



# THE CHOATE NEWS

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL SINCE 1907

Choate Rosemary Hall  
333 Christian Street  
Wallingford, CT

VOL. CX · NO. 7

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2016

THECHOATENews.CHOATE.EDU



Photo courtesy of Jade Watson

Under Circe's gaze, Pallas Athena (played by Rebecca Lilenbaum '17) glides across the stage during *The Odyssey*. Athena is the goddess of wisdom and war strategy, and she supports Odysseus on his journey home.

## STUDENT COUNCIL CEMENTS LEGACY

By **Haley Chang '18**  
Copy Editor

Many students remember the events that the 2016-2017 Student Council held this fall term, such as the school-wide Lip-Dub challenge, but fewer will recall the accomplishments the council has achieved behind the scenes. Below is a rundown of the Council's efforts over the past term.

### More Inclusive Student Representation

In order to be more inclusive to all students, the Council has revised its Constitution to incorporate students of all genders as well as day students. The changes made to Constitution will be finalized once Dean of Students Mr. James Stanley gives his approval.

Student Body Vice President Namsai Sethpornpong '17 said, "I think that the changes that we suggested and voted upon are exactly what we need. The point of having a student council is for student representation, and through making these changes, I think we are carrying out the mission of better representing students, and that includes constituents who do not conform to the gender binary and/or whose issues are not represented enough."

The precursory Constitution stated that in all forms except for the rising sixth form, "If the president and first representative do not represent both genders, the next highest vote-recipient of the opposite gender will become the second representative," while the new Constitution states that if the top two vote recipients are of the same gender, the third member must be of "any other gender." Additionally, the circling process has been changed so that after each student selects the names of any eight students who they feel would best represent the form, the top four male

and the top four female vote-recipients, as well as the next highest vote-recipient, will be sent a petition. Previously, the top eight students, regardless of gender, received a petition.

Student Body President Cecilia Zhou '17 explained the driving forces behind pursuing this change. "What initially sparked the scrutiny of the Constitution was a couple of members expressing interest in updating it. And as we got more into it, we realized that there were several inconsistencies between what was written and what we do in practice. So the motive was really twofold — we wanted to reflect the truth of what we actually do and believe, but also change it so it would be more forward-looking."

She continued, "Very recently, the school officially changed its wording surrounding gender for people who don't identify as cis-boys or cis-girls. We wanted to make sure that our procedures were reflective of the school's inclusive values."

Furthermore, the Council has voted to broaden day student representation. Last Monday, in a vote of 10 - 1, the Council agreed to increase the number of day student representatives to two — a rising fourth former representing underclassmen and either a rising fifth or sixth former representing upperclassmen — as opposed to the current system of having only one sixth former on the Council to represent the entire day student population. The two day student representatives will be responsible for meeting with the Director of Day Students once a week and reporting the contents of each meeting to the Council at large. The Council voted on: (i) having three day student representatives, one from each rising fourth, fifth, and sixth forms; (ii) having two day student representatives, a rising fourth former

See COUNCIL, Page 3

## The Odyssey's Action-Packed Journey Wows Audience, Garners A Crowd

By **Namsai Sethpornpong '17**  
Staff Reporter

On Friday, December 2, the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) was packed with eager students, faculty, and family members all in attendance of the long-awaited fall production: Mary Zimmerman's adaptation of *The Odyssey*.

Every year, freshmen read *The Odyssey*, the tale of Greek hero Odysseus's voyage home after helping his allies win the Trojan War. The epic poem includes Odysseus's encounters with mythical creatures such as sirens, whose beguiling voices lure men to their deaths,

and the one-eyed man-eating Cyclops, Polyphemus.

Director Ms. Tracy Ginder-Delventhal said of her choice to produce the play, "I chose *The Odyssey* because we're always looking for ways to tie what we do into the larger community. Additionally, I chose it because freshmen read *The Odyssey*; it was my hope that we could bring in more people." She went on to elaborate on what the play meant to her: "I think it's about the central question. Where are we at home? I think that's a really relevant question for all of us," she said.

Noah Nyhart '17, who played Odysseus despite be-

ing a newcomer to the stage, commented on this underlying theme of homecoming and the challenges that he had to overcome in order to truly connect to the character. He remarked, "It was pretty hard to relate to Odysseus because he's so heroic and he thinks he's above everyone. He's got this huge ego, and you can see over the whole arc of the show that he's getting beat up and having false moments of finding home, like through his relationship with Calypso, but in the end, when he's finally able to reunite with his wife, he is humbled." According to Nyhart, it was during the last two

weeks of rehearsal that everything finally reached a certain unison: "The show came together then, because when you start rehearsing on the PMAC stage, you can feel it. You've got the set, you get to see your costumes, and you can really become the show."

**I chose *The Odyssey* because we're always looking for ways to tie what we do into the larger community.**

Ms. Tracy Ginder-Delventhal  
Director of *The Odyssey*

See ODYSSEY, Page 7

## EXAMINING THE EFFICACY OF TERM REPORTS

By **Grayce Gibbs '18**  
Staff Reporter

While the kickoff of a new term is often the least stressful time for students, the first day of this year's winter term was quite the opposite for teachers, coaches, and advisers, as it coincided with the due date for fall term reports.

Usually winter term begins the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, and faculty comments are due the Monday before, when there are no classes. This year, due to calendar shifts primarily relating to the dates of Thanksgiving and Christmas, classes needed to start on Monday in order to have enough school days in December. Mr. Kevin Rogers, Director of Studies, said, "Some of the faculty felt like there was a lot to do that Monday because comments were due at 2:00 p.m., and they were also teaching classes."

Mr. David Loeb, an English teacher, agreed: "We tend to work, like our students, up until the due date. Thanksgiving is a working week and when we treat it as if it's not a work week, we wind up running out of time. I got my reports and my grades in, but I got them in pretty close to the deadline."

However, Mr. Will Nowak, a math and HPRSS teacher, said, "It was fine. I really don't care much about the deadline. Like all things in life, I believe in the philosophy of slow and steady wins the race. I wrote some term comments on Monday, the first day of classes, but being aware of the deadline, which was given to us well in advance, it wasn't too onerous."

Ms. Katie Levesque, the Dean of Faculty, added, "Most faculty members were able to plan out their time accordingly, so that they

See REPORTS, Page 3

## DECADE-LONG ACCREDITATION PROCESS BEGINS

By **Kate Spencer '20**  
Staff Reporter

Choate recently began an accreditation process overseen by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASAC), in which faculty, parents, students, and alumni contribute their opinions and observations through surveys and committees. The cycle, which is composed of self-evaluation, peer review, and a follow-up council, is being led by Director of Studies Mr. Kevin Rogers and mathematics teacher Ms. Kimberly Norman.

The process, a three-step cycle that takes roughly two years, aims to assess every aspect of an institution's community. The accreditation cycle commenced this fall with the release of faculty surveys. "Faculty have completed surveys for a preference on a standards committee that they will sit on, and that begins in January. We will also be surveying alumni, parents,

and students, and that will be happening before the start of the calendar year," explained Ms. Norman. After the self-evaluation, Choate is expected to create more initiatives for the School's future and expand its implementation of curriculum. After this, NEASAC will send a visiting committee to evaluate Choate. "In the spring of 2018, a team of faculty and administrators drawn from all other schools like us will visit campus for a couple of days to find out if Choate does what we say we do. And then their review goes off to the NEASAC organization for them to decide whether we should be accredited or not," Mr. Rogers stated.

The accreditation is composed of a ten-year cycle in which schools go through the self-study, peer review, and follow-up stages. Self-study pushes the entire school as a whole to reflect on its values and to plan for the standards in a structured analysis. Mr. Rogers said, "Each

group will be responsible for generating a section of the self-study that looks at their particular standards and how Choate is doing. Once all of those committees have done their work, which will happen in the winter term, we will assimilate all of those reports into one unifying report that will then be shared with the faculty." Ms. Norman added, "The report provides us with a manual for the school evaluation, and it explains the phases of the accreditation process, different standards that have to be fulfilled, and the indicators we need to respond to. We are just adhering to the parts of the process that are provided to us by NEASAC."

Peer review, which involves a visiting committee of other educational professionals, gives the named institution an outside perspective on their methods and plans for the future. As the cycle ends, it is guaranteed that a school will be monitored loosely by a follow-up council,

a commission of elected peers overseen by a professional staff to ensure that plans are being implemented and institutional change is accomplished. According to the NEASAC website, this allows faculty and students to "respond to information gathered in regular reports from the institution or through complaints from the public concerning a failure to comply with the standards."

This process is not new to Choate. In 2006, Choate went through the same process with Director of Curricular Initiatives Dr. Katie Jewett and Associate Headmaster Ms. Kathleen Wallace as co-leaders. However, Choate was able to get an extension of the ten-year interval. "With Dr. Alex Curtis coming on and the initiation of the strategic plan, we got a postponement so that we could get some things in place," said Mr. Rogers. He continued, "Many of the faculty

See ACCREDITATION, Page 2

### A Gingerbread Champion Reflects

Li '17 opines on her three (sadly, not four) year winning gingerbread house streak.  
Opinions • P4



### Stories from Sabbaticals

A peek at the adventures of fall-term sabbaticals.  
Features • P6

### A Musical Composer Phenomenon

Learn about Arts Concentration's first (and only!) composer.  
Arts • P7



### Wondering about Winter?

A preview of Choate's chances in athletics this trimester.  
Sports • P8

### What's Inside

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

### Contact Us:

Online at  
thechoatenews.choate.edu

Email at  
thechoatenews@choate.edu

Visuals (from left to right) by  
Katherine Li,  
Amy Salot,  
Audrey Powell,  
and Daniel Kramer



Read it then recycle it

# DEMYSTIFYING CHOATE RESOURCES FOR TREATING EATING DISORDERS

By **Grayce Gibbs '18**  
Staff Reporter



Illustration by Katharine Li/The Choate News

"I don't even know what the health center would do about an eating disorder—I've never heard any policies about it," said Kate Moore '17. Many students are not sure what resources are available when dealing with an eating disorder like anorexia. On why eating disorders are so complex at Choate, Ms. Karen Klein the health center's Director of Nursing said, "It's not the boarding piece. It's that students who are extremely high achieving, competitive, and expect a great deal of themselves are the students who are more likely to develop eating disorders."

Mrs. Char Davidson, one of Choate's two on-staff therapists, thinks of eating disorders as a fluid continuum of the range of normal eating. In addition to normal eating, disordered eating, Mrs. Davidson noted, is when "people get obsessed about things, and they're never really at ease." She described eating disorders as an overwhelming force: "A person has no control. They wake up in the morning thinking about food and calories."

The health center's staff, who evaluate and address eating disorders, include Ms. Klein; Dr. Christopher Diamond, the Director of Health Services; and Choate's two therapists. According to Ms. Klein, "We do an assessment that is developmentally appropriate, including height, weight, and body mass index; it may include a food diary and a mental health assessment. All of those pieces are in place when we initially talk with a student about whether or not they actually have an eating disorder. From there we put together a multidisciplinary approach to provide the student with all the support that they need."

This support sometimes includes an outside treatment team with a psychologist, nutritionist, and physician. Mrs. Davidson added, "We know when things are serious, and we don't have those specialties. We need to refer out to specialists whose focus is on this kind of illness."

Ms. Klein continued, "We determine what a student's needs are, we provide them with a pri-

mary care base in the health center, and then we determine what other aspects of a treatment team they may need. Then we help coordinate that so they can get to appointments that might not be on campus or that we can arrange for them while they are here."

Ms. Klein said, "If you need the services of a multidisciplinary team then we need to contact you parents. That's a very straightforward issue, because it requires transportation, insurance, and billing, and all these other aspects that are very technical."

If the eating disorder is drastically threatening the student's physical or mental health, they may go on medical leave. Ms. Klein said, "Our goal is for kids to be able to stay at school and to feel successful, and that's why we have all these supports in place." Mrs. Davidson added, "A severe anorexic may have to be hospitalized because their heart rhythm and blood pressure needs to be monitored, and they need a very safe, predictable environment to get re-nourished, and that is going to take time."

Mrs. Davidson, who has been counseling at Choate since the 1980s said, "As the whole body of information around eating disorders has developed over time, we know more. It's in our culture, and if it's in our culture, it's in our school."

She notes that the influence of culture on eating disorders has caused eating disorders to become more prevalent on campus. "We've gotten better at diagnosing eating disorders over time." She continued, "I've been here long enough to see the first eating disorders come forward. Over time it wasn't just anorexia, which we've known about for a long time, but bulimia emerged. Now we know that there are many different kinds of eating disorders, and there are combinations."

Ms. Klein, who has been at Choate for five years, said, "We have deepened and broadened our support in our community to really ensure as much as we can that students can remain in school and get the team that they need in place, and to ensure that we can get them to those supports in a timely way. We have improved and enhanced that in the past few years."

One way the health center works to prevent eating disorders is through outreach. Several student organizations address eating disorders, including the Body Project, the assessment team, and Sophomore Seminar. With the curriculum changes coming next year, Ms. Klein said, "We will be doing education and support around eating disorders in a variety of ways, which may or may not include sophomore seminar."

However, students feel differently. Lauren Lamb '17 said, "People don't have enough knowledge about eating disorders. We need more education about eating disorders."

Hadalee Goodman '17 believes that the silence around eating disorders is attributed to culture rather than education: "You don't really hear about eating disorders, but there definitely are instances where you know someone has an eating disorder, but you don't want to tell someone because that might get the person with an eating disorder in trouble. It's more of a culture of silence and lack of support." Moore said, "You feel like it's not your place to bombard and ask people questions, take preemptive action, or intrude on someone else's affairs, because you don't want to be wrong."

Ms. Davidson noted, "I think students can go to any faculty member of their choice and begin talking about whether they should be worried or talking about behaviors that they've noticed."

"It's important to decrease the stigma around eating disorders. Having conversations about it, and knowing that this is a treatable, that there's no shame in having disorder and that there is help available is a really important on-going goal," said Ms. Klein.

**Grayce Gibbs** may be reached at [gjibbs18@choate.edu](mailto:gjibbs18@choate.edu)

# School Store to Modernize

By **Mehreen Pasha '18**  
Staff Reporter

Refreshing — that's the word Mr. Daniel Cronin, the manager of the School Store, used recently to describe the ways in which Choate's book store will change once it's in the new St. John Hall Activities Center. Mr. Cronin and other faculty members visited New Haven not long ago to glean inspiration from the Yale Bookstore. The School is discussing different store hours and layout. Among these substantial changes, the School Store also hopes to invite more product representatives and vendors to facilitate product sampling.

The goal is to improve sustainability, efficiency, and customer experience. Mr. Cronin hopes the new store will look like a modern retail shop. "The new School Store will mesh with the aesthetic of the new building," he said. "Being up close to the heart of campus and working more closely with the community will make the School Store seem more connected to the community than it ever has been before." (After the new St. John is finished, the School Store will be above ground for the first time in the School's history.)

Director of the Student Activities Center Mr. James Yanneli agreed. "The new store will have a certain freshness. Its more vibrant and accessible location will encourage more foot traffic." He added, "Hopefully, it's good for kids, good for the

School, and good for the School Store's business."

In order to glean inspiration, Mr. Cronin noted that members of the school visited New Haven, "We looked for inspiration from the bookstore about products that are available at the bookstore. We also observed their ways of merchandising to see if we can adapt that on a smaller scale."

The focus of the new store's layout is on maximizing space and efficiency. Additionally, the Store hopes to make textbook distribution more efficient by building a storage unit separate from the Store to carry extra textbooks throughout the year, therefore reducing congestion in the store when students buy textbooks.

Furthermore, to mitigate long wait times and increase sustainability, the School Store hopes to change the way it conducts transactions at the cashier with a new point of sale system, including an electronic signature capture pad that produces an electronic record of the purchase, eliminating need for paper receipts entirely. Mr. Cronin said, "Even though it doesn't seem like much, it will have a cumulative effect."

The School Store is also considering extending store hours to accommodate students' busy schedules. This would allow purchases after sports practices and rehearsals. Josephine Mahh '18 pointed out that "because the School Store is currently so far away from all of the

academic buildings, students put off buying textbooks and other materials. The new location and timing is more convenient, which is nice."

Students expressed mixed opinions regarding whether or not these changes would result in more traffic for the store. Tommy Ren '18 said, "By adjusting itself to meet the students' needs for sustainability and shorter lines, the School Store will attract more students and steer them away from off-campus options such as Walmart. Hopefully, even after the new SAC opens, the School Store can continue to listen to our opinions and make more necessary adjustments."

In contrast, Joseph Coyne '19 remarked, "I don't think the changes will affect student life too much. I think only a decrease in overpriced items would be one of the only changes that might really affect the amount that the school store is visited."

No matter the exact changes that will be incorporated between now and its opening date in the new building, the School Store hopes to exemplify its main purpose: to serve the Choate community. Mr. Cronin reflected, "I think the new store is very unique. I don't think that you are going to find another one like it in the prep school marketplace."

**Mehreen Pasha** may be reached at [mpasha18@choate.edu](mailto:mpasha18@choate.edu)

## Accreditation

*Continued from Page 1*

have participated in visiting committees for schools across New England. It is a requirement that everybody has a role and participates, so that ranges from filling out a survey to being part of a committee."

**It's going to be a long process, and we are just at the front end of it.**

*Mr. Kevin Rogers*  
Director of Studies

The highly regarded accreditation was originally created in 1885. The NEASC organization works to achieve proficient and commendable education systems through the

assessment of classes, teachers, and school communities. Accreditation is required for all academic institutions, and it must be reinstated every ten years. The self-study process, recently begun by Choate, takes about 12-18 months. It aims to achieve effectiveness, improvement, and public assurance. As stated by the NEASC website, "Drawing upon its considerable experience, NEASC serves as a public policy resource on issues related to the condition of education in New England and in the international school communities it serves." NEASC, which is made up of four commissions, is free to proclaim institutions deficient if there is supportive evidence.

In that situation, institutions are "usually given time to take corrective action," explained NEASC.

The accreditation is expected to improve the implementation of new initiatives and build on pre-existing programs at Choate. "It is an important step because it is our form of regulation. It says that we are everything from financially sound to a safe place to go to school to being a place that does what we say we will do," said Mr. Rogers. "It is going to be a long process, and we are just at the front end of it. If done right, it will make us a better school."

**Kate Spencer** may be reached at [kspencer20@choate.edu](mailto:kspencer20@choate.edu)

# FACULTY WORKSHOPS PROMOTE INCLUSION

By **Grace Zhang '20**  
Staff Reporter

Science teacher Ms. Selena Gell described the workshop "Expanding Gender Identity Beyond the Binary" as "productive and worthwhile." This meeting, held on December 12, is the second in a series of "Dialogues on Differences" workshops, which Dr. Keith Hinderlie, Director of Equity and Inclusion, started this year with the help of Mr. Tom White, Director of Faculty Development.

"The general idea was to create times on the faculty calendar for proactive discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion topics," said Dr. Hinderlie. Mr. White expressed a similar sentiment: "Certainly, our ongoing desire to create dialogue in the community prompted these workshops."

Math teacher Mr. Zach Kafoglis, who attended the workshop, said it "emphasized that while constantly fluctuating terminology surrounding gender can be tricky to nail down, it is important to establish some common language and understandings for our campus." Ms. Gell said, "One conversation that particularly struck me was about asking students for their preferred pronoun at the start of a new course or at a beginning of the year dorm meeting. Some faculty suggested this was

a good practice because it normalized the idea that each of us choose our own gender identity, while others felt it was not a good idea because it forced students to make a public declaration of something they might not be comfortable sharing right away."

According to Dr. Hinderlie, the first meeting, which engaged attendees in conversation about stereotype threat, implicit bias, and microaggressions, was also well-attended and well-received. Mr. Thomas Larsen, a science teacher found it to be a useful and stimulating discussion: "It was interesting and gave me a lot to think about."

Two additional meetings, exploring socioeconomic diversity and white privilege and consisting of similar discussion styles, will take place this school year. Every faculty member is required to go to at least one.

The faculty-led workshops were designed with the intention of utilizing the expertise of faculty. "We want to build our cultural capacity from within," said Dr. Hinderlie. However, he also plans on possibly sending faculty to conferences and bringing outside experts into campus.

Several students still have doubts on how much faculty can affect diversity inclusion among the student community. "It's lim-

ited to what teachers can do," said Brandon Zhang '20.

Caroline Rispoli '20 added, "If a student barely knows a teacher, it could be uncomfortable if the teacher tried to start a deep, personal conversation about inclusion."

Dr. Hinderlie considers the idea the unproductivity of investing time and effort into diversity inclusion within the community. He and his colleagues' goal in creating these workshops is not to stifle the concept of inclusion by oversaturating it. "We wanted to create a way for faculty to have opportunities to come together and talk about these and other topics," said Dr. Hinderlie. He continued, "Being responsive to the needs of a diverse school community is more challenging without this type of focus and structure."

If faculty continue to appreciate the Dialogues on Differences workshops and they are effective, they may even expand in the future. "We thought four was a good number to start with, but we want the opportunity to maybe add one or two more meetings a year," revealed Mr. White. "The hope is that we'll continue to have these dialogues on differences going forward."

**Grace Zhang** may be reached at [gzhang20@choate.edu](mailto:gzhang20@choate.edu)

# NEW DIVERSITY DAY STRUCTURE PLANNED

By **Anjali Mangla '19**  
Reporter

"You don't know me until you know me" is the official theme of this year's Choate's Diversity Day, which will occur on January 16, 2017, Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The Diversity Day Cabinet in the Choate Diversity Student Association (CDSA) has changed the structure of the Day in hopes of better engaging students, and it is currently in the process of training facilitators for the event.

Plans for the day are tentative. Diversity Day will be divided into two separate sessions for underclassmen and upperclassmen. The underclassmen will be learning about background topics concerning diversity, while the upperclassmen will choose to talk about topics such as stereotypes, PC culture, and privilege in smaller discussion groups. Depending on the form, students will also spend part of the day in follow-up conversations in English class about the keynote speaker.

Cabinet Co-President Larisa Owusu '17 remarked, "We hope that we can help people engage and open up just a little bit, show some part of themselves." Owusu is joined by Co-President Jerri Norman '17, Officer Elena Turner '17,

Officer Danielle Young '17, and Secretary Alexia Walker '17.

"The success of Diversity Day is really driven by the students themselves. The faculty are really just there to support them," Ms. Sara Boisvert, former member of the Diversity Education Committee (DEC), commented. Mr. Kojo Clarke is the faculty adviser to the CDSA and Ms. Duckett-Ireland is the current chair of the DEC.

**We hope that we can help people engage and open up a little bit, show some part of themselves.**

*Larisa Owusu '17*  
CDSA Diversity Day Cabinet  
Co-President

The cabinet sent out a survey to upperclassmen to gauge their interest in various workshop topics, as well as to solicit volunteers to be facilitators. Facilitators participate in three two-hour-long training sessions during the weeks leading up to Diversity Day, promoting their role in creating engaged, safe environment and going through the myriad of activities and discussion prompts. Lucianne Manigbas '17, a facilitator, said, "Facilitator training enlightens me to the point of Diversity Day. It really

helps identify the strengths and weaknesses that there are within the program that already exists."

The Cabinet is excited about the main speaker, who "embodies this idea of not knowing someone until you actually know them, and also the idea of celebrating identity." Young said, "That's the thing I'm really excited about, I don't want to give anything away."

The word "diversity" does not just mean racial diversity or difference in skin color, and students hope to explore this on Diversity Day. There are eight established identifiers under diversity: gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, ability, race, and ethnicity.

Norman said, "If you bring up diversity around campus, the first thing you might here is someone sighing or grumbling and saying, 'Oh, we are talking about this again.' We're trying to make it so that people can enjoy talking about it and have a fun time on Diversity Day as well. We want everyone who participates in Diversity Day to have a good time, and rather than be spoken at, actually participate in activities and conversations."

**Anjali Mangla** may be reached at [amangla19@choate.edu](mailto:amangla19@choate.edu)

## ITS AND COMMUNICATIONS GIVE DIRECTORIES MAKEOVER

By **Alyssa Shin '18**  
Copy Editor

Information Technology Services (ITS) and Communications offices recently collaborated to revise Choate's online directories, a feature in the school's portal that provides information about all students and faculty on campus to the entire community.

A disclaimer now runs along the bottom of the Directories, warning users of what comprises improper usage, including but not limited to: "Reproducing and storing in a retrieval system by any means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying or using the addresses (electronic or otherwise) or other information contained in this directory for any private, commercial, or political mailing, and/or phone solicitation." It goes on to note that transgressions may violate copyright and is "punishable by law." Ms. Sarah Gordon, the Assistant Director of Communications, said, "This is a 'Terms of Use' statement used to protect members of the Directories. You will notice that this type of language is on many other directories. Its purpose is to ensure that all members are appropriately using this content."

Additionally, members of the Choate community can no longer look up an individual by his or her official first name. Instead, they can now search by one's "preferred name." Ms. Gordon said, "We are trying to keep our systems on the cutting edge of societal changes." She add-

ed, "There is a transition of using 'preferred names' as default within the data systems of the school. The idea of a nickname is much different than a preferred name. Your preferred name will stay with you during your Choate career. It is what your email is based off of, and how your information will be fed through certain systems on campus." She explains that a preferred name is more official and therefore more widely used. Regardless of the differentiation between nicknames and preferred names, however, the Directories no longer allow users to search by given first names.

### We are trying to keep our systems on the cutting edge of societal changes.

*Ms. Sarah Gordon*  
Assistant Director of Communications

Addressing this change, Isabelle "Izzy" Peel '19 said, "I know that people use the Directories a lot to look up people they don't know and learn their faces and names. I think having to know their preferred name to look them up is going to make it really difficult. It's a lot faster to be able to search up their name." Changing the required information necessary to find someone in the Directories could prolong the process.

Other students had different opinions. Riley Choi '18 added, "I don't think it would hinder people from finding me in the Directo-

ries. No one calls me by my Korean name, Seung Hyun, so I think finding me by my preferred name would make things convenient."

However, students whose preferred names begin with a different letter than their given name, like Choi, still have email addresses that begin with the first letter of their given name. Choi goes on to note that, "Everyone calls me Riley, and whenever my friends wanted to send me an email, they had trouble finding me in the email list." The change in the Directories can make it difficult to find someone's given name when needed.

It is unlikely, however, that people will stop using the Directories because of this adjustment. Samantha Rusnak '18 said, "For me, the purpose of the Directories doesn't really change."

These changes were implemented without any announcement, and most students are currently not aware of the changes in the Directories. Anna Deitcher '18 said, "I had no idea that the Directories changed." On working with ITS to execute these changes, Ms. Gordon said, "ITS owns the data portion of the Directories. Communications, specifically myself and Mr. Drian Hillman, who are the web team, own where the data is fed to, which is the website portal."

So, what next? Nicole McGuigan '18 suggested, "I think we should be able to look people up by dorm."

**Alyssa Shin** may be reached at [ashin18@choate.edu](mailto:ashin18@choate.edu)

## Student Council Moves Forward

*Continued from Page 1*

representing underclassmen and either a rising fifth or sixth former representing upperclassmen; and (iii) maintaining the current system with one day student representative.

Day Student Representative Jack Hodgson '17 suggested the idea of increasing the number of day student representatives on the Council. He said, "My predecessors have told me that as the only day student rep, they had great difficulty in reaching out to day students in every form, especially freshmen."

### I think that having people connect over a shared experience is bound to have them become more understanding of each other.

*Cecilia Zhou '17*  
Student Body President

Zhou added, "Jack also mentioned that oftentimes, when a day student rep voices concerns or suggests initiatives to improve day students' quality of life, they go straight from him to the Director of Day Students, which he noted that doesn't feel quite as formal as a Student Council proposal does. And so the idea is that if we have a required base of day students on the Council, and turn day student problems into student council problems, it would help legitimize them and their issues because, historically, student council initiatives have mostly been border-centric ones."

Fourth Form Representative Arjun Katechia '19 voiced his support for increasing day student representatives. "As a day student, I believe that more representation would be very helpful," Katechia said. "As a minority group on campus, our issues our not brought up as frequently as boarders' issues."

Another fourth form rep-

resentative, Tommy Wachtell '19, added, "The supposed drawback of having additional day student representatives was that this would potentially lead to overrepresentation of day students on the Council. I don't think this is a significant issue, since it's much better to have overrepresentation than underrepresentation."

### The Future of the Daily Grind

The 2016-2017 Council has made a record-breaking profit from the Daily Grind (DG), despite competition from the Lanphier café; the DG has made somewhere between \$1300-\$1700 per year since the 2012-2013 school year, but the 2016-2017 Council's DG has already exceeded that maximum and still has another term to go. Sethpornpong accounted this success to the expansion of DG to major school-wide events, such as Deerfield Day, during which the DG sold almost 400 donuts and earned around \$600 donuts. "We've only had four Community Lunches this past fall term, while in the past, we used to have DG almost every week due to the more frequent Community Lunches. Most of our profits came from people who didn't have lunch blocks on those days. But this year, due to a lot of new variables, we had to make DG more event-centric — for example, extending the DG to Deerfield Day." She continued, "We found out that it was a huge success. I think another reason for its success was because we sold donuts from Neil's Donuts, not the ones catered by SAGE."

The shift of DG from catering to Friday conference block to major school events may be permanent, as there will be no Community Lunch next year, and the new Tuck Shop will open in the St. John's Hall. Sethpornpong observed, "I'm

considering maybe we'll just do away with the Humanities Rotunda in the future and focus on operating it in conjunction with major events and capitalizing on the crowds who attend those events."

### A Joint Event with Wallingford Townies

As Zhou announced during the school meeting last Wednesday, the Council is currently discussing organizing an event that can foster friendships between Choate and Wallingford students. This idea was brought up by Headmaster Dr. Alex Curtis, who, after meeting with the Mayor and Deputy Police Chief of Wallingford, expressed interest in hosting an event where clubs and teams could open up their facilities and resources to students in town.

Zhou explained the importance of this undertaking, saying, "I think that one of the problems with the Wallingford-Choate relationship is that there's a lot of animosity and tension, part of it rising from various misunderstandings from both sides. But I think that interacting with each other one-on-one would break down generalizations, because as much as many people in Wallingford see us as this homogenous group of wealth and privilege, we also see them as a homogenous group of people that are 'out to get us.' I think that having people connect over a shared experience is bound to have them become more understanding of each other."

With less than a term left to their tenures, the 2016-2017 Student Council is aiming to deliver on their promises to the fullest extent and finalize their work as they prepare to hand over the baton to the next council.

**Haley Chang** may be reached at [hchang18@choate.edu](mailto:hchang18@choate.edu)

## Community Reflects on Term Reports

*Continued from Page 1*

would have the comments mostly done by Monday, and would only need to revise or edit for the Monday due date."

The change in date brought attention to the effectiveness of the reports. Ms. Levesque noted, "The effectiveness of comments is a very important topic that we need to return to cyclically as a faculty."

### It seems that less feedback more often would better help kids chart a successful course throughout their Choate career.

*Mr. Will Nowak*  
HPRSS and Math Teacher

Gabby Garcia '19 believes they are effective. She said, "They're really constructive, and they give you advice on how to improve. Comments are a good add-on to the grade; it gives us an understanding as to why teachers gave us the grades they did."

Mr. Rogers agreed, saying, "It's a really nice complement to the grade, which is kind of stark." He added, "When you write a comment it helps you to think about the student."

However, math teacher Mr.

Jake Dellorco said, "There's definitely a lot of room for improvement. Right now comments are primarily for the parents. There are a lot of teachers who would like it to be more for the student. But at the same time, parents deserve that feedback."

One way to orient comments more towards students is having one-on-one student-teacher conversations instead of only written reports. Mr. Rogers elaborated, "If you enacted a plan where teachers have a discussion with students instead of a written comment, they would be able to follow up with questions they had about what the teacher said, which would encourage dialogue. Maybe the best would be to have both a comment and a dialogue, but if you were to say which one is more valuable, there's something to be said for the record of writing a comment."

On the importance of written comments, Ms. Levesque added that they "play a role for advisers, deans, and the college counseling office. While your teachers may be able to sit down with you for a five-minute conversation, they wouldn't necessarily be able to do that with all of their students' advisers and deans."

Another disadvantage of written term reports is the frequency

and timing. Written term reports are released at the end of each trimester, allowing students only three opportunities for comprehensive feedback throughout the year. Mr. Nowak said, "It seems that less feedback more often would better help kids chart a successful course throughout their Choate career."

Anselm Kizza-Besigye '17 agreed, saying, "Comments could be more effective if they came at midterms. When I was abroad, the school that I was at did comments in the middle of the term, and I think that's ultimately more useful. It's good to know what you've done over a term, but if you know what you've been doing at the middle of the term, it's possible to change the course of that term."

Speaking to the role of comments in general, Mr. Nowak said, "If the goal is to improve student learning and development, there are tweaks that could be made to the system to make it better, but as it currently stands, it's not wholly imperfect." He concluded, "In term reports, I'm able to formally give substantive feedback, and I hope that my students read them and that they take serious-

**Grayce Gibbs** may be reached at [ggibbs18@choate.edu](mailto:ggibbs18@choate.edu)

## AN INTERVIEW WITH HANNAH MORRIS, NEW ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBER

**Adrian Whatmore '19:** Where did you work before Choate?

**Hannah Morris:** I taught at two other schools before teaching here — The Holden School in New Hampshire and the Elizabeth Morrow School in New Jersey. I actually used to teach at Choate; I started here in 2001 and worked until 2004. I then left for two years, during which I went to grad school and got married to Mr. Will Morris. Mr. Morris and I met in 2001 at Choate; we came back to the school in 2006 as teachers, but once we had kids I stopped working for seven years. Now I'm back part-time, actually in the

same classroom where I taught when I originally worked here.

**AW:** What positions have you held at previous schools?

**HM:** At other schools I've taught world history, French, and Latin. At Choate, I've taught French and Latin. I was the head of the French section. Right now, I am teaching two sections of French 300.

**AW:** Where did you go to college?

**HM:** I went to Dartmouth.

**AW:** Where are you from?

**HM:** I'm originally from

Berkeley, California. It was a big change for me to come out here and deal with snowy winters. My whole family lives out West; they're spread up and down the West Coast from Alaska to Washington and California. We spend a lot of time visiting people there. Mr. Morris and I have three kids, who are nine, six, and four.

**AW:** Are there any fun facts you have about yourself?

**HM:** I've lived in four different dorms on campus: Library, Hall, West Wing, and now Mead. My favorite dorm in which I have lived is Mead; I love working with the seniors in the dorm.

**Community Service Requirement Reminder!**

Still need to enter your completed Service hours?  
Please submit your hours to the Portal by Dec. 31, 2016. Starting Jan. 1, 2017, all hours must be entered within 3 weeks of completing your project.

Still need to complete your hours?  
Reach out to Melissa Koomson ASAP! Thank you!

**COLONY DINER RESTAURANT**

**BREAKFAST SERVED ALL DAY**  
**DELIVERY AVAILABLE**

(203) 269-9507  
WWW.COLONYDINER.COM

### THE CHOATE NEWS

110<sup>TH</sup> MASTHEAD

VOL. CX  
NO. 6

J. Bryce Wachtell '17  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Lucas C. Ferrer '17  
MANAGING EDITOR

Sabrina Xie '17  
PRODUCTION EDITOR

**NEWS**  
Varshini Kumar '17  
Truelian Lee '17

**OPINIONS**  
Katharine Li '17  
Jack O'Donnell '17

**FEATURES**  
Jessica Shi '17

**ARTS & LEISURE**  
Camila Borjesson '17

**SPORTS**  
Rachel Hird '17

**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
Elle Rinaldi '17

**COPY**  
Kristen Altman '18  
Haley Chang '18  
Nina Hastings '18  
Alyssa Shin '18

**PRODUCTION & ONLINE**  
Nikhil Davar '18  
Alan Luo '18  
Ariel Zhang '18  
Alex Yoon '19

**SOCIAL MEDIA**  
Sophie Ball '17  
Arielle Kassinnove '17

**CIRCULATION & ADVERTISEMENT**  
Nils Lovegren '18

**ADVISERS**  
Mr. Mike Peed  
Ms. Cathryn Stout

**VIDEO**  
Johnny Clapham '17

#### STAFF CONTRIBUTORS

Kristen Andonie '17  
Nathan Chang '17  
Andrew Garver '17  
Andrew Kim '17  
Anselm Kizza-Besigye '17  
Namsai Sethpormpong '17  
Riley Choi '18  
Donessa Colley '18

Eben Cook '18  
Grayce Gibbs '18  
Michael Li '18  
Liza Mackeen-Shapiro '18  
Alix Mackillop '18  
Sophie Mackin '18  
Mehreen Pasha '18  
Imad Rizvi '18

Helena Yang '18  
Nicole Yao '18  
Julian Yao '18  
Pinn Chirathivat '19  
Jeanne Malle '19  
Simi Sachdeva '19  
Inc Thongthai '19  
Nicole Weinrauch '20

To submit a letter to the editor or an opinion piece, please email us at [thechoatenews@choate.edu](mailto:thechoatenews@choate.edu). We welcome all views.

Interested students should attend an assignment meeting, held on most Mondays, at 6:45 PM in the i.d.Lab of the Lanphier Center. Opinion pieces represent the opinions of their respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editorial board or the School. Unsigned masthead editorials represent the view of the majority of the members of the editorial board of *The Choate News*.

[/choatenews](https://www.facebook.com/choatenews) [@choatenews](https://twitter.com/choatenews) [@choatenews](https://www.instagram.com/choatenews)

Email us: [thechoatenews@choate.edu](mailto:thechoatenews@choate.edu) | Call us: (203) 697-2070 | Find us: [thechoatenews.choate.edu](http://thechoatenews.choate.edu)

## GINGERBREAD ARCHITECTURE: GO BIG OR GO HOME

By **Katharine Li '17**  
*Opinions Editor*

Take it from a three-year (not four-year, tragically) Choate Gingerbread House Competition champion: to become a maker of gingerbread houses is no joke. It's a calling. Just Google "First Lady Laura Bush gingerbread White House." You'll see.

I can understand why some people devote huge amounts of time to the practice of gingerbread architecture. Forget palettes of weird-smelling paint and non-edible embellishments; imagine spending your life exploring Van Gogh and Martha Stewart's scrumptious lovechild. And if you eat your product, it's not even considered cannibalism. Who wouldn't give it a try?

Just Google "first lady Laura Bush gingerbread White House." You'll see.

Apparently, not a lot of Choate kids. Three years ago, the smell of sugar and spice was not enough to entice my peers at Choate into trying the craft. My freshman year, most student participants in the gingerbread house competition were in it for the \$10 Walmart gift card that came with signing up. A group of boys in Memorial House ran out of icing and presented a finished product that had used shaving cream instead. To most, the gingerbread house competition was just another casual, ultimately forgettable campus event.

But something about being an architect of an *edible house* stimulated my artistic and foodie inner selves. I knew that if I were to make a gingerbread house, it would be more than a fun weekend project. It didn't matter that none of my competitors were taking the contest seriously. I was going to go big or go home. And go big, I did.

For the weeks leading up to the competition, preparation for the gingerbread house competition consumed my life. My head was bursting with ideas for what I would create with gingerbread, icing, and ten dollars for candy decorations. I looked to my

prefects and dorm mates for support. They slaved away with me for the whole week leading up to the competition (a privilege of being a freshman with actual free time). In the Squire common room, our a giant Victorian edible castle, one destined to blow the judges away, was born.

Through a snowstorm, like Brave Irene, I and my team carried the creation to the dining hall for judging. As we walked underneath the moose, the seniors greeted us with applause. In that moment, I forgot all about the icing stains on the common room carpet that I knew my adviser would later berate me for. Everyone was looking at our gingerbread house, and everyone was amazed.

Building that year's gingerbread house was my first exposure to what would become, for me, an essential part of the holiday season at Choate. My sophomore year, I created a Japanese pagoda with my roommate in our room in Bernhard House. Junior year was the Grand Budapest Hotel, decorated while propped on the table in Library dorm's common room. I learned a few maxims along the way: \$10 was nowhere near enough to create an extraordinary gingerbread house; cleanup was always a pain in the neck; making Mr. Yanelli smile was even better than being the centerpiece of Holiday Ball.

Tragically, it all fell apart this year. Yes, my gingerbread house collapsed halfway through its assembly, and at 1:00 a.m., shocked and barely-eyed in the Bungalow's quad, I couldn't muster the energy to finish strong. The remnants of an edible Taj Mahal that would never be lay before me, blue and white icing smeared into my room's carpet. Am I ashamed that I let my fans down? Yeah. Would I have like to win the competition for four consecutive years? You bet. But I reckon part of being a senior is recognizing that your time is nearing its end. I know it's now up to the underclassmen to continue my legacy, and I'm sure there's someone out there who can do it. Are you reading this? Remember: nobody ever actually eats the gingerbread, and *anything* is edible if you try hard enough.

**Katharine Li** is a sixth former from Plainsboro, N.J. She may be reached at [kli17@choate.edu](mailto:kli17@choate.edu)

## THE COLLEGE CONUNDRUM

Why the culture of secrecy surrounding the college process needs to stop

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

Looking back, my reaction to being rejected from a college surprises me. At the time, I knew all the truisms that my college counselor and last year's seniors had imparted: college decisions don't define you, one rejection doesn't reflect other schools' responses, etc. I knew these stock phrases so well, in fact, that as I now celebrate with or console my friends, I find myself invoking them with regularity without having to really think about what I'm saying.

The day I received my first college rejection letter, I didn't tell anyone. That morning, the last Friday of Thanksgiving break, I woke up wrapped in the soft embrace of my white hotel duvet, bathing in the mid-morning sun of Mexico City. After enduring senior fall and winding up in Mexico for vacation, I couldn't have felt more triumphant and accomplished. However, an unexpected email from the admissions tutor at one of the colleges to which I applied early undermined this feeling of worthiness, imbuing me at once with doubt and uncertainty. Though none of my accomplishments or attributes had disappeared, I felt as though a few individuals'

appraisal had diminished the value of my qualifications. The rejection letter, it seemed, had exposed some damning flaw I had failed to conceal in my essays and scores, and this flaw filled me with shame. I struggled to share the bad news with anyone, even as I sat down for breakfast with mother.

As other seniors and I anticipate and receive college decisions, I hope that we, as members of the Choate student body, can help each other avoid feelings of unnecessary shame and ineptitude by offering each other support and avoiding unhealthy discussion about college. However, we will only be able to do so when we improve the way in which we talk about college acceptances and rejections, specifically, when we become more comfortable sharing in each other's news, both good and bad. In the months building up to these tense weeks, I've noticed that we tend to speak about the college process with extreme caution, hesitating to mention the name of our first-choice schools, becoming irritable towards nosy under-formers, and otherwise guarding our college processes from each other.

When I reflect on my participation in this culture, I recognize that I, like many, feared the possibly of having to admit

my failure in the future. This fear caused me to make my first rejection letter a private shame, rather than opening up to my friends and community, whom, I'm sure, would have supported rather than derided me. If we fail to speak openly about our college applications, to cast off our fear of "failing" before our peers, we will continue to alienate ourselves from the support we deserve, while simultaneously encouraging a culture in which we are unable to acknowledge our inherent imperfection.

*The rejection letter had exposed some damning flaw that filled me with shame.*

In addition to preventing ourselves from receiving support, we also create a hostile environment for the proliferation of covert, often unfriendly gossip when we normalize our reclusive behavior surrounding college. By approaching college decisions with silence and caution, we make our processes topics of backroom conversation, rather than trying

experiences to which we can all relate. If we deconstruct our current culture of unrealistic perfection, we can combat the negativity and pettiness that pervade talks about our peers' college processes.

I don't think we, students, are wholly culpable for our guarded culture surrounding the college process. The daily competitiveness of Choate life makes us feel as if we ought to be beyond imperfection. However, to truly thrive during the college application season, we must reject it. At the beginning of this year, both Student Council President Cecilia Zhou '17 and Headmaster Dr. Alex Curtis implored us to embrace unity. We owe it to one another and to ourselves to uphold that commitment. So, I suggest we exercise vulnerability and allow our community to see more of our flaws. Tell that nosy freshman where you applied for early decision. Thumbtack your college response letter to the mantle of the dining hall fireplace. React with the same kindness and openness you would want to receive yourself when someone else gets the news for which we're all waiting.

**Anselm Kizza-Besigye** is a sixth former from Oxford, England. He may be reached at [akizzabesigye17@choate.edu](mailto:akizzabesigye17@choate.edu)



Counterclockwise from top right: Katharine Li's '17 entries to the Choate Gingerbread House Competition in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

## SMARTER PHONES, DUMBER PEOPLE

By **Alan Luo '18**  
*Opinions Writer*

I hate smartphones. Nothing corrupts so widespread and so thoroughly. They are herders of the world's greatest herd of sheep. In times of ennui, soulless children and adults alike become little more than mindless animals, obediently chomping at food for unthought, force-fed to them through the bottomless gate to oblivion that sits in their hand.

At a school meeting in fall term, Elena Levin '17 gave a Choate talk on smartphones and social media culture, describing her personal experiences with Snapchat. I share in some ways a similar experience, having been extorted into creating a Snapchat account in the first day of freshman year. However, except for a few week-long stints, I still do not use it. Many of my friends had very negative reactions to the Choate talk, describing the impossibility of being without their incredibly personal lifeless hunks of metal for even an hour. Personally, I cannot empathize.

These rounded rectangles lure their victims close with promises of productivity and limitless activity, only to strip

them of their skin and personality. The dining hall is populated with brainless creatures that behold their dull metallic idols with religious delusions of connectivity, praying to shadows in order to interact and connect with other souls through an invisible web, but in the process, entangling and enshrouding themselves from each other.

*We subject ourselves to the slavery of mass consumerism and gradually lose ourselves.*

Where are the lions, eagles, and whales but on the fields, skies, and oceans of the wild unknown? What fantasy causes humans to presume that we can connect with each other without gazing upon the intricacies of complexion, body, and voice that behoove us with revealing character and soul? Why do we deign to enjoy the beauty of great novels, paintings, and symphonies in favor of vomiting meaningless ap-

plause at superficial imprints of other people?

Now, don't get me wrong: I have always been a fervent supporter of technology, and I, too, have a smartphone. It seems I've been spoiled such that older phone interfaces now seem obtuse and unintuitive. However, every time I take out my phone when I have nothing to do, I find myself feeling like I am decaying inside. Social media in particular is perhaps one of the purest forms of vanity ever to be conceived by humans, in large part due to the irony of browsing social media to avoid conversation. Every time I relegate myself to ambivalently pawing at my phone in the dining hall, I regret losing time I could have spent in the confines of a great novelist, in the embrace of a great musician, or in the company of the great people sitting right next to me.

Certainly, smartphones have their benefits, but they pad functionality with an endless stream of media, advertisement, and clutter. In subconsciously absorbing and processing this information, we subject ourselves to the slavery of mass consumerism and gradually lose ourselves. Nowadays, we seem to only do things halfheartedly. We work

while texting, we text while shopping, we shop while speaking, and we speak while working. We have blended every aspect of our lives with those of everyone else's, leaving us as a cohesive unit of ruthless ego-strokers with no appreciation for deep thought.

Intellectual discourse and pursuit have been replaced by communication with an indistinct homogeneous purée of thought through arcane obstructions. This destruction of thought is a transgression upon humanity, and claims that this flavorless monotony outshines the music of intelligence, of art, and of our race. Our species has been corrupted in these spheres to the extent that billions of our kind partake in these fallacious fantasies, submitting themselves to the contrived propaganda. Such sufferers to globalization have lost their greatest gifts: their minds, their hours, and each other. Never has a symbol of technological progression regressed our own stories so far, for we have thusly robbed ourselves of our selves.

**Alan Luo** is a fifth former from Hong Kong. He may be reached at [aluo18@choate.edu](mailto:aluo18@choate.edu)

## There Is No Such Thing as the War on Christmas

By **Maya Lewis-Hayre '20**  
*Opinions Writer*

The “War on Christmas” is a myth. It is a phrase created by those who believe in government support for Christianity, which contradicts the United States Constitution and the separation of church and state. Those who shun the term “Merry Christmas” often do so to promote ambiguity about holiday celebrations during the winter season in hopes of being inclusive to all religions, and not promote Christianity over another faith.

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” Therefore, freedom of religion and freedom of speech allow individuals and companies to say almost whatever they want regarding Christmas and the holidays. The government’s “establishment of religion” is disallowed by the Constitution, so representatives of government agencies have far less freedom, and cannot endorse Christmas. People complaining about this movement toward a more inclusive winter greeting are fighting for Christmas being valued more than other religions — but they need to get it through their heads: there is nothing posing a threat to Christmas.

People speaking out against the phrase “Merry Christmas” are exercising free speech and government officials are complying with the Constitution that compels them to separate church and state. There is no doubt that the “War on Christ-

mas” argument is partly promoted by people who feel like old traditions are being lost, but to them I say — Christmas is not being delegitimized, it is simply being asked to make room for other holidays.

Individuals and companies can freely promote Christmas over other holidays. This is protected by the First Amendment, which concerns freedom of speech and freedom of religion. Many people make an effort to respect others’ religions by saying “Happy Holidays!” rather than “Merry Christmas!” Those who believe that there is some “War on Christmas,” should understand that they can keep their values, and other individuals and companies can keep theirs. Nobody is trying to push their Christmas away; in true American fashion, people are trying to ensure that the twenty-five million Americans who don’t celebrate Christmas don’t feel alienated around the holidays. This isn’t political correctness — it’s simply public politeness.

There is no doubt that many companies have begun to be more accommodating during the holiday season, yet some people complain about Christmas not being promoted over other holidays. For example, in 2015, Starbucks released a red holiday cup, without the ornaments featured in the design the previous year. This was an effort to be inclusive of everyone. Joshua Feuerstein, a well-known Internet Evangelical Christian from Arizona, complained about this in a famous YouTube video, saying that, “we’ve become so open-minded, our brains have literally fallen out of our heads.” He believed that this was part

of a coordinated attack. In actuality, Feuerstein was fighting against a group of people who never picked a fight.

Another battle in this so-called “War on Christmas” unfolded in the October of 2014

when the American Humanist Association sent a letter to the Cherokee county courthouse in Texas. The organization requested that county officials remove a Nativity scene outside of the courthouse. Greg

Abbott, former Texas Attorney General, said that the courthouse had no legal obligation to remove the decorations, but many people disagreed. Monica Miller, an attorney at the Appignani Humanist Legal Center, said, “This conveys the unmistakable message of governmental endorsement of religion, and Christianity specifically, in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.” Ultimately, the Nativity scene remained outside the courthouse, but it continued to spark conversations about what is an “American tradition” and what the limits of the separation of church and state are.

Individuals and companies are free to say almost whatever they want about Christmas, but government officials and government employees are rightfully held to a different standard. There is a fine, but important, line between upholding traditions, upholding the First Amendment, and upholding the separation of church and state.

The citizens and government of this nation should aspire to create a land where no one feels alienated, especially during the holiday season. Those who promote the idea of a “War on Christmas” have an important role in creating unity. This war will end when they lay down their weapons, cease their divisive rhetoric, pick up a cup of Starbucks, and welcome the spirit of inclusion during this great and historic winter season.

*Maya Lewis-Hayre is a third former from New Haven, Conn. She may be reached at [mlewishayre20@choate.edu](mailto:mlewishayre20@choate.edu)*



Photo courtesy of Starbucks Inc.

## PLEASE, SOMEBODY TAKE AWAY HIS TWITTER ACCOUNT



**Liza Mackeen-Shapiro '18**  
*Columnist*

It has been approximately a month since Donald Trump won the presidential election. His transition so far has been characterized by the same recklessness, inexperience, and general chaos that defined his campaign. If Trump’s actions as president-elect indicate how he will behave as president, then the United States is in for a troubling four years.

Donald Trump’s unfortunate habit of inflammatory tweeting has not ceased (as many of those who defended him during the election claimed it would) now that he is the president-elect. On November 19, following an incident where

the cast of “Hamilton” personally addressed audience member and Vice President-elect Mike Pence, Trump angrily took to Twitter to deem the message a form of harassment, the actors “very rude,” and the play “overrated.” One day later, in response to a sketch mocking him on Saturday Night Live, Trump tweeted that the show was “one-sided, totally biased” with “nothing funny at all.” This sort of immature behavior is unbecoming enough of an average adult — let alone the next president of the United States. The presidency is a job that invites constant criticism, and as such, requires enormously thick skin. Clearly, Trump cannot handle even the mildest critique or mockery of himself, which is an incredibly worrying prospect. Will he take to Twitter to call foreign leaders “haters” and “losers” every time they slight one of his policy positions? Will he take to Twitter to impugn every sketch comedy show that pokes fun at him? Such questions are terrifying to consider, yet seem realistic based on Trump’s past conduct.

Trump has not only used Twitter as a platform for shar-

ing his childish outbursts, but also a vehicle for spreading outright lies and unconstitutional threats. In a November 28 rant about Jill Stein’s election recount effort, Trump claimed that he “won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.” This allegation, originating from a conservative website called TrueTheVote, is not substantiated by any evidence whatsoever.

### *Trump cannot handle even the mildest critique or mockery.*

The fact that the President-elect, a man with an audience of 17.1 million followers (not to mention the entire global community), is perpetuating baseless rumors about our democracy on Twitter is absolutely inexcusable. The next day, Trump tweeted that anyone who burns the American flag should face consequences of either a year in jail or a loss of citizenship — a statement that is egregiously and shockingly

unconstitutional. The right to burn the American flag is protected under the free speech clause of the First Amendment, and to punish someone for doing so would be in direct violation of the Bill of Rights and precedent set by the Supreme Court.

However, the most troubling part of Trump’s transition so far is not his online behavior, but rather his cabinet appointments. His choice for Secretary of Housing and Urban Development is Ben Carson, a surgeon who has never held political office and who, according to his spokesperson as of November 15, “doesn’t feel like his life and career have prepared him to run a federal agency.” His pick for head of the Environmental Protection Agency is Eric Pruitt, a climate change denier and ally of the fossil fuel industry, and his selection for Secretary of Education is Betsy DeVos, a known opponent of public education. Ironically for a candidate who ran on a platform of populism, Trump’s chief strategist, head of the Treasury Department, and head of the National Economic Council have all been affiliated with Goldman Sachs.

Assuming the now Republican-controlled Senate approves all of his appointments, Trump’s administration will be staffed by incompetent, out-of-touch, destructive bureaucrats.

Additionally, Trump is awash in conflicts of interest. Being a global businessman, he has properties in countries ranging from Turkey to Panama and involvements with many foreign governments. Such conflicts of interests could be alleviated if Trump sold his business or entered it into a blind trust — however, he refuses to do either. This is unprecedented and unacceptably corrupt, and yet it will likely be the norm for the next four years.

Optimistically, Trump will rise above his past actions as the president — but realistically, he will not. He is, at his very core, an immature, corrupt, and incompetent child, and it would be naive to expect him to act otherwise. Undoubtedly, our nation is facing a tumultuous next four years.

*Liza Mackeen-Shapiro is a fifth former from New York, N.Y. She may be reached at [lmackeen Shapiro18@choate.edu](mailto:lmackeen Shapiro18@choate.edu)*

## To Fix Our Flaws, We Must Reform the Electoral College

By **Imad Rizvi '18**  
*Opinions Writer*

Despite winning by millions in the popular vote, Hillary Clinton is likely to be defeated by Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election. This is because the election is actually decided by the Electoral College, a system that gives each state a certain number of representatives called electors that will cast votes on December 19 based on the will of the people in their state. In two of the last five election cycles, the winner of the popular vote has faced a hurdle with the electoral college — Al Gore was one of these candidates in 2000 while Hillary Clinton was the other. The Electoral College is an archaic, outdated relic harkening to the times of horse carriages. With modern technology, there is no longer any need for the Electoral College, as Americans can vote for themselves easily.

The Electoral College is no longer functioning in the way the framers of the constitution hoped — to accurately represent our nation — and has become an unfair institution that

undermines the effectiveness of our democracy. It should be abolished, and instead a simple popular vote should be used to decide which candidate becomes the American president.

### *The Electoral College deserves criticism as the system that will allow Trump into the White House.*

The original purpose of the Electoral College was to ensure that the choice of the people could be overridden if American citizens elected a person unsuited for the presidency. This idea was based on the elitism of early American politics when leading figures believed that only a select few should have a role in shaping the nation. The existence of an Electoral College goes against the foundation of our conception of democracy: the idea that all members of the populace should have a role in electing their leaders. Although it was

an institution that violated the beliefs the nation was founded upon, it still became an integral part of the presidential election process.

Not only does the Electoral College go against the true basis of democracy, but it also does not work for its intended purpose. During his campaign, Donald Trump’s hateful rhetoric and lack of policy proved that he is incapable of uniting the country and representing the interests of American citizens from diverse backgrounds. If the electors decide to stick with Donald Trump, then it proves that the modern-day Electoral College will never go against the presumed outcome. The electors should not be blamed for voting for Trump: it would be immensely difficult to make the decision to go against what the majority of people in a state wanted. Instead, the Electoral College deserves criticism as the system that may allow Trump into the White House.

There are several other reasons why the Electoral College should not determine who will take the highest office of power in America. First, in the vast

majority of states, the winner of that state takes all the electoral votes. This is unfair because in larger states, the losing candidate may only have been behind by a few percentage points, yet they lose the thousands or even millions of votes that they deserve. For example, Clinton received no benefit from the almost 4.5 million people who voted for her in Florida, while Trump received none of the 2.7 million votes he collected in New York.

A further reason why the Electoral College is ineffective at determining the president is that it gives more power to voters in smaller states. Each state is guaranteed three electors, no matter its population. For smaller states, this equates to a greater number of electors per person than in larger states. Wyoming has fewer than 600,000 people and three electors: one for about every 200,000 people. Meanwhile, Texas has about one elector for every 700,000 people. Additionally, more power is given to voters in swing states, where each vote has the chance of tilting the results of the state to give all electors to one can-

didate; in comparison, the results are already almost guaranteed in strong Democrat or Republican states, so the importance of each individual voter is reduced.

It is time to abolish the Electoral College as an institution and rely on the popular vote to determine the American president. If America actually wants to represent the values of democracy, then the popular vote is the clearest indicator of who the citizens want to lead the country.

This change is unlikely to occur in the near future because it would require approval from 2/3 of the states to make a constitutional amendment, and smaller states would likely be unwilling to give up the advantages that the system provides them. Still, only when the institution is abolished and the popular vote determines the President can the American people be sure that they have a fair role in democratically choosing the principal leader of the country.

*Imad Rizvi is a fifth former from Glastonbury, Conn. He may be reached at [irizvi18@choate.edu](mailto:irizvi18@choate.edu)*

## ELENA LEVIN '17 ASKED TO LAST HURRAH

By **Jack O'Donnell '17**  
*Elena's Best Friend*

Jack O'Donnell '17, the creative and handsome Opinions Editor of *The Choate News*, has decided to invite Elena Levin '17 to be his date to the Last Hurrah dance. He had the idea to use the Opinions Page in the newspaper during his Junior spring, and he has been extremely excited ever since.

The Last Hurrah is Choate's dance for seniors. Each year, suitors try to out-do each other with the scale of their proposals. It appears unlikely that O'Donnell's great proposal idea will ever be topped.

O'Donnell and Levin have been friends since the first week of their freshmen fall. Through thick and thin, they have grown extremely close over the years, and he is extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to become so close with such an incredible person.

When asked for a comment, O'Donnell, insightful as ever, only said, “I just hope she says yes!”



## Transition Train



Donald Trump is TIME's Person of the Year 2016 #TIMEPOY



**Donald J. Trump** @realDonaldTrump

Reports by @CNN that I will be working on The Apprentice during my Presidency, even part time, are ridiculous & untrue - FAKE NEWS!



**Elizabeth Warren** @SenWarren

Appointing Andrew Puzder to run the agency responsible for protecting workers is a slap in the face for every hard-working American family.



Photo by Andrew Harnik  
Donald Trump declared that Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt will be his nomination for head of the EPA. Pruitt is a climate change denier, and will likely discontinue the EPA's policies from the Obama administration.



**Paul Ryan** @SpeakerRyan

General John Kelly knows how to secure our borders and combat terrorism at home and abroad. He will do an excellent job at @DHSgov.

## FACULTY SABBATICALS: A FALL TO REMEMBER



Photo courtesy of Kate Doak

The Doak family visited the Warner Bros. Studios, where this model of Dumbeldore's office is on display.

By **Riley Choi '18**  
Staff Reporter

Winter term has taken off, and Choate welcomes back four faculty members who have just returned from sabbatical: Ms. Carol Chen-Lin, Ms. Kate Doak, Ms. Fran O'Donoghue, and Ms. Amy Salot. What have they been up to?

Ms. Chen-Lin spent her most recent sabbatical enriching her experience as a Chinese teacher. She mainly worked on writing an advanced level Chinese language textbook and attending conferences.

In October, she went to Atlanta, Ga. for a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the STARTALK program, a government-funded initiative to support education in critical-need foreign languages. (Choate was involved in this program, thanks to Ms. Chen-Lin, from 2006 to 2013.) She also went to the annual convention for the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in Boston.

Outside of work-related activities, Ms. Chen-Lin spent a lot of time reading. She said, "I love how the sabbatical provides a great opportunity to explore my areas of interest. I gained a lot of inspiration and ideas that would not have occurred with my rigid and demanding schedule."

Ms. Doak, an English teacher, spent her sabbatical — the first of her time at Choate — with her family. They explored historical sites in Scotland and England, which helped her continue her work on the online theater history class she created last year for Choate. "One of my favorite parts of the sabbatical was visiting Hampton Court near London," Ms. Doak recalled. "We walked into a large room, and one of my kids pointed out a huge portrait of Charles II and said, 'Mom, there's your boyfriend!' I guess he said that because the picture of Charles II was on my computer for a long time as part of the class."

Ms. Doak and her family also visited the Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden (outside of London), where the Harry Potter se-

ries was filmed. The photos from the studios will be used by her students for a set design project for the theater history class.

In addition to being closely intertwined with her Choate-related pursuits, the sabbatical allowed Ms. Doak to further her independent writing projects as well. For example, she is currently in the notes stage of a novel, and seeing sites such as the Tower of London up close helped her refine setting descriptions.

Ms. O'Donoghue, a chemistry teacher, and Ms. Salot, a history and English teacher, spent their third sabbatical together last term.

Both agreed that this most recent sabbatical was their favorite. "I went to Houston, Texas for my first sabbatical," Ms. O'Donoghue said. She was invited there by Ms. Mae Jemison, the first female black astronaut in space, who she had met when Ms. Jemison came to Choate as that year's Commencement Speaker. Ms. O'Donoghue commented, "It was a super cool experience to explore her work in



Photo courtesy of Amy Salot

Ms. Fran O'Donoghue (left) and Ms. Amy Salot (right) hiked through the Dolomite Mountains in Northern Italy.

developing new technology for medicine distribution around the world. However, it was not as fun as I expected it to be."

Ms. O'Donoghue and Ms. Salot planned to go on a long bike trip across the U.S. for their second sabbatical; however, it was cut short because Ms. Salot was diagnosed with cancer. "Although I was thankful that I had a chance to treat it without the interference of work, I did not enjoy the sabbatical as much as I wanted to," said Ms. Salot.

For this sabbatical, Ms. O'Donoghue and Ms. Salot decided to focus on having fun. Each month, they planned a theme or special activity.

In June, they went to Italy to visit various cities as tourists and to hike through northern Italy for a week. In July, they stayed in New Hampshire to visit friends and family. In August, they travelled to Montreal, and in September, they visited Washington D.C. In October, they went mountain hiking in the Southwest, including Utah and Arizona.

Ms. Salot mentioned that the sabbatical was a "great balance between doing absolutely nothing and having great adventures." She continued, "I ran my first five-mile race. We hiked the Grand Canyon for 16 miles and went mountain biking. I felt I was 25 years old during those physically challenging activities, and I felt as if I were 85 years old at the end of the day."

Ms. O'Donoghue added, "All the trips were spread out, so we certainly didn't feel like we were rushing. There was a lot of relaxation time in between the travels."

These trips and past sabbaticals are made possible by Choate's sabbatical program, under which faculty members can either take a term off or use the summer months (both with pay) every seven to ten years. The sabbatical program is organized by Mr. Thomas White, Director of Faculty Development. He keeps track of a list of faculty members which contains information about how long they have been at Choate and how long has it been since their last sabbaticals.

Mr. White plans the sabbaticals two years in advance to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Faculty members complete a proposal detailing what they want to do during the sabbatical and what they hope to accomplish. Although, according to Ms. O'Donoghue, they are encouraged to "do something that is beneficial," the faculty are able to decide what exactly that "something" is.

These four teachers are now back on campus, and they are excited to resume teaching. Ms. O'Donoghue said, "I'm in the excitement phase of beginning a new year. I have been meeting new people, including my students. I am excited to see people and to start my classes!" Of course, transitioning can be difficult. "It is a little challenging to adjust back to campus because my students have been taught in a different style with another teacher for a term," Ms. Doak mentioned. "So far, however, it has been great."

Riley Choi may be reached at [schoi18@choate.edu](mailto:schoi18@choate.edu)

## \$20 IN YOUR POCKET: A THRIFT SHOPPING GUIDE

By **Kristen Andonie '17**  
Staff Reporter

As you switch your fall clothes for warmer garments and realize you hate your old cardigan, think twice before tossing it into a trash bin. There are numerous thrifting initiatives, both on and around campus, that allow for the Choate community to economically and environmentally donate and buy used clothing.

Perhaps the most well-known event for students and faculty is The Thrifty Boar, an annual thrift sale hosted by the C-Proctors. This year, The Thrifty Boar took place on Sunday, December 4, during brunch. All clothing items were priced at \$1 or in exchange for one donated item.

The Thrifty Boar starts off with a fairly large inventory. According to C-Proctor Riley Choi '18, at the end of each school year, she and the other C-Proctors visit dorm common rooms to gather clothes that have been left in designated piles. Those garments are then stored on campus until December.

The C-Proctors donate all the profits to charity every few years, after enough money has been raised. Typically, The Thrifty Boar raises anywhere from \$75 to \$140.

Customers of The Thrifty Boar range from devoted fans who go every year to the casual passerby. Sebastian Chacon '19, who first noticed

the Thrifty Boar when he was having brunch, falls in the latter category. He recalled, "I was just curious in what they were selling, so I started looking



Photo courtesy of Wallingford Patch

Cindy's Unique Shop, which is located on North Colony Street, sells used home decor pieces at affordable prices.

around." Chacon left the sale with a new (or rather, not-so-new) sweater, which he wore the following day.

Of course, one of the major appealing factors of thrift sales is the low price tags. "I think the budget of a lot of teenagers can be dedicated to clothes, so it's good to find different resources that allow you to buy clothes that you would like at a lower price," said Genevieve Richardson '17.

By exposing students to the advantages of thrift shopping, the C-Proctors also hope to inspire more in the broader community. Opportunities abound:

comfortable — and a good price," said Antigone Ntagkounakis '17.

Twice as Nice Consignment, located on North Planes Industrial Road, is small but packed full of interesting items. Dr. Jared Diamond and his family had a very positive experience at the store, and they left with a "just ugly-enough-to-be-really-cool soft, used chair that was perfect for our kid's room." The fun of thrift shopping is in the uncertainty, and Twice as Nice is certainly no exception. Dr. Diamond recalled, "You never quite know what you're going to find. Some places in the store you just get the sense of 'Oh my goodness, someone bought this new at one point,' and then in other places you just want to spend an hour or longer gazing."

Cindy's Unique Shop, located on North Colony Street, sells second-hand furniture, decorations, and jewelry. Slightly more upscale than the others, as Lauren Lamb '17 put it, "If you have a bigger budget, go to Cindy's."

Moe Janneh '18, who visited The Thrifty Boar last Sunday, spoke for many students when he said, "It was really fun because there were a lot of things, they're really cheap, and even more than that, they're for a good cause. I was happy to participate." Thus, thrift shopping is a win-win-win.

Kristen Andonie may be reached at [kandonie17@choate.edu](mailto:kandonie17@choate.edu)

## Q&A Around Campus: Mr. Steven Lazarus

By **Sophie Mackin '18**  
Staff Reporter



Photo courtesy of Choate Rosemary Hall

Mr. Steven Lazarus has worked at Choate for almost 20 years. He teaches one course and one course only — Architectural Design, an art elective that is typically held in the winter term.

In addition to teaching, he runs a small firm based in downtown Wallingford: Lazarus and Sargeant, Architects, which he co-founded in 1986. Now a team of seven, the firm is involved in a wide range of projects: large scale site planning, corporate and institutional facilities (including for Choate), residential homes, and interior design.

**What is your process when tackling a project?**

Architecture requires a mixed bag of skills. You must have a practical ability to make things work as well as an ability to creatively solve problems. The first component to solving a problem is to think about it with as few constraints as possible and create the ideal solution. You want to start with the 'what if' before letting practical considerations set in.

For example, my class was recently discussing the Beinecke Rare Book Library on Yale's campus. The building was inspired by the practical decision to have light filter in through a thinly cut stone so that the books would be carefully preserved. That decision ended up affecting the entire design. The building became a ramping-up of that one idea to have stone panels.

Similarly, my process is not necessarily logical. It's more about the interplay between practical and creative that leads to a design.

**What recent projects have you been involved in at Choate?**

There has been an on-going dormitory quality of life upgrade, and I've been working on that for the past handful of years. Every year we take on one or two dorms and make some improvements to them. The improvements are based upon recommendations from and conversations with students. For example, we just finished a

ping-pong tournament lounge space in Clinton-Knight.

**What has been your favorite project for Choate?**

The varsity baseball dugouts. It was a modest project, but it was a lot of fun. There's an old English tradition of designing garden follies, and in a lot of ways, the baseball dugouts remind me of them.

**What has been your favorite project outside of Choate?**

A large part of architecture is meant to help people. My favorite projects off campus have been when I'm helping someone with limited means to use what they have more efficiently.

**If you could design anything in the world, what would it be?**

The housing project that would bring about the rebirth of downtown Wallingford. It would cause people just out of college to say, "Wow, I really want to live in Wallingford." It would be a multi-use complex with housing, retail, and commercial components. I'm really interested in helping Wallingford become even more vibrant than it already is.

**What advice do you have for someone interested in architecture?**

Being educated as an architect is a useful education. Probably only about 50% of people educated in architecture actually practice architecture, but that's okay. Architecture changes the way you see things; it can be useful in a variety of places in the world — any place where there is a built environment, which is basically everywhere.

Sophie Mackin may be reached at [smackin18@choate.edu](mailto:smackin18@choate.edu)



### Across

- Santa's home, abbr.
- Rudolph sans deer
- Ersatz liberal?
- Wednesday's stand-up comic

### Down

- Merkel's no
- Tree variety
- Jan. 1 deadline, abbr.
- Physical agreement

	1	2	
3			4
5			
	6		

The solution for this puzzle can be found online at [thechoatenews.choate.edu](http://thechoatenews.choate.edu)

## Alice Volfson '19: Choate's Resident Composer

By **Nicole Yao '18**  
Staff Reporter



In terms of musical preferences, Volfson enjoys listening to early turn of the century classical music, citing John Cage and Dmitri Shostakovich as a couple of her favorite artists. "Because I'm a teenager, I also listen to pop music," she added.

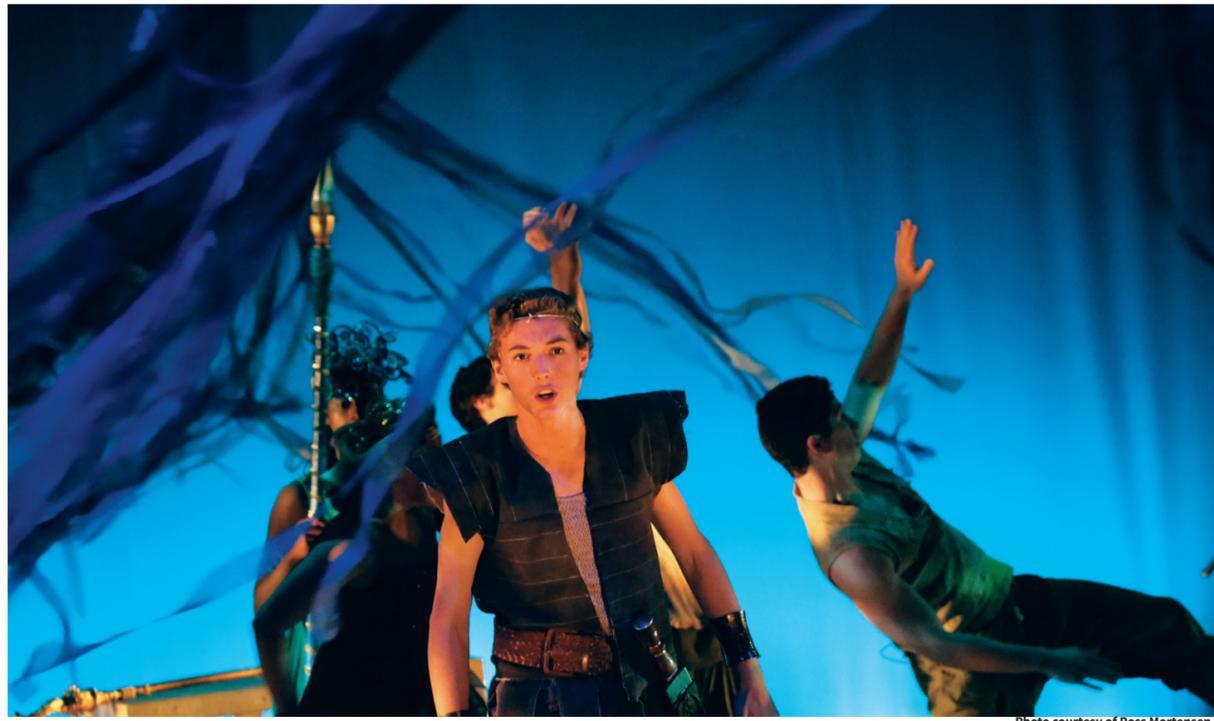
"Whether she is singing, playing piano, composing, or acting, she has a tremendous imagination, as well as a strong intuition for how to connect emotionally," remarked Ms. Kegel, the Choral Director at Choate. "She loves to put together different types of sounds as well as surprising elements of theater in ways that expand the audience's idea of what is possible."

Eddie Conekin-Tooze '19 also praised Volfson's talent, commenting, "Something that is special about Alice is her musical knowledge and piano technique. She is a really creative person."

While Volfson isn't necessarily sure if she wants to pursue a career in music, she does hope to continue developing her passion and skills. "I'm always going to have a love for music and a background in music," she stated, "so I'm hoping that I'm going to continue doing this one way or another when I go to college."

**Nicole Yao** may be reached at [nyao18@choate.edu](mailto:nyao18@choate.edu)

## ODYSSEUS SAILS TO THE MAIN STAGE



Noah Nyhart '17 as Odysseus in the recent school production of *The Odyssey*, with Anselm Kizza-Besigye '17 (left) as Poseidon and Kyle Gelzins '17 (right) as a member of Odysseus's crew.

*Continued from Page 1*

A distinctive aspect of this show is that it was an ensemble cast, with most actors playing small yet vital roles that helped to piece the show together. Actress Kaitlyn Dutchin '17, who played Calypso, explained the importance of an ensemble show: "The reason that I really wanted to do this show in the first place is because Mary Zimmerman is known for creating a lot of ensemble. She writes the plays while directing it because she's all about ensemble casting, and in theater the ensemble is really important because it's what makes a play a

play. It's what makes theater so special. It's all about everyone coming together to make the show stronger, and that's why there are no really big parts — because everyone's parts are equally important."

The audience was very receptive to the production. Kevin Shen '17 said of the production, "I think the music and costumes were really nice," and Nate White '20 added, "It was really well done."

**Namsai Sethpornpong** may be reached at [nsethpornpong17@choate.edu](mailto:nsethpornpong17@choate.edu)

## Season's Events Culminate in Holiday Program

By **Neve Scott '18**  
Staff Reporter

As the holiday season approaches, Choate is preparing its students for the oncoming festivities and break. The events kickstarted with gingerbread cookie decorating and Hanukkah with Hillel. This coming Wednesday, December 14, math teacher and holiday aficionado Mr. Marquis Tisdale is hosting "Tiz the Season," a holiday-themed gathering designed to lighten the pressure on students due to the overwhelming amount of beginning-of-term assessments. From 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., replacing school meeting, hot cocoa, as well as donut holes, cookies and candy, will be served in the Library/Hill House quad.

However, there are more holiday-themed activities going on than ones that simply involve food. During the winter at Choate, the Arts are at their peak popularity. On Sunday, December 11, the annual Lessons and Carols service took place. This event included teachings and choral accompaniment sung by the Chamber and Festival choruses during the Christmas

service. On Monday, December 12, there was cocoa and A Charlie Brown's Christmas in the Seymour St. John Chapel as well as caroling performed by Christian Fellowship.

To culminate this series of holiday-themed events, Rev. Ally Brundige is hosting Cho-



The first holiday (then Christmas) program at Rosemary Hall, 1911.

ate's annual Holiday Program on Thursday, December 15, the evening before students depart.

On the topic of the program, Rev. Brundige said, "The Holiday Program brings the Choate community togeth-

er one last time before the New Year and Winter Break to celebrate our diverse community and its various winter holiday traditions and artistic talents. This occasion provides a time to be in the present, enjoy one another, exchange a sense of joy, belovedness, generosity,

beauty, laughter, peace, and hope, and perhaps leave us inspired to share these very same gifts with our friends, families, and the world."

To help get Choate into the holiday spirit actively, Dance Company is doing a piece to a

remix of "Carol the Bells" during the program.

Madison Epstein O'Halloran '18, the junior officer of Dance Company and president of Hip Hop Club, said "Lily James, Elle Rinaldi, and I, the heads of Dance Company, met an hour before Dance Company started every week to choreograph an optional dance to "Carol the Bells." In past years, we have used the Club's time to make the dance with the entire company. This year is different. We had out of club rehearsals and people volunteered to be in it, which added a different dynamic because everyone who is in the dance wanted to be in it and is really committed to it. It was really a collaborative effort."

Although many of the other acts are kept as a surprise for the night of the event, Rev. Brundige said that Choate can count on student ensembles, a cappella performances, poems, video clips, messages, and school-wide sing-alongs for this year's long-awaited Holiday Program. New students, get ready to sing your lungs out.

**Neve Scott** may be reached at [nscott18@choate.edu](mailto:nscott18@choate.edu)

## LESSONS AND CAROLS BOLSTERS HOLIDAY CHEER



Clothed in blue robes, choral students perform for an excited audience.

By **Simi Sachdeva '19**  
Staff Reporter

The three weeks in between Thanksgiving and Christmas break at Choate are filled with excitement and stress, but holiday traditions such as Holiday Ball and Tiz the Season prevail. Lessons and Carols is one such Choate tradition. This old custom began in Truro Cathedral in 19th century. However, Choate uses the 1918 adapted version of King's College Chapel in Cambridge by Dean Eric-Milner-White.

The Lessons and Carols service started as the Chapel lights dimmed and Lily Kops '18 began the carol "Once in Royal David's City." In blue robes and holding candles, the Chamber Chorus entered the chapel and filled the space with beautiful sounds. Speaking with Kops after the service, she acknowledged that her solo was a lot of pressure. "There was no accompaniment; it's all a cappella. Basically, if I go out of tune, the whole choir goes out of tune." Without a doubt, Kops lived up to expectation and led a stunning beginning to the service.

The rest of the service was exceptional, and the entire chapel was filled with beauty both through the the music and the candles lighting up the darkness. Director of the Arts Kalya Yannatos gushed about the service: "I always think it's magical but this year, it was particularly magical. I don't know if it was choice of music, profound words share, or the incredible spirit and beauty that our students evoked through singing that is truly magical."

Although Choate is a non-denominational school, Lessons and Carols is, in fact, a religious service. Rev. Ally Brundige stated, "Lessons and Carols at Choate is a tradition that started when it really had a Christian emphasis, and it continued into this time of not only being non-denominational but multi-faith, including secular and religious traditions

among our great and awesome diversity as a school. It is also one of the times where spiritual life and the music program come together to offer something to the community — both those within Choate who are celebrating the season of advent and Christmas, and also the greater Wallingford community, so it acts as a gift to the campus and world for those to whom Christianity is a tradition and really upholds beautiful musical tradition while doing so."

**I always think it's magical, but this year it was particularly magical.**

Ms. Kalya Yannatos  
Director of the Arts

Stephen Ankoue '17, a co-president of the Chamber Chorus, reflected on the service: "I wanted to share the hard work that Festival and Chamber Choruses have put into the songs that we have worked on. Because we have spent two months on them, we really wanted to go out to the community and provide awe-inspiring beauty to them through what we feel is great music. I'm not Catholic myself, but I still feel like I can get a lot out of it by the beauty of the music and the essential messages that the lessons give us. I feel great — I am about to go home, it's Christmas, and I'm ready to spend time with friends and family over the holidays."

As a member of Choate's Festival Chorus, it was a heart-warming experience to be a part of Lessons and Carols and take part in the spirit of Christmas, serving the community in the meantime. It was a gorgeous service and those who attended left into the snowy winter weather feeling warm and having the joy of the holiday season within them.

**Simi Sachdeva** may be reached at [ssachdeva19@choate.edu](mailto:ssachdeva19@choate.edu)

## À LA MODE



By **Jeanne Malle '19**  
Staff Reporter

On Wednesday, December 7, Haley Williams '18 wore a skirt. This probably does not seem especially noteworthy, yet it was unconventional for Williams, who pays special attention to what she puts on in the morning, and rarely does that final choice include a skirt. Questions about why Williams might make this choice flew through my head. Did she feel an obligation to wear pants because people

would look at her differently if she did otherwise? Do women still need to avoid skirts and dresses to appear more professional? Williams surprised me with her answer: "I don't really wear skirts because, one, I don't have a ton that match my style these days, and, two, skirts make me feel heavily girly, and that makes me uncomfortable. I'm not binary and I really hate feeling like I have to associate with a gender, so I don't like wearing things that look conventionally girly."

She added, "Don't get me wrong — I wear skirts and love how they look and feel on me, but recently I just don't. I like experimenting with different clothing at different times, and these days I feel like I have more cool ideas for outfits with pants. I like to have my own look; I don't want to look like a girl or a guy — I just want to look like Haley."

Her decision to not wear

skirts represents how she identifies herself and the general aesthetic of how she desires to look. Thinking back on the past year, I realized that not only with Williams, but also with the entire world of fashion, androgynous looks have flourished. While labels such as women's wear and men's wear are still used, customers have become increasingly aware of the incompleteness of the terms. "Women's wear" that resembled "men's wear" always used to be "feminized" and tailored to fit the female body in a "girly" way. However, these past few months, popular clothing trends have taken "men's" items and sold them in what are traditionally viewed as female sizes.

We might not realize it, but this might be the fashion breakthrough that we have been waiting for. It seemed a far-fetched idea that women and men might one day be truly equal. Now, it is starting to

look like the fashion industry makes no distinction between the clothes that are designated for men and those that are for women. As Williams responded when I asked her how she felt after wearing that outfit, this is a "fabulous" step forward for women worldwide,

**Jeanne Malle** may be reached at [jmalle19@choate.edu](mailto:jmalle19@choate.edu)



Haley Williams '18 poses.

**FIELD REPORT**

**Saturday Games**

**Boys' Basketball** (1-3-0)  
falls to Kent, 43-83

**Girls' Basketball** (2-1-0)  
beats Kingswood, 54-37

**Boys' Hockey** (1-3-0)  
beats Deerfield, 7-3

**Girls' Hockey** (2-2-0)  
beats Noble, 2-1

**Boys' Squash** (2-2-0)  
beats Loomis, 4-3

**Wrestling** (5-0-1)  
beats Worcester, 57-12

**Keeping Athletes in the Game: A Terrific Trainer Triumvirate**

By **Laila Hawkins '19**  
Reporter

Superheroes may not be real, but these three are as close as it gets. Based in the Winter X, Ms. Emily Osterhout, Mr. Brian Holloway, and Mr. Matt Pendleton spend their afternoons helping injured Choate athletes get back on the field. After classes, athletes race to the X, counting on the trainers to prep them for practice.

For those of you who are not familiar with these names, these three have been working together for the last decade and a half to prep and prime our athletes. Working alongside a local physical therapy clinic, they have helped many athletes through the recovery process of an injury, from muscle spasms to broken bones. Brian, who has been at Choate for almost 20 years, said that he enjoys working with young athletes here because "this setting provides a tremendous opportunity to educate them regarding their health, injury care and prevention, and physical preparation." Emily and Matt feel similarly, saying that by working at a boarding school, "you get to do other things aside from just athletic training — working in the



Photo by Elle Rinaldi/The Choate News

From left to right: athletic trainers Ms. Emily Osterhout, Mr. Matt Pendleton, and Mr. Brian Holloway.

dorm, advising other groups or clubs. It keeps things from getting too stale."

Each trainer has his or her own experience and knowledge in the field of sports medicine and athletic training. Brian came from a high school in Madison, Conn., as an athletic trainer. He eventually came to Choate and fell in love with the community and the relationships he formed here on campus. He said, "Working with

this population is quite rewarding, both personally and professionally, due to the relationships formed within the community." Matt, also coming from another high school, said that coming out of medical school, he "wanted to practice medicine in a more fun environment," which led him to Choate. Similarly, Emily "knew she wanted to help people." She came to Choate after working at a physical therapy clinic

because she wanted to work with younger athletes.

While they definitely make their jobs look easy, it is certainly no cakewalk. Everyday, they spend the majority of their afternoons in the X working directly with athletes. Matt said, "The hours are sometimes odd, early at night. But that also keeps it interesting, on the other side, because you're not doing nine to five all the time. It gives you a variety of

schedule, which I think is very important." They also said that all the hardships are made up with the relationships they have with the athletes.

Together, in a tiny room at the X, Matt, Emily, and Brian play an integral role in helping Choate athletics come out victorious, season after season. A part of this success is the bond these trainers made with the community and each other. Emily spoke about the relationships she forged, saying that they get to have "such a great relationship with the athletes. And, you can come to work, knowing that it's going to be lighthearted most of the time, and you get to joke around with the kids. It makes it more fun. It's not the classroom, making it less stressful, so the kids come in here and de-stress. We get to see a different side of them." Certainly, after classes, the trainer's room is alive with lighthearted spirit and an aura of relaxation, despite any injuries or pain one may be experiencing. This sense of camaraderie hinges on the trainers and their effort in providing this environment.

Laila Hawkins may be reached at [lhawkins19@choate.edu](mailto:lhawkins19@choate.edu)

**BOYS' VARSITY HOCKEY**

**BOARS DEFEAT DOORS IN HIGH-SCORING GAME**

By **Joseph Coyne '19**  
Staff Reporter

On Saturday, December 10, the Boys' Varsity Hockey team took on Deerfield in its third contest of the season. After a physical and emotional game, Choate came out on top, 7-3, for its first win this winter.

From the start, the game was physical, with both teams delivering major hits, prompting cheers and groans from the packed arena. Nonetheless, the Choate boys were able to control the puck and keep it in their attacking zone. Coach Pat Dennehy partly accredited the team's win to this physicality: "I just think the guys battled a lot more than they previously have."

In a rivalry game such as this one, though, physical play can cause emotions to run high, leading to penalties or missed opportunities. In the third period, this began happening to Choate, which allowed Deerfield to score three quick goals and tie the game. Coach Dennehy said he believed that his players lost their heads a little bit during this period, allowing Deerfield to get back in the game.

However, Choate was able to regain composure. Captain Bobby Goggin '17 said after the game, "When we ran into penalty trouble in the third, Coach called an important timeout and settled us down." During that time out, Coach Dennehy said that he just wanted his players to refocus and keep it simple and win the little battles. According to Coach Dennehy, another main reason behind the team's ability to refocus was the captains' leadership and outstanding performances. He said that, being a fairly young team, leadership from the seniors was vital for this win.

Another major part of the team being able to withstand Deerfield's run and comeback was the team's mindset. Captain Craig Uyeno '17 said, "The boys did a great job of believing in themselves and believing in each other. After our penalties expired in the third, we were full steam ahead and had a great team comeback." Goggin added,

"We have a great team atmosphere with everybody pushing each other to win games. That is vital for success in a team sport."

Another vital aspect of team sports is every person playing his best and doing his respective job. This is something that is even more apparent in hockey, since one line does not get all of the playing time. The Boars' collaborative effort certainly benefited them on Saturday. Coach Dennehy also cited this aspect as an important factor in his team's win. He found that the third and fourth lines had a goal differential — the number of goals scored by a team minus the number of goals it conceded — of +1, taking a lot of pressure to produce off of the top lines.

Along with the lower lines, the special teams were a huge part of the game. In the third period, the outcome of the game was decided by who could accomplish more penalty plays. Choate was able to dominate special teams for most of the game en route to its win. Choate ended the game three for six on penalty plays with a short-handed goal as well. Meanwhile, the Wild Boars held Deerfield at two for six on power plays.

Finally, while this game was won in large part because Choate was able to play together as a team, there were many outstanding individual performances. On the scoring side, Jack Hoey '18 scored a hat trick. Choate's other four goals were scored by Faisal Al-Saif '18, who played an outstanding and physical game, Sean Dennehy '19, who also had an assist, Chance Gorman '18, and George Upgren '17. These goals would not have been possible without the team's swift passing; Cooper Swift '19, Luke Wheeler '19, Daniel Kramer '18, and Goggin each made two assists. Finally, goalie Cal Stewart '18 played an outstanding game, keeping Deerfield off the board for the first two periods and making a few jaw-dropping saves in the second period.

Joseph Coyne may be reached at [jcoyne19@choate.edu](mailto:jcoyne19@choate.edu)

**WINTER SEASON PREVIEW**

After a strong fall season, evidenced by the varsity sweep on Deerfield Day, Choate Athletics hopes to carry its momentum into the winter term. Most teams have already begun their seasons, but much is still unknown about the winter sports, with many teams still looking to solidify their identities. Whether it be in the pool, on the ice, on the courts, or on the mats, the Wild Boars are set to begin another hopeful winter season. Jackson Elkins '18 reports on the outlook of Choate's varsity winter teams.

**Boys' Basketball**

**Key Players:** Owen de Graaf '17, Nick Fennell '17, Colin Donovan '17, Brad Landry '18

As Elliot Sawyer-Kaplan '18 put it, "We aren't the most athletic or talented team in the league, but we can play with anyone. If we believe in ourselves, we will have a good shot at being a great team." Look out for Elliot and company to grab some wins this year.

**Girls' Basketball**

**Key Players:** Nicole Hiller '17, Jocelyn Polansky '19, Abby Blair '17

Girls' Varsity Basketball team is now reloaded with talented players, adding the likes of Jordan Obi '20, Sam Gallo '19, and Claudia Pagnozzi Schwam '18, as well as returners Olivia McCulloch '17 and Lexy Cook '17. With playoffs in their crosshairs, the girls' basketball court is certain to buzz all winter.

**Boys' Hockey**

**Key Players:** Jack Hoey '18, Faisal Al-Saif '18, Craig Uyeno '17, Bobby Goggin '17

Boys' Varsity Hockey is look-

ing for a rebound season after a disappointing campaign last year, and with a new set of players, they look primed to do so. Players like Chance Gorman '18, Sasha Tertyshny '18, and Cooper Swift '19 will be looking to increase their respective impacts, while new faces like Brendan Darby '19 and Daniel Kramer '18 aim to help round out the team.

**Girls' Hockey**

**Key Players:** Cam Leonard '17, Kristina Schuler '17, Lexi Takashima '18

Coming off a 2-1 win over Noble and Greenough, the Girls' Varsity Hockey team, while not a large squad, has the right players on board to have success out on the ice. Post Graduate (PG) Ellen Arena '17 will bring leadership and experience to the team, while freshman twins Christina and Effie Tournas '20 look to be impact players straightaway.

**Boys' Squash**

**Key Players:** Robin Armour '18, Dylan Muldoon '17, Jack O'Donnell '17

Fresh off of annihilating Kent 7-0, Boys' Squash looks to

notch a dominant season this winter. With half the team having risen from Thirds to Varsity (an uncommon trajectory, for sure), the Squash program embodies hard work and skill development. Continued dedication should earn them many wins on the courts this winter.

**Girls' Squash**

**Key Players:** Olivia van den Born '17, Hope Worcester '19, Keeley Osborn '18

Like several other teams, Girls' Squash is fresh off a massive victory against Kent, defeating them 6-1. With no freshmen on the team, the girls will bring a wealth of experience to the courts this winter, which is sure to help them at the National Team Championships in February and the New England Championships in March.

**Boys' Swimming**

**Key Players:** Scott Romeyn '18, Tristan So '17

After delivering a strong performance against Andover early in the term, Boys' Varsity Swimming is on track to have a great season. On Saturday,

December 3, the team broke Choate's existing record for the 200 meter IM relay. The collaborative effort included Scott Romeyn '18, Tristan So '17, Jason Weng '17, and Ben Zhao '18.

**Girls' Swimming**

**Key Players:** Nina Hastings '18, Samantha Scott '20

The girls have a promising season ahead of them based on their recent 98-80 win against Andover. Nina Hastings '18 said, "We have strong swimmers specializing in every event, which is promising for the New England Championships come March."

**Wrestling**

**Key Players:** Fallou Babou '18, Nick Bradley '17, Sam Madden '17

Currently 5-0-1, most recently destroying Worcester, 57-12, the Wrestling team is off to an impressive start. With a big and committed team spanning across a variety of weight classes, Wrestling looks forward to more victories out on the mats.

Jackson Elkins may be reached at [jelkins18@choate.edu](mailto:jelkins18@choate.edu)

**The Home Advantage Phenomenon**

By **Grace Stapelberg '20**  
Reporter

If you're an athlete, you are most likely aware of the phenomenon called the home advantage. Whether your home field is a pool, a rink, a court, or an actual field, the difference is clear. Playing on your own turf, in your own environment, often improves the overall outcome of a competition.

Sydney Jones '17, a member of the Girls' Varsity Soccer team, said recently that "having a home game completely affects the mentality of all players. When you're on your home field, the familiarity breeds more confidence than when you're in a completely new

environment." Playing somewhere you are familiar with allows for less mental competition with yourself. You are able to play without worrying about unknown factors. This is your home turf, and that means you have the upper hand.

**A simple physical game can very quickly turn into a mental one.**

However, the players are not the only ones who are affected. Teams playing at home have bigger crowds on their side, which, in turn, has been shown to influence the officials, especially in sports like football, hockey, and soccer. When officials have very little time to make a decision,

the crowd's vocal cues can usually play some part in influencing calls. The pressure of having a crowd, especially a loud one, close by often leads to a biased referee, which may change the flow of a game.

A way games can often mean long, uncomfortable bus rides, as well as the stress of packing up all your equipment and necessary belongings. Being away from your home field may affect your warm-up and your pregame rituals, which can in turn affect your performance on the field. A simple physical game can very quickly turn into a mental one. There's also the more practical obstacles like bathrooms and access to trainers. Being out of your comfort zone presents

the problem of unknown factors. The opposing team's crowd can also present mental challenges to you. It can cause distractions and lead to costly mistakes.

The home game advantage is a phenomenon that affects almost every kind of athlete. It can be hard to push past the mental aspect of playing away from your own turf. With a supportive crowd on your sideline, and by playing in your own environment, it can help a team persevere despite adversity. As trivial as it may seem, the home game advantage is a huge part of being an athlete, here at Choate, and beyond.

Grace Stapelberg may be reached at [gstapelberg20@choate.edu](mailto:gstapelberg20@choate.edu)