



THE CHOATE NEWS

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333 Christian Street
Wallingford, CT

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THECHOATENews.CHOATE.EDU

REOPENING CHOATE



21
Possible dining assignments per meal
7
Locations
6
Time slots

DINING

MAILROOM



2600+ packages delivered to the mailroom (Oct 1 - Oct 10)



~ 1300 packages delivered to the mailroom (Oct)



Faculty began testing



Students began testing



- 2123 total tests (as of Oct 9)
- 0 positive tests

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

TESTING

108

Club booths at virtual clubfair

HYBRID LEARNING

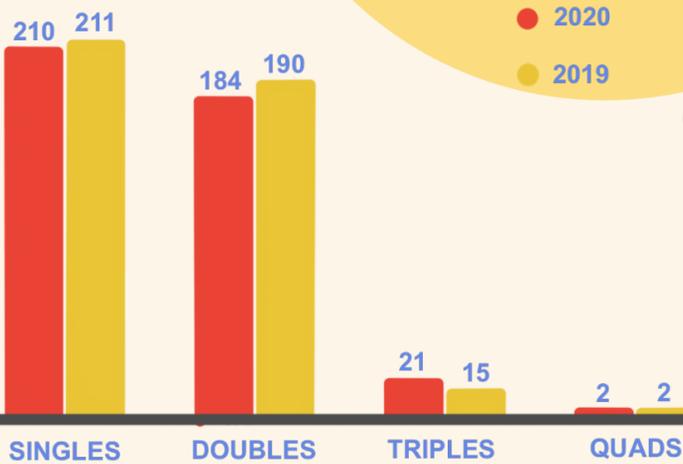
18%

Remote Students

85
Virtual Student Displays

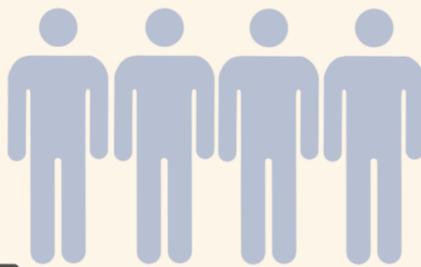
NEW CLASS BLOCKS

RESIDENTIAL LIFE



Rooms On Campus

42 Day student family units



DAY STUDENTS

No WiFi restrictions

WIFI

HIGHEST RISK

What does it mean?

- Significant increase in COVID-19 on campus with concern for reaching health center capacity to care for students **and/or...**
- Significant rate of infection in Connecticut (>10:100,000 and/or positivity rate >5%) causing increased risk to the Choate community and concern for adequate supply of health center personnel, testing, and personal protective equipment

MODERATE RISK (CURRENT LEVEL)

What does it mean?

- COVID-19 has been diagnosed on campus and/or...
- Incidence of COVID-19 is rising in Connecticut and indicators show risk of infection is increasing (>5:100,000 and positivity rate <5%)

COVID-19 ALERT LEVELS

LOWER RISK

What does it mean?

- There are no cases on campus **and**
- Prevalence of infection in Connecticut remains low but with the potential for increased transmission (<5:100,000 and positivity rate <3%)

NEW NORMAL

What does it mean?

- There are no cases on campus
- Cases are rare and transmission is controlled throughout Connecticut (<1:100,000 and positivity rate <1%)
- A vaccine or adequate treatment for COVID-19 is available

Information from <https://www.choate.edu/safeandsounder/>

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PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR COLSON WHITEHEAD SPEAKS TO SCHOOL VIRTUALLY

By **Yoyo Zhang '24**
Reporter

On October 5, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Colson Whitehead spoke to the Choate community through a school-wide webinar.

The School invited Mr. Whitehead to provide insights on his latest work, *The Nickel Boys*, this year's required summer reading book.

While such an event would typically be held in Colony Hall during School Meeting, the ongoing pandemic forced a virtual approach.

Rather than diving straight into the book, Mr. Whitehead opened the talk with some amusing anecdotes of the inspiration behind his work.

"I was definitely surprised that he didn't focus strictly on *The Nickel Boys*," Ula Lucas '21 noted. "He took some liberties to talk a little bit more about himself as a writer."

Dr. Matthew Bardoe, the head of the Mathematics and Computer Science Department, said that, compared to focusing on and hearing only about the book, "it is more edifying and useful to hear about [the author's] personal story, and in that way understand the life that leads to the book."

Many saw Mr. Whitehead's bright energy as a stark contrast to the gravity of his novel, which details years of race-based trauma at a fictional reform school in



Colson Whitehead answers questions from the Choate community through GotoMeeting.

north Florida. (The novel is based on the real-life Dozier School for Boys, which operated for decades in the Florida panhandle; the school closed in 2011.)

"He was so self-deprecating and humorous that at the moment I was focused primarily on the humor of his talk," Dr. Bardoe said. "But, in reflecting, there were many important lessons from his personal story of how he became a writer."

Mr. Whitehead revealed that he works painstakingly on every story to incorporate history as accurately as possible into his

fictional scenes. "With the extensive research Colson Whitehead has put into his work, his niche knowledge only made the webinar more engaging," said Zora DeRham '23.

A poor internet connection in the beginning detracted from the experience for some. Eva Li '24, who enjoyed hearing Mr. Whitehead speak about his writing process, was "quite disappointed by the audio quality."

While the virtual format posed various challenges, it did not prevent students and faculty from gaining insightful informa-

tion. "I really appreciated that he was a good sport about the connection," Lucas said. "I think we all can relate to things like shaky Wi-Fi. I enjoyed what I could hear, nonetheless."

Despite the physical distance and technical difficulties, Mr. Whitehead excited students and faculty members alike. Through his hour-long talk, he allowed the Choate community to peek inside the head of a contemporary writer working at the top of his game.

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Student Council Recap

By **Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22**
Reporter

With the new year in motion, Student Council is working hard to pass new proposals that will benefit both the School and the student body. Through regular Wednesday Zoom meetings, form representatives are formulating proposals for initiatives on regulating homework, implementing ways for students to give more consistent feedback to teachers, providing more opportunities for students to connect with Choate alumni, and holding a Quarantine Olympics.

A proposal by Student Body President Ula Lucas '21 and Fourth Form Class President Ava Maha '23 to establish a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) student committee passed two weeks ago. The committee will bring faculty and students together to plan community conversations about culture, help shape events like Diversity Day, and host equity and inclusion-related club events.

The Student Council is currently planning the launch of this year's Daily Grind. Though doing so more challenging than past years because of the pandemic, Student Council is confident that it can resume the fundraiser once the quar-

antine period ends and abide by health and safety protocols established by the School.

One major goal for Lucas this year is to set up a Student Council website through which students can sign and comment on proposals. The website's goal is to "wrap the student voice back into the proposal process" and "present a united voice to the administration," said Lucas. The Student Council is working with the Communications Department and other students to code and design the website.

Fifth form Representative Abby Lu '22 is developing a project called "Dialogues for Understanding." The project aims to "promote cultural understanding at Choate by giving cultural club events more influence and outreach," Lu explained.

Although Student Council is finding Zoom meetings productive, members have felt it difficult to gather student input on proposals. "My main form of reaching out has been social media, whereas usually, it would be through forums. It's harder to get to know people on social media," said Lu, who is completing the fall term remotely.

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New Policy Bans All Political Apparel from Classrooms

By **Kate Bailey '22**
Copy Editor

While Choate may be known for its permissive dress code in the classroom compared to the required blazers and skirts of other boarding schools, there's now one specific article of clothing that students can't sport in the classroom: political candidate merchandise.

With just 18 days to go until the presidential election, new restrictions, announced by the School on October 8, prohibit any form of political apparel or signage — including T-shirts, hats, stickers, even Zoom virtual backgrounds — from both in-person and online academic spaces.

The policy was conceived by four faculty members who make up the committee on policies and procedures — Assistant Athletic Trainer Ms. Tanisha Clark, HPRSS Department Head Ms. Kyra Jenney, English teacher Mr. Joe Lampe, and Associate Head of School Ms. Kathleen Wallace. This subgroup is a component of the larger planning committee on support for BIPOC students and faculty,

which is one of the six new planning committees established last summer.

In line with the committee's objective and the School's values, the policy is designed to make Choate a more welcoming and safe place for all students, especially students of color.

According to the policy, certain forms of political expression can infringe upon that comfort. "Especially after @BlackatChoateOfficial, @QueeratChoate, and @LifecatChoate, we knew that there needed to be a change — that we needed to start stepping in the right direction," Ms. Clark said. "Being a Black woman, I want to make [the School] a safe place for people who identify like me."

The new rules acknowledge that certain political apparel carries discriminatory connotations that can act as a trigger for many students and take a serious toll on their wellbeing.



Graphic by Sage Setty/The Choate News

Allyson Alavez '22 said, "As a person of color, those things can be really detrimental to your mental health...Because Choate prides itself on being so diverse, they'd be doing a disservice to the students of color on campus by not trying to protect them."

Although most political apparel is banned only from academic spaces, now, anything bearing a political slogan is not allowed anywhere on campus, even in extracurricular or residential contexts.

"We thought that those slogans were a way of shutting down conversations," Ms. Clark said on the choice to differentiate between slogans and candidate names. "You're saying, this is how I feel, period. With names, on the other hand, [someone can ask] 'Oh, how do you feel about this person?'"

This ban on slogans, in particular, has attracted mixed reactions from students. While the policy is neutral in its specifica-

tions, students from both sides of the political spectrum agreed that Democratic nominee Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" tagline was not its driving concern. Conor Brown '22, the president of Young Republicans, expressed that felt that the policy was directed towards one specific slogan. He said, "Let's be blunt: this is a restriction simply targeted at the slogan 'Make America Great Again.'"

Donald Trump's P'oo controversial campaign slogan can be interpreted differently by students. While acknowledging that the slogan can be seen as "provocative," Brown said, "The slogan 'Make America Great Again' is pretty simple to Republicans. It means that we want to make America great again."

For Alavez, though, that statement carries contextual weight. "The slogan can be really harmful because if you believe that Donald Trump is making America great, you're ignoring

the greater social issues [and] the racism, sexism, [and] xenophobia that Donald Trump stands for," she said.

The policy also raises concerns for some that Choate is preventing open political dialogue by interfering with students' freedom of expression.

According to Brown, Choate becomes a lesser school when it doesn't actively promote discourse and dialogue among students.

The text of the policy states that its purpose isn't to obstruct respectful conversation, but to draw a line when that conversation begins to disrespect someone's identity — staying conscious of the fact that political apparel can carry harmful connotations for BIPOC students.

Mr. Ned Gallagher, a HPRSS and English teacher who is also the adviser to Young Democrats, said that simple political discourse and "comments about someone's identity — immutable qualities that have to do with

racial identity, sexuality, things like that — are really different." He added, "We want to have kids feel safe at Choate."

Mr. Gallagher has observed that political discussions in his classes, which are known among many students for their political discourse, are mostly balanced and considerate. "From what I see in class, kids feel empowered to speak their mind, and they're doing so in a civil and respectful way."

Brown believes that polarization is a growing problem on campus, particularly between Young Republicans and Young Democrats. He cites a major cause of this division to some students' unwillingness to "separate the issues at play" — the difference in policy between the two presidential candidates — "from Donald Trump as a person."

According to Ms. Clark, these associations are a major part of what the new restrictions on apparel hope to com-

bat. When students see each other wearing political apparel, she said, it's easy for them to make extreme assumptions about each other's values. "We don't want our students to think like that. We'd rather have everyone think of everyone as equals and try to have those engaging conversations and debates," she said.

This policy is just one of the School's many new initiatives designed to support and uplift BIPOC students in the wake of the nation's racial reckoning that began in May. Other initiatives include the creation of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force in July and the identity-based slur policy, which was added to the Student Handbook in September.

The ultimate goal, Ms. Clark said, is "to be a community where everybody feels welcome."

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Local Government Offices Adapt to New Voting Processes Due to Pandemic

By **Adrienne Chacón '22**
Copy Editor

Due to the ongoing pandemic, local government offices have adapted their mail-in voting procedures so that votes can be cast and processed in time for Election Day on November 3.

Although mail-in voting has historically been limited in the U.S., 34 states, including Connecticut, are now allowing all voters to mail in their ballots this year to ensure the health of their citizens. To protect the integrity of the election, local offices are working diligently to ensure that voting runs smoothly.

Local offices, such as the Town Clerk of Wallingford, have made a considerable shift in preparation for mail-in voting. Connecticut is a request-only state for mail-in ballots. To obtain a mail-in ballot, voters must submit an absentee ballot application to the Town Clerk's office. Applications are available on the town website, at the Wallingford Public Library, and the Town Clerk's office. Applications have also been sent out by Connecticut's Secretary of the State to all registered voters. Voters should fill out the ballot with their personal information and either mail it back to the Town Clerk's office or leave it in one of the designated drop boxes located around town.

The last day to register to vote absentee is Tuesday, October 27, one week before the election. Those who submitted their applications at the start of the mail-in ballot request period may have received their official ballots as early as October 5. If someone receives an application but decides they want to vote in person, they are instructed to not return their application.

It is important to note that the mail-in ballots must be returned in two envelopes: a secrecy envelope



Photo by Peter Di Natale/The Choate News

Ballot drop boxes were recently installed near Wallingford Town Hall.

velope that requires the voter's signature on the back and a mailing envelope in which the secrecy envelope is enclosed. If one of these required envelopes is missing, the ballot will not be counted.

Connecticut has tried to make absentee voting accessible by pre-stamping all mail ballots. All Wallingford ballots will be transported via the U.S. Postal Service to the Town Clerk's office, locally.

"The mail is not getting processed out of town, so have faith in the USPS within the town," Wallingford Town Clerk Ms. Barbara Thompson told Wallingford Government Television.

According to Ms. Thompson, in a traditional election cycle, there are six valid reasons to vote absentee: military deployment, absence from town hall during voting hours, illness, religious events/beliefs that preclude a voter from voting on Election Day, duties as an election official, and disability. By executive order of Governor Ned Lamont, all Connecticut residents are allowed to vote absentee for the 2020 election; a seventh justification, concerns over Covid-19, has been added to the ballot.

While USPS has always been involved with transporting ab-

sentee ballots during election cycles, the Postal Service is now a more crucial player than ever before. "There's a lot going on behind the scenes," said Ms. Maureen Marion, Regional Strategic Communications Manager at the Post Office.

The USPS has its own federal law enforcement agency, the United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS), that handles all issues regarding mail fraud and tampering. Concerns and suspicions are taken seriously and violators are severely prosecuted.

"The USPIS is a diverse and highly technical organization ready to come to your help," said Ms. Marion. As Ms. Thompson suggested, the USPS ensures that ballots arrive at their location expeditiously. Individual post offices are keeping "election logs," which are scrupulous records of any modifications made to usual Post Office procedure.

Since November is part of the holiday season, a time when the Postal Service is already heavily relied upon, extra time and energy will be dedicated to the safety of packages, mail, and especially mail-in ballots. The USPS suggests voters mail in their ballots at least ten days before the election.

Mr. Chad Elderkin, Wallingford citizen and first-time mail-in voter, heeded the advice to apply and send his ballot as early as possible. Mr. Elderkin sent his ballot on October 9, 23 days in advance. His main reason for voting by mail was the pandemic, but the process has other benefits: he does not have to skip work or wait in long lines to cast his vote.

Conversely, HPRSS and English teacher Mr. Ned Gallagher plans to vote in person as he did in the primary elections. The pandemic has made it easier for some who choose to vote in person; the lines were considerably shorter during Mr. Gallagher's visit.

Despite feeling positive about the election and his vote, Mr. Gallagher said, "I do worry about voter suppression in some states and about efforts to delegitimize results from mail-in ballots ... I hope the latter does not become something that results in uncertainty about the election outcome."

In her first voting experience, Trista LeBlanc-Serbyn '22 voted by mail as well. "I feel so lucky to be turning 18 just in time to vote and have my voice heard," she said.

Any Connecticut citizen that will turn 18 before or on Election Day can register to vote prior to their 18th birthday.

LeBlanc-Serbyn registered to vote using HeadCount.org — one of various online registry sites — and the Connecticut state website, which she said took her roughly five minutes.

She encouraged her peers who are capable of voting to do so. "I know many of us feel skeptical of the process or hopeless as to whether or not our voices even make a difference. Please make your voice heard in a vote. It's time for us to play our part!"

Adrienne Chacón may be reached at achacon22@choate.edu

VOTER GUIDE

for absentee voting



REGISTER TO VOTE
Deadline: Oct. 27

A. Register online via CT's Online Voter Registration System

B. Mail a voter registration form to Wallingford's Registrar of Voters (takes 1-3 weeks to process)



COMPLETE ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION
Deadline: Nov. 2

Applications have been mailed to all registered voters in CT

Additional applications are available at the Wallingford library, Town Clerk's office, and online at CT.gov



SUBMIT BALLOT
Deadline: Nov. 3

Ballots can be hand delivered to the Town Clerk's office, mailed via USPS, or placed in the official ballot dropbox near Town Hall

Graphic by Amanda Li/The Choate News

Connecticut Transitions to Phase Three of Reopening

By **Linda Phan '22**
Copy Editor

On October 8, Connecticut started Phase Three of its reopening plan. With this step, as much as 99% of the state's economy can resume, according to Governor Ned Lamont.

While businesses such as nightclubs and bars will remain closed, restaurants, libraries, and personal services including hair salons and barber shops have increased their gathering size from 50% to 75% capacity. Places of worship can now increase their capacity up to 50% as well.

Transitioning into Phase Three, local businesses have prepared precautionary measures to ensure the safety of their customers and patrons.

Colony Diner on North Colony Road is one of the many Connecticut restaurants increasing its capacity up to 75%. To accommodate more customers safely, owner Mr. Eric Celik said that his restaurant installed more plexiglass between dining booths, antibacterial cleaners, and markings on the floor that remind customers to remain six feet apart. Customers are required to wear a mask and are given a single-use paper menu. After a table clears, employees wipe down all of the furniture.

"When you are seating more people inside, there's always a danger to it," said Mr. Celik.

To avoid any potential risks, Mr. Celik has been operating the outdoor area at 50% capacity since the start of Phase One. In order to maintain a steady stream of customers this upcoming winter, Colony Diner has installed heating in its outdoor dining areas. "Once the tent goes away, business is going



Photo by Peter Di Natale/The Choate News

Colony Diner prepares to accommodate a larger capacity of guests inside their restaurant.

to drop again," he said. Mr. Celik plans to continue curbside pickups and take-out orders.

Unlike restaurants, theaters such as Holiday Cinemas Stadium 14, also on North Colony Road, can operate only indoors. Since reopening in late August, the theater has enforced new protocols for social distancing, implemented new policies for sanitizing and disinfecting the facility, reduced its seating capacity to 30%, and changed its operating hours.

General Manager Mr. Kevin LaFlamme described the reopening as "taking a small step towards getting back to normal." He mentioned that receiving more customers was one of the benefits of Phase Three. "With the guidelines our theater has in place, we are confident we are providing a safe experience to our customers," he said. According to Mr. LaFlamme, as attendance

increases, the theater will be increasing its cleaning frequency.

The Wallingford Public Library is another location taking on new safety measures as Phase Three progresses. Requiring all of the library's patrons to be masked, the library administrators have enforced social distancing: stairways can only be used one person at a time, and only a limited number of people are allowed to enter the building to access the book collections, copiers, and fax equipment at a time.

Plexiglass is used to shield public staff working areas. The Park 'n Pickup program is a check-out process that requires no physical interaction between patrons and staff. Additionally, most of the library furniture has been stored away to decrease the number of people staying at the library and to encourage patrons to sit individually.

"We are more like a store right now where people come in and get what they need to borrow and then leave with only maybe 20 opportunities for people to sit in chairs at a table," said Library Director Ms. Jane Fisher.

The library has also altered its book-returning process. "All of the books are now returned through the book drop, and those books have to sit for four days before they get checked in and put back on the shelf," Ms. Fisher explained. Computer use has also changed to require scheduled appointments with the purpose of maintaining a distance in between computer users. After each user, keyboards, mouses, tables, and monitors are wiped down.

Most of the library programs have been on Zoom or Facebook Live, and the attendance has been "pretty excellent," according to Ms. Fisher.

The Library Director, however, lamented the continued closing of specific areas of the library. "Unfortunately, we have not been able to open our Collaboratory, our Wonder Room, and our bookstore, and we don't have a date yet [for] when those spaces will be open," she said.

Another public space that reopened with Phase Three is the Most Holy Trinity Church. Upon entering the church, parishioners have their temperatures taken by the ushers, and hand sanitizer stations are available at the church's entrances. Seats in every pew are also marked to denote if they can be occupied.

While ushers assist with maintaining social distancing, those who are part of the same household may sit together. More time has been allotted between services to allow for the cleaning of regularly-touched surfaces such

as doorknobs and tops of pews. "We're doing our best to comply with the regulations but also offer people the chance to go to church," said Parish Trustee Mr. Jerry Farrell Jr. '86.

While Phase Three allows for more normalcy, Mr. Farrell noted that some changes made during this time may be kept permanent. Before, the Church had four Sunday Masses. After readjusting to the pandemic, the Church has decided to keep only three masses going forward. "The 7:30 a.m. [masses] were a little sparse," he mentioned.

The Church is also keeping its live streaming program, which was created to give people the option of staying at home while also attending Mass during the lockdown. Live streaming has especially helped those who are immunocompromised or of an older age. According to Mr. Farrell, live streaming can bring many benefits even once the pandemic passes. "If your grandchild is getting baptized at Holy Trinity, but you're in South America, you can attend by livestream," he said.

As Connecticut shifts to Phase Three, businesses and service locations are most concerned with keeping their customers and patrons safe at the increased capacity. New implementations have been added onto safety measures that have been present since previous reopening stages. Keeping a close eye on the number of coronavirus cases, the state hopes to continue with its reopening efforts.

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Rewriting Pandemic Productivity

By **Jessica Wu '22**
Copy Editor

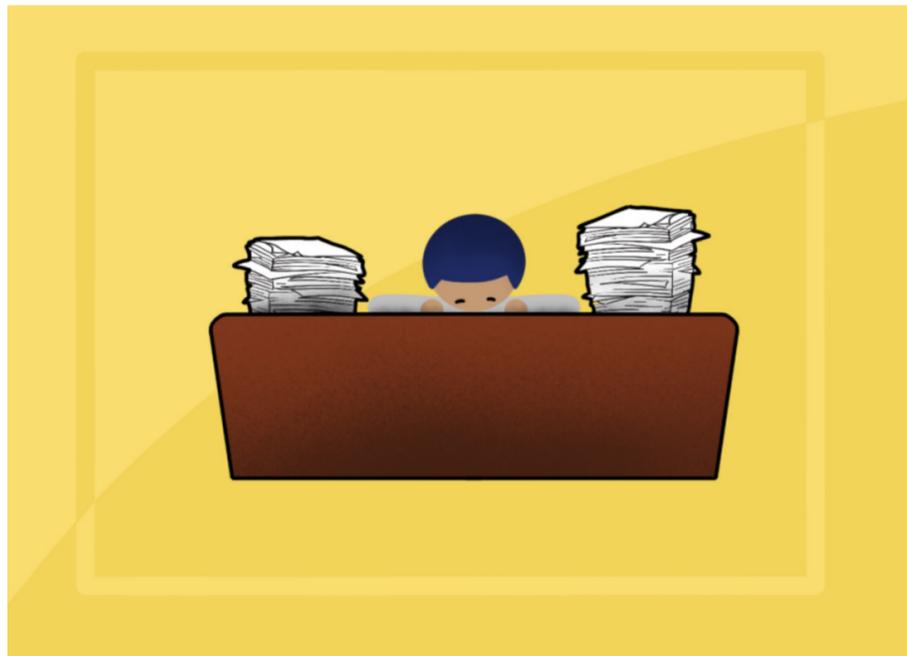
I spent this summer in pursuit of productivity. With summer programs canceled, vacations postponed, and prospects of finding a summer job thrown out the window, I focused the first month of my summer on finding other ways to fill my time.

It was almost as if I lived off the adrenaline of being productive. Whenever I had even a minute of free time, I would spend it worrying about what I should be working on. Despite the ongoing pandemic, I couldn't help but think about all the time I was wasting while some of my peers continued their jobs and internships.

In the end, although I was successful at remaining productive and achieving the goals I set for myself, I did not understand why I so desperately needed to feel busy. Why did I need internships and summer programs to fulfill my sense of purpose?

In her article "[Expletive] the Bread. The Bread Is Over," poet Sabrina Orah Mark describes her relationship with productivity in the time of the coronavirus. For years, she spent her time and energy applying and interviewing at hundreds of universities for professorships she didn't even know why she wanted. On the 58th day of quarantine-induced homeschooling, Ms. Mark gave her children a list of objects to find for a scavenger hunt, simply because they needed to stay busy.

She spent her own time in quarantine searching for purpose through arbitrary goals. Hunting for bread flour in grocery stores so she could bake bread, Ms. Mark compared her experience to fairy tales characters who must diligently spin straw into gold or slay monsters to inherit the throne. But, once they succeed at their task, what happens to their narrative? The story ends. There is nothing left



Graphic by Ethan Foreman/The Choate News

to do. No more purpose. "The bread is over."

Before coming to Choate, I never sought to be productive for productivity's sake. However, after being surrounded by people who constantly seemed to be doing and achieving more than me — and after stalking too many LinkedIn profiles — I began to strive toward that same level of success.

At competitive schools like Choate, which are often labeled as having toxic productivity cultures, it's easy for students to compare themselves to others and constantly push themselves to work unhealthily hard. It's easy to walk into Lanphier Cafe, see everyone on their computers with an iced coffee in hand, and get nervous about the three assignments that are due the next day. It's easy to get caught up in taking as many classes as possible, joining every club Choate offers, and applying for every leadership opportunity until

the enjoyment of doing these activities in the first place is forgotten. Like me, many students felt they needed to fill their free time in quarantine with tasks such as learning new languages or starting a nonprofit organization — they never stopped searching for the bread flour.

In her article, Ms. Mark said that once she completes tasks like achieving a professorship, there is nothing left to do but jump off the top of the fairy tale palace that has no place for her. Instead, she must redesign the system —

cut down the kings and sons and peasants and the whole castle itself. She must get comfortable with where she lands among the rubble of the kingdom and choose what she wants to do with her life, rather than continuing to fulfill these tasks (like spinning gold or searching for bread) for the sake of checking them off a to-do list. We don't have to stop looking for bread, but we must come to it on our own terms.

For those who did learn a new language or start a nonprofit this summer, they still ended up expanding their own knowledge and helping their communities. There is nothing inherently wrong with the way these students chose to spend their time, but it's also important that they do it for their own self-improvement and not for the sole purpose of being productive. We don't need to push ourselves past our breaking points and lose sleep completing arbitrary tasks that serve only as tiny ego boosts in a quest to emulate what we see others accomplishing. There's nothing productive about studying nonstop until we can't distinguish our own thoughts from the words swirling on the screen in front of us. We need to allow ourselves the time to recharge and take a break. Once we learn to be productive doing the things that we love, then we might not need to leave the fairytale in the end. Maybe, we will rewrite the story.

Jessica Wu is a fifth-former from Wilton, Conn. She may be reached at jwu22@choate.edu

We don't have to stop looking for the bread, but we must come to it on our own terms.

WOMEN BELONG IN THE LAB

By **Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22**
Opinions Writer

Every night when I was five, my mom would read me Paul de Kruif's 1926 biology biography *Microbe Hunters: The Classic Book on the Major Discoveries of the Microscopic World*. It was my favorite book, and I asked for a microscope for Christmas. At five, nothing could stop my dreams of growing up to be like the scientists in *Microbe Hunters*. But, as the years went on, I began playing with Barbies, toy kitchens, and tea sets. I learned the role that society had apparently preordained for me as a woman, and I lost hold of my dreams.

Then came my seventh-grade biology class. As I studied my textbook, I realized that none of the scientists mentioned were women. Thinking back, I realized my once-beloved *Microbe Hunters* did not have women in it either. I was then aware of the lack of representation and wondered what it meant. Despite my disappointment, biology was my favorite subject, and I became obsessed with becoming a doctor; I fell in love with science once again.

That year, I remember my parents telling me that if I was going to become a doctor, I should be a dermatologist or an ophthalmologist because they wanted grandkids, and I would not have time to build a family while stuck on a long medical school residency track. To my parents, this comment was a joke. To me, it was another reason to let go of my aspirations and remember my future as a woman in Mexico — get married, have kids.

Now, I'm not as convinced that I wanted to be a doctor as I was in seventh grade, but this year's recipients for the Nobel Prize in Chemistry brought back my love for science and my hopes that my next science book will have women in it.

On October 7, 2020, Dr. Emmanuelle Charpentier and Dr. Jennifer Doudna received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their ground-breaking research on CRISPR-Cas9 technology, a gene-editing tool that the *New York Times* called "an invention that will change the human race."

As I read the article on their discoveries, questions swirled in my mind about the technological possibilities their research will open. Suddenly, research on CRISPR-Cas9 excited me as much as *Microbe Hunters* excited my five-year-old self. Now, I wonder what my younger self would have felt if these women were in the books I read back then; maybe I would have never lost my love for science in the first place.

Dr. Charpentier and Dr. Doudna were only the sixth and seventh women in history to receive this prize, and it's the first time the prize has honored two women at once. Seeing two women thrive together and get the recognition they deserve is a milestone not just for science, but for women worldwide. It means that even against the odds, women can do anything if we support each other.

Dr. Charpentier told the *New York Times* that the prize will "provide a message specifically to young girls who would like to follow the path of science and to show them that in friendship, women can also be awarded prizes."

Now, my love for science is back once again. And this time I'm hoping that with someone who looks like me finally in the limelight, my passion will stay for good. In the years since I played with Barbies, I've redefined my role as a woman. To me, Dr. Charpentier and Dr. Doudna are proof that societal gender roles are designed to be dismissed.

If I ever have kids, I know the book I will read to them: *Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls* — a book of inspiring women's biographies, including figures such as Serena Williams, Frida Kahlo, Marie Curie, and, maybe one day, Dr. Charpentier and Dr. Doudna.

If young girls are never made to believe that their gender limits their dreams and are instead able to see people who look like them working in fields across society, nothing will stop them from changing the world — just like Dr. Charpentier and Dr. Doudna.

Irene Garcia Gutierrez is a fifth-former from Villahermosa, Mexico. She may be reached at igarcia@choate.edu

CUTTING CALORIES IN QUARANTINE

By **Renee Jiang '22**
Copy Editor

Stepping outside of my dorm room, still groggy with sleep, I am excited for my favorite meal of the day — breakfast. Yet, in the back of my mind, I know what breakfast will look like: half-stale bagels, sugary muffins, yogurt, and some fruit if I'm lucky. Although I am grateful for the hard work of the SAGE staff, it's hard not to feel frustrated.

As I approach the breakfast basket in Library's common room, I close my eyes and pray for some bacon or eggs — I'd even give hard-boiled eggs a try. As I peek into the basket, disappointment sinks into my stomach as I stare at the same five foods I've had for breakfast for the past few days.

As I reach in to grab a bagel, a small voice in my head reminds me how many carbs I've had over the past few days. I head back to my room and eat plain, healthy oatmeal — though I know it will never satisfy my appetite nor power me through the day.

By the time classes end, I am so hungry that I search through all the snacks in my room, devour my last bag of chips, and beg my roommate for her cookies. I stuff more calories into my body than if I had just eaten SAGE's turkey sandwich.

After my binging spree, I walk over to my mirror and pull up my shirt. My stomach is bloated, and guilt overwhelms me. I am filled with anger and hate for my uncontrollable eating habits, and I command myself to go on a run to salvage my health. However, my insufficient intake of nourishment has left my body with little energy, and my workout ends up both unenjoyable and ineffective.



Graphic by Stella Dubin/The Choate News

As I walk back to my room, I realize that exercise has become purely a means to shed off that extra weight I think I see in the mirror, rather than an outlet for relief from the many stresses of school. When did this shift in my relationship to food begin?

As a student-athlete, I've always tried to maintain a healthy diet to help sustain my fitness level for sports. Throughout high school, I've restricted myself to a generally healthy diet — a regiment always lingering in the back of my mind. In the past, however, my strict eating habits were only a way for me to gain muscle, not lose weight. The recent on-campus quarantine, however, has given way to a sudden eruption of all the negative thoughts I've accumulated from dieting for the past few years.

Though I greatly appreciate SAGE employees for their tremendous efforts to follow

safety measures and provide high quality food during this quarantine period, their meal service hasn't exactly included healthy options that I also enjoy. The unhealthy thoughts that I had maintained subconsciously for so long began to speak: If I don't like the provided meals to begin with, why not just skip the meals and lose some weight along the way?

Suddenly, eating in moderation wasn't something I did for my body but a habit I practiced to achieve an "ideal" body shape. Trapped inside this mindset, I'm constantly trying to escape a cycle of hunger, binging, and self-hate. My new eating habits have not only worsened my perception of food and exercise but have led me to criticize my body, degrading my mental health in the process.

I hope writing this article will be a step in fighting this

mental blockade. One night last week, I allowed myself to enjoy mac and cheese, chicken nuggets, and cookies for dinner without worrying about what was written on the foods' nutritional labels. Though pockets of guilt did creep up throughout the night, a different and stronger emotion — fulfillment — was able to triumph over that guilt. While fasting seems like a step toward my goal body in the moment, I realize that I cannot be truly satisfied until I free myself from my own destructive thoughts.

If you're struggling with an eating disorder, contact the Choate Health Center or the National Eating Disorders helpline at 1-800-931-2237.

Renee Jiang is a fifth-former from Hopkinton, Mass. She may be reached at rjiang22@choate.edu

Corrections

A School News Faculty Profile published on September 25, 2020 misstated that Instrumental Ensembles Director Mr. Gene Wie was a vocal instructor and professional singer before he came to Choate. Previously, Mr. Wie was Music Director of the Community Youth Orchestra of Southern California, Artistic Director of the California Solisti Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestra and AP Computer Science teacher at St. Margaret's Episcopal School in San Juan Capistrano, California.

The Choate News regrets these errors. To submit a correction, email thechoatenews@choate.edu



The Choate News presents...

The Great Debate



IS JUDGE BARRETT QUALIFIED TO SERVE ON THE SUPREME COURT?

By **Michael Korvyakov '23**
Opinions Writer

There is nobody President Donald Trump P'oo could have nominated who better exemplifies the disposition and temperament of a Supreme Court justice than U.S. Federal Judge Amy Coney Barrett. Not only is Barrett intelligent and experienced, she also will uphold the U.S. Constitution to the fullest extent.

Judge Barrett is an outstanding student, professor, and jurist. She was awarded *magna cum laude* and named the "most outstanding English department graduate" upon her graduation from Rhodes College, where she received her undergraduate degree in 1994. On full scholarship, Barrett went on to graduate from Notre Dame Law School at the top of her class in 1997.

In 2002, Judge Barrett returned to the University of Notre Dame to teach law and was awarded the "Distinguished Professor of the Year Award" three times.

Judge Barrett served on the Advisory Committee on Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure, a group within the federal judiciary branch tasked with setting rules on civil procedure, from 2010 to 2016. And, since 2017, Barrett has served on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Not only does Judge Barrett have extensive law experience, but she has held several high-level court positions. And, as if this wasn't enough of a testament to her impressive career, her former and current colleagues have passionately pushed for her appointment to numerous major judicial positions.

Notre Dame law professor O. Carter Snead said that Judge Barrett "doesn't go in with an ideological sort of conclusion in search of justifications. She goes in with a genuine, open, scholarly mind, tackling a question." In a letter in support of her nomination to the Court of Appeals in 2017, her colleagues from Notre Dame described her as "a model of the fair, impartial, and sympathetic judge."

Equally as important as her exemplary character and academic success is her commitment to constitutional values. A Supreme Court justice should interpret the Constitution as it's written and act as an impartial arbiter of the law.

Judge Barrett is a self-proclaimed originalist. In other words, she interprets the Constitution as it was originally intended. Her colleague at Notre Dame said, "Judge Barrett has shown that her role as a judge would be to try to do her very best to interpret the statutes or to read the Consti-

tution as it is and discern the actual meaning in those documents — rather than imposing on them a particular ideological framework."

Because of this, Barrett's appointment could lead to needed progress with regard to gun rights; her interpretation of the Constitution is one that supports Americans' Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Some have tried to taint her excellent record by spreading rumors and conspiracies. For instance, *Newsweek* published an article reporting that People of Praise, Judge Barrett's religious organization, served as the inspiration for Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale*. This statement was found to be false by fact-checking website Snopes.com, forcing *Newsweek* to issue a correction.

When it comes to selecting a Supreme Court justice, what matters to the left is not the nominee and their qualifications but rather the nominating party. Those who are attacking Judge Barrett should deeply reconsider whether they're attacking her values and work ethic or, rather, the man who nominated her.

Michael Korvyakov is a fourth-former from Old Greenwich, Conn. He may be reached at mkorvyakov23@choate.edu

By **Sabahat Rahman '21**
Staff Reporter

U.S. Federal Judge Amy Coney Barrett is as conservative as her possible predecessor Ruth Bader Ginsburg was liberal. According to George Washington University law professor Jonathan Turley, Judge Barrett is "the ultimate 'deliverable' for conservative votes."

Of course, being a conservative doesn't equate to being a bad person. The issue I have with Judge Barrett is that many of her principles contradict my interpretations of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

For one, Barrett is linked to a Christian group called People of Praise, which has published guidelines stating that "sexual relations should only happen between heterosexual married couples." To that end, the Human Rights Campaign, an LGBTQ+ advocacy group, called her "an absolute threat to LGBTQ+ rights."

Judge Barrett is also passionately pro-life, believing that "Many liberals and conservatives would support restricting, if not outright overturning *Roe v. Wade*," which she has called an "erroneous decision." She joined the University Faculty for Life chapter at the University of Notre Dame, where she is a law school professor.

Furthermore, Judge Barrett's religion may play a prominent role in her court decisions. She has asserted that the Supreme Court should conform its behavior to the standards of the Church. Additionally, in a 1998 article she co-authored, Judge Barrett rejected the notion that judges must value the Constitution more than their faith.

This brings me to what I see as the larger problem with the Supreme Court nomination and appointment process. As of right now, according to the Constitution, the president "shall nominate" and, "with the advice and consent of the Senate," appoint justices to the Supreme Court.

This is a problem: why should President Donald Trump P'oo and the Senate have the power to select and confirm Judge Barrett to the Supreme Court if her decisions will more directly affect ordinary Americans? I believe Supreme Court appointments would be much more effective as public elections.

Why? In theory, the Supreme Court is supposed to be the most unbiased court in the U.S. In practice, its judges are carefully picked and approved with the intent of accommodating a president or party's political agenda.

For instance, in 2016, President Barack Obama nominated former Chief Justice of the U.S.

Court of Appeals Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court following Justice Antonin Scalia's death.

In response, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell vetoed the nomination. Senator McConnell's decision was clearly driven by his desire to maintain Scalia's conservative jurisprudence on the Court.

Our current system blurs the line between partisanship and justice. Judge Barrett's nomination is only the latest example of this trend.

However, in Judge Barrett's case, the stakes are particularly high. With her conservative stances, Judge Barrett is sure to tip the balance of power on the court even further to the right. As a result, LGBTQ+ and abortion rights are in danger.

I don't think of myself as either a conservative or a liberal; I like to take issues as they come. But regarding Judge Barrett's nomination, I see a judge who is incapable of differentiating between her political and religious views, which could inhibit the Supreme Court from formulating moderate and impartial judgments for decades to come.

Sabahat Rahman is a sixth-former from Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. She may be reached at srahman21@choate.edu

TRUMP'S CLIMATE CHANGE RECORD IS BURNING

By **Renee Jiang '22**
Copy Editor

For the past two months, wildfires have ravaged California, blanketing the state with thick veils of black smoke. Despite these grim circumstances, the Trump administration remains unfazed and unresponsive, continuing their trend of blatant ignorance regarding climate change.

On September 14, President Donald Trump P'oo traveled to California for a meeting with state officials and scientists concerning the state's catastrophic wildfires. During the meeting, California Secretary for Natural Resources Wade Crowfoot discussed the large role that climate change played behind these wildfires.

In response, Trump dismissed climate change's disastrous impacts by saying, "It will start getting cooler, you just watch." Crowfoot responded with, "I wish science agreed with you," to which Trump retorted with a line that has since gone viral: "Well, I don't think science knows, actually."

Even when surrounded by experts, Trump continues to deny the truth. The planet's environmental crisis is escalating at an alarming rate, and its devastating consequences will only intensify, whether Trump believes in it or not.

The president's negligence toward California's wildfires is only one example of his dismissive attitude towards climate change. For the past three years, the Trump administration has reversed over 100 pieces of environmental legislation, according to a study by the *New York Times* — decisions that were clearly influenced by his close ties with the fossil fuel industry.

Important environmental policies that Trump has reversed include regulations on methane leaks and hydrofluorocarbon usage — both major contributors to carbon emissions. The administration's rollbacks also involve the replacement of the Obama-era Clean Power Plan, which aimed to monitor the fossil fuel industry and shift to cleaner energy alternatives.



Graphic by Yuko Tanaka/The Choate News

This August, the Trump administration finalized plans to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska for oil and gas drilling. This decision sparked nationwide controversy, with opposition from Alaskan environmental groups as well as lawsuits from 15 states.

Trump's dismantling of major environmental policies and pushes to install new federal lands for oil and gas development have both been integral to his goal of creating "the greatest economy in the history of the country" and securing American "energy dominance" worldwide. However, not only has Trump failed to consider the devastating environmental consequences of his mission, but he's also ignored the soaring costs of fossil fuel extraction.

Contrary to his opinion, renewable energy can actually improve the economy by creating millions of new jobs while also eliminating the risk of depletion. On the other hand, if fossil fuels continue to be consumed at the current rate, scientists estimate that they will be depleted by 2060. By then, the U.S. will have to confront a catastrophic environmental and economic crisis.

In the current presidential election, climate change is one of the most important issues for many voters. During the first presidential debate on September 29, Trump and former Vice President Joe Biden presented strikingly different environmental agendas. While Biden acknowledged the seriousness

of the nation's environmental crisis and outlined his plan for clean energy and environmental justice, Trump hammered away at the economic costs of renewable energy and conservation, per usual.

When asked about his environmental rollbacks, the president said, "I believe we have to do everything we can to have immaculate air, immaculate water." In reality, Trump's outright support for fossil fuel companies and his reduced regulations against power plant developments, energy usage, and natural habitat protection are predicted to cause an additional 1.8 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas to be released into the atmosphere by 2035.

The president also downplayed the climate crisis once again by saying that "we are doing phenomenally." Ironically, the nation has suffered through some of the worst consequences of global warming these past three years under Trump's authority, hit with devastating hurricanes and raging wildfires.

If Trump is re-elected this year, his many regulatory rollbacks will remain in effect, and the state of the planet will unequivocally worsen. Science is not political. Only when the environment is separated from the economy and politics can the U.S. alleviate its ever-worsening climate crisis.

Renee Jiang is a fifth-former from Hopkinton, Mass. She may be reached at rjiang22@choate.edu

In First Presidential Debate, Democracy is the Real Loser



Photo courtesy of The New York Times

President Trump and former Vice President Biden at the first presidential debate on September 29.

By **Wesley Boatwright '22**
Opinions Writer

Presidential debates should serve as an opportunity to learn from and connect with candidates. The first presidential debate for the 2020 general election between former Vice President Joe Biden and President Donald Trump P'oo on September 29 accomplished neither. Frankly, it was a mess — and that's a generous description.

Much of the blame can be placed on President Trump. He refused to abide by the debate's format, regularly interrupted Vice President Biden and moderator Chris Wallace, and resorted to distasteful insults and petty asides.

However, Vice President Biden was far from a formidable opponent. He made mostly weak and ineffective rebuttals of President Trump and missed pivotal opportunities to back the president into a corner. Vice President Biden would have come across as stronger and sharper if he had presented coherent responses to the president's half-truths and blatant lies.

Let's look at a few examples. No more than 180 seconds into the debate, President Trump attacked Vice President Biden about his educational background: "Did you use the word smart? You said you went to Delaware State ... You graduated either the lowest or almost the lowest in your class. Don't ever use the word 'smart' with me."

Biden passively countered, "Oh, give me a break."

Instead of conceding the point with an unremarkable one-liner, Vice President Biden should have used this as an opportunity to relate to working-class Americans. Biden comes from a middle-class background, and. Unlike President Trump, who grew up wealthy, Vice President Biden's success as a politician is the product of determination and drive.

A shocking line of the debate came after Wallace asked President Trump to denounce white supremacy. Pushing back, President Trump responded, "Give me a name," to which Vice President Biden interjected, "Proud Boys." Then, the president said, "Proud Boys, stand back and stand by."

In other words, the president not only refused to denounce white supremacy, but went as far as to tell the Proud Boys, a known white supremacist organization, to "stand by" on national television.

To make sure viewers understood the weight of the president's comments, Vice President Biden should have interjected and vociferously called President Trump out for endorsing white supremacists.

Although Vice President Biden struggled to put up a strong front in those two portions of the debate, he came back from it. The most emotional moment of the debate for him, and the most heartless from President Trump, was their exchange regarding Vice President Biden's sons. Vice President Biden said, "And speaking of my

son [Beau], the way you talk about the military, the way you talk about them being losers and being and just being suckers. My son was in Iraq. He spent a year there. He got the Brown Star. He got the Conspicuous Service Medal. He was not a loser. He was a patriot."

Even as Vice President Biden honored his son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015, President Trump responded with jabs about Vice President Biden's son Hunter, who has struggled with substance abuse. Vice President Biden responded to the attacks with clarity and emotion: "My son, like a lot of people at home, had a drug problem. He's overtaking it. He's fixed it. He's worked on it. And I'm proud of him. I'm proud of my son."

Vice President Biden could not have said that any better. He connected with the millions of Americans who have been affected by or have had a family member struggle with substance abuse, and he rose above Trump's childish taunts. While Trump came off as a heartless bully, Biden won sympathy.

Although Biden did not have a perfect debate, he shines in comparison to Trump's abysmal performance. However, being better than Trump isn't enough to win the election. Hopefully, in the next and final debate, Biden will bring more passion and strength to the podium.

Wesley Boatwright is a fifth-former from San Francisco. He may be reached at wboatwright22@choate.edu

Choate Administration and Students Help Community Members Hit Hard by Covid-19

By **Natarsha Yan '21**
Staff Reporter

These past few months, the pandemic has wreaked immense and unexpected changes in global financial dynamics. Schools and universities have been hit hard, leaving some to wonder: how has the Choate budget been affected, and as students and families have also encountered difficulties, how has Choate or its students helped assuage any financial troubles?

This past week, Chief Financial Officer Mr. Patrick Durbin discussed the pandemic's impacts on the School's budget. He said, "At the start of the pandemic, we chose to delay some of our capital improvement projects in order to see how the pandemic progressed. However, this fall, as we were able to reopen campus, we have now been able to move some of these 'paused' projects forward again." Despite those initial hiccups, the Choate budget has quickly recovered, and any impacts do not appear to be long-lasting. Additionally, Mr. Durbin said that the endowment "was impacted during the spring — as was the entire global economy — but it has largely recovered and is positioned well for the future."

Mr. Durbin also explained how the School's spending budget has been reorganized. "We

needed to move some budget items around in order to respond to the pandemic," he said. "We awarded more financial aid to families and spent more on technology in the classroom so that those who were unable to come to campus could still participate in the classroom with those on campus. In addition, we are spending much more on cleaning and cleaning supplies, as well as on testing the community each week." Fortunately, Mr. Durbin expressed, "most of this has been offset by reductions in spending in areas such as travel. We have also had donors generously contribute to the School's efforts."

Divestment is one area that has not been impacted by the pandemic, and Mr. Durbin confirmed that "the investment policy regarding fossil fuels adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2018 is still in place." Two years ago, in response to a student-led push for divestment, the School stopped further investments into fossil fuels and committed to slowly terminate their existing investments in those areas.

All in all, Mr. Durbin believes that Choate has adapted well to these sudden circumstances and is optimistic about the future.

Outside of administrative efforts, students have also played a substantial role in alleviating the

financial burdens on the student body. In particular, the Independent CRH Student Relief Fund (ICSRF), founded by Mai Ly Hagan '21 and Ula Lucas '21, has, as of the end of September, already distributed over \$20,000 to Choate students and families from the Classes of 2020–2023 to help pay for rent, bills and utilities, groceries, medical bills, and childcare costs.

Lucas spoke on the founding of the ICSRF, explaining, "The ICSRF is a mutual aid network at Choate. Our goal is to provide immediate financial assistance to Choate students who have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, specifically low-in-

come Choate students." The ICSRF has played an especially significant role in establishing and strengthening the Choate community, because, as Lucas said, "it has been able to help in ways that the School itself cannot."

As a non-profit institution, Lucas explained, "Choate is limited in the ways through which it can distribute financial aid. One stipulation is that the financial aid must be given for an academic purpose: for example, tuition support or study-abroad trips. From the outset, the ICSRF's goal has been to provide non-academic financial relief to Choate students. We hope to help combat things like food and

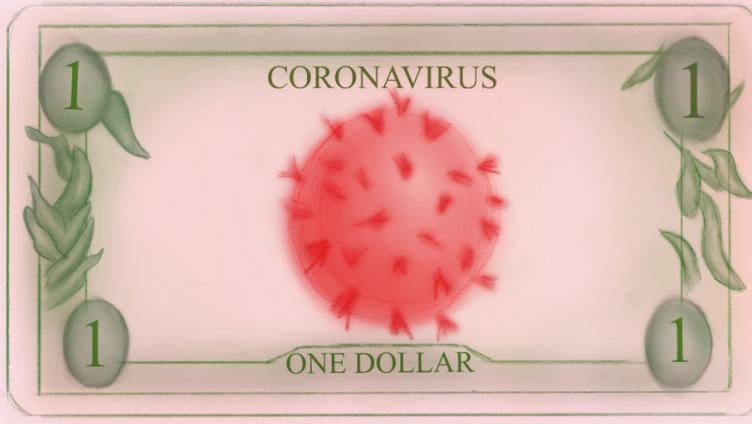
housing insecurity and to help pay for medical expenses, family expenses, and childcare. Essentially, we seek to provide monetary support for the areas that the School with its limitations as a non-profit is unable to cover."

Already, the fund's impact is quantifiable; on the fund's Instagram page, its leaders have published several posts detailing anonymous testimonials from students and parents who have been the recipients of grants from the ICSRF.

"It has been truly inspiring for myself and everyone else involved to see the ways that the Choate community came together in a time of great need," Lucas said. "It warmed my heart to see the involvement of everyone: not only students, but also alumni, faculty and staff, and parents."

Lucas notes that the fund is still accepting requests from students who are facing financial hardship due to the pandemic. She asks for members of the community to continue spreading awareness and making donations. The committee is also looking to host fall fundraising campaigns and sponsor some events on campus this term. For further information, Lucas advised students to visit crhstudentrelief.wixsite.com/join.

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Graphic by Julian Hurley/The Choate News

Whatcha Reading? Choaties' Favorite Books

By **Cassatt Boatwright '24**
Reporter

When the world's nonstop news cycle becomes too overwhelming, sometimes all one can do is curl up with a book and escape to a faraway fictional place. This week, I caught up with avid readers here at Choate to talk about their favorite books.

"*The Song of Achilles*, by Madeline Miller is one of my favorite books of all time. The romance described between Achilles and Patroclus is one of the most raw, heartrending romances I have ever read. Miller's writing is exquisite and poetic, and she can make each character come to life with vivid imagery. I will never get over this book, and my heart will never be the same. I know that every time I reread the book, I will never finish without tears."

— Claire Fu '22

"I really like *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen. Growing up, it was a bonding point for my sister and me. It was also one of the first classics I ever read, which is my favorite kind of book, and I appreciate the character development. I recommend it to feminists."

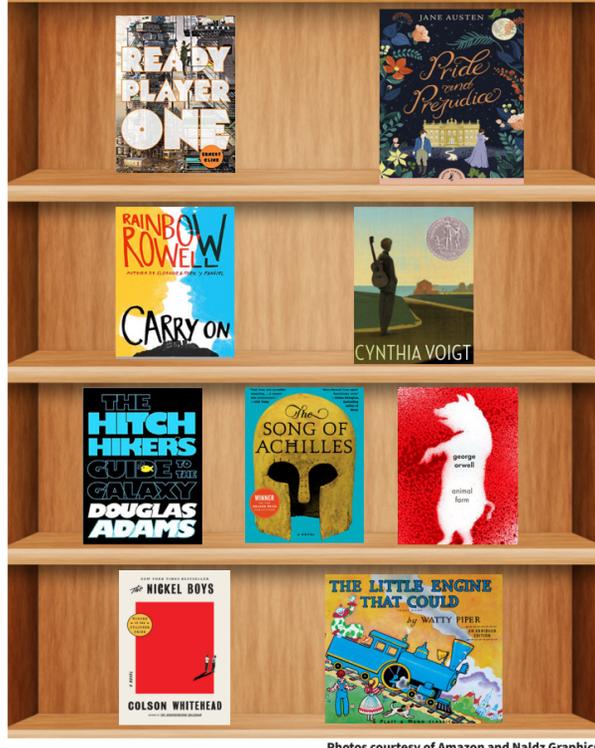
— Hannah McMurtrie '21

"*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, by Douglas Adams is a very sarcastic and strange book, but it's great for those who have a specific taste for dry humor."

— Anna Gargamelli '23

"One of my favorite books is *Ready Player One*, by Ernest Cline. It gives insight into what our future could look like when our lives are dominated by technology, but also tells a gripping story of friendship and perseverance. I'd recommend it to anyone interested in a quick science-fiction read."

— Lauren Kee '24



Photos courtesy of Amazon and Naldz Graphics

"My favorite book changes a lot, but *Carry On*, by Rainbow Rowell is my current choice. It's like *Harry Potter* except more adult, so read it if you are someone who liked that series."

— Reagan Colton '24

"My favorite book of all time is definitely *The Little Engine That Could*. My mom would always read this to me when I was a kid, and I remember feeling safe and in control during some tough and scary times."

— Marcus Ding '22

"Honestly, *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead has become my new favorite book. It was a heartbreaking yet informative read that helped me understand the plight of the African-American community. You can reread it because the message holds true."

— Ethan Foreman '22

"It's hard to choose, but I would say *A Solitary Blue*, by Cynthia Voigt. It's about a teenage boy and his relationship with his family and the people around him. I would recommend it to people who are having a hard time but want to be hopeful."

— Sakura Hayakawa '21

"My favorite book is *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell. It's my favorite because the personification of animals is both amusing and applicable to real life. I would recommend it to anyone looking for a quick but engaging read."

— Varun Ramamurthi '22

As the hectic fall term continues, stop by the library to take a break and check out one of these recommendations!

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COMMITTEE ON STUDENT ACTIVITIES: FRIEND OR FOE?

By **Brian Harder '23**
Staff Reporter

The Committee on Student Activities (COSA) aims to facilitate club life while executing the mission of the School. This has led many students to view this organization as a kind of "club police," shutting down student groups as it sees fit. In fact, COSA is not involved in many such decisions, and the group was not the one that created two recent controversial policies: the removal of club co-presidents and the unification of all community service clubs into one.

COSA acts "as a governing body, providing direction and resources for club leaders," according to Ms. Colleen Kazar, Assistant Director of Student Activities and COSA's faculty adviser. The student-led organization, composed of fourth, fifth, and sixth form students, aims to make club life as productive, enjoyable, and organized as possible. Facets of COSA's responsibilities include standardizing the proposal process for new clubs, managing the status of existing clubs, promoting clubs via social media, maintaining public relations, and managing publications.

COSA has also recently expanded its support of student life beyond the realm of administration; their social media subcommittee posts about COSA's recent undertakings and the School's club life on the Student Activity Center's (SAC) Instagram account, and their publications committee oversees the various magazines and journals on campus. "These bodies help bridge the gap between COSA and clubs," said Allen Zheng '21, Chair of COSA.

Furthermore, the public relations committee tries to bolster COSA's relationship with and involvement in the community. Over the years, COSA has grown to expand its presence and be a more useful resource for club members and leaders within Choate. "We have become more willing to listen to the community, which is important for carrying out our mission and letting people know who we are," said Wavy Griffin '21, Vice-chair of COSA.

The idea that COSA is the "club police" has developed in the community over the past several years. "Some students see the committee as a group that just cancels clubs," said Griffin.

This tension has only increased lately as a result of two controversial decisions that were attributed to COSA: creating one umbrella community service club and removing co-president positions.

The motivations behind establishing a single community service club involved the convenience of having just one place to go for community involvement. The SAC also thought this decision would simplify the unnecessarily complicated process of tabulating volunteer hours undertaken by Director of Community Service Ms. Melissa Koomson. "Combining community service clubs allows us to all brainstorm together, but the large size of each project can make it hard to manage," Berk Gokmen '21, the president of the Community Service Club, commented.

The controversy surrounding new club leadership rules began with the announcement that, beginning in the 2021–2022 school year, co-president positions will not be allowed. Many students are not in favor of this decision and have mixed thoughts on COSA as a result. Claire Fu '22, co-president of GirlTech, said, "I view the co-presidency positions as



Graphic by Yoyo Zhang/The Choate News

beneficial, because they give clubs a greater aspect of collaboration — an extra level of support and communication between the leaders." She added, "I have noticed that since the announced removal of co-presidents, this level of collaboration has degraded, and there now exists a more toxic competitive attitude within the leadership boards of clubs."

However, Monty Singer '22, President of Do-It Club and Choate Maker Club, agrees with this decision. "I think COSA wants

to make sure the club leaders are actually leading their clubs instead of just having another thing on their resume," he said.

Despite the fact that many students blame COSA for these decisions, the reality is that the committee was not actually behind them. The faculty who run the SAC, mainly Ms. Kazar and Director of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long, instituted these changes.

Ms. Kazar said, "The SAC office created these policies, and COSA shared the information with club leaders." Zheng said, "I

[COSA] had little say in the community service decision and no say in the co-president change."

Perhaps because COSA informed students and club presidents of these decisions, they were blamed for the controversy. COSA members report that they remain more committed than ever to supporting club life. Zheng encouraged club leaders to refer to the Club Manual if they had any questions or confusion.

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Choate Dancers Pirouette into the New Normal

By **Kate Bailey '22**
Copy Editor

This year, the phrase “dance like nobody’s watching” takes on a whole new meaning for Choate dancers. After a slew of sudden Covid-19-related cancellations in the spring term, the dance program is back on its feet (or tiptoes, perhaps) this fall with remote rehearsals and choreographies specifically designed for virtual performances.

Since September, all dance classes and rehearsals have been held online through Zoom. Instead of dancing together in the Colony Hall Dance Studio, students attend classes alone in their dorm rooms or bedrooms — in many cases hundreds or thousands of miles away from each other.

But what happens when a 4:00 p.m. practice at Choate is

at 4:00 a.m. for dancers in Asia? It’s a challenge that Jenny Guo ’21 and Madison Lee ’22, who are from Hong Kong and Seoul, respectively, have taken into their own hands. Instead of skipping rehearsals completely, the two dance leaders are teaching their own classes twice a week at times more accessible for international dancers. Guo’s class centers around contemporary dance, while Lee’s focuses on ballet.

“I’m very excited about the project,” Guo said. “I like the opportunity to extend the dance program outside of the Choate campus and to be able to share it with different students all over the world.”

Dancers have also had to make practical changes regarding the way they learn choreography. Mirielle Ma ’21, a Dance Company Leader who is choreographing a dance *en pointe* — a

special form of ballet — takes an asynchronous approach when relaying choreography to her dancers. “I’ve been recording little clips of me doing choreography in my basement or outside and then sending it to my dancers and asking them to learn in whatever way possible — in their own rooms or whatever space they can get,” Ma said.

The virtual nature of dance rehearsals also allows dancers to explore aspects of the craft that they’d previously left untouched. For example, some dancers are choreographing what they call “screen dances” — pre-recorded dances that will eventually be shown alongside in-person dances at the concert next spring.

Laya Raj ’24, a third-former who joined Dance Company this year, has enjoyed the opportunity to work with “video as a medium”

during virtual practices. She said of combining cinematography with dance, “We’ve been working on getting really close to the camera, then moving far away, and then entering the frame again.”

While dancers have found innovative ways to continue practicing together despite the miles of distance between one another, some of the dance program’s traditions have been difficult to replicate virtually. Dance leaders are trying to reimagine some of Dance Company’s most cherished traditions in an online setting — such as the company’s first meeting of the year, which is often a memorable moment for new and returning dancers alike.

“Usually we’d be sitting in a circle in the dance studio and introducing ourselves ... this year, it was pretty weird seeing everyone’s faces on a Zoom screen,”

Guo said. “However, it’s tradition, and it was nice to have that sense of community again.”

The dance leaders have also been focused on ensuring new students are warmly welcomed into the program. Ma said, “We’ve been hosting these little dance parties, where we invite all of the freshmen to come on Zoom. We talk to them and show them clips of our old shows.”

Raj, who joined the program this September, has enjoyed her experience so far, though she’s still getting to know everybody. “I don’t really know much about everyone’s personalities yet, but I think I know them as dancers now,” she said.

Despite the obstacles the dance programs faced this fall, Ma treasured small moments when she got to spend time with fellow dancer leaders on Zoom.

“The Dance Company presidents and I spent, like, four hours one Sunday morning on Zoom putting together cast lists,” she said. “It just felt like what dance used to be. All of us are such good friends, and we would spend so much time talking.”

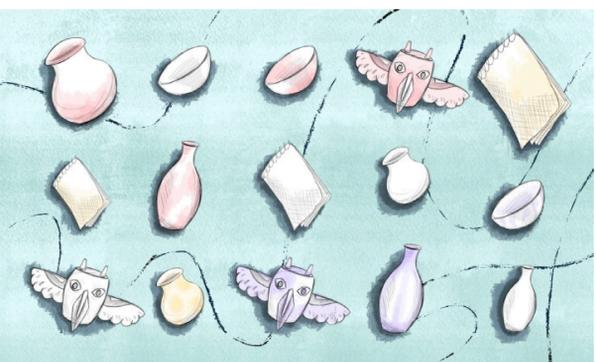
This fall, the dance program is planning to perform for the first time since winter term last year. Traditionally, Student Choreographed Scenes (SCS) takes place every December, but this year, the dance performance will debut in November due to the remote learning schedule. The program leaders also hope to be able to put on the annual dance concert in late spring.

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Graphic by Tony Lee/The Choate News

CERAMICS TAKES A DIGITAL SPIN



Graphic by Tony Lee/The Choate News

By **Reagan Colton '24**
Reporter

From birthday parties to traveling to hugs, Covid-19 has robbed us of many simple joys in life. This school year, it’s also taking away the ceramics courses traditionally offered in the Dodge Shops studio. Replacing the previous ceramics offerings is a similar studio art course called The Art of the Handmade, created and taught by ceramics teacher and Visual Arts Concentration Program adviser Mr. Aaron Sober.

In a similar fashion to the original ceramics classes, students taking The Art of the Handmade learn about how historical artisans and craftsmen contributed to their local societies with their artwork, as well as how handcrafted art influenced different cultures around the world. The course features several projects that allow students not only to tell stories through artwork, but also to explore topics on social justice, religion, and various cultural rituals.

Though both iterations of the course study the same themes and ideas, this new course differs from previous ceramics classes in how students engage with art. “Instead of making sculptures and things with our hands, we will be making art on the iPad,” Mr. Sober said.

While the course has previously focused on clay as its primary medium, this year’s spotlight is on the digital drawing and editing

app Procreate, which is provided for free on every Choate student’s iPad. Students use Procreate for animations and photo editing, which are two components of digital art never before explored in ceramics classes.

In addition to iPads and Apple Pencils, students also work with an array of physical tools — although much fewer than in previous years — such as traditional pencil and paper, mixed media such as acrylic paint, and oil-based clay.

The Art of the Handmade also features a unique ritual: every class, Mr. Sober greets students by playing a song that, he says, helps them enter the mental realm of creativity and gain focus for their artistic work. Mr. Sober’s class also includes lectures, readings, videos, podcasts, and Zoom tours of art studios, which give students an inside glimpse into how different artists have continued to create art during the pandemic.

Mr. Sober hopes the virtual set-up of the course will help familiarize students with digital art, expand their artistic vocabularies, and develop their ability to visualize and describe images. “We are being bombarded with digital images everyday. It is important to know that we understand images better if you create them,” he said.

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MUSIC ENSEMBLES CONFRONT PANDEMIC CHALLENGES WITH CREATIVITY

By **Angel Guo '22**
Staff Reporter

It’s time for orchestra rehearsal. When you enter the room, you expect to see the familiar rows and rows of faces and instruments — but this year, awkward smiles greet you from muted laptops, and your stand partner waves to you from his room across the country. In these new socially-distant rehearsals, music ensembles are finding ways to replicate the in-person experience with new practices such as conducting score analysis and playing with backing tracks.

This school year’s new academic schedule, which was specifically designed to accommodate remote learning students in various time zones, presented many hurdles for ensembles regarding scheduling. Every

ensemble has had to shift their rehearsals from their traditional evening time slots to daytime class blocks. Ultimately, Symphony Orchestra was designated to meet during D block throughout the week and String Orchestra during H block on Mondays and Thursdays.

Conflicting schedules have meant several former orchestra players were unable to rejoin the ensemble this year. The time-zone differences and in-dorm quarantine posed challenges even for members who were able to participate, preventing them from playing with the group during the designated meeting times.

Recognizing the impossibility of coordinating convenient rehearsal times for every member, Instrumental Ensembles Director Mr. Gene Wie shifted the focus of music rehearsals this year to score analysis and

sight-reading, which can both be done asynchronously.

During synchronous rehearsals, in order to simulate the familiar orchestra environment where students play with each other concurrently, Mr. Wie created a backing track using Logic Pro to paste the music score and generate a sound sample through the recordings of a professional orchestra. During rehearsals, Mr. Wie plays the backing tracks over Zoom, allowing students to hear the full score and play along with their own parts.

Although the current arrangement cannot completely substitute the experience of practicing together with other students in a full orchestra or small sections, Paloma So ’23, a fourth form violinist in the Symphony Orchestra, enjoys the online rehearsals. “I would say this new format is much more diverse because we are looking at new repertoires from a performance point of view rather than an academic perspective,” So said.

Mr. Wie has also taken advantage of the new digital format to familiarize himself with Canvas and other learning management softwares. During future rehearsals, Mr. Wie plans to make notations on scores for different sections and upload them onto Canvas so students are able to review their feedback afterwards.

“Technologies can be very efficient and effective when applied to music ensembles,” Mr. Wie said. “This is something we should have been doing a long time ago, but we didn’t because we teach in a very traditional field that is highly resistant to new technology.”

After the quarantine period ended on Monday, the majority of students returned to socially-distanced, in-person rehearsals. Mr. Wie placed tripods with mounted IMS camera systems

in different sections to ensure students who are learning online will share the same experience as those learning in-person. For example, remote students who play the violin joined the violin Zoom meeting, which is connected to a specific camera. Through this intricate system of section-specific cameras and Zoom rooms, students who are learning remotely can interact with other musicians in their section and share the same viewpoint of the conductor as if they were sitting in their usual seats.

“This is something we should have been doing a long time ago, but we didn’t because we teach in a very traditional field that is highly resistant to new technology.”

Mr. Gene Wie
Instrumental Ensembles Director

“All the creative methods that online music ensembles are exploring are to guarantee that everyone is involved and participating meaningfully,” said Mr. Wie. “I feel the frustration and disappointment when people who are Zoom-ing in across the globe cannot be heard, and we are trying every possible way to make them feel connected.”

Since students are unable to rehearse altogether, Mr. Wie used this opportunity to explore exceptionally challenging pieces that the orchestra would not normally play, in addition to film soundtracks and video game theme songs, such as those from Nintendo’s Super Mario games, a silver lining in these challenging times.

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Graphic by Tony Lee/The Choate News

Teams Adjust to Reopening Restrictions

By **Priam Alataris '22**
Reporter

Without a doubt, 2020 is one of the most unprecedented years in sports history. This week, Choate held its first round of in-person practices with new health guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19 on campus. These measures will include the mandatory wearing of masks at all times, proper sanitization, and adequate social distancing. Teams have put in a tremendous amount of work to acclimate to the circumstances. Eager to finally resume fall athletics, captains are rethinking team goals and planning out new practice schedules for the upcoming months.

Girls' Cross Country

In order to maintain its tight-knit character, Girls' Cross Country have already been conducting online workouts via Zoom and Google Drive. Co-captain Taylor Mitchell '21 said, "The coaches and I are trying to create different workouts and interactive virtual events so that Girls' Cross Country can still feel like a team." The use of online tools has allowed students to stay connected with teammates and stay in shape. More importantly, the runners have been able to hold each other accountable for the effort they put in.

Boys' Cross Country

Boys' Cross Country is planning "somewhat regular practices but with more distance between runners during drills," according to co-captain Rory Latham '21. As cross country requires less close contact and physical interactions between athletes compared to other sports, the team is looking to hold practices resembling a normal season. The team "will have opportunities to improve official times on our own course, which is great because that's a huge part of cross country," Latham said. A virtual meet in November against Loomis remains a possibility.

Varsity Field Hockey

Establishing themselves as trailblazers of remote practicing, Varsity Field Hockey has initiated a new program which they believe will ensure that new students feel welcomed even without physical interactions. "One thing that I am super excited about this season is our 'Bigs and Littles' program where the upperclassmen and underclassmen [are] paired up and it's just like having a buddy on the team," said co-captain Claire Gavin '21. "Speaking from experience, it can be very helpful having someone to ask questions and talk to before we

get on the field and even during the season."

Boys' Varsity Soccer

Boys' Varsity Soccer is looking to make the most of its season's cancellation. According to co-captain Allen Zheng '21, the team is taking advantage of their extra time together to focus on training new players. "We have a bunch of new younger guys that we will help develop since the

"We truly want to make the most of the situation and are just happy to be back on campus and have the ability to play the sport we love."

Bella Capuano '21
Girls Varsity Soccer Co-captain

season is canceled." The team has been hosting virtual practices and Zoom meetings, but most of the boys haven't played together before. Zheng emphasized that the team is excited about finally playing together this week.

Girls' Varsity Soccer

Girls' Varsity Soccer is coming off a strong season from last year. The team is determined to maintain a competitive practice environment and hopefully hold intrasquad scrimmages. Co-captain Bella Capuano '21 said, "Even though we are not having a traditional season, we are excited to come together as a team and

have the ability to play the sport we love."

Varsity Football

Varsity Football players had been awaiting their first week of practices with anticipation but were also prepared to follow strict Covid-19 guidelines. Head Coach Mr. LJ Spinnato said, "All players are required to wear gloves. All players will be required to wear a mask underneath their helmet, equipped with a full splash guard that covers the entire face and all drills will be spread apart by three yards in the first two weeks. 'Give me three' is the saying."

Mr. Spinnato also highlighted post-practice precautions, such as wiping down balls and equipment after use. He reiterated that the team hopes that "by the end of our fall trimester, we'll be able to do some sort of inter-squad scrimmaging, which will allow the players the opportunity to exercise their techniques and test their physical development." He added that the team is "excited to get back to work."

Girls' Varsity Volleyball

Like other teams, Girls' Varsity Volleyball began training on Tuesday with both indoor and outdoor practices. Co-captain Ella Sklar '22 explained that the team will split into groups of experienced and less experienced girls, instead of the traditional varsity, JV, and thirds. Practices on the woodcourt will be held 12 feet apart, while outdoors will be six feet apart, both with masks on. New volleyball nets have also been set up on the soccer field to allow for proper social distancing protocol. The captains are also trying to organize outdoor team bonding exercises and activities, including group runs, workouts, and outdoor games.

Boys' Varsity Water Polo

Boys' Varsity Water Polo is taking a tenuous approach to the readjustment procedure. According to co-captain Jack Sun '21,

"The team will be doing mostly swimming and conditioning for the first week or two, and if the campus risk level goes down, might progress to eggbeater [water-treading] or solo ball drills." Sun highlights the need for the team to stay in shape even with limited time in the water: "There will be a lot of dryland to make up for lack of aquatic exercise. There's also a lot of strict rules on how, when, and where you can enter and leave the pool, and you've got to wear masks the whole time up until the moment you get into the water." Sun, as well as other members of Choate Water Polo, understand that "these guidelines will present difficulties for the team." Nonetheless, Sun emphasized that the captains are "striving to keep the team environment the same."

Ranging from increased team-bonding activities to new, socially-distanced drills, Choate sport teams have employed innovative techniques to combat the many obstacles of the pandemic and a cancelled fall season. With many students now back on campus, Choate athletes are excited to finally be on the field together, introducing some sort of normalcy into their lives.

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PLAYER PROFILE

ON THE FIELD WITH TEMI AND TIFE AGUNLOYE



Tife (left) and his twin brother, Temi will soon be college rivals.

Photos courtesy of Choate Flickr

By **Jessica Wu '22**
Copy Editor

Recently, Boys' Varsity Soccer player Temi Agunloye '21 and his twin brother, Boys' Varsity Soccer co-captain Tife Agunloye '21, committed to rival colleges Bates College and Bowdoin. Before the start of their senior season, the Agunloyes sat down with reporter Jessica Wu '22 to discuss their experiences playing soccer at Choate, the pandemic's effect on their sport, and their aspirations for college.

Jessica Wu: How long have you been playing soccer?

Temi: Since we were three or four — so 13, 14 years.

JW: How did you start getting involved in soccer?

Tife: It was actually because of my dad's brother who came from Nigeria — [we were] in the front yard, and we started passing around a soccer ball. Since then, we've taken it more seriously and started playing more.

JW: Do you find that you're able to support each other when

you have setbacks? Does it help to have your brother on your team with you?

Temi: It definitely does — just having someone you've known your whole life that you can talk to who's also experienced similar things really helps.

JW: What were your aspirations for your senior season before the pandemic and how have they changed since?

Tife: I feel like we would have had a good season — we were preparing well during workouts in the spring. Now, instead of preparing for games, we have to just get better individually and work on more individual strengths instead of team strengths.

Temi: Going off of that, my aspirations going into the season were like, "it's your last season. You got to make the most of it. You have to do your best for college coaches." But, when you hear in the summer that the season's not going to happen, it became more like focusing on the college season and preparing mentally for that.

JW: What is your favorite thing about playing on the Choate team?

Tife: The family. The coaches, the players, always coming together and being able to share laughs, whether that be on bus rides home or just training in general. The whole community sense being part of that team brings us, I feel like it's a great experience.

JW: What was it like committing to play soccer in college?

Tife: A big relief, because once coronavirus hit, we were supposed to have a spring season where coaches come to see us and a fall season where coaches were going to come see us. Once that all went away, we started to get a little worried — how would we get seen and how were we going to talk to coaches? But once we committed, it lifted a weight off of our shoulders.

JW: Is this the first time you guys will be playing on rival teams?

Tife: Yes, it is. We've been on the same team all our lives.

JW: What will it be like going from teammates to playing on rival teams?

Tife: It will be competitive, to say the least. We've always pushed each other in training and in games — we've always had that competitive edge. Now, it's going to be against each other. I feel like it's going to be a lot more competitive. We're just going to go at each other.

Temi: I think it's also going to be an interesting experience for people watching us, like our parents. They never had to support their sons on different teams. It's always been one goal, so now it's like, "Who do they root for?"

JW: What are you most looking forward to about playing soccer in college?

Tife: It's a new challenge to start to bond with a new group and new coaches. Also, Bates is in Maine, so it's going to be a bit colder than it is here. I'll have to adapt to that, but I'm just looking forward to the challenge of playing bigger and better players.

Temi: Yeah, I think he said it pretty well.

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CHOATE OFFERS NEW INTRAMURAL SPORTS



Graphic by Mia Katz/The Choate News

By **Sam Anastasio '23**
Staff Reporter

Reopening the School in the midst of a pandemic has brought about major changes in every aspect of life at Choate, and sports are no exception.

Like other daily campus activities, sports must now meet measures set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Connecticut state guidelines, as well as Choate's own health guidelines, to ensure the safety of its student-athletes.

Despite the cancelation of interscholastic play and several intramural sports, students are still responsible for fulfilling their normal athletic requirements. The Athletics Department, as a result, offered new options for intramural sports during the fall term.

Some of the intramural sports previously held during fall term, like self-defense, jiu-jitsu, and kayaking, are not being offered, as they cannot uphold social distancing protocols. As a result, the School plans on providing new intramural sports for the student body, including ping-pong, pickle-ball, and Frisbee golf; the Athletic Department is also offering fall A.M. Yoga, which has previously only been available winter and spring terms.

Many of the new offerings are a welcome addition to the repertoire of sports students can choose from, although it is

unclear how many people will participate in these activities. "Ping-pong was always a great way to spend time in the SAC during my first fall term at Choate. It definitely made me interested in the intramural offering," said Finn McGaan '22.

In the past, many attendees have enjoyed A.M. Yoga, which is newly available in the fall. Ava Maha '23, said, "A.M. Yoga was a great way to kickstart a relaxing and productive day. Ms. Sue Schade was a kind and helpful instructor, who widened my knowledge and appreciation for yoga."

The Athletics Department has also developed a plan to help reduce the number of students that are participating in each activity at once. Athletics Director Mr. Roney Eford said, "We will have intramural offerings throughout the day to give students options and to de-densify the afternoon athletic time slot."

The School has also allotted time for Winter and Spring season teams to practice during the fall term. These practices will take place on Monday and Wednesday each week.

Although many students may be disappointed that they will not be able to compete against other schools, new athletic offerings aim to keep students active on campus and help broaden their horizons.

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