



## Heated Political Debate Erupts During Ally Week Discussion

By **Amanda Li '21**  
*Reporter*

On September 27, more than 80 members of SPECTRUM, Young Democrats, Young Republicans, and Choate Diversity Student Association (CDSA) gathered for an unprecedented meeting in the Bay Room of St. John Hall to discuss LGBTQ+ issues as part of Spectrum's Ally Week initiatives.

First proposed by Kathryn Phillips '20, a cabinet member of SPECTRUM, the discussion topics centered on, as Phillips put it, "religious freedom used as justification for LGBTQ discrimination." SPECTRUM's intention, she said, "was to use the safe space of SPECTRUM to not necessarily mend the political divide, but to confront it, confront how many people are so stuck on their beliefs and are not open to having an open mind."

This meeting was appealing to participants and organizers for many reasons, from the opportunity to converse respectfully with people who have different opinions to the ability to broach topics that feel rarely discussed on such a wide scale at Choate.

"I hoped that it would sort of bring to light that Choate Young Republicans, as a whole, is genuinely pretty socially liberal," said Alex Amine '19, President of Choate Young Republicans. "The club, as a whole, has no problem with the LGBTQ movement. We genuinely support social advocacy groups, within reason."

The meeting was structured as an open forum in which students could share their opinions and perspectives simply by raising their hands. Before beginning, club leaders described the guidelines and expectations to be followed throughout the discussion, emphasizing the importance of using the "I" perspective to represent one's per-

sonal views, instead of speaking on behalf of a group or population, and maintaining respect by not interrupting or otherwise speaking out of turn.

The first topic was the separation of church and state, in particular reference to the Masterpiece Cakeshop Supreme Court case, which ruled in favor of a Colorado baker who, citing his religious rights, refused to bake a wedding cake for a gay couple, and the groups discussed the rights of the gay community in regards to the Bible.

In the second half of the meeting, the focus turned to the use of preferred pronouns and transgender rights, and a tense discussion that raised sensitive subjects ensued. More than once, CDSA and Spectrum cabinet members, serving as mediators, needed to diffuse the tension through peaceful facilitation and intervention techniques.

"Our role was making sure that everyone felt safe and comfortable in the space to the best of our abilities," said Bekah Agwunobi '19, co-president of CDSA.

Most of the participants were respectful and thoughtful toward each other, which helped the flow of the meeting. "For the most part, everyone was really diligent about keeping the conversation open and open to contributions," said Piper Connelly '19, co-president of SPECTRUM.

Despite efforts to consider others' views, many students left feeling hurt, confused, or, at best, annoyed. Controversial opinions were shared during the meeting, and there were instances in which they were delivered in a way that made participants uncomfortable and upset.

"It definitely opened up people to different viewpoints," said Itai Mupanduki '19, President of

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## Philosopher Peter Singer Delivers Lecture as Charles Krause '51 Fellow in Rhetoric

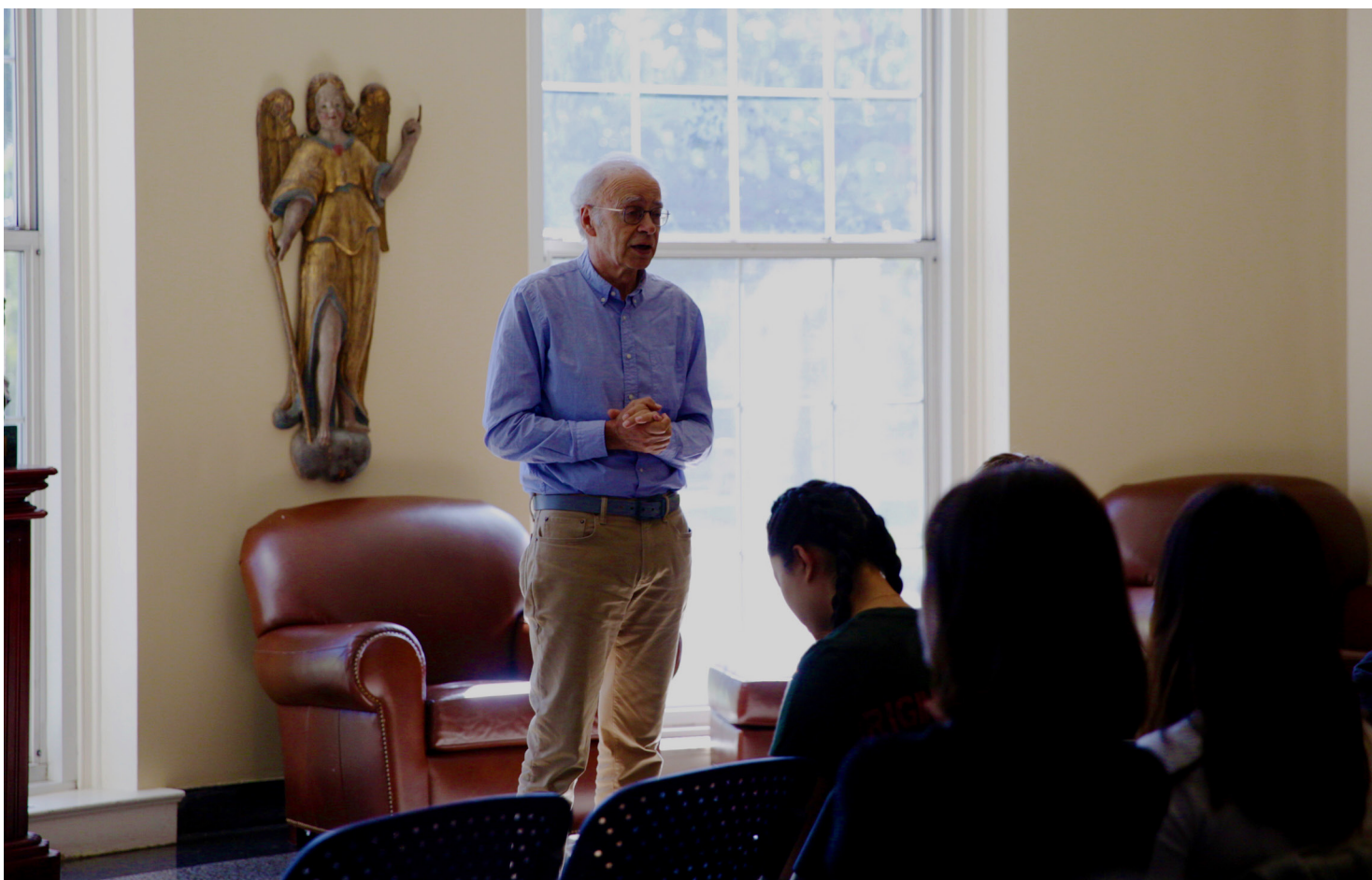


Photo by Kathryn Phillips/The Choate News

Mr. Singer answered student questions in the Humanities Rotunda after his schoolwide lecture.

By **Anjali Mangla '20**  
*Staff Reporter*

Earlier this year, the HPRSS Department named Mr. Peter Singer the Charles Krause '51 Fellow in Rhetoric and invited him to deliver the annual Krause Lecture. Mr. Singer delivered his speech to the student body last Friday, October 5. Mr. Singer is a leading figure in his field of bioethics and philosophy, serving as a professor of bioethics at Princeton University and the University of Melbourne. He has also started a foundation to fight extreme poverty based on his ethical principles.

Known for his advocacy to give to the poor and liberate animals treated inhumanely in factory farming, Mr. Singer's essay "Famine, Affluence, and Morality" and his book *Animal Liberation* have inspired great

change in the study of what is known as effective altruism and the animal rights movement. Many call *Animal Liberation* the intellectual beginning of the animal rights movement.

On why Mr. Singer was chosen as the Fellow in Rhetoric, Ms. Amy Foster, Head of the HPRSS Department, said, "Philosophy is part of this department, and it's not common for us to bring a philosopher to campus. Many people call Singer the most influential living philosopher, and he has had an impact on a lot of different fields."

Ms. Foster went on, "Not everyone agrees with him, and not everybody agrees with the reasons he does things, but he has had a large impact on not just thinking but doing. He's not just a philosopher who sits on deep thoughts, but he wants to actually take action to follow

through on his ethical principles."

Mr. Singer's speech focused

**Many people call Singer the most influential living philosopher, and he has had an impact on a lot of different fields.**

*Ms. Amy Foster  
Head of HPRSS Department*

mainly on effective altruism and how students can give to efficient charities. Mr. Singer urged students to think about how to ensure that their altruism and donations would have the maximum benefit possible. Mr. Singer reinforced this argument by stating his belief that everyone should act in a way that can maximize happiness and minimize suffering for

everyone in the world. He also detailed his thoughts about the value of animal lives in the factory farming industry.

After his talk, Mr. Singer was available in the Humanities Rotunda to answer students' questions.

Mr. Singer refused a speaker's fee from Choate and instead expressed his wish to donate that speaker's fee to a charity. Choate students were tasked with voting on one of four charities chosen by Mr. Singer to donate the speaker's fee to. The four choices were Against Malaria Foundation, GiveDirectly, The Humane League, and The Good Food Institute. The HPRSS department announced yesterday that the Against Malaria Foundation beat out the other three.

Mr. Singer's visit was a

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## Community Service Day Focuses on Environmentalism

By **JeeHwan Kim '21**  
*Reporter*

Today, hundreds of students, faculty, and staff gather for Community Service Day. Students will be truly interacting with the local community, which is a significant development from last year.

According to Ms. Melissa Koomson, the Director of Community Service, half of the student population will be travelling off-campus to areas in Wallingford, New Haven, and Cheshire to complete work related to sustainability and the environment, such as cleaning up, working in local farms, and helping with restoration in inner-city parks. The other half will stay on campus, removing invasive species in specific locations, including the cross-country course. The student body will be split in half by dorms and day student groups. After students complete their assigned activities,

they will come back together on campus for lunch and a debriefing activity.

**This year's activities are just so outside of the box that it makes me think, Do we even have a box?**

*Ms. Melissa Koomson  
Director of Community Service*

The planning of this one-day event started more than a year ago. "I first met with facilities last January to talk about the idea of doing some kind of service work on campus," Ms. Koomson said. "That initial conversation happened because some of the C-Proctors had expressed a desire to do community service related to sustainability and the environment. I said, 'I love it! Let's try to work it out and see what we can do,' and so we've been working on this for a really

long time."

Mr. Jim Yanelli, Director of the Student Activities Center, and the community service advisory group joined Ms. Koomson and the C-Proctors in the planning process.

Ms. Koomson highlighted the complexity of planning such a massive event. "People don't always know what's going on behind the scenes," she said. "For example, the day is called 'Community Service Day,' but we're not going to be doing community service for the entire school day because the local bus company has to finish their route in the morning, dropping kids off at local schools before coming to work with us. And then they have to be back by one o'clock in the afternoon to pick up those kids."

Ms. Koomson also added that the main difference between this year's and last year's Community Service Day involves the complexity

of preparation: solving the logistical pieces, such as finding the appropriate organizations, contacting numerous people to check who is available, organizing transportation, and gathering all the tools and snacks for students, was a big job. "The previous service day activities have involved people working together in a packing environment, and I wanted to do something that really engages students in their work," said Ms. Koomson. "It's really important for me to hear student voices about things, so when the C-Proctors came to me and expressed their enthusiasm, I wanted to be that 'yes' person."

She added, "This year's activities are just so outside of the box that it makes me think, Do we even have a box?."

In terms of future goals for Community Service Day, Ms. Koomson said that she re-

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## NOVELIST CATHERINE CHUNG VISITS CAMPUS

By **Grace Zhang '20**  
*Copy Editor*

This past summer, Choate's 859 incoming students from over 35 states and 40 countries were united by a single literary experience: *Forgotten Country*. The debut novel of Korean-American author Catherine Chung was this year's schoolwide summer reading book. Ms. Chung visited campus Tuesday, October 9 for an interview at School Meeting, a craft talk with a creative writing class, a book signing that more than 100 students attended, and a dinner with English Department faculty, as has been customary of the School's summer reading author for four of the last five years.

As the first Korean-American author of a school wide summer reading book, Ms. Chung had plenty of perspective to offer. She touched on a variety of topics during the Program, which featured English teach-

er Mr. John Cobb interviewing Chung. The interview topics included her inspiration for certain characters, anecdotes from her life, and her transition from studying math to writing novels.

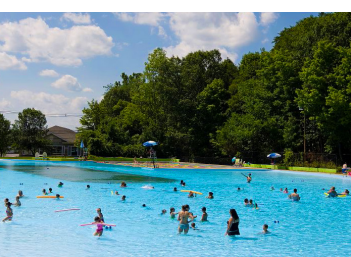
Before the talk, Choate students shared their expectations and hopes for the event. Skylar Hansen-Raj '20 hoped to hear about the author's "own experiences" to allow more insight into the author's inspirations. Lily Ding '20 hoped to learn about Ms. Chung's process: "I'm interested to hear how she made decisions for the plot. Like, why she included the sexual assault storyline and things like that."

During her talk, Ms. Chung revealed that she does not have a sister, that she was not born in Korea, and that her parents are not very strict, all defining characteristics of Janie, the protagonist of *Forgotten Country*.

While Ms. Chung differed

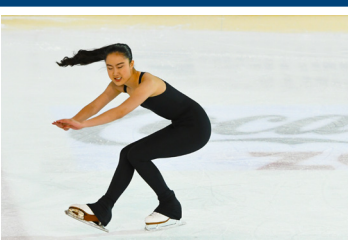
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Wallingford begins its plans to reconstruct the local community pool.  
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The 112th masthead encourages mindfulness about the college process.  
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**Figure Skating Star**  
Ashley Wang '19, U.S. Figure Skating Team member, shares her story.  
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# Student Council Recap

By **Grace Zhang '20**  
*Copy Editor*

Last week’s Student Council meeting introduced a new faculty adviser: Mr. John Connelly. Mr. Connelly joined Ms. Kyra Jenney as the second adviser to the Student Council. Mr. Connelly has been at Choate for 37 years and teaches a variety of HPRSS classes, including Honors World History, American Studies, Modern China, and War in Vietnam.

Mr. Connelly was not the only new face at the table. Ms. Libby Peard, Director of Health and Wellness Services and Dr. Holly Hinderlie, Wellness Coordinator, sat in on the meeting to collaborate with Fifth-Form Representatives Will Robertson ’20 and Caroline Rispoli ’20 on a new wellness initiative. Robertson and Rispoli have drafted a proposal to convene a student Wellness Committee available to students of all forms via application. Ms. Peard offered her support, stating, “I love the concept. You guys are expected to be superhuman, and it’s still not enough. We do need to unpack how to make your lives more balanced.” Fourth-Form Representative Ula Lucas ’21 explained the need for a Wellness Committee that is separate from other student issues: “With a committee, there’s a constant stream of communication between the deans and the students just about wellness.”

Student Council also discussed a second initiative led by Fourth-Form Representative Anesi Ojior ’21. Ojior introduced her proposal with the results of a student poll she conducted. “No one really knew what student council was working on. Why don’t we make it easier?” she asked. She proposed publicizing the Student Council website by having Information Technology Services put a Student Council button on the portal or sending out weekly emails to the student body with Student Council updates. Sixth-Form Representative Arjun Katechia ’19 voiced his support for the latter. “If we want our constituents to actively talk about what we talk about, an email would be great.” Said Katechia.

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## Tense Debate Ensues During Joint Discussion of Political Issues

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Choate Young Democrats, “but some of the things that were said could’ve been said in a more sensitive way.”

The discussion brought to light the need for better awareness on how to engage in thoughtful conversation. “A lot of people came into that meeting very sure of their opinions, and when challenged, a lot of us didn’t have the skill set necessary to understand how to deal with opinions that were different from ours,” remarked Agwunobi.

For some participants, the meeting’s effects weren’t wholly positive. “Members of my club feel attacked because of what they said, and I think that’s absolutely horrible,” said Amine in regards to the Choate Young Republicans. Following the meeting, clubs were able to gather and talk about concerns or worries members had.

In a follow-up meeting of SPECTRUM, cabinet members elaborated on avenues of support as well as the acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community at Choate. “We clearly expressed that we do not accept any hate speech on this campus and will put our best efforts into eliminating hate speech,” said Wilson Wang ’19, a peer confidential resource for SPECTRUM and co-president of CDSA. “Also, we listed and explained all the resources that people might talk about the meeting with.”

SPECTRUM officer Nico Decker ’20 added, “We especially wanted to make sure that the new kids felt welcomed and safe.”

In its own follow-up meeting, Young Republicans discussed how the meeting affected members and the club. “We want to clarify that the club holds the view that although

some people are religious in the club, they do not speak for the majority; they only speak for themselves,” Amine said.

The faculty also showed support for the entire Choate community. “It was clear in the period right after the meeting that some kids were surprised and in some cases hurt by what they had heard,” said Mr. James Yanelli, one of the faculty supervisors during the meeting. “A number of the faculty who serve in student support roles got together to talk about how the needs of those students might be addressed.”

Faculty members like Dr. Holly Hinderlie, Wellness Coordinator, and Chaplain Ally Brundige, Director of Spiritual Life, also reached out to the participating clubs to make sure students were aware of the support systems available at Choate. “A lot of teachers have reached out to [Choate Young

Republicans] in a very positive way to let us know that they’re here to support us and that there’s always resources for us,” Feltovic said.

Overall, though, the meeting was described by the organizers as constructive and productive for the Choate community. Wang said, “Young Dems and Young Republicans talked more about the legality of issues, while CDSA and Spectrum talked more about the morality of the issues, and that brought a whole new perspective to the conversation.”

The meeting shed light on what needs to be improved in terms of community values and behavior of its members and how to better discuss topics that are so sensitive and opinionated. “It showed that another conversation needs to be had about acceptance and respect,” Feltovic said.

The groups obtained mutual understanding at points

through respect and honoring the values of acceptance that Choate upholds. “One of the most notable moments was when someone had expressed an opinion ... and when somebody else disagreed with them,” Agwunobi said. “There was a dialogue between the two of them that essentially resolved in, ‘I understand your perspective and here’s how I raise mine,’ and I think that those kinds of interactions were what we were actually trying to accomplish.”

Most in the Choate community agree that this meeting was also able to open a door that could pave the way for future discussions in which students with different viewpoints and backgrounds could meaningfully communicate with one another.

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## CATHERINE CHUNG ANSWERS QUESTIONS ABOUT HER WRITING PROCESS AND INSPIRATION

*Continued from Page 1*

from Janie significantly, elements of her novel proved autobiographical. “You give pieces of yourself to every character,” she said. Like Janie, Ms. Chung studied mathematics in college, a pursuit encouraged by her parents, before she “rebelled to become an author.” Like Janie, Ms. Chung was ostracized at school as a child; she told a humorous anecdote about how her classmates at Christian school prayed for her family because they were not religious. Like Janie, Ms. Chung had an aunt who went missing amidst the Korean War.

Despite these revelations about Ms. Chung’s inspiration, not every student felt that the Special Program enhanced their understanding. “I just think that, because we read the book two months ago, it doesn’t add anything to your experience of reading the book. Everyone’s forgotten about it, and now we’ve done our assessments on it,” said Lily Ball ’20. She suggested, “It would have been better if the timing was better.”

Other students, however, were satisfied with the program. “Some teachers have reported that their students feel as though it was one of the better



Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen

After her interview, Ms. Chung signed her book for students in the Library Reading Room.

all-school meetings/Special Programs they’ve had. They really enjoyed Catherine’s demeanor and her openness,” stated English Department Chair Ms. Ellen Devine. “The sense that she gives is that when she’s talking to you, she has all the time in the world. Not everyone is good at that.”

Opinions on the novel varied. Lily Ding ’20 found the reading valuable, stating that it “was interesting to read a book from the perspective of a Korean author writing about Korean life, especially because she was a woman. I feel like being an Asian-Ameri-

can woman is a whole other perspective that doesn’t get touched on a lot.” CC Gulbrandsen ’20, on the other hand, found the topic over-emphasized. “It was the same as the books we’ve read before. We should talk about something else, because we’ve talked about immigration for the last two years,” said Gulbrandsen referencing last year’s text, *The Book of Unknown Americans*, a story about intellectual disability and the plight of a neighborhood of Hispanic and Hispanic American families in the U.S.

Last year, cultural diversity

was a main focus of the Summer Reading Committee, a group of faculty who discuss and decide the school’s summer reading book. “One of the things that we looked for in this book was diversity. We wanted something that would appeal to people who might feel like they’re not as represented in some of the books that we choose,” said English teacher and member of the Summer Reading Committee Ms. Brooke Fichera. Added Mr. Cyrus Cook, also a Summer Reading Committee member, “The narrator has a foot in each

world – Eastern world, Western world. I think that was one of the attractions to the story. We thought it was something that our students would understand and appreciate.”

According to Ms. Devine, the reason the English Department began the summer reading series was to allow students to encounter “living, breathing authors of a text that they’ve read in school on a yearly basis so that they can understand the landscape of contemporary literature, which you don’t always get to investigate in English classes, depending on what level you’re at.” Ms. Devine also described the merits of the tradition, stressing the importance of “[understanding] that writers are complex and flawed humans, not geniuses who work in the silence and isolation of their house in the woods.”

However students felt about it, summer reading at Choate is a unique tradition. Said Ms. Fichera, “I hope our whole community can be grateful that we get this opportunity. It’s a really rare thing. No matter what you thought of the book, there’s something that can be gained from the experience.”

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## PETER SINGER ENCOURAGES EFFECTIVE ALTRUISM

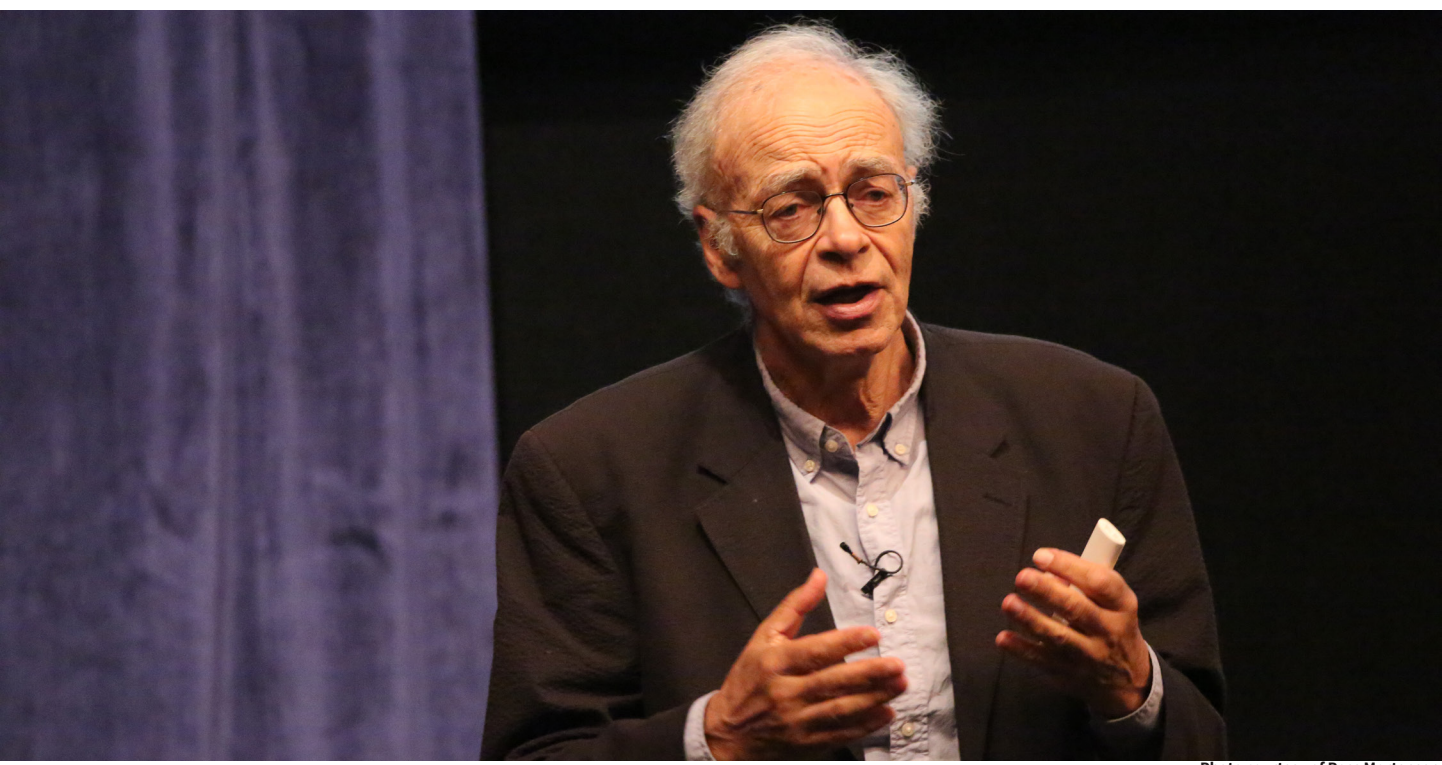


Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen

Philosopher and activist Peter Singer talked to the Choate community on ways to practice effective altruism.

*Continued from Page 1*

highly anticipated one and elicited a variety of reactions from students. Students in Choate’s Chamber Chorus met Mr. Singer prior to his talk. They met with Mr. Singer to discuss some of his ideas so they could better understand the lyrics of one of the songs they were performing on stage, which was a song made up of excerpts from his works. “He made some very

strong points on both how vegetarianism is beneficial to the world and our consumption of fuel as well as how he first formed those views through some meaningful conversations during his college years,” said Mia Katz ’21, a member of Chamber Chorus.

Many students had studied or heard about some of Mr. Singer’s more controversial opinions and were hoping to

hear more about those.

Ethan Luk ’20 said, “The controversial topics I would have liked him to talk about are his views on necrophilia, bestiality, and the infanticide of disabled children, which are topics I have heard he has very controversial opinions on.” He continued, “I think it speaks volumes when even the Q&A session was more educating and entertaining than the talk.”

Bekah Agwunobi ’19 echoed these sentiments and added, “I do think that we have to discuss the implications of our own altruism, and I don’t really think he touched on the fact that not all altruism comes from a well-intentioned place, which is equally important to the discussion.”

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## Choate to Come Together to Serve the Surrounding Community

*Continued from Page 1*

gards this year’s event as an investment for future models. “I do like the idea of providing space for students to engage in the community around campus but also on campus to give back to our school community while serving the earth,” she said. “I think it is important for students to learn about the impact disasters have on the earth and the importance of green space in an inner-city situation.”

Ms. Koomson said that she wants students to view themselves as “change-agents” by engaging directly with the community.

Many students had unique opinions on Community Service Day and the direction that community service should take at Choate in general. Gordon Clark ’19 argued that students are often left to do community service on their own at Choate, which can be daunting and tedious, so Community Service Day offers a great way for students to work for a common purpose and have fun at the

same time. Clark emphasized the need for having a relationship with those you help. “Community service should be about making relationships with the people that we are helping and being meaningful in their lives, not just being a superficial, impersonal helper,” he said.

Sarah Gurevitch ’19 brought up a similar point in regards to the lack of work done in the community, since last year, students packed toiletries and did not go out into the local area. “Community service has really become more hands-on and interactive over the past years, so it would be cool if students had more opportunities to meaningfully interact with the people in need,” she said.

Community Service Day has changed quite a bit since last year in terms of how what students will do and how they will interact. It will be interesting to see how it continues to evolve in the future.

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## COMMUNITY POOL GIVES UP GALLONS AND ADDS AMENITIES IN NEW PLAN

By **Will Zhu '20**  
Copy Editor

For many decades, the Wallingford Community Pool has provided a convenient space for local residents to swim, sunbathe, or cool off during the summer. However, in recent years, pool attendance has declined, and maintenance issues have multiplied. To remedy these problems and rejuvenate public use, the Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department has proposed a new plan to demolish the existing pool and build a new aquatic facility.

According to Mr. Mike Savenelli, chairman of the Wallingford Parks and Recreation Department's pool committee, the plan is "to build a new pool and to make it a destination area with additional amenities." Under the new plan, the 7.1-acre community pool will be replaced by two new pools, a renovated bath house, and a park containing a large splash pad, playground equipment, a sand volleyball court, and a seasonal performing arts stage. The two pools contained in the new facility will include a 12,900 square-foot main pool and a 3,850 square-foot lap pool with six lanes. The new pools will be able to hold 860 swimmers and will only use 334,000 gallons — the existing pool requires one million gallons.

These improvements will not be cheap, however. Demolishing the existing pool and excavating the area alone will cost about \$2.1 million. The price of the actual pool, the pool equipment, and the poolside amenity additions will bring the total



Photo courtesy of the Record-Journal

The Community Pool, last renovated 20 years ago, is set to be renovated according to a plan proposed at the Town Hall.

projected cost to between \$4.5 and \$6 million. In addition, the pool must close while undergoing construction.

"Based on the timeline, it's quite possible that the pool will be closed for one season," said Mr. Savenelli. "That being said, we are working with the neighboring town in hopes of being able to have our residents utilize their pool."

The Parks and Recreation commission spent two years discussing the future of the pool before arriving at the conclusion that a new facility was necessary. The pool has not been renovated in 20 years. Maintenance issues

largely stemmed from the cracking pool bottom and the paint chipping from its surface. Pool attendance has plunged to less than 50 percent of what it was a decade ago. Fewer than 2,500 pool passes were sold this year, compared to more than 5,000 in 2010.

The plan still faces many obstacles before construction can begin, despite a favorable reaction from the Town Council during the proposal meeting. The town will need to hire an architect to sketch preliminary designs and blueprints. The project will then need to submit a Request for Proposal and complete a bidding process that will

likely take between 60 and 90 days. The proposal must be approved by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. Additionally, the plan requires public support and funding to continue.

Because of a lack of funds, the town will most likely need to authorize borrowing to finance the project. The project's effect on taxes is not clear yet, but Mayor William W. Dickinson told the *Record-Journal*, "Ultimately, no matter what money you use, if it's purchasing or receiving or borrowing, the money you use is no longer available

for other purposes, so that impacts future expenses." The actual construction and renovation will take an additional six to nine months, or possibly longer.

Despite these challenges, many are still optimistic about the new aquatic facility. Mr. Savenelli said, "We believe all this enhances our community, especially when people are considering Wallingford for their choice of residence, and gives our current residents new destinations to enjoy with their families."

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## Community Calendar

**OCT. 13, 10:00 a.m.**

**Paint the Pumpkin Pink**  
Purchase and paint a pumpkin at Lyman Orchards for this Breast Cancer Awareness Month fundraiser. Half of the proceeds will go to Middlesex Comprehensive Breast Center

150 South Street, Middlefield  
Pumpkins start at \$10;  
\$15 car ride

**OCT. 14, 5:00 p.m.**

**Wendy Sherman at R.J. Julia Booksellers**  
Join Ambassador Wendy Sherman at Wesleyan's R. J. Julia Booksellers for a discussion of her book, *Not for the Faint of Heart*, and her experience as a diplomat.

R.J. Julia Booksellers  
Middletown  
\$27 car ride

**OCT. 15, 12:00 p.m.**

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**  
Donate blood at this local drive held just a few minutes from campus. Call or visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) to schedule an appointment.

Wallingford Public Library

## State Calls for Capstone Projects

By **Victoria Esquibies '20**  
Staff Reporter

About one year ago, the State Board of Education initiated the Connecticut Capstone Project for Connecticut's public high schools. The project allows senior high-school students to display their skills and particular interests in a project of their choice. The project challenges students to think independently and creatively, and can act as an opportunity to explore potential topics students would like to pursue in college or as a career.

The project was created to implement mastery based learning and encourage districts to establish a "Portrait of the Graduate," a collective vision that articulates the community's aspirations for all students. "The Connecticut Capstone Project is aligned to the Portrait of the Graduate NESAC standard, which asks districts to define the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that they wish their graduates to have upon graduation," said Ms. Frances Rabinowitz, Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents. The project asks for students to apply the knowledge they have gained throughout the entirety of their educational journey to produce a new, creative experience.

The Capstone Project course at Sheehan High School in Wallingford begins with brainstorming ideas during the summer before senior year. The students are asked, "Is there a particu-

lar social, cultural, or political problem or movement that has always interested you?" and are advised to think of topics they've "always wanted to research but have never had the time."

Once school begins and the topic is chosen, the seniors begin the "Capstone Experience" class. It runs in the fall and gives students time to complete the foundations of their projects. Some requirements within this course include a letter of intent that proposes the topic and project idea to the Capstone Committee, a bi-weekly reflective journal of the Capstone journey, and a personal narrative that explains the student's progress.

In the spring, students take the "Capstone Project" class. In this course, students are not given a typical, structured class, but are given a period similar to a study hall to work on their projects. The course meets bi-weekly and culminates in a final presentation about the Capstone journey to an invited audience of community members and a final journal entry reflecting on the Capstone experience as a whole. The projects must be completed by the end of the school year.

"I have a class of students looking for a new and innovative educational experience," said Ms. Melissa Harkins, the Capstone teacher at Sheehan High School. "They are willing to stretch themselves and their skills to achieve an original objective." The members of the class support each other and

help each other formulate ideas. Projects students have chosen vary for each student's particular interests. Some projects include copywriting and publishing books, holding silent auctions for different causes, raising awareness through different events and campaigns for various causes, and running mentorship programs for students in Wallingford and surrounding towns.

The program not only benefits the students, but also the teachers and adults involved. "This experience has been rewarding for me, as an educator, because I get to work with students outside of a curriculum to see them display their passions and talents in an organic setting," Ms. Harkins explained. The teachers have the opportunity to help students discover their interests and create something entirely new that benefits the community around them. With the support and guidance from these educators, the seniors can more easily find success in their final projects. "Students have loved the Capstone process and feel invigorated by the autonomy and ownership of the process," said Ms. Harkins. "Every student expresses by the end of the class that Capstone was an enriching experience that taught them about themselves and the soft skills that core classes miss."

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Photo courtesy of alyssascakery.com

Alyssa's Cakery creates cupcakes, cakepops, and full-size cakes with vibrant decorations.

By **Peter DiNatale '21**  
Columnist

Alyssa's Cakery, located on Center Street, brings confections to the Wallingford community, through its baked good, of course, but also its whimsically decorated interior and its delivery and takeout options. The shop is known for quality homemade cupcakes and cakes, and its online photo gallery suggests the wide variety of the fondant-covered desserts it offers. The shop is owned and run by Ms. Alyssa Nieves, and has been providing its brightly colored confections to the community for six and a half years.

"I felt that there was a need in town and local surrounding towns for custom cakes and cupcakes," said Ms. Nieves. Alyssa's Cakery opened in April of 2012 and was originally located near Vinny's Deli, also on Center Street. Alyssa's Cakery remained in this location for about three years before moving to the other side of Main Street. Though the location switch was a bit of work, Ms. Nieves felt that the new spot has definitely been a benefit for the cakery.

Alyssa's Cakery offers signature desserts in many forms, from cupcakes to cake pops to sheet cakes. The bakery offers many cupcake flavors, grouped

into three categories. The classic flavors include longtime favorites like vanilla, chocolate, funfetti, and red velvet. Specialty flavors are more unusual, with flavors like PB&J, a jelly-filled cupcake with peanut butter cake and frosting, and a minty chocolate concoction called Grasshopper. The list of gourmet flavors is the most expansive, with more than 25

**Alyssa's Cakery**  
156 Center Street

Open Tues.-Thurs  
8:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.  
Friday 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
Saturday 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

flavors listed on the cakery website, ranging from Coffee Oreo to Nutella to Banana Split. The shop even features a gourmet cupcake flavor called Dirt, which, despite the unappetizing name, is just chocolate cake and frosting filled with pudding and topped with oreo crumbs and gummy worms. Alyssa's Cakery does not have all the cupcake flavors available in its glass display within the shop, so many flavors must be ordered in advance.

Aside from their classic, specialty, and gourmet flavors, Ms. Nieves also incorporates

seasonal flavors into the menu, which she cycles through each month. The flavors for October are apple cider and pumpkin spice.

Alyssa's Cakery also offers custom-made cakes, which can be delivered for parties, as well as cake pops, scones, coffee, and cider. Ms. Nieves also decided to incorporate a party room when designing the cakery. The space can be reserved for special occasions and complemented with a choice of one of the custom confections from the menu.

After teaching herself how to bake, Ms. Nieves wanted to take her passion for decorating into business. She opened her bakery after graduating from Southern Connecticut State University. "Our main goal as a cakery is to make people happy with desserts and serve the community of Wallingford and surrounding towns with custom cakes and cupcakes," said Ms. Nieves. With a pastel-hued interior, a wide selection of cakes in all shapes and sizes, and a passion for baking, Ms. Nieves and her team are happy to be serving the community while doing what they love.

**Peter DiNatale**  
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## Celebrate Wallingford 2018



Photo by Abigail Chang /The Choate News

Local businesses and organizations participated in Wallingford's annual festival last weekend.



THE CHOATE NEWS



112<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

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EDITORIAL

Be Mindful of the College Process

It's hectic. It's stressful. It's the college process.

Early decision deadlines are approaching, and many seniors are scrambling to attend information sessions, finalize personal statements, and complete supplements. It's nothing new: applying to college always comes with a certain degree of stress.

Though worrying about college seems to be universal among seniors, some underclassmen fail to recognize the sensitivity around this subject. We, the 112th masthead of *The Choate News*, understand that students may be curious about seniors' plans for college admission, but we urge all members of the community to be mindful and respectful during this time.

For the college fair on Monday, seniors flocked to the WJAC to meet with representatives and demonstrate interest in particular schools. Underclassmen were welcome to explore the 160 schools visiting campus, though many seemed to forget that seniors value this time as an opportunity to increase their chances of admission. Seniors should have been given priority in speaking to college representatives, and underclassmen should have been aware of the dynamic at play.

Underclassmen need to also understand that seniors are not always willing to talk about their experience with the college process. Whether it's to avoid a sense of competition with their peers, minimize embarrassment after a potential rejection, or simply make it all seem less of a reality, many seniors would prefer to keep the process to themselves.

On the other hand, seniors should be aware that questions about the college process may stem from innocent curiosity. Underclassmen may simply be wondering what applying to university might look like for them in the coming years. If you are a senior and are asked about the process, we encourage you to be aware of this and respond appropriately. Though you may be uncomfortable sharing your plans for college, a mere question shouldn't elicit outrage.

The college process means something different for every senior on campus, and it's up to each to decide whether he or she wants to talk about it. With that being said, let's allow seniors to speak to a college representatives first at information sessions, and let's simply be mindful of the questions we ask at such events. And, seniors, remember that you, too, were once curious underclassmen.

DESPITE DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS, WE MUST RESPECT



Photo courtesy of Kyra Jenney

Alex Amine '19, president of the Young Republicans, leads his club's weekly meeting in the Lanphier Commons.

By **Huong Pham '19**  
*Opinions Writer*

Every Thursday night, Young Republicans gather at the same time — and on the other side of campus — as Young Democrats. While a typical Young Democrats' meeting is characterized by a circle of armchairs and formally moderated debate in the Bay Room of St. John Hall, a Young Republicans' meeting is a more laid-back gathering of students who discuss any topics that come to mind. Participants represent a range of opinions: staunch conservatives, those who support only certain Republican policies, and those who come out of curiosity. Not long ago, I was one curious mind, and was welcomed with no questions asked.

The Young Republicans are a minority on the Choate campus — a large portion of the student body, hailing from places like New York and California, identifies as liberal. Choate itself sits in a blue state, though it enjoys the privilege of a diverse student body that comes from all around the world, including countries without a two-party system or a particularly democratic form of government. Coming from a self-proclaimed Socialist Republic and one-party state, I went from

a nearly homogenous community in Vietnam to an immensely diverse one, where students not only differ by race but also socioeconomic background, religion, and other identities. While the School rightfully celebrates this diversity and frequently engages its students in conversation about these differences, political identity always seems to be overlooked. If we can have uncomfortable conversations about topics like consent and race, I wonder, can we not also have such conversations about political identity?

As an international student with mostly liberal friends, I don't find myself able to answer this question on my own. Hoping to hear more viewpoints from the conservative minority, I sent an anonymous survey to the Young Republicans. From the club's 20 active members, I received 14 responses that quickly confirmed what I had suspected: the Young Republicans felt that they were too quickly judged for their perspectives.

Members of the Young Republicans come from both red and blue states. Some have religious backgrounds while others don't. Yet all stated that their opinions "aren't being heard" or "are being heard but not respected." The survey also revealed a general frustration

with the fact that they usually found themselves alone against a majority of opposing opinions. Some responded that they felt their opinions were often labeled "hate speech" or "misogynistic" or "racist" without proper deliberation. Because of this, right-leaning students look for platforms through which they can share their views without being shut down or ridiculed. A hundred percent of responses confirmed the tight-knit community of Young Republicans as such a place. People come to those meetings to express viewpoints that they feel they can't share anywhere else on campus, and they receive unconditional support for their courage in sharing.

The political tension on Choate's campus has magnified since the inauguration of President Trump in 2016. In my opinion, it has been a while since we as a school has had constructive conversations and peaceful joint meetings about American politics. President Trump has become the face of the Republican Party, and his views on women and immigrants have hurt the reputation of conservatism as a whole. This prevents students from having unbiased conversations with campus conservatives.

For instance, at the recent joint meeting between the Young Democrats, Young Republicans, Spectrum, and CDSA, moderators struggled to control the conversation. The cramped room and limited time frame stunted proper discourse. Some students were interrupted while they were talking, and the respectful silence often erupted into loud disagreement. Nearly everyone left dissatisfied, seemingly clinging ever more tightly to their existing beliefs. In that overwhelming environment, both sides were at fault for picking at small details while failing to understand overarching points. Everyone felt as if he or she were in a fight to defend a side. The truth is, everyone just wanted to be understood.

Human beings naturally react defensively to opposing opinions. We must acknowledge this inherent psychological reflex and pause to offer our peers the space to voice their perspectives. There's no guarantee that we will agree on anything, but we can always understand and respect one another.

**Huong Pham** is a sixth former from Hanoi, Vietnam. She may be reached at [hpham19@choate.edu](mailto:hpham19@choate.edu)

Finding Deeper Meaning in *Forgotten Country*

By **Kiki Kim '20**  
*Opinions Staff Writer*

You may remember an article I wrote a few weeks ago about *Forgotten Country*, in which I reflected on Choate's tradition of assigning a book for the entire student body to read over the summer. However, the process doesn't end with the last page: it continues into the school year, when Choate brings the author of the book to speak in front of the school. My feelings on *Forgotten Country* were ambiguous before, but with author Catherine Chung's recent visit to campus, I have begun to see the experience in a new light.

Ms. Chung was likeable and warm, in stark contrast to *Forgotten Country*'s tone. It was hard to imagine that she — a kind, relatable woman —

wrote such a harrowing story of grief and struggle. However, as she began to reveal the circumstances of its creation, the plot's origin began to make sense.

*It means much more now that I know these folktales were treasured parts of the author's childhood.*

It seemed fitting that she completed the book ten years ago. A lot can change about an author in ten years — including her writing style.

It's strange, but through reading any book, we really

are getting to know a past version of its author. Mrs. Chung put so much of herself into *Forgotten Country*, digging deep through herself to unearth everything: her Korean-American culture, her love of fairy tales, and her feelings of injustice over the North-South Korean divide. In a way, reading the book was akin to looking into the author's mind through a distorting kaleidoscope.

Furthermore, after seeing how she is in real life, I can see a new lightness in the anecdotal folk tales from the novel. Learning about Mrs. Chung's passion for fairy tales makes me reflect on the book even more warmly. It means much more now that I know that these stories aren't just sterile narratives arising as from a Google search. Rather, they were treasured parts of the author's childhood.

While reading books, fiction especially, a reader tries to find connection with the story, pondering the book's morals and contextualizing her identity within the book's parameters. Personally hearing from the novel's author gave me the insight to consider where I stand in relation to the story itself.

Choate's tradition of inviting the summer reading novel's author to speak to the student body makes the entire reading experience more valuable. The opportunity to absorb material from the author directly prompts deeper contemplation of the novel's themes. The chance to hear the author of our summer reading novel in person must be treasured.

**Kiki Kim** is a fifth former from San Francisco. She may be reached at [kkim20@choate.edu](mailto:kkim20@choate.edu)

Yes, Take Your First Language As A Class

By **Greer Goergen '21**  
*Opinions Staff Writer*

Should native speakers be allowed to take their first language as a class at Choate?

Though Choate's answer is yes, some argue that it's illogical for a student who already "knows" a language to retake it. If you've taken Geometry, why take it again? Not only does prior experience speaking a language give native speakers an unfair advantage, but they themselves are likely to gain little from the class. At first glance, it appears that allowing native speakers to take their mother tongue as a class benefits no one.

What does being a native speaker even mean? According to Language Department Head Mr. Georges Chahwan, a native speaker "refers to someone who has used and learned the language in their early childhood." The person, he said, "has been fully immersed in that language at home, in school and throughout their environment." By this definition, we are all native speakers of some language. Therefore, all at Choate whose mother tongue is English technically take their first language as a class. Shouldn't this allow-

ance apply elsewhere?

And so we shouldn't see native speakers of foreign languages as unfair competition. Rather, we should view them as role models to learn from. A student who grew up in Beijing could share about her culture in a Chinese classroom. A student who was raised speaking Spanish could talk about how the language has shaped his identity. Especially in higher level classes that focus on culture, history, and literature, this sort of knowledge and firsthand experience benefits everyone. These classes also focus on the discussion of plays, stories, or books that often have nothing to do with what one already knows, but rather, personal opinion and understanding. Instead of viewing native speakers as unfairly advantaged, we should do our best to learn from them.

In any case, simply being a native speaker doesn't mean that one knows the grammatical constructs of her language properly. Native speakers might know verb tenses intuitively, but they might not be able to name them or apply them in writing. As a result, they too, struggle on assessments. A Spanish student may be completely fluent in Span-

ish but can't always conjugate verbs, write the most powerful essays, or dissect Spanish texts. Choate's language classes are still beneficial to the students taking them — regardless if they have grown up speaking the language or not.

Students should, indeed, be able to study their first language at Choate. Languages are linked inherently to culture

and understanding the world, and when it comes to this, native speakers have bountiful experiences to share. Having a native speaker in a language class presents us all a challenge to learn and grow.

**Greer Goergen** is a fourth former from New York. She may be reached at [ggoergen21@choate.edu](mailto:ggoergen21@choate.edu)

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Corrections

School News

A school news article last week incorrectly identified last year's interim Wind Ensemble director as Marshal Brownford. He is Marshall Brown.

Features

A features article last week incorrectly listed Elizabeth Quinn's email as [lquinn19@choate.edu](mailto:lquinn19@choate.edu). It is [lquinn20@choate.edu](mailto:lquinn20@choate.edu).

The Choate News regrets these errors.

To submit a correction, email [thechoatenews@choate.edu](mailto:thechoatenews@choate.edu)



Graphic by Elaine Zhang / The Choate News



# USMCA TO JEOPARDIZE TRADE WITH CHINA

By **Nate White '20**  
*Opinions Writer*

On September 30, the leaders of the United States, Mexico, and Canada signed the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), a revamping of the nearly 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The deal came as a victory for President Trump, who frequently called NAFTA a “disaster” and aimed to renegotiate it throughout his campaign. The USMCA is poised to come into effect by 2020 and stands to make changes in industries such as automobile manufacturing and dairy. However, the USMCA also makes significant changes that threaten each nation’s trade with China – this is a fatal flaw.

The USMCA severely restricts trade with China, although rather indirectly. Article 32.10 of the agreement states that any country in the USMCA shall notify the other two if it means to engage in trade negotiations with a “non-market” country and must allow them to review the full text of any agreements signed. The clause states that if the other countries review the agreement and decide that it will affect trade between them, they can end the USMCA with a six-month notice and replace it with a bilateral agreement. Technically, this clause could apply to any “non-market” country, but government officials in Beijing have openly criticized the clause as being unfairly directed at China. This criticism is not unfounded. The Trump administration has recently been engaging in a trade war with China, passing high tariffs on Chinese imports. Therefore, the U.S. government certainly has reason to try to limit Chinese economic influences with its North American trading partners. In Trump’s mind, if he wants to win the ongoing trade war with China, he must block his own allies from trading with China too.

The clause, reportedly submitted by the United States toward the end of the negotiation process, is also a clear indicator of the false equality between the



The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement was signed on September 30 by the leaders of all three nations.

Photo courtesy of The Washington Post

United States and its neighbors. Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau both have previously sought increased commerce with China, which is Canada’s second-largest and Mexico’s fourth-largest trading partner, yet the renegotiation of NAFTA forced each country to significantly slow down any efforts to create stronger trading ties with China. The United States is both nations’ top trading partner, and the U.S. essentially forced each country to choose between trade with the United States and trade with China. Such diplomatic strong-arming emphasizes the fact that

while the USMCA is technically an agreement between three nations, the United States possesses a clear position of power over the other two.

The USMCA’s “China clause” is flawed in both its intention and execution. Firstly, the harmful effects of the Trump Administration’s trade war with China are manifested in Article 32.10, as it robs all three North American nations of valuable trade opportunities. From a purely economic standpoint, trade with China offers manufactured goods for a much lower price than goods produced by any of the three member nations of the USMCA. The primary goal of the Trump

Administration in enacting so many rules and regulations regarding Chinese imports is to protect manufacturing jobs in the United States. However, considering that most jobs lost in manufacturing are lost as a result of automation and that Chinese imports provide goods for ordinary citizens at much lower costs than American goods, such economic protectionism is clearly not a viable solution to unemployment in the manufacturing sector and only serves to hurt ordinary Americans rather than help them. The United States’ abuse of its role as a major trading partner of Mexico and Canada is extremely unfair to

both countries. Free-trade agreements are meant to increase trade between its members, not to limit trade between its members and outside countries.

The stipulations within Article 32.10 are also much more beneficial to the U.S. than to Canada and Mexico. Our North American neighbors rely heavily on the U.S. for much of their trade, but this reliance is not completely mutual. If the United States signed an agreement with one of the “non-market” countries described by the clause, neither Mexico or Canada would be likely to protest because neither country can afford to lose the U.S. as a trading partner.

Conversely, the U.S. is perfectly capable of enforcing this clause.

In truth, the USMCA does not make much of a difference when it comes to actual trade in North America. Other than the clauses targeting China, only small parts of NAFTA have been adjusted, and the agreement will have a largely unchanged impact. While the fate of the U.S.-China trade war is uncertain, what is evident is that the United States has tightened its leash on Canada and Mexico in an attempt to pull them away from China.

**Nate White** is a fifth former from Cheshire, CT. He may be reached at [nwhite20@choate.edu](mailto:nwhite20@choate.edu)

## Ford v. Kavanaugh: A Tragic Example of the Gender Double Standard



Photo courtesy of The New York Times

On September 27, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified that now Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh allegedly sexually assaulted her in 1982.

By **Niki Gummadi '21**  
*Opinions Staff Writer*

On September 27, Dr. Christine Blasey Ford testified in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee, recounting her alleged experience of being sexually assaulted by Judge Brett Kavanaugh, who was confirmed to the Supreme Court on October 6. Judge Kavanaugh’s testimonial response was anything but convincing, and it exposed many of the double standards between men and women, especially as they relate to modern politics.

The most noticeable differences between these two testimonies were the tone and temperament of the speakers. Dr. Ford relived a painful trauma – one that has had lasting, harmful effects on her life – and yet, she was able to remain calm, collected, and polite towards those on the Senate judiciary committee. The most emotional Dr. Ford became on the stand was when she held back tears while describing details of her sexual assault. Kavanaugh, on the other hand,

was aggressive from the very beginning of his testimony, and he only became more aggressive as the hearing continued. To fully understand the double standard demonstrated throughout the testimonies, one must imagine what would have happened had the roles been reversed. Had Dr. Ford been as angry and emotional as Kavanaugh, she would have been described as hysterical, and her story would’ve been written off immediately. The fact that Kavanaugh was able to maintain his credibility with Republican Senators despite his hostility was due solely to his gender. Furthermore, Judge Kavanaugh was undergoing a nomination to the Supreme Court; under no circumstances should behavior like the type he demonstrated be displayed by anyone who sits on the highest court in the land. If Judge Kavanaugh were a woman, the committee would not have tolerated anything close to his behavior.

These double standards are especially harmful in sexual assault cases like this one, where

men already have more power. It is overwhelming enough for anyone, regardless of gender, to come forward and detail their some of their most painful and traumatic moments to the world; Dr. Ford and other female victims have the double burden of knowing that their gender automatically makes them less credible than the men who allegedly assaulted them.

The issue of what constitutes a “credible” person has been affected by double standards throughout history. Dr. Ford is, by all means, an accomplished professional. She is a research psychologist at the Stanford University School of Medicine as well as a professor of psychology at Palo Alto University. These achievements have no doubt boosted her credibility, but a woman should not have to have a “respectable” job in order to have her voice heard.

The differences in Ford’s and Kavanaugh’s behavior are most likely a result of the double standards that they have faced throughout their lives. Profes-

sional women such as Dr. Ford often endure years of being labeled “too emotional” if they dare show anything other than poise and composure. On the other hand, professional men such as Kavanaugh often go through life being told that aggression will get them whatever they want. Had Dr. Ford and Judge Kavanaugh been held to the same standard in the hearing, the judge would have been ousted immediately.

This double standard is dangerous, as it disenfranchises all women, a group that comprises half the population; women shouldn’t have to work twice as hard and remain twice as calm to be considered equal to their male counterparts. There are no words to describe Dr. Christine Blasey Ford other than brave and composed, and Senate Judiciary Committee did both her and America a terrible injustice by not holding Judge Kavanaugh to the same high standards.

**Niki Gummadi** is a fourth former from Ocala, FL. She may be reached at [ngummadi21@choate.edu](mailto:ngummadi21@choate.edu)

## India is Not Yet Ready for Modicare

By **Bianca Rosen '21**  
*Opinions Writer*

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi’s belief that a healthy population is the key to India becoming the next global superpower inspired him to launch “Modicare.” Modicare is a government initiative which would supposedly provide free healthcare to 500 million impoverished citizens. However, a lot of work is needed before we can see Modicare actually implemented. Modicare, though a wonderful notion, is far too idealistic.

Before India can begin to provide free healthcare, they need to upgrade their hospitals and retain more doctors. Currently, 66 percent of Indians live in rural sectors, where hospitals are rare. Therefore, to receive medical care, they need to travel long distances to urban regions. Furthermore, most skilled medical professionals are drawn towards the private healthcare sector, where they can work under better conditions and for higher salaries. While the people who can afford health insurance can easily access those private practices for their medical concerns, those who can’t have extremely limited access to the care they need. The Indian government simply can’t solve this problem overnight with Modicare. The minimal medical presence in rural regions should be dealt with first before the arrival of Modicare.

*Modicare, though a wonderful notion, is far too idealistic.*

Though Modicare has been granted approximately 1.7 billion dollars per year in federal and state funding, that money won’t necessarily solve the lack of healthcare for India’s poorest. It will take a tremendous amount of time to build enough hospitals for the poor. In India today, there is approximately one doctor for every 1,315 persons. Moreover, many of the doctors who gradu-

ated medical school in India emigrate to Western countries soon after to practice there instead – a phenomenon known as the “brain drain.” It is estimated that as a result of Modicare’s implementation, hospitals will perform 5 million more operations and need 35 million more beds. When asked how the program will deal with the massive increase in demand, Indu Bhushan, the project’s executive officer, said, “The market will deal with that.” He makes grand proclamations about free healthcare, which is theoretically a good idea but nevertheless unrealistic.

Moreover, giving free healthcare to such a large, diverse population is often very difficult and expensive. Every person has different needs, making it hard to budget money for hospitals. Catering to such groups poses a challenge to many large countries, including the United States. This is why modeling larger countries after nations with successful free health care systems doesn’t work; those societies often have significantly smaller populations. For example, Denmark has a booming free health care system, but it is comprised of only five million people, whereas India has a population of 1.3 billion. Therefore, it is impossible to make a comparison. Free healthcare varies in efficacy by country, and in India, it seems hard to speculate whether Modicare will have a lasting impact on the lack of medical care for the poor.

There are many questions to answer in terms of practicality as well. Serving such a large amount of people is impossible without fully prepared hospitals and skilled workers. Until India can achieve this, it is doubtful that Modicare will be successful in granting healthcare to the general public. Before giving the people false hope, Prime Minister Modi must take time to develop a strategy. How will he most efficiently build hospitals and train doctors? How can the government support such a financially taxing initiative? Given the extent and expense of the Modicare program, being unsure of the answers to these questions is concerning and irresponsible.

**Bianca Rosen** is a fourth former from Bozeman, MT. She may be reached at [brosen21@choate.edu](mailto:brosen21@choate.edu)



## Introducing Ashley Wang '19: New Senior at the KEC and Member of the National U.S. Figure Skating Team



Left photo by Kathryn Phillips/The Choate News, Right photos courtesy of Ashley Wang

Ashley Wang '19, a new senior, practices figure skating for the National U.S. Figure Skating Team.

By **Deanna Tan '20**  
Staff Reporter

You are probably aware that a number of Choate's students are athletes on varsity teams, but for new senior Ashley Wang '19, athletics extend far beyond the WJAC. Wang is a student from Los Angeles, California who is on the National U.S. Figure Skating Team and represented the United States at Worlds last season. She participated in both single skating and team skating on the junior and novice levels and is now on the senior level. She recently skated in the U.S National Showcase in Santa Rosa, California.

Back in Los Angeles, Wang was the captain of the Los Angeles Ice Theater team for five years. Wang said, "My skating team was my second family. My favorite memory with my team was when we performed our Día de Los Muertos program in Paris. We befriended a bunch of Australian skaters, and they gave us little koala souvenirs." Wang has been skating for ten years. She started towards the end of the first grade when her brother, Bradley Wang '21, joined his travel hockey team. Her mom would leave her and her brother at the rink for hours after school. At one point, Wang decided that she would rather be

twirling on ice than playing tag or doing dryland workouts with the hockey players. When Wang isn't on the ice, she practices by stretching, jogging, practicing off ice, and taking ballet. She still trains at Choate, although it is significantly more difficult for her to find rinks than it was in LA. Currently, she skates at Northford Ice Pavillion and hopes to be able to practice on Choate's ice rink when it opens later this month. Wang shared that it has been a lot harder for her to maintain the same level of intensity she had back home as she has been living and studying at the KEC. She added, "But I knew what I

was getting myself into, and I was aware that I would have to make certain sacrifices in pursuing this program. And it's been gratifying so far. I think I made the right decision." Wang practices in Northford as often as she can, but since she doesn't have a special projects exemption from the Athletics Department, she needs to balance Choate's athletic requirements with skating. So far, Wang has been practicing a couple times a week during Northford's freestyle sessions, which is difficult because they prioritize hockey over figure skating — that means there are few sessions reserved for ice

skaters, and those sessions often get canceled last minute to accommodate hockey practices or games. However, when Wang gets the opportunity to practice on ice, she coaches herself to maintain and strengthen current jumps and spins. She's also working on improving her edges and skating skills in preparation for a U.S. Figure Skating Senior level test that she plans on taking in November. "To skate on school days, I take a 20 minute Uber to the ice rink or get another parent to drive me. Practice lasts for an hour — I wish I could skate for longer than that, but the rink is used for hockey practices after. Northford house

is the closest ice rink to Choate, but I'm open to exploring more options around New Haven!" Wang commented. Wang believes skating will always be a part of her life, but she realizes that the extreme competitive aspect of it has come to an end, and she is working on coming to terms with that. Wang sees skating as a very fun chapter of her life, and she is glad it has happened while it did. Now, she is grateful for the opportunity to focus on furthering her research and intellectual pursuits during her senior year at the KEC.

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## A LATTE CAFFEINE ON CAMPUS

By **Lizzie Quinn '20**  
Reporter

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, caffeine is the most widely used, mind-altering substance for people of varying age groups and backgrounds because it's legal, easy to obtain, and present in many beverages. Recent studies by the National Council on Strength and Fitness have shown that caffeine intake among children and teens has increased by an astonishing 70% in the past three decades. So it's not a surprise that caffeine on Choate's campus, specifically, is easy to obtain and a fixture in the lives of many Choate students. A medium iced coffee at Lanphier Café is just a dollar fifty (quite the bang for your buck!), and hot water for tea and coffee is readily accessible in the Dining Hall. This raises the question: Have Choate students become too reliant on caffeine to make up for their lack of sleep as a reliance on caffeine sweeps the nation, or is this problem under control? I interviewed a few members of the Choate community to get a better idea.

as she only drinks coffee when she has a class in Lanphier, which is three times a week. Sydney Klakeg '19, on the other hand, gets her coffee either from the dining hall or Lanphier, but doesn't feel like she depends on caffeine to get through the day. With regards to how much caffeine she consumes daily, Klakeg responded, "It varies. Some days I'll have no coffee, and there are other days where I'll have one cup, and there are some days where I'll have two." Although she doesn't have a strong reliance on coffee, Klakeg says, "If I'm having a rough day, sometimes a coffee can make my day better. It's just warm, like a warm cup of love." Workers from the Lanphier Café shared that the number of caffeinated drinks ordered on a given Tuesday (one of the busier days for Lanphier Café, both before and after school meeting) can range from one hundred to two hundred drinks. On October 2, 137 caffeinated beverages were ordered, which included espresso drinks, lattes, hot and iced coffees, caffeinated frappes, and hot teas, among others. Based on the 137 caffeinated drinks ordered last Tuesday, if only one drink were ordered per person, then around 10% of the Choate community (including both students and faculty) consumed caffeine that day. Since the number of caffeinated drinks ordered every day varies and doesn't include dining hall coffee, this percentage isn't set in stone. As a whole, caffeine consumption at Choate hasn't quite reached disastrous standards, but regular caffeine consumers should monitor their intake so as not to risk addiction.

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## A GUIDE TO CHOATE'S VERNACULAR

By **Ho Jin Jang '21**  
Reporter

During your time at Choate, you've probably become acquainted with the various acronyms students use to communicate both for convenience and easier understanding. Here is a condensed list of some of the acronyms that Choate students frequently use:

**The SAC:**  
**Student Activities Center/ St. John Hall**  
St. John Hall, or the Student Activities Center, is often referred to as "the SAC". St. John Hall is the newest building on campus, and opened April. It is an educational and social hub for the Choate community that includes the Choate Store, the Tuck Shop Café, and Dean's and Student Activities Offices. This is also a place where students come to enjoy SAC dances and numerous weekend recreations. Eliza Marovitz '21 said, "I personally think it is easier calling St. John Hall 'the SAC' because it is shorter and catchy."

**PMAC:**  
**Paul Mellon Arts Center**  
The Paul Mellon Arts Center is the arts building on campus. It is locally known as the "PMAC". The building is divided into two major parts: the Theater Wing, which constitutes a 760-seat, two level proscenium theater and a black-box theater; and the Triangle Wing, which has five levels of art studios, practice rooms, classrooms, offices, and recording studios.

**The X:**  
**The Worthington Johnson Athletics Center**  
"The X" is the name that students frequently refer to as the Athletics Center. Although the majority of the student body refers it as "the X", "the WJAC" is an equivalent. The Worthington Johnson Athletics Center includes two basketball courts, international squash courts, three courts that can be used for volleyball and tennis, a dance studio, a wrestling room, an ergometric room for crew, and a fitness center. Directly adjacent to the athletics center lies the recently renamed Class of '76 Field, a multi-field that can accommodate lacrosse, field hockey, soccer, and football.

**Lanphy:**  
**The Lanphier Center**  
"Lanphy" is the abbreviated name used to refer to the Cameron and Edward Lanphier Center, otherwise known as the building for mathematics and computer science. The Lanphier Center is also a home for Choate's first iD lab, which stimulates students to take an interdisciplinary approach to the STEM subjects with the incorporation of art and design. The building is also known for its cafe; it serves coffee, tea, and a number of to-go food options.

**DH:**  
**Dining Hall**  
The Dining Hall, located in Hill House, is usually used as an abbreviation in the written form. Operated by SAGE, weekday breakfast hours are from 7:15 am to 8:30 am, and continental breakfast hours are from 8:30 am to 9:30 am. Lunch starts from 10:45 am to 1:30 pm, and dinner from 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm.

**Noho and Soho:**  
**Tenney and Bernard House**  
"Noho" and "Soho," much to the chagrin of their donors, are names that replace Tenney and Bernhard respectively, due to their length. They are the newest

dorms on campus; the building opened in 2008 directly across from the Worthington Johnson Athletics Center. The acronyms help describe their location, Tenney being Noho, since it is the north house and Bernard being Soho, the south house.

**The KEC:**  
**The Kohler Environmental Center**  
The Kohler Environmental Center, located on the far east of the main campus, is Choate's environmental and research education center. Students who are admitted to the Signature Environmental Immersion Program reside and take the majority of their classes at "the KEC".

These are only a handful of Choate's acronyms —there are many more obscure ones you may pick up throughout your time here. Looking ahead, Colony Hall, a complement to the PMAC, is planned to open by the start of the next academic year. Anyone who is interested in creating an acronym for Colony Hall should start thinking now!

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# Cafe Ra

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**I feel like caffeine doesn't have an effect on me, so I just like it, because I like the way the coffee tastes.**

*Sam Scott '20*

Sam Scott '20 obtains her caffeine through coffee, but for her, it is more for the taste than the increase in energy. "I feel like caffeine doesn't have an effect on me, so I just like it, because I like the way the coffee tastes," she said. It's also a matter of convenience,



## Digital Media and Design Students Raise Awareness Of Animal Cruelty



Graphic by Chandler Littleford/The Choate News

Chandler Littleford '20 created this artwork of a Himalayan tarh in Digital Media and Design, a new class at Choate.

By **Deanna Tan '20**  
Staff Reporter

A series of artwork produced by students from a new class, Digital Media and Design, now hangs in the Hill House commons.

This course focuses on employing digital tools such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to create artwork. Kevin Lynch '19, a student in the class, said, "I think the class goal is to improve and push our own artistic skills and abilities while also creating art that carries a message. Of course, we want art to be appealing to the viewer, but what is more important is what they glean from it. That is the measure of our success or failure."

The class, taught by new teacher Mr. Aaron Sober, consists of four students who have formed good relationships. "It's a very close, fun little group. More like a club than a class," said Chandler Littleford '20, another student taking the class. Little-

ford chose to take this course in order to further her knowledge of Photoshop and Illustrator. She, however, could not take the class in previous years because of the lack of teacher availability. Mr. Sober was able to fill this gap. "You need someone with a handle on graphic design as well as traditional art. Mr. Sober is really great. He knows what he's talking about when it comes to digital art," Littleford said.

Tyler Carreon '21, a third member of Digital Media and Design, believes that the class name is not fitting. Carreon thinks that most people would better understand it if it were simply labeled "graphic design." He commented, "The class doesn't get the attention it deserves because of its misrepresentation. We have new pieces that really are going to show just how fun the class is."

The current exhibit was based upon a previous project done by photographer Joel Satore, known as "The Photo Ark."

Satore's mission is to highlight the prevalence of animal endangerment through photography. The members of the graphic design class wanted to educate members of the Choate Rosemary Hall community by representing some animals that face grave danger due to poaching, recreational hunting, and habitat destruction.

Littleford hopes to capture the beauty of her chosen animal, the Himalayan tarh, all the while reminding others that it's in danger. She realizes the exhibition will not have a great impact, but hopes it'll draw attention to the beauty being destroyed while we go about our lives.

The Himalayan tahr has similar features to a mountain goat. The biggest danger to the species is sports hunting. After researching "tahr hunting," Littleford discovered hundreds of pictures of people posing with the tahrs after killing them. She says, "I'm looking at this reference photo I have, of this tahr

staring straight in the camera with these huge eyes. You wonder how anyone could ever shoot a creature like that point-blank. I guess I wanted to convey all the kind of wistfulness I got from thinking about that."

Lynch's artwork focuses on the Mexican Grey Wolf. Featured is the wolf itself, but the significance of the piece lies in its background, where a hunting scope is centered around the wolf's head. The wolf is meant to appear powerful, which is expressed by the dark, piercing eyes in the center of the piece.

Lynch expressed his realization that, "no matter how powerful the wolf may be, we hold the ultimate power in our hands of whether it lives or dies."

All students in the class hope that their exhibit, displayed in one of the campus' most frequented locations, will promote awareness.

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## CHOATE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA TO TOUR IN ITALY

By **Eliana Kim '20**  
Staff Reporter

For eleven days this summer, the Choate Symphony Orchestra will perform in Italy and learn about the country's rich culture. Members of the music department and orchestra students have been desperately awaiting this — especially since the cancellation of last year's tour. The most recent international tour took place in 2016.

Mr. Phil Ventre, Director of the Choate Symphony Orchestra, has planned numerous international and domestic tours for his students. "The Choate Orchestra has presented concert tours many times in historic cathedrals, in renowned concert halls, music conservatories in twelve European countries, and many more. This year's tour is especially more meaningful because the Choate Orchestra presented its first concert tour in Italy in 1995."

**If you had told me five years ago that I would be touring in Italy, I would have laughed at you — yet here we are!**

William Robertson '20

The Symphony Orchestra will leave the country on June 1 and return on June 11. Throughout the tour, students will learn about Italy's history of music, art, architecture, and literature. In addition, the group will be performing masterworks in historic concert venues in Rome, Florence, Cremona and Venice. They plan to perform Hector Berlioz's *Carnival Overture* and Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's piano concerto, featuring Kaki Jiaqi Su '19.

William Robertson '20, a cellist in Symphony Orchestra, shared his enthusiasm: "I feel so incredibly blessed and lucky to be part of this tour. As someone who is from a fairly small and rural town, if you had told me five years ago that I would be touring Italy with a symphony orchestra, I would have laughed at you — yet, here we are!" He continued, "I am most excited about the fact that we will be playing a lot of Italian music in Italy. In orchestra, we play pieces from all over the globe, but it is really rare that we get to perform these masterpieces in the places which these pieces were inspired. This tour means something bigger than a bunch of teenagers playing hunks of wood with horsehair — the stuff we are playing is not easy. Every one of us has struggled and practiced to get to the point we are now, and we get to share this experience together, performing and enjoying the music as a group."

Ethan Luk '20, Co-Principal violin of the Choate Orchestra, also showed his eagerness: "I hope I will get to fully immerse myself in the Italian culture and history. Italy has produced so much amazing classical music and I want to understand the history of music making in Italy. I am most excited about our trip to Cremona because Stradivarius violins were made there."

The June 2019 concert tour will be a special moment for the Choate Orchestra musicians. Mr. Ventre and all the faculty members that planned this trip hope that the tour will not only help students grow as musicians, but will also fill student lives with cherished memories.

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## PMAC Main Stage Damaged by Torrential Flooding

By **Richard Chen '22**  
Reporter

On September 25, a flood hit North Haven County and caused knee-deep waters on the eastern side of campus. The Paul Mellon Arts Center stage, which supports the majority of the school's productions, faced significant flooding during the storm. The water, reaching one foot deep at the back of the theatre, destroyed the stage as well as the set of *Noises Off!* that was meant to be completed in the coming weeks. With the stage currently undergoing extensive repairs, the fall production *Noises Off!*, the Parent's Weekend choral concerts, and the upcoming Wallingford Symphony Orchestra performance have been postponed or moved to different locations.

"We put a few scenarios on the table, but the best one is to move the fall production into the winter," said Deighna DeRiu, the director of *Noises Off!*. "This show is heavily set-based. The main concern would be the heavy two-story set breaking through what was left of the stage." *Noises Off!* will now premiere in the winter term with the same cast, meaning that the originally planned *A Midsummer Night's*

*Dream* will now open in the fall of 2019.

The entire cast and crew of *Noises Off!* has had to find new sports or activities for the remainder of fall term. This poses a challenge for certain members.

Luckily, the PMAC auditorium's hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of technical equipment only faced minimal damage. Mr. Mark Gostomski, Technical Director, said, "As far as the overall building, we're pretty OK. The stage floor took a very significant hit and that's where the largest amount of concern is. The floor is actually about five separate layers. The top black layer was utterly destroyed, so absolutely nothing could be saved and everything had to be removed. We know that there is water damage which is causing mold and mildew issues."

The overall costs and timeline of repair work is currently being discussed by the inspection crew. However, apart from the main stage's "apron," which will be used for school meetings and the upcoming show *Tsidii Le Loka*, the theatre will not be used in the fall term.

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## TAKING ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

A Photo Essay By **Kathryn Phillips**



The Choate student body and administration have long worked to increase environmental conscientiousness on campus. Sustainability efforts include installing lights that automatically switch off and solar panels that provide the energy for the Kohler Environmental Center. Choate strives to ensure that its new buildings are LEED certified, and it nurtures campus organizations like the Environmental Action Coalition and the Conservation Proctors. Smaller efforts can sometimes go unnoticed. Many of us may not be aware that every day 80 pounds of compostable leftovers are brought from the dining hall salad bar to the KEC. There, two faculty members, Mr. Joseph Scanio and Ms. Lena Nicolai, disperse the food waste around the property as fertilizer.





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# FIELD REPORT

## Saturday Varsity Games

**Boys' XC** (3-2)  
*falls to Andover, 31-24*

**Girls' XC** (2-1)  
*falls to Andover, 29-26*

**Field Hockey** (0-6)  
*falls to Andover, 0-7*

**Football** (4-0)  
*beats Andover, 50-8*

**Boys' Soccer** (6-2-1)  
*beats Andover, 4-0*

**Girls' Soccer** (4-1-2)  
*ties Andover, 0-0*

**Volleyball** (2-6)  
*falls to Andover, 2-3*

**Water Polo** (2-8)  
*falls to Andover, 11-19*

## Saturday J.V. Games

**Boys' XC** (4-1)  
*beats Andover, 28-29*

**Girls' XC** (0-1)  
*falls to Andover, 39-16*

**Field Hockey** (0-4-1)  
*falls to Andover, 0-5*

**Boys' Soccer** (4-1-2)  
*beats Andover, 4-1*

**Girls' Soccer** (1-3-1)  
*falls to Andover, 1-5*

**Volleyball** (5-1)  
*beats Andover, 3-2*

**Water Polo** (1-2)  
*falls to Andover, 4-11*

# ANDOVER DAY ENDS UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR CHOATE

By **Dan Brockett '19**  
*Sports Editor*

## Football:

Despite missing several key starters, Choate dominated an Andover team that looked over-matched from the first play, beating them 50-8. Choate took an early lead with two long touchdown passes from quarterback Jack Maley '19, and never gave it up. The game looked close in the second quarter after an Andover touchdown and two-point conversion that put them only six points behind Choate.

The Wild Boars' offense had a quick answer with Maley hitting tight end Spencer Witter '19 for a 43-yard touchdown pass. That gave Choate a 21-8 lead with 7:51 left in the first half. Regarding the team's first half success, Sean Dennehy '19 said, "We were a lot more disciplined than we have been in our prior games. Penalties have really killed our offense in the past."

A pick-six for co-captain Clay Zachery '19 put the Wild Boars up by 20 points. Another touchdown pass for Maley gave Choate a commanding 34-8 lead at the end of the first half. Choate didn't look back in the second half, putting up 16 more points and surrendering none. Zachery said, "I think the game was a good challenge for us. We had a lot of guys injured and a lot of young guys stepped up and made plays."

## Boys' Soccer:

Enjoying another excellent season, Boys' Varsity Soccer continued its trend of strong play, defeating Andover 4-0. The team got off to a quick start with co-captain Aaron Lake scoring the first goal of the game. Despite controlling the ball for the majority of the first half, the teams appeared to be evenly matched. Both teams had scoring opportunities, but neither team was able to score.



Photo courtesy of Ross Mortensen

The Choate defense swarms the Andover quarterback in the backfield.

With time winding down in the first half, the Choate team finally got their second goal of the game. A great cross into the box off of a corner kick allowed utilityman Kevin Lynch '19 to knock it past the Andover keeper. Choate took a 2-0 lead into halftime.

In the second half, great play from new goalie Max Patel '19 and backs Allen Zheng '21, Faisal Nazer '19, and co-captain Will Eichhorn '19 kept Andover off of the scoreboard. Choate put two more into the Andover net with a great shot by Tife Agunloye '21, and a great penalty kick by Javi Alvarado Martinez '20.

Co-captain Brendan Kish '19 said, "The game was our best of the season. We had been working on making runs and creating scoring chances in practice, and we executed it really well in game today." The boys hope to continue their success with tough games against Taft and Loomis still to come.

## Girls' Soccer:

In perhaps what was the most evenly matched game of Andover Day, Girls' Varsity Soccer tied in a game where neither side could fin-

ish. Both teams generated plenty of chances, and the game went back and forth. Choate retained possession for the majority of the game, and they used it to create scoring opportunities.

Goalie Jordan Small '19 said, "The offense controlled the ball in the other team's half for a large portion of the game. I think we played a really solid game, but we were just unlucky at key times."

Erin Martin '20 created a number of chances early on in the game, taking shot after shot. The Andover goalie made numerous outstanding saves on shots by Martin, Abbi Adler '20, and captain Nicola Sommers '19. However, the teams went to halftime tied at zero.

After the half, Andover came out with a fire and had a number of excellent scoring opportunities, but great play by Jenna Rempel '20 and CiCi Curran '20, and several clutch saves by Small kept Andover from scoring. The game went down to the wire as the teams traded chance after chance. However, the clock struck zero, and the two teams were still tied.

Adler said, "In our next games it's imperative for us to capitalize

on our opportunities to score and to stay disciplined in every aspect of the game." The girls look to rebound against Taft on Saturday.

## Girls' Volleyball:

Girls' Varsity Volleyball lost a heartbreaker on Andover Day. Game 1 got off to a rocky start as Andover took a lead early. The large crowd rallied behind the girls, providing much needed energy. Co-captain Julia MacKenzie '19 said, "The game was incredible to be a part of. The big crowd definitely helped us in the first game." Choate came back to tie the game at 19. Unfortunately, the girls would lose Game 1 by a score of 22-25.

Game 2 did not have a better result for the Wild Boars, as they lost another close game. The Boars were down but not out. As Game 3 started, many of the fans who had left for dinner returned, and there was a new energy in the gym. Choate jumped out to an early lead in Game 3 and never looked back, winning the game by a score of 25-15. Co-captain Lani Uyeno '19, returning from a head injury, played excellent in the third game, and

was one of the key pieces in forcing a fourth game in the match.

In Game 4, the two teams went back and forth as they traded leads. Excellent play by Morgann Skoda '22, Grace Bohan '21, and Ally Chadha '20 pushed Choate over the top to force a tie-breaking Game 5.

Game 5 didn't have the start or result that the team was hoping for as Andover jumped out to an 8-0 lead. Choate fought fiercely to come back, but the effort just wasn't enough as Andover won the final game by a score of 15-8. After the game Chadha said, "This was our first game with Lani back, and we were just getting accustomed to our usual rotation, so I think we put up a really good fight."

## Boys' Water Polo:

The team suffered a tough loss to Andover, despite an excellent effort from everyone on the team. Co-captain Oliver Chessen '19 opened the game with two goals in less than three minutes, and he finished with four in the game. Andover responded with four goals leaving Choate down 2-4 at the end of the first quarter.

The second quarter was all Andover as they were able to sneak seven goals past Choate goalie Jackson Haile '19, who played outstanding in both games. Choate could only manage to put one in. Andover ran away with the game, winning 19-11.

Co-captains Matt Anastasio '19 and Tommy Wachtell '19 provided some additional support, scoring one and two goals respectively. Jack Sun '21 was a key piece for the Choate team as he scored an additional three goals.

So far, the team has had a disappointing season, though half of it remains. The Boars have a chance to rebound.

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## PLAYER PROFILE

# On the Court with Lani Uyeno '19

By **George McCabe '20**  
*Staff Reporter*

Lani Uyeno '19 is the reigning New England Player of the Year and Girls' Varsity Volleyball co-captain this season. In her sophomore year, Uyeno played a large role on the team that would eventually win back-to-back New England Championships. Recently, she sat down with staff reporter George McCabe '20 to talk about her goals for the team this season, lessons she has learned from the sport, and playing volleyball at Choate.

**George McCabe:** How did you start your volleyball career?

**Lani Uyeno:** I started playing volleyball in eighth grade. That was my first year of playing club, and I used to play a lot of competitive soccer, but I got kind of burnt out. Volleyball just seemed like it was a fun sport. Also, it was very different from soccer because you don't have to run as much, so that was very appealing.

**GM:** What are some of the lessons you have learned from volleyball?

**LU:** I think that volleyball has made me a lot mentally tougher, especially since it is more of a mental game than it is physical. Definitely on the court, staying positive and out of your head is so important, especially since there is always another ball coming right at you. There is no point in dwelling on the past mistake.



Photo by Ryan Kim/The Choate News

# The Struggles of Being a Freshman on Varsity

By **Allen Zheng '21**  
*Staff Reporter*

Playing a varsity sport is undoubtedly an impressive feat, and for many high school athletes, it is the ultimate goal of one's athletic career. Spots on varsity teams are extremely coveted, and often many of those spots will be filled by seasoned upperclassmen. However, there are a select few athletes that dive straight into the deep end, joining a varsity-level sport as a freshman during their first term at Choate.

Playing a varsity sport comes with numerous challenges, most notably on a physical level. Naturally, freshmen are the youngest players on their teams, giving most a slight physical disadvantage.

Paley Adelson-Grodberg '22, a new freshman on Girls' Varsity Soccer said, "I'm only 14 years old. There are postgraduates playing on the other team that could be 18 or 19 years old. People tend to grow a lot in these four years, so in comparison to these larger girls I'm going up against, I am very small and not nearly as strong as people I'm competing against."

Despite these physical disadvantages, these athletes have the talent and dedication to keep up with their elders on the field. The size disadvantage is deceiving because ability doesn't come with a certain build, it comes via hard work and lots of practice.

The time commitment involved in being a varsity athlete can also be strenuous, as student athletes have to juggle athletics with their academics and other extracurricular activities. With

longer practices and almost always two games each week, time-management becomes crucial to staying on top of schoolwork. This is especially difficult for freshman, who as may still be adjusting to life on the Choate campus. Varsity Field Hockey player Gretchen Russell '22 said, "We play almost every day of the week, so I never really have a break. I really have to plan when I do my homework around athletics, and I have to get work done during study hours instead of goofing around because I don't have as much time as other people."

Joining a varsity sport can be a daunting experience in the social sense. It is not always easy to fit into a new team culture, especially with upperclassmen years older than you. However, Adelson-Grodberg did not find this a problem. "My absolute favorite thing about this team is the amount of love and family there is," she said. "We all truly love and care about each other and what is going on in each other's lives. There is not one person on this team that I don't, and I am so grateful for that."

There is no doubt that being a freshman varsity athlete comes with its challenges. With all the physical and social challenges that come with joining a varsity team, being a varsity athlete as a freshman is no small feat. Nonetheless, these talented individuals will play important roles on their respective teams, and continue to contribute to Choate's phenomenal athletics program.

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