understood like zoning, you’re going to have people think you’re doing something that you’re not trying to do,” he shared.

Estelle Guira '23 recently worked with the organization to raise awareness on the inequality that zoning laws have created. According to Guira, she “wrote op-eds to state legislators consisting of the benefits of reforming zoning laws” as part of her experience.

Mr. Kurian is confident in Desegregate CT’s future. “Our future is strong because it’s driven by young people, and I think that’s the real key in the longevity of any given organization.”

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ALL-LATINA TEAM BRINGS “GOOD BONES” VIDEO GAME TO WALLINGFORD

By **Amelia Sipkin '25**
Copy Editor

“Good Bones,” a new video game written and programmed by Wallingford resident Jes Negrón, will be released on the video game platform Steam this spring.

The game took six months to complete and according to one of the visual designers, Patricia Navarro Guerra, it has been “crafted with passion and dedication by all participants.”

The game will feature an all-Latina cast and, as Negrón articulated on her Twitter account, will be “exploring themes of grief, loss, familial expectations, mental health, queerness, etc.” Negrón and her team did not want to reveal too much about the game, but they gave fans a small glimpse into it by providing a short summary on the Steam website. “After the death of your spouse, you pack up your daughter and run from your grief — straight into a dilapidated old house filled with terrible memories. You encounter the ghost of a young woman who doesn’t remember who she is, why she’s there, or how she died.”

Throughout the game, players will attempt to uncover the identity of this ghost and the truth behind what she and the house have endured. The main characters include: Avi Colon, a mother who is afraid of the dark; her daughter Bianca Colon; the town librarian Olivia Mendez, who loves puns



Graphic courtesy of RETCON Games

and hates pool water; and the ghost, Rosa Castillo.

Negrón majored in English at the University of New Haven; hence, she is a formally trained writer but a self-taught coder. Her father, who is also a programmer, helped guide her to achieve mastery of the skill. “Although I’m in gaming, my English major has been essential in the process. When creating a game, you have to know how to write a good storyline and make people interested,” said Negrón.

After graduating, she put her storytelling and coding skills to work at Riot Games for two years; however, Negrón, along

with other female employees, experienced unequal pay, discrimination, and sexual harassment. They filed a lawsuit against the company and received a \$100 million settlement. Negrón continued her coding career by creating her own company: RETCON Games. “Good Bones” will be RETCON’s first release.

Ms. Guerra is the environmental designer of the game. “My role has been creating the atmosphere, the background, and the props” she said.

She utilizes different color palettes to manipulate the players’ moods throughout different scenes during the game. “I design

the rooms where the story happens, giving them the mood required through color palettes and composition. I bring a visual feeling,” Guerra praised the all-female and all-Latina design team, emphasizing their passion, dedication, and creativity. “I’m particularly inspired by the fact that Jes has been directing the whole project with her own resources and from scratch,” she said.

The game costs \$14.99 to download and has already been added to over 3,000 Steam wish lists.

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Graphic courtesy of RETCON Games

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My Journey to Mastering Independence at Choate

By **Teniola Obayomi '25**
Opinions Staff Writer

Coming to Choate in the fall presented me with many things: new friends, an unfamiliar environment, challenging classes, but above all, the opportunity to grow.

I wasn't sure how my freshman year would change me, but on the first day of school, I quickly realized how much freedom I had. For the first time, I had educational autonomy and could take electives that I was interested in. I also felt socially liberated and relished going to school with a different group of people. Now, all of this independence sounds ideal, but at the beginning of the school year, I struggled with all of the newfound freedoms that I suddenly had to manage. However, over the course of the last two terms, I think I've finally found my stride, and I've mastered what it means to be independent.

The first time I truly understood the taste of freedom was when I realized I could spend 13 hours at school which would give me the ability to bypass limitations caused by lack of time. As a day student, it's easy to feel like you don't have enough time in the day to keep up with the extracurricular rigors of the Choate schedule. However, these 13 hours give me the freedom and ability to pursue all that I want to do at Choate. From using the academic resources to participating in events, clubs, and activities, at the beginning of the year I was excited to embrace it all. Unfortunately, I found it difficult to use the School's resources and to engage in all that I wanted to because, for the first time, it was up to me to advocate for myself. In middle school, I was highly reliant on my teachers and peers — they guided me, showing me what assignments to do and exactly how to do them.

Since the fall term, I've learned to be more resourceful. Before

I ask teachers for help, I always look at my notes, seek out online resources, and try to figure out the material by myself. I've gotten better at managing my time and tough homework load through rigorous planning — my planner has become my best friend. The key to mastering independence, is to first master the things that are easier to control. For me, this included mastering time management and creating controlled and efficient study environments. Of course, I have my moments of procrastination, but everything gets done on time at the end of the day.

Additionally I didn't need to be socially independent in middle school. I practically knew everyone at my school, making it easier for me to talk to my peers. My friends and I relied on each other, frequently doing homework together and spending lots of time hanging out after school. Always having friends by my side made me feel comfortable and secure, and I grew to detest being alone at school. Re-

cently, I've been spending more time by myself and I've realized the importance of self reflection and feeling comfortable spending time alone. I've found that sometimes "solo-activities" can be just as fun; personally, I enjoy crocheting and reading while listening to some of my favorite music.

While it took the majority of freshman year to accomplish this feat of independence, I believe that I now know how to be comfortable in situations that I have to approach on my own — both socially and academically. Though this is a bold claim, I believe that it's justified! It was challenging at first because I had no idea how to get through school without my hand being held by my peers, family, and teachers. But as time went on, I realized the importance of being your own best supporter, advocate, and friend.

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Choate Takes: School Dance Edition

"At dances, students should be provided with either headphones or ear plugs to prevent permanent hearing damage. The speakers are set so loudly that they have the potential to cause hearing loss!!"
- Campbell Pfbaum '23

"More scream and sing music... less stomp on people in heels music."
- Lorraine Hilgen-Santa '21

"Where was the food at First Hurrah? One of the reasons I went was for the food, but I got there and there was none! Food and water are absolutely necessary at every dance."
- Ischel Hernandez '23

"We need more music that encourages people to dance instead of mosh pit. Personally, I also really enjoy the formal dress code."
- Dylan Clack '23

"Dances should remain separated between grades. If not underclassmen and upperclassmen, the freshman should have a dance of their own."
- Vic Glass '23

"Too much jumping, not enough dancing. Also, I should be the DJ."
- David Hallal '23

FACILITATING WOMEN'S VOICES IN MALE-CENTRIC INDUSTRIES



Graphic by Brian Yip '24/The Choate News

By **Eva Swanson '25**
Opinions Staff Writer

One of the most popular clubs on campus is the Finance and Investment Club with an email list totaling roughly 340 students. I learned that fun fact at the club's first meeting of the term.

Although I was always aware that finance is a heavily male-dominated field, I quickly realized that I wasn't quite ready for the roughly 6:1 ratio of males to females. Unfortunately, on Choate's campus, there is still a gaping gender disparity in the field of finance and politics, causing women to feel an absence of representation and respect.

I remember walking into the first Finance and Investment club meeting. As a very punctual person, I arrived half

an hour early. Taking a seat at the back of Getz auditorium, I started working on some homework to pass the time and was completely unacknowledged by the club's cabinet seated at the front of the room. Fifteen minutes later, a group of boys came in and were applauded for their promptness. Though I didn't bother to think much of it, it's the frequency of such microaggressions that make women feel uncomfortable in similar environments on campus.

Another major problem I witnessed in these meetings, as well as in other spaces on campus, was being repeatedly talked over by male counterparts. However, such occurrences are nothing new. Anyone who attended the joint meeting between Young Democrats and Young Republicans on Roe v. Wade knows, in many forums at

Choate, women's opinions aren't valued as much as men's. Women's voices, especially when talking about a highly personal and sensitive women's issue, should be prioritized over all others. In this discussion, the conversation felt dominated and scrutinized by its male participants, making it difficult for the women in the room to feel comfortable voicing their genuine, and oftentimes anecdotally charged, perspectives.

Unfortunately, people aren't willing to address the issues of gender-imbalance by finding the root of the problem and discouraging the behavior that perpetuates it; they just want a quick fix. As a member of Choate Women in Business, I sincerely appreciate that women are given the opportunity to learn about such topics in a safe space. However, sometimes it feels as if creating a

space separate from men, as opposed to having these discussions with them, only further perpetuates this divide. The first step to moving forward is ensuring that there's a mutual understanding of the issue. Until we create more opportunities for co-ed conversations on the topic of female inclusion in male-dominated fields, we will not be able to meet a productive and pivotal consensus.

The gender divide is a widespread issue in finance and similar fields. Countless barriers are put in front of not only women, but rather anyone who is not a cisgender male. The largest of these hurdles is having our voices trampled by those that are deeper, louder, and, in many cases, more masculine. We must ask ourselves: how do we address an issue that's been so prevalent in society for centuries? Until we learn to mitigate and address this issue on a widespread level, it is up to us all as individuals to reflect on, acknowledge, and, if necessary, change our actions to help women feel like equal members of this community. Whether it's through a community conversation, one-on-one club meetings, or SCOPE stepping in, action needs to be taken. At a school that holds pride in their diversity and inclusivity, women have the right to feel confident in pursuing their passions and not be hindered by gender divides.

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HISTORY CLASS REIMAGINED

By **Mwendwa Daisley '23**
Opinions Writer

One way to learn history is through a textbook: mastering dates and names until you can recite the book's contents back to front. I often wonder how effective this method is, and I've concluded that it falls short at giving students the opportunity to put things into perspective. How do we fix the structure of the history class? What elements does the class need to be genuinely engaging and educational? Well, to answer those questions, I'll tell you about my ideal class, what it would be about, how I would teach it, and how it would work.

The class would be called Bullet Point History: The Historical Moments That You Need to Know. The class examines pivotal points in history, focusing specifically on the moments that have altered, shaped, and informed the future. Over the course of the year, students would examine longer periods and patterns of change, but every week, the class would focus on a major event as it happened chronologically in history.

To teach these lessons, students would place themselves in these pivotal moments. The teacher would present them with a situation, and each student would be assigned a historical figure to represent or a perspective to portray. For homework, students would research their perspective and do reading on the event. During class, students might hold discussions, give important speeches, and debate with their peers, all representing their assigned perspective.

In addition, another cool homework component would be for the historical figures to get

involved outside of class. For example, if you're a president or a powerful politician, send out an address to the rest of your classmates-turned-fellow-participants in this makeshift society. If you are a journalist or artist, write an opinion or commentary piece about what is going on in the world at that time. Maybe someone might write a song or some poetry that is inspired by the plight that their character faces.

It would be crucial for students to get into character as well. I think that costumes and props, along with other distinguishing nuances, can give an entertaining aspect to the class and could help students feel more invested and interested in the decisions they make and the effort they put in. This class would give students opportunities to write about relevant news and topics, practice giving speeches and talking publicly, as well as collaborating with other classmates to solve complex issues, all crucial, and often overlooked, aspects of an education.

As a person who has a particular interest in history and the humanities, this is a class that would definitely appeal to me. A lot of reading and exploring that I did online when I was younger was to satisfy my desire to understand the context of every situation or every person that I had seen in a movie or in a book. Bullet Point History would give students a different approach to the study of the past. It would engage students with diverse interests, as this class gives opportunities to act, to debate, to write, to collaborate, and ultimately to learn.

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Graphic by William Gao '24/The Choate News

ABOLISHING ROE V. WADE IS A DANGEROUS MOVE FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

By **Helen Ryan ’24**
Opinions Staff Writer

Since 1965, women have tirelessly advocated for their reproductive rights, starting with their fight for the prescription, sale, and use of contraceptives. In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that states do not have the right to legislate abortion before the third trimester; yet, almost 50 years later, women are still faced with regulation of their bodies. This week, a Supreme Court opinion draft was leaked to the public, showing that the court was ready to repeal the ruling of Roe v. Wade, the landmark case for women’s reproductive rights. If this law is repealed, nearly 26 states are expected to limit or prohibit abortions.

The draft was written by Justice Samuel Alito and four other justices — Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Barrett. Though Alito stated that it does not represent a finalized decision by the court, many believe its unlikely for this ruling to change by the time the final decision is released. This decision opens doors to a terrifying future for women in the United States. *The New York Times* wrote, “Efforts are already underway to impose a nationwide ban on abortion as soon as Republicans regain the White House and Congress, which could happen as soon as 2025.”

Abortion is a topic that has been long-discussed and debated. Before and after Roe v. Wade, people have never been able to agree on whether or not



Graphic by Brian Yip ’24 / *The Choate News*

women should be able to get an abortion. Funny, isn’t it — a nationwide discussion about a woman’s personal decision regarding her own body? Still, this was the reality. This is the reality. Six out of nine of the current Supreme Court justices are male, and these men, who have no knowledge of women’s lives, circumstances, or anything except for what they have experienced as men, are trying to dictate what women can or can’t do with their bodies.

Abortion is not about politics, religion, debate, or controversies. It’s about freedom, civil rights, healthcare, safety, and the well-being of women across the United States. More than a headline in the news, abortion is a reality that many women go through every day. It is healthcare — something everyone has a right to. For example, women who are assaulted are often victims of nonconsensual preg-

nancies. Without Roe v. Wade, these women would be forced to carry these pregnancies to term, despite it being the outcome of immense trauma. In fact, in some states, rapists are allowed to sue for custody or visitation of the child. But, it would be illegal for a woman to make the choice not to carry this trauma with her for the rest of her life.

Furthermore, pregnancies can cause fatal health hazards for women, which are exacerbated if their child has a birth defect. If abortion is illegal, doctors would have to wait until after a woman gives birth to provide treatment. At that point, it may be too late, and the woman’s health may have deteriorated past the point of a cure. Pregnancies may result in health complications for the mother as well as the fetus. Oftentimes, abortion is a choice women make when pre-screening discovers issues with the pregnan-

cy. Medical abortions are valid, and women deserve the right to choose the best option for them.

Even if there are no health issues involved, women should still have the right to an abortion. If they are not ready to be a mother or are currently in a situation in which they can not adequately support a child, they should be allowed to make that choice for themselves. Abortion is not murder. It is a choice — a woman’s choice. It is not an argument of whether human life begins at conception or birth or if your religion or political party supports or condemns it. It is about real lives, choice, and freedom. Women deserve freedom when it comes to their own bodies. Unfortunately, our country seems to be moving in the wrong direction, and the reality for women is shifting back to the 1950s.

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YOON SUK-YEOL HAS AN IMPACTFUL VISION FOR SOUTH KOREA

By **Stanley Cho ’25**
Copy Editor

Yoon Suk-yeol, a member of the People Power Party, won the South Korean Presidential election on March 9 to become the nation’s 13th president.

In recent years, South Koreans have been outraged by the political exploitations committed by previous presidential administrations. Though some remain suspicious about Yoon’s lack of political experience, Yoon was able to defeat Democratic Party nominee Lee Jae-myung because of his status as the nation’s former prosecutor-general and his popular domestic policies. The future of South Korean politics looks bright; Yoon’s administration promises to address issues such as corruption, the nation’s economy, and international relationships.

Ever since its democratization in 1987, South Korea has fallen victim to institutions that encourage corruption and duplicity. This corruption is deeply ingrained within the politics of South Korea, which can be observed through the multitude of bribery cases, sexual harassment scandals involving high government officials, and the impeachments and incarcerations of former presidents.

Yoon’s campaign promised to investigate the wrong-doings of the current administration of President Moon Jae-in; many in South Korea see Yoon and his administration as a symbol of justice in a nation littered with corruption. His stance on corruption is not just in speech — he has the record to back it up. As the prosecutor-general, he was known for being tough on corrupt politics. Yoon intends to renew the prosecution of South Korea and conduct scrutinous investigations to properly and impartially judge those who have threatened the nation’s democracy.

Other than his proposed action to battle corruption, Many South Koreans are supporters of his domestic policy. Unlike the United States, where economic opportunities are spread across major

cities, Seoul, the capital of South Korea, holds the vast majority of the nation’s commercial, financial, and administrative action.

The unreasonably high concentration of job opportunities in Seoul has created a housing bubble. Additionally, the Jeonse rent system — a South Korean rental system in which tenants pay a lump-sum deposit that they receive back in full following the completion of their rental contract — has led to the inflation of property prices. The current Moon administration aims to increase property tax and regulate Jeonse loans to reduce Seoul’s inflated demand for housing and make property much more affordable. Despite these efforts, Moon’s administration has also caused significant harm to regular homeowners and members of the working class. But, Yoon has promised to reduce government interference in the housing market, allowing the private sector to make profit there once more. Yoon’s administration aims to supply 2.5 million housing units across the nation — 1.3 million of which would be located in Seoul — to provide property for homebuyers in their twenties and thirties. Yoon’s ambitious project promises to fix the housing crisis that remains an issue at the forefront of voters’ minds.

Moreover, Yoon has promised to support the Korean economy through his focus on expanding the information and communications technology (ICT) sector and the creation of new, sustainable jobs. The majority of South Korea’s exports comes from its ICT sector, which has proven to be extremely profitable, as companies such as Samsung and LG have become essential parts of South Korea’s economy.

Yoon plans to relax government involvement in the ICT sector to foster expansion of production and development in technological companies. His administration will facilitate corporate investment and plans to ease labor regulations, which will allow companies to receive aid from the government to develop startups in medical fields, cultural content, and social services.

Despite the immense support that Yoon plans to show towards companies, his main agenda is to compensate those who have sustained economic losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, Yoon was unable to address gender inequality in South Korea. The country has the largest gender wage gap amongst countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), been prone to frequent gender discrimination within the workplace, and fallen victim to a multitude of sexual harassment cases involving high-level government officials.

The prominence of South Korea’s own #MeToo movement, other organizations, and increasing occurrences of femicide pushed South Korea’s Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, a governmental ministry, to reduce gender discrimination and violence against vulnerable groups by implementing gender-related policies.

Though the previous administrations supported the continuation of the ministry, Yoon’s administration has called for its abolishment. Surprisingly enough, nearly half of South Korean adults, typically younger men, support the abolition of the ministry, claiming that it has been ineffective in promoting equality and has supported “reverse-discrimination” toward men in the workplace.

Yoon’s administration plans to reform the “unfair policies that favor women” by “establishing a new body that can shed light on the “value of ‘family’ and youth who strive for fair competition.” Yoon’s stance on the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family has stirred controversy amongst South Korean voters and many worry that years of progress towards gender equality will be undone under his leadership. However, it appears that Yoon and his administration will properly address issues of gender inequality, corruption, and economic stagnation through their government model.

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A Cautionary Tale: Elon Musk Buying Twitter



Graphic by Carolyn Chen ’25 / *The Choate News*

By **Tyler Kuo ’23**
Copy Editor

Elon Musk’s proposed acquisition of Twitter has dominated news headlines over the past several weeks. Many have questioned what sort of content will be allowed on Musk’s Twitter, given his stated intention to make Twitter a more free-speech-friendly platform. These fears are well-founded: the history of social media and Twitter has shown the dangers of misinformation and hate speech. While Musk may have noble intentions in preserving freedom of speech, a closer look would indicate that Twitter, privately controlled by Musk and out of the public limelight, is likely to create more headaches for democracy. Such a change will allow the worst parts of social media to proliferate falsehoods and further polarize the internet.

While Twitter is a much smaller company compared to its social media peers, such as Facebook and Tik Tok, its influence is disproportional in our society due to it being many politicians and public figures’ first choice in disseminating information. Twitter is a platform that holds considerable power in

influencing how society expounds and refines its views. As a result, it has often been abused by those seeking to promote hate speech and misinformation. Perhaps the most memorable, recent example of this is the use of Twitter by former President Donald Trump, who claimed that the 2020 Presidential Election was stolen from him.

Following the January 6 Capitol riot, Trump’s twitter account was banned. The reality is that the toxic cycle of tweeting and angry responses to those tweets has become an ingrained feature of the Twitter ecosystem, despite efforts by the company to gradually put guardrails in to limit abuse on the platform. And just recently, Musk stated his intention to place Trump back on Twitter, calling his initial removal “morally wrong.”

Musk insists that Twitter is the “Town Hall” of digital speech, and he wants to preserve all “legal” speech on Twitter. While Musk is undoubtedly one of the preeminent entrepreneurs of our time, having started both SpaceX and Tesla, he will find that the definition of “free speech” is not subject to the same rules of physics and science that electric cars and rockets are. In fact, legal free speech creates

al principles and prioritize the well-being of their staff and those influenced by their company.

In more recent years, efforts to show diversity on-screen have been more significant, and Disney is a leading example for other companies. There aren’t a lot of characters or movies, including characters in the LGBTQ+ community or conversations about these topics in films; consequently, now is the time for Disney to stand up for what it believes in. The “Don’t Say Gay” bill stigmatizes various family structures. As a result, children in the classroom will internalize the ideology that gender and sexuality are inappropriate topics. Many children will likely feel embarrassed about their families and themselves because it has been deemed inappropriate to discuss in classrooms.

It’s dehumanizing to ban these crucial conversations that are a pathway to understanding one another, especially at an impressionable young age. Big corporations, like Disney, demonstrate that we need to follow our conscience and adhere to our moral principles regardless of the outcome; the Blue Fairy was right. People aren’t wooden and hollow like Pinocchio. Disney’s comment on social justice issues as a corporation is influential in Florida and worldwide, and I hope other companies will step up and follow Disney’s example.

Olympia Wolff is a third-former from St. Paul, MN. She may be reached at owolff25@choate.edu

risk for unwarranted and abhorrent conversations around topics such as white supremacy and the spread of outright falsehoods such as vaccine misinformation. Under Musk’s high-level vision, everyone should be allowed on Twitter as long as they are not promoting violence. Indeed, Musk has his own history of tweeting irresponsible content: he once called a diver who was attempting to rescue children trapped in a cave a “pedo guy” and recently criticized the General Counsel of Twitter for policies on moderating speech. This type of speech free-for-all would drive further polarization in our already heavily-divided society.

Moreover, Twitter is not a true “Town Hall” where citizens congregate in person and debate ideas knowing the identity of the speaker. Many Twitter users are anonymous, and the platform is heavily influenced by “bots,” which are programs trained to respond to certain messages to promote an, often, divisive agenda. Musk has indicated that he may require users on Twitter to be authenticated, which would be a good step in cleaning up this problem. Yet, if users, regardless of whether their hashtag is “real,” can say whatever they want, the overall result will be even more damaging to society.

There is also the problem of having one individual effectively control Twitter; it is emblematic of the challenges of income inequality in the U.S., where the world’s richest man can acquire such a critical social media platform without any legal scrutiny. While Musk is undeniably one of the most brilliant entrepreneurs of our time, he has also shown himself on Twitter to be overly sensitive to criticism, making clear that he is not willing to be restrained. Under Musk’s vision, Twitter would likely become an even more hateful place and our society a more divided one, with increasing numbers of people shouting past each other.

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SPRING STAPLES DEBUT ON THE PATHWAYS

By **Jacqueline Yan '24**
Copy Editor

Birds are chirping. Flowers are blooming. The sun is shining. Most importantly, the spring closets are opening. Let's take a deeper dive into the closets of our very own Choate fashion icons and explore their favorite springtime essentials.

Button-up Shirt

Ximena Castillo Núñez '24's spring recommendation is "a good-quality, thick button-up shirt for layering." Castillo Núñez finds button-up shirts ideal for spring's capricious weather, especially on days that are neither hot

nor cold. She shared that one of her favorite trends is color-blocking — pairing a bright-colored button-up with a bright-colored tank top. "You can play with the color and texture of it," explained Castillo Núñez. Castillo Núñez's favorite way to style her closet staple is by cross-layering a lined button-up with a graphic tee.

Sunglasses

Blake Bertero '22, the creator of the Instagram fashion account @dressedfordistracton, believes that a nice pair of sunglasses is the perfect spring accessory, "transforming the vibe of any outfit to match a warmer season." According to Bertero, "There is so

much variation in style to ensure people don't match often but also can have fun with their choices." She enjoys the flexibility of some good "sunnies" — especially the way different shapes flatter different faces. Bertero loves to style her sunglasses by tucking them into a shirt or crewneck, but "the classic pushed up as a headband look" is always cute too!

Short-sleeved Button-down

"A short-sleeved button-down is definitely the way to go," said Wes Walker '24. He believes that button-downs are both classy and dressed-down. The light material can also help one tackle the hot weather.

When styling his own collection of button-downs, Walker always makes sure to "unbutton the first button and wear jewelry." He claims to be a "silver type of guy" but advises others to go by their skin complexion. Walker's most important piece of advice is, "Go to any thrift [store] and go for the coolest pattern."

Graphic Tee

Proud owner of "a zillion" graphic T-shirts, Jada Dixon '24 praises them for their universality and layering capabilities. Wearing a graphic T-shirt not only allows you to dress in style but is also a fun way to display something you're passionate about,

whether it be an artist you enjoy or a design you like. Dixon usually styles their comfy tees with dark wash jeans and "funky jewelry." The perfect essentials for layering, graphic T-shirts and a light jacket make a jaw-dropping look for a cool spring afternoon.

White Sneakers, Corduroy Pants, and an Overshirt

Grant Koh '23's spring go-to's are white sneakers, corduroy pants, and a white or denim overshirt. According to him, these items "elevate your style by a lot because [they're] so trendy." Finishing a fit with white sneakers is a must for Koh because the light color match-

es the sunny weather and the "feeling of spring." Koh also believes you can never go wrong with corduroy pants because they match all tops, including plain T-shirts, sweaters, hoodies, sweatshirts, and more. A white or denim overshirt completes the look by offering some warmth for those cooler nights

As Koh said, "Look good, feel good." Now that you've learned the secrets of all these fashion gurus, the mall or thrift store might just be your next destination!

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Photos courtesy of Ximena Castillo Núñez '24, Blake Bertero '22, Wes Walker '24, Jada Dixon '24, and Grant Koh '23

Garden Party!



Photos courtesy of Tiffany Xiao '23, Isabel Maida '23, Audrey Lim '23, and Nadia Baldur '22

DECK THE "HALL"

A Continuation of the "Guide to Dorms for Rising Fourth-formers"

By **Grace Liu '23**
Reporter

Hall is a vivacious fourth and fifth form girls dorm conveniently positioned above the dining hall. It has easy access to

all of the amenities that the Hill House complex has to offer. The dorm features a spacious central common room that spans both of its floors, with stairs leading up to a balcony that overlooks the main space.

According to two-year Hall resident Chloe Chan '23, the layout gives this mid-size dorm a "smaller feeling, because everyone is always near each other— that really helps to foster community." The Hall girls also enjoy study-hours acapella concerts from the balcony, turning the dorm into their own version of a concert hall.

Chan appreciates that, while the group of people in Hall has changed drastically during her two years in the dorm, the dorm has never had trouble finding the "dynamic that works for us." She credits the insightful and interesting group of faculty advisors — Ms. Tiffany Rivera, Mr. Zach Kafoglis, and Ms. Emily Kaplan — as the main reason why Hall consistently attracts a good, community-oriented crowd of girls.

"There's never really a night when we're not looking forward to a specific advisor being on duty. I enjoy every advisor no matter what day it is, they're all so chill," Chan said. Ultimately, Hall is the place to be for those who enjoy feeling a strong sense of interconnectedness with their dorm, advisors and fellow housemates alike.

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Photo courtesy of Ms. Emily Kaplan

Hall has a friendly, home-like environment.

Mr. Chang's Transdisciplinary Learning Initiative

By **Adrian Torres '25**
Reporter

As a biology teacher and the Director of Curricular Initiatives, Mr. Deron Chang is always on the lookout for different ways to improve student experience on campus. Throughout his 25-year career, Mr. Chang has been tasked with envisioning different programs that bring a positive change to the School.

In 2003, Mr. Chang founded Choate's first signature program — the Science Research Program (SRP). Later expanded to include eight different options, Signature Programs are a highlight of Choate's curriculum, with opportunities for professional training, exclusive internships, and specialized research.

The recent Strategic Plan inspired Mr. Chang to search for improvements and develop a new learning initiative. A solid proposal has yet to be defined, but Mr. Chang envisions a transdisciplinary learning program distinct from Signature Programs. He hopes to address the institution's goals of embracing innovative approaches to learning. "I want to have variety when it comes to how people learn on this campus," he explained. "That's probably the most valuable thing that we can give to [students] coming up."

Mr. Chang finds inspiration everywhere, including a visit to the Apple Education in Cupertino, California. At the time, Choate was considering the incorporation of the 1:1 iPad program. Although Mr. Chang went into the trip with a skeptical eye, the educators at Apple moved him with discussions on "shifting the paradigm of teaching from the sage on the stage." Not once was the use of iPads mentioned on the trip; instead, all the conversations centered around creating a student-focused classroom. "That completely shifted my thinking on what it meant to be a good teacher," said Mr. Chang.

Motivated by new approaches to teaching, Mr. Chang started developing a learning initiative of "schools within a school," where cohorts of students and teachers would work together toward solving real-world problems with transdisciplinary skills. These stud-



Photo by Ava Persaud '25/The Choate News

Mr. Deron Chang envisions a "school within a school."

ies would culminate in a project that spans all departments.

Mr. Chang's view of transdisciplinary learning can be visualized as a triangle — at the top is classroom learning, which includes all the departments and gives a base knowledge and tools to students; in the lower right are co-curricular activities, which encompasses wellness, multiculturalism, and environmental education; and in the lower left is the outside community and world, which is where students apply their knowledge. This combination of disciplines ensures that everything taught connects to something larger in the real world. "In order to really learn or appreciate what they're learning, [students] need to have a relationship with what they're learning," said Mr. Chang.

In addition to this, students would develop collaborative skills and teamwork in their cohort while learning the same set of skills as students taking multi-disciplinary courses. Thus, the initiative differs from a Signature Program, which is tailored for students who are passionate about a chosen subject. Students in this program will not

be focusing on a specific discipline but instead on a new style of learning that will expose them to everything and later help them narrow down their scope.

An example of what the program might cover is the topic of climate change. History is necessary to understand past environmental movements. Politics will help explain how different governments have worked to alleviate the issue. Language is needed to understand the primary sources from different countries or communities. English is also needed to analyze texts and persuade others through writing. Math would be used for modeling, and science would be used to investigate the underlying issue. A cross-disciplinary education would allow students to approach a real-world issue like climate change from different standpoints with skills taught in different courses.

"Even though we're having great success, obviously, at the moment, with what we offer, we can always do better," Mr. Chang said. The addition of a multi-disciplinary learning approach would mark a large step in innovation within Choate's curriculum.

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CHOATE’S TAKES ON THE 2022 MET GALA LOOKS

By **Laya Raj ’24**
Copy Editor

The looks that grace the Met Gala red carpet in New York City are always the center of the event, creating a stir amongst fashion critics, enthusiasts, fans at Choate, and onlookers around the world — this year was no exception. The exclusive annual event, with highly-coveted invitations, welcomes celebrities and designers to showcase their best fashion while following the dress code; it is also a fundraising event for the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Costume Institute. This year, the Met Gala’s theme was “In America: An Anthology of Fashion,” and the dress code was “gilded glamor, white tie.” “The 2022 Met Gala will ask its attendees to embody the grandeur — and perhaps the dichotomy — of Gilded Age New York,” wrote Vogue in April 2022. To provide some context, the Gilded Age took place from 1870 to 1890 and was characterized by the emerging New York high society who discovered novelly ostentatious ways to spend their money. As a result, over-the-top fashion featuring rich silk, intricate lace, and expensive fur came into style. Another defining aspect of this time was the arrival of millions of immigrants into America through Ellis Island, who worked to keep the country’s industrial economy running. Attendees of the 2022 Met Gala were expected to showcase the glamor of the Gilded Age; yet, as many Choate students noted, very few referenced the time period and its essence in their outfits. Here are the looks that sparked both admiration and controversy among Choate students.



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Blake Lively’s gown is reminiscent of the Statue of Liberty.

Blake Lively’s look for the evening, an Atelier Versace gown inspired by The Statue of Liberty, was one of the most well-received by audiences and Choate students alike. Lively entered onto the carpet in a copper gown, which was then unfastened to reveal a teal train that represents the oxidation of the statue over time. Explaining why Lively’s dress was her favorite, Ryan Froeb ’23 said, “Gilded means covered in gold yet hiding the rotten interior. Blake Lively literally stripped her copper exterior to uncover the rusted blue beneath.” Others admitted that the dress received so much appreciation because many other A-list attendees showed up in misplaced outfits. “Was it the prettiest dress ever? Definitely not. Did it fit the theme and have an unexpected reveal? Yes,” said Rio Federman ’25. Reka Bajus ’22 also observed that “it immediately called to mind the paintings of Elizabeth Wharton Drexel, a wealthy woman in the Gilded Age.” Having attended The Met Gala ten times prior to this year, Lively has mastered the art of arriving at the Met steps in newsworthy looks. “She is the Met Gala,” said Monicke Costa ’25.



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Billie Eilish wears a corseted dress inspired by Gilded Age fashion by Gucci.

Another fan favorite for the night was Billie Eilish, who was dressed in a Gucci corseted dress cut from repurposed fabric. The dress was praised for its historical accuracy as it featured a corset and a bustle, both of which were defining elements of Gilded Age fashion. Although the look was simple, the pastel colors gave the dress a modern twist while still embracing elegance and highlighting the theme of the Gilded Age. Others, however, recognized the thought put into the look but took issue with the execution. “I think, ditch the flowers, [wear a] different skirt, and change the color scheme, and this would look great,” said Evelyn Stanley ’24. “Right now, [the dress] feels too light for her hair and like it should belong at the Met Gala in 2019.”



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Evan Mock walks the carpet in a look by Head of State.

Evan Mock worked with the brand, Head of State, to make his mark at the Met Gala by creatively referencing the Gilded Age. Mock wore a white shirt with a frilled collar paired with a pale yellow corseted jacket and flared pants. “It is an American brand. So first off, that’s a plus one,” said Ximena Castillo Núñez ’24. “The collar had this sort of feminine sense to it, so he was pulling from feminine and masculine themes. I think he did a great job.”



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Kaia Gerber embraces gilded glamor with a modern twist.

A curly-haired Kaia Gerber walked the carpet in an ethereal beaded silver gown by Alexander McQueen. “The metallic fabric perfectly fit the Gilded Age theme, but the sheeriness, movement, and experimentation with texture made it modern. The hair is giving ‘fairy goddess’ and also references some historical paintings,” said Kate Laird ’24, explaining why it was her favorite look. “It was easily the most interesting and best dress,” said Oona Yaffe ’23.



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Kim Kardashian wears iconic Marilyn Monroe dress.

The Kardashian-Jenner family’s looks made it onto many lists of the event’s worst-dressed celebrities this year. Kim Kardashian chose to reference the mid-1900s, a couple of decades after the Gilded Age, by wearing one of Marilyn Monroe’s dresses. She lost 16 pounds in the two weeks leading up to the gala to fit into the jeweled dress. “What she’s representing by wearing that dress, I don’t really stand for, even if she looks amazing in it,” said Castillo Núñez. “I think the dress has to fit you. You don’t have to fit the dress.”



Photo Courtesy of Getty Images

Kylie Jenner honors Virgil Abloh in a look by Off-White.

Kylie Jenner’s look was one of the most widely disliked amongst her family. She paired an Off-White white strapless ball gown layered on top of a sheer white T-shirt with a white snapback attached to a veil that covered her face. Jenner wanted to honor the designer Virgil Abloh, who passed away recently, by wearing his brand. However, audiences were unsatisfied with the look for not acknowledging the gilded glamor theme. “I don’t think Virgil would have approved of that whatsoever,” said Castillo Núñez.

Some of the event’s attendees received significant backlash for not embracing the theme. “The average American high school spirit week is more likely to have people accurately following a dress theme than the Met Gala,” said Bajus. Furthermore, the event didn’t acknowledge the millions of immigrants who came to the country and the workers who were exploited during the Gilded Age, who were pivotal in the construction of America as it stands today. The timing of the event was also inopportune: “Watching people put together these very opulent, patriotic ‘yay America’ clothes, half of which weren’t very good, [on] the same day that Roe v. Wade gets overturned was rough,” said Yaffe. “I would consider myself a patriot, but I think making these art shows built around the grandeur of America maybe feeds into exceptionalism a little bit.” Although some looks in the Met Gala rose above the others, others fell flat. The 2022 Met Gala theme inspired guests to focus on the glamor of the Gilded Age, an already flawed premise that many believed wasn’t duly executed. Nevertheless, spectators witnessed a plethora of gowns, suits, and everything in between on what is commonly described as “fashion’s biggest night out.”

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Musicians Shine in their Senior Recitals

By **Eva Li ’24**
Copy Editor

With the arrival of graduation month, seniors have been busy rehearsing and performing in their highly-anticipated senior recitals — an event that serves as the students’ last opportunity to share their talent and hard work with the community. This year, among the many performers are Rebecca Alston ’22, Claire Fu ’22, and a band composed of Henry Kops ’22, Jarett Jean Jacques ’22, Max Xu ’22, and Sejin Kim ’22 with support from their peers from the Jazz Ensemble. As a voice student in the Arts Concentration Program, Alston performed a variety of genres at the Seymour St. John Chapel, ranging from classical and musical theater selections to popular songs and original compositions. Alston spent most of her rehearsal time in Colony Hall exploring the sheet music on the piano. Apart from meeting with her teacher regularly to go over specific techniques, Alston attempted to run through the performance from the beginning to the end in St. John Chapel several times to find the most realistic experience possible.

Alston has focused her practice to become more comfortable with the higher part of her range. “I was trying to make sure that those were strong notes where my voice wouldn’t crack, and I’ve been pretty proud of how I’ve been able to expand through practicing,” she said. Practice makes for a better performance, but it does not always soften the train of emotions performers experience. “It’s definitely always nerve-wracking, and I think when you spend that much time preparing for something, you always want it to be absolutely perfect. But sometimes, you just kind of have to go with things, and overall, I’m still proud that I did it,” she described. Fu performed four violin pieces in Colony Hall on May 8, forgoing the typical westernized classical repertoire for “Butterfly Lovers’ Concerto (梁祝小提琴协奏曲)” in her recital. The piece, Fu explained, is “super pretty, but no one plays it for repertoire, ever.” Pulling from her Chinese identity, she further elaborated, “I wanted to tie my culture into my music and make sure that I’m also representing the diversity that music has to offer.” Unlike Alston and most other performers, Fu is not part of the



Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom ’24/The Choate News

Musicians from the Jazz Ensemble perform at their senior recital.

Arts Concentration Program, so she is not required to complete the senior recital. However, after realizing how little time she had to practice the instrument now compared to in middle school, Fu found rehearsing for the senior recital to be helpful in maintaining her hobby and skills in the violin. “I felt like the senior recital would be a way for me to find a purpose and a way to improve on the violin again,” she said. “I want to be able to continue to practice violin for my own enjoyment and to also work on pieces that I could play for myself instead of just for the orchestra.” In a band formed in their sophomore year, Kops plays the drums and sings; Jean Jacques the trumpet, saxophone, and piano; Xu the upright bass, bass guitar, and piano; and Kim the guitar and the piano. Similar to Alston’s repertoire choice, Kops described their May 7 selections, “we’re doing a bunch of different genres — some jazz standards, some pop, some classical pieces in there as well, some blues.” The band members are focused on their goals. “It’s about what exactly we want from this recital, what it is that we want our audience to feel, and how enjoyable it is for the audience,” said

Jean Jacques. Xu reiterated the sentiment of audience engagement, adding, “With most of the genres we have, there’s a lot of room for audience-and-performer interactivity. I mean, when we were just rehearsing earlier, we were bobbing up and down and everything, and so it’d be nice if the audience could as well.” While the band expressed their struggles to concentrate as a group, they believe they compensated for the lost time with their dedication and hard work. “When it came the time to really get grinding on this recital that we were all super scared of, we all took it extremely seriously, and I think we all put in a lot of work,” he said. Describing the band’s dynamics, Kim said, “So long story short, we are the most dysfunctional yet the most united.” Despite the challenges many faced, the seniors have found the process to be a rewarding experience. “I definitely learned a lot and grew a lot as a musician and a soloist, and I think that it was definitely the right decision for me to do regardless of what the outcome of my senior recital is,” Fu said.

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Photo by Toffy Prakittiphoom ’24/The Choate News

Claire Fu ’22 performs in her senior recital on May 8.



Graphic by Yujin Kim ’23/The Choate News



FIELD REPORT

Choate Spring Record
53- 50- 2

Varsity Games

Girls’ Softball (8-2)
vs. Suffield Academy, 1-2

Girls’ Golf (6-4)
vs. Williston, 4.5-0.5

Boys’ Golf (9-3)
vs. Loomis, Kingswood, Williston, 208-231, 208-215, 208-215

Boys’ Tennis (9-0)
vs. Kent, 8-0

Frisbee (3-6)
vs. Ludlow, Ward , 5-13

Boys’ Lacrosse (5-5)
vs. Berkshire, 11-4

Girls’ Lacrosse (5-6)
vs. Ethel Walker, 6-11

Boys’ Volleyball (0-4)
vs. Exeter, 1-3

Girls’ Tennis (2-2)
vs. Hopkins, 3-6

Boys’ Baseball (3-7)
vs. Kent, 20-7

Girls’ Water Polo (3-6)
vs. Loomis, 8-9

J.V. Games

Boys’ Lacrosse (1-4)
vs. Eaglebrook, 5-12

Boys’ Golf (2-2)
vs. Taft, Kingswood Oxford, 222-257

Boys’ Baseball (0-4)
vs. Hamden Hall, 7-5

Girls’ Lacrosse (4-4-1)
vs. Miss Porter’s, 9-2

Boys’ Tennis (7-0)
vs. Kent, 8-0

Choate Prospect Showcase Returns After Hiatus

By **Tariq El Mammann ’24**
Reporter

A large part of high school football, especially when making the next step to play at the collegiate level, is attending and excelling at various showcases observed by college coaches. These showcases often take place during the off-season. As summer approaches in the upcoming weeks, Choate hosted their 8th annual showcase this past Tuesday.

The event provided an opportunity for players from various schools to show off their skills to college coaches and sports scouts. Unfortunately, with the impact of the pandemic during the 2020-21 season, Choate could not hold the showcase last year. After a year-long break, the Choate Prospect Showcase has returned.

Ral Nwogbo ’23, a defensive lineman in his second year of playing football, noted, “Especially as someone who hasn’t played for a long time and doesn’t have much film, I think that camps play a pivotal role because it allows coaches to see my athletic ability and football skills.” Nwogbo continued on, explaining how Choate has a large football program, which played a role in why he started and continues to play the sport. “As we can see, we’re doing what many schools can’t. We can host our own showcase where colleges from around the US come and watch us play, and coaches really trust Spinnato, which is a big part of it.”

Varsity Football Head Coach LJ Spinnato shared the “behind the scenes” of the Choate Prospect Showcase. Coach Spinnato spoke

of the showcase’s origins and how it began as an event between Choate and Cheshire Academy. It has since grown extensively, with multiple prep schools attending the event annually now. “We saw a need to pool recruits from multiple schools and give college coaches a chance to see them workout...It draws in a bunch of coaches from all over the country to come to see a group of players from multiple schools, so their recruiting is more efficient, and our attempts to get our kids noticed is more efficient, too,” said Coach Spinnato.

Regarding challenges faced when setting up the showcase, Coach Spinnato explained, “Initially it was probably easier to set up. However, you had to learn about what the college coaches wanted to see as a young coach and how to organize a showcase like this. I will say that it was a little bit harder without social media, but we had fewer people and it was a smaller event... As Choate has become more of a destination to recruit good quality young players and people, obviously more attention is drawn to the showcase.”

Football showcases mean a lot to the players, allowing athletes to prove themselves on their home fields — an opportunity many players will be taking advantage of. So, with great excitement, the Choate Prospect Showcase is welcomed back to the off-season schedule. Crank it!

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Photo courtesy of Saif Nazer ’23

Ral Nwogbo ’23 shows off his skills at an annual showcase.

The Legacy of Head Swim Coach: Sara Massa

By **Grace Walters ’24**
Reporter

“Every woman was trained the same, and it was a long time before enough women got into coaching to start changing that,” Coach Sara Massa explained. Coach Massa was one of two female head coaches in Connecticut when she first started coaching in the late 80s and 90s. Growing up, Coach Massa was surrounded by male swim coaches who embodied the mentality that “if a swimmer didn’t do well, the swimmer didn’t work hard enough. Somehow, it was the swimmer’s problem.” Coach Massa shared, “As I got older, competing became [attached to] more and more pressure, and that took a lot of the fun out of swimming.” Because of her past experiences dealing with strained mental health and gender inequality in swimming, Coach Massa has contributed heavily to fostering a safe environment for swimmers’ mental health and promoting gender inclusivity in Choate’s Varsity Swim Team.

When one thinks of swimming at Choate, Coach Massa is often the first thing that comes to mind. This year, Coach Massa celebrates her 14th year as Head Coach of Choate’s Varsity Swim Team and her 10th year as Choate’s Aquatics Director. Before Coach Massa began her career in coaching, she was an elite, competitive swimmer, qualifying for the Olympic Trials at 13 years old. Sharing her passion for competitive swimming, Coach Massa explained, “I love swimming, and why I think others like swimming is because we like to be in control of our own destiny in our sport and our own work ethic. We like not being dependent on what others are doing. Swimmers like to manage their own training, mindset, and goals.”

Coach Massa also utilizes her degree in psychology to aid her coaching methods. “I have a degree in psychology and never intended to coach. My first coaching job was because a coach got ill, and I said I would substitute. I was going to be a practicing counselor, but I still use psychology when coaching,” Coach Massa stated.

When asked to give an example of how she merges her degree in psychology with her coaching, Coach Massa responded, “If I am sending a swimmer up to the block, I should know them well enough to know whether they’re very



Photo by Sophia Kim ’24/The Choate News

Coach Sara Massa poses for a final photo.

nervous, putting too much pressure on themselves, or they’re ready for the perfect race. Coaches have to adjust to who a swimmer is, both athletically and psychologically.”

When asked what her favorite things about coaching Choate students are, Coach Massa noted, “developing relationships with my swimmers, watching their growth, and hopefully contributing as a positive mentor.” Coach Massa considers the most outstanding achievement of her career as Head Coach for Choate’s Varsity Swim Team to be “keeping the feeling of the team alive” after taking over for Mr. Robert Burns in 2008 by “allowing kids to recognize, respect, and allow individual growth while remaining team-oriented.”

After 14 wonderful years with the School, Coach Massa is stepping down from her position as mentor and director at Choate, and those who know her will miss her. Chris Childs ’24, who has swam under Coach Massa for around a decade, said, “One of my fondest memories of Sara is when she decided to welcome us back with the hose on one of our first practices back from summer. We all jumped in the pool very quickly after that.” Since freshman year, Grace Furtado ’23 has swum for Choate’s Varsity Swim Team, and when asked what her favorite memory with Coach Massa was, she said, “When I first joined the team, Coach Sara insisted that I was a distance swimmer. After com-

plaining every time I had to swim the 500 Freestyle, it eventually paid off when I qualified for finals at New England’s this year, and it’s all thanks to Coach Sara.”

Coach Massa is hopeful that in her absence Choate’s Varsity Swim Team will continue to see “decades of success” as they have seen in the past. When asked what Coach Massa will miss the most after stepping down, she reminisced, “I will miss the interactions with the students and getting to know them as people. I will also miss training very much; I love the science of training and getting to be creative with training. But most of all, I will miss my swimmers and my fellow coaches.”

As a final message to the swimmers and coaches of Choate’s Varsity Swim Team, Coach Massa said, “As sad as I am to leave, and I know some of my swimmers are sad, they’re going to do great, and I fully expect them to carry on the Choate tradition of great swimming. This was one of the most difficult decisions I have made, especially because it was not for health reasons or because I was moving, but because I thought it was best for Choate and my swimmers.” Choate’s Varsity Swim Team and the Choate community will not be the same without Coach Massa, but her legacy will live on for years to come.

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CONGRATULATIONS, SENIOR ATHLETES, ON SIGNING DAY!



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Killian Gribben ’22 (Siena College), Dylan Matchett ’22 (Resselaer Polytechnic Institute), Derek Osman ’22 (Harvard University), Charlie Katarinic ’22 (West Virginia University), Landon White ’22 (Ithaca College), Matthew Buron ’22 (Fordham University), Damian Carrano ’22 (Amherst College), Malachi Wright ’22 (Central Connecticut State University), Dalton Rice ’22 (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Cobe Crews ’22 (Columbia University), Aidan Barry ’22 (Villanova University), Anthony Crossman ’22 (Wesleyan University), Nina Hashmi ’22 (University of Virginia), Mark Chapman ’22 (Columbia University), Joey Knight ’22 (West Point Military Academy), Jack McManus ’22 (Merrimack College).