



THE CHOATE NEWS

THE OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF CHOATE ROSEMARY HALL SINCE 1907

Choate Rosemary Hall
333 Christian Street
Wallingford, CT

VOL. CXIV · No. V

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020

THECHOATENews.CHOATE.EDU



FAREWELL 2020



HOLIDAY BALL MOVES TO ZOOM

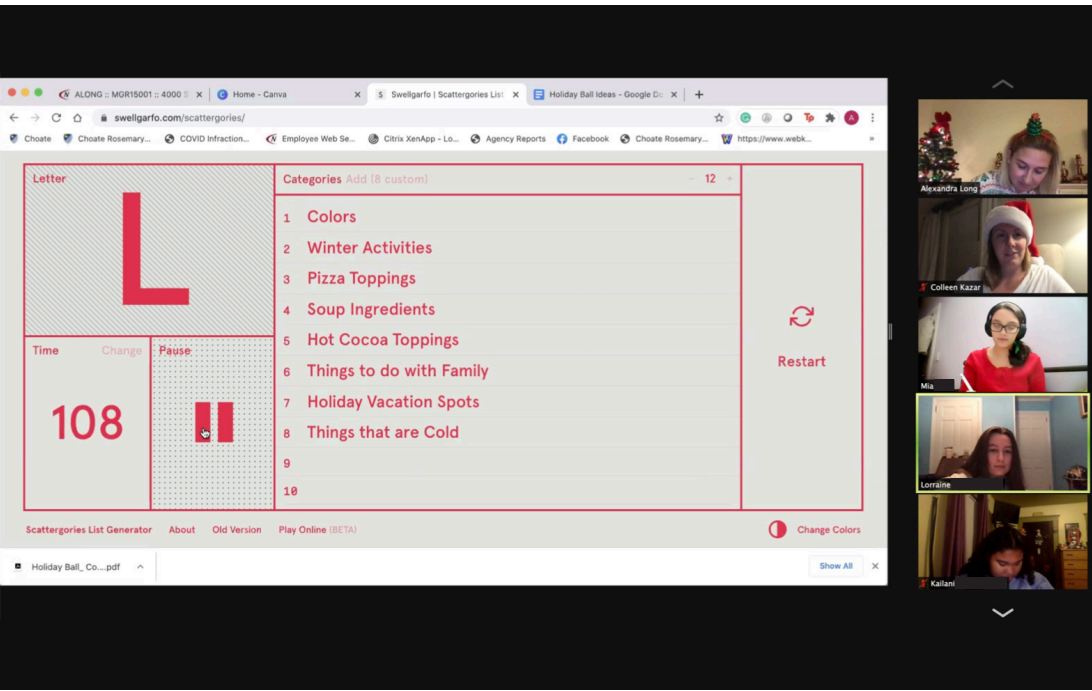


Photo by Gretchen MacLean/The Choate News

In the first-ever virtual Holiday Ball, students played games like Scattergories and Quplash.

By **Ryan Kim '23**
Reporter

In light of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, another time-honored Choate tradition transitioned to a virtual setting. The first-ever online Holiday Ball was held on Saturday, December 12 from 8:00 p.m. — 10:00 p.m., Wallingford time.

In past years, the event has been a semi-formal dance held to celebrate the holiday season and give students a chance to

depress before working on exams, papers, and presentations due the following week. Hosted in the dining hall, the event traditionally included food, dancing, booming music from a professional DJ, and a brightly illuminated Christmas tree in the senior section of the dining hall where many students took photos. However, the new virtual format greatly changed the nature of the event.

Ms. Colleen Kazar, Assistant Director of Student Ac-

tivities, said that this year's virtual Holiday Ball featured "an assortment of games and prizes in the theme of Comfort and Joy," including activities like "a best-dressed and make-your-own-virtual-background competition, along with games such as Go Fetch Holiday Edition, drawing competitions, and word games."

Ms. Kazar appreciated the festive, upbeat, and energetic

See HOLIDAY BALL, Page 2

COVID FORCES CHANGES TO CLASS SCHEDULE AND REGISTRAR ADJUSTS

By **Tiffany Xiao '23**
Reporter

Circumstances surrounding the pandemic have forced nearly one-fifth of Choate's student body to learn remotely — as such, the School must now accommodate students taking classes in nearly every time zone across the globe. The Registrar's Office quickly adapted to the new situation by creating a new schedule that allows all students to learn at a reasonable time, no matter their location.

In the past, the daily schedule consisted of five class blocks every day, between 8:00 a.m. and 3:20 p.m., Wallingford time. However, when the School unexpectedly shifted to online learning last spring, many students, especially those living outside of the United States, needed to stay up until early in the morning to take live Zoom classes or opt to participate asynchronously instead. For some, a standard 1:00 p.m. class in Wallingford became a 2:00 a.m. class in Asia. To mitigate some of these problems, the new schedule has seven class blocks — some in the morning and others as late as 9:40 p.m. ET — in order to give students more options.

While these changes in the schedule have benefitted many students, they have also created

new challenges. Kaya Tray '24, a day student, has classes during both nighttime blocks. As a new student familiarizing herself with campus, this schedule was difficult: she had long stretches of free time during the day and felt like she had nowhere to go when boarding students returned to their rooms. Even after Tray conversed with her dean and adviser, the Registrar's Office could not change her schedule; the best alternative was for her to take the night classes online. After a few weeks, though, Tray grew accustomed to her schedule. "I learned to love having night classes because I had time to just hang out with friends at dinner and [we could] study together as well," she said.

Additionally, music ensemble rehearsals are now scheduled during class blocks instead of select times in the evening, Wallingford time. This means that rehearsals are less likely to interfere with club meetings but more likely to interfere with students' classes. Because of her involvement in the Environmental Immersion Program, Claire Fu '22 is required to take the electives environmental ethics and environmental economics, which are only offered during C block — the same block as orchestra rehearsal. "I miss orchestra a lot," Fu said.

"My class day is still very busy without it, but I definitely feel like I'm missing a tiny part of my life from week to week, as this is the first year I haven't been in orchestra since middle school."

An issue that persists is the impact of limited class availability on student course selections. Some students are unable to take advantage of the improved schedule because select classes only meet during blocks that are at unreasonable hours for their local time zone. In the fall, Andrew Lee '21 spent the remote portion of the term learning from Hong Kong, taking an E block class that often took place at 1:00 or 2:00 a.m. his time. Luckily, this term, he no longer has an E block class. For others like Jewon Im '23, who is in California, time zone differences lead to challenging sleep schedules, such as getting up early for 5:00 a.m. classes and staying up late to complete homework assignments.

Yet, while the new schedule is not perfect, many students feel that they have experienced an improvement this year and strongly appreciate the time and effort the registrar has allocated toward making student experiences as positive as possible.

Tiffany Xiao may be reached at txiao23@choate.edu

Students and Faculty Persist Through Online Learning

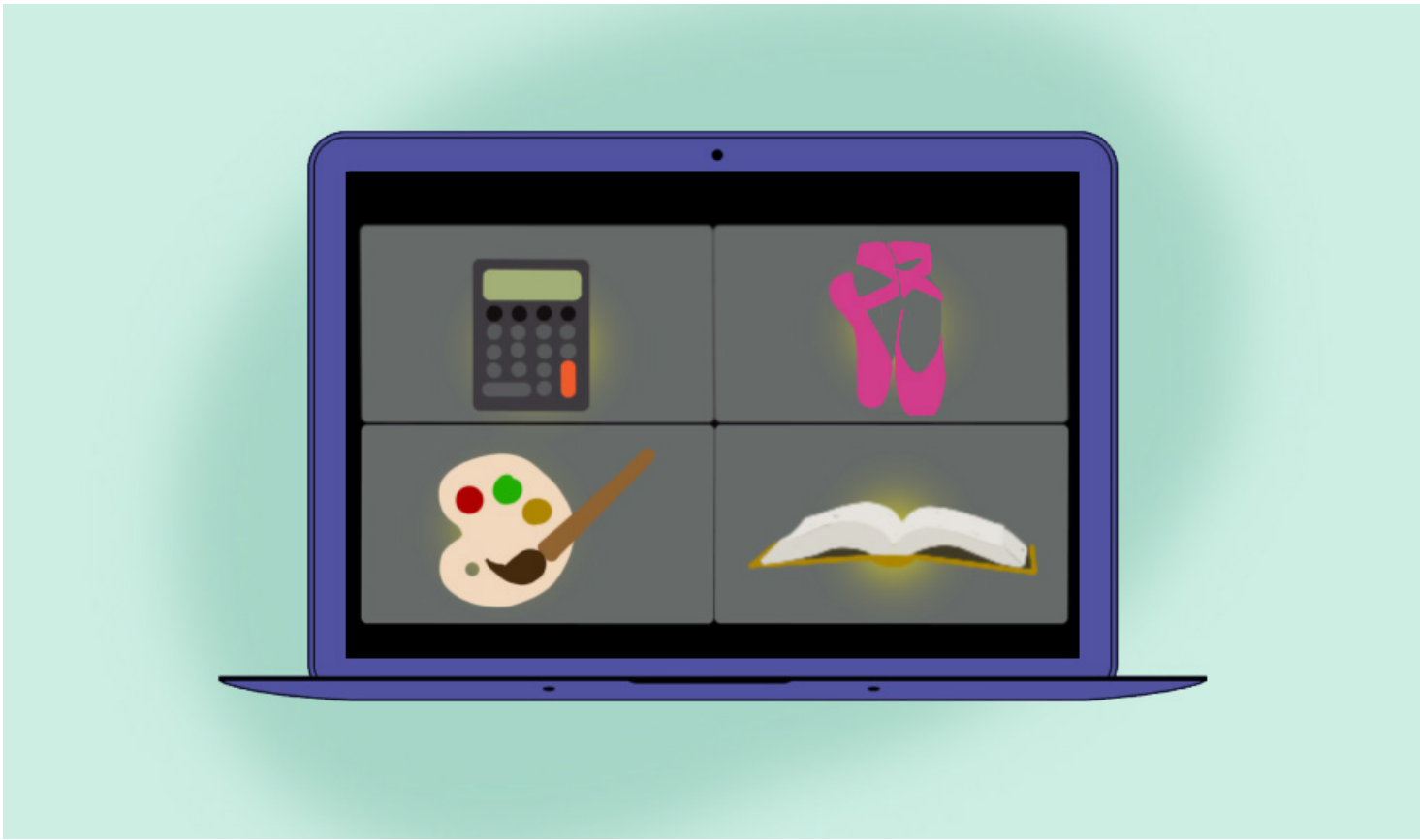
By **Sabrina Wang '23**
Staff Reporter

Though many students were able to return to campus in October for the fall term, both students and faculty continued to take advantage of virtual methods of communication. Since last year's spring term, Choate students have been learning using virtual platforms such as Zoom in order to ensure the community's safety.

For some teachers, the transition to virtual learning was not a significant hurdle, as they had already incorporated technology into their classrooms before the pandemic. "It wasn't super hard to transition to remote because everyone has an iPad, and I am able to share my screen on Zoom," said mathematics teacher Ms. Stephanie Neul. "I can still do major tasks that I do in the classroom, such as projecting notes everyone can see and asking questions."

HPRSS teacher Mr. Neil Shimmield said of virtual discussion-based humanities classes, "It's easier to complete more tasks, as there are fewer distractions. Travel time is minimal, and I find it much more helpful to have meetings over Zoom rather than waste time going to a building."

Though most teachers were able to transition to the new plat-



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

form easily enough, they still faced difficulties replicating an in-person classroom environment. "It's hard to see the kids work. They can share their screen, but it's not as seamless as being able to walk around," noted Ms. Neul.

Mr. Shimmield added, "You can do more things in the classroom. I can give reading quizzes

in the classroom to make sure students do nightly readings, but I can't do it online, as it's too easy to cheat."

The transition for students hasn't been without challenges, either. "Being an international student, the biggest challenge for me has been the difference in time zones," said Lauren Kee '24. "Class-

es run pretty late into the night for me, which makes it challenging to stay engaged and energized."

The transition to online learning has proved especially difficult for the Arts Department. "One of our biggest challenges is how to share what we're doing. It's not as easy as gathering in the theater at the PMAC or the studio to re-

hearse," said Ms. Kalya Yannatos, Head of the Arts Department. "As a dance teacher, teaching on Zoom is a nightmare. The latency of the music and not being able to see the students' whole self in the way that is so essential for dance was a challenge."

The limited space offered in both Colony Hall and the Paul

Mellon Arts Center reduced the number of in-person meetings held by many ensembles and dance classes. In visual art classes, none of the teachers taught classes in-person during the fall term.

However, the Arts Department will continue to adapt to the unprecedented changes. Accommodating students from different time zones, dance classes have been pre-recorded so that students can tune in at any time. To allow students the opportunity to use the Arts centers, a practice room rotation system in Colony Hall has enabled music students to access spaces where they can practice their instruments.

Though there have been many difficulties with adapting to the challenges of the pandemic, some students have also felt that hybrid learning in the fall term was able to successfully preserve aspects of the Choate experience. "I'm so grateful that I had the opportunity to be on campus," said Kee. "I was able to make friends in my classes, my dorm, and extracurricular activities outside of the designated class periods."

Ms. Yannatos said, "My heart is full of hope knowing that eventually we'll get through this tunnel."

Sabrina Wang may be reached at swang23@choate.edu

2020 in Six Words

Students give their short takes on a long year.

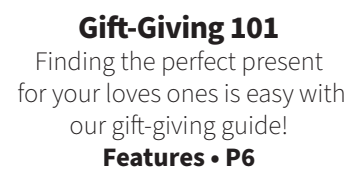
Campus Opinions • P4



Vaccines for All?

The Great Debate considers a nationwide vaccine mandate.

Opinions N/W • P5



Gift-Giving 101

Finding the perfect present for your loved ones is easy with our gift-giving guide!

Features • P6



Luwa's Indie(stry) Debut

Indie singer Luwa, a.k.a Ore Tejuoso '21, debuts with "You."

Arts and Leisure • P7

What's Inside

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



Read it, then recycle it.

Visuals by Country Life,
European Pharmaceutical
Review, Hubspot Blog, and
Spotify.



BREAKFAST SERVED ALL DAY
DELIVERY AVAILABLE



(203) 269-9507
WWW.COLONYDINER.COM

CHOATE ADMISSION OFFICE PIVOTS TO VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

By **Prim Tangkaravakoon '24**
Reporter

In a usual year, Choate's Admission Office would host a wide range of in-person information sessions in cities around the world and provide opportunities for prospective students to visit campus — both of which are important components of the application process. This year, however, the Admission Office has had to move away from in-person recruitment to a method that is safer amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. The office has created virtual tour-style sessions and panels for prospective students and families called Choate Chats, which have taken place over Zoom for the past few months.

The Admission Office has also changed from territorial recruitment, where each admission officer oversees a certain territory or country, to thematic recruitment, where different recruitment events focus on certain aspects of the Choate experience. Over the past summer, the Admission Office selected different themes for current students and faculty panelists to address in Choate Chats. In total, there have been seven different panels focused on different topics, ranging from Signature Programs to Equity and Inclusion. In the coming weeks, three more panels will be taking place online before Choate's mid-January application deadline.

In the tour-style Choate Chats, which occur around once a week and are hosted by student Gold Key Ambassadors, applicants are presented with videos and pictures



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

to provide an experience similar to an in-person tour of the campus. Gold Key Ambassadors have also been working hard to assist the Admission Office by connecting through email with each applicant that completes an interview, offering themselves as another resource for prospective students to learn more about Choate.

From these Choate Chats, applicants can get a genuine sense of what Choate is beyond the website. Laura Jiang '21, who has been a part of four Choate Chats so far, including one focused on the Arts Department, said, "It was all of my favorite arts people all in one room, and we just raved about how much we love our Arts forms and our community here. It actually made me quite emotional."

Ms. Helene Ramirez Guerra, Director of Multicultural Recruitment in the Admission Office, oversees the planning and execution of the virtual events. She specified that to prepare for them, creative and meticulous planning has taken place since the summer. "We're talking about hours over weeks of time," she explained. "There are a lot of components to each event. We also often have to do run-throughs to make sure technology is working."

There has been high attendance at these Choate Chats, which has felt rewarding for the Admission Office and Gold Key Ambassadors. Prospective families have also given positive feedback. To accommodate the more than 600 families who were watching the two Signa-

ture Program Choate Chats, one for STEM and the other for humanities, the Choate Chat had to take place over GoToWebinar instead of Zoom. For applicants who were not able to attend, there are recordings of the sessions available for access on the Experience Choate Today website, which was created especially for this year's applicants.

Although these Choate Chats cannot fully replace visiting Choate's campus in person, the Admission Office is excited that prospective students and families can still access so much information about Choate through these panels and virtual tours.

Prim Tangkaravakoon
may be reached at
ptangkaravakoon24@choate.edu

Student Diversity Leadership Conference Goes Virtual

By **Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22**
Reporter

From December 2 to December 5, the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) held its annual Student Diversity Leadership Conference (SDLC) virtually for the first time. Now in its 27th year, SDLC is an international event held for high school student leaders from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Among the attendees from Choate were Anesi Ojior '21, Lara Prakash '22, Deven Huang '23, Ava Maha '23, Adama Sowe '23, and Tristin Hurst '24. Several faculty members, including Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers and Associate Director Mr. Filipe Camarotti, participated in the corresponding NAIS People of Color Conference (PoCC).

Though this online format of the event was unprecedented, both students and faculty successfully engaged in conversations and workshops that promoted understanding and community building.

According to attendees, the keynote speakers in the conference covered social issues, such as racial discrimination, the terminology used to describe marginalized identities, and the Indigenous experience.

This year's keynote speaker was Ms. Lyla June Johnston, an

Indigenous woman, environmental scientist, doctoral student, artist, and community organizer. In her speech, she discussed ways to better support the Indigenous communities in the United States. Prakash said, "She was inspirational [and] really moved me to bring change to Choate." Prakash also felt that the speaker helped her "realize that we are never done educating ourselves."

A major component of the event was the opportunity to connect with students from schools around the globe. Even though the Covid-19 pandemic forced SDLC to transition online, students still found ways to bond and form friendships through social media.

"Everyone got super close despite it being on Zoom. We all still communicate through group chats even though the conference is over," said Prakash.

Leading up to the conference, Ojior had questioned how she could most effectively create a more equitable and inclusive community. She said, "SDLC really helped me grapple with these questions, figure out where to go from here, and realize that my love for this school is why I want it to be better."

Irene Garcia Gutierrez
may be reached at
igarciagutierrez22@choate.edu

First-Ever Virtual Holiday Ball

Continued from Page 1

atmosphere of Holiday Ball. Though the Student Activities Center (SAC) team has had to postpone many exciting activities until the next year, Ms. Kazar emphasized that the virtual Holiday Ball was a unique opportunity for "students to dress up, share their favorite holiday traditions, and interact with their peers."

Unfortunately, the turnout this year was lower than anticipated. The students who partook in the events nonetheless enjoyed the experience and wished more students could have been there to celebrate the evening with them.

Kailani Day '21 said, "Not many people came, which was a bummer because it was so much fun!" Day wanted to credit Ms. Alex Long, Director of Student Activities, and Ms. Kazar for planning the memorable night.

Lorraine Hillgen-Santa '24 agreed with Day, adding that she "had a fun and relaxing time thanks to Ms. Long and Ms. Kazar, who energized the holiday spirit."

Some of the activities included Scattergories, a creative-thinking game that requires participants to list words that all start with a pre-designat-

ed letter and fit into different categories, which could range from TV shows to desserts; Quiplash, a humorous game where participants have to provide alternative answers to prompts like "Another name for France"; and drawing competitions.

The night concluded with students singing Mariah Carey's "All I Want For Christmas Is You." Both Day and Hillgen-Santa expressed great enthusiasm for all the activities organized for the event.

Reflecting on the evening, Ms. Kazar said, "[The event] allowed students to connect even though we are located all around the world, and we are grateful for the students who came out to enjoy this event. We look forward to next year's event, which will hopefully be in-person!"

Hillgen-Santa added, "I had actually never met any of the students that participated in the activities, and it was really nice to start friendship with people outside of my classes."

Day encouraged members of the student body to partake in more SAC sponsored activities. She said, "You never know what could happen or who you will meet!"

Ryan Kim may be reached at
rkim23@choate.edu



Photo by Gretchen MacLean/The Choate News

Students tuned into the virtual Holiday Ball over Zoom.

TEACHER TERM REPORTS CANCELED FOR THE FALL



Graphic by Yoyo Zhang/The Choate News

By **Alexis Lien '23**
Staff Reporter

In light of the many strenuous challenges that the Choate community faced this term, the administration made the decision to cancel teacher term reports for the fall.

In previous years, faculty wrote term reports for each of their students at the end of every trimester. A long-standing practice, term reports are designed to encourage students to reflect on their performance during the term and adjust accordingly for the following one.

Dean of Students Mr. Mike Velez '00 noted that the amount of time and energy required of faculty and staff members to care for students and each other was significantly heightened during the final weeks of fall term. Several factors, including the ongoing pandemic, the outside threat against Black-identifying members of the Choate community,

and the aftermath of the U.S. presidential election, increased stress and anxiety among students, faculty, and staff. In order for teachers to provide the proper support to students and the community in future terms, a bit of time off was crucial. "The feeling was that faculty members needed to recharge, essentially," said Mr. Velez. The School also felt that, in addition to being an extra stressor on teachers, term reports would be repetitive this year, as parent-teacher conferences have been moved from mid-October to early January.

The decision was made after a series of conversations, initially between the Dean of Faculty Office and the Dean of Students Office and later with other senior administrators.

Mathematics teacher Ms. Andrea Sorrells said, "It was a really hard term for the faculty, especially my BIPOC colleagues. We were dealing with Covid-19 stress, managing ex-

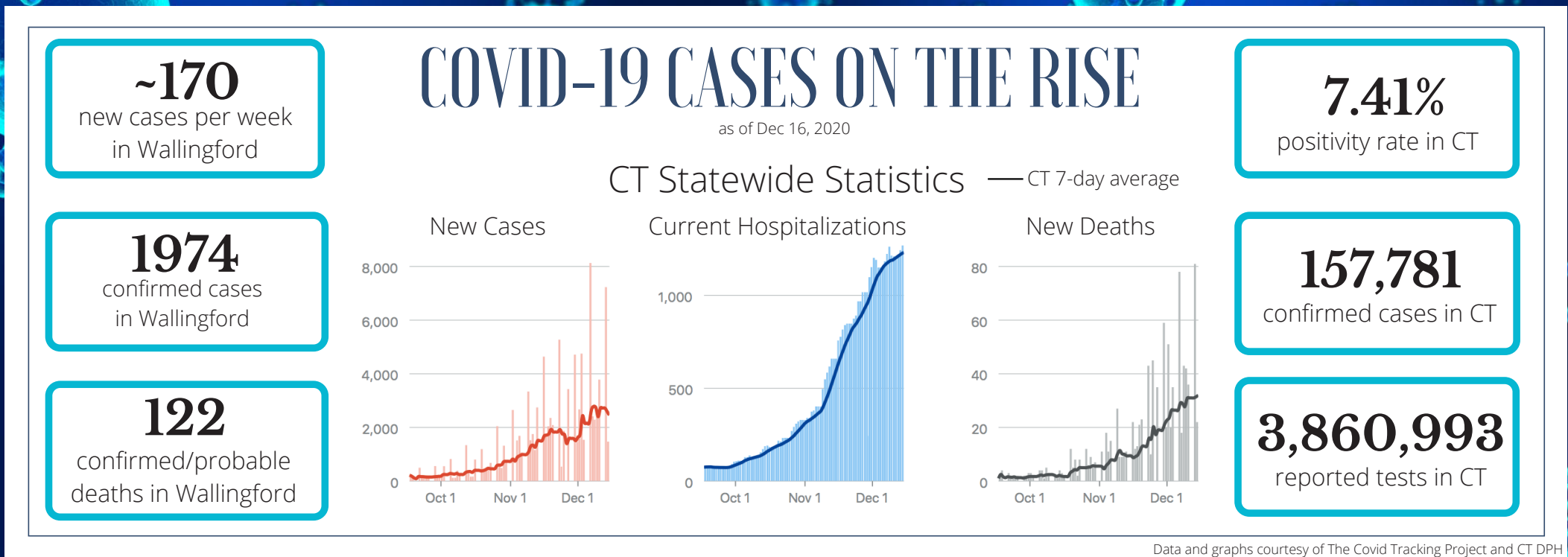
tra responsibilities, teaching in a new hybrid environment, worrying about the election, either working towards being anti-racist or dealing with racial trauma, and trying to help our students through the same things. Normally, report-writing fills up the week [of fall break] and then faculty jump right in to the new term. Not writing reports gave all of us, but BIPOC and especially Black-identifying colleagues, time for self-care."

Mr. Velez expressed that canceling term reports has also allowed the administration the opportunity to "recalibrate, reassess, [and] reevaluate" the School's normal practices regarding term reports and other academic standards. This recent adjustment has called into question whether three full term reports every year is the most effective strategy to relay feedback from teachers to students and parents.

Mathematics teacher Mr. Jeremy Oliver said, "The school has done really well in making the most of the opportunity to be flexible at this time. Choate has been around for more than a hundred years, and sometimes we can get entrenched in certain habits, but I think that as a school, we've taken the opportunity to explore how we can find a way to connect when fundamentally so many things are different about what we expected this year to look like."

Mr. Velez added, "We've had to pivot at times and move in directions that we're not accustomed to, and we have found out in some of those processes that there is something to be said for greater efficiency." He concluded that continued conversations are needed to ensure that the administration can be as effective as possible in supporting the community moving forward.

Alexis Lien may be reached at
alien23@choate.edu



The rate of daily Covid-19 cases in CT is increasing once again, with over 150 towns on "red alert." The state has one of the highest rates of cases per capita in the country.

Graphic by Amanda Li/The Choate News

CONNECTICUT PREPARES FOR VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

By **Linda Phan '22**
Copy Editor

Following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine on December 11, Connecticut began its vaccine distribution plan as the state's Covid positivity rate increased to 7.41% on December 16.

Because there are currently not enough vaccines for everyone, state officials have decided to allocate them through three phases — 1a, 1b, and 2 — based on the recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Vaccines can only be found at healthcare provider locations that have pre-registered in the Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS). Drafted by the state's Department of Public Health (DPH), the vaccine distribution plan will prioritize healthcare personnel, long-term care facility residents, and medical first responders as soon as the vaccines are received in phase 1a.

Dr. Reinhard Kage P'22, an immunologist and allergist at the Rheumatology and Allergy Institute of Connecticut, believes that it is essential for healthcare workers to receive vaccinations. He said, "Right now, the only way to protect ourselves is masks and face shields and gowns and gloves, and there is still a small risk of infection. So, I think [getting the vaccine] is the only way to keep the healthcare workers safe."

If phase 1a is successful, phase 1b will be implemented from January through May and will include adults over 65, high-risk individuals under 65, and anyone who works in congregate settings and the critical workforce. Everyone else, including those under 18, can get the vaccine during phase 2, which will occur between June and December.

Although the plan intends to make the vaccine accessible to everyone by the end of next year, several hurdles may make this goal difficult to achieve. With limited federal funding, Connecticut may not be able to distribute as many vaccines as planned. "There's a little bit of money," said Acting Commissioner of the DPH Dr. Deidre Gifford to *The Hartford Courant*. "But it's not really adequate to the task."

The -70°C temperature required to store the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine may present another obstacle to Connecticut's distribution plans. According to Pfizer's distribution fact sheet, the vaccine can be stored in three ways: six months in ul-

tra-low temperature freezers, 30 days with refills of dry ice every five days in thermal shippers, or five days in refrigeration units at 2 to 8°C.

"It doesn't really impact us very much because we are used to handling things that require -70°C storage," said Dr. Thomas Balcezak, the Chief Medical Officer at Yale New Haven Health, which has requested an initial allocation of 26,000 vaccines. However, for certain parts of the country and world, he notes that "it's going to be harder to find that -70°C storage capacity." With the Moderna vaccine that only requires -20°C for storage and the AstraZeneca vaccine requiring 2-8°C both waiting for FDA approval, Dr. Balcezak believes that "it's good that there are multiple different kinds of vaccines in the pipeline, and we're not fully dependent on one type of vaccine or one manufacturer."

In trying to get as many people vaccinated as possible, the distribution plan faces another crucial problem: distrust in the vaccine.

Results from a survey conducted by the Pew Research Center show that about four out of ten Americans do not plan on getting the vaccine. Since Connecticut has not yet decided on a statewide mandate — although employers have the power to enforce a mandate — those who do not wish to receive the vaccine reserve the right to not take it. However, Dr. Balcezak believes people should "100% unequivocally" get the vaccine if it is made available to them. "We know that the risk of death in Covid-19 is real, and this vaccine is safer than getting Covid," he said.

Dr. Kage echoed this sentiment, saying, "We will want 70% of the people immune to the disease to prevent widespread outbreak. Once we achieve [herd immunity], then I think we can get back a new normal."

Despite the relief that comes with vaccines finally starting to roll out, Dr. Kage warns that the fight is not over. "The vaccine is 95% protective to prevent the disease for people who get the vaccine. What we do not know is if the vaccine actually prevents spreading of the virus, so that has not been studied."

Since the number of doses provided in phase 1a is not enough to vaccinate everyone, Dr. Kage encourages citizens to continue following health guidelines. "we need to continue wearing masks and practicing social distancing," says Dr. Kage.

Linda Phan may be reached at lphan22@choate.edu

By **Renee Jiang '22**
Copy Editor

With Covid-19 cases on the rise in Connecticut, the holidays have never looked so different for businesses and citizens alike. Long periods of social isolation have left many searching for a spark of joy and normalcy during this holiday season. While previous holiday-themed events involved dazzling displays with large crowds, the ongoing pandemic has forced most businesses to either shut down or implement strict safety restrictions.

The Fantasy of Lights show at Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven is an annual fundraiser held by Goodwill that is celebrating its 26th anniversary this year. In the past, the popular holiday tradition has attracted thousands of visitors state-wide, offering spectacular light displays and holiday-themed character exhibits. Given the reality of the pandemic, the organization has found an innovative way to follow proper social distancing guidelines by requiring all visitors to view the event from the comfort of their own vehicle. This way, not only does everyone still receive the opportunity to view the show in-person, but the organization also does not have to worry about health violations. Special Events Manager Ms. Nancy Shapiro said, "The staff works closely together, but they're outside — it's definitely safer, and they all wear masks. We also have volunteers that work with us, and we take their temperature and ask the typical [symptom screening] questions to the employees."

Though the features and lights of this year's show echo previous ones, Ms. Shapiro said, "It's a very different year because so many people are looking for things to do with their families and this is definitely Covid safe.

WALLINGFORD FIREHOUSE HOSTS ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

By **Nathan Lang '22**
Reporter

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc upon communities in every corner of the world, the North Farms Volunteer Fire Department in Wallingford has offered familiarity and holiday cheer through its Annual Christmas Tree Sale.

Since around ten years ago, this volunteer fire department has been selling Christmas trees annually during the holidays. According to science teacher Ms. Ashley Bairos, who serves as a volunteer EMT with the department, the firehouse



Photo courtesy of The Record Journal

The annual Magic of Lights event at Toyota Oakdale Theater helps bring the holiday spirit to Wallingford.

We are finding that we are extremely busy this year, more so than ever. The audience attendance is 86% better than last year." This success wasn't guaranteed. According to Ms. Shapiro, the event required approximately six weeks of preparation stretching back to mid-October.

Another ongoing holiday-themed event is the annual Nutcracker Suite & Spicy Dance, a unique and entertaining twist on the classic Nutcracker ballet. "I started the show because I wanted to create a Nutcracker that followed the story of the traditional ballet but updated for a modern world with a more modern aesthetic — something that definitely responded to social issues and diversity," said founder, director, and choreographer Ms. Carolyn Paine, who began the production in 2009. "It fuses all sorts of dances,

from ballet to modern to contemporary to jazz to hip-hop to ballroom to acrobatics."

Normally held at the Wadsworth Museum of Art in Hartford, the show has adjusted to the pandemic by going entirely virtual. When asked about the format of the show, Ms. Paine said, "We are presenting an HD, edited video from last year's show. It's neat because you get up-close shots and shots from the wings, so it gives you a completely different perspective. You really feel like you get to watch the show very close and personal." Ms. Paine began working with a team from Wadsworth back in the summer to ensure that the video would encapsulate the magic and holiday spirit of the show.

Not only does the new virtual program allow people worldwide to view the show, but the video is being offered free of cost to the

public, providing the opportunity for those who may have previously been unable to pay the fee to experience the once-in-a-lifetime performance. "It gets to reach a whole new audience this way, so that's definitely a silver lining," said Ms. Paine.

However, the transition to a virtual event has been an unfortunate loss for many dancers who have performed in the show year after year. Ms. Paine said, "The emotion of the pandemic, I think, has really hit a lot of the dancers, including myself. We all call it our home for the holidays."

While overcoming the challenges of the pandemic has been a struggle for many businesses, most have been successful in making the necessary adjustments for their holiday events.

Renee Jiang may be reached at rjiang22@choate.edu

Not only does the new virtual program allow people worldwide to view the show, but the video is being offered free of cost to the

public, providing the opportunity for those who may have previously been unable to pay the fee to experience the once-in-a-lifetime performance. "It gets to reach a whole new audience this way, so that's definitely a silver lining," said Ms. Paine.

However, the transition to a virtual event has been an unfortunate loss for many dancers who have performed in the show year after year. Ms. Paine said, "The emotion of the pandemic, I think, has really hit a lot of the dancers, including myself. We all call it our home for the holidays."

While overcoming the challenges of the pandemic has been a struggle for many businesses, most have been successful in making the necessary adjustments for their holiday events.

Nathan Lang may be reached at nlang22@choate.edu

The Choate News

114TH MASTHEAD

VOL. CXIV
NO. V



Claire Yuan '21
Editor-in-Chief

Niki L. Gummadi '21
Managing Editor

School News

Esther An '21
JeeHwan Kim '21

Local News

Peter DiNatale '21
Amanda Li '21

Opinions

Rachel Pittman '22
Bianca Rosen '21

Features

Henrik Torres '22

Arts & Leisure

Tony Lee '21

Sports

Greer Goergen '21

Photography

Gretchen MacLean '22

Graphics

Sesame Gaetsaloe '21

Layout

Laura Jiang '21

Layout

Linda Phan '22
Rose Shen '22

Social Media

Sabrina Kim '21
Madeleine Dubrinsky '22
June Lu '22

Business

Bella Capuano '21
Ho Jin Jang '21

Video

Lauren Cussler '22
Julia Alkhayer '23

Multimedia

Declan Murphy Zink '21

Copy

Kate Bailey '22
Adrienne Chacon '22
Praj Chirathivat '22
Renee Jiang '22
Linda Phan '22
Jessica Wu '22

Online

Nico Campbell '21
Claire Fu '22
Sam Anastasio '23

Adviser

Mr. Mike Peed

Staff Reporters

Bella Capuano '21
Sabahat Rahman '21
Calvin Walker '21
Natarsha Yan '21

Joy Bang '22
Angel Guo '22
Nick Visuthikosol '22

Sam Anastasio '23
Brian Harder '23
Alexis Lien '23
Audrey Lim '23



/choatenews



@choatenews



@choatenews

Email us: thechoatenews@choate.edu || Call us: (203) 697-2070 || Find us: thechoatenews.choate.edu

EDITORIAL

Letter from the Editors

On December 19, 2019, as the year came to a close, the 113th Masthead of The Choate News published a special issue celebrating the 2010s by surveying the major events the School had seen over the past decade. In the year since then, it seems as if the School, and the world at large, has experienced enough to rival the events of the previous decade. Between the Covid-19 pandemic, the United States' racial reckoning, the country's whirlwind presidential election, and more, it's easy to understand why many in our own community and beyond are eager for a new year. Despite our desire to forget the tragedies of this year and begin anew in 2021, though, we shouldn't be too eager to leave everything behind in 2020.

As the transition to remote learning allowed us glimpse into each other's homes through our Zoom screens, we began to understand one another better than we had before. That, in turn, served to foster an increased sense of empathy among members of the community.

Our arrival to campus brought about not only new Covid restrictions but also a heightened awareness of the widespread impacts of our individual choices. Now more than ever, we have become conscious of our actions, sacrificing personal comfort for the sake of the community at large. In many ways, we have witnessed our community here at Choate become more cohesive as a result, a quality we should hold on to even as we ring in the new year.

Since March, we've seen evidence of this awareness in students' efforts to enact change. Despite studying at a well-established institution like Choate, which can seem, at times, hidebound, students this year have been inspired to challenge practices and conventions and to call for change within our community. We have seen people more readily speak up for themselves and others and advocate through social media accounts such as @BlackatChoateOfficial, @QueeratChoate, and @LifeatChoate on Instagram or through student-led initiatives like the Independent Choate Student Relief Fund and the Forever True Mentorship Program.

As Covid-19 threatened the health and safety of people around the world, members of the Choate community became more aware of the ways in which they can protect their own health, whether physical or mental. Students and faculty recognized, perhaps more directly than ever, the importance of taking the time to maintain their physical and mental well-being, especially during a pandemic.

But this increased dedication to health and wellness should not go away with the new year or even with the end of the pandemic. This past year, we began shifting toward being a community in which the students prioritize taking care of themselves. In the wake of this global pandemic, the School must continue taking steps to foster and reinforce the messages that student well-being comes first.

Almost one year ago today, The Choate News asked its readers to reflect on the past ten years. Today, we think about what 2021 might look like. Unsure where to begin? Read the community's six-word memoirs on page 4, and take a moment to consider: which six words can encompass this year? Which of these words should accompany us into 2021?



Body & Soul Day Spa
For Men and Women

MEN'S WASH, CUT & STYLE: \$20

WOMEN'S WASH, CUT & STYLE: \$30

*first time clients

26 N. Main ST., Wallingford, CT 06492
www.thebodyandsouldayspa.com
203-269-FACE

2020 In Six Words

"They said school would zoom by." — Ava Maha '23

"Days blend into one, each unique." — Natarsha Yan '21

"Those small moments you always remember." — Jada Dixon '24

"The sunbathing iguana my grandpa spotted." — Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22

"Reunifying lost connection from back home." — Praj Chirathivat '22

"Rainy drives, music fills the car." — Reagan Colton '24

"All grown-up with nowhere to go." — Laura Kors '21

"Now I can fry an egg." — Aarthi Katakam '21

"My only joy is microwave soup." — Charlotte Weinstein '22

"The sun rises after its death." — Audrey Lim '23

"Reality shown through the embellished haze." — Ellie Porter '24

"Skin check: nothing but old memories." — Riley McMahon '23

"Waiting to hug my friends again." — Tiffany Xiao '23

"We all existed in rectangular boxes." — Sydney Alleyne '23

"Online is temporary, friends are forever." — Noah McBride '23

"Every foot feels like a mile." — Lucas Eggers '21

"Bad weather's good for the grass." — Richard Chen '22

"Our community is supportive and strong." — Wylie Doak '22

"I found self love and confidence." — Chloe Lewis '22

"I've grown bigger than six words." — Julia Xu '23

"Happiness comes quicker than I imagined." — Kenadi Waymire '22

"Minecraft servers brought us back together." — Melody Qian '24

"Brief moments last forever in memory."

— John Reach '24

"A bird ate my bok choy."

— Rose Shen '22

"I'll never buy a lottery ticket."

— Juliet Ainsley '22

"2020 provided opportunities

to step up." — Mealy Cronin '23

"I've just launched my weekly newsletter." — Jayden Khuu '21

"Read; finish the book; cry; repeat." — Claire Fu '22

"The introvert grows terrified

of solitude." — Audrey Kaye '22

"I caught a virus, not fun."

— Wesley Boatwright '22

"We're all slowly becoming germaphobes. Fortunately?"

— Ximena Castillo Nuñez '24

"Almost a year now, feels strange." — Ryan Kim '23

"I now social distance in dreams." — Tobi Oyinloye '22

"The regret of forgetting a mask."

— Amanda Benneh '24

"I forgot that people had noses." — Linda Phan '22

"Don't cough. Don't cough. Don't cough."

— Harry Chen '22

"Learned to smize. Thanks, Tyra Banks."

— Jessica Wu '22

"Looked deep within, found yesterday's lunch."

— Alex Aronov '22

"Being alone, I've finally found myself."

— Renee Jiang '22

"I am thankful that I'm here." — Adrienne Chacón '22

"Good lord, that was a mess." — Emily Koscielski '21

Photos by Irene Garcia Gutierrez '22 (left), Claire Fu '22 (center), and John Reach '24 (right)/The Choate News

Letters to Strangers

By Jessica Wu '22

Copy Editor

To the office staff at my elementary school,

Thank you. I don't know whether the class rosters were generated randomly or if you all hand-picked them yourself, but on the day you placed Olivia and me into the same kindergarten class, you introduced me to my best friend. Well, I guess we hated each other at first, but isn't that how all lifelong friendships start? The next year, you placed Olivia and I into the same first-grade class. By then, we were inseparable. We would monopolize the playground at recess, organizing games of tag or house. The next year, you once again put us in the same second-grade class ... and third, fourth, and fifth. The chances of that happening were extremely slim — honestly, at this point it was getting a little suspicious, but neither Olivia nor I were complaining. Throughout the years, we worked our way through the highs and lows of elementary school drama — we whispered secrets when we were supposed to be silently walking in line; we discovered new songs, books, and movies; we partnered up for every school project possible; and we stuck by each others' sides the whole way. Now, as our friendship reaches its eleventh year, I can not thank you all enough. You changed our lives.

Yours in friendship,
Jessica

To the airline staff at a Wyoming airport,

Five minutes before boarding, six-year-old me turned to my mom at the airport gate to tell her that I needed to go to the bathroom. Hurdled, we grabbed our bags, rushed to the nearest restroom, and barely boarded the flight in time. As we stepped onto the plane, I looked into my blue, dolphin-embroidered tote bag for the little stuffed moose that I had begged my parents to buy for me at a souvenir shop in Wyoming. I rummaged around,



Graphic by Sesame Gaetsaloe/The Choate News

shoving aside my water bottle and my copy of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, but the moose had disappeared. On the verge of tears, I sat down next to my parents, trying my best to hold myself together. As I slumped in my seat, thinking about the case of the missing moose, I heard a break in your usual pre-takeoff speech: "There's a moose on the loose from Wyoming!" I looked up, and lo and behold, a smiling flight attendant stood there holding my moose, which must have fallen out of my bag in our haste. It was like Christmas. You showed me that a simple act of kindness goes a long way.

I gotta take off,
Jessica

To Chelsea the gymnast,

I was going to quit gymnastics. Although our coach invited me to join the team, I was not interested in becoming a competitive gymnast. At seven-years-old, I didn't think I was good enough for competition. Besides, the idea of being pain-stakingly watched and scored by a mean, straight-faced judge did not sound appealing to me. You shared none of this apprehension — you were making headlines as

the best competitive gymnast in our town's history, winning the all-around county title three years in a row, and leading our high school to its first championship in decades. At practice that summer, the head coach of our gym was spotting me while I practiced doing handstands on the training bar. As I kicked up into a handstand, making the extra effort to point my toes and squeeze my legs together because I knew he was watching, he told me that I had a lot of potential and that I was going to be the next Chelsea. That day, when I came home after practice, I found the article about you in the newspaper, cut it out, and clipped it to the calendar that hung in my room. I ran downstairs and told my parents to sign me up for the Level 4 gymnastics team. Thank you, Chelsea, for inspiring me to keep doing gymnastics, a sport that became my life for the next six years and introduced me to the team that became my second family.

Flipping out,
Jessica

To the waiter at Red Lobster,

As you stood waiting to take our order, I was nervous. Your eyes followed my mom

as she spoke with my grandpa in Chinese so that she could translate his order into English. I was nervous that you would get impatient or judge us for speaking Chinese. All I wanted to do was fit in — to be just like all the other American families who sat around us. In my town with little diversity, I was tired of sticking out everywhere I went. My mom apologized to you for taking so long to order. "Don't worry," you said. "When I'm eating at a restaurant with my family, I also have to translate the menu and translate their orders into Spanish. Take your time." Just like that, my anxiety was lifted. To my sixth-grade ears, those words were synonymous with: It's okay to be Asian. It's nothing to be ashamed of. You showed my family compassion and understanding at a time when I was just beginning to accept my own Asian identity.

Cod bless you,
Jessica

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



SHOULD THE U.S. IMPOSE A COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATE?

By **Sabahat Rahman '21**
Staff Reporter

The moment we’ve all been anticipating is finally here: the arrival of a coronavirus vaccine. With it, however, comes a plethora of questions: how does this vaccine work? What side effects should we expect? Will we be required to take it? The possibility of a federal requirement for the coronavirus vaccine has made people unusually nervous. Regardless, a mandate is imperative in order to curb the enormous infection and death rates in the U.S. as a result of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The word “mandate” may conjure up images of a dystopian world where citizens are forcefully injected by government officials, but the reality is far from that. Current vaccine mandates in the U.S. take a variety of forms. For instance, public schools in all 50 states require students to take multiple vaccinations prior to enrolling.

Medical contraindications are always a valid exemption from immunization, and religious or philosophical objections are recognized in the majority of cases. Hence, a federal coronavirus vaccine requirement would be far from the oppressive measure its opponents make it out to be. Rather, it’s a measure to ensure the majority of the population is immunized. And

that’s the point: we need a vaccine requirement to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Almost all scientists and organizations agree a vaccine mandate is necessary to achieve herd immunity. When a significant proportion of the population is vaccinated, the disease is no longer able to infect high numbers of people. It dies off, becoming far less of a threat to the population.

However, having a vaccine is fruitless if the majority of the population doesn’t take it. A federal mandate would ensure that citizens in states that have taken a more lax approach to containing the virus are accounted for.

What’s more, requiring the vaccine has economic benefits. The short-term costs of paying for vaccine distribution are far fewer than the long-term costs of leaving the coronavirus to spread unchecked. This past year has shown us that if the pandemic persists at its current rate, the economy will continue to suffer great losses.

Ultimately, Confucius got it right: “Study the past, if you would divine the future.” Going back in history shows us what vaccine mandates have accomplished, hinting at what a coronavirus vaccine mandate would allow us to achieve.

Take smallpox — a disease that killed about 30% of those infected and left most with severe scars. Organized vaccination movements were met with resistance, leading to the *Jacobson vs. Massachusetts* Supreme Court decision in 1905. The Court ruled that states have the power to order residents to vaccinate in an epidemic to ensure the public’s safety.

Today, global smallpox eradication — the direct result of countless vaccination campaigns and mandates — is still lauded as one of history’s greatest public health achievements.

Ultimately, mandating a vaccine on the federal level wouldn’t be necessary if everyone would take it willingly, but that’s sadly not the case. Anti-vaccination movements have gained traction in the last few decades, thanks to social media and the propagation of false information.

In 2019, the World Health Organization named hesitancy to vaccinate as one of the ten largest threats to global health. To ensure enough people are vaccinated to eliminate the coronavirus, a federal vaccine requirement is a necessary measure.

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

By **Michael Korvyakov '23**
Opinions Writer

On December 11, the Food and Drug Administration approved Pfizer’s coronavirus vaccine, authorizing the first shipment of vaccines to high-risk individuals. If the U.S. federal government pursues the implementation of a coronavirus vaccine mandate, they will be endangering the American people from a public health and political standpoint.

The first issue with imposing a coronavirus vaccine mandate is that it strips people of their ability to autonomously assess the risks of the vaccine.

For instance, it is predicted that people may experience mild to severe coronavirus symptoms for a few days following an injection (of which they will receive two). And, because the vaccine was created so quickly, clinical researchers currently don’t know if there are any long-term side effects.

What’s more, it typically takes about ten years to fully produce and approve a vaccine, according to the World Economic Forum. The regulatory review and approval process generally takes one to two years; this step alone would take more time under standard conditions than did the entire production and implementation of the corona-

virus vaccine, which occurred over a nine-month period.

In addition, the experts who created the vaccine are not entirely sure if it is effective in fully preventing the spread of the coronavirus. According to Medscape, “[Scientists involved in Operation Warp Speed] noted that the studies haven’t shown whether the product can prevent the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.”

There’s also a major issue concerning the practicality of enforcing a coronavirus vaccine mandate. According to the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr. Anthony Fauci, “We don’t want to be mandating from the federal government to the general population. It would be unenforceable and not appropriate.”

To that end, according to a November Gallup poll, 42% of Americans reported that they would refuse a government-approved vaccine. While we don’t know how many of those people would seek to evade the vaccine if it were mandated, if the number were substantial, it could cause significant enforcement problems.

Another question that needs to be addressed is: what qualifies as a reasonable cause for exemption? Is a religious reason a viable excuse? Will pregnant women be

required to get the vaccine? According to the *National Public Radio*, pregnant women were not included in clinical trials.

Finally, a federally-enforced coronavirus mandate would indicate an overstepping of bounds by the federal government. The tenth amendment of the United States Constitution outlines that powers not given to the federal government in the Constitution are granted to states. Public health falls under this qualification, exemplified by the fact that previous public health issues have all been dealt with on state and local levels.

This is why governors are often in charge of implementing masking and social distancing policies as opposed to the federal government. Therefore, while a state-enforced vaccine mandate may be constitutional, a federal mandate would surely be outside the purview of the higher government.

While we do not know what the future holds for the coronavirus vaccine, a federal coronavirus vaccine mandate would be unconstitutional, and it could have unpredictable consequences for the American people.

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

REPUBLICANS DISAPPOINT IN GEORGIA DEBATES

By **Michael DiCostanzo '23**
Opinions Writer

The runoff election taking place in Georgia on January 5 will determine the legislative ability of the Democrats for the next two years: President-elect Joe Biden will either have the power to enact major policy changes supported by a unified government or be blocked due to a gridlock in Congress; this all comes down to which party will control the U.S. Senate come inauguration day.

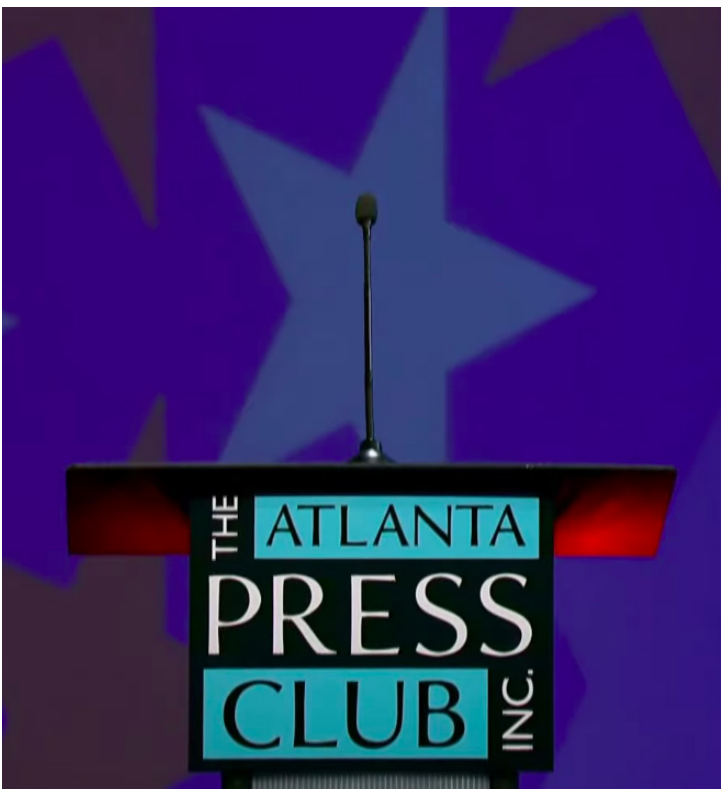
The Republicans currently control 53 out of 100 seats, having lost one seat on election night. Ideally, the Democrats win both of the remaining seats, and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris breaks the 50-50 tie in the Senate. But, if the Republicans keep just one seat, Senate Republicans will be able to block any major legislation proposed by Biden or congressional Democrats.

However, with the way that the Senate debates went on December 4, they’ll be sending two Democrats to the Senate soon enough.

The “debate” between Democratic challenger Jon Ossoff and Republican incumbent Senator David Perdue was not quite what our anxious nation was anticipating, thanks in large part to Perdue’s absence. Yes, Ossoff answered questions from the moderators next to an empty podium.

Despite remaining active on social media as well as on the campaign trail, Perdue is yet to issue a statement explaining why he skipped the debate.

Ossoff certainly took advantage of the incumbent’s absence during the debate, claiming that Perdue feared a poor debate performance would lessen his chances of winning. Ossoff’s consistent reminder of his opponent’s absence was effective, but not quite necessary: the empty podium spoke more than enough for the people of Georgia.



Senator David Perdue was absent from Georgia Senate debate.

As Ossoff answered questions alone on stage, another showdown was occurring between Democratic challenger Raphael Warnock and governor-appointed Republican incumbent Senator Kelly Loeffler. Both Loeffler and Warnock discussed their youth and the difficult journey to their current positions, presumably to empathize with Georgians suffering from economic setbacks.

To the dismay of Republicans, Loeffler’s debate performance was not optimal, considering the tenuous status of the Republicans after Biden’s presidential win. Rather than vouching for herself, Ms. Loeffler spent the debate fear-mongering about what would happen if Georgians elected Warnock, referring to him as a “radical liberal” a total of 13 times, by my count.

What’s more, Loeffler dodged questions related to the presidential election, refusing to admit Biden’s victory and instead repeating over and over that President Donald Trump P’oo has the right to take legal action.

In stark contrast, Warnock did not smear Loeffler’s name with labels. Instead, he criticized her past policy proposals and how she allegedly used her wealth to claim her seat. Warnock also spoke specifically about his own policy ideas, emphasizing the importance of medical care and financial relief during the coronavirus pandemic.

Debates, with some exceptions, tend not to dramatically shift the tide of elections. However, I believe that a debate that went this poorly for Republicans will have an impact on voter decisions — one that spells trouble for Republicans in the Senate.

Although Georgia is historically a red state and both Loeffler and Perdue have incumbency advantage, the wave of voters who came out to win Biden the 16 electoral votes are not likely to stay home while Trumpism continues to permeate parts of the government.

Michael DiCostanzo is a fourth-former from Rye, N.Y. He may be reached at mdicostanzo23@choate.edu

Poland Abortion Law Rattles E.U. and Imperils Liberal Democracy



A protest in Warsaw in mid-November against Poland's abortion ban.

By **June Lu '22**
Opinions Writer

On October 22, Poland’s constitutional court ruled that aborting a fetus due to a fatal abnormality is not sufficient justification for the termination of a pregnancy. Not only does this ruling directly attack a woman’s right to bodily autonomy, but it is also representative of the ever-growing threat to Polish democracy, the rise of staunchly right-wing politics, and, with it, the splintering of the European Union (E.U.) and its bubble of liberal democracies.

Polish politics are vastly swayed by the dominating Law and Justice Party (PiS). Also known as the United Right, foreign relations experts characterize the political party as a semi-authoritarian regime.

To that end, in the five years since the PiS has emerged as the majority party, they have filled 14 out of the 15 seats on Poland’s constitutional tribunal with judges loyal to their party. In meddling with Poland’s judicial branch, the PiS has violated the nation’s rule of law, wielding higher government as a tool to impose their religious and right-wing agenda.

Earlier in October, *Time* found that 60% of Polish people

are in favor of liberalizing abortion laws. However, the PiS, with their conservative political stance, blatantly disregards the needs of an increasingly liberal population. What’s more, 430,000 people across the country have participated in protests — Poland’s largest public movement since the Solidarity Movement in 1989, which ultimately led to the fall of communism in the nation. The recent protests have been glossed over by politicians, whose primary concern is to bolster their party platform rather than benefit the people.

While the demonstrations in opposition to the abortion law may have begun with the intention of protecting women’s rights, they have evolved into an expression of anger toward the government for its corruption and its influence on the judiciary and nation as a whole.

The abortion law and, more broadly, the rise of the PiS has also heightened tensions between Poland and other E.U. member states. The E.U. believes in democratic principles, including freedom of speech, fair and just election processes, and meeting the needs of the people.

Even without the recent abortion law, Poland has violated these standing principles. Accord-

ing to the European Commission, which is responsible for initiating and enforcing the E.U.’s laws, “Where a constitutional justice system has been established, its effectiveness is a key component of the rule of law.” Poland’s constitutional tribunal is a systematic threat to the rule of law because it is highly partisan.

Because the PiS and other E.U. member states have different ideas of how to govern, the E.U. consensus has started to fragment. Already, Poland and Hungary are on thin ice for blocking \$2.2 trillion in E.U. funds, allocated with the intention of alleviating some of the pandemic’s financial burden. And, as of now, both countries are questioning their E.U. membership, inciting debates over “Polexit.”

Ultimately, Poland’s corruption within the independent judiciary branch, apathy towards women’s rights, and neglect of the most fundamental E.U. values represents the rise of the far right. Only when the PiS is overthrown and its outdated ideology is expelled will the nation be able to begin rebuilding the principles on which it is founded.

June Lu is a fifth-former from Canada. She may be reached at jl22@choate.edu

FACULTY DRAFT LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT PROPOSAL

By **Praj Chirathivat '22**
Copy Editor

On Indigenous People's Day on October 12, Choate's official social media accounts recognized the Quinnipiac tribe, on whose land Wallingford was established, with a quiet video of campus above a caption acknowledging the land that Choate is built on. According to HPRSS Department Head Ms. Kyra Jenney, the post was the first land acknowledgment statement from Choate's social media pages.

Ms. Jenney, along with Spanish teacher Mr. Charlie Fuentes, Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers, Director of Faculty Development Mr. Tom White, and many other faculty members, are dedicating themselves to an initiative that would commit Choate to Indigenous acknowledgment, representation, and awareness.

Chaperoning a student at the 2019 World Individual Debate and Public Speaking Championships in Toronto last summer, Ms. Jenney noticed that the school hosting the competition, Branksome Hall, included a formal land acknowledgment statement on its website, as well as multiple presentations on the different tribes native to the Toronto area. Additionally, on campus, the descriptions and names of each building are written in not only English but also the regional Native language. Explaining the purpose behind their land acknowledgment, the school wrote on its website: "An acknowledgment is a call to action to take both individual and collective responsibility for the past and future of the communities of this land," indicating their respect and gratitude to the Indigenous communities in the area. Inspired by Branksome Hall's land acknowledgment efforts, Ms. Jenney and other faculty members are now drafting a proposal in hopes that Choate will do the same.

According to a guide entitled "Honor Native Land," written by the United States Department of Arts and Culture, acknowledgment

ment is a powerful way of showing respect and a first step toward correcting stories that erase Indigenous people's history and culture.

"Choate doesn't have a good infrastructure in acknowledging indigeneity," said HPRSS teacher Ms. Rachel Kesler, one of Choate's two Indigenous faculty members. "Part of the benefit of doing land acknowledgment is to recognize the Native people [who] continue

Director of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers agreed, saying that, as a community, we should "engage with Indigenous peoples and organizations that can give us guidance towards the best way to do so without it being performative in nature."

Noting similarities with last June's #BlackOutTuesday trend, where people around the world posted black squares on social me-

These types of land acknowledgments come in the form of referencing treaty rights, partnering and collaborating with Native Americans, and recognizing Native tribes and colonizers that were involved in the history of the territory. There is a traumatic history of Native American assimilation and genocide. Indigenous children, for instance, were forcefully taken from reservations and forced to

with the sentiment that more needs to be done to acknowledge Choate's Indigenous past. "There are a lot of small things the School can be doing that they haven't taken the leap yet. There is a lot of conversation about race and equity and inclusion, but there aren't talks about what it means to be Indigenous and acknowledging [that] these people had and still live here," Ms. Kesler said.

Nonetheless, Ms. Jenney, Mr. Fuentes, and other faculty members are continuing to hold meetings via Zoom. Dr. Myers said, "Right now, we are looking to partner with an organization and are looking into their availability to engage with us for some professional development for our community." The idea of holding virtual Indigenous history lectures has also been discussed as part of the proposal.

Ms. Jenney added, "There are plans for additional workshops during the winter term that [Dr. Meyers] and Mr. White are coordinating and that Mr. Fuentes and I are hoping to help with."

Even though many Connecticut universities, including the University of Connecticut and Quinnipiac University, have formal land acknowledgment statements and have collaborated with land-acknowledgement organizations, New England boarding schools rarely have these commitments. "It's not something that a lot of our peer schools are doing, and hopefully that will change moving forward," Ms. Jenney said.

With Choate's upcoming formal land acknowledgment and other institutional commitments to inclusion and awareness of Indigenous communities in boarding schools, Ms. Jenney and her team hope to prompt other schools to "challenge myths of Indigenous erasure and harms of settler colonialism, and make our community more inclusive and intentionally anti-racist and anti-colonial."

"When I think about a space like Choate, there isn't that infrastructure of support and a ton of Native faculty members who students are able to look up to and a strong Native community necessarily," said Ms. Kesler. "When I think about Natives in any academic setting, I think that scaffolding and institutional support is so important."

Praj Chirathivat may be reached at pchirathivat22@choate.edu



Graphic by Rose Shen/The Choate News

to live here and also acknowledge that we as an institution continue to participate in settler colonialism. With the amount of privilege that we do have, we have to be understanding and recognize the people whose land we are living on right now."

Currently, the School's efforts of land acknowledgment are accomplished informally through social media posts and individual acknowledgments. However, as Ms. Jenney said, "Sometimes, these statements are performative. They are a way of acknowledging the Indigenous presence without making any systemic changes to make these institutions more inclusive, welcoming, and open."

dia to recognize racism, Ms. Jenney explained how that event and informal land acknowledgment are both "one-time things where you are trying to be inclusive but not proceeding through with real, substantive change. That black square is self-serving and doesn't do anything to be part of a broader restorative justice framework."

She added, "The conversations that Mr. Fuentes and I have begun to have with others at Choate have centered around land acknowledgment plus educational programming for the community, professional development for faculty and staff, planning for the recruitment and retention of Native students, faculty, staff, etc..."

assimilate into American society through harsh and deadly boarding schools. Many people feel that a formal acknowledgment of the Indigenous land that Choate resides on would indicate the School's recognition of settler colonialism and commitments to restore justice.

However, land acknowledgment is just the first step of the School's plans. "If a school is going to adopt land acknowledgment, it must be a part of broader institutional commitments that involve professional development of faculty and staff, education of students and other community members, and recruitment of Indigenous students and staff," said Ms. Jenney. Ms. Kesler agreed

Even though many faculty members are working toward these commitments, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced the School to turn its focus to issues of health and safety on campus. As a result, during the past several months, the need to ensure community safety has taken priority over the ongoing task of creating the formal land acknowledgment statement and also other efforts to promote Native American awareness and inclusion. For instance, an event that was canceled due to Covid-19 concerns would have invited Native American history experts to campus to teach Southern New England Indigenous history to the Choate faculty.

A PANDEMIC DAY IN THE LIFE: CHOATE'S ADMISSION OFFICERS

By **Melody Qian '24**
Reporter

Choate students: look back and try to remember what it was like to apply to boarding school. The tedious process of building your résumé, writing essays, and nervously attending the long-awaited interview is all too familiar for any Choate student. But, now that the ongoing pandemic has turned in-person activities into virtual ones, what is life on the other side of admissions like? To find out, I turned the tables on Choate's admission officers and interviewed them about their experiences.

Most of the officers start off their days early in the morning. During both the morning and evening, each admission officer conducts around three or four 45-minute interviews a day. Associate Director of Admission Ms. Cynthia Stahura said, "Our schedule this year has changed to be all virtual. We looked at our interview slots and changed our schedule to offer more early-morning slots and later-in-the-evening slots because of Covid and wanting to be accessible for families. Offering these extra slots sort of makes it hopefully fit into everyone's schedule a little bit more."

However, an admission officer's job entails more than just conducting interviews. Ms. Stahura said, "In between interview slots we spend a lot of time collaborating in our office. We'll have meetings, set agendas, and be working on virtual events; that's what we've been doing a lot this fall. We've been offering a robust offering of different types of virtual events get to know Choate and our community." In addition, much of an admission



Graphic by Yuko Tanaka/The Choate News

officer's role involves traveling to different states and doing recruitment work. For this admission cycle, however, all of those events remains online with virtual outreach programs and virtual interviews.

This increased number of virtual interviews often presents challenges for both the officers and the applicants. Across the board, interviewers often felt disconnected from their interviewees. Ms. Frances Irvine, an interviewer in the Admission Office, said, "You don't have that same sense of being with someone and being able to hear a tone of voice or body language. Everybody is behind a screen, so it's unusual that way."

Ms. Stahura echoed the sentiment. She spoke about the difficulties prospective students face when trying to get a true sense of community. "We want to meet families face to face, and it's a little bit harder to convey what our community feels like virtually," she said. "Community really comes from

physically walking the campus, and meeting people and talking to a tour guide or one of our Gold Key ambassadors, and that's something that we're sort of missing."

Yet, while there have been several drawbacks to the all-virtual admission process, one positive to the virtual interviews is better accessibility for students for whom a trip to Wallingford for an interview would be unfeasible. Although Choate has offered virtual interviews every admission cycle for those faraway applicants, this year expanded the virtual aspect to a much larger scale. Additionally, for many applicants, being able to interview in their own home is a sense of comfort in a nerve-racking situation. "Archbold or any admission office can be intimidating. I remember being very intimidated when I interviewed at boarding schools," said Director of Admission Mr. Jeffrey Beaton, who completed a post-graduate year at the Loomis Chaffee School.

Most days, admission officers' schedules are long and hectic. In those circumstances, what do they do to relieve their stress? Ms. Stahura, who lives in a busy household apart from her role in the admission office, highlighted the importance of balancing home, family, and work. "It helps to go outside. On my 8:00 a.m. mornings, I usually go for a walk before just to get some fresh air and get set for the day," she said.

As the admission season reaches its busiest point of the year, what motivates these admission officers the most are the students.

"There is nothing better than interviewing an amazing candidate and picturing them on our campus," Mr. Beaton said. "You are all the next leaders, and it is a true pleasure seeing you all grow in front of our eyes on this campus."

Melody Qian may be reached at mqian24@choate.edu

A Guide to Perfect Gift-Giving

By **Emma Ding '24**
Reporter

The holiday season is right around the corner and with it comes family, love, and, of course, presents. Giving and receiving gifts from loved ones can bring hope and joy amid this difficult year. Here's a guide on how to give the most memorable holiday gift possible.

Here are some factors to keep in mind while shopping:

1. Practicality: One solid strategy for gift-giving is to think about something practical that would bring joy to your recipient's life. Think back to conversations when they might have mentioned a specific book or outfit they've always wanted. If you can gift something practical that also brings back memories, even better!

2. Originality: Now, it's nice to give something practical at times, but don't be *too* practical — a new toothbrush, for example, probably won't elicit much more than a courtesy 'thank-you.' There's a perfect balance between both giving a gift that would be useful and that they wouldn't have simply bought themselves in their weekly grocery shopping trip.

3. Unexpectedness: Surprising and unorthodox gifts are sometimes the best to receive. If you don't necessarily want to give a practical gift, another sure-fire strategy is to give a gift the receiver would never expect — something you can't find in typical gift listicles!

4. Meaningfulness: Of course, one of the best gifts one could receive is one full of senti-

mental value. Nothing can compare to a song written from the heart or a knitted blanket that took weeks or even months to complete. A gift doesn't have to be expensive or flashy to be loving. Simply reflect on why you love the person, and you'll know what they would find meaningful.

5. Experiences: The perfect gift doesn't have to be materialistic. Especially for those who profess yearly that they "don't really want anything specific," perhaps planning a picnic, buying tickets to a sports game, or ice skating is all that is necessary. Remember: a physical present may break or get lost, but the memory of a touching outing will last forever.

6. Bad Gifts: This is a guide on how to give great gifts, but I must also caution you against bad gifts. As you go shopping, you may be tempted to get something you know you would enjoy, but you need to remember who you are shopping for. If there is even the slightest hesitation that the recipient may not enjoy it — even if you'd love the gift yourself — it is best to find something else.

There are many ways of showing someone you care about them, and gift-giving is a perfect way of going about it. It doesn't matter where the present comes from, how much it costs, or how long they've been wishing for it. The meaning behind it is what really counts in the end. So, go out and embark on the journey of gift-giving. Happy holidays!

Emma Ding may be reached at eding24@choate.edu



Photos courtesy of Ore Tejuoso

Tejuoso traveled to Hollywood to record her debut single “You.”

Indie Artist Luwa Debuts With Single “You”

By **Angel Guo '22**
Staff Reporter

Under dim yellow lights with guitar in hand, Ore Tejuoso '21, a member of the music Arts Concentration program and the founder and vocalist of the student band Orange, performed her first single, “You,” in its official behind-the-scenes video. With a passion for singing since her childhood, Tejuoso made her debut as an indie singer under the stage name Luwa on December 1.

Tejuoso started her songwriting process for “You” with a basic chord progression. As she replayed the piano chords over and over again, she began to uncover an original melody that she felt a personal connection with. Once she composed the melody, she started humming the chords and wrote down words that spontaneously came to her mind, even jotting down made-up words and gibberish as long as they evoked emotions from her. “As I write the song, I don’t really know what the song is about. I just know the way the music makes me feel,” Tejuoso explained.

After she finished writing the song, Tejuoso reviewed the lyrics and revised words and phrases to create a more cohesive piece. “The song reflects what I feel at the moment. When I look back

at my lyrics, sometimes they represent my week or my year, or whatever that has been in my subconscious mind that I was not paying attention to,” Tejuoso said. “Those feelings turn out in my writing.”

Tejuoso recalled that it was a rainy day when she was writing “You,” and her inspiration from the mellow weather manifested itself in the calm, steady mood of the song. Tejuoso shared that if it was a very sunny day and she played the same chord progression, a completely different song could have emerged.

The purpose of “You,” Tejuoso explained, is to invite listeners to think about the moment when they realized that their love for someone else was strong enough to overcome any conflict or disagreement. “Even if you have an intense fight with your sibling, you know that your sibling is still your sibling. You wouldn’t worry about losing them. But finding this feeling with someone else in the world beside your family is a beautiful experience,” Tejuoso said.

When recording “You,” Tejuoso was contacted by a professional music studio and traveled to Hollywood during the spring break of last year to work with them. There, she was able to connect with other producers and music engineers who helped

her create the backtrack for the song and invited professional pianists and violinists for specific sections. “It was overwhelming at times, but I was happy that I can be with a team that has collaborated with some of the artists that I look up to, such as Summer Walker,” Tejuoso said.

In addition, Tejuoso shared that Usher was recording in the same studio as her, and she was starstruck to hear Usher singing in the adjacent room. Tejuoso was also recording in the same exact booth where Michael Jackson had recorded his album *Bad* nearly 35 years ago.

“I wrote so many songs before I was reached out to. Oftentimes when I was writing my song, I wondered: ‘Am I working for nothing?’ I go to Choate and I’m a hardworking student, but all these factors seem to pull me away from becoming an artist,” Tejuoso said. “However, being there and working with those professional people, I felt that everything is coming together, I felt that this is happening, and it is becoming something serious.”

For Tejuoso, singing has been an inseparable part of her life and identity for as long as she can remember. Though she has always been passionate about and interested in songwriting and composing, Tejuoso had

been wary of writing songs due to fears of creating a piece she isn’t completely satisfied with.

“I knew how much I love music, and the idea of making a song that wasn’t as good as the music that I listen to just scared me. Being a perfectionist, it’s either a hundred or zero in my mind,” said Tejuoso. However, in the second week of her summer program at the Berklee College of Music two summers ago, she decided to let go of her worries and just experiment with writing.

Looking back at the day when she wrote her first song, Tejuoso realized that songwriting was not as difficult as she expected, and she profoundly enjoyed the process from start to finish. “What I’m so happy about what I did was that I didn’t care. I just wrote a song and I really love it,” Tejuoso said.

As an indie artist, Tejuoso is mainly gaining exposure through social media such as Instagram and YouTube. All information about her music can be found on her professional website, luwa.hearnow.com. “You” is available on major music streaming platforms, and the official music video will be released on the Luwa Youtube channel today.

Angel Guo may be reached at aguo22@choate.edu



Graphic by Tony Lee/The Choate News



Photos courtesy of Lauren Kee

Student musicians of In Music We Trust performed percussion and string instruments in their first virtual concert.

In Music We Trust Spreads Love of Music With Virtual Concert Series

By **Lauren Kee '24**
Reporter

In times of turmoil and uncertainty, we can always find comfort and hope from the common language of the world: music. In Music We Trust (IMWT), a student-led community service group at Choate established in 2015, hopes to spread the joy of music by sharing Choate musicians’ recorded performances with senior homes across the state of Connecticut.

In November, leader of IMWT Nick Madon '21 and members Julian Hurley '22, Tiffany Xiao '23, Jessica Zhao '23, and Lauren Kee '24 videotaped themselves performing for the first installment of their virtual concert series, which is now available on the official Choate Rosemary Hall Vimeo account. Over the summer, IMWT col-

laborated with the Happiness Project — a similar student community service group at The Hotchkiss School — to explore the capabilities of the new digital format. The Happiness Project aims to create a wide network of musicians in various schools, including Choate, in hopes of sending out weekly virtual concerts to senior homes and facilities around the country.

During a normal year, Choate musicians commute to the Regency House Health & Rehabilitation Center in Wallingford once every term to perform for the residents there. Whereas in previous years, IMWT members could not visit the center multiple times per term due to logistics, they can now perform more frequently with the flexibility of the virtual concert format. “Anyone can record themselves playing on their phones, anytime, anywhere.

As long as I have enough videos, I can create a concert and send them out,” said Madon.

In addition, the online arrangement now allows IMWT to include musicians who play less travel-friendly instruments such as percussionists, pianists, and bassists. Students can also easily provide backing tracks or piano accompaniment to singers without having to transport heavy speakers and keyboards.

“The breadth of what we’re able to offer, with both modern and classical performances, has expanded since we’ve gone virtual. We have more people who want to and are able to participate who wouldn’t be able to if we were in-person,” said Madon.

While virtual concerts offer the group greater flexibility, the digital format comes with several drawbacks. Xiao, a member of IMWT since her third-form year, shared

that emotions and technique don’t always come across the same way in recordings. Xiao also felt less connected with the audience performing online and misses seeing their enthusiastic faces. However, she also felt less pressure with her performances since she’s allowed to practice and re-record her part until she is satisfied.

“As long as I have enough videos, I can create a concert and send them out.”

Nick Madon '21

Another unexpected challenge that comes with the recorded format are potential legal issues with copyrighted music, since the performances are released into the public domain

and can be replayed infinitely. Madon works closely with Ms. Melissa Koomson, the Director of Community Service, and the Choate Communications Office to avoid legal complications.

“I edit all the footage together before sending them to be checked and made ‘Choate-Official’ by the Communications Office,” said Madon.

Despite the new challenges the virtual format presents, Madon believes the positives outweigh the negatives. Since performances are all just one click away and easily accessible by all, he hopes to reach a larger audience with the group’s music this year.

“People can now watch our video more than once, whenever they want. I’m exploring new performance opportunities to send our videos to different groups of people,” said Madon. “Not only

including people in senior homes, but also those in community centers and hospitals.”

Xiao also has suggestions for the club to expand its outreach within Choate. “It would be fun if we could collaborate with some other student performance groups on campus, like a cappella or dance groups. Although the club currently focuses on musical performances, the inclusion of other performative arts like dance, acting, or even comedy could be super interesting,” said Xiao.

“Music transcends all cultural and generational barriers, and everybody can appreciate it. If we can make a difference through In Music We Trust, no matter how small, we’ve done our jobs as musicians,” said Madon.

Lauren Kee may be reached at lkee24@choate.edu

CHOATE WINTER SPORTS ARE CHANGING THE GAME

By **Sam Anastasio '23**
Staff Reporter

The Founders League has canceled interscholastic play for the winter season, and many prep schools in New England are learning remotely throughout December. As such, Choate's varsity athletes have made serious adjustments to their practices, while captains remain determined to uphold team morale and camaraderie. While a definite return to campus and in-person practices remain uncertain, these teams continue to push themselves physically using apps like CoachMePlus and team meetings over Zoom.

Varsity Swimming & Diving: The Swimming and Diving team, Choate's largest winter varsity team with more than 45 athletes, faces a multitude of Covid-related challenges. Swimmers must follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) guidelines; because they can't wear masks while swimming, social distancing is key, so the pool can only hold 16 swimmers at a time. However, the team is hoping to work under these parameters, and will use this season to improve their skills as players and teammates. The team had a great season last winter and hopes to train this season in order to maintain that momentum for next year, when they hope competitions will resume. Zoe Tray '21, Girls' Varsity Swimming Captain, said, "I loved the team bonding activities and the meets in previous seasons, which I will miss the most this year. It is sad to think that I unknowingly competed in my last Choate meet ever last year."

Boys' Varsity Basketball: Boys' Varsity Basketball finished 8-16 last season, and the



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Last year's Swimming and Diving team competing at a meet. team graduated many of its most talented players last year, such as Ryan Zambie '20, a former player on the Lebanon National Team. The team is looking to restructure its training program this season, which begins with player development through a combination of strength and conditioning, agility work, and individual skills such as shooting and dribbling. If all goes according to plan with a return to campus, the program will have to adjust to not playing any interscholastic games or even scrimmaging amongst themselves while continuing to improve.

Girls' Varsity Basketball: Girls' Varsity Basketball was looking forward to a promising season, after only graduating two seniors. So far, the team has been working out at home individually, but Head Coach Mr. Donta Johnson has been crafting individual workouts for players who want them. Basketball is classified as a high-risk sport and will have to adapt to new protocols once back in person. Kayce Madancy '22, a player on the team, said, "I think it will be very similar to what our open gyms looked like in the fall. Masks on, avoiding being near each other, and lots of skill development." She emphasized how strange it was not

to spend hours each day with her teammates, something she had grown used to in past years.

Varsity Wrestling: Wrestling just might be the easiest sport to contract the virus from, given its face-to-face style of competition, so contact drills are on hold for the time being. Over the fall term, the team met twice a week for conditioning, shadowing wrestling, and watching wrestling films and documentaries. Throughout this winter term, the team has met once a week to discuss goals and keep track of their assigned weekly workout schedules. Upon a return to campus, the team would not be able to use the wrestling room, so they plan to continue their strength and conditioning skills alongside watching film. Team member Zayd Gonzalez '22 said, "Wrestling is a tough sport but it builds some deep camaraderie, and even when we're tired and sweaty knowing that everyone is feeling the same is reassuring and allows up to push further than we would alone."

Boys' Varsity Hockey: Boys' Varsity Ice Hockey began preparing for this unprecedented season by working on skill development and off-ice training six times a week throughout October and November. Head Coach Mr. Pat

Dennehy said, "The team met via Zoom on December 9 to get some face time, talk about the workouts, and talk about what we will be doing moving forward." Mr. Dennehy plans to bring various hockey team alumni to talk to the group, including Mr. Mathieu Darche '96, Director of Hockey Operations for the Tampa Bay Lightning, which won the NHL's Stanley Cup this year. Mr. Dennehy reflected on the pandemic's impact on the sport, which negatively affected many of the seniors' recruiting processes, since the NCAA allowed college senior athletes to return for another season, limiting the amount of space on a given team for incoming freshmen. However, the team has maintained a positive team culture. Mr. Dennehy remarked, "I think [team captain] Andrew Carmody '21 summed up our mindset best when he said, 'When the world is ready, Coach, we will be ready!'"

Girls' Varsity Hockey: Team captain Lexington Secreto '21 "misses team bonding and being around some of [her] best friends." She said, "there's never a dull moment on GVH, and I miss the smiles and jokes we make when we're together." She hopes the team can be on the ice again and perhaps scrim-

mage with local Founders League teams, if Covid-19 guidelines permit it. The team has had meetings twice a week to concentrate on staying healthy and focused on their goals. When back on campus, the team plans to use all eight of the rinks' locker rooms for social distancing.

Boys' Varsity Squash: When playing a normal squash match, like most other winter sports, it is virtually impossible to adhere to social distancing requirements. However, Boys' Varsity Squash Head Coach Mr. Will Morris thinks that the team can still improve by doing lots of conditioning and solo practicing drills. The team has had weekly meetings to compete on one of the CoachMePlus assigned workouts that the players have been completing throughout the term. Unfortunately, solo practicing eliminates much of the camaraderie and fun of the team. Mr. Morris said, "Probably the part I miss most is seeing our seniors, many of whom are 'home-grown' products of our squash program, have the opportunity to represent themselves and their school on the varsity team."

Girls' Varsity Squash: Girls' Varsity Squash, coming off last year's strong season in

which they went 12-2, is looking forward to having a successful season, in whatever form it takes. Thus far, the team has "had one optional Zoom workout, and each player is working individually to stay in shape by doing a workout from the CoachMePlus app or following our training plan every day," said Captain Supriya Chang '21. Upon students' return to campus, the team plans to follow similar guidelines to that of Intramural Squash in the fall, where players trained by having one player per court and worked on specific solo skills. Chang missed the team camaraderie aspect, saying, "We would play music and chat with each other on the bus rides to matches. It was overall a great team bonding experience."

Varsity Archery Varsity Archery team Captain Elton Zheng '22 has presented an interesting goal for the team: do one push-up every day. Zheng's main goal isn't necessarily to get his teammates to do more and more pushups everyday, though they are encouraged to do so if they can. Rather, the goal is to be consistent and not miss any days. "Archery is an especially long-term sport: sustained effort trumps intensity, always. But, I expect that both stamina and intensity will bring us success this season," he said. Zheng explained that on campus, the practice building is designed to have 12 archers shoot at once with little space in between the posts. When students return to campus, the team will have to stagger the archers to shoot in groups while incorporating strength training in between shoots.

Sam Anastasio may be reached at
sanastasio23@choate.edu

Senior Hockey Players Prepare for Junior Hockey

By **Bo Goergen '22**
Reporter

Every year, several Choate hockey players decide to play in one of four U.S. junior hockey leagues instead of going to college directly after high school. The USA Hockey leagues focus on player development and training young players between the ages of 16 and 20. After playing in the junior leagues, many players will go on to play Division I (D1) hockey in college. In fact, according to USA Hockey's official website, junior league hockey players make up a large fraction of D1 teams nationwide.

A key component of Juniors, as the junior leagues are known among players, is how membership in the leagues facilitates players' development. Players are pushed to their absolute

limits, but with this hard work comes significant results.

Chris Guyette '19, a former Choate hockey captain and current Juniors athlete, said, "Playing Juniors in one of the most unique gap year experiences. The hockey side is the biggest physical challenge I've had to endure. We are at the rink six hours a day and it's basically a job."

That work has paid off, though. Guyette added, "Juniors is a grind, but once you get your college commitment, it is all worth it in the end ... besides the fact that I'll be a 21-year-old freshman in college."

Currently, Andrew Carmody '21, Bauer Swift '21, and Zach Vandale '21 all plan to play in the junior leagues next year. Swift said, "I wanted to play Juniors because it gives me a

good opportunity to be seen by lots of college coaches. It also helps develop my game as I will be playing against mostly Division I and Division III commits on whatever team I end up on." Swift knows that he will be ready for whatever challenges come his way in this new league and is excited about the amount of exposure he will undoubtedly receive.

Vandale commented on how Choate's hockey program has helped him prepare for Juniors, saying that "the opportunity to play in one of the top high school leagues in North America the last four years has given me a great advantage. Not only has it helped prepare me for Junior Hockey, Choate has also instilled the drive and work ethic I use today to pursue my goal of playing college hockey."

Carmody also reflected on his hockey career at Choate and is excited to turn over a new page in his life. "Obviously I wish that this year would've been a normal season, but I'm feeling prepared and, in a way, lucky to be able to take another year. The entire college process was shaken up, so being able to take another year to get continued exposure will be awesome. Getting to travel playing hockey will be a memory for life."

Choate Hockey has helped all three of these seniors get where they need to be in order to succeed in Juniors and eventually college hockey teams. Each of these players hopes to make the most of their last Choate season before bringing their drive and competitive spirit to the League.

Bo Goergen may be reached at
rgoergen22@choate.edu

Athletics Department Introduces "Physical Wellness"



Graphic by Mia Katz /The Choate News

By **Naomi Fleisch '22**
Staff Reporter

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, Choate's Athletic Department has made major adjustments, and in order to provide viable athletic options for students, a new program will be added this winter as an intramural option: Physical Wellness.

Physical Wellness essentially combines several intramural offerings into one option that is available throughout the day. "Instead of having specific intramural classes like Winter Running, Fitness, Weight-Training, Winter Rowing, Intramural Basketball and Intramural Hockey, which we normally have had, we will now just call each class Physical Wellness," said Mr. Pat Dennehy, Associate Director of Athletics. "Students will be scheduled into a free block in their schedule during the day. They will have the opportunity to sign up to

use the fitness center or downstairs weight room, or set up the tennis court, shoot hoops, play squash, skate on the rink, and more."

The biggest difference between intramural fitness, which has been a popular option among students in past years, and Physical Wellness is the variety of options students have every day. In advance of their designated Wellness days, students will work with coaches to schedule their activities on a particular day. "We envision about 30 students assigned to a certain Physical Wellness class," Mr. Dennehy added. "One of the main goals is to manage the capacity limits for each room in the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center."

Students participating in Physical Wellness will meet three times a week, but because the activity is scheduled into students' free blocks, the sessions are only 45 minutes long. Physical Wellness

will begin once students return to campus in the new year, and only after the on-campus quarantine period. Meanwhile, the School has provided all students with access to CoachMePlus, an app with weekly workouts designed by Mr. Brian Holloway, Choate's Head Athletic Trainer. The app provides a great way for students who are not otherwise part of a team to stay in shape and track their progress while at home.

A main goal of Physical Wellness is to allow students to stay active while still having fun with their peers in a more casual environment. "The physical wellness opportunities will give our Choate students a chance to explore a variety of activity options that they are interested in that are beneficial to their overall health," said Mr. Roney Eford, Director of Athletics.

Naomi Fleisch may be reached at
nfleisch22@choate.edu



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Carmody on the ice during a scrimmage last year.