



# THE CHOATE NEWS

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Aneesh Sheth spoke at the Spectrum Eleventh Annual Interschool Conference Speaker Series on May 7.

Photo Courtesy of The Mary Sue

## “JESSICA JONES STAR” ANEESH SHETH KICKS OFF SPECTRUM SPEAKER SERIES

By **Pranav Pendri '22**  
Reporter

On Thursday, May 7, Jessica Jones star and transgender activist Aneesh Sheth tuned in to Choate's Spectrum Club, an identity group for LGBTQ+ students, via the virtual platform Zoom to give a presentation about her life and her work for the transgender community.

Ms. Sheth's talk was part of the larger Spectrum Eleventh Annual Interschool Conference Speaker Series, which is a series of workshops on issues and stories of the LGBTQ+ community presented by prominent LGBTQ+ or allied speakers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, speakers were not able to present in person to Spectrum as planned. However, faculty advisor Ms. Mb Duckett Ireland and the Spectrum Club were still able to book two speakers to appear to the Spectrum Club and Choate community via Zoom. The second speaker, Dr. John Pachankis, Director of Yale's LGBTQ+ Mental Health Initiative, is scheduled to give a talk to Spectrum on May 18 at 9:00 p.m EDT.

Ms. Sheth's presentation focused on her life as a transgen-

der woman of color attempting to build a career as an actress and activist. Ms. Sheth said, "A lot of my activism work is based around visibility and the intersectionality of my identity. I realized that my existence, solely as the person that I am, in these spaces, is activism itself."

Ms. Sheth explained that she has struggled with the lack of transgender representation on TV, finding instead that directors would fill roles for transgender characters with cisgender actors. Ms. Sheth said being on Jessica Jones gave her "a lot more visibility in my career than I had before, specifically not just as a trans actress but as a trans South Asian actress, because how often do we turn on our televisions and see someone with those intersectionalities?"

Mai Ly Hagan '21, Co-president of Spectrum, said, "This lecture was important to LGBTQ+ youth to show that success as a queer person of color is possible — though it requires self-advocacy. Representation taught Aneesh to ac-

See SPECTRUM, Page 2

## HEALTH CENTER PROVIDES SUPPORT FROM A DISTANCE

By **Sabrina Wang '23**  
Reporter

Throughout the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Choate's Health Center has invested a great effort into supporting the health of the Choate community.

The Health Center continues to provide healthcare for students despite their absence from campus. Dr. Miriam Cohen, Medical Director of the Health Center, said, "The great part of electronic medical records and electronic medication prescription is that I don't need to use a piece of paper anymore. I can send a prescription anywhere in the United States. [The students] can just go to the pharmacy of their choice and pick it up." In addition, the Health Center has also begun to connect students with local primary care providers. "While we're at Choate, we

Center," said Ms. Klein. "We've been working together to identify some of the issues that are affecting kids right now and to look at ways we can reach the broader community. Some of the issues we're planning to address over the next few weeks are coping with family relationships at home and self-care at home."

The Health Center has also paid attention to the increased stress that isolation has placed upon students, which may lead them to harmful habits like vaping.

"Vaping is a big problem for a lot of our students, and we want to provide information for

kids on how to identify if you might be getting addicted to vaping. It actually can happen very quickly because the nicotine level in vapes is very high," said Ms. Klein.

With this problem in mind, the Health

**We are talking about all the issues associated with Covid, both for opening our schools in the fall and how we can all work together to make this happen and support each other.**

Dr. Miriam Cohen  
Health Center Medical Director

take care of things for kids on campus," said Ms. Karen Klein, the Director of Nursing at the Health Center. "When we're not in school, it means trying to get kids reconnected back to services. We've also been able to reach out to kids and check in with them. For example, we've gotten some feedback from kids who might want to start seeing a new counselor."

The Health Center is also striving to connect with student groups, such as the Peer Educators, Wellness Committee, and Assessment Team, in order to reach out to the Choate community and spread useful information concerning health.

"The Peer Educator group is a great fit with the Health

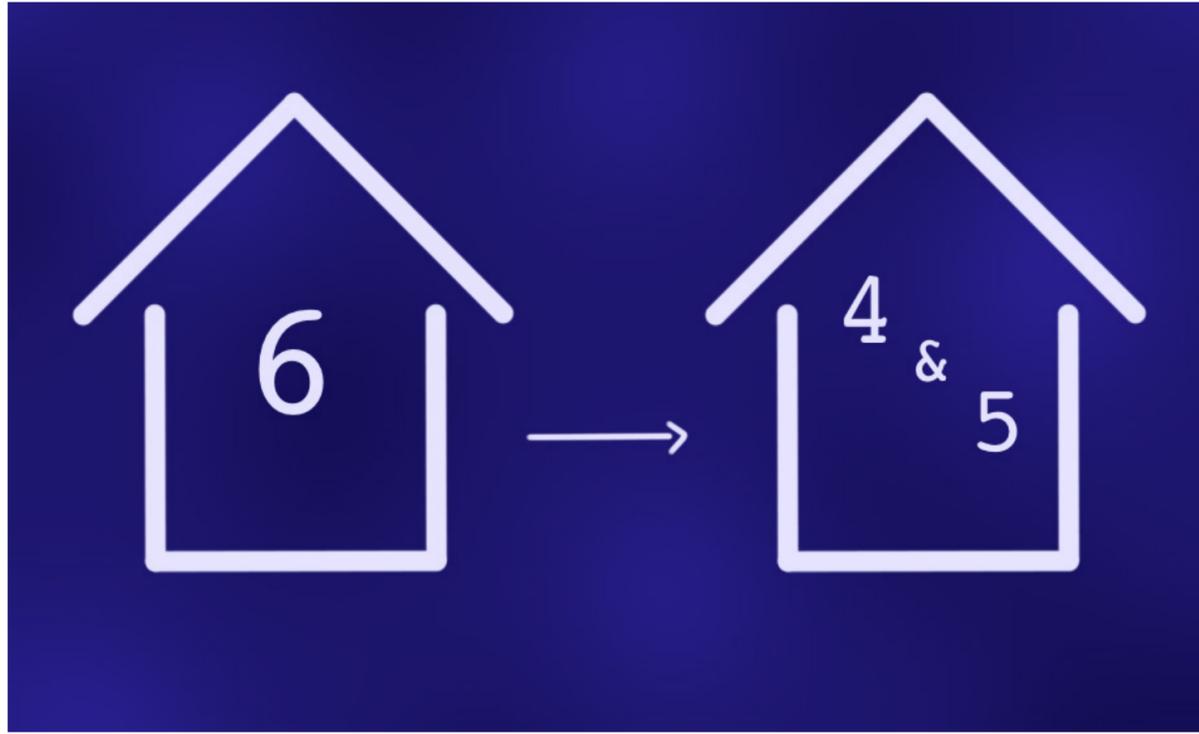
Center has worked with Peer Educators to create confidential text quitlines. By texting "QUIT" or "DitchJUUL," students can be connected with medical providers and counselors to receive confidential help.

The Health Center is also working with the Eight Schools Association and the Westminster School to discuss interscholastic problems that have arisen due to the pandemic and strategies to handle those problems.

"We are talking about all the issues associated with Covid, both for opening our schools in the fall and how we can all work

See HEALTH, Page 2

## STUDENT HOUSING PROCESS GOES VIRTUAL



Lewis House and Lowndes House will no longer be sixth-form dorms next year.

Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

By **Stephanie Chen '23**  
Copy Editor

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the group of faculty members in charge of student housing is working to ensure that dorm life will be preserved next year, providing the same housing information to students and maintaining as much of the old housing lottery process for boarding students as possible.

"I think what's really important with all of the uncertainty that's been going on is to retain as much familiarity as we could in what was happening — so, to do what you expect and not all of a sudden change what's going on," said Mr. Will Morris, Director of Residential Life. He explained that this will

help not only students but also faculty members better adjust to the difficulty of arranging housing assignments, which must now be done virtually.

The housing process started at the end of the winter term with Mr. Morris working closely with Ms. Judy Senft, Assistant to the Dean of Students, to determine the distribution of students across campus. Around April 10, the Admissions Office updated them on the number of students in each grade for the next academic year, allowing them time to set aside specific dorm rooms for new fourth, fifth and sixth formers. The form deans will then coordinate rooming requests and housing lotteries to make rooming assignments.

The entire housing plan will be double-checked to ensure the numbers add up and no student is left out.

A few tweaks had to be made to the housing process this year. In the selection process itself, deans have been forced to use a random number generator for the lottery instead of having students actually pick a number out of a hat.

Mr. Morris said, "[A random number generator] has the same effect, but it used to be a great moment as a dean when the students would walk in and look at the basket of papers and think to themselves, 'Okay, I must pick a good number right now.' It was this moment when it almost felt like you as a student had some control over that random number."

Students also did not get a chance to visit prospective dorms ahead of time to get a better feel for which dorms they could see themselves living in. Alternatively, deans and other faculty members have been working to share more information and give students a better picture of dorms through writing descriptions in lieu of physical visits. Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22 said, "The process was stressful especially because it's harder to communicate with people when you are not with them physically, so I figured things out on my own."

The housing plan for the upcoming academic year has changed slightly. "Every year,

See HOUSING, Page 2

**Businesses Reopening**  
CT establishments hope to welcome customers back this month.  
Local News • P3



**Healthcare for All**  
The pandemic has amplified the U.S.'s need for healthcare reform.  
Opinions N/W • P5

**Ready, Set, Binge!**  
Must-watch Netflix shows to stream during quarantine.  
Features • P6



**Choate's Sports Leaders**  
Star athletes who made an impact at Choate and beyond.  
Sports • P8

**What's Inside**

School News	1-2
Local News	3
Opinions: Campus	4
Opinions: Nation/World	5
Features	6
Arts and Leisure	7
Sports	8



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## Health Center Stays Active During Pandemic



Photo by The Choate News

Despite Choate's closing this term, the Health Center has continued to support students virtually.

Continued from Page 1

together to make this happen and support each other, as well as how we support the students," said Dr. Cohen, who attends meetings with the association twice a week.

"We're talking about, 'What problems are your students having? How are you approaching those problems? How are you providing them help?' Then I can bring that back to Choate, and we talk about it in our Health Center group, and we try to then take that to the next step."

Beyond the Choate community, the Health Center has also directed its attention to collecting and donating personal pro-

ective equipment (PPE) to first responders, providers, and hospitals in the state of Connecticut.

Although the Health Center has put in its best effort to continue providing support for students, the physical closing of the Health Center has, of course, had its drawbacks. The planned installation of a student-led art exhibit in the building has been delayed, and the move to virtual platforms has resulted in the loss of valuable in-person communication.

Dr. Cohen said, "Although there is benefit to [virtual communication], it's not the same as sitting one-on-one and talking to students and being able to make true eye contact. I think it

affects care in the ability of our interactions. My fear is that they are not as of high quality just because we are not in the same room, and it's not the same feeling." The Health Center hopes to continue providing information and support despite the challenges of an exclusively virtual system. Dr. Cohen commented, "Sometimes it's hard for us to know exactly what's needed by the students. If we haven't thought of something that we could do to help you guys, then please reach out to one of us and share some information so we can make that happen."

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## Housing Plans to Change for Next Year

Continued from Page 1

we have to change usually just a small number of house designations. Interestingly enough, we don't have the same number of students every year," said Mr. Morris. "Luckily, this year we actually had to make relatively few tweaks."

There will only be three changes to the housing plan this year: Atwater House will go back to being a sophomore/junior boys' dorm after having been a sophomore/junior girls' dorm this year, Lewis House will become a junior girls' dorm instead of a senior girls' dorm, and Lowndes House will no longer be a senior boys' dorm but a junior girls' dorm.

Mr. Morris stressed the importance of creating a new understanding and structure for residential life at Choate after students are able to return to

campus. "What exactly the adjustments will be, whether in the classroom, or in dorm life, or in any place throughout campus, it's still too early to say. No matter what, we'll be prioritizing student safety and wellbeing in any adjustments to our program that need to be made in order to ensure that we can keep everybody healthy and keep everybody safe. That's hopefully the first priority," he explained.

"As our running the lottery would suggest, one of the contingencies that we're most hoping for is a return to campus in the fall," Mr. Morris said. "That's what we all miss and that's all we all want, and we feel like if we can all be back together, even though we have to be six feet apart, that's still going to be preferable."

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## SPECTRUM SPEAKER EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF SELF-ADVOCACY

Continued from Page 1

cept herself, and now she is an LGBTQ+ advocate."

After the roughly twenty-minute presentation, Ms. Sheth answered about forty minutes' worth of questions from students who were eager to learn more about her work as a transgender activist and her experience as a transgender woman in the film industry.

When asked about when she first realized that she was transgender, Ms. Sheth shared her experience of coming to the realization at the age of 26 after speaking to a representative of the Trevor Project, a non-profit focused on preventing suicide among LGBTQ+ youth.

The second person scheduled to speak for Spectrum, Dr. Pachankis, is a researcher at Yale on mental

health issues affecting members of the LGBTQ+ community. His studies, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), examine the efficacy of interventions delivered via technology, community members, and diverse settings in reducing anxiety, depression, and suicide among LGBTQ+ people.

Spectrum Co-president Nico Campbell '21 said, "One thing that we stand to gain is really any sort of community right now, because I know for a lot of kids who go to Choate, their life at school can be so different from their life at home."

Campbell and other members of Spectrum encourage all Choate students to join the event to hear about Dr. Pachankis's research.

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## TRISTA LEBLANC-SERBYN WINS FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL PRATT-PACKARD SPEECH CONTEST

By Joy Bang '22  
Staff Reporter

On May 5, the finalists of the annual Pratt-Packard Declamation Contest, Sakura Hayakawa '21, Joe Monti '21, Adrienne Chacón '22, and Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn '22 delivered their speeches on the online platform Zoom to a panel of faculty judges. LeBlanc-Serbyn won first place, followed by Chacón, Monti, and Hayakawa.

Students were able to watch the speeches in a recording of a virtual School Meeting emailed to the community by Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00.

The Pratt-Packard Contest, which honors the tradition of public speaking at Choate, is one of several public speaking contests held annually by the School. The contest is open to fourth, fifth, and sixth formers. All participating students are asked to compose a speech to be reviewed by a reading committee composed of faculty members.

The committee chooses eight speeches for a semifinal round in which students deliver the speeches only to the judges. The panel of judges selects four finalists. Though finalists have traditionally delivered their speeches live at School Meeting, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic forced this year's finalists to deliver their speeches online over a Zoom call.

Contestants had conflicting opinions about the online nature of the contest, especially surrounding the fact that fewer people could listen to their speeches live. For Mon-



Photo by Gretchen MacLean/The Choate News

The finalists, including winner Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn '22, shared their speeches via Zoom instead of at a school meeting.

ti, who spoke about the ways in which his mother's love has shaped his view of the world, the smaller live audience lowered the stress of the event. He said, "I think the online nature of the contest was a positive for me since there weren't as many eyes watching me, which would have made me more nervous."

Other participants were disappointed that they could not present to a live Choate audience and felt challenged about the online nature of the contest.

Hayakawa, who decided to enter the contest with the goal of inciting conversations about toxic masculinity at Choate, said, "I was personally disappointed about the finals being held online since I submitted my speech partly because of the opportunity to speak in front of the School. I also think that the online nature of the contest made it much harder to gauge the reaction of the audience."

Still, the finalists said they enjoyed the chance to share

their personal stories, voice their opinions, and start conversations across the school community.

LeBlanc-Serbyn's speech discussed her year-long medical leave and the stigma surrounding mental health issues. She said, "I was inspired to write this because I was so frustrated by the 'myth' of medical leaves and wanted to share a little bit of truth behind it all."

Chacón delivered a speech about the loss of her father and how she has coped with the sense of a void, longing, and other mix-

es of emotions. She said, "I don't often tell other people that I have lost a parent. I suppose I don't want people to know that, and I don't want others to think that all he is gone." Chacón added, "The contest was exciting. I enjoyed the suspense of knowing how well I did, and I was happy that I was able to share some part of who my dad was to me, at least, with everyone."

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## Student Council Recap

By Praj Chirathivat '22  
Copy Editor

In the wake of Choate campus closing this term, Student Council has proposed several measures to improve the virtual learning experience and off-campus student life. With new events and changes planned, the council has made efforts to not only unite the Choate community but also better the well-being of students adjusting to the circumstances.

The council's first official meeting took place on April 14. The group's work this term has been split between initiatives for the virtual spring term and proposals for the upcoming school year. Instead of weekly meetings in the Paul Mellon Humanities Center, the council has decided to meet biweekly via Zoom.

"The biggest change we have made in the procedure is what we are doing with our initiatives. Normally, big changes go through the proposal process. For anything that regards this term, it has now shifted to initiatives with groups of students working directly with faculty," said Student Council President Ula Lucas '21, who took office only this spring.

Instead of going through the conventional proposal process, Student Council members who are working on their independent initiatives this term are now expected to check in every week with other members and give updates on their progress.

With Student Council's help, one major change has already been implemented this term: the pass/D/fail grading system. Student Council discussed with Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00, Director of Studies Mr. Kevin Rogers, and members of the College Counseling Office prior to the decision.

Lucas has proposed a relief fund initiative to support Choate families who don't have the financial assistance to pay for tuition. Especially during a period when many families are seeing reduced funds and even unemployment due to the pandemic, Student Council wanted to help provide a platform where the Choate community can support one another. Lucas is currently working with Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long to create a webpage for accepting donations and reaching out to the greater Choate community about the project.

Additionally, rising Fourth Form Representative Joy An '23 is working with Choate Create, a project created by the Arts Department, to undertake an initiative for an ongoing weekly art challenge. Every week, a prompt will be posted on Choate Student Council's Instagram, and students can send in any of their artwork that is related to the weekly theme. In this way, student artists can have a platform to share their art with the community during a time of anxiety. Students have already submitted their entries for the first prompt, "Memory." The second prompt is "Hero."

For the upcoming year, Student Council members have already begun introducing proposals which include eliminating assigned seating in school meetings, allocating day student parking spaces closer to St. John Hall, and giving students the freedom to complete early check-in on Saturdays in any dorm.

"When it comes to the council, I think we are really getting to understand the true importance of collaboration and self-motivation," Lucas said. "We're not meeting weekly anymore or seeing each other around campus, so connecting with our individual passions for this community and being self-starters are more important than ever before."

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## Anti-Hunger Organizations Persevere Through Pandemic

By **Linda Phan '22**  
Copy Editor

As unemployment rates skyrocket across the nation, more and more families are left worried about their next meals. Consequently, food banks are struggling to meet the demand that follows, with some being forced to turn away hungry families in need. To combat the rising food-insecure population, hunger-relief organizations such as Foodshare and Master's Manna have been expanding their operations to increase their contribution to the community.

Foodshare, the largest anti-hunger organization in the Greater Hartford area, provides food for more than 280 food pantries, meal programs, and Mobile Foodshare sites. Continuing to operate in most of its sites, Foodshare has also opened up new pop-up distribution locations to try to meet the surging demand for food assistance. In April alone, it has seen a 31% increase in food distribution compared to the same time last year.

The new pop-ups span several sites throughout Hartford and Tolland counties, including a drive-through location at Rentschler Field in East Hartford. "We did 2,512 cars today. That's 2,512 households that needed food. That's a record for us," said President and CEO of Foodshare Mr. Jason Jakubowski in a Facebook Live with Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy. "More than 75% of them [have] never used one of our services before. These are people who are brand new to food insecurity."



Staff and volunteers of CT Food Bank distribute food at Vertical Church in New Haven (left) and Victoria Soto School in Stratford.

Measures have also been implemented to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and those who are receiving the food. The office staff has been working from home, and workers at food sites are also abiding by new safety policies to maintain social distancing. Workers at distribution sites are given masks and gloves to wear at all times and are almost always 6 feet apart from one another. At the drive-through site especially, families are able to receive food through minimal contact with the staff and other families. "Some of our biggest challenges have been balancing how we meet the need while also

maintaining a safe environment for our staff and the people we serve," said Mr. Jakubowski.

Outside of direct food supply, Foodshare is also providing additional programs to aid the community during this time. By maintaining the SNAP Outreach Program, the organization continues to support low-income families trying to apply for the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Furthermore, the non-profit's partnerships with local homeless shelters and soup kitchens have expanded to include donations of face masks.

Master's Manna, a food pantry serving the Wallingford and Meriden areas, has also implement-



Photos Courtesy of Connecticut Food Bank

ed similar measures as it distributes food to more than a hundred families each week.

"We closed our family dining area where we used to serve hot meals [and] our marketplace because, in those two areas, there was no way we could guarantee any social distancing," said the Administrative Services Director Ms. Gail Powell.

Other operations at the food pantry have also been modified to ensure safety. Before the pandemic, people who came to the pantry shopped independently for their groceries. Now, the organization gives out prepackaged bags with enough food items for around twelve meals. To prevent crowd-

ing, the pantry implemented an appointment-based food distribution system. At the scheduled time, the prepackaged items are picked up at the curb and customers are given the opportunity to schedule an appointment for the following week. Communal items, such as the cart used to pick out goods, are also sanitized after each use.

Master's Manna also conducts grocery deliveries each Friday to around 40 house-bound families in Wallingford.

"Some of our older clients are afraid to come out, so they are not coming out to the food pantry," said Ms. Powell. This service is also available to those who are under quarantine or recovering

from surgery or illness. "There are a variety of reasons why they are at home and unable to shop, but we will deliver their groceries to them as long as the need exists."

The closing of businesses that were previously food donors has also contributed to the shortage of supplies for both of these organizations. "We source our food from several different supply chains and organizations, [but] the balance of where our inventory is sourced has shifted since the start of the crisis," said Mr. Jakubowski.

Ms. Powell said, "Some of our corporate donations have slowed down because companies are not operating. They are not getting their regular revenue."

But, other nonprofit organizations, as well as individual members of the community, have stepped up and contributed monetary donations towards helping these organizations replenish their supply.

"Our economic support comes from [an] extremely generous community, individual and corporate donors, as well as federal support in the form of TEFAP [The Emergency Food Assistance Program] funding, a federal commodity food program," said Mr. Jakubowski.

Despite the many challenges, local food banks are devoted to supporting all citizens in need of meal assistance during this time. Ms. Powell said, "We plan to continue as long as the need exists, and we would like to see the need satisfied, but until it is, we will be here trying to do the best we can to make sure people don't go hungry."

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## WITH AN ANXIOUS EYE, LOCAL BUSINESSES LOOK TO REOPEN



Colony Diner prepares to reopen after months of operating as take-out-only.

Photo Courtesy of Vincenzo Di Natale

By **Stephanie Chen '23**  
Copy Editor

On Thursday, April 30, Governor Ned Lamont announced his plan to reopen select businesses and organizations in Connecticut, the state's first step in moving away from quarantine regulations.

Scheduled for May 20, the step would include the reopening of restaurants, retail stores, offices, nail and hair salons, museums, zoos, outdoor recreation spaces, and university research programs. Although the reopening is contingent on meeting certain conditions, such as a decline in coronavirus-related hospitalizations and adequate access to protective equipment, the state predicts that the plan will proceed as scheduled.

In preparation for reopening day, local businesses in Wallingford have already started discussing logistics. Supercuts, a hair salon on Ives Road, has

scheduled employee meetings to review sanitary guidelines and to teach staff how to prioritize hygiene in their operations.

"The most important part is to make sure everything is as clean as possible, to make sure things that could be a danger are removed," explained Mr. Joe Goldberg, the salon's owner. "Some of our guidelines are that we have to have social distancing and customers have to make appointments. We are usually a no-appointment salon. I think we will obviously have customers walking up to the salon, so we will have to set up signs asking them to stay outside until somebody comes to sign them up for a service. Of course, everyone is also going to be wearing masks."

Supercuts has also decided to suspend certain services that require additional interpersonal contact, such as blow drying, to minimize the risk of spreading the virus.

At Colony Diner, a popular restaurant in Wallingford, owner Mr. Eric Celik echoed the same sentiment about the importance of safety. Colony Diner has been able to stay partially open during the pandemic, but the restaurant is taking extra precautions in anticipation of a rise in the number of customers.

"I believe people will definitely be walking out of their houses more, [especially] since more stores opening means more reasons to get out," said Mr. Celik. "But no matter what, we would always put employees' and customers' health as our number one priority," he added.

To ensure proper sanitation, all who enter the restaurant will be required to wear masks, employees will sanitize tables after each use, and hand sanitizer will be provided to customers.

Due to the pandemic, many local businesses are finding it difficult to access the materials needed to provide their services.

"We're hoping and praying that we have sufficient quantities of these things in order to have ongoing support for our customers," said Mr. Goldberg. "I personally have gone out to get what I can to have stock, but this is something that's going to be an ongoing problem for a long time."

As much as local businesses are excited to begin to reopen their doors, many owners remain anxious about the months ahead. "I wouldn't be telling you the truth if I didn't say that I'm scared," Mr. Goldberg said. "Not only my staff but employees in general. Maybe all of the precautions we take might not be enough."

Still, Mr. Goldberg remains optimistic that the return of businesses will benefit the community. "We're going to do the very best we can, and hopefully there'll be some nice days ahead for all of us."

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## LOCAL SCHOOLS BEGIN LIVE ONLINE CLASSES

By **Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn '22**  
Reporter

On Monday, May 4, Wallingford Public Schools (WPS) made the switch to live online classes in addition to implementing a new pass/fail grading system. These changes came a day before Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont's announcement to officially close all public schools in Connecticut for the rest of the academic year.

Before the switch to live classes and the pass/fail grading system, students were assigned classwork and homework through Google Classroom and received grades on each assignment through an application called PowerSchool. Now, virtual classes are being held over Google Meet, with each class expected to meet for approximately 20 to 30 minutes each week. This switch gives students the opportunity to interact with their teachers and peers during school hours, as opposed to a complete reliance on asynchronous work.

Mrs. Dana Blasczyk, a fourth-grade teacher at Pond Hill Elementary School, said, "We are required to hold only two live sessions as our morning meetings or afternoon check-ins. We are not required to teach a full lesson during these times. They are not mandatory for students to attend either, but rather provide an opportunity for students to see the teachers' faces, connect with their peers, and ask any questions that they may have."

With the switch to live classes, teachers have had to quickly restructure their classes to fit a live, online learning environment. Mrs. Blasczyk said, "Teaching [online] is much different than that in the classroom. We have had to teach and familiarize ourselves with many online tools in order to present our lessons to our students."

Although the new system of distance learning has been beneficial for some, these changes have affected students differently based on their personal learning

style. Both students and teachers have experienced obstacles presented by the newly-implemented virtual learning environment.

Alyssa Pallatto, a junior at Lyman Hall High School, said, "I do not find the live classes beneficial. Some classes have only a few kids that show up, and the class contains the same information as a video they could have posted. The recorded video lectures or lessons are helpful because you can go back and replay them."

In regards to the new pass/fail grading system, Pallatto said, "I am very upset about [pass/fail]. Junior year, obviously, is the last year to really boost or maintain grades before applying to college. I am doing the same amount of work, if not more, for fewer grades."

Mr. George Giacco, an eighth-grade teacher at Dag Hammarskjöld Middle School, also said that the pass/fail grading system has negatively affected the structure of his class. "Before pass/fail, students were responding better and doing better work," he said. "They seem to lack interest in the grade now, which directly affects lesson presentation." Without grades, students are becoming less motivated to learn, placing a heavy burden on the teachers.

Mr. Giacco added, "Some students [are] opting to fail one or two lessons because the whole trimester will be pass/fail."

Still, WPS teachers are trying their best to accommodate this new system of learning. Aside from helping students learn, teachers are also trying to keep students' spirits high as they are isolated from their peers.

"Teachers miss [their students] very much," said Mrs. Blasczyk. "[But] we will all be in our classrooms, shaking hands, smiling at one another, and enjoying real connection before we know it."

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114<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

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## “Hollywood” Is a Dream Come True

By **Adrienne Chacon '22**  
Copy Editor

Ryan Murphy’s new Netflix mini-series, “Hollywood,” has not been heralded by critics — as publications like *Slate* and *The Verge* have argued, the show is far from perfect. There are plot holes, some characters have little narrative drive, and acts of hate and violence are immediately forgotten. It’s easy to say that “Hollywood” is not an expertly written piece of art. What it is, however, is a dream: the show envisions a world wherein marginalized people succeed even as the world roots against them.

“Hollywood” reimagines Hollywood in the late 1940s. It creates a fantasy wherein people of color, people identifying as LGBTQ+, and women can thrive in ways that are still not fully realized. Just five years ago, a #Oscarssowhite campaign tried to combat the lack of representation and nominations of people of color at award shows. This sentiment is echoed in “Hollywood” when the first non-white person to win an Oscar in any category, Hattie McDaniel, tells the story of being blocked from entering the very building in which she was set to win an award. The magic of “Hollywood” comes from its departures from reality in which the protagonists — gay men and black women — are able to succeed. It is a fantasy of equality and art that roots itself in the dreams of those who are underrepresented and unable to get through the doors of the entertainment industry.

“Hollywood” features a diverse cast whose characters find themselves at the fictional Ace Studios making a movie called *Meg*. The characters assume that their film is guaranteed to flop and incite riots because of its controversial cast. After all, the main players include a gay

African-American screenwriter named Archie, a talented African-American actress named Camille Washington, a half-Filipino director Raymond Ainsley who is forced to mask his ethnicity to get ahead, and a ridiculed female Jewish studio head, Avis Amberg.

*Meg* tells the story of a young African-American woman who, against all odds, makes it in Hollywood. The movie within the show tells African-Americans, women, LGBTQ+ people, and other minorities: yes, you can succeed. *Meg* says, “Thank you ... for making sure that no little girl staring up at that screen will ever again be told that there are limits to what they can achieve.”

We have yet to reach a time when creators of all identities are recognized for their creativity in Hollywood, and the show is well aware of that fact. The fictional creation and distribution of *Meg* did not end hate or inequality. Even within the show, the movie, written by a gay man, starring a woman of color, directed by a half-Asian person, and helmed by a Jewish female studio head, is met with violent and racist protests — echoes and recurrences of which are not unfamiliar today. Nevertheless, *Meg* is a groundbreaking fantasy, for it wins despite hate and inequality.

“Hollywood” and its portrayal of triumph for people who, historically, have struggled to achieve recognition or opportunities, is today’s dream. It is a success story that helps us imagine a world wherein all people of all identities have equal opportunity to be recognized for their creative contributions.

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## GLOBAL STUDIES REQUIREMENT HINDERS SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY

By **Audrey Lim '23**  
Opinions Writer

Every Choate student, sooner or later, feels the looming shadow of the Contemporary Global Studies graduation requirement. Instead of taking the electives they’re interested in, many freshmen take classes such as Contemporary Issues, World Religions, or Peace and Justice during their first year in order to get their Contemporary Global Studies requirement out of the way. The rigidity of the Contemporary Global Studies requirement constricts students’ schedules and stifles their opportunity to follow their passions.

Choate’s standard core classes — math, science, English, foreign language, and history — are widely recognized as the most basic and necessary classes, so it makes sense that students are required to develop competency in those areas.

However, many Contemporary Global Studies classes are humanities based, preventing STEM-oriented students from pursuing their passions until later in their Choate careers.

Although one might contend that the purpose of the Contemporary Global Studies requirement is to teach fundamental writing and presentation skills that students will eventually need when taking higher-level classes (after all, according to the Student Handbook students are “urged to fulfill these requirements as early in their careers as possible”), I’d argue that these foundational skills can be taught in both core and subject-specific prerequisite classes. This way, students can cater their schedules to their passions while also developing these critical skills.



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

For example, English classes can assign more writing projects to supplement discussions and seminars. Non-humanities classes can work on presentation skills; in math and science classes, students can speak about a researched topic relevant to the subject they’re learning in class.

Furthermore, prerequisite electives that are required before a student can enroll in upper-level classes can refine writing and presenting skills as they apply to a particular field. If these lower-level electives and core classes focused on developing students’ communication skills, Contemporary Global Studies classes wouldn’t need to be required solely to teach new students to write and present.

Teaching writing and presentation skills in core classes and prerequisite electives would create room in the schedule for a student to take more classes of their own choice. After freshman year, students take World History and have more responsibilities on campus overall, which makes finding time for specialized electives more challenging. Without the Global Studies requirement, students would be able to get a head start on taking classes they are interested in during freshman year before their schedule becomes more weighed down.

Moreover, by allowing students, especially freshmen who are exploring new passions, to have more leeway in their schedules, they can take more classes in different fields and sample

various areas of interest. This way, as students continue to explore their curiosity, they can engineer their schedule to fit a diverse set of classes or a myriad of more focused ones depending on their interests.

Some students come to Choate with an idea of what they want to pursue, while others’ ideas change over time. After all, isn’t the purpose of electives to help students discover their passions? Students should be able to take full advantage of all the open doors that Choate has to offer, to take “many paths,” rather than having their ambition restricted by the Contemporary Global Studies requirement.

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## Closing the Door On Sex Stigma

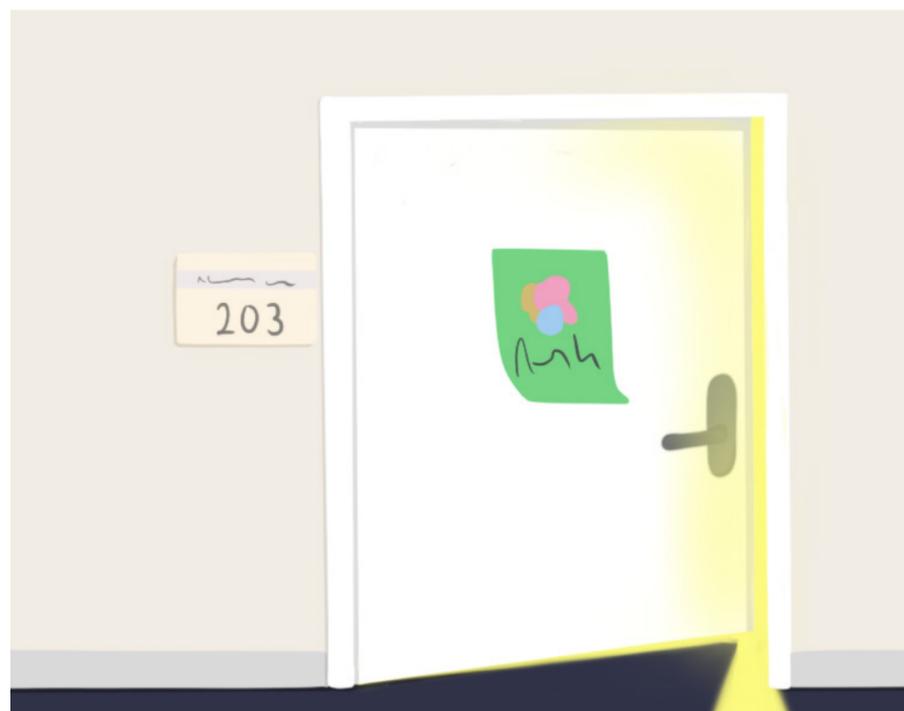
By **Calvin Walker '21**  
Staff Reporter

Visitation has long been a hot topic of discussion on the Choate campus, with many students yearning for a more relaxed policy. The current rules prohibit students of the opposite sex to close the door when in a dorm room together, enter dorms of the opposite gender during the school day, or enter them before noon on weekends. While many students criticize this policy as frustrating and inconvenient, it also points toward a much larger issue on campus: Choate’s inconsistent and ineffective attitude towards sex and intimacy.

As it currently stands, visitation rules require that when freshmen, sophomores, or juniors of the opposite sex are in a dorm room together, they must keep the door propped open with either a recycling bin or a trash can. Sixth formers must do so with only a shoe. In all cases, the Student Handbook states that an overhead light must remain on and that visiting students must check in and out with a house adviser.

Notably, the current visitation policy does not take students’ sexuality into account. For example, a male who identifies as gay would still need to get visitation to enter a female friend’s room but wouldn’t have to if visiting another male. Although it would be discriminatory to ostracize students from dorms of their gender based on sexuality, the visitation policy doesn’t seem to have an appropriate policy for students who identify as LGBTQ+.

Furthermore, relationships, intimacy, and sex are natural and healthy parts of growing up. In the Student Handbook, Choate states, “Healthy romantic attachments do develop and the School affirms students as they search for appropriate ways to express affection towards one another while demonstrating respect for other members of our residential



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

community.” However, the Student Handbook contradicts this statement by also saying that “the School discourages sexual intimacy on campus.” While the administration obviously has the right to be concerned about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), pregnancy, and sexual assault and misconduct, Choate’s policy sends mixed messages about student intimacy by forcing the exact relationships that the School claims to “affirm” to be pursued through deception.

With no hope for complete privacy through visitation, students are motivated to circumvent the rules. They find other methods to be intimate including sneaking into dorms, which, ultimately, puts them at a far greater risk. By forcing students to break rules in order to be sexually intimate, the School casts sex as taboo, reducing discussion of sexual intimacy to whispers.

Fearing condemnation, students are far less likely to seek advice from adults on practicing

safe sex, potentially leading to unhealthy sex habits or sexual misconduct. By enforcing stringent visitation rules, Choate creates the issues that it is trying to prevent. Instead, the School should focus on creating a policy that is sex-positive, while still upholding its responsibility to keep students healthy and safe.

Having a visitor’s presence acknowledged by a house adviser should be enough to grant closed-door visitation. That way, advisers would be able to facilitate a safe environment and simultaneously provide students with privacy. Moreover, while Choate’s Wellness and Peer Educator Programs try to facilitate conversations in dorms, they should adopt a more sex-positive mindset when organizing these programs — preaching healthy choices and empowering consent, rather than pushing students not to engage in sexual relationships at all.

By better educating students on safe sex and consent, students will be more likely to make healthy sexual decisions and prevent sexual assault. Furthermore, the establishment of a more trusting, sex-positive visitation policy and environment at Choate overall would create a safer setting for intimacy among LGBTQ+ students, despite the fact that the visitation policy only addresses straight couples. Although some parents may be uncomfortable with their children being intimate on campus, it’s much safer for the School to create a safe and trusting environment for students’ sexuality, one in which students are educated about sex. This way, if students choose to have sex, they will have the knowledge and privacy to do so in a healthy, consensual way.

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## COMMUNITY STAYS UNITED DESPITE SEPARATION

By **Jessica Wu '22**  
Copy Editor

From form events to Friday night SAC dances to simple dining hall get-togethers, Choate's brimming social life has seen no rest, albeit in the digital realm. Now, with students scattered across the globe, Choate has risen to the challenge of staying united and continuing to foster close bonds within the community.

The loss of dorm life, one of the most active social scenes on campus, has been a tough blow, leaving students and advisers alike feeling separated. Still, many dorms have been working hard to stay connected. In dorms like Bernhard House, frequent full-dorm mug nights and adviser check-ins over Zoom attempt to replicate the sense of a dorm community. By working around time differences, students and advisers living in Bernhard have successfully convened for virtual mug nights to celebrate birthdays. These birthday gatherings have all been themed, with students arriving in crazy hats or dressed in pajamas.

Dr. Jessica Pfeil, an adviser in Bernhard, is still meeting in small groups with her advisees every two weeks, gathering together on Zoom during the 'Break' in the schedule. When describing the atmosphere of these meetings, Dr. Pfeil said, "The people who crack jokes in person are going to be the ones who are still cracking jokes over Zoom. I think the personalities still come through. I feel like the overall feeling [is] that we're all in this together and that we all miss this place together."

Ms. Colleen Kazar, Assistant Director of the Student Activities Center, has also made efforts to continue organizing social events. "I would say that, since transitioning to remote learning, we've had to think about ways to engage stu-



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

dents virtually while also considering that the students were going to be in class in a virtual space all day. That can be mentally exhausting for the students," said Ms. Kazar.

The first virtual SAC event held in the spring term was a Zoom Dance hosted on April 3 by Max Brown '21, who played music while over 50 students dropped into the Zoom and were able to either watch or join in on the dancing. On May 1, the SAC held a joint trivia night with Deerfield Academy.

For the rest of the term, Ms. Kazar is planning a virtual Lit Coffee House, an event planned each term by *The Lit* as an informal get-together for poetry and music.

For seniors, the SAC has also planned events such as Senior Bingo in an attempt to bring the

class together. Moving forward, senior dance lessons have been planned in place of the annual dance lessons taught in preparation for the Last Hurrah.

The SAC has also been supporting clubs that are trying to move their meetings online for the rest of the term. The Environmental Action Committee (EAC), has met three times throughout the spring term, holding more discussion-based meetings. Recently, the club held a Zoom movie night, with one cabinet member sharing *WALL-E* from her computer screen with the other attending members. Livia Fingerson '22, Vice President of EAC, said, "It was just kind of a fun event to get people together and get them thinking about the environment without putting pressure on them."

During this virtual spring term, other clubs have found it easier to host joint meetings rather than formal events. On May 6, Girl Up and Choate Women in Business (CWIB) held a joint meeting.

CWIB Co-president Charlotte Myers-Elkins '22 said, "The attendance at this meeting was actually really successful, and I think that was definitely due, in part, to the fact that it was a joint meeting. It allows people to feel like they're really still remaining active in Choate club life by attending two meetings at once."

Despite these successes, there are a few notable challenges of hosting club meetings over Zoom, particularly time differences and the awkwardness that comes with talking to a computer screen. "It's a little daunting when you're in an

online space, at least for me, to try and be the first one to speak up and say something when you don't interact with people the same way as when you're in a room together," President of Girl Up Rhea Shah '22 explained. "We found that once someone started talking, the conversation flowed more naturally."

Although students are now scattered across the planet, the spirit of the Choate community has persisted. While the warm "hello" on the path and the informal dining hall chat prove to be impossible now, dedicated efforts by the SAC, dorm advisers, and club leaders have helped preserve what makes Choate so special: community.

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## Netflix Binge List

By **Begum Gokmen '23**  
Reporter

With practically the entire world on lockdown, this time of isolation has spawned a new routine: wake up, go to class, binge Netflix, repeat. With events postponed, festivals canceled, and movie theaters closed, many have found themselves relying on their screens more than ever for entertainment. Amid our once-in-a-lifetime situation (fingers crossed!), perhaps it's finally time to get through that Netflix binge list:

**Money Heist (La Casa de Papel)** - This Spanish drama depicts the themes of mystery, crime, and action, focusing on the "perfect" bank heist carried out by a group of robbers. Led by "The Professor," the group dons red jumpsuits and signature Salvador Dali masks before stealing billions from the Royal Mint of Spain. A go-to if you are looking for an engaging drama that makes you feel a bit better about procrastinating on that Spanish homework.

**Outer Banks** - This popular new production follows four teenagers - the "pogues" - living on the poor side of an island in coastal North Carolina. When one of them discovers a secret message from his father, who was presumed lost-at-sea, the group heads off on a thrilling, and possibly deadly, treasure hunt. This show is sure to hook you, offering a break from those quarantine blues and a glimpse of those breezy summer vibes.

**All American** - After high-school football star Spencer James is recruited to join the team at Beverly Hills High, he is forced to scramble between the two worlds of his haunting past and his present life. This inspiring drama explores themes of classism, racism, and bullying.

**Gilmore Girls** - This show is a lot closer to Choate than one might initially think. The series focuses on the relationship between Rory Gilmore and her young mother, Lorelai Gilmore, taking viewers through the ups and downs of Rory and Lorelai's lives, including Rory's years at Chilton, a fictional prep school based on our own school. This hilarious, heart-warming show won't disappoint.

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## EMAIL SIGN-OFFS BETTER THAN "BEST"

By **Adrienne Chacón '22**  
Copy Editor

During quarantine, many students find themselves searching for ways to stay in touch, whether through Zoom, texts, or even radio waves. However, no method is as tried and true as the email. Often, you may find yourself using the same few classic email signatures in all your correspondence. Reliable sign-offs include: "Thank you," "Best,"

"Warm regards," as well as the ever-formal and always reassuring "Get Outlook for iOS." Now, it's time for a change. Here's a list of the funniest, funkiest, and spiciest email sign-offs to keep your mailbox fresh.

For when you're feeling cheerful: "**Cheers, [your name]**" This sign-off is subtle enough not to raise any eyebrows, but it will surely put a smile on someone's face.

For when you're being passive-aggressive: "**Let me know**

**if you have any questions, [your name]**" We've all sent that email where we needed to seem stern and annoyed. Be sure to let the source of your ire know that they better not have any questions.

For after a Harry Potter binge session: "**Mischief managed, [your name]**" This quirky sign-off is great for spreading the Hogwarts magic. Use it ironically after a serious extra help email and to create some great email message juxtaposition.

For when you're desperate and not afraid to show it: "**PLEASE, [your name]**" An email sign-off that's both assertive and groveling. The impassioned begging can show that you are at the recipient's mercy, but you're like... cool about it. This one's perfect for pleading with the registrar after the add/drop class deadline to take you out of that sociology class that's guaranteed to axe your GPA.

While these email sign-offs may not be a true substitute for

a term together, they can at least bring a smile to the receiver. Oh, you want a few more? Use at your own peril:

- **From the toilet, [your name]**
- **Sent from my Samsung Smart Fridge, [your name]**
- **Tag, you're it, [your name]**
- **Hakuna Matata, [your name]**

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## LIBRARY TRANSITIONS TO A VIRTUAL SETTING

By **Natarsha Yan '21**  
Staff Reporter

The Andrew Mellon Library has expanded tremendously since the appointment of its new director, Dr. Sherry Marrotte Newman, in 2018. Dr. Marrotte Newman has brought about much change and growth with her vision to make the library the academic hub of Choate.

Over the last two years, Dr. Marrotte Newman has created more flexible spaces in the library and purchased new equipment for students to check out. This equipment includes green screens, professional-grade video tripod stabilizers, several microphones for iPads and smartphones, small vinyl cutters, and Zoom H6 Handy Recorders.

To fully utilize this new equipment, more dynamic spaces for student creativity and collaboration, such as the media room for audio and video recording, have also been integrated. The Math Center was recently introduced, and all class textbooks have been added to the Library collection. Dr. Marrotte Newman also launched academic support sessions geared toward supporting

students in all aspects of academic life. In addition, the Library now runs various contests to promote resources and raise awareness of all the services offered.

Dr. Marrotte Newman said, "Transitioning solely to online definitely took a bit of planning, but the fact that the library subscribes to over 50 databases, has over 120,000 ebooks, and has an incredible team of people made it easier to keep essential resources available to faculty and students during this term."

She pointed out new features and policies that have been implemented in the past few months to further ease the transition. "We created Chat Hours, so the library would remain open to help students and faculty as they transitioned into the online learning environment; in addition, we continue to add more ebooks and videos as needed to support instruction," Dr. Marrotte Newman said.

She went on, "Our Chat support services go beyond research assistance as we also provide assistance with iPad apps, finding and accessing vid-

eos and online newspapers, and navigating online spaces such as Canvas and Zoom."

Most recently, the Student Writing and Math centers have joined the Chat area to continue offering tutoring. (To find out more about the Chat Hours, Dr. Marrotte Newman recommends visiting the library website.)

While Chat Hours provides invaluable assistance during this remote term, Dr. Marrotte Newman also finds value in continuing these online services upon the return to campus. "This term, we have come to understand how valuable access to virtual support is to the community," she explained. "The virtual Chat will definitely remain active when we return to campus as this will open up library access to day students, underformers during study hours, and any Choate community member in general."

Dr. Marrotte Newman is also collaborating with ITS to implement a tech support area in the library as a resource for students who have questions or issues with technology. For example, the librarians have been creating video tutorials to help patrons navigate



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

and use library resources, attending Zoom classes to guide students in research and citations, revamping the summer reading list, digitizing archival material to make them accessible online, and searching for video resources for teachers to use for online learning.

As the Library strives to support students during this virtual

term, Dr. Marrotte Newman hopes to modify the Library into the ultimate online resource for students. Adapting to the struggles of online learning that the community has faced this term, she and her team of librarians continue to offer services to all those in need and to prepare the Library for when students and faculty return to campus.

"The Library is not just about books and research," Dr. Marrotte Newman said. "It's about access to various spaces, resources, and programming. I hope that students will come to appreciate the library as such."

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## MEET NARI, YOUR PERSONAL CGI TUTOR

By **Rebecca Alston '22**  
Reporter

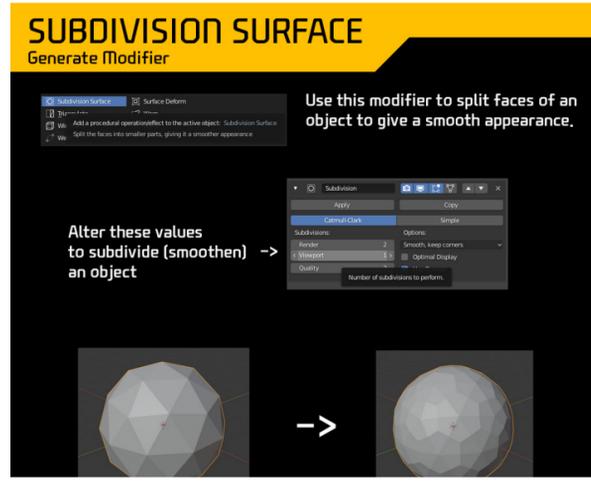
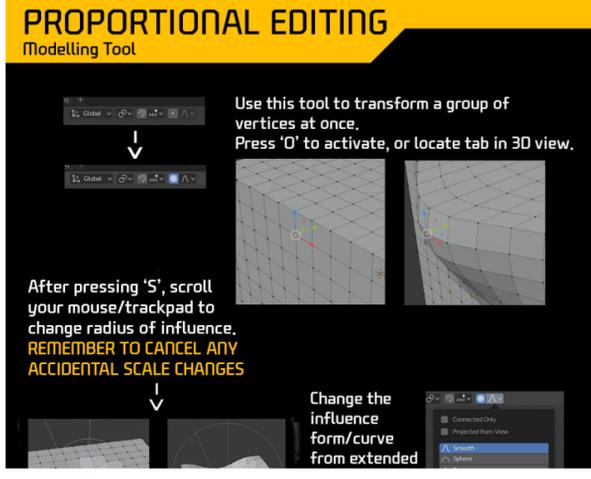
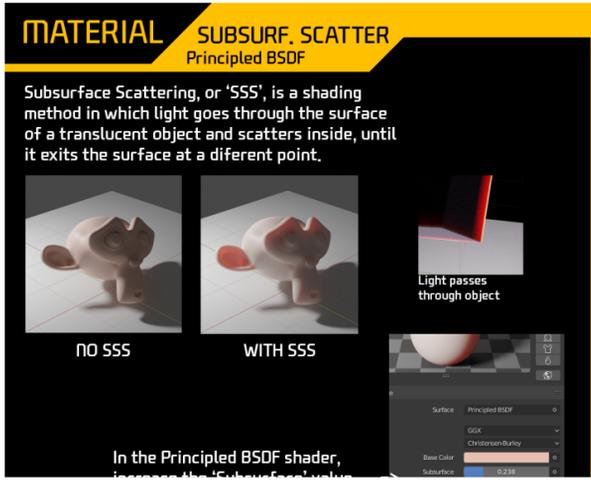
From Siri to Alexa to the nameless Google Home assistant, personal voice assistants are now seen (and heard) in homes all around the world. At home in Seoul, South Korea, Visual Arts Concentration member and 3D graphics enthusiast HP Park '21 is currently working on a smart assistant of his own: a chatbot and 3D graphics tutor called the Narrative Assistant for Rendering Inquiry (NARI).

As the founder of the new 3D computer-generated imagery (CGI) club, Park often receives simple and repetitive questions from students on 3D effects and operations. With the student body scattered across the globe during this term of remote learning, Park was inspired to create a virtual assistant that could replace him in helping students learn 3D graphics software.

"Since I am no longer on campus to teach other people in-person, I thought to myself, 'What if I were to make a virtual representation of myself?'" Park said.

Park began working on NARI after he returned to Korea. He explained, "I started development for an AI chatbot to have it recognize speech contexts and provide appropriate responses. You will be able to ask NARI a question about 3D, and it will provide useful tips and 'tutorial cards' corresponding to that question."

Unlike most personal assistants, NARI will have a fully animated visual model in addition to typical conversational capa-



HP Park '21's new project NARI is an artificial intelligence chatbot with a fully animated 2D and 3D visual model.

abilities, with the assistant's face animated in 2D and its body rendered in 3D.

Park aims for NARI to feel as realistic as possible with facial expressions and changes in stance when the chatbot is listening to an audio input. He hopes that having a character associated with the virtual as-

stant will set NARI apart from other AI companions.

In the process of modeling NARI, Park has encountered roadblocks ranging from issues in shading to difficulties in meshing 2D and 3D graphics together. He described combining the two conflicting styles of 2D and 3D art as

the biggest learning curve he faced, saying the process has been both "a challenge and an adventure." Park revealed that his solution to mistakes in NARI's anatomy model is concealing imperfections with animated clothing, such as a sweatshirt that features his own personal logo.

Working in 3D combines art, data, and other facets that can be used to translate what's seen in reality or create something better. Although Park focuses on the functionality of the chatbot tutor too, he sees it as being more design-centered. He said, "[CGI] is often like acting, but you do it piece-by-piece on a puppet that

reflects some part of yourself you want to express. That's [the] ultimate control."

While designing NARI's functionalities, Park kept in mind the challenges he faced when he first learned 3D graphics. According to Park, NARI would provide more straightforward answers than the results from search engines. Instead of needing to browse through long documents or tutorials to find answers to simple questions, students would be able to save time by using NARI instead. Park aspires to make NARI available for public use in 3D programming education and accessible on all operating systems on devices. Of his long-term goals, Park said, "One day there could be one-to-one scale interactive digital guides in public buildings."

Although Pixar movies first sparked his love for 3D art, Park cites the Academy Award-winning *Spider-man: Into the Spider-verse* and Studio Ghibli's animated films as his biggest inspirations for this project. Park was inspired by how film and anime have pushed traditional boundaries of art with combinations of 2D comic-like features with 3D elements and spaces.

As 3D graphics have been Park's passion for many years, he hopes his current work can help the Choate community gain interest in 3D art as well.

NARI, he said, "feels like a way for me to share a little something that I have devoted my life to learning."

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## ART BY THE FIREPLACE



Photo courtesy of Krystal McCook

Krystal McCook '20's favorite outfits combine style with comfort.

By **Angel Guo '22**  
Staff Reporter

The increasing amount of time we spend at home and the lack of social interaction in quarantine can serve both as creative inspiration and a damper on our sense of style. In the sea of sweats, hoodies, and pajamas that can be seen in every Zoom classroom, some Choate fashionistas have spiced up comfortable clothing with their keen eye for fashion.

For sixth-formers Krystal McCook '20 and Di'Anna Bonomolo '20, fashion is a creative outlet and a form of self-expression, and they feel that maintaining a chic fashion sense in quarantine is part of a necessary attitude towards life.

"At home I would wear more oversized clothing but tweak it to make the outfit look stylish, whereas at Choate, I would focus on dressing to be fashionable and not thinking of comfort," McCook said.

McCook shared one of her favorite at-home outfits: a simple white crop top matching a pair of acid-washed jeans with small accents like metallic silver lettering of the words "Angel Baby" on the shirt and an elastic waistband in the jeans for comfort. McCook described her outfit as "cheerful, simple, and comfortable."

Although the clothes that McCook wears at home differ from her typical outfits at Choate, her perception and understanding of her fashion sense remains consistent. She always approaches putting together an outfit by asking herself "How can I be comfortable, how can I express myself, and how can I feel happy in what I'm wearing?"

Instead of confining herself to one specific style, McCook enjoys letting her outfits vary based on her mood, from sporty leggings to casual crop tops. McCook chooses the color scheme of her outfit depending on the weather. For example, on cloudy days, she often selects hoodies that mostly consist of dark colors, while on sunny days, she prefers brighter colors.

"I find bright colors more attractive because they give the pop of cheerfulness that I'm looking for, especially during the monotonous quarantine," McCook said.

Watching videos on TikTok and seeing people's persistence to dress up despite being stuck at home has started to inspire McCook to maintain the same style she typically wore on campus. She said that when she feels lost in the unending days of quarantine, "a cute outfit would make my day."

Although Bonomolo also watches TikTok videos as an inspiration for her outfits, she has been avoiding social media lately because she doesn't want to conform to the beauty standards often promoted on social media platforms. "In terms of fashion, I like to follow people that look like me and take into consideration their style of clothing," Bonomolo said.

In contrast to her go-to tank tops and sweatpants, Bonomolo wears T-shirts, dresses, and shorts more often at home since most of her clothes are still on campus. For Bonomolo, matching the color scheme and choosing the color that best brings out her best complexion is her favorite part of putting together an outfit.

She described the look that she shared, a sleeveless tangerine romper speckled with white polka dots, as "vibrant, cute, and lovely." Its colors, she said, "scream spring vibes, represent my character, and complement my figure."

Staying at home has not diminished McCook and Bonomolo's passion for style as a representation of their personalities. "When I find the right outfit, I feel very accomplished, and my heart warms up a little," McCook said. "The sense of confidence I feel and the ability to boost my self-esteem is my favorite part about fashion."

Bonomolo agreed, saying, "Fashion is wearing the outfits that make you shine."

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Photo courtesy of Di'Anna Bonomolo

Di'Anna Bonomolo '20 prefers colors that flatter her skin tone.

## The School's Greatest Athletes

By **George McCabe '20**  
Sports Editor, 113th Masthead

### TOMMY BURR, CLASS OF 1913

Burr started his prep school career at The Hotchkiss School but transferred to The Choate School the following year. He immediately earned varsity spots on both the football and baseball teams. Burr met early success on both teams, but he established himself as one of the best all-around baseball players in New England in 1913. In his sixth-form year, Burr didn't allow a single run as a pitcher, tallying 185 strikeouts and allowing only 32 hits and 18 walks. *The Meridan Morning Record* called him "the pride of Choate School," saying that he "was the biggest man at Choate this year as its leading athlete."

After graduating, Burr was signed to the New York Yankees. He appeared in just one game, in 1914, and decided after the season to continue his education at Williams College. He went on to enlist in the United States Army Air Service, and, in 1918, he died in an airplane accident in France. Burr is one of 15 Choate graduates for whom Memorial House was dedicated.

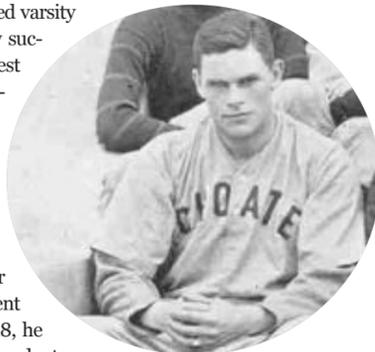


Photo courtesy of the Society for American Baseball Research

### BILLIE BATSON GIBBENS, CLASS OF 1921

At Rosemary Hall, Gibbens played field hockey and basketball but quickly discovered her aptitude for the hurdles event in track and field. "Aptitude" is an understatement; Gibbens became the definitive leading American women's short-distance hurdler during her time at Rosemary Hall. Between 1919 and 1921, she did not lose a single hurdles race and set national records in the 60-yard high hurdles, at nine seconds, and the 100-yard low hurdles, at 14.4 seconds.

After Rosemary Hall, Gibbens attended Smith College to continue her athletic career. There, she was invited to join the U.S. team at the first-ever Women's Olympics, organized to compensate for the lack of women's sports at the Olympic Games. She was chosen as captain to lead her team in the Olympics. However, after spraining her ankle, Gibbens was limited in her competitive abilities and failed to place in any events. Gibbens died in 1996 at the age of 96, just before Choate created its Athletics Hall of Fame.



Photo courtesy of Geni

### MUDDY WATERS, CLASS OF 1943

Waters played fullback for the Choate football team and was a crucial part of the team's success in the early 1940s. In his final year, Waters led the 1942 team to an undefeated season and New England Championship as a team captain. He also served as a captain for the Varsity Track and Field team.

After Choate, he played fullback at Michigan State University; however, most of his fame came after he graduated from college. Waters coached Hillsdale College for twenty years and compiled a 138-47-5 record, including a stretch between 1953 to 1957 when he won 34 consecutive games. In 1980, he returned to Michigan State to coach its football team. In recognition of over thirty years of playing and coaching experience in college football, he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2000. He died six years later.



Photo courtesy of Reflections Magazine

### THOMAS YANKUS, CLASS OF 1952

Yankus played baseball and football before graduating from Choate in 1952, but that was only the start of his long relationship with Choate Athletics.

After a successful baseball career at Choate as a left-handed pitcher, he continued pursuing his education and the sport at Williams College. After graduating, he returned to Choate to teach English and played for the New York Yankees Triple "A" team during the summers. After his playing career, he continued to coach professionally as a manager and pitching coach in the Cape Cod leagues for over two decades. Yankus also spent a summer playing on a minor league team in Montana which he wrote a book about.

While he was at Choate, Yankus coached Boys' Varsity Baseball from 1966 to 2010, a total of 44 years. His coaching career concluded in 2010 with his 500th win as head coach, the most wins from a coach in the history of Choate Athletics. Yankus retired as a teacher in 2014, and Choate's Ayres-Yankus baseball field was named in part for him.

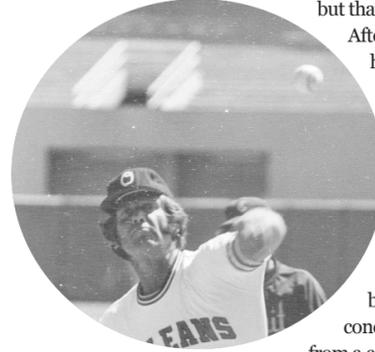


Photo courtesy of Miles Spencer

### BOB MCVEY, CLASS OF 1954

McVey starred as a center for Choate's hockey team before winning the School's first Olympic gold medal. He was the best hockey player at Choate during the early 1950s and set the single-season record for the most goals scored during his sixth-form year. McVey continued his playing career at Harvard University and was eventually inducted into the Harvard Athletic Hall of Fame.

After graduating from college, he was offered a spot on the Boston Bruins' top minor-league team, but turned it down to train instead with the U.S. national team in the hopes of making the 1960 Olympics. Make it he did. Entering the Olympics in Squaw Valley, Calif., McVey and his teammates were considered massive underdogs to Canada and the Soviet Union. But the Americans, with McVey playing on the team's first line, won the first gold medal in U.S. hockey history. Fans the world over know the accomplishment as "The Miracle on Ice."

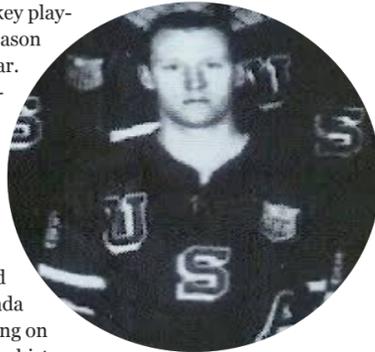


Photo courtesy of MPR News

### DEDE GRIESBAUER, CLASS OF 1988

Griesbauer excelled as a swimmer at Choate and, as an adult, became a world-renowned triathlete. Her specialty was the backstroke and medley events, in which she set pool, school, New England, and National Prep School Records. Griesbauer went on to swim at Stanford University. As a captain, she led the 1992 team to an NCAA Championship and earned All-American honors. Internationally, she won a gold medal in the 200-meter backstroke twice at the 1989 Pan Pacific Championships and at the 1991 Pan American Games.

After she just missed making the Olympic Team in 1992, she retired as a swimmer and took a job on Wall Street. However, her retirement did not last long. She decided to pursue a career as a professional triathlete. She has won three Ironman competitions, in 2006, in 2009, and in 2015 at the age of 40. Griesbauer has also finished in the top 10 three times at the Ironman World Championships in Kona, Hawaii.



Photo courtesy of Trigir.com

### JAMES PYNE, CLASS OF 1990

Pyne's strong leadership as an offensive lineman for Varsity Football gave the team a steady presence to build around. He was respected and appreciated by both his teammates and coaches, earning him the Choate Coach's Award in 1989.

Following Choate, Pyne went to Virginia Tech, where he started on the team's offensive line throughout his entire college career. His proficiency at his positions led him to numerous accolades, including being selected as a unanimous All-American. His Virginia Tech number is one of the four numbers ever retired through the university's 100-year football history. In 1994, he was selected in the seventh round of the NFL draft by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and held a starting role on the team's offensive line for four of his nine seasons in the league. He concluded his career by playing on the Detroit Lions, Cleveland Browns, and the Philadelphia Eagles, winning an NFC East division title in 2001.



Photo courtesy of Al Golub Photography

### GOGA VUKMIROVIC, CLASS OF 1996

Vukmirovic didn't know how to play water polo before arriving at Choate in 1993. She came to the School from Venezuela after fleeing her hometown of Sarajevo, Bosnia, with her mother and sister. She quickly became one of the best prep school water polo goalies and even created a new defensive scheme called the "Goga defense," in which the goalie swims to the middle of the pool to help defend. The former Girls' Varsity Water Polo Head Coach Mr. Bill Berghoff said, "She's kind of a legendary kid here."

Princeton recruited her for its newly formed women's competitive water polo team, and she excelled in the cage there. She led the team to the National Championships in 1998, 1999, and 2000 — an impressive feat for an East Coast school competing against West Coast powerhouses. Vukmirovic also earned All-Ivy honors in her final two seasons and was an honorable mention for All-American in her final. She was inducted into the Collegiate Water Polo Hall of Fame in 2015.



Photo courtesy of Collegiate Water Polo Association

### JULIE CHU, CLASS OF 2001

Chu is an incredibly accomplished Choate women's hockey player, possibly the best ever. During her time on the team, she set and still holds the Choate hockey records for the most career goals at 101 and career assists at 112, despite leaving during her senior year to play for the U.S. Women's National Team.

After Choate, Chu continued playing hockey at Harvard University, where she quickly set the record for the most points ever earned in a freshman season. Chu finished college as the all-time assists leader and points scorer in NCAA history and was awarded the Patty Kazmaier Award in 2007 for the best female collegiate hockey player. During and after college, she led a distinguished career for the U.S. Women's National Team. She played for Team USA in the Salt Lake City, Turin, Vancouver, and the Sochi Olympics — winning three silver medals and one bronze. She concluded her international career as the second-most decorated American woman in Olympic Winter Games history.



Photo courtesy of Choate Archives

### HILARY KNIGHT, CLASS OF 2007

Like Chu, Knight is another Choate hockey player who rose to the highest level of competition in the world. She only attended Choate during her fifth- and sixth-form years, but she won the Founders League MVP in both seasons. In her final year at Choate, she scored a single-season record of 73 points in just 23 games.

Knight translated her success at Choate to more success at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She and her team won two NCAA Championships, in 2009 and 2011, and finished second in 2008. She was selected as an All-American for three seasons at Wisconsin. After graduating, she played for the U.S. Women's National Team. Playing with Chu, Knight earned two silver medals at the Vancouver and Sochi Olympic Winter Games. Then, in 2018, Knight guided the national team to its second-ever gold medal in women's hockey. In the championship game against Canada, Knight scored the winning goal in a penalty shootout.



Photo courtesy of Choate Archives