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DARING PLAYS BRING SEXUAL ASSAULT OUT OF THE SHADOWS

By **Nathan Chang '17**
Staff Reporter

SLUT: The Play and *Now That We're Men: A New Play*, written by Katie Cappiello and featuring teenage actors from The Arts Effect of New York City, brought the audience to tears on September 27. *SLUT* included only female actors while *Now That We're Men* included only male actors, each portraying serious messages regarding rape culture and consent in high school.

"This is just important content and important material to share and to share in this powerful. To me it is so different from bringing in a speaker, another adult, to talk about sex. This is teenagers talking to teenagers, and that just makes so much more sense," Ms. Kalya Yannatos, the Head of the Arts Department, remarked.

"Even if people don't feel the plays are relevant to them right now, at some stage in their life, there's a high likelihood they'll become relevant. The point wasn't to have plays that were perfectly relevant. The point was to bring something on campus that would get people talking about this," Dean of Students Mr. James Stanley commented. "It's taken a really challenging topic out of the shadows and has made it a campus-wide conversation. That to me is what's important."

Ms. Yannatos had the idea to bring the plays to Choate after hearing about them last December from an alumnus during Choate's 125th anniversary. She, Mr. Stanley, and Mrs. Kathleen Wallace, the Associate Headmaster, joined her to watch *SLUT*. Ms. Yannatos also saw *Now That We're Men*.

The goal with this project is to tell the truth.

Katie Cappiello
Writer and Director

On stopslut.org, the website for both of these plays, Ms. Cappiello explains the goals for *Now That We're Men* and *Slut*. "The goal with this project is to tell the truth. We can't move forward if we aren't brutally honest about where we are and where boys are right now," said Ms. Cappiello. And with regards to the movement of spreading awareness about consent, she added, "StopSlut uses this powerful play to ignite social change. The movement supports a youth-initiated response to slut shaming and sexual assault, addresses the inaction of bystanders, the need for sex education that examines dynamics alongside mechanics, and emphasizes the responsibility we all share in per-

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Photo by **Alix Mackillop**/The Choate News

(From left to right) Jordan Eliot, Alphonso Jones, Caleb Grandoit, and Fred Hechinger performing in Katie Cappiello's *Now That We're Men*.



Photo by **Alix Mackillop**/The Choate News

Joey Del Marco, the protagonist of *SLUT*, endured intense interrogation in which she recounted her sexual assault.



Photo by **Alix Mackillop**/The Choate News

SLUT portrayed high school relationships and struggles, speaking to the social pressure faced by many female adolescents.

Dramatic Schedule Changes in 2017-18

By **Huong Pham '19**
Reporter

For the second year, Choate experimented with a new schedule during the first few days of school, seemingly in an effort to gauge the effects of a proposed daily schedule that would lengthen each class period. While the precise structure of this new schedule is still being developed, Choate's administration has indicated that class time will expand significantly, from the current 45 minutes to as long as 70 minutes. Classes are likely to meet only a handful of times each week.

The proposed new daily schedule is part of an effort to relieve stress for students. Sixth form boys' dean Mr. Pat Dennehy remarked that the new schedule, "might help with the quick pace of life for both students and faculties and make Choate a healthier place for our students."

Choate has conducted extensive research of various school schedules in order to find the ideal amount of time for each class block. The administration will examine each of those proposals and make the final decision sometime before the end of the school year. The new schedule is set to take effect in the 2017-2018 school year.

See **DAILY SCHEDULE, Page 2**

Student Council Sets Ambitious Agenda

By **Haley Chang '17**
Copy Editor

The Monday after Convocation, 14 students and two faculty members returned to the second floor of Humanities building, per usual. The Convocation speech of Student Council President Cecelia Zhou '17, which stressed the importance of compassion, unity, and pro-activity, resonated throughout the room as the first meeting of the 2016-2017 Student Council kicked into high gear, members feverishly discussing their plans for the coming months. Here are some of them:

Revisions to Sophomore Seminar Curriculum

The Student Council has evaluated the effectiveness of the current Sophomore Seminar curriculum, asking students and alumni about their thoughts this past spring term.

Day student representative Jack Hodgson '16 recently submitted a proposal to reform the Sophomore Seminar curriculum. He commented, "A lot of students felt that many pertinent issues were not being properly addressed in their Sophomore Seminar classes — and that wasn't due to poor teaching, but more due to the lack of resources and not being able to include all the material into the given class time."

Hodgson's proposal includes expanding Sophomore

Seminar into a course that is required and covers different materials for freshmen, sophomore, junior, and senior students; changing it from a class that meets once a week for two terms to a full-sized course that would meet for a single term; having more involvement from various student groups; and trying to incorporate a more interactive teaching approach, especially in regards to teaching students how to find relevant information for whatever issues they are dealing with.

Sixth form representative Larisa Owusu '16 observed, "Although it has its good parts, the current curriculum doesn't go in-depth as much as it could or should. I remember in the beginning of the course, we focused a lot on health and developing good eating and sleeping habits. I definitely think that these topics are extremely important, but I don't think we went into more in-depth conversations such as how to facilitate intimate relationships on campus, or, when we did talk about sex, talk about things like consent — what that means and looks like."

Fourth form president Shade Mazer '19 added, "I also feel that we should extend the breadth of the topics covered, in addition to the depth. Most of the people in my grade know of the Sophomore Seminar class just as this mandatory class that's mostly ineffective and useless. Although I do un-

derstand that learning about sex and drugs from early on is extremely important, it seems to me that graduating Choate without knowing basic life skills, such as knowing how to pay your taxes, is a little strange."

School-wide Lip Dub Challenge

Sometime during this fall term, most likely in lieu of a school or form meeting, students will gather to help create a school-wide Lip Dub, a type of music video where participants lip-sync to a song while performing a choreographed routine.

With the help of a cameraman, a Steadicam will follow a path that starts from Archbold and meanders through the Lanphier Center, the Science Center Bridge, the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC), and the Great Lawn. Students and faculty will gather along the path in various groups — sports teams, arts ensembles, clubs, and more — all while lip-syncing to "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten.

This idea was presented to the Council last year by Zhou, who watched a similar video made by students in Lakewood High School, NJ. She explained, "When I watched their video for the first time, it really just amazed me how well thought-out the video was. I'm really happy that we have the oppor-

tunity to make this video, and I think it's doubly impactful that this sort of uniting, school-spiriting event is happening at a time when exactly those things are needed the most." She added, "I genuinely believe that beyond our resources, programs, and everything else that Choate has to offer, it is our community that is the most valuable part of the education we receive here. And I think that showcasing this vibrant life and the amazing people who study here and live here is a very significant and unifying thing. And I think that being able to stand beside your friends, and creating something as fun and silly this and putting it out in the world — it's just a great spirit booster."

My goal is to try to maximize the time we spend on things that actually have effect on the student body at large.

Cecelia Zhou '17
Student Body President

Sixth form president Amir Idris '17 commented, "All the information we could give you about our school in a pamphlet, we can just tell you by showing actual student faces. Each student group and organization is going to be able to choose their own way of showing who they are and what they're all about. I

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NEW TORAH: A SIGNIFICANT SYMBOL



Photo courtesy of Ross Mortenson

The Torah procession began at the Sally Hart Lodge and ended at the Seymour St. John Chapel.

By **Siri Palreddy '20**
Reporter

Traditional fiddle tunes pierced the air last Sunday evening as people danced and laughed in a warm welcome to Choate's new Torah. The procession of faculty and students started at the Sally Hart Lodge before parading around campus with the Torah and settling down in the Seymour St. John Chapel to hear a small service, which included remarks from Headmaster Dr. Alex Curtis, Rabbi Barbara Paris, and various student readings.

"We have tried over the last 15 years to have the Chapel become more and more of an inclusive space for every religion to feel comfortable and welcome. So the Torah is going to go into

a custom-made wooden box in the Chapel," Mr. Jim Davidson, a Spiritual Life adviser.

A Torah is a text that is the cornerstone of the Jewish religious tradition. Mr. Davidson said, "A true Torah is a hand-copied scroll made of either hand-made paper or hand-pounded animal skin." He elaborated, "It is seen as the exact word of the law, hand copied and checked by three rabbis."

Rabbi Paris had heard that two synagogues in New Jersey had merged, and the resulting synagogue had extra Torahs for sale. Mr. Davidson said, "Torahs are pretty rare, and Torah scrolls can be very expensive, but we managed to bring all the pieces together. The seller was will-

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Play Spurs Criticism and Support

Leland Ben '17 and Anselm Kizza-Besigye '17 discuss last Friday's performance.
Opinions: Campus • P4

Discord in Views of Ensembles

The difference between chorus and a capella.
Opinions: Campus • P4



Summer Reading
Sherman Alexie's *Flight* met by mixed reviews.
Arts and Leisure • P7

Soccer Scores Big Against Kent
Ninety minutes of tight play broken by final goal.
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Read it then recycle it.

Visuals by Shutterstock, SLUT: The Play, and Sebastian Barquin.



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Ms. KOOMSON ESTABLISHES NEW VISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

By **Mehreen Pasha '18**
Staff Reporter



Photo by Andrew Garver/The Choate News
Ms. Koomson brings with her years of experience, from building a school in Ghana to assisting refugees learn English.

From Ghana to Wallingford, new Director of Community Service Ms. Melissa Koomson brings to Choate a strong background in education coupled with her goals for improving campus in the realm of community service.

She began her college career at Prescott College but later transferred to Chestnut Hill College in Philadelphia, which was closer to home. She majored in Spanish and studied education. Her arsenal of professional experience hasn't solely revolved around community service, but has branched out to include teaching Pre-K at Westtown School, a Quaker school just outside of Philadelphia. She taught Spanish to these students, while also coordinating the service program, which consisted of the daily chores required of students.

She added, "My education was at a Quaker school, and I taught at Quaker schools for fifteen years. That lifestyle, that philosophy, is really in tune with who I am. The values of Choate — the respect, the integrity, the community — really spoke to me."

Mrs. Koomson said, "I got really excited about being able to just focus on the community service piece here." She loves boarding school life and the opportunity to interact with girls in the dorm.

She brings with her several ideas to improve Choate's community service program. Ms. Koomson hopes to form a community service committee comprised of faculty and students who will help ensure community service opportunities are in line with what Choate defines as community service. This committee will help decide a community service project approval process.

"Going through a proposal-writing process is a really important skill that students need to learn," said Ms. Koomson. She said that an issue is the distinction between fundraising and charity work. "I just want to clarify what counts as community service and what the expectation is so that students can have a real impact on the community they're serving and vice versa. For example, this includes having face-to-face contact with those whom you are serving and really stretching yourself beyond your comfort zone," said Ms. Koomson.

From a very young age, service has been a recurrent theme in Mrs. Koomson's life. Her family sponsored Vietnamese refugees who stayed at her family home, a unique opportunity for cultural exposure. During fifth grade, Mrs. Koomson participated in a Mexican exchange program which culminated in two weeks in Mexico. She said, "That experience really opened my eyes to other parts of the world at only 11 years old." Mrs. Koomson spent several summers on the Mexico-United States border assisting Central American refugee families learn English. Her experiences embedded an intrinsic love and passion for community service that shaped her later career path.

She worked at Westtown School until the summer of 2015, when she and her husband moved to her husband's hometown in Ghana for a year. They revisited a school in Ghana that they built twelve years ago. She recalled "wanting a different pace of life," and moving back to the village in Ghana to help develop a chicken farm. Moreover, they returned with the intention of monitoring protein intake amongst the Ghanaian students who were typically in the 70th percentile for weight and height, and whose diet was primarily starch-based. They began raising chicken farms to get eggs and other protein products, producing an average of 250 eggs per week that were divided amongst students.

Mrs. Koomson and her husband also spearheaded three other initiatives while in Ghana. She was involved in the creation of a soccer academy that has grown to include over 350 members from the school she built and the surrounding village. She taught recent graduates of the school she built Batiking, the art of wax resist on cloth, to help them create their own school uniforms. Her initiative to disperse reusable feminine hygiene products helped reduce the two months of school Ghanaian girls miss due to the onset of menstruation and lack of proper sanitary products.

Mrs. Koomson's commitment to service and bright personality is sure to mix well with Choate's community. She said, "I am blown away by the kindness, not just of my colleagues, but of the students. Everybody has been so welcoming and friendly. It's been a really smooth transition."

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SPECIAL PROGRAM STUNS STUDENT BODY

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petuating misogyny through our language, actions and inactions."

The plays not only highlight the realities of slut and rape culture, but also address a variety of other issues, such as masculinity and societal perceptions of male and female sexuality. There were two performances of plays on Friday; in each session *Now That We're Men* performed first, following five teenage boys and their experiences with masculinity, sexual assault, homophobia, and more. The play was then followed by *SLUT*, which details the sexual assault of sixteen-year-old Joanna (Joey) Del Marco and the events that follow.

Members of the Choate community have reacted differently to the productions. Ms. Yannatos said, "The plays themselves are pretty jarring. They cut through the core and make you feel and make you think in ways that are just so critical and so important as a culture, as a community especially and how we care about each other and how we think about challenging topics and how we talk about them or don't talk about them."

English teacher Mr. Edward McCatty had a similar opinion. Addressing the plays' importance, he said, "Even though the topics are troubling, and the way they were presented was disturbing to many, the underlying ideas are important." These concepts include how boys talk about girls and how a group mentality affects the thinking of an individual. "I hope that these plays reminded students how important it is to be courageous when it's necessary and to not let themselves take those actions that could be harmful to others even when they might not think they are acting inappropriately. Even when people are caught up in the energy

of a group, I hope they are able to know their own thoughts and values and stand up for how they hope people are treated."

Cammi Chester '17, one of the students who facilitated the mandatory conversations after Friday's plays, also expressed her enthusiasm for the plays' content and message. Chester said that the plays were important for the community to watch because they provided a raw depiction of rape and hookup culture in teenagers' lives. "There was no sugarcoating or filtering what is said behind closed doors, away from adults, which furthered the connection to the audience, and it was easy to see parallels with Choate students." She also liked that each play was performed by either male teenagers or female teenagers only, because they showed how both boys and girls are involved in the rape culture of teenagers. According to Chester, the plays did a good job of showing how girls victimize other girls with regards to "he said-she said" arguments, and how peers and social media influence those arguments.

She continued, "I think people took the conversations very seriously and made it clear that they really want to see a change at Choate." She did note that some students did not think that the plays were worth the time they took out of their lives and that rape culture is not prevalent at Choate.

Although some members of the community praised the plays, others viewed them with more criticism. Jun Jang '17 commented "I found *Now That We're Men* heavily biased, and it could have been more comprehensive." He added that the girls' play conveyed the idea that in the case of a rape trial, "the image of a person, whatever it is, should be discarded, and the actions the girl had taken prior to the unfortunate rape incident are meaningless."

He said that though rape is never okay, *SLUT* downplayed the social status Joey had been building up as a member of the Slut Squad, a promiscuous school dance team, and the fact that the boys who assaulted her were drunk. Other students argued that being under the influence of alcohol did not justify violence or sexual assault.

Stella Fitzgerald, who plays Jane in *SLUT*, said, "When boys see this play, they don't want to associate themselves with the rapists in the play. It's important to understand rapists aren't just the guys in the alley who jump out at you, but a lot of women and men are raped by people who they know, like acquaintances or friends. The guys who rape the girl in this play are her best friends."

In addition, Fitzgerald commented on the effectiveness of the plays as opposed to a traditional speech or presentation. "I think having a visual is so much more helpful for students for understanding what rape culture is as opposed to having someone speak in health class."

Mr. Stanley reflected, "I think consent and rape culture is a national conversation. It's something that's being talked about at college, that's being talked about at peer schools. It's coming out of the shadows, and I think it's the responsible thing for Choate to do to engage students in conversation so that they understand why consent is important, understand the complexity of personal relationships. I think that's something the plays did well. The characters were very nuanced. It is possible for people to make bad decisions because they don't understand. It's better for the school to help people understand before they make bad decisions."

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New Daily Schedule

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Some of the outlined changes include fewer class blocks each day and different sports practice times. Students should anticipate two to three classes per day instead of the current five to six classes. Even though there are fewer blocks each week, the amount of homework allowed is likely to remain the same, and, as a result, students will have less homework to prepare each night. At the same time, as the number of classes decrease, there will be more opportunity for students to seek extra help from teachers.

The new daily schedule will also likely feature a 'sliding block' that allows students to have a lunch block. Mr. Dennehy said, "So for example, with E block, there will be a first half of E and a second half, so every student can be provided an opportunity to have lunch."

The new schedule will likely offer mixed benefits for academic departments. Repetition can be effective in learning a language, and longer class blocks means more time per block for that, but fewer blocks per week. Commenting on the switch to longer blocks, Spanish teacher Ms. Angela Weston said, "You don't have to review as much to continue a topic that you talked about the last time the class met. Sometimes, though, that can be beneficial in terms of language."

Other teachers seem to be less excited, and even hesitant, about the switch; for example, science teacher Mr. Lawrence Stowe remarked, "Science took a bit of a hit with this proposed new schedule." He cited a reduction in total teaching time and removal of the lab block as the main drawbacks. In addition, according to Mr. Stowe, the new schedule will negatively affect the preparation

process for standardized tests, especially the SAT Subject Tests or AP tests.

The proposed daily schedule will also affect sports and other extracurricular activities. Some coaches argue that the two hours dedicated to sports every day in the new schedule is not sufficient. Mr. Dennehy, who is also the school's Associate Athletic Director, acknowledged that different sports have different requirements. For example, crew, football, and tennis meet with different frequencies and for different lengths of times each week. There will be tweaks and adjustments to the schedule in the future, but as Mr. Dennehy noted, "There are going to be some sacrifices that some teachers, some coaches, and that we all have to make."

I think the new schedule will be a lot more convenient.

Nicole Wasomi '19

The proposed daily schedule provoked mixed reactions from students. Some support the resolution as a smart way of giving students proper eating time, and they can see themselves adjusting to the new schedule easily. Nicole Wasomi '19 commented, "I think that the new schedule will be a lot more convenient. For example, drawing from my own experience, I never have a lunch block on Thursday, and this new sliding blocks may actually solve the problem."

However, students are concerned about the loss of lab blocks in science classes. As Katrina Gonzalez '17 said, "Since I usually have lots of lab time, I hope that the new schedule would extend them instead of cutting them short."

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CHOATE WELCOMES TORAH

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into making a Torah available to our school at a very fair price."

Hadalee Goodman '17, co-President of Hillel, a Jewish student group, said, "Everything is handwritten in special paper and ink, and it took four months for rabbis to review every character. I would guess that it cost 20,000 to 30,000 dollars."

Many students from Hillel have been eagerly hoping for a Torah at Choate. As Mr. Davidson said, "Kids are thrilled that it's coming, and students have wanted to have it for a good bit. They're happy."

Mr. Davidson continued, "I think our Jewish students will just feel that much more supported with the Torah. Some of them are used to have access to Torahs at their home synagogues, but I think having a Torah here will allow them to read the law in a very traditional form. The Torah exists online, and you can get regular bound books of it, but having this is special."

Students really enjoyed the event welcoming the Torah. Hillel Co-President Max Nobel '17 commented, "I'm pretty sure we're the only prep school that has a Torah, and I think bringing it here really

symbolizes multiculturalism, the expansion of religious life on campus, and the increased access of all students about information about other religions."

All students were welcome to attend the events. Science teacher Deron Chang said, "I was amazed by the turnout because there were both Jews and non-Jews." Polina Ermoshchina '19 said, "The event wasn't mandatory, so the people who were there really wanted to be there. It was pretty sizable for a religious event. Holding the Torah was fun, and everyone was really accepting even if you weren't Jewish. It was really cool to see Dr. Curtis be the last one to carry it into the Chapel. What was really remarkable was that he said, 'Choate being around 126 years old, we don't get any firsts anymore, but this is a first.' So, I feel really honored to be apart of it."

Goodman said, "It was a fun community event, and it would have been more fun if they required students to attend. It was a very joyous occasion. I'm not religious at all but, it is nice to have this Torah."

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Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen



Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen

Many Jewish and non-Jewish students and faculty attended the Torah Installation, getting a chance to hold it and read from it.

Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen



Student Council Plans for the Year

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think this video will be a very genuine way of showing what the Choate community really looks like.”

However, not all Council members approved of this initiative. Sixth form representative Leland Ben '17 commented, “I think the Student Council probably has better things to do. Sure, it'd be fun, but then you have to look at priorities. The Lip Dub challenge is just a logistical nightmare that the Council really shouldn't be taking on.”

Fifth form representative Katherine Burgstahler '18, one of the main organizers of this event, described some of the logistical difficulties that the Council will have to resolve. “Once we modify the path of the video to fit the exact song length, we're going to need an estimate of how many groups are signing up to be in it. This is going to be a little hard to coordinate, just because there are so many Choate students who are involved in everything. I expect those people will just have to pick several groups that they can get to in the time of the Lip Dub, or just choose one to be in. But we'll have to send out a survey soon to find out exactly how the groups will be organized and ensure that everyone feels represented.”

Creation of Public Relations Subcommittee

Transparency, or lack thereof, was the buzzword of this past Student Body President and Vice President election. Fifth form representative Mpilo Norris '18 said, “A lot of people still feel like they don't know what we're doing. We made the Student Council website last year, but the biggest problem with that was accessibility — you couldn't get to our website right from the home screen, a technical problem we couldn't solve.”

Last spring, in response to concerns about the lack of communication between the Council and its constituents, Zhou created the Public Relations subcommittee, a group consisting of Ben, Norris, sixth form representative Jack Hutchinson '17, and fifth form president Noah Hermes De Boer '18.

One of the subcommittee's first initiatives was creating the official Student Council Facebook page, which is now accessible to everyone. Ben commented, “All of our announcement-type posts that we normally put on the website, like our most recent notes and meeting agendas, will now be posted on our

Facebook page. I think Facebook will be a great medium for this role since many people at Choate use Facebook on a regular basis, and non-Facebook users can access the page as well.”

Norris added, “However, we're not getting rid of the website — there's still a purpose to it. It's more of an archival unit. We'll put the most updated version of our Constitution, all of our notes, an FAQ page, and a profile of each of the Council members on the website. I think the combination of these two mediums will be a better way of reaching out to our constituents.”

Norris also noted the additional benefit of establishing the Facebook page. “It's interesting because when you have the Facebook page for many people to see, you now have mechanisms where you can show what you've done so far and what you want to do in the future. I think it'll push people to get more things done.”

Addressing Efficiency of the Council

Interestingly, when asked how the Student Council can improve, all of the council's members interviewed said: the efficiency of their meetings and discussions.

Student Council Vice President Namsai Sethpornpong '17 said, “Sometimes I notice that our discussions are dominated only by a certain few; we don't leave a lot of room for other people to talk. Some of us are unwilling to let go of ideas for the benefit of the conversation.”

Owusu added, “I think that we sometimes tend to get caught up in very, very small details that always hinder us from moving on. I think that we just need to get better at speaking concisely and learning how to compromise — figuring out what's best for everybody and what's most convenient and efficient.”

Ben pointed out his frustration about the pace of the meetings. “We need to clear out our agendas and just get more things happening, so that our discussions don't drone on about something that's insignificant.”

Zhou commented, “I think that historically, the Council has tended to get caught up in internal problems — insignificant, logistical things, which are a kind of a given for any bureaucratic organization. My goal is to try to maximize the time that we spend on things that actually have effect on the student body at large.”

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Sofia Pontes

Photo by Michael Li
[The Choate News]

Before classes began, when faculty were rushing to prepare for classes, Facilities was mowing the lawns, and students and their families were lugging all that gear into their dorm rooms, new English teacher Ms. Sofia Pontes was nowhere to be seen. A vacation already? Nope, Ms. Pontes was getting married.

Ms. Pontes is enjoying the positive energy on campus. When asked about her hopes for her time at Choate, she said, “I hope to find a balance between working on teaching and growing as a mentor and adviser and to fill both roles as best as I can.”

She eagerly anticipates getting involved in the student community. She is an adviser in Bernhard House. “I really like the energy of a large girls' dorm,” she remarks. “Duty is always interesting and exciting; you're having lots of conversations. I think that as an adviser, you have more of an impact.”

Ms. Pontes grew up in Tucson, Arizona. She earned her master's degree in comparative literature at Rutgers University, and was also a Teaching Assistant. Last year, she taught at Phillips Academy Andover, and this summer, she taught at Choate Summer Programs. She loves the boarding school environment because students are, “driven in multiple areas—not just in the classroom but in sports and extracurricular activities as well.” She notes, “It's exciting for me to be part of that energy and to see the kids in my classrooms in different arenas.”

—Angelina Heyler '18

HANDBOOK REVISIONS SHIFT RULES ON DRESS CODE AND AMNESTY

Among the revisions to the Student Handbook are an increased leniency in dress code and an amnesty policy encouraging the reporting of harassment on campus

By **Lauren Dorsey '18**
Reporter

The Student Handbook received a makeover this summer. The biggest changes include a new amnesty policy, a new dress code, a policy on consent, and a modification of the language that regulates campus sexual intimacy and technology use.

While the dress code was a total inversion of the policy from last year, the consent changes were brand new additions to the handbook.

The dress code modifications had the most immediate impact this year, as suddenly students were able to go to classes in sweatpants and blue jeans, which were expressly prohibited last year. The handbook does not outline specific clothes that are allowed, and it also does not differentiate between the male and female student dress code. It simply communicates that students' dress should “be consistent with the School's values” and “respects the atmosphere of learning.” The dress code changes resulted from a process that began last year, when a committee assembled to assess the previous dress code.

At that time, many on campus felt that the dress code was confusing, with arcane rules about shirts with and without tails having to be either tucked or untucked being disregarded. Throughout the winter, faculty seemed unconcerned

about rules regulating sweatshirts and other heavy athletic tops. Last spring, after a single, voluntary lunchtime discussion, the faculty approved, by electronic vote, the committee's recommendations.

To some the process felt too quick, without proper reflection, though Mr. Will Morris, Dean of Residential Life, said, “The purpose of a faculty vote is that the dress code is something that all members of the faculty need to take responsibility for. If there was a list that was produced by the Dean of Students office that said, ‘Here is your list; deal with it,’ there may have been an issue with ownership of it, and so at least now we know that, based on the vote, a majority of faculty is on board with this shift in the dress code.”

I think most people are happy with it, but it's still kind of restrictive.

Amanda Lin '18

The opinions of the students on campus regarding the new dress code are reasonably mixed, but mostly positive. “I think most people are happy with it, but it's still kind of restrictive. For instance, we can't show things like bra straps,” Amanda Lin '18 said.

Lauren Lamb '17 remarked, “The new dress code is nice, but one thing I still don't understand is why crop tops are still banned.”

“I was actually a fan of the old dress code. I thought everyone looked a bit more professional then, and I think that the new dress code takes a level of professionalism from our school,” Jack Bergantino '18 said.

I hope the amnesty policy is taken seriously, and that it creates a conversation on campus.

Lauren Lamb '17

Form deans and Mr. James Stanley, Dean of Students, have had to make various announcements clarifying the rules governing, say, hats in academic buildings and jeans with deliberately ripped knees, both of which are prohibited. The new dress code makes no distinction between weekday and weekend dress, and yet the rules on the weekend seem to be consistently disregarded. Students, for instance, have freely worn ripped jeans in the Dining Hall on Saturday nights. Many students continue to push the boundaries on when and where baseball caps can be worn, and it appears that the faculty remain hesitant to enforce this rule. The handbook also states that athletic gear is all but prohibited in the Dining Hall. That has certainly not been the practice in the opening month of the school year.

The amnesty policy is a new addition to the Student Handbook originating from students' desires to create a safer

space for students. The amnesty policy, in essence, states that students who are the victims of intimidation, sexual harassment, etc. at a time when other school rules were violated should feel free to report the incident without fear of punishment for rules broken, given that a faculty member wouldn't have otherwise known about the policy.

The Student Council worked closely with Mr. Morris, researching what other boarding schools, secondary schools, and schools of higher education were doing to prevent sexual assault from going unnoticed. The council then offered a proposal. Mr. Morris said, “Mr. Stanley and I decided that the policy was such a good idea that we wanted to actually broaden it to include not just sexual assault but also any sort of behavior that would fall under harassment.”

Students also view this new addition to the handbook positively. Lamb remarked, “I hope the amnesty policy is seriously considered, and that it creates a conversation on campus. I hope that if students feel like they need to use it, then they feel comfortable.”

“I think it's definitely a good policy. I think it's a good way to ensure that there is a safe environment in the school and ensure the safety of others,” Bergantino said.

Lauren Dorsey may be reached at ldorsey18@choate.edu.

Say Hello to Your New Faculty!



Selena Gell

Photo by Donessa Colley
[The Choate News]

As a new school year starts, new students and faculty alike are becoming accustomed to Choate's academic and social environment. Dr. Selena Gell is one of these new faculty members, teaching Biology Honors, and several other biology electives, along with coaching the Boys' Water Polo team.

After earning her B.S. from Brandeis University and her Ph.D. from Brown University, Dr. Gell became a postdoctoral researcher at Harvard Medical School, which placed her on track to eventually head her own lab. However, as she was completing her fellowship, she decided that she wanted to teach science instead.

Dr. Gell was attracted to Choate because of its communi-

ty. She said, “When I interviewed here, I was very impressed with the community, which valued diversity and welcomed lots of individuals from different backgrounds.” Furthermore, she was very impressed by the faculty that she met, as they “cared tremendously about both their own fields and about their students.”

Dr. Gell delights in outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, and camping, as well as cooking. She played rugby for 12 years in college and in various recreational teams after. Dr. Gell says she loves trying new things, especially experiencing new cultures.

After her first few weeks at Choate, Dr. Gell is most excited about her classes. She commented, “The students here are really exceptional, especially in how hard they work.” She is looking forward to challenging her students.

—Ariel Kim '20



Mustafa Abdul-Rahim

Photo courtesy of Ross Mertensen

Engineer, coach, and world-class athlete, Mr. Mustafa Abdul-Rahim has joined the Choate community this year to teach Geometry and Fundamentals of Calculus.

Mr. Abdul-Rahim hails from Boston, Massachusetts. He spent the last few years coaching track and field at other boarding schools, including Phillips Exeter and Milton Academy. He also coached at colleges as well, including Southern Connecticut State University. Mr. Rahim is a decorated decathlete and heptathlon, competing in national and international tournaments and participating in the Olympic trials twice.

While competing competing in athletics, Mr. Rahim studied at Dartmouth College, earning a A.B. in Engineering and an M.A. in engineering management.

He then decided to become a teacher. He said, “I just felt like I had done a lot before this, and I continued to feel like I needed more and wanted more. I felt like being around the students that were also striving to get more out of themselves was the right place. I had a feeling that teaching would be right.” Mr. Rahim described boarding school as “one of the most complete settings that you can really put yourself into. Being at Choate is a plus; it is one of the best places to be in the boarding school setting.”

He reflected, “I think a teacher is someone who facilitates learning, regardless of the subject, and I think would have been a teacher of some sort.”

—Aidan Marzeotti '20



Yuxin Xie

Photo by Jeanne Malle
[The Choate News]

New Chemistry teacher and Boys' Crew coach Ms. Yuxin Xie has wanted to teach since elementary school.

Ms. Xie was born in China and spent her childhood traveling, because her dad had numerous jobs on the East Coast. She has lived in New Jersey, Boston, and Cambridge, where she attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and majored in Chemistry. She then received her a Masters degree in Organic Chemistry from The University of Chicago.

She remarked, “I enjoyed doing research, and I spent most of my life wanting to be a professor. However, I found out that being

a professor isn't doing research—it's writing grants and going to conferences, which I didn't enjoy.”

Because she enjoyed being a teaching assistant in college, she decided to become a private tutor, which later encouraged her to become a teacher.

Choate particularly attracted her with its prestigious academics and unique opportunities provided to students. Additionally, she appreciated how Choate encourages a “balance of academics and extracurricular activities” because when she was in high school, she experienced an academically competitive environment in which the pursuit of non-academic interests was not encouraged.

Ms. Xie hopes to encourage students to pursue their own interests. She concluded, “Everyone here is super nice and positive.” In her free time, she likes to collect a variety of office stationery and dabble in calligraphy.

—Eliana Kim '20



Ashley Bairos

Photo courtesy of Choate Rosemary Hall

Former professional hockey player, new science teacher and Choate alum Ms. Ashley Bairos '06 has moved to Wallingford to teach science. Originally from Sherman Oaks, California, Ms. Bairos teaches Physics and Marine Sciences and coaches JV Girls' Volleyball and Varsity Girls' Hockey this year.

Ms. Bairos previously worked at Thayer Academy, in Braintree, Massachusetts for two years. She also worked at the National Sports Academy in Lake Placid, NY. She also has worked as a teacher in the Choate Summer program for the past eight years. Ms. Bairos

said, “I knew that I wanted to be back at a boarding school as a teacher because I like hanging out on dorm duty and having that interaction with students, and I wanted to be teaching high level academics at a really good place.” Ms. Bairos majored in environmental science and architecture at Middlebury College and earned her MS in Environmental Science at Green Mountain College.

After college, Ms. Bairos moved to Sweden to play hockey. “I took some time off because I never got to travel when I was a student at Choate or at Middlebury because of hockey,” Ms. Bairos explained. “I really enjoy facilitating whatever kids are interested in and supporting them on the field, in their classes, at an arts performance. I find that truly rewarding,” she added. Ms. Bairos can be found in Memorial house with her dog, Scout.

—Kate Spencer '20

THE CHOATE NEWS



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EDITORIAL

Authenticity of the Dress Code: Questioning the Crop Top Ban

On July 20, Mr. James Stanley, Dean of Students, sent an all-school email informing members of the community that the faculty had decided to alter the dress code for the 2016-2017 school year. The new dress code asks little more than for students to dress in a manner they deem appropriate and respectable.

Choosing what we wear and when to wear it is a means of self-expression and self-exploration that can reflect our culture, our personality, our mood, and our comfortability. This new and wide latitude of diversity and flexibility is well aligned with the School's increased focus on fostering an inclusive, supportive community.

We applaud the removal of standards biased by a gender binary and Western hegemony. We applaud the increased emphasis on conversation — in place of the previous bald criticism, — when a faculty member disagrees with a student's choice of dress.

However, despite this progress, the administration appears hesitant to fully accept its new dress code standard. For instance, crop tops were recently prohibited—judged inappropriate and disrespectful, by the new code's logic. We disagree with this decision.

The argument stands that crop tops are not suitable for the workplace, and, rightfully, in many cases, this is true. Crop tops are generally considered informal wear — but so are T-shirts, sweatpants, and jeans. And even so, there are workplaces where certain kinds of informal wear are not just permitted but expected: Silicon Valley, for example.

We agree that some crop tops are not acceptable for an academic setting, and even conservative crop tops are not appropriate at all times. However, we hold that — like t-shirts, sweatpants, jeans, and truly any clothing item — they should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

When a clothing item like crop tops is banned outright, the rule is clearly no longer meant to address the clothes, but instead the body part they cover or, more to the point, reveal. The crop top ban reads, in translation, “no exposed midriffs.” The administration has failed to provide sufficient justification: what about a person's midriff is inherently unbecoming for an academic setting? What makes it less appropriate than, for example, one's shoulders, knees, or back?

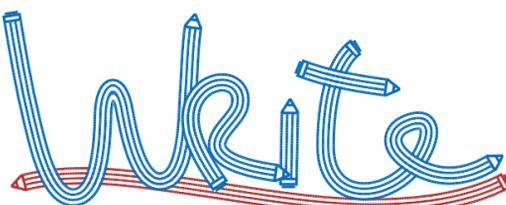
Perhaps, as some students fear, this ban is the first step of many in increasingly restricting students' dress, particularly for those female or female-presenting students, in the name of enforcing modesty.

This ban does not promote a “focused learning environment,” or a “safe, inclusive community,” and especially not “constructive and positive conversation” — all phrases from the new dress code. Instead, it sexualizes yet another part of the body.

We recognize the increased student responsibility not to abuse the now blurred lines between what is acceptable attire and what is not. However, we ask for the administration's trust in students to be aware and sensitive of the nuances of the dress code, and to follow it properly.

Banning specific items of clothing is a slippery slope. Let's remain atop the mountain.

This opinion represents the views of the 110th editorial board of The Choate News.



for The Choate News

Mondays at 6:45p.m. in the Lanphier i.d. Lab

PLAYS OPEN DIALOGUE ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

By **Anselm Kizza-Besigye '17**
Opinions Writer

As I've spent my time at Choate, I, like so many, have danced the silent dance of perpetuating sexual assault. I begin the dance by jamming thick, heavy earplugs into my ears. This layer of padding silences the deafening noise of sexual assault that pervade my surroundings. “I'm a feminist,” I mumble, sticking the plugs deeper into my ears. “I would never propagate rape culture,” I assure myself, as the sounds of patriarchy grow faint, succumbing to my devices. Contented, I skip along in my ignorance, unaware that avoiding the music doesn't undo the dance.

In reality, as I walk about, the rhythms of sexual assault — songs taught to me by sexism since birth — course through me, forcing me to dance despite my best efforts. Blind to this truth, I've danced and danced, self-righteous and self-deceived. However, this cycle of unawareness has been punctuated by brief and shocking moments of clarity, the most recent of which took place last Friday.

Halfway through *Now That We're Men*, Nick, played by Fred Heschinger, hunched over the PMAC stage, broke the fourth wall, and shook me

loose of my obliviousness. His boyish crush on Rebecca and his upbeat personality disarmed me, and I began to empathize with and relate to Fred. He described himself as a docile guy and as a feminist, the same buzzwords I used to justify ignoring culture of sexual assault. I grew comfortable and let his words seep through my armored ears until I developed an amused, even fraternal impression of Fred. This was the impression I held at the end of the show, as the house lights came on and Fred admitted to having raped Rebecca.

The plays' brilliance lies in their accurate and reliable depiction of a toxic subculture.

I wished I could have been anywhere else. I felt exposed and vulnerable; I retreated from the edge of my seat in cowardice. The ending left me coverless, forced to evaluate my almost immediate identification with a rapist. My carefully guarded ears were left bare, and in all their bareness, I could understand the awe-inspiring power

of the plays *SLUT: The Play* and *Now That We're Men*.

I am still struck by how strongly I identified with certain characters and plot points; undoubtedly, the plays' brilliance lies in their uncommonly accurate and relatable depiction of a toxic subculture. In thinking of how ubiquitous these sexual experiences in the play are, I reflect on the first SAC dance of freshman year.

Coming from a conservative and sheltered background, I had no experience or familiarity with sexual intimacy or with any system of impersonal, casual hookups. I observed that night that many of the same dangerous social dynamics with which characters in *SLUT* and *Now That We're Men* grapple. In particular, I witnessed the infectious hypermasculinity that drives both male students and characters in the plays to view sex as a conquest. As my dorm mates and I reclined in exhaustion after the SAC dance, we and our prefects indulged in who-danced-with-whom stories and kept an unspoken tally of “successes” from the night. Those who recounted exaggerated (or even falsified) stories of brave interactions with girls were met with praise and admiration. Conversations like these not only perpetuate the notion that men should pursue their own pleasure before

anyone else's but also mirror the destructive interactions in *Now That We're Men*. While I can only speak to my privileged experience as a man in a culture of sexual assault, many women with whom I've spoken have affirmed that their experiences also mirror those of the characters in *SLUT*.

Reconsidering our position within this culture will have a positive effect on our community. As more Choate students view their actions through the slightly dramatized lenses of *SLUT* and *Now That We're Men*, the number of unwitting propagators of dangerous practices will decrease. The proof for this assertion was the breathless, taut energy of the PMAC auditorium on Friday; the mouths of shocked audience members left ajar; the furrowed brows reevaluating their inextricable role in maintaining coercive or unhealthy practices. Surely, the campus air felt different on my walk back from the arts center Friday night, and this change will manifest itself in the number of people who fight their tendency to begin the comfortable and silent dance of perpetuating a culture of sexual assault.

Anselm Kizza-Besigye is a sixth former from Oxford, England. He may be reached at abesigye17@choate.edu

CHOATE HAS A LIBERAL REVOLUTION AND NOT EVERYONE IS ON BOARD

By **Leland Ben '17**
Opinions Writer

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to Choate's version of the First Church of Progressivism and its very secular and sexual sacraments.

Over the past year, Americans have been witness to a vast amount of social change, from the legalization of gay marriage to the opposition of North Carolina's “bathroom bill” to the battle against “hate speech” on university campuses. Choate has likewise embraced an agenda of academic leftism, dedicating special programs last year to advancing liberalism, propagating one-sided coverage of racial relations by bringing in advocates to deliver progressive platitudes on “white privilege” and Black Lives Matter.

Last week, I witnessed two performances that rank among the most appalling things I have ever seen: *SLUT: The Play* and *Now That We're Men: A New Play*. Both plays reduced today's teenagers and their “culture”

into unrealistic stereotypes that many Choate students would struggle to fit into.

It was a slap in the face to the students at Choate who dedicate their time here to advancing their education; that is, those who engage in learning that involves exploring things outside their own identities, not having and thinking about sex every five minutes.

I understand that the plays were meant to spark discussion in a variety of directions, but here are several aspects of them that I find particularly irksome. The School has been parading the issue of “consent” since students arrived on campus a month ago. Supposedly, these performances would increase awareness about this important issue. But this theme was glossed over, and during the post-show Q&A, the director Katie Capiello herself explained that the message is to create some sort of “sexual revolution,” where sex is deemed a beneficial expression of freedom.

I disagree with the notion that such an idea will benefit the school community. We can look to the current climate on college campuses, where sexual assault is an epidemic. Colleges have become more sexualized than ever, and the result is terrifying. Encouraging self-restraint is deemed repressive, and schools have themselves off from the criminal-justice system and administrators ignore due process. These administrators have created judicial legal systems that often allow actual rapists to avoid legal punishment, the massive scandal at UVA being a notable example, among others.

Perhaps even more mind-numbing than sending mixed messages about a sexual free-for-all was the playwright's suggestion that the current legal system is broken because rape cases aren't afforded some type of judicial preference. In an appeal to ignorance, the writer of the play stated that rape cases aren't brought to trial because prosecutors feel that if they lose

it will hurt their chances for promotion. But in truth most rape cases are extraordinarily difficult to prosecute and seldom reported. It is often very difficult for the prosecution to meet their burden of proof with only two witnesses: the victim and the defendant. This is an unfortunate and tough reality.

Choate seems to favor these types of special programs — despite the fact that some students find their messages totally off the mark — which speaks to the larger issue of campus progressivism being constantly shoved down our throats. This liberalism has almost turned into a quasi-religion. What Choate is saying is that extraverbed liberal students are always in the right, everyone else is always in the wrong, and if one doesn't step to the beat of monolithic, progressive thinking, one has no place in this community.

Leland Ben is a sixth former from Albany, NY. He may be reached at lben17@choate.edu

THE TALE OF TWO ENSEMBLES

Unpacking Choate's embrace of a cappella and its indifference to choir

By **Angie Zhao '19**
Opinions Writer

“I got into Lilith!” “Kaps sent me an email! I'm in!” Only God knows how many times I have heard these exclamations on my way to class, the students in question eager to spread the good news to their friends. Pictures on social media reveal the lucky singers who have earned this new elite status as a member of an a cappella group. By contrast, almost no one has heard of the seven new students that passed auditions for Choate's chamber chorus, mostly because they do not win social points for showing off this particular achievement.

As auditions and call-backs for Choate's five a cappella groups were held last week, countless conversations cropped up around the central topic “a cappella.” Dialogues teemed with esteem for these singing groups, praising the energy of their members during performances or the exciting arrangements of their songs. The kids who love to sing were beside themselves with desire to make it into a group.

This “ca-crazy” phenomenon is not foreign to those of us who are returning to campus for our second, third, or fourth years. In the meantime, other vocal ensembles on campus — namely, festival and chamber chorus — are rarely mentioned at all among students.

Apart from the fact that chorus has much more admin-



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istrative backing while a cappella groups are predominantly student-led, the two have no fundamental differences regarding their participants' musical skill sets. In fact, all five of the presidents of the Choral and Vocal Program are or have been members in an a cappella group. However, it is fairly obvious that the a cappella groups receive much more credit for their work than do choral groups, at least among the student population. Festival chorus has struggled this year with recruitment, while a cappella groups have been overwhelmed with prospective singers, as usual. The question is: why?

I still remember that during my freshman year, whenever the Maiyeros or the Whimawehs or any other group came to Nichols to perform, the whole dorm of 40-plus girls would pack themselves onto the common room floor, looking up at the singers with eyes

sparkling with adoration. We could not believe that a cappella was associated with the so-called singing “nerds” not long ago. What we knew was that at least for the time being, this form of musical expression was a trendy obsession.

The media has, undeniably, contributed to this boost in popularity. In the past few years, Hollywood has produced a number of a cappella-themed movies and television shows. These shows have captivated their audiences with their gifted casts and beautiful harmonies — especially well-known films like *Pitch Perfect*, its sequel, and the TV show *Glee*. They lifted a cappella out of the shadow of obscurity into the center of the entertainment world. All of a sudden, non-accompanied singing was no longer dorky; it became the new synonym of “cool” and “in.”

Another factor of Chamber Chorus's lack of appeal is that

its repertoire is mostly from the classical tradition. While I am not saying that this should necessarily be changed, these types of musical performances simply do not attract as many Choate students as performances of pop music do. Since our community is mostly comprised of teenagers between the ages of 13 and 19, the genre of music that students are familiar with is unlikely to be classical. If we were to squeeze some time out of our tightly packed schedules, it would be for listening to an a cappella group sing familiar songs rather than for sitting in the Chapel trying to comprehend what foreign language the choir is singing.

At an academically rigorous school like Choate, it is difficult to stay high-spirited with the workload and stress that comes along. It is much easier to be entertained by an a cappella group with a great soloist rather than by a piece of renaissance music sung by the Chamber Chorus, which requires extensive knowledge of music theory to appreciate.

Ultimately, one must acknowledge that the culture at Choate considers a cappella “yay” and choir “nay.” It is just the result of the portrayal of a cappella in the media and the soaring popularity of pop music over classical music among the youth of our day.

Angie Zhao is a fourth former from Beijing, China. She may be reached at azhao18@choate.edu

Clinton and Trump Face Double Standards

By **Liza Mackeen-Shapiro '18**
Opinions Writer

Donald Trump is a walking scandal. Not a day goes by without him spouting some blatant falsehood or offensive comment, and he has no political experience to compensate for it. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton is a dedicated politician. She has devoted her life to hard work and public service, and is perhaps one of the most qualified presidential candidates in American history. Despite this, Clinton often ends up demonized by the general public. The media turns her mild missteps into major scandals, and she is labeled untrustworthy and unprofessional. While she is unfairly attacked, Trump is permitted to get away with saying and doing outlandish things. This ridiculous double standard needs to end, and the American people must hold Donald Trump fully accountable for his actions.

One of the most popular accusations against Hillary Clinton is that she is a “liar.” A recent Quinnipiac poll found that 55% of likely voters consider her “not honest enough” to be president, and a February Gallup poll found the phrases most commonly associated with her to be “dishonest/liar/don’t trust her/poor character.” Although it is true that Clinton has not always told the truth, she is much more honest than any of these polls would imply. The fact-checking website Politifact found 50% of her statements to be either “True” or “Mostly True”, and only 13% to be “False” or “Pants on Fire.” In contrast, Politifact found a mere 15% of Donald Trump’s statements to be either “True” or “Mostly True,” and a whopping 53% to be “False” or “Pants on Fire.” As these horrendous ratings indicate, Donald Trump lies constantly.



Sec. Hillary Clinton and Mr. Donald Trump square off at Hofstra University for the first general election debate in the 2016 presidential race. Photo courtesy of Getty Images

He has claimed that he never supported the Iraq War (he did), that Ted Cruz’s father was connected to the Kennedy assassination (he was not), and that Hillary Clinton started the birther movement (she did not) — and the list doesn’t stop there. This begs the question: why is Clinton considered the dishonest candidate? Clearly, the general public holds her and Trump to very different standards. When Clinton tells one of her occasional lies, the media relentlessly vilifies her. When Trump tells one of his near-daily lies, the media turns the other way. Of course, this is not to say Clinton should not be held accountable when she lies — all politicians should! How-

ever, it needs to be recognized that Trump lies far more than Clinton, and the general public should treat them accordingly. In addition to being held to a higher standard about honesty, Clinton is held to a much higher standard about her language on the campaign trail. At a fundraiser on September 9, Clinton remarked to the audience that half of Trump supporters belong in a “basket of deplorables” on account of their racist and sexist behaviors. This statement immediately received swift backlash from the media, and Clinton was forced to rescind her remarks. Meanwhile, Trump has called Mexicans “rapists,” insulted the immigrant family

of a fallen war hero, and said that a judge could not preside over his court case because he is “Mexican” (despite him being born in Indiana). Unlike Clinton, Trump has never been made to apologize. He is not held accountable for his vulgar actions, and as a society we must hold him to the same standard that we hold Hillary Clinton. This system is unfair, and the media should not perpetuate it. This double standard is absolutely absurd. Instead of attacking Clinton for mild gaffes, the media needs to hold Trump accountable for each and every one of his repugnant remarks. With only two months left in the election cycle, it is hard

to imagine media coverage and general perception of Trump and Clinton drastically changing. Trump’s lies and offensive remarks will likely continue to go unchallenged, and Clinton’s gaffes will likely continue to be sensationalized. The toxic double standard that surrounds the two will accompany voters to the polls and could possibly decide the election. The media should be ashamed for their part in creating this double standard and for normalizing the horrific behavior of the racist, dishonest Trump.

Liza Mackeen-Shapiro is a fifth former from New Haven, CT. She may be reached at lmackeen Shapiro18@choate.edu

KNEELING DOWN TO TAKE A STAND

By **Donessa Colley '18**
Opinions Writer

From as early as elementary school, American children are taught to stand for the national anthem. Placing a hand over one’s heart and bowing one’s head have long been synonymous with showing respect for the American flag and demonstrating that one agrees with what it and the United States stand for. Therefore, when San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick decided that he did not agree with some of the practices the American flag has come to symbolize, namely police brutality and prejudice against black people in America, he also decided that he would no longer stand for the national anthem. Kaepernick’s seemingly simple and personal decision soon resulted in everything from outrage to praise as Americans everywhere weighed in on his actions. In reality, Kaepernick was simply

using his power and influence to call attention to an issue that lawmakers have continued to ignore: police brutality and racial discrimination against minorities.

Racial prejudice in American law enforcement desperately needs to be addressed.

Kaepernick’s protests come on the heels of a huge increase in demonstrations by the Black Lives Matter Movement and other groups fighting police brutality against African-Americans. Multiple unjust killings this summer, such as that of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, further show that the issue of racial prejudice in American law-enforcement desperately needs to be addressed.

Though millions of people have demonstrated their frustration and anger with the law-enforcement system, the government has yet to take adequate action to solve this problem. In 2015 alone, almost 1,200 people were killed by the police, and about half of them were minorities, according to open-sourced reporting project “Killed by Police.” However, too few police have been convicted of murder or misconduct as the result of any of those killings. These statistics once again confirm that racism and discrimination are rampant among police officers and other law-enforcement officials. By refusing to stand for the national anthem and calling for change, Kaepernick shined a light on an issue that legislators continue to ignore.

Many solutions have been proposed to put an end to the unjust police murders of minorities. Many have called for a law requiring police to wear body-cameras at all times, so that in the event of a fatal situation,

video evidence would be available to be examined. This has been implemented in some districts across the nation and has proved helpful in cases like the murder of Alton Sterling, where body-camera footage enabled lawyers to review the actions of the police officer in question and either corroborate or disprove his story. Implementing a federal law that mandates the wearing of body cameras would have allowed clarity in many other questionable deaths — such as that of Michael Brown — and may have resulted in justice in cases where police officers were not convicted because of unreliable evidence. Despite body cameras having been proven effective in districts where they were implemented, the federal government still has not taken any legislative action. It is necessary for the federal government to take action to prevent further killings.

Ultimately, Kaepernick has succeeded in his goal of calling

attention to the unjust police brutality in the United States. However, making headlines and simply talking can only do so much. It is now up to the national government to make changes and implement legislation that will save hundreds of lives each year while deconstructing the growing racial divide in the United States. If other celebrities and the general population join in these protests and help call attention to the issue of racial prejudice in the law-enforcement system, they can help pressure the government and prevent more unnecessary killings. It is our duty as American citizens to demand change when our government refuses to act, and until legislators make the necessary changes, protests like Colin Kaepernick’s will remain vital in this struggle.

Donessa Colley is a fifth former from Bloomfield, CT. She may be reached at dcolley18@choate.edu

Duterte: A War Criminal in the War on Crime

By **Imad Rizvi '18**
Opinions Writer

While the recent American election cycle has been filled with surprising comments from candidates of both parties, the rhetoric has paled in comparison to outrageous statements and policies of Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte since he won the election in June 2016. Not only has the president insulted leaders from around the world, but he has also advocated for killings of those involved in drug-related crimes. His complete disregard for the law has led to human rights violations across the country that cannot continue to go unpunished — it is necessary that negotiations with his government begin in the hopes of changing the style of his regime.

In his short time in office so far, Duterte has already managed to damage Filipino relations with many nations around the world. Recently, President Barack Obama cancelled a meeting with the Fili-

pino leader after Duterte called Obama a derogatory term. He has called the U.N. “stupid” and declared that the U.N. Secretary General is a “devil.” Despite the Philippines being a predominantly Catholic nation, he even referred to the Pope in a disparaging manner because of an increase in traffic during the Pope’s visit.

Although his remarks may seem outlandish, just a few months ago, President Duterte harbored high approval ratings of over 90%. This may have been the result of a citizenry tired of the corruption and lack of change in a failing political system. Many major leaders of the nation in the past have been surrounded by controversy. Some examples of the Philippines being plagued by a past of corrupt politicians include former Presidents Arroyo, Marcos, and Estrada who were accused of corruption and embezzlement of funds; however, they were later pardoned. Another former leader representing the disrepair of the system is former Congressman Romeo Jalosjos, who was

given two life sentences for raping an 11 year old child, yet still got re-elected from behind bars and was pardoned less than 15 years into his sentence. Duterte’s idea of change may have resonated with many Filipinos and this may explain how such an extreme, unpredictable candidate would be able to become president.

Duterte’s unpredictability makes him a dangerous bet to continue to lead a country as large as the Philippines.

However, some of the ideas that Duterte has stood behind represent complete breaches of law and crimes against his people that are considered inhumane to many human rights organizations; these values that Duterte represents cannot be tolerated. Duterte has completely disregarded any rule of law that the country may

have had by offering to pardon members of the police and military for killing those that he deemed drug criminals. His literal war on drugs has led to 3,400 killings and over 18,000 arrests already, only months into his term. He threatened to shut down legislative branches that may get in the way of his goals, and has warned the media against disrespecting his regime. He even called for the civilian-led execution of criminals and drug dealers throughout the Philippines. Duterte has wielded his power to create a position above the law, and international action should be taken in the form of advanced negotiations or even the threat of sanctions if he continues to behave in this manner with no respect for the voices or rights of his citizens.

Human rights violations have also appeared in his suppression of critics. Senator Leila de Lima — who was the head of the Senate Justice and Human Rights Committee — was removed from office because of her criticism and the risk that she might expose his regime

on a larger scale. She has even stated that she fears for her life as a critic of Duterte’s government. Duterte should not be able to avoid punishment for the crimes he has committed or incited through his hateful and violent rhetoric. No head of state should be able to act in such a destructive, criminal, and harmful way.

Duterte’s unpredictability makes him a dangerous bet to continue to lead a country as large as the Philippines for the next six years. His violation of basic human rights, such as free speech and the right to live freely without fear of extrajudicial behavior, are starting to have major negative impacts on the Philippines and foreigners there. For the sake of protecting citizens at risk, the U.N. or another multi-national force should lead negotiations with President Duterte in the hopes of changing the ideals represented and perpetuated by his harmful regime.

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ELECTION



Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
My lawyers want to sue the failing @nytimes so badly for irresponsible intent. I said no (for now), but they are watching. Really disgusting

On Saturday, September 24, the editorial board of *The New York Times* announced its endorsement of Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton, calling her the most ideal person in this election to confront the “bigoted, tribalist movements and their leaders on the march” across the world. In contrast, the editorial board named Republican nominee Donald Trump as the “worst nominee put forward by a major party in modern American history.”

Donald J. Trump @realDonaldTrump
Such a great honor. Final debate polls are in - and the MOVEMENT wins! #AmericaFirst #MAGA #ImWithYou



Hillary Clinton @HillaryClinton
Not one living president has said they believe Donald Trump has what it takes to be Commander-in-Chief.

Among the five living U.S. presidents — three Democrats and two Republicans — none of them support Donald Trump. At the 2016 Democratic National Convention, President Barack Obama even proclaimed, “There has never been a man or a woman — not me, not Bill, nobody — more qualified than Hillary Clinton to serve as President of the United States of America.”

Hillary Clinton @HillaryClinton
Donald Trump lied to the American people at least 58 times during the first presidential debate. (We counted.)

Hillary Clinton @HillaryClinton
“I love this country. I’m proud of this country. I want to be a leader who brings people together.” — Hillary #LoveTrumpsHate

Chuck Woolery @chuckwoolery
It makes absolutely no difference what the elite press says about the #Debate. The American people will decide, as they always do.

Rachel Tilford @rtilfordpotato
I want Obama back #Debates

Thirty nine days remain before election day on November 8. With three more debates and countless campaign appearances to come, pundits, journalists, and citizens alike do not know what to expect from either candidate.

The Dress Code Gets Made Over

By **Jessica Shi '17**
Features Editor

Each new school year inevitably brings changes. This time, the Choate community was met with progress on the construction of the new St. John Hall, a host of new students and faculty, and — to the cheers of some and the disappointment of others — a new dress code. In order to better understand how it came to be, I set out to uncover how exactly this dress code was reworked.

In the early spring of 2015, girls in each grade were asked to stay behind separately after their respective form meetings. The deans told the girls that they needed to be mindful of how they dressed, especially in terms of shorter or more revealing clothing. Esul Burton '16, who was a junior at the time, remembered feeling outraged. She said, "The dress code is a collective responsibility of the student body to uphold, and there should not be any assumptions that it is only women at Choate who violate it."

Burton realized that the problems extended beyond the typical student complaints of wanting to wear sweatpants: the structure, language, and enforcement of the dress code varied unfairly based on students' perceived genders. And so, Burton began drafting a petition. In general, she felt that "the values that were in the Statement on Character and Statement on Expectation were not necessarily related to the values of the dress code." Burton brought her draft to the co-presidents of Students Advocating Gender Equality (SAGE) and then to the rest of SAGE, some dorms, and trusted faculty for further revision.

The Student Council also proposed changes to the dress code at around the same time. These changes were at a much smaller scale, mostly involving additions to the existing "do and don't" list. However, in the administration's view, it did take priority over SAGE's petition, and so SAGE's petition was never formally submitted or discussed. According to Burton, although the Student Council proposal was a more influential factor in the decision to form the Dress Code Committee,



Illustration by McKynzie Romer/The Choate News

SAGE's petition more closely resembled the final product — the dress code we have today.

At the beginning of the following school year, in the fall of 2015, Dean of Students Mr. James Stanley began accepting faculty volunteers and student applications to establish the Dress Code Committee. The Committee ultimately had five faculty representatives: Mr. Jesse Minneman, who was the chair, Ms. Ellen Devine, Mr. Sam Doak, Ms. Catherine Velez, and Ms. Judi Williams. It also had five student representatives: Burton, who was the SAGE representative, Shamari Harrington '18, Dylan Stafford '16, Mark Su '18, and Cecilia Zhou '17, who was the Student Council representative.

Many of the early meetings consisted of general, philosophical dialogue about the purpose and impact of dress codes. As Mr. Doak recalled, they had "free form conversations meant to orient us towards some sort of proposal."

One such conversation was about clothing materials. Su's parents manufacture clothes, so he has extensive knowledge about the subject. He explained to the Committee that under the old standard for boys' dress, the clothes the students had to purchase were not only more expensive but also less durable. Why? Collared shirts, khakis, and other similar clothing items are harder to make, and so they tend to be made with lower quality materials

that do not hold up well against sweat or multiple washings.

The Committee concluded that the notion of "dress for success" is antiquated. Blue jeans, for example, are common — and in fact, expected — in Silicon Valley. The correlation between external appearances and achievements has grown weak.

Furthermore, the Committee determined that the old dress code was, in the words of Mr. Minneman, "a history of piecemeal changes." As fashions shifted and students tried out new clothing items, the faculty had to make decisions on whether to allow it or not. And thus, the dress code was largely a series of reactions to changing trends rather than a cohesive document.

How, then, could that problem be addressed? The advice of Ms. Rosetta Lee, the 2015 Diversity Day keynote speaker, provided a source of inspiration. While visiting Choate, Ms. Lee spoke to the faculty about school climate. She mentioned that for her students, who were in middle school, she had a "statement of intent," which focused on aligning the standards of dress to the values of the school.

During the fall committee meetings, Ms. Williams brought up this statement and Ms. Lee's ideas. She reasoned, "If middle schoolers can grasp what it means to be mindful of the messages that are often sent or received by certain clothing choices, it makes sense that our older students can

grasp those concepts as well." Zhou described the statement as "the turning point of our work," and it has since been shaped into the "General Philosophy" section of the new dress code.

From this point forward, the Committee knew that it would likely be creating a new dress code, not just revising the old one. Mr. Minneman explained, "Having general positive statements, de-gendering, and providing students with greater agency but also encouraging faculty to have conversations with students — those were all things we all agreed on. Once we realized that, we realized that we would probably be re-writing everything from scratch."

Much of the subsequent debate was on the exact language that would be used. This back-and-forth continued through winter term and into the spring term of 2016. A semi-finalized draft was brought to the deans and to a voluntary faculty meeting for feedback and revision. Then, it was brought to a vote before the full faculty — a majority were in favor of the new dress code.

The dress code is a collective responsibility of the student body to uphold.

Esul Burton '16

Some faculty are in disagreement with the decision, however. Mr. John Ford, for example, does not like the increased casualness the new dress code allows. "We now can have kids going to class wearing T-shirts, jeans, or sweatpants. As far as I'm concerned, that's a loss," he said. Mr. Ford also wishes the full faculty had an opportunity to discuss the issue as a group, instead of only the voluntary meeting.

As for how satisfied the Committee is with the result, Mr. Minneman concluded, "I don't think anyone claims the dress code is perfect, but we're satisfied that, in the end, it captures the values of the school and reflects the spirit of the community."

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TWO STRANGERS, TEN MINUTES, ONE QUESTION

Varshini Kumar '17, a four-year senior from League City, TX, and Edward Rakphong-phairoj '17, a three-year senior from Bangkok, Thailand, had never spoken before when they sat down together in a Lanphier Center study room a few weeks ago. They were given one issue to discuss. Here is an abridged transcript of their conversation.

Does success depend more on hard work or luck?

ER: Hard work is a fallacy. A human's success is predetermined.

VK: Uh...

ER: But wait, how do you define talent?

VK: Talent is an inherent ability that is natural to one to do anything.

ER: Okay. Do you prefer to have talent and be able to do things just by breezing through? Is that more efficient, is that better, in your opinion, than having to work really hard for it?

VK: Talent, yes, is important — maybe even required for things — but if you end up approaching a certain thing very easily, eventually you're not going to learn how to work hard. You're not going to learn how to put in 50 hours to do something.

And so in other areas of your life, you'll be lacking.

ER: So basically being able to work hard is better overall, but talent is more important if you're just doing this one special thing.

VK: Mhm. I mean, at a certain point, Picasso probably really had a talent to do art. And I think that no matter how hard someone else worked, they were probably

never going to reach Picasso's level.

But then you get into the question of, well, how is success defined? Are you truly successful as a painter, even if it's the only thing you're good at? I don't know.

ER: Let me spice the question up a bit. Does success also rely on luck?

For example, you may have heard of "year bias" or "birthday bias." If you look through history, basically all the richest tech guys in the world right now are all born between 1950 and 1960.

When was Bill Gates born? 1955. Steve Jobs? '55. My dad was born in '56, and he also went into computer engineering. Now, there's so much competition for computer industries. They wouldn't be successful. Well maybe, but I don't think it would be as easy as back then.

That's luck for me.

VK: I feel like when you say luck, you mean "fate." For me, I think it is possible to be genetically predisposed towards a certain activity, whether that's arts or sports.

Also, especially when you're zero to four years old, I think the environment in which you were raised —

ER: Yeah, nature versus nurture.

VK: — also determines whether you develop a talent towards something. But that's related to how wealthy your parents are. Did your parents have enough money to pay for the best dance teacher in the world?

That is luck, to be born into a family like that. But it's luck with a method — there's a reason that happened.

So I do think that luck plays into this a little bit, but maybe not in the same way that you do.

SRP: FROM ZEBRAFISH TO NANOPARTICLES

By **Kristen Andonie '17**
Staff Writer

For students who dream about vaporizing metal into nanoparticles or finding ways to cure cancer, Choate offers the Science Research Program (SRP). A selective Signature Program, SRP aims to arm students with the skills needed to perform professional experiments. Students apply to one or both sections, quantitative or biology, depending on their interests.

Regardless of their section, all SRP students must secure an eight- to twelve-week summer internship in a professional laboratory. Although the internship represents a fraction of the time students are involved in SRP, it is the core of the program.

As Dr. Christopher Hogue, who teaches the quantitative section, noted, "The entire junior year is a build-up to prepare students to be ready when they go into a professional research lab in the summer so that they can contribute in meaningful ways."

The projects of each student vary immensely, even within a section. For example, Nathan Chang '17, a student in the biology section, interned at a lab that researches breast cancer. He grew the cancer cells and then doused them with a chemical to examine how many died. Chang said, "An important piece of understanding how to treat cancer better is understanding how cancer cells die."

In contrast, during her internship for the biology section, Alyssa Zhou '17 examined how neomycin, an antibiotic, affects inner ear hair cells of genetically modified zebra fish.

She explained, "We're trying to figure out ways to prevent damage of the hair cells, because hair cell damage is permanent, so once you're deaf, you're deaf for your entire life."

Meanwhile, as part of the quantitative section, Anna Ekholm '17 worked on quantitative proteomics during her internship. What on earth is quantitative proteomics?

Ekholm explained, "Basically, I studied the proteins in a human. Not all of them, because not all of them are interesting." She continued, "I had a plasma sample, and 99% of it is super



Photo courtesy of Dylan Muldoon

Dylan Muldoon '17 spent the summer in Bermuda for his research, titled, "Populations and Polymorphisms: A New Look at the Bermuda Skink".

boring. The stuff you care about is in the bottom 1%."

Ekholm used antibodies to isolate the proteins she wanted, and then she ran those proteins through a mass spectrometer to count them.

Also in the quantitative section, Weston Miller '17 completed his internship at a mechanical engineering lab. Miller's experiment embodied the inner yearning of every science fiction geek: vaporizing a metal nitrate dissolved in liquid into nanoparticles using an electrostatic atomization technique.

One application for these nanoparticles is using them to make lithium ion batteries that can last a long time without being charged. "As opposed to having to charge your phone every night, you'd maybe only need to charge your phone once a month," Miller said.

It is perhaps important to note that even though SRP students often intern at cutting-edge labs, their experiments are not bursting with constant excitement and discovery.

According to Chang, a lot of waiting is involved: "You have to wait for the cells to grow; you have to wait for the cells to die."

Moreover, Dr. Hogue added, "In science research, a large part of it is failure, failure, failure, failure, teeny tiny bit of success, failure, failure, failure, failure, teeny tiny bit of success."

Even so, that "teeny tiny bit of success" is enough to fuel the motivated lab scientist into further inquiries.

After a summer filled with so many internships, the senior SRP students are currently preparing a series of presentations that will be open to the entire Choate community toward the end of the fall term. Zhou highlighted how helpful SRP has been in improving her public speaking skills. "For the past two weeks we've been practicing giving our presentations one-by-one, over and over again," she said.

While the seniors reach the end of their projects, the juniors are filled with anticipation for the year and summer to come. Alan Luo '18 is hoping to find a lab where he can immerse himself in the world of quantum computing. He explained, "I think it's really cool to be studying something that you can't just Google search and find an answer to. You actually have to dig kind of deeply."

Although the specific interests of SRP students are completely different from each other, in the end, the program brings students together for the celebration of science. Whether the students bond with their lab partners over unintentionally putting aluminum foil in a microwave (yes, that actually happened at a professional lab) or bond with their classmates while giving each other feedback on their presentations, every student finishes the program with a better understanding of laboratory science.

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THE VIEW FROM MY BEDROOM WINDOW

Construction chatter, as overheard by Bungalow resident Camila Borjesson '17:

"Polooo! Poloooooo!"
"Marco?"
"POLOOOO!"

"You're so lazy, Larry."

"Heeey haaaandsome... Donnie?"



Photo courtesy of Pascale Huntsinger

PIPING UP AGAINST PIPELINES



Photo courtesy of Arielle Landau

Students marched against fracking and for a healthier future.

By **Sophie Mackin '18**
Staff Writer

"Hey hey, ho ho, fossil fuels have got to go!" So chanted the one hundred protestors — among them, 12 Choate students — who participated in the "People Over Pipeline Walk" last Saturday, September 24.

With the Connecticut Expansion Pipeline Project scheduled to begin construction in the coming months, several environmental justice groups decided to take a stand against the use of fossil fuels and climate change by organizing the protest. The eight-mile walk began in Agawam, Massachusetts, continued into Suffield, CT, and ended in East Granby, CT.

A part of the goal was to raise awareness about the implications of fracked gas pipelines. The event was sponsored by the Connecticut Sierra Club, 350 CT, Toxics Action Center, Bethlehem Ecodefense, and Berkshire Environmental Action Team. Their

statement about the event concluded, "It's time to take a stand for our planet's future, and make sure that CT politicians hear the message that fracked gas is not a bridge to the future, but the road to climate disaster."

Fracking is the process of drilling through layers of rock below the ground. Fracked gas is packed into pipelines at high pressure, which increases the risk of leaks or explosions. In addition, the extraction and transmission of natural gases involves a large amount of methane emissions. Methane is 25 times more powerful as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and is one of the main contributors to global warming.

The proposed gas pipeline route is 13.42 miles and would run through parts of New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Kinder Morgan, the largest energy infrastructure company in North America, applied for their project permits on March 11, 2016. However, 2.3 miles of

their proposed pipeline system would loop through Otis State Forest in Sandisfield, MA. Opponents of the pipeline argue that Otis State Forest, a beautiful spot for camping, hiking, and fishing, is protected by Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution. It states, "People shall have the right to the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic qualities of their environment."

When Arielle Landau '17 heard about the plans for the pipeline and the "People Over Pipeline Walk," she wanted to get other Choate students involved, so she organized a group to attend the walk.

Landau said, "The organizers were so excited when I told them I was trying to get a group of high schoolers to come to the event." The walk was "part of the larger fight to keep fossil fuels in the ground and stop gas expansion projects," she added.

Ananya Karanam '18, who participated in the walk, said, "I knew it was successful when we were walking down the street and people started coming out of their houses and cars to join the march. When people come together like this, the collective human spirit is so inspiring."

As Mr. John Calandrelli, the Chapter Program Manager of the Connecticut Sierra Club, put it, "There are three kinds of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch things happen, and those who wonder 'what the hell just happened?'" The protesters hope they can fall in the first category and fight against fracking.

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A WEEKEND AWAY WITH CHAMBER CHORUS



The Chamber Chorus members engaging in a fun bonding exercise during their weekend retreat.

Photo courtesy of Morgan Harris

By **Eben Cook '18**
Reporter

On Saturday, September 24, members of the Choate Chamber Chorus piled onto a school bus full of music stands, overloaded backpacks, and multiple speakers playing at once. The bus was bound for The Wisdom House, a conference and retreat center situated on 70 acres of land in the woods of Litchfield, Connecticut. Scott Romeyn '18, a member of the ensemble, explained, "The purpose is for members to get to know each other, but also to create a standard for what we want for rehearsals." Along similar lines, Ms. Alyson Kegel, Choral Director and leader of the retreat, added, "The ultimate goal of the retreat is for us to build a stronger sense of 'ensemble,' which means 'together' in French. A good choir is able to do things at exactly the same time, and with immediate responsiveness and alacrity, which

takes trust, connection, sensitivity, and ability to anticipate what another person will do." The choir strengthened their aforementioned camaraderie through a variety of different bonding activities — from sectional structures with the common theme of environment to elbow tag and cut-throat musical chair games. Meditation was also a crucial part of the retreat. Whether it be walking through the woods — which Ms. Kegel refers to as a "powerful and special labyrinth" — performing tai-chi with Will May '18, or learning yoga poses from Lily James '17, the group learned that meditation is significant for any singer, as it establishes a connection with the ground and with other singers. The choir spent a part of the time discussing values and rules for the choir to keep in consideration throughout the year. Through the discussion,

the singers were able to self-reflect and ask themselves what they wanted to get out of their choir experiences this year. **My favorite part was spending time with people who I've always known, but the retreat allowed me to get to know them even better.** Eamonn Welliver '18

As expected, the choir retreat would not be so without singing. A combination of team bonding and singing, the choir performed Pauline Oliveros's "Slow Song" at the woods, danced with scarves to Alberto Grau's "Kasar mie la Gaji," and expressed the dynamics of "Cloudburst" using a massive stretchy band. These activities helped the choir improve the collective sound of their reper-

toire while they enjoyed themselves at the same time. "My favorite part was spending time with people who I've always known, but the retreat allowed me to get to know them even better," reflected Eamonn Welliver '18. Mattie Drucker '17 added, "My favorite part about this retreat was when Max Patel '19 started this improv musical called Heelys." The improv musical starred Patel, Stephen Ankoue '17, Caitlin Lawrence '17, and Mia Rubenstein '18, accompanied by Kevin Auman '17. All in all, the retreat allowed members of the Choate Chamber Chorus to escape the stress of being on campus and spend time with their fellow singing mates, which hopefully prepared the group as a whole for their upcoming singing endeavors at Choate and beyond.

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THE KEYS TO KNOWING DAVID PARK



By **Inc Thongtai '19**
Staff Writer

If you don't remember him from his incredible piano performance at the first all-school meeting of the year, meet David Park '16, a four-year senior from Glastonbury, CT. Partaking in Chamber Music Ensembles and Jazz Ensemble, playing the piano for the Choate Orchestra, and engaging in the Arts Concentration's Jazz Trio, Park has been integral to Choate's music program for years. As Park recounted, he was introduced to music very early on his life. "My dad was a self-taught pianist and my sisters also played the piano, so I knew that music would always be a big part of my life. I had my first piano lesson in first grade. I had never played before, so I was extremely nervous. Piano is something both meditative and challenging for me." "David is an inspiration to all the students in the Jazz Ensemble," noted Mr. Phil Ventre, Orchestral and Jazz Ensemble Director. "He is an outstanding improviser and section leader. He is an exceptional young man: kind, caring, and one of the most diligent musicians we have ever had here." Park is also a great inspiration to his peers. He is very hardworking, often practicing over three hours a day. Kaki Su '19, a pianist for the Choate Orchestra, said, "Whenever I go to the PMAC, I always see him practic-

ing — he is so dedicated. He also takes care of everyone in the Arts Concentration Program." Annett Ho '18, a first-chair violinist for the Choate Orchestra and String Ensemble, added, "I teared up when I first heard him play so well after the summer because he practiced so much. David is one of the only people at Choate with whom I can have a conversation purely about music." During this coming Parent's Weekend, David will be performing the first movement of Sergei Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 2." Mr. Ventre stated, "The second piano concerto is one of the greatest virtuoso piano concertos in the history of written music, which says a lot about David's talent. He has the ability to look behind the notes, and see through the emotions that the composer put in while creating the movement. David has the ability to look behind the notes on the page and feel the emotions the composer tried to convey. Techniquewise, he is perfect." Park is not just one of the most talented pianists Choate has ever seen. According to Ms. Kalya Yannatos, Director of the Arts, "As a human being, David is extremely generous. He is always willing to share his talent at concerts or events. As a pianist, he is extremely exceptional. To me, he has the ability to convey such complexity in the way he plays. He will be dearly missed in the Choate community when he graduates." Park reflected on the meaning of music and stated that, to him, "music is the manifestation of human's ability to appreciate life. It is the most direct way to express joy and understand the deeper truths of life." For all those who agree with him, be prepared to hear his fingers strike the piano keys again in future musical performances.

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FIGHT OR FLIGHT?



By **Neve Scott '18**
Reporter

Sherman Alexie's *Flight* intertwines themes of estrangement, vengeance, and mercy through the main character Zits's time-traveling escapades. Over the summer, Choate students were able to follow Zits in his adventures, but not everyone enjoyed the ride. While some students were impressed with Zits's intelligence and thought his narrative was the essence of a troubled youth, others commented that Alexie, as a writer, tried too hard to appeal to the teenage reader. Nicole Sellow '17 said, "It was clear from his use of the language that Sherman Alexie doesn't know how to appeal to teenagers. He missed the mark on connecting with his adolescent readers." James Rose '18 agreed, saying, "The use of the profanity as an effort to appeal to the teenage mind was not relatable at all." Students also complained about the lack of depth and of fully developed secondary characters, as well as its speedy finish. While some students said that the plot's swift pace and tight conclusion were more appropriate for juvenile fiction, others believed that those aspects were what made *Flight* too childish as a high school summer reading book. Elyse Cornwall '18 said, "We really get to understand what it means to be the hero, villain, and victim from Zits's journey. How-

ever, the time-traveling aspect was unnecessary in that it didn't push the narrative forward — those moments just served as individual lessons that didn't really contribute to Zits's character development as a whole in the end. He got a lot of redemption in the end just for going back in time and experiencing events that he had no control over." However, among the students who participated in the poll, the consensus was that the entrance of the Native American character was enlightening. Tristan Jamidar '18 said, "Sherman Alexie is a really provocative writer. He really wakes up the reader and makes him conscious of the Native American historical figure." On a similar vein, history teacher Ms. Courtney DeStefano said, "*Flight* was not shy with language or with violence and contained difficult imagery. It helped to make students feel uncomfortable and highlight a group of people who get so little attention. It helps us to think about current events, and made me think about what the author has been through." Though Alexie's *Flight* may have disappointed some students, most people applaud Choate's efforts for introducing diversity into the summer reading.

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Approximate percentages based on the writer's 43 sampled students and faculty members.

FACULTY DISPLAY VISUAL ART IN ANNUAL SHOW

By **Jeanne Malle '19**
Reporter

It was an amazing surprise to see the walls of the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) full of new and unseen art when students walked into Choate's annual registration at the beginning of the year. To many people's surprise, however, the art was not student-made this time. It was created and showcased by the group of faculty members who spend hours teaching students their finest skills. The faculty featured in the exhibition were Ms. Jessica Cuni, Mr. Robert Mellon, Ms. Jane Gustin, and Mr. Willard Lustenader. Ms. Cuni exhibited two of her photo series. The first consists of four self-portraits taken in a stream, in which she has replicated herself, carrying her youngest baby. To do this, she

did not hire a lookalike, but instead used Ms. Kegel's hand and legs as replacements for her own, then Photoshopped these photos. Her second series of photographs were taken on her latest trip to Cuba with a travel grant from Choate, accompanied by two other Choate teachers. Ms. Cuni is originally from Cuba but her family, who immigrated to New York, has not returned in sixty years, and thus she was greatly appreciative of the opportunity to return to Cuba this summer. She said, "I was able to track down my family and actually meet them while I was there, which was very special. For the faculty show, though I took more than 1,000 photos during this 11 day trip, I chose to focus on my portraits of some of the people I met. It was wonderful to meet new people. Their warmth has really stayed with me."

I was excited to see how talented our teachers were. We normally exhibit our own pieces, but now the tables have turned.

Edith Conekin-Tooze '19

On the other hand, Ms. Jane Gustin exhibited different things. There are paintings, ink drawings, and collages. Her favorite piece began as something to "mess around with," but the big black paper ended up becoming one of her favorite creations. The technical complexity of this piece is amazing, and has a beautiful meaning behind it. According to Ms. Gustin, the inspiration for this piece came from some of the current events that have left her, like many others, utterly devastated. "The

way I was feeling with all of the political activity and terrorism, everything seemed to be on edge, and things kept moving. You can't hang on to anything, so that's what it was all about." Edith Conekin-Tooze '19, who has walked by the pieces hanging in the PMAC gallery several times, stated, "I was excited to see how talented our teachers were. We normally exhibit our own pieces, but now the tables have turned." There was no overall theme for the exhibition. Instead, it was an eclectic compilation of different forms of talent in the visual arts. It is truly a privilege for students and other members of the community to see the work of the professionals that live and teach in our community.

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Remembering Playwright Edward Albee '46

By **Namsai Sethpornpong '17**
Staff Writer

On Friday, September 16, legendary playwright and Choate alum Edward Albee '46 passed away quietly in his home in Montauk, New York. The death of the 88-year-old playwright, a winner of three Pulitzer Prizes and two Tony Awards, has left the world feeling numb. **Never be afraid to be outrageous.** Edward Albee '46

From the moment he first stepped foot on our school upon the hillside, to his last visit in 2006, Albee remained faithful to his alma mater, gracing our campus and community with his numerous visits over the years. As a student at Choate, Albee frequently wrote for *The News* and was the managing editor of the literature and art publication, *The Lit*. Ever since his graduation in 1946, Albee has visited campus on five different occasions. In 1968, he helped direct Choate's rendition of his internationally-acclaimed play, *The Zoo Story*.

In 1976 he came to accept the Alumni Seal Prize and for the grand opening of the Paul Mellon Arts Center. Last, he was the speaker at two Convocations, visiting Choate in 2006 for the last time. In 1991 and 2006, Albee worked with drama instructor Ms. Tracy Ginder-Delventhal leading theater workshops for students. Ms. Ginder-Delventhal remembers his 1991 appearance with certain ambivalence, but of the 2006 visit, in contrast, she said, "The second time he came was much different than the first. I was more se-

cure and perhaps his character had mellowed a little. He was brought in to work with the student playwrights and because of it, we were dealing with totally different questions. He was very respectful of me and although he challenged the kids, I think it was in a way that enabled them to learn and grow." Of the last day working with Albee, Ms. Ginder-Delventhal recalled, "I drove him to the train station after our last workshop and he kissed my cheek." She added, I felt very honored and that we had met as fellow artists." She followed, "When I

look at the history of theatre, it is clear to me that his voice was extremely important and that he changed theatre in the U.S. from being about entertainment to being about social and political change. I thank him for that." His instructive visits to Choate seem to have been inspiring for students and faculty alike. Albee, like many of his contemporaries, was a critic of the American Dream, shedding light on a darker interpretation of the human condition. He was widely known for his fiery spirit and his unapologetic subversion against his critics. As Albee once said to a Choate senior during one of his visits, "Never be afraid to be outrageous." Indeed, that is one of the major lessons he propagated while at school. Although the loss of Albee's ferocity in his writing can still be felt throughout the art world, his sweltering spirit continues to live on not only through ground breaking works, but also in the legacy that he left here at Choate Rosemary Hall.

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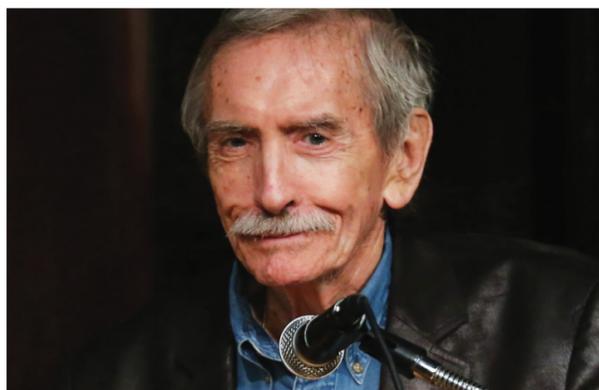


Photo courtesy of Neilson Barnard

Game of the Week: Boys' Varsity Water Polo vs. Deerfield • 10/5 • 3:30 p.m. • Larry Hart Pool

FIELD REPORT

WIN	LOSS	TIE	W-L-T Score
Field Hockey			
			2-1-0
			Sacred Heart 2-1
Football			
			2-0-0
			Lawrenceville 42-14
Boys' Soccer			
			4-1-0
			Westminster 2-1
Girls' Soccer			
			3-0-1
			Loomis 1-1
Girls' Volleyball			
			3-2-0
			Hopkins 3-0
Boys' Water Polo			
			5-1-0
			Hopkins 14-4

PLAYER OF THE WEEK



Name: Jake MacKenzie '17
Team: Varsity Water Polo
Position: Goalkeeper

BOARS BOUNCE BACK IN RESILIENT VICTORY AT KENT



Boys' Varsity Soccer prepares to take on the Blue-and-Grey.

By **Jackson Elkins '18**
Staff Writer

After a disappointing loss to Worcester Academy on Wednesday, September 21, Boys' Varsity Soccer travelled to Kent School for a game that was sure to challenge the Boars. Coming into the game 2-1 on the season, the boys were looking to maintain their over .500 record.

Kent struck first, proving the difficulty of the Boars' task ahead. Dilibe Iloje '18 took the initiative to find the back of the net for Choate, equalizing the game at 1-1. However, the competition wouldn't get easier for the Boys in Blue. Kent came back and reclaimed the lead off of a well-struck

volley, putting Choate back into the corner they had just fought themselves out of. Luckily, Abdoulaye Diallo '17 fought back, leveling the game at 2-2.

After fighting back from a one-point deficit twice, the Boars were able to take control of the game. With just ten minutes remaining, Zach Lopes '18 put Choate ahead. The Boars never looked back, finishing the game 3-2 in favor of the Blue-and-Gold.

While all players performed spectacularly this weekend, Mike Levene '18 had an outstanding performance at right back, which teammate Chris Birch '17 called "filthy." Iloje had nothing but praise for his teammates' performance on

Wednesday, saying, "Abdul, Zach, and I all had great goals, and everyone worked hard to get the win. We want to keep this momentum going." Birch added, "We had an average first half, but then we had a phenomenal second half."

In general, the team's defense has been strong this season, only conceding a total of five times in five games. Meanwhile, the offense has scored twelve goals in the same time frame. Now with four wins and just one loss in the season, Boys' Varsity Soccer looks forward to Saturday, October 1, when they will head up to New Hampshire and take on Exeter.

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Joey Waters: Overflowing with Talent

By **Shrenik Agrawal '17**
Reporter

The Boys' Varsity Soccer team has started off their season on a high note, with big wins against Cheshire, Hopkins, and Kent, thanks to a large crop of returners and a strong group of new recruits. One new team member, Madison native Joey Waters '18, has just recently made his mark on the squad. Day after day, teammates praise and try to emulate his attitude.

Waters' calm demeanor and resolute character can be attributed to his humble Choate soccer roots. He began his career on thirds soccer as a freshman, before starting for the junior varsity team last year, and ultimately making the varsity team his junior year. Waters' previous JV teammates only had fond things to say about him. Arinze Nzeako '19 recalled, "Joey was really the team dad. He was a brick wall in the back and a stallion going forward!"

Despite playing a smaller role for varsity, Waters has exhibited the same leadership qualities that made him a team favorite on JV. Whether he's bringing up gear, working hard during fitness, or hitting absolute bangers, Waters sets an example for all teammates.

Captain Jack Hutchinson '17 said, "Joey has inspired me to kick the ball higher, faster, and farther. His die-hard attitude and relentless work

ethic get me going. They're provocative." Spencer Jimenez '18 echoed his captain's words, stating, "Not a day goes by without Joey scoring a gino. He's the heart and soul of the team, and we would not survive without him. He really knows how to crank it up!"

Waters' presence has not gone unnoticed by Head Coach Charlie Fuentes. When asked about Waters, Coach Fuentes responded, "Who, Aguas? He's quiet, yet thoughtful. He's good to have in practice to push the starters, and we hope to get him time on the field soon."

When Waters is not setting standards on the soccer field, he can be found playing junior varsity basketball, shining on varsity lacrosse, or excelling in Spanish class. Joey's success on the field is paralleled by his excellence in the classroom. Zach Lopes '18 commented, "He is an academic weapon with high market value. We always knew that he could play soccer, but, boy, can he play school!"

When asked if he expected to be in his current situation freshman year, Waters responded, "I don't really think about it too much. I guess I'm just happy to be here." Waters, with his array of talents and inspiring attitude, is sure to guide Boys' Varsity Soccer to victory this season.

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Life as a Varsity Freshman

By **Grace Stapelberg '20**
Reporter

For most high school athletes, making a varsity team is the ultimate goal. It is an incredible accomplishment and a testament to one's hard work and skill as a player. At Choate, there are a select few who launch themselves right into the action, kicking off their third form fall by joining a varsity-level sport.

Making a varsity team as a freshman does not simply entail a season of glory and celebration; for many, participating in a high level of play can negatively impact one's social life. Erin Martin '20 of the Girls' Varsity Soccer team has experienced her fair share of late-running practices and long games. When asked how playing varsity soccer affects her social life, she said, "I've met other freshmen on the team, and I've become very close to them because we have games and practices almost every day. But sometimes we miss out on things that other girls in the dorm are doing."

For many people, spending so much time on the field is daunting. This is especially applicable to freshmen, who are busy getting accustomed to Choate's workload. However, for Martin, varsity soccer is a reprieve. She said, "Soccer is my favorite thing in the world. When I am stressed about homework, practice takes me out of that negative mindset. I think taking little breaks from the heavy workload helps improve my academic performance overall."

When I am stressed about homework, practice takes me out of that negative mindset.

Erin Martin '20

Joining a varsity team as a freshman is an intimidating experience for many. It can be hard to fit into the team's dynamic when a majority of the members are upperclassmen and returning players. How-

ever, Martin doesn't seem to have that problem.

She said, "The upperclassmen obviously have more inside jokes with each other, and they've been with each other for longer. But honestly, this team is really welcoming. There's not a big difference between us; they usually include the freshmen in everything." She added, "I think bonding off the field will improve our game on the field. That will be the key to winning our games this year." With 3 consecutive victories on their record, the girls of varsity soccer are looking forward to a successful season.

Being a freshman varsity athlete may not always be convenient, but its challenges certainly reap rewards. Hopefully, this year's wave of freshmen athletes will continue to contribute to Choate's excellent sportsmanship and exemplary talent.

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FOOTBALL SEEKS ANOTHER CHAMPIONSHIP



The Wild Boars hone skills and push limits at practice in preparation for the 2016 season.

By **Brooke Popadich '20**
Reporter

Varsity football is one of the most celebrated teams at Choate. The Wild Boars have been undefeated for two years, and are hoping to continue that streak during the 2016 season. They kicked off this year with a historic win against Cheshire on Saturday, September 17. The game was a thriller for players and supporters alike. Team member Kevin Nusdeo '17 said, "That was a big win and the best game I have ever been a part of, by far. Last year we had no close games, but this one was really back and forth. We were down three times and we came back every time." Nusdeo also commented on the significance of the two distinguished teams going head-to-head for the first time: "It really put prep school football on the map." Indeed, the Cheshire game was an amazing win for Choate and an incredible way to start the season.

With that win under their belt, players and coaches are grinding through practices to prepare for another great season of Choate football. Jake Kasthuber '17 said, "We definitely need to work on our kick return and make sure that we secure everything that comes to us." Varsity Coach LJ Spinnato commented, "Defensively, we hope to be more dynamic and multiple than we've been in the past. Offensively, we are excited to bring back our quarterback run game."

Regarding which team is expected to pose the greatest threat this year, Coach Spinnato said, "We don't really focus on opponents outside of the ones we are playing each week. Lawrenceville is a great team and we are preparing for them right now. Class A football is getting better and more competitive every season. We have a very tough schedule this year." The boys zone in on their immediate competition each week, instead of focusing on obstacles later in the season.

The varsity team gained many new players this year. Kasthuber said, "This year we have about thirty new kids, so it's kind of a whole new team. Still, everything is going pretty well and everyone is bonding." Nusdeo commented on how this influx of new talent affects team dynamic and play: "I think this year's team is just as good, if not better than, last year's team. Obviously, we have only played a few games so far, so the team is still getting stronger as one. We'll keep improving as the season goes on." With all of the new players, bonding will be a key element to the team's overall function this year.

The football team is projected to have yet another exciting season this fall. The players and coaches are all pumped to get back on the field and defeat Exeter this Saturday.

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Sam Brown '20 and Erin Martin '20 help Girls' Varsity Soccer win against Greenwich on September 21.