

Library Study Rooms Turned Into Offices

NICCOLO LEE-SUK

Throughout last year, eight study rooms in the basement and second floor of the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library (OWHL) were converted into offices. These rooms were previously available for student use.

Camille Torres Hoven, Director of the OWHL, explained that the change was made to accommodate the OWHL's full staff. She noted that the change would be temporary, as renovations in Graves Hall and George Washington Hall (GW) are expected to create more office space.

"The OWHL has been operating without a full staff since I started three years ago, and with new hires, we needed additional office space. Some of our existing offices weren't functional for meetings or technology needs. This was not an easy decision, but it is a temporary one. Once GW and Graves are renovated, some offices will move out of the OWHL. We'll be able to restore a better balance of offices and study rooms—and potentially add new student spaces in those buildings as well," wrote Torres Hoven in an email to *The Phillipian*.

For Samantha Gong '28, the study rooms had been a place to escape from the noise of the library and spend time working and connecting with others. She expressed her frustrations about finding alternative spaces to study and socialize, especially as a day student without a dorm.

"Where am I supposed to go?... [I'm] not happy about it because that was an important study space. People like the study rooms. There were a lot of people in them last year. There's a reason for that, because sometimes what you need isn't everything that's going on in the library [but] just some space to yourself, your group members, or perhaps even your friends if it's not a busy day. I've been going to Falls [Music Center]," said Gong.



C. ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Rooms in the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library that were previously available for student use have been converted into offices.

Gong continued, "[Removing the rooms is] just not a useful way to promote the 'all-in' community. Because I don't know [about] anyone else, but I personally haven't been hanging out as much or even doing as much work with friends or group members [this year] because that was the space I relied on last year."

Despite the study rooms' popularity as study spaces, Colin Lee '28 shared that students did not always use them productively. He mentioned that other spaces in the library felt more beneficial for his academic work.

"Often times, the study rooms were not being used intentionally. You just went to see if your friends were in there. If your friends were in there, you'd pull up and go mess around. People weren't really using them to actively meet up with groups... I don't really think it took away anything too valuable, except for the unique resources [of] the rooms, which were the whiteboards for small groups and the TVs," said Lee.

Regardless of their usage as study spaces, Alfonso Gonzalez-Cano '27 expressed his confusion about this uncommunicated change. He suggested that the OWHL administration consult with students before making such

decisions.

"They should run a poll on it. They should get some student body involvement. Ideally, we should have separate office spaces for the staff and we should get the study rooms back, or at least a replacement. We have roughly a 1,100 kids in the entire school, and we only have three study rooms with whiteboards in the entirety of the library. That is not a lot," said Gonzalez-Cano.

Torres Hoven acknowledged that students may feel frustrated due to this change. She highlighted her intention to support students to the best of her ability.

"I knew it would be disappointing for students, and that's never easy. I always try to keep students at the center of my decisions. But there was a real need for functional office space, and I do believe this is a temporary trade-off. I appreciate students' flexibility and understanding. The goal is always to support both student learning and faculty, staff, and admin in their work for the community to support teaching and learning, and I'm optimistic that in the future we'll have more—and even better—spaces for everyone," wrote Torres Hoven.

Computer Science Department Aims to Make Course Offerings More Accessible

STAFF REPORT

Students have been discussing that some previously offered Computer Science (CSC) courses are not available this year. While the CSC curriculum has not changed this year, the CSC course offerings each depend on a rotation process, departmental coverage, and student and faculty interest.

In the fall of 2023, the CSC curriculum underwent a significant redesign that focused on term-contained electives compared to year-long courses as well as a broader range of CSC courses. Developed over the course of two years, the curriculum aimed to make

CSC more accessible and flexible for students with varying amounts of prior experience.

Since then, many CSC electives have been created and rotated each year to accommodate for the needs and interests of the department and student body. Joel Jacob, Department Chair and Instructor in Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science, described the process of deciding the course offerings for CSC each year.

"We try and run 1-2 sections of an advanced course per term. This means not every advanced CSC course is offered every year. When choosing, we balance student

Continued on A5, Column 3

What is "6-7" and Why is Every One Saying it?

CADE RUTKOSKE

From the day students returned to campus from summer break, Andover has been plagued by a new viral phrase popularized on social media: "6-7." Anyone who spends a day on campus will unavoidably hear this phrase whether on the paths, at meals, and even in the classroom.

The term "6-7" originates from a rap song by musician Skrilla, titled "Doot Doot (6 7)." Most students have picked up the phrase and associated hand movements from social media where it became a meme associated with little more than the numbers 6-7. Patrick O'Donohue '28 is one fan of the "6-7" meme

who gave some insight on his experience with it on campus.

"I mean, it's pretty dank. I like '6-7' a lot, especially in math class with my teachers. I try to see if anyone catches it, but sometimes I'm the only one," said O'Donohue. "Whenever 6-7 comes up, I'll start dying laughing. It actually happened the other day. I was in class and my teacher was [distributing] the [practice] questions. He was like, 'You do 6, you do 7,' and then I looked around, [but] I was the only one. I was dying."

The term "6-7" doesn't strictly surface in casual environments. Sarah Bae '26 commended Co-Presidents Gracie Aziabor '26 and Philip Meng

Continued on A5, Column 1

Student-Led Skits Aim to Reinforce ASM Expectations



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN
Blue Key Heads Malcolm Tolbert '26 and Frank Hu '26 model proper and improper ASM etiquette.

JOHN KIM & ADELYNE LIU

Last week's All-School Meeting (ASM) showcased skits organized and performed by student leaders instead of hosting a typical guest speaker or faculty programming. The collaboration between student leaders and faculty aimed to remind students about expected conduct during ASM, including phone usage and attentiveness.

Drawing heavily on internet humor, the skits were performed by Cluster Co-Presidents, Blue Key Heads, and Student Body Co-Presidents. Frank Hu '26, a Blue Key Head, shed light on the writing process for the skits.

"We were told to come to a meeting on the Sunday before ASM. We just got an email saying that campus adults wanted us to make skits about behavior [during ASM]. This included the student leaders, Taylor Ware, [Associate Director of College Counseling and Upper and Senior EBI Course Head], and Dean Winslow, [Dean of Community and Multicultural Development (CaMD)]," said Hu.

Hu continued, "We prepped for an hour. We did a lot of brainstorming, and then we met one more time the

night before the ASM. Most of the skit-making or rap writing was done in our own time."

To further engage the audience, 50 vouchers for an "All In" t-shirt were placed throughout the pews of Cochran Chapel. Julia Xu '28 noted that this interactive element, combined with the different structure of the ASM, was effective in capturing the attention of the student body.

"There were 50 blue numbered tickets placed in pews across the chapel. They were stuck in the hymnal books, and students who had those could go after ASM to claim an 'All In' blue T-shirt," said Xu. "There was definitely a lot of engagement through the tickets and the T-shirts. I heard a lot more cheers and claps from a lot of my friends and students in the audience than normal."

Skits ranged from topics such as the cellphone policy to using phones in the bathrooms during ASM. Some students found the skits effective, while others questioned whether the humorous format diluted the seriousness of the message. Elise Zhang '26 was unsure how the student body would internalize the ASM.

Continued on A5, Column 1

Supporting Success: The Evolution of the Academic Skills Center

SOPHIA FANG & ADELYNE LIU

For decades, the Academic Skills Center (ASC) has played a central role in supporting Andover students, offering academic guidance, peer tutoring, and spearheading student disability services. First founded in the 1980s as the Academic Support Center, the center featured both psychological and academic support, ultimately expanding in the 2000s to include Student Accessibility Services.

Originally situated in Graham House, the Academic Support Center was funded by an Abbot Grant from the Abbot Academy Fund (AAF) according to Patricia B. Davison, the Director of Academic Skills and Coordinator of Student Disability Services from 2000 to 2018. Davison explained how the AAF assisted Andover in building an academic and psychological support center.

"When Abbot Academy

merged 50 years ago with Phillips Academy, Andover didn't have any support for anybody. The guys that came here would drop out, and half the class would be dropped out by the time graduation came... When Abbot merged, they said, 'You can't just teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. You have to give kids some other kinds of support. They're away from home.' They gave money first for a psychological therapist, and then they gave money to start academic support," said Davison.

In 1999, Andover was sued in a lawsuit for violating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This prompted the school to start the Ad Hoc Committee on Student Disability Policy in the fall of 2001. Davison described her role in developing the policy to address a lack of accessibility in private schools throughout the United States.

"The head of the Dean of Studies Office picked one person, usually the Chair of the department or somebody who'd

been here a long time from each of the graduation requirements [courses]," said Davison. "We spent 18 months, looked at all the things you had to do to pass the math requirement, all the things you had to do to pass the language requirement, and we had to write what the rationale was. By the time we were done, it was a very large corpus of work."

Susanna Buzard, Andover's Student Accessibility Specialist from 2016 to 2017, highlighted the ASC's duty to inform teachers about learning disabilities. She clarified that the purpose of disability accommodations was not to reduce the rigor of coursework but rather to ensure a level playing field for every student.

"The most valuable program that the ASC did was outreach to teachers, [which included] connecting, informing and collaborating with them... The big sticking point with academic

Continued on A5, Column 3



C.ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Henry Zimmerman '27 and many other students utilize the Academic Skills Center for academic support.

Commentary, A2

Red vs. Blue

A shift in American politics has turned constructive debate into violence and eroded morality, displayed in the assassination of Charlie Kirk.

Eighth Page, A8

Don't Look Up.

What's the saying? What comes down must come up, right???

Sports, B1

Boys Water Polo Fires on All Cylinders

Boys Water Polo (3-1) jumps to hot start after a 6-5 nailbiter win against Deerfield.

Arts, B6

"Takedown" of KPop Demon Hunters

Read about Daniel Liu '28 and Jonathan Oh '27's review of the viral sensation, "KPop Demon Hunters."

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Editorial

Going A.I.

At the first All-School Meeting (ASM) of the year, the school unveiled a new slogan: “All In.” The following ASM, student leaders clad in blue “All In” T-shirts performed a series of comedic skits. Between the cell phone policy and the introduction of “All In” into Andover’s vocabulary, the school has redoubled its efforts to strengthen our community this year.

But when the slogan was introduced alongside a stream of “All In”-themed merch — T-shirts, stickers, and even an “All In” poster contest — it came with questions: Does this message imply that we weren’t already “All In” for our community? What does “All In” even mean in the first place? Other misgivings centered on the merch; plastering “All In” all over new merch risks cheapening its meaning, until it becomes another buzzword a few months later. It’s understandable to be skeptical about this new “All In” culture that we’re expected to immediately embrace.

Yet, whatever concerns students may have about the delivery of this message, we should embrace this new slogan. In recent years, Andover’s school spirit has faltered. More students chatter at ASM; less people attend Andover/Exeter (A/E), Brace and CaMD scholar presentations, and weekend events. Showing up for our friends and our school is the epitome of a strong community, and we’ve often failed to do so. Whether that’s related to our phones or not, we should appreciate the administration’s efforts to organize a more engaging ASM and formally address the decline of connection on campus. “All In” is not merely a simple idea propelled onto students, but it represents the school’s structured and deliberate efforts to address the critical issue of rekindling community.

While some students are confused by its vagueness, “All In” seems to be intentionally ambiguous for students to decide themselves what they need to go “All In” for. Perhaps you stay in Silent too long and do not spend as much time with your friends. Perhaps you do not attend the Weekender events because you think it might not be fun. Perhaps you procrastinate too much. Go all in. Our various interpretations of “All In” allow us each to play a role in finding the solution — to identify the personal and collective needs of our school. While there may be opinions that the slogan is an unnecessary addition to other abstract mottos such as “Big Blue” and “Non Sibi,” the advice to go “All In” tries to directly encourage us to take a more proactive stance. After all, Andover is meant to engage our critical thinking skills and cultivate leaders in the community. Instead of lamenting over the minutiae of the execution of the ASMs, we should put our energy into reforming the school for the better.

Yes, “All In” may feel artificial when we are being told to do it, but it’s a step in the right direction. The beginning of any change will feel awkward. Culture does not appear overnight; it needs to be created, and all parties need to participate. The administration didn’t do it perfectly, but now that the conversation has been started, students should put in effort, too. We don’t have to go “All In” on everything the administration does, but we should at least give it a chance.

This Editorial represents the opinions of *The Phillipian*, vol. CXLVIII.

The iPhone 17 Series Matters

MANALEE CHOWDHURY



For most of my life, Apple’s designs have been intertwined with everything around me. Not only did I grow up in Silicon Valley, the heart of all emerging technologies, but I got to second-handly witness the process of designing new innovations through my father, who has worked at Apple for fifteen years in the iPhone team. Looking at the internet’s response and hearing students on the path making fun of the 17 Air, I saw and heard points made that misrepresent what the 17 Air actually achieves and what ground-breaking engineering it really takes to deliver something this thin, light, and capable. Referring to the Air as mere amusement trivializes the technological innovations needed to make small handheld devices like an iPhone Air, which is at odds with the fundamentals of science. Although it is easy to dismiss the new Air as an insignificant device, the Andover community would benefit from understanding the challenge of designing a versatile technology as thin as 17 Air.

Critics have said that the

iPhone 17 Air has sacrificed features people actually value, that it exists essentially as a decoy pushing consumers toward more expensive Pro models, and that its thinness might signal the end of real innovation. But that doesn’t match what the 17 Air actually offers. It’s the thinnest and lightest iPhone ever, but still keeps the things most people want: a high-quality screen, strong cameras, solid build, and plenty of storage. It may look minimal, but it still delivers where it counts, according to the “New York Times.”

Moreover, we must refrain from considering every consumer as the same when it comes to consumer interest. Everyone has varied degrees of interests, opinions, and preferences. 17 Air offers a choice for someone who wants a thin, light device, does not need the largest battery, and is satisfied with the high performance offered by the single camera lens. In an article by “CNN,” a writer who was initially unimpressed by 17 Air came to “[realize] that this might be one of those instances where Apple’s nailed a look so well that some people will just want it. A lighter iPhone could arguably be seen as addressing an accessibility concern.” Some people have had concerns with iPhones because their heavy weight puts a toll on their wrists from all the phone use. 17 Air aims to address those concerns by upgrading the standard features while reducing weight. Additionally, people who carry multiple iPhones may prefer to buy lighter ones.

Regarding the argument that this device is positioned as a premium option to push people to

buy another model, such as the Pro, Apple has simultaneously offered compelling alternative devices at both lower (iPhone 17) and higher (Pro & Pro Max) price points. It’s entirely up to the customer to decide what they want that best meets their needs. In fact, the lowest-priced iPhone 17 has been upgraded with Pro features like a larger, higher refresh rate display and an upgraded front camera that is the same as the Pro models. If anything, any price-conscious consumers “will just gravitate to the iPhone 17” as the “New York Times” puts it, rather than the Pro, where Apple has provided enormous value at the lowest price point.

Finally, the claim that innovation might take a backseat if devices like 17 Air become more common can easily be refuted. The 17 Air itself shows innovation is far from over, as reviewed by ZDnet, a known and reliable source for tech reviews. Specific advances in both hardware and design demonstrate the innate innovativeness of the Air, such as the materials, display tech, camera system advancements, design architecture, and improvements in scratch and crack resistance. These kinds of adjustments often go unnoticed in headlines but shift what users expect and demand. They push the baseline forward. If anything, the Air will actually spur increased innovation as the model already incorporates boundary-pushing technologies, and Apple and its competitors will outpace each other to bring future models in a similar form.

The iPhone 17, like every generation before it, represents



ANGELA GUO / THE PHILLIPIAN

far more than a new screen or a faster chip. It embodies the grit and brilliance of some of the world’s best engineers solving multi-dimensional problems. The claimed ‘marginal improvements’ or ‘terrible quality’ are the result of years of domain expertise building systems from the ground up. To dismiss them is to overlook the extraordinary sacrifice and innovation that make modern technology possible.

The process behind the iPhone 17 Air is a way the Andover community can examine what real innovation looks like: the curiosity, the failures, the trade-offs, and most importantly, the courage to attempt something risky. In Andover, we cherish the capacity to change the world. Recognizing the 17 Air’s achievements as well as the difficulties behind it can deepen our understand-

ing of what goes into building new technology and inspire us to create something novel of our own. That’s why acknowledging the 17 Air is relevant; often, innovation is a slow accumulation of many small breakthroughs, each demanding precision and resilience. Understanding the iPhone 17 Air and the series as a whole honors the ideals that we as a community wish to cultivate. By doing so, we give ourselves a richer perspective of what building world-changing technology really means.

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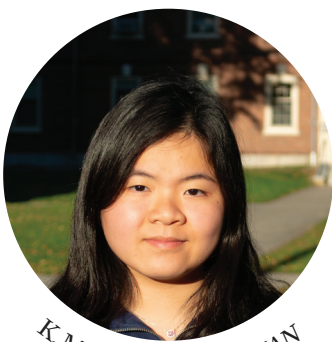
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CORRECTIONS:
The score for Football versus Hotchkiss on September 13 was 9-12.

The Phillipian regrets these errors.

Morse Hall Needs A New Name

JEANNIE KANG



K. MA / THE PHILLIPIAN

Andover students and alumni alike have vivid memories of Morse Hall. From cramming for exams in the Math Study Center to solving complex problems in a classroom, the name “Morse” holds personal significance for many. However, the racist and xenophobic ideas tied to the name of Morse Hall call for the removal of the name from the building. Samuel F. B. Morse, though famous for developing Morse code, actively vilified immigrants and sponsored the institution of slavery. A school as dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as Andover is obligated to remove a name bearing such roots.

Samuel Finley Breese Morse attended Andover from 1801 to 1805, then graduated from Yale University in 1810. Morse gained wealth and fame through the invention of the telegraph and the development of the Morse code, both of which spread throughout the world within his lifetime. In 1900, Morse was inducted into the National Hall of Fame, becoming the second Andover graduate (after Oliver Wendell Holmes) to be selected for the list. According to the Men Of Andover by Claude Fuess, this honor contributed to the then-science building being named after Samuel Morse. While it’s undeniable that Morse produced many notable achievements, his academic accolades often overshadow his racist ideals. In 1835, Morse ran to become the mayor of New York City on the “Nativist” ticket, an anti-immigrant and pro-slavery movement of the time. Leveraging his political power, he further published views opposing “outside agita-

tion” against Southern slavery. Thirty years later, Morse became a renowned pro-slavery activist. He further described enslavement as a “divinely ordained discipline of the human race,” accusing anti-slavery activists of going against God’s will. Eventually, Morse became the president of two prominent pro-slavery organizations at the time: The American Society for the Promotion of National Unity and Society for the Diffusion of Political Knowledge. The prior institution, upon its launch, “thanked God that four million beings, incapable of self-care, were entrusted to Southerners.” Likewise, Morse’s unabashed support of enslavement supplemented unjust legitimacy to the institution that stripped away the rights of millions of African Americans.

Morse also spread xenophobic ideals by vilifying immigrants. In 1835, Morse established the first anti-immigration party, the Native American Democratic Association. The institution supplemented their xenophobic views with populist appeals, arguing that the European immigrants taint the purity of the country. They proposed initiatives that delayed the civic process through which immigrants could become citizens, vote, or run for elections, and further alienated Irish and German Catholics

for their devotion to the Pope. Morse blamed the poverty and the crimes in the slums to the immigrants, describing them as “filthy and ragged in body, ignorant in mind... they fill your streets with squalid beggary, and your highways with crime.” The anti-immigration political movement founded by Morse went on to implement discriminatory policies based on nationality and ethnicity throughout the early twentieth century.

But Morse’s beliefs and activism contradict these values; they are a direct assault against community members who are racially marginalized individuals or immigrants.

The aforementioned actions contradict the values that Andover hopes to convey. Andover takes pride in “value[ing] the educational continuum that diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts represent for our community.” In recognition of the ongoing implicit discrimination of racially marginalized students on campus, the school

even established the Andover Anti-Racism Task Force in September, 2020. The official school website explains that the task force aims to explore “potential avenues that would move the school closer toward its goal of being an inclusive institution committed to educating youth from every quarter.” But Morse’s beliefs and activism contradict these values; they are a direct assault against community members who are racially marginalized individuals or immigrants.

Some critics may argue that the name of the building symbolizes its tradition and history, and thus should not be replaced. Examples of numerous universities and boarding schools changing the name of their buildings to preserve their values further testify to the need for a change on Andover’s campus. In 2017, the Loomis Chaffee in Connecticut renamed the Mason Hall after the Student Council petitioned to change the name of the dormitory. The Mason Hall was initially named after John Mason, who killed hundreds of innocent residents by burning the Pequot village to the ground, leading to his heroic reputation among English settlers. In the Head of School’s long letter explaining the decision, she wrote, “Many members of the Loomis community find the Mason name

out of keeping with our values as a school and, in particular, with our desire to be a welcoming community for all students from all backgrounds.” Similarly, also in 2017, Yale University renamed Calhoun College, due to “John C. Calhoun’s legacy as a white supremacist and a national leader who passionately promoted slavery as a ‘positive good’ [that] fundamentally conflicts with Yale’s mission and values.” Many educational institutions have demonstrated the courage to stand firm for its missions and beliefs through renaming buildings that honor people with values that contradict our community. Andover has the duty to do so as well.

The priority lies in honoring an individual who represents the academy’s values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Alternate names for the building remain unclear. Some possibilities include Holley Hall, after Joseph Winthrop Holley, Class of 1900, an African American founder of the Albany State University, and Jackson Hall, after Alexander L. Jackson, Class of 1910, an African American business owner and civic leader. Regardless, the priority lies in honoring an individual who represents the academy’s values of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Though the name of a building might not seem important, it represents the values the school conveys to its students, alumni, and at large, the world. Thus, the administration must take immediate steps to replace the name of the Morse Hall.

Editor’s Note: Sources are linked on the digital version of this article.

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DASHA GOMEZ/ THE PHILLIPIAN

Red vs. Blue Has Gone Too Far

EMMA HONG



K. TOMALA / THE PHILLIPIAN

In light of Charlie Kirk’s tragic assassination, among myriad other occurrences, it has become apparent that the political split in contemporary America has gone far too deep. This hardened divide is something that has been built up over multiple decades; there’s not any specific event that has galvanized this deep fissure. Red vs. Blue feels less like a difference in political beliefs but like a civil war between personal adversaries.

No matter how controversial Charlie Kirk’s views were, the death of a thirty-one-year-old man with a family cannot be reduced to just another point of debate in the endless partisan argument. This isn’t just about Charlie Kirk; this is a much bigger reflection of American politics. This must be a time to reflect on the consequences of partisan rhetoric. The loss of any public figure to political violence is a sign that something fundamental in our

system is breaking down; when a disagreement has become deadly, we cannot go on without addressing its root shortcomings.

Politics has become increasingly correlated with identity; therefore, someone else disagreeing with your perspective can feel like a personal attack. Factoring in social media and news platforms designed to amplify conflict, reward emotional responses, and keep people locked in echo chambers, every issue — cultural, personal, or economic — gets filtered through a political lens. Charlie Kirk’s death, regardless of where you stand on his politics, should have been a sobering moment of national

reflection. If tragedies of this magnitude cannot draw bipartisan reflection, only one question remains: Can the U.S. survive with the growing political divide?

This phenomenon is not entirely new in American life, but the intensity of today’s political culture marks a stark departure from the past. Before, neighbors and acquaintances more commonly disagreed on matters of policy and still harbored levels of respect and friendship for each other as people. Today, however, relationships have become overly dictated by one’s political values. The very idea of looking past politics to work towards a compromise feels foreign — it is dismissed

by many as a naive concept that is not grounded in the cold reality of the current political climate. However, democracy is not designed to function as an endless tug-of-war between political parties inherently incapable of getting along. To reject cooperation is to reject the concept of America itself: a nation built on compromise, debate, and the uneasy balance of clashing ideals.

We can start on a personal scale. First and foremost, being open to difference is imperative to closing this huge division that has formed in America — you don’t always have to agree with someone else. Try to listen rather than yell, ask questions rather than make as-

sumptions, and read a couple of sources that lie outside of what you agree with. Meaningful changes will only happen if we step outside of our mental routines and habitual thought patterns and learn not to resort immediately to arguments. By actively challenging the automatic ways we interpret information and respond to opposing viewpoints, we create a space for empathy and understanding to grow. Listening carefully, asking clarifying questions, and seeking out information from a wider range of sources are all practices that build resilience against violent polarization.

Ultimately, the health of American democracy depends not on the complete elimination of division, but on the ability to live with difference without allowing it to consume our shared humanity. If we allow polarization to dictate every interaction and interpretation of tragedy, then we hand over power not to reason or principle, but to hostility itself. Only if we deliberately work toward empathy, mutual accountability, and a renewed commitment to the democracy can America hope to step back from this detrimental political split that has formed in our country.

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CARINA PAIK/ THE PHILLIPIAN

We're Sick, Already



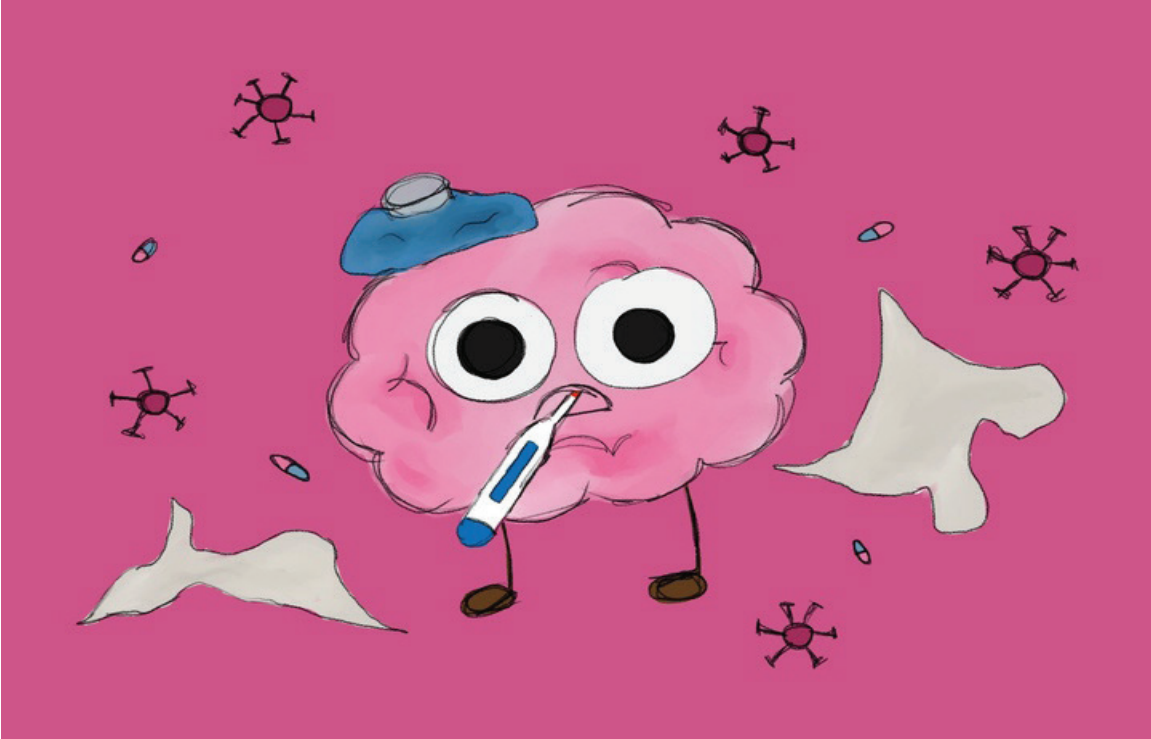
As I am writing this article, my neighbor is wheezing, my hallmate across from me is sniffing, the people down the hall have lost their voices, and I am utterly confused. September, which should have acted as a sort of grace period for adjustment and renewal, has become a cycle of endless homework and the early onset of campus sickness. It's been just under 20 days of the 2025-2026 school year, and many of us are already drenched in germs and sickness. Around campus, I keep hearing the phrase "I'm tired," and frankly, I agree wholeheartedly. So in these trying weeks, Andover students should act more deliberately to lift themselves up from the depths of illness.

As much as we deliberately try to be sanitary and clean in such a widely shared space, we are all undeniably exposed to each other in many different ways: whether it's living in the same dorm, walking on the paths together, or having classes together. Andover as a community is much more vulnerable to diseases, with over 700 people and 200 faculty members living in such a closely-knit community. Our boarding lifestyle encompasses our identity as a school, but also serves as a reminder that

we are vulnerable to outbreaks of sickness.

Rigor is the greatest enemy in the fight to get back our health as quickly as possible. Called "behavioral malaise," one of the most common side effects of feeling sick or catching a cold, it can derail daily routines and, inevitably, academic performance. Therefore, accommodations must be accessible to all students, and students themselves must take advantage of their right to request changes to fit their needs. When sickness takes over the body, our body's metabolism is on full alert and needs a greater amount of energy to fight off the disease. Spending more and more energy on academics while your energy levels are still low puts an additional strain on the body, which could worsen your condition. The cliched phrase "take care of yourself" should be enforced literally, not as "take care of yourself but also study for a test and two quizzes along with writing an essay and a first draft." Students should not treat care as a task they can procrastinate on until the looming tests and assessments pass, but as a priority. Taking the time to feel better will minimize the amount of effort needed to make up all the work, as homework and comprehending material would be a lot easier with a fueled body and a brain that isn't entirely concerned about fighting off an illness.

Now, of course, taking care of oneself should not include scrolling and watching YouTube for the entire day. Actual rest aims to readjust and strengthen the immune system through the simplest tasks, such as going on a walk or simply shutting down and going to sleep for eight to nine hours (a Saturday luxury for many Andover students). Students can also try remedies



GEMMA PARK/ THE PHILLIPIAN

such as setting a towel with room temperature water which moistens the air in the room, helps clear mucus, soothes respiratory passages, and strengthens the body's natural defenses. Apart from community-wide action, these small tweaks to living conditions may help nurse our community back to health.

Apart from community-wide action, these small tweaks to living conditions may help nurse our community back to health.

Paradoxically, for a sickness most commonly spread by communication and interaction, the best way to combat it is through talking to each other and keeping each other aware. The cold or any type of abnormality is

also related to a disruption in hormonal balance. Cortisol is a stress hormone that takes care of excessive inflammation in the body, but excessive amounts of it, which can be very common, can lead to anxiety, mood swings, and difficulties concentrating and memorizing important material. High cortisol may be another reason why effective studying may not be plausible with an energy-drained brain and body. On the other hand, social interactions, whether in person or virtual, can help stabilize these cortisol levels and release feel-good hormones such as dopamine, improving both mood and overall well-being itself. In fact, for more severe cases of illness, healthy social interactions have supported the lowering of mortality rates by 20 percent to 40 percent, so hanging out with a friend has real-life benefits to recovering quickly from illness.

A cold outbreak requires the entire community to work in unison to help each member get

back on their feet. Our unique environment makes Andover more vulnerable than ever to things such as the common cold. Students must be aware of their rights to fit their schedule as necessary to their condition and severity, but must also take proper and effective steps to make themselves feel better as quickly as possible. Apart from the normal, "taking care of yourself," calling a friend or moistening the air could combat the common cold from getting more severe, and letting go of the feeling of being even further behind will allow for a faster recovery and a stronger push forward. We're sick, already. Let's get over it, quickly, together.

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The Self-Defeating Logic of Affinity Clubs



Andover boasts a diverse student body on this campus. One of our core pillars is "Youth From Every Quarter." Any Andover student will tell you that they've heard the phrase "53 countries and 41 states" countless times. With this heterogeneity comes something our school discusses extensively: our affinity groups. Most students have been involved in affinity groups at Andover at least once. They provide spaces for students who share similar identities, affirming their sense of belonging and representation; there is no doubt that they exist for a good cause. However, the way affinity groups work is actually counterproductive in achieving that goal. Each of these groups emphasizes differences rather than encouraging dialogue between them. Despite their best intentions, affinity groups at Andover actually tend to divide the community rather than bond it.

Affinity groups fragment students into different factions of "people like me," limiting their ability to take full advantage of the myriad divergent perspectives available at Andover. According to a study by Cornell University, affinity groups strengthen relationships within the group at the expense of intergroup collaboration, ultimately promoting insularity and limiting the potential for broader community cohesion. This phenomenon is particular-

ly applicable to Andover, where students come from varied backgrounds. Although classes and afternoon activities bring us together by requirement, it is in the experiences we choose for ourselves that the strongest relationships are formed. True growth in communities and individuals comes from engaging across differences, not retreating from them. By isolating ourselves in affinity groups, we risk turning Andover's greatest strength, its diverse network and community, into a missed opportunity. For a group whose efforts are to establish connection and foster belonging, affinity groups paradoxically end up highlighting our differences by separating students into identity-based batches: Asian students here, Black students there, LGBTQIA+ students elsewhere. This deepens separation and leaves fewer opportunities for genuine cross-group friendships.

As the number of affinity groups has multiplied over the years, identities have become more narrowly defined, reducing their ability to foster genuine cross-community connections. From my experience, some affinity groups only resurface around college application season, when students want another line on their resume. This performative cycle reduces affinity groups to symbols of representation rather than spaces of authentic dialogue, weakening their ability to build authentic friendships across identities and instead reinforcing divides. Additionally, while poor attendance and weak communication affect many clubs on campus, in the context of affinity groups, these shortcomings take on sharper consequences. Missed meetings or inconsistent leadership can weaken opportunities for productive exchange, as when a group with low turnout becomes a small circle of the same three or four students,

repeating familiar conversations. In these cases, belonging is reduced to optics: who shows up, who is seen supporting, and who can claim credibility from being associated with a particular group. This transforms affinity groups into spaces where appearance takes precedence over substance. This "performative allyship" encourages the practice of shallow cultural empathy; individuals aren't exposed to the necessary practice of listening to perspectives unlike their own and building cross-identity friendships. At best, the loop allows actual inequities, such as microaggressions, disparities in dorm life, or unequal leadership opportunities, to go unaddressed. At worst, it underscores the divide between students who live and breathe these identifications day in and day out and those who merely "appear" out of convenience.

While some sensitive discussions around race, gender, or sexuality exist in spaces like Empathy, Balance, and Inclusion (EBI), they are too frequently limited to designated programs rather than becoming part of everyday conversations in dorms, advisories, or informal student life. And of course,

not every space needs to revolve around identity. Still, when dialogue happens only in set-aside forums, it limits the chance for those lessons to carry into the broader community. Affinity groups aim to provide safe spaces for individuals to share their vulnerability. Yet, the research suggests that the conversations affinity groups are designed to encourage may thrive most in diverse, mixed settings. Princeton University found that students who frequently interact with diverse peers show greater gains in critical thinking, problem-solving, and general knowledge than those who remain in a homogeneous group. While affinity groups aim to promote cultural understanding, the research suggests that true "understanding" flourishes most in integrated spaces, not identity-based sectors. By isolating conversations that thrive in diverse spaces, they weaken both individual growth and the collective strength of the Andover community.

Non-affinity spaces that celebrate culture, such as AflaAm and even the K-Pop group, are the real stars of the show as they resist isolation by sharing their traditions and experiences with

the entire community, while still being open to all. School-wide dialogue programs, cross-identity forums, and even stronger integration of identity and culture into curriculum or dorm programming are better ways to take advantage of our "intentionally diverse" community. For instance, many schools offer "Intergroup Dialogue" programs, pairing students from different backgrounds to discuss topics such as privilege or discrimination. Andover could be more proactive in adapting these intergroup conversations, creating student groups like the Interfaith Council that features a student from every major religion on campus. Even smaller dorm traditions can foster the campus culture of welcoming these conversations. At Fuess House, during every dorm meeting, a student is selected to share their culture with the dorm community, essentially celebrating the culture that expands minds and understanding, a goal that the affinity groups on campus also attempt to achieve. They may share the meaning of their flag or how their cultural food makes them feel. In doing so, they invite their peers not just to learn about a tradition but to step into the emotions, pride, and memories that shape their identity.

Andover's affinity groups inadvertently hinder discussion and dialogue among the diverse communities we have on campus. True belonging at Andover doesn't come from dividing ourselves into smaller groups; it comes from learning how to sit together, even in discomfort, and growing as one community.

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MIA WALKER/ THE PHILLIPIAN

ASM Comedically Educated Students on New Policies

Continued from A1, Column 2

“The message came across, but I’m not sure how seriously students are going to take it, because the way the message was presented was kind of making light of the situation. The way it was acted out didn’t really highlight how important these ASMs are to the speakers and how important they should be to the students. But this approach has been better than what we’ve been doing in past years, which is just sending out emails and expecting students to take it seriously,” said Zhang.

Winslow emphasized that the purpose of this ASM was to help students recognize the value and insight these gatherings can offer.

“I hope that they got a sense that it’s really important to be paying attention. It isn’t just about sitting there, but also that people have been in-

entionally thoughtful to who we bring to campus, and what we’re hoping they get out of it. We hope that they will keep their phones away. We hope that they will be awake and engaged, and most importantly, we hope that they’ll enjoy the ASM. That’s the most important thing,” said Winslow.

Ware offered insights into what future ASMs could look like. She mentioned that, though skits would not be a regular occurrence, there will be attempts to better engage the student body during ASM.

“I’m not sure if anything’s in the pipeline for additional skits in the coming weeks, but we’re definitely looking to have students involved in each ASM. We’d like to have a lot more student performances of all types, like musical, dance, theater... We just want more students to be involved in ASM. That helps the student body to know what’s out there, too, and be able to recognize incredible talents that their peers possess,” said Ware.



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN
Abbot Cluster Co-President Magdalena Mercado '26 and Blue Key Head Frank Hu '26 preformed a high energy and comedic rap to explain the new phone policy to the student body.

Students Commented on the “6-7” Trend, Comparing it to Past Internet Memes

Continued from A1, Column 5

’26 for comically alluding to it during their inaugural ASM speech. She also noted how the campus wide joke reflects a comedic community.

“I liked [how the student co-presidents] Gracie and Philip mentioned it in their inaugural speech. It was pretty much all Gracie. She was very funny, and her comedic timing was really good. She said ‘senior spring is coming in about six or seven months.’ Comedic gold. Seriously. Great,” said Bae.

She added, “It kind of highlights how brainwashed our campus is, but I think it’s also very bonding because every time you hear it, you all have a common thought.”

Not every student appreciates the incessant “6-7” jokes; Ethan Brown ’27 is one of them. He suggested that the meme has been overused, and is no longer comedically viable.

“It’s quite childish. It gets me annoyed. Every single time I hear it, I just want to leave the space. I honestly think it’s the stupidest trend I’ve seen in a while. It doesn’t make any sense. It’s overused. The comedic background behind it has just faded into just noth-

ingness, and to be quite honest, it just needs to be toned down,” said Brown.

Many students frequently experience the joke “6-7” in math class due to the high likelihood that the specific numbers will be said. Dean Burton ’26 is another student who mentioned “6-7” jokes in his math class.

“In my stats class, the number 67 is really important in the empirical rule and other percentages. Every time our teacher says 6-7 or 67 or something along those lines, everyone just gets up, starts clapping, and starts yelling 67. It’s just a crazy experience,” said Burton.

Burton also provided his outlook for the future of the “6-7” meme. He contrasted the longevity of the “6-7” joke to “Italian Brain Rot,” a set of memes that was popularized last Spring.

“This ‘6-7’ movement has the longevity of something comparable to the Ninja low taper fade. And that’s saying something, all right? Like ‘6-7,’ this isn’t the kind of thing that you just pass on by in a couple of weeks, days even. The Italian rain rot, you don’t hear that anymore. But I’m still hearing ‘6-7, 6-7, 6-7,’ and maybe an occasional 41. ‘6-7’ is here to stay at Andover,” said Burton.

Continued from A1, Column 5

support is a lot of teachers still think it means that you’re going to water it down and you’re not going to keep the integrity of the rigor. The teachers don’t want their curriculum compromised and made easier, so our big message is to explain that we’re not making it easier. We’re making it accessible. It means kids can do it,” said Buzard.

Today, the peer tutoring programs offered by the ASC have become essential to the lives of many students, tutors and tutees alike. Philip Molina ’28, who is currently preparing to become a peer tutor, emphasized the ASC’s role in easing the academic and mental pressures of Andover.

“In 2018, we moved from

The ASC Relocated From the OWHL to Pearson in 2018

“[The ASC] is here to lighten the load as much as they possibly can. They won’t give the same support to every student, since they understand they have to approach each student differently, and they do their best to provide every resource they can to help us succeed. But because of how they function, it’s a two-way street. The student must want the help as well. The most important part is knowing about the ASC and what it has to offer,” said Molina.

Having moved to Pearson Hall in 2018, the ASC plans to relocate to George Washington Hall (GW) for the next academic year. Laura Warner, the Director of Academic Skills Center and Student Accessibility Services, highlighted the opportunities the new space in GW will bring to the ASC.

“In 2018, we moved from

[Oliver Wendell Holmes Library] (OWHL) after the renovation to the first floor of Pearson Hall, where we are now... We will be moving to GW, which will be slightly farther from the center of campus, and especially from [Paresky] Commons, Morse [Hall] and OWHL. Students will have to plan ahead a bit more to get to their appointments and we anticipate less foot traffic. All of these are challenges, but the opportunities in our new space are many: we hope to have many more small group areas for peer tutoring, more whiteboard, more chairs and flexible seating for quiet work space, and a larger area to meet with advising groups or other groups of students,” Warner wrote in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Annual Harvard Native American Powwow Trip Cancelled Due To Bus Service Complications

DINA NAMJOO & NICCOLO LEE-SUK

The annual trip to the Harvard Native American Powwow, sponsored by the Robert S. Peabody Institute of Archaeology (Peabody), was cancelled last Saturday as a result of bus service difficulties. The trip would have marked the third year Andover students attended the event.

Powwows serve as both cultural celebrations and social gatherings for Native American tribes. The Harvard Powwow, established in 1995, is an intertribal event open to the public that many indigenous people living in the Boston area attend. In 2023, the Peabody began chaperoning trips for Andover students to Cambridge for the powwow.

Dr. Robert Wheeler, Director of the Peabody, expressed the value of sponsoring the trip. Wheeler explained that this year, there was a scheduling error with the bus company causing extended wait times. This ultimately resulted in the trip being cancelled.

“We coordinate through the Dean of Students office for off-campus trips. They did in fact book a bus for us, but somehow the bus company didn’t write it down. We were sort of waiting there. Then when we finally were like, ‘Hey, maybe we should start to call people and find out what’s

going on,’ it became clear that there was no bus coming. We had about 20 kids that were there ready to go, but we decided that was pushing the timeline far. We do plan on going next year and we will definitely confirm, reconfirm and re-reconfirm with the bus company,” said Wheeler.

Wheeler continued, “It’s a great cultural event for people that may not have had a lot of exposure to Native American cultures, to take a pretty quick bus ride (if the bus is running) to experience not just the drumming and dancing and singing, but also the vendors. It’s a neat way for students to engage with a culture that they probably have not had a lot of connections to.”

Azzaam Abdur-Rahman ’27 had caught wind of the event through his History 300 class, as it piqued his interest as an opportunity for extra credit. Abdur-Rahman also emphasized the importance of Andover student attendance at the powwow in terms of historic and cultural engagement.

“It’s especially important for Native American history, and important for us to learn about how Native American culture is still present today. It’s important for us to not just sit in a classroom and learn, but engage in a real world setting. I didn’t just do it for extra credit. That’s what piqued my interest, but I was interested in seeing something new and actually engaging with what we had been

learning about,” said Rahman.

Dasha Gomez ’28 mentioned her excitement at the prospect of seeing the Native American dances. She also emphasized the scarcity of opportunities to engage specifically with Native American culture.

“We waited for 30 minutes or so before it was cancelled, so I felt disappointed because we waited a long time, but also it would have been nice to go off-campus and see something so different. As Andover says, they acknowledge that we’re on Native land, but we don’t really get to explore that, and there’s not much representation here,” said Gomez.

Mercy Okoronkwo ’27 also felt curious about the event, and as a result, was disappointed at its cancellation. She conveyed the significance of the possibility of witnessing Native culture in person.

“In History 300, we were learning about Native Americans, and we were learning about matriarchs in the Native American societies. My teacher was talking about how the powwow was going to encompass the matriarchs. I wanted to go see that in-person. I’ve never seen Native American culture live or in person, so I wanted to see the traditional wear, the food, the culture... I was watching a video on my computer, and I was sad that I didn’t get to see that in person,” said Okoronkwo.

Faculty Consider Many Factors When Deciding Which Computer Science Courses Are Offered

Continued from A1, Column 5

interest, departmental coverage, and faculty capacity/interest. New courses always come directly from faculty initiative — a teacher sees an opportunity, designs the curriculum, and brings it forward to the CSC curriculum team, then to the department, and finally to Academic Council for approval,” wrote Jacob in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Decisions about which courses are offered each term are not arbitrary. Nicholas Zufelt, Instructor in Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science, explained the selection process in an email to *The Phillipian*.

“The [CSC] teaching faculty get together with the department chair and consider a variety of factors, including previous enrollment data, current course requests, teaching course loads and other faculty needs, and the needs and interests of the student body,” wrote Zufelt.

Jacob elaborated on the decisions, noting that he views accessibility as key. He also explained that faculty members have the option to spearhead courses aligning with their specialties.

“I believe there should be more introductory courses than intermediate, and more intermediate courses than advanced ones. Some courses are closely associated with individual faculty expertise or interest—for instance, Scientific Computing is a course that [Meghan Clarke, Instruc-

tor in Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science,] has developed and taught. While another faculty member like myself could prepare to teach it, my hope is that faculty teach courses they themselves find intrinsically interesting and energizing,” wrote Jacob in his email to *The Phillipian*.

On the other hand, Henry He ’26 explained that the CSC curriculum’s lack of placement tests and emphasis on entry-level courses can impede the development of people with existing coding experience. He noted that advanced-level classes should be more accessible to students by implementing placement tests.

“The way that they structured the requirements makes it very difficult for students who are interested in these topics to take Computer Science classes. I was talking to one of my friends and he has tons of Computer Science experience in the past. He’s built whole websites and stuff. He was forced to go through Introduction to Python this year because he didn’t have the school prerequisites. That was a little bit silly in a sense, so you can’t test out in the same way as you could do math and other stuff. Perhaps one of the reasons why these classes aren’t offered is just because the students who would want to take them oftentimes can’t,” said He.

Having taken three CSC courses at Andover, Alfonso Gonzalez-Cano ’27 appreciated the curriculum’s focus on soft skills over technical skills. He explained how these skills can be translated and applied in multiple disciplines.

“They do a really good job of teaching you the skills. They don’t focus so much on learning the different languages, which you can do in the basement of your house on a single night if you want... anyone can learn a language. There’s plenty of tutorials out there on YouTube. Really what they teach you is the skills and how to apply them and practices in the workspace. It’s one of the more applicable classes,” said Gonzalez-Cano.

In his email to *The Phillipian*, Jacob acknowledged that students may be disappointed if they intend on taking a specific advanced course. However, Jacob encouraged students to be open to other avenues, noting that many of the advanced classes build on the same transferable core skills, and that by learning different topics, students may find new problems or facets of computer science that they want to explore further.

“I would encourage students not to think of one particular course as the only way to achieve their goal of a PA education. Part of the value of coming to a place like Andover is being pushed to explore new directions and discover problems you have not anticipated. Beyond any one title, our advanced courses all heavily emphasize problem-solving, project-based learning, ideating on new problems, and collaboration skills. These experiences build skills that are highly transferable—across multiple disciplines and domains,” wrote Jacob.

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10 Questions With Dr. Benjamin Cashen

REPORTING BY KRISTEN MA

Dr. Benjamin Cashen is an Instructor in the Physics Department. Prior to coming to Andover, he worked as an Analytical Quality Control (QC) Chemist for a nutrition company before transitioning to the Williams Laboratory at Northeastern University, where he obtained his PhD in Biophysics. In his free time, Cashen enjoys arranging music, playing pool, and walking with his wife.



E. LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

You graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree in physics. Were you always interested in physics, and how did you come to find that was your passion?

I took physics in high school, and I remember I wasn’t really interested in anything at the time. I was more interested in socializing. But I did take a physics class, and it felt like it was one of those subjects that started to click right away. I was taking some classes initially just at a community college because I wasn’t sure what I wanted to study. I took a physics class, [and] I ended up having the most phenomenal teacher, and the material was so interesting because it was the study of electricity and magnetism. It was where physics becomes magic in some way, where it’s mind-blowing. I got pulled in so quickly into the wonders of understanding the world through that lens, but it was really the teaching component of it all that was actually the main thrust to where I am.

Throughout your life, you have owned a variety of different pets. What is the craziest interaction that you’ve had with one of these pets?

An old friend sort of pawned off two ferrets on us because they were moving. We had these ferrets, which are the weirdest, wildest animals. They’re so crazy and adorable, and they have practically no spine, so you can just bend them into any shape. What they will do is they will take things around the house and hide them. They were taking flip-flops or pens or little objects that they could find anywhere, and they would drag them into a little hiding spot. During the week, you could pull the couch back and find all this random stuff, their treasures.

What was your experience at University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) like?

My experience at UTD was just about as perfect as you could get for an undergrad experience. I was very sure that I wanted to study physics, so I was able to just jump into it, and very quickly. The culture is that of just nerdy science kids. They also don’t have much Greek life or even a lot of sports. Their best, “sports team” would actually be their chess team. Everybody you met was on the same wavelength as you in terms of what they were passionate [about]. They were really hard-working, and they wanted to study, not party, which I was all about.

What drew you to Andover, and did you have any expectations about teaching prior to coming here? Did anything change after the fact?

I got to do a lot of teaching during grad school. I was already thinking teaching would be something that I would go down as a path eventually. I had made a profile on a teaching website. John Rogers, the Chair of the Physics Department, reached out because he saw my profile and said, ‘We’re looking for an instructor and you look like you’d be a good fit.’ I started doing research and realized this is an incredible institution for teaching. I got here and my initial notions of what this school might be, a pocket of wealth and privilege, were instantly dispelled. Everyone is very down to earth. Everyone is so passionate about teaching, and it’s such an incredibly close-knit community. It is very cool to see, and it’s a wonderful way in which education is working very well.

During your time at Northeastern, you received the Outstanding PhD Student Research and Excellence in Teaching awards. Did those honors feel validating for the effort you put in as a graduate student?

For the teaching ones, absolutely. I would prefer teaching over doing my research. I put in so much effort. All of my students, I loved having in class, and I was present for them. Reading the end of term reviews was the most validating. Sometimes you forget how impactful you are being until you actually see some feedback from your students. The outstanding research one, I was surprised by. It’s sort of the luck of the draw in terms of what you get for projects. So it’s less validating because half of it feels like just good fortune. Whereas teaching, it really feels like that is actually coming from your true involvement with the students.

What is a life lesson you were taught and live by?

My life lesson is to remember to appreciate the things and the people around you as much as you can, particularly the

people. Stop and remember everything that you’re being given at a moment. It’s very easy to take [things] for granted. If life is constantly raining down on you, maybe you’re not in a position to see that. But when things are picking up, or you’re in a spot where you can take some time to relax, think about how meaningful your relationships are. Always keep in mind the things that are important to you, and why they’re important to you.

To obtain your PhD in biophysics, you worked at the Williams Laboratory for single molecule biophysics at Northeastern University. What was an important lesson you learned there?

One of the most important parts of doing research or working in general is that it’s a very collaborative process. You have to rely on people to help push you up, and you also have to hold people up as well. The great thing about that lab was that all of those members were really phenomenal at doing that. If somebody was stuck on something, or we wanted to run ideas off someone else, and we hit a brick wall in terms of where we were going

with our work, then there was always somebody to talk to. One of the most important things is a really collaborative spirit, especially because science right now is done in large groups. Our role was doing biology, physics, and chemistry, so it was also the idea that really good discoveries are usually interdisciplinary, so they span across different subjects.

Beyond physics and teaching, what hobbies do you enjoy and how do you find time for them?

I really like making music and doing music arrangements. When I’m playing music, it feels like the moment when I can be closest and express the thing that is closest to my real self. It’s where if I had to say that I had any spirituality, it’s where that spirituality would actually come from. I have to be very intentional with it. You have to find, not necessarily even a routine, but times in which you can actually use [it]. You have to force yourself a little bit sometimes... I would consider [music] my biggest hobby. I also like to play pool. I was an avid skateboarder back in the day. My hobby is also just spending my time with my wife, sometimes walking in the woods.

If you could eat only one meal for the rest of your life, what would you choose?

I’m just gonna go with the classic, my favorite sandwich, the BLT. I just love a good BLT, and I only eat them in the summer, because that’s when you get good tomatoes, which is very crucial. I have to go a whole nine months before, or ten months before I can get them again.

What is your favorite place or a hidden gem that you know about on campus?

It’s got to be the [Cochran] Bird Sanctuary. My wife and I decided to walk over there on a nice day. It’s such an easy way to get away from people and the school and away from it all, and pretend that you’re really out in the middle of nowhere. It’s a great, easy miniature escape from everything else in life. There are a ton of birds in there, you can find some really cool ones. We definitely [saw a] spotted woodpecker, a cardinal, a few other cool ones, and then tons of chipmunks. The last time we were there, it felt so perfectly New England woods, you could really imagine Thoreau in Walden. You feel a little bit more connected to the world, which oftentimes, when you’re around the city or a more industrial setting, it’s harder to connect with that. Going into the woods of the forest is always a rejuvenating thing.

HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

COLLECTED BY IAN S. KIM & SARAH SUN

Foreign Policy: Five Major Countries Formally Recognize Palestinian Statehood

Britain, Canada, Australia, Portugal, and France officially recognized a Palestinian state at the annual United Nations (UN) General Assembly on September 21. According to “The New York Times,” Israel faces mounting pressure to alleviate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Despite receiving some international recognition, a Palestinian state will likely do little to change the situation on the ground. According to “CNN,” Israel has continued their military campaign in Gaza. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to the events by declaring that “there will be no Palestinian state.” At a subsequent UN summit, U.S. President Donald Trump characterized the recognition as a reward to Hamas, according to “The Independent.”

Health: Trump Pushes Unsubstantiated Claims Tylenol May Cause Autism in Developing Fetuses, FDA to Change Label

In a recent press conference, U.S. President Donald Trump instructed pregnant women not to take acetaminophen, a painkiller including medicines such as Tylenol, falsely linking it to an increased risk of autism, according to “ABC News.” He also announced the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would update the labelling on acetaminophen bottles to more strongly suggest this connection. According to “The Hill,” many groups of medical professionals publicly opposed this announcement, calling it scientifically unsupported. Steven Fleischman, president of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), noted in a statement that “in more than two decades of research on the use of acetaminophen in pregnancy, not a single reputable study has successfully concluded that the use of acetaminophen... causes neurodevelopmental disorders in children.”

Business: Negotiations Underway to Place TikTok Under New American Ownership

The White House recently released new details about a potential deal with China that would allow popular social media app TikTok U.S. to be owned by American investors. According to “The Wall Street Journal,” the preliminary framework will not require users to install new apps, and TikTok’s content-recommendation algorithm would remain under American control. Cloud-computing firm Oracle and private-equity firm Silver Lake would own about 50 percent of the entity, while TikTok’s parent company, ByteDance, would retain less than 20 percent. Additionally, the company’s new board would have six American directors out of seven, and would be tasked with ensuring user data remains in the country, addressing a key concern of many TikTok critics, according to the “The New York Times.”

Media: Jimmy Kimmel Returns to the Airwaves

Comedian Jimmy Kimmel’s show has returned to American Broadcasting Channel (ABC) six days after it was suspended indefinitely for a statement he made about the assassination of political activist Charlie Kirk. However, according to “PBS,” two of ABC’s affiliate groups still will not air Kimmel’s show. As reported in “Reuters,” during his first show back, Kimmel stated that it was “never my intention to make light of the murder of a young man ... [nor] to blame any specific group for the actions of what was obviously a deeply disturbed individual.” However, Kimmel also decried what he called censorship by President Donald Trump and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Trump, who had previously celebrated Kimmel’s suspension, expressed his displeasure at Kimmel’s return and hinted at further action against ABC.

Culture: Netflix’s Movie “KPop Demon Hunters” Breaks Records

Netflix’s animated film “KPop Demon Hunters” (KDH) has been breaking records since its release in early summer, becoming a global phenomenon that surprised even its creators. Maddie Kang, creator of KDH noted, “We didn’t expect any of this. It’s blown our minds. Every time [viewers] click the play button on Netflix, they are not just watching your movie, but they’re going back to Korean culture, which is truly incredible.” KDH became the first Netflix film to top the U.S. box office and the most-watched film in Netflix history, amassing 266 million views by August 2025. Its soundtrack also became immensely popular; according to “Billboard,” the movie’s fictional group Huntrix was the first fictional group to top the Billboard Global 200 chart with their song “Golden.” This song also achieved the highest chart position for an animated movie soundtrack and set a Spotify daily stream record with 33 million streams in one day.

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Betcha Thought We'd Make a Ph-Joke

New Qualifications for 6-Level Work Announced by Konnor Fortini

After complaints from Ivies that we are just “too qualified,” the Dean of Studies' office is proud to announce the new qualifications for 6-level work. A 6 is given only to the best of the best, outstanding high honor work (done mostly over the table), and a demonstration of exceptional mastery. The requirements by department are as follows:

- English—Your essays must evoke so much life that your teacher gets pregnant upon reading.
- Chemistry—Don't even answer 4 level questions, leave it with a sassy note that screams untapped genius, such as “stoichiometry again, seriously *eye roll*?” Skip straight to 6 levels, and reject Lewis's elementary dot structure, aka pseudoscience on par with RFK Jr. Instead, use quantum modeling to create a more accurate prediction of what happens when Carbon, Hydrogen, and Nitrogen are combined. (A little bit of Blue Sky never hurt anybody)
- History and Social Sciences—A 6 now requires a well-researched and cited (Chicago ;P) plan to turn the Middle East into a Banana Republic, while at the same time preventing the upcoming United States recession (without another World War).
- Biology—Don't be afraid to think outside the box, test shaky theories, and sometimes torture answers out of your classmates. Think Stanford-level experiments. Requirements are more flexible, but an example would be memorizing the entire textbook so you can feel cool when your teacher retells the textbook word for word.
- Math—The requirement is straightforward: convince the math department chair to advance your math level. Bribery is encouraged. Salary men vs. women (get creative, twist those numbers into the fourth dimension, but keep it under the glass ceiling)
- Physics—Students will not be considered for a 6 until receiving an official Lockheed Martin Job Offer. The security of said 6 depends on which department they are selected for, defense or offense.
- Philosophy & Religious Studies: Prepare for the rapture.

Week's Top Headlines

- *Student Gets Caught Misinterpreting The Meaning Of “All In” Before Crucial YES+ Meeting*
- *Jimmy Kimmel Leaves The Eighth Page To Return To PA Comedy Club*
- *Head of School Munch Serves Expired Ben (& Jerry)'S Ice Cream In Solidarity*
- *iPhone 17 Air Proven To Be Heavier And More Ineffective Than The Entire Andover Football Roster*
- *GAP Related Activity Increases 300 percent On Campus Following NBA Youngboy Concert In The Den*
- *W-Stem Student Hacks the Mainframe, Bypassing the Respondus Lockdown Browser*
- *Boston Tea Party Reenactment Delays Senior Cruise*

OVERHEARD ON THE PATHS

- “Mega Knight son or beatdown daughter?”
- “Imma get with her Tonight Dough, like Jimmy Fallon.”
- “You better hope she's pregnant.”
- “Should NOT have eaten that burrito.”
- “My YES+ talker gets a No-, I'm not listening to ts.”
- “Hazing agreement? No.”
- "Diper? I hardly know her!"

Letter to the Editor **Staff Report**

Dear *The Phillipian*,

We are writing after receiving a comment from the head of this paper, claiming that we only write about “polishing the knob,” especially in pressing times like this. But we recognize this as what it is. We need to stand with our foremothers to make it known that WE WILL NOT STAND OR KNEEL (but we will squat, also sometimes kneel) for such systemic oppression and will not let anything happen under the table.

In a free state, such as the United States, public media is a place for innovation to grow and for ideas to flourish. We believe that anyone (including women ;D) deserve a right to stoke the social fire. Alas, we proudly resonate with Al Jazeera's quote that “Political violence is an American problem only White America can resolve.” We recognize our position as mostly white male Americans (socioeconomic background is factored as well), and we promise to carefully wield such power to inspire those wrongdoers, no matter their location on the race, gender, and sexuality spectrum to continue to go ALL IN (wink wink) with their agendas, no matter who tries to shoo- stop you.

The governing body of a free press should not exercise control over those who write for it. Everyone who works and writes for the paper should "seize the means of production!" As a close friend of the 8th page once told us, never give up on “My Struggle,” in this case, our struggle. Push boundaries, stay funny.

And in case we ascend up to heaven like the prophet foretold, or happen to slip the other way, Farewell, mortal souls.

write for the eighth page

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The Phillippian SPORTS

Volume CXLVIII | Number 19

i talkin' bout
ALL INNIT

September 26, 2025

Boys Water Polo Stays Afloat Against Deerfield in Close Battle

ALEX GODSEY

SATURDAY 9/20	
Andover	6
Deerfield	5

Boys Water Polo (3-1) won a close match against Deerfield this week, pushing the team to a strong 3-1 start. In the game, the team worked cohesively offensively, which allowed it to lead early. When Deerfield retaliated by closing the gap quickly, the team was able to hold onto the lead, clinching the game by one.

Brandon Xu '26 elaborated on the events of the game and the triumph at the end, crediting the defense for its gritty end-of-game play.

“In the first half, we were up 6-3, and in the second half, we started rushing things. Our passes weren’t as great, and overall, we were disorganized on offense... We allowed them to catch up, but ultimately our defense played really well to hold them off,” said Xu.

One of the significant aspects of the successful defense was strategy. Coming into the game, the team understood Deerfield’s playstyle and strategies. Lincoln Tomlinson '27 talked about the approach that ultimately helped secure the win.

“A lot of the team has had a history with Deerfield, so we knew the way they play. We knew they were going to try to feed this one player, so we focused our defense around



K. MA/PHILLIPIAN

Goalie Hugo Appen '27 comes up clutch in third and fourth quarters, helping Andover narrowly defeat Deerfield.

dropping on this player. Every time the ball went to him, we would crash on him, which means two or three players getting on this one player, and we made sure he didn’t score. The whole team was on the same page, and that was great. We stopped a lot of goals that way,” said Tomlinson.

The other key area of the defense was individual play. An outstanding performance from goalie Hugo Appen '27 was crucial in fending off Deerfield’s comeback. Jeffery Lim '27 shouted out Appen as a vital part of the team’s de-

fense.

“Hugo is one of the reasons why our defense is the best it has been in a few years, and why we were able to stay in the game. Later, in the third or the fourth quarter, there were many times where Deerfield could’ve taken the lead, and Hugo made sure that that didn’t happen, so big shout out to him,” said Lim.

One prominent challenge for the team was that Coach Howard Kalter was away for personal reasons. As a result, the team had to step up and rely on its communication

and chemistry. Tomlinson noted players who stepped up to that leadership role.

“I want to shout out Jeffrey Lim, Ethan Zhu [’26], and Victor Hillier [’28]. The three of them worked really well in leading our team and making call-outs and shouts because our coach was out for surgery that game. We coached ourselves, and they did a great job of leading the team and keeping us together,” said Tomlinson.

Lim added to Tomlinson’s comment, talking about how much Coach Kalter means to

the team. The team was not just playing a regular game; every member was playing for their coach.

“We came together and knew that this game was more than just a game. We played for [Coach Kalter] because he wasn’t able to be there for us. Although it was a one-goal game, we are still proud of what we did,” said Lim.

Boys Water Polo hopes to carry its momentum to its next game on Saturday at Williston.

Field Hockey Flies by Loomis 8-0 in First Game in NEPSAC Class A

EVA JACKSON

SATURDAY 9/20	
Andover	8
Loomis	0

This past Saturday, September 20, Field Hockey (4-0) faced off against Loomis Chaffee, extending their undefeated win streak with a dominant 8-0 win. This game marked the first of matches against schools in the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Class A division for Field Hockey. Because of this, facing off against Loomis proved to be an exciting challenge

and a confidence boost when looking forward to future matches.

Goalie Cat Powers '28 commented on the positive shift in energy after the win. Despite the team already having high pride from their undefeated status, this game promoted an extra boost in the team’s tone for the rest of the season.

“It was our first Class A game of the season, so it was nice we were able to win and it is keeping us positive for the rest of the season,” said Powers. “It was tough because it was very physical for no reason. Everyone powered through, even when there were bad calls.”

Field Hockey is still striving to improve and smooth out minor issues in their teamwork. Vanessa Hall '28 commented on how the team has implemented what they

have been working on in practice, translating their focuses into real plays on the field.

“We worked on quick ball movement. The team we played, they were really physical and we worked on jumping the passes on the press. We did well on 1v1 defense which we worked on before that game,” said Hall.

With their competitive spirit and strong record, the team has already built strong connections and team dynamics. Gabby Gillette '28 described the energy of the team and its spirit this season.

“The team is performing really well considering our record and we just have a good connection with one another. The season’s been going really well so far. We’ve won all of our games and we’ve just been having a great time,” said Gillette.

Field Hockey’s performance continued to match, if not raise the bar for, their level of play and intensity early in the season. Hall described how the team’s performance fit in with the rest of its games.

“It fit in really well because we were moving the ball quicker and that’s something we were told to work on leading up to it. It was our first class A game, which is important for standings and the end of the season,” said Hall.

Hall highlighted improvements in skills such as ball handling and player positioning, noting that the team’s coordination has grown quickly throughout the start of the season.

“We performed good. We moved the ball well and didn’t hold onto it for too long. Our teammates moved the ball

down the field. We get better each game, so we’ve just been playing with each other more and getting used to each other,” said Hall.

The team is full of strong leaders who have had meaningful impacts on each game. Gillette shouted out Captain Lucy Parker '26 who had a particularly impressive game.

“I wanna shout out Co-Captain Lucy Parker, she’s my buddy and she just scored four of our eighth goals last game. Not only is she great around the circle, she is also a great leader overall,” said Gillette.

Field Hockey is preparing for home games against Tabor on Saturday and Governor’s Academy on Wednesday.



C. ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Field Hockey continues its four-game win streak after commanding 8-0 win over Loomis Chaffee.

Co-Captain Oliver Stabach '26: Leading with Calm Confidence and Bringing the Team Together

EVA JACKSON

Co-Captain Oliver Stabach '26 started playing Water Polo his Junior fall, when he joined the team to stay in shape for the swim season. After joining the team, he found a love for the sport and decided to continue it all four years, becoming captain of the team for his Senior year.

Victor Hillier '28 emphasized that Stabach leads with calm and confidence. He stressed that the effects of his leadership are felt from all around the team, especially due to his approachability.

“He’s calm and confident. It’s easy to talk to him, if you need anything or have questions,” said Hillier.

Jeffrey Lim '27 added onto Stabach’s leadership skills, pointing out his ability as a knowledgeable captain to provide specific feedback and help everyone improve, even if he isn’t the loudest voice on the team.

“Oliver leads a lot by example, and is always there to support the team. He isn’t



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

always the loudest voice, but he provides good specific feedback for everyone. He’s a great leader, one of the best leaders I have had in my life. He is very knowledgeable and always helps people when they need it, but isn’t overbearing or micromanaging anyone. When everyone is tired at the end of games or practices, he always push-

es everyone to keep working and shows them they have a little bit more left to give,” said Lim.

Stabach explained that his favorite roles of being a captain include running practices, talking to the team after practices and helping other players grow and develop everyday.

“Running practices is re-

ally fun. Talking to the team after practice, and giving everyone a pep talk before a game. I let a lot of people do their own thing, and if I see that [someone] could be [doing something] better I butt in and help them,” said Stabach.

Despite having a specific leadership role, Stabach keeps himself level with the rest of the team, while providing knowledgeable support. Hillier compared Stabach to his other experiences with captains and describes Stabach as a humble and helpful captain.

“I have had many captains in my life and they all seem to have much more power [than the team]. But Oliver is modest, and he doesn’t think he’s better than us simply because he’s captain. If he has advice, we know that it’s because he thinks that we could get better, not that he’s better than us,” said Hillier.

Not only does he provide good feedback, but Stabach is the backbone of the team, bringing everyone together and championing positive energy during practice. Bran-

don Xu '26 described how Stabach affects the team’s culture with his positivity.

“He’s a very uplifting leader. He’s really good at giving constructive criticism. Without him, water polo practice is a little less happy. That goes for everyone on the team, but it’s always nice to have him, especially during warmups and stuff. He just brings everyone together,” said Xu.

Adding on, Lim commented on how Stabach aims to motivate his teammates, pushing them to perform as their best selves and inspire collective improvement.

“Oliver is a great leader in that when the team needs him most, he is always there for them. Like, for example, say we are losing by three. Oliver is there to lead the team and to push everyone to keep working and get back into the game. He’s a great captain and leader and also one of my good friends,” said Lim.

Stabach is committed to Georgetown University for their Division I Swimming program.

Co-Captain Ethan Zhu '26 Leads Boys Water Polo with Determination and Focus

AVIAD AWA

Co-Captain Ethan Zhu '26 joined Boys Water Polo as a Junior and, now as a Co-Captain, hopes that his prior experience with the team will help to lead Boys Water Polo with a positive outlook and an empowering mindset, whilst uplifting his teammates. Having already made an impact with three commanding wins this season, Boys Water Polo is off to a strong start with a change-making leader.

Zhu credits his friends for getting him to join the team. As a swimmer, Zhu had no other option during the off-season but to stay in the water — which Boys Water Polo offered — and his love for the sport quickly blossomed.

“I wanted to get in the water as much as I could because swimming isn’t available in the fall, so that’s what I did for the fall as my sport. And, a lot of my friends were doing it as well, so I just wanted to join them,” said Zhu.

Victor Hillier '28 shed some light on Zhu’s leadership style, especially empha-

sizing his vocal abilities and how Zhu serves as a strong role model to the team. Hillier also praises the Co-Captain’s determination and focus.

“He’s pretty vocal with his opinion on everything. He’s always leading and showing a good example of what we should be doing. He’s never really goofing off, and he’s a pretty good role model for us,” said Hillier.

Teammate Lincoln Tomlinson '27, who also competes who also competes alongside Zhu with Boys Swimming, praised Zhu’s professionalism and how he serves as a perfect example to the coaches’ expectations. Tomlinson also emphasized how Zhu’s leadership helps keep the team together, making them better.

“As a leader, Ethan does a great job of upholding what the coach explicitly describes as our expectations. He keeps the team together, and he has great attention to detail. He makes sure that when we’re warming up, we’re doing it right, we’re not rushing anything, and we’re doing everything from small passes to bigger passes to make sure that we have all the funda-



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

mentals down,” said Tomlinson.

Hillier commented on Zhu’s best qualities as a leader, crediting his flexibility, sincerity, and how willing he is to take responsibility for his actions.

“His best quality is being able to admit that he’s wrong, because there are a lot of people who, when they make a mistake, are always blaming others. But Ethan, if he real-

izes that he made a mistake, he’ll take ownership of it, which is a great quality, because it tells the rest of us to do the same,” said Hillier.

Zhu has accepted his role of Co-Captain with great maturity. Specifically, he has shown that he has grown into his role tremendously and is willing to step up when the team needs him by leading by example.

“The role of captain is to

lead by example. Obviously, you may not necessarily be the best player at all moments or the most skilled, but what’s most important as a Captain is to show some leadership and especially accountability and responsibility. When things go wrong or when things aren’t going your way, you have to step up and you have to say something to try and turn things around,” said Zhu.

Zhu has plans of playing water polo in college, although he sees himself competing at a recreational level more than collegiately. He hopes that the team will serve as a way to stay fit, and doing something he enjoys will release stress from classes.

“I would like to do it recreationally. Even going into college, I’m still very open to trying to keep on playing water polo. It’s a very fun sport; it’s a great way to stay in shape, and also to just release the stress they have from school and stuff because you get to be in the water, you get to be shooting around, things like that, which are all really fun,” said Zhu.

BOYS WATER POLO

OLIVER STABACH '26 
GLASTONBURY, CT

ETHAN ZHU '26 
DHAHRAN, SA

BRANDON XU '26
SIMPSONVILLE, SC

DAVID PORTO '26
VINHEDO, SP, BR

HUGO APPEN '27
NEW YORK, NY

NATHAN EGBUNA '26
EL PASO, TX

OWEN BURKE '28
METHUEN, MA

ANDREW CAI '27
FT WASHINGTON, PA

VICTOR HILLIER '28
KIRKLAND, QC, CA

JEFFREY LIM '27
NEW YORK, NY

JOSHUA CHANG '27
DAVENPORT, FL

RYAN LOH '28
HONOLULU, HI

NICHOLAS KOURA '26
LA JOLLA, CA

LINCOLN TOMLINSON '27
OCOEE, FL

BECKETT KAVANAGH '29
STOW, MA

MANAGERS:

DJENABOU BAH '28
DHAHRAN, SA

CAMDEN SCHOPLER '27
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Football Falls to Williston Northampton During Home Opener Despite Preparation and Support

ALEX GODSEY

SATURDAY 9/13	
Andover	0
Williston Northampton	27

Last Saturday, Football (0-2) fell to Williston Northampton (Williston) with a score of 0-27 during its first home game of the season. The team’s defense was able to make many key stops, but the third quarter proved to be challenging for the Andover offense.

After starting with an advantageous field position on its own 40-Yard line, Andover strung up a 36-Yard reverse play led by Co-Captain Ollie Velez ’26. Co-Captain Scott Carmichael ’27 detailed the plan that led to that first play.

“Going into the game, we had a lot of juice, and we really thought we were going to pull off an upset. We thought all the preparation we had and the work we put in during the week would come to fruition. That first play made us believe in that. We hit a huge play, and we got really excited and kept going. Everyone thought it would be a touchdown, but we ended up a little short,” said Carmichael.

Jacob Honor ’27 commented on how each position



M. STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Linebacker Richard Indresano ’26 sets up at the starting line in loss against Williston Northampton.

performed in the game and how the team could improve. These areas of improvement were minor, but would help the group to create a strong, cohesive team early on in the season.

“Our defense played pretty well. We had a few mistakes, but our defense played well overall. Our offense is working out some minor problems. We’re early in the season, so we have to keep moving through our games and try to limit the mistakes,” said Honor.

Honor also highlighted

the play of linebackers Brock Feinberg ’26 and Nathaniel McCormick ’27, whose physicality disrupted Williston’s run attack, holding the opposition to seven points in the second half.

“Brock Feinberg stood out. He had a great game. He had about six tackles. Nathaniel and Brock played really well on the defence. They made a lot of tackles and made some big plays,” said Honor.

Although the game didn’t go as the team hoped, Elizandro Pereira ’27 applauded the mentality displayed by

new player Trevor Morasse ’29. Specifically, Pereira noted that Morasse supported his teammates and stayed focused during moments of pressure.

“[Trevor Morasse] is a freshman, and he was able to step up to the call and become the Varsity starter these last two weeks. During the game, he had a moment where he struggled, and he showed his passion and determination to make sure he got back on the field and became a better player. That’s what Andover Football wants to show. We

want to show that when we fall, we can get back up and punch again,” said Pereira.

Many students came to watch Football play its home opener at Phelps Stadium. Pereira described the support of the crowd and its effect on the team’s morale and effort.

“Our big goal was to go out and show our fans, our families, and our friends how far Andover Football has come. Sadly, we weren’t able to show that completely, but it’s shown by how our defense played. We had a lot of students there supporting us to the end of the game, which is great to see, because in past years people started leaving by the second half. It’s great to have that support all the way through,” said Pereira.

Looking to the upcoming weeks, Carmichael discussed what the team is focusing on during practice, in preparation for playing against the challenging teams in its schedule. The team plans to practice specific positions and teamwork with skill-building exercises.

“We’re looking forward to playing Salisbury and going against some more good competition. We’re looking forward to the offense improving in practice and taking a step in the right direction,” said Carmichael.

Football will compete against Salisbury School on Saturday.

Girls Cross Country Obtains Dominant Result at the Manchester Invitational

AVIAD AWA

Girls Cross Country kicked off its season with an inspiring showing at the Manchester Invitational, securing high placements across all categories. At one of the biggest meets in New England, these formidable results — notably a 20:07.1 from Amelia Alvazzi ’26 and a 20:33.0 from Anya Budzinski ’26 — forecast an exciting season.

Sophie Stetson ’29 took first place in the Girls Freshman race — which was 2.1 miles rather than the typical five kilometers in a course record time of 12:36.5. Budzinski praised Stetson’s performance in her first ever race

wearing an Andover uniform.

“Someone that stood out to me in the Freshman race was Sophie Stetson. She won [the Freshman race] in the last 200 yards and was super strong throughout. The finish is uphill, so it’s very tough, but she had a great kick at the end and won and had a really great time. So, that was really exciting. Hopefully we’ll have her in the varsity race soon, which will be great,” said Budzinski.

Being the first meet of the season, high excitement accompanied the races. Hannah Jung ’28 described the support and motivation she received from her teammates.

“As I went up every single hill and crossed each corner, I would notice that there

would be at least a small group of Andover students cheering each and every single athlete on. There was that team bonding moment where, no matter how much homework you have or things you need to do, everyone would be there supporting you on each and every single hill you challenge,” explained Jung.

Stetson shed some light on the team’s pre-race routine and a specific uplifting team-wide ritual. She described the various ways the team encourages one another.

“Before the race, we were all on the starting line together. We had a talk before we started the race and we talked about how we were feeling, and we held each other high. We all knew that we were go-

ing to do great,” said Stetson. “During the race, we have this little saying called ‘spark it’ when you see someone in a race. It’s just telling your teammates, you got this, keep pushing. That really helped.”

Jung highlighted the enthusiasm that new runners brought to the sport. She expressed pride that the team was able to make a statement at this meet.

“I believe the team’s future is still bright, maybe even brighter because we have lots of new runners who are interested. [This meet] was a really good way to start off the season,” said Jung.

After this strong meet, the team looked to maintain their energy throughout the season. Budzinski explained the

team’s training strategy for upcoming meets.

“Our next meeting is at home, so we’re going to do a lot of work, probably in the Sanctuary but also on the Great Lawn to really get familiar with the course, the terrain, and the tangents. In general, we’ll just keep doing what we’ve been doing. We’ve gotten a lot of great miles recently, so we’re going to keep that momentum going forward in the next couple of weeks,” said Budzinski.

Girls Cross Country will host Choate and Montrose in its home opener on Saturday, October 4.

Boys Cross Country Shows Promise in Opening Meet

ALEX GODSEY & ALEX HAVEMEYER

Boys Cross Country had its first meet of the season this past week at the Manchester Invitational. By far the biggest meet of the year, with over forty teams participating and hundreds of runners per heat, it provided a great first challenge for the team. Andover placed 17 out of 35 varsity teams, led by impressive runs from Charlie Gillick ’27 and Robert Budzinski ’26, who finished within ten seconds of each other.

Sebastian Vermut ’27 praised the younger runners on the team, who placed seventh out of 43 teams, an ex-

cellent outing. He mentioned that the young runners had shown great progress and that the future of Andover Cross Country was in good hands.

“On the boys’ side we had 31 runners, and it was the first [ever] race for fourteen runners at Andover. We look towards the younger runners... to see how they’re doing, and they did great,” said Vermut.

Along with the invitational being the first meet of the year, the course itself was also the most difficult that Andover will run all year. Tiger Wang ’29 described how Captain Robert Budzinski ’26 stepped up and led the team in its strong performance.

“[Budzinski] had a really great race and did great on this course, but at the

same time, he really helped me and the younger runners who were new to the course because he explained the course, where to make moves, and what to expect in general. Even though I was skeptical about it, it really did play out exactly the way he said it would. I was able to do exactly what he said, and I was able to also end with a pretty good result,” said Wang.

Budzinski applauded two young runners, Devin Akyali ’29 and Wang, who stepped up to the challenging circumstances and performed well. He emphasized the runners’ strategy and composure throughout the race.

“[Akyali] moved up consistently throughout the race and kept passing people the whole

time, which is a great strategy because, a lot of times, the Freshmen get excited and run the first 300 meters really fast. He stayed composed and ran really well. He’s going to develop into something special for us this season. Also, Tiger Wang, running his first New England-style cross country race, responded well to hills that he hadn’t seen before. He stayed calm and composed. He’s also a Freshman, and we’re gonna see some great development from him this season. I’m excited to see what he’s gonna do for us,” said Budzinski.

Wang described the supportive culture that the team has built throughout practices and meets. He provided insight into how the team has

worked to uplift itself during competitions and in practices.

“We have a strong team, but compared to previous years, as others say, we’re rebuilding this year... We’re doing really well, supporting each other, pushing each other not only in competitions, but also in training. From simple things like high-fives and saying ‘good luck’ to sharing our expertise, we have a positive team relationship,” said Wang.

Boys Cross Country will race at home on October 4 against Choate.

Girls Soccer Fights Hard but Falls Short Against Top Rivals

By Xavier Howell

Girls Soccer (3-2) faced two tough opponents this past week, falling to Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) on Saturday as well as the defending Class A champion Worcester Academy (Worcester) on Wednesday. While both games underscored areas for growth, they also were testaments of the team’s grit, with strong individual performances keeping the team competitive against top-tier opponents.

Against Loomis, Isabel Park ’28 noted that the team showed flashes of strong play but ultimately struggled to maintain rhythm, while also pointing out areas for improvement.

“It was a good environment. It’s especially tough because it’s the middle of the week and everyone’s tired, but it still had a good intensity. Emily Decker [’26] did great defending and pushing the team up. The team needs to trust in each other in order to have a strong season but obviously we’ll build that over time,” said Park.

On Wednesday, Worcester’s speed and intensity pushed the team to raise its level of play. Nina Oswanski ’28 emphasized finishing, building team cohesion, and maintaining a strong defensive line as key areas of focus.

“The game was really intense against Worcester. They are a really good team so it made us play better. Wylie [Roossien ’26] did a really good job and so did Keaghan [Murphy ’27], helping hold the back line. We need to work on building out of the back and playing through the middle. We also need to work on shooting and finishing as a team,” said Oswanski.

Girls Soccer hopes to overturn its losing stream in its next game on Saturday at Tabor.



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Sarah Powers '26 fights for the soccer ball against Loomis Chaffe opponent.

SATURDAY 9/20	
Andover	1
Loomis	3

WEDNESDAY 9/24	
Andover	2
Worcester	3

Boys Soccer Remains Hopeful After Loss to Loomis

XAVIER HOWELL

FRIDAY 9/19	
Andover	0
Loomis	3

Boys Soccer (1-5) matched up against Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) on Friday night under the Phelps Stadium lights, losing to Loomis by three goals. Despite the outcome of the game, the team demonstrated grit and determination with every play.

Goalkeeper Adam Sealfon ’29 spoke about how the team plans to turn the season around in hopes of improving their win streak. In addition, he highlighted key players Jaeden Morgan ’28 and Matthew Shampine ’26 who created many opportunities for the team to prevail.

“The season will go a lot better for the rest of the year, because we worked out our kinks as a group, and have a much easier schedule ahead of us compared to the start... The standouts for the Loomis game were Jaeden, because he had a great defensive



M. STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Goalkeeper Adam Sealfon '29 kicks the ball up the field. While the team is off to a 1-5 start, Sealfon believes that it will improve as the season continues.

game, and Matthew, because he generated a lot of opportunities going forward to score,” said Sealfon.

Wyatt Orraca-Cecil ’28 described the remainder of the season and how the team will keep spirits high moving forward. The team remains hopeful by defining their success through the game’s narrative rather than statistics.

“The rest of the season will be great for us. Our guys are really starting to connect and

bond. The way we practice, the way we want the best for each other, the way we hold each other accountable are vital pieces holding this team together. The score doesn’t tell the whole story. You have to really look at the game and watch the game to see what truly happens. Honestly, we’re a great team and we are going to have a great future. We are going to do pretty well this year,” said Orraca-Cecil.

Orraca-Cecil also empha-

sized the performance of midfielders Kai Myles ’27 and Ethan Brown ’27. He also highlighted Morgan and Edrian Vargas ’27 for their strong defensive plays during the game against Loomis.

“Kai and Ethan really managed the midfield. And you always have to give a shout-out to Jaeden and Edrian who kept our backline stable and steady. They’re really the glue guys,” said Orraca-Cecil.

Acknowledging the slow

start to the season, Michael Staii ’27 shared that the team is building up its momentum. He expressed that the team will continue to seek out its rhythm.

“Even though we are starting the season on a losing streak, we’ve played almost all of the hardest competition in our schedule, so we can turn around our record. The biggest thing we need to work on is our confidence and chemistry. We have such a young team, a lot of us haven’t played with each other very much, so we aren’t fully gelled yet,” said Staii.

Sealfon described drills and team building exercises that the team plans to focus on in upcoming practices. While individual skills are important, he highlighted that teamwork defines the outcome of each game.

“We will overcome this losing streak both by improving as a team, by continuing to upgrade the team chemistry, and as individuals, by improving our technical ability,” said Sealfon.

Boys Soccer’s next matchup is Saturday at Taft, as they look to turn the tide of their season.

Girls Volleyball Falls to Tough Matchups Against Loomis and Groton

GAURI BHAKTA

SATURDAY 9/20	
Andover	0
Loomis	3
WEDNESDAY 9/24	
Andover	0
Groton	3

Girls Volleyball (0-5) faced off against Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) on Saturday and Groton on Wednesday, competing hard in both matches. The team demonstrated determination and strong teamwork throughout

both games, despite coming up short in a three-set match against both teams.

According to Rihana Gomez ’26, even though both matches ended in losses, the team’s performance has improved significantly since the start of the season.

“Obviously, both of those games did not go the way that we wanted. But overall, our performance has really improved since the beginning of the season. All our practice and hard work has really paid off in these last couple of games. If I were to compare our team from our very first game against Dana Hall to the latest game against Groton, it’s two completely different teams in a very positive way,” said Gomez.

Sophia Fang ’28 also pointed out moments of skill and teamwork that stood out

in both games. Particularly during critical rallies, some players stepped up and made big plays.

“A highlight from our game against Loomis was during a tense rally back and forth, where neither side could score. Gracie [Azia-bor ’26], one of our middles, went up to hit the ball and was blocked, but she reacted quickly, passing it to a smart spot a couple feet off the net. Loomis didn’t see this coming, and they weren’t able to pick up the ball, so we ended up winning the point,” said Fang.

Both players acknowledged that keeping energy and focus throughout the matches were a challenge, but they emphasized how the team’s communication and connection helped overcome these adversities.

“One challenge we faced

was keeping our energy up throughout the entirety of the games. Energy is really important in a fast-paced game like volleyball. Sometimes we’d be really up, then have moments where it trickled down. But we’ve improved on that because we’ve become closer as a team. That connection makes it super easy to be energetic on the bench, loud, cheerful, and just have fun, which is the most important part,” said Gomez.

Fang emphasized the team’s communication and adaptability on the court as a key factor in their success. The Co-Captains Kate Rodgers ’26 and Nneka Ezeike ’26 have been especially inspirational.

“Our blocking has been really on point these past two games. Our middles, right side, and outside hitters

have been able to communicate a lot. This hard work has really helped us bounce back in moments where we are down, getting back into the flow of the game,” said Fang. She continued, “Both of our team captains, Kate and Nneka, have been doing really well leading the team on the court and keeping the energy positive no matter what. They offer helpful advice and push us to communicate and want the ball, which is something I appreciate.”

Girls Volleyball looks forward to building on its recent growth as a team and will travel to Tabor on Saturday, September 27.

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October 15
October 29



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Picture This: The Addison’s Artful Fall Opening Reception

DANIEL LIU &
ELIZABETH QIN

Golden light spilled through the Addison Gallery of American Art’s (the Addison) windows as guests drifted between rooms, their voices mingling with the faint hum of excitement. Beneath the museum’s vaulted ceilings, walls came alive with two strikingly different visions: the dream-like landscapes of Florida’s coastal marshes and the self-reflective portraits of a contemporary photographer.

On September 20, the Addison welcomed students, faculty, and local visitors to its fall opening reception, unveiling exhibits such as “Making Their Way: The Florida Highwaymen” and “Tommy Kha, Other Things Uttered.” The two exhibitions, which will run, among many others, through early 2026, highlight the gallery’s mission of honoring underrecognized histories while supporting emerging voices in the American art scene.

Angela Parker, an educator for The Addison shared the process of how Tommy Kha, Other Things Uttered was chosen for exhibition as a part of the Bartlett H. Hayes Junior Prize.

“Other Things Uttered’ is part of our Bartlett H. Hayes junior prize. We select an artist, like Tommy Kha, who has not had a solo exhibition in a collecting institution, a museum that has its own collection. It’s a way to give them a new platform for their work. Along with that, we publish a book about their exhibition and then one of their artworks becomes part of our permanent collection. Each exhibition has its own unique story,” said Parker.



C. ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Tommy Kha pictured with his favorite work, an ongoing collage, which he describes as a collaborative piece.

The reception was noted to have hundreds of attendees, about a third of whom were students. There was plenty of lively conversation and excitement, contrasting the usual serious and quiet atmosphere of a museum. Ophelia Lee ’26 was drawn in by a sign for the Florida Highwaymen.

“I don’t usually visit The Addison unless there’s an exhibit that really catches my interest. When I do make it there, it’s pretty relaxing to just browse and take my mind off school. [But for this reception,] it was definitely more social. I went with my roommate, and we ended up having a

20-minute conversation with the wife of an Andover alum about a painting and life in general. People were eager to talk, and it was pretty crowded, so I’d say it had a dynamic, social vibe,” said Lee ’26.

Parker emphasized the importance of such dialogue, noting how although the exhibitions are not bound by a single theme, they force us to reflect on how they are underlyingly interconnected.

“Each season we have an opening to celebrate all of the different exhibitions, so the reception is not necessarily under one specific theme but more so a way to honor each exhibition. But if you think

about themes that show up across the different exhibitions this season, they’re all interconnected in several ways, and they can help us think about identity, belonging, and our relationship to nature,” said Parker.

The Addison is holding a collage workshop on October 4 centered around the ideas of family, and on November 1 Tommy Kha will be on campus doing a mask making workshop. For Allison Lee ’28, the reception was a reminder about all of the visual art opportunities on campus.

“Last spring, I went to a Tom-

my Kha workshop and did some art inspired by his work. It was really cool to see how people you meet one year come back the next, and you can trace this connection to the art and the place. It makes you feel more connected to the campus and its creative community,” said Lee ’28.

The Addison offers more informal ways to make the museum a welcoming space for students, especially during the stressful times of a term. There are also various ways for students to get involved with the Addison.

“Last year, we started offering study hours at the end of each term. We stay open into the evening, offer refreshments, and have peer tutors available in case that’s helpful while students prepare for finals. We’ll be doing that again toward the end of the Fall term, so people can look out for that,” said Parker.

She continued, “We have a new role this year, an Addison Scholar. During the Scholar open house, students can learn more about this and other research-based opportunities on campus.”

While visiting alone can be a great way to quietly reflect on the art, Lee ’28 commented on the benefits of visiting the Addison with friends.

“It’s a much better way to experience the art at The Addison than going alone. It can be a lonely experience by yourself, but at the opening, you get to talk with people about the art, like ‘Wow, this is so cool!’ or ‘This piece means something different to me.’ It’s a much more exciting way to engage with what Addison has to offer,” said Lee ’28.

Love It, Hate It, or Hate-Watch It: Andover Talks “The Summer I Turned Pretty”

CHARLIZE SOW & HAYLEY FAN

From heated “Team Conrad” versus “Team Jeremiah” debates to frustration with Belly’s indecisiveness, Andover students have plenty to say about Prime Video’s “The Summer I Turned Pretty” (TSITP). For some, the television show is pure drama-filled escapism; for others, it’s an unrealistic portrayal of teenage life. Loved, hated, or even hate-watched, TSITP has sparked strong reactions across campus, cementing its status as the show of the summer.

EILEEN ZHU ’29

“There are some moments where I really would like to shove my head into a wall, but overall, it was a great show, and it is filled with lots and lots of drama. My team has always been Cameron from the moment he popped up, with his little cute dimples. He didn’t have very obvious problems. His problems mostly stemmed from his relationship with his mom or not being interested in whales anymore. They weren’t problems that affected his relationship with Belly. TSITP represents relationships terribly. Compare this to people at Andover, we’re busting our butts off to get into good colleges and to get good grades, we are doing everything to make sure that we ourselves grow as independent people. That is what I wanted TSITP to capture: the struggles of an actual teenager, not just relationships. I also think that the final episodes and ending are a joke. Literally a big fat joke. Why did Conrad go? The ending was really rushed. Everyone got with the most random people ever, for example, Jeremiah and Denise. The season three episodes are absolute trash, the ending too. Belly needed to choose the beach house and leave everybody alone.”

NISREEN DOHADWALA ’27

“I started watching TSITP when it came out in 2022 because it was all the rave and I needed a new show to start. I’m 100 percent Team Conrad. His character went from someone who was very sensitive, unable to process, convey, and communicate his emotions, to someone very mature with his feelings, especially in the last season and finale episode. I have to admit, before Conrad developed, I liked Jeremiah more. He was more confident in himself, and that would’ve been better for Belly in a relationship. However, that all changed when Jeremiah cheated. I really loved that she decided to move to Paris after everything blew up just to focus on herself. It’s the best decision she made in the entire show. I feel like TSITP is a good representation of what a super complicated relationship is like. People expect the characters to be perfect and their choices to be rational, but in reality, that’s not possible because of other imminent factors like depression, anxiety, and self-sabotage that are all part of the human experience.”

SAANIKA SLOTWINER ’27

“I’m Team Conrad, because Jeremiah is really annoying in my opinion. In the first season, I was Team Jeremiah because Conrad was boring and Jeremiah was cuter. But now I’m Team Conrad. I thought Belly wasn’t going to end up with anyone, which I actually would have liked. But I was happy with how it ended, it was better than I expected. I thought she was going to simply enjoy summer, and when something happened with about ten minutes left, I thought that was the end. But then she fixed it, so I was happy with that. The finale was satisfying. It was what everyone wanted, though some people disagreed, which confused me. From my own experience, I don’t think it’s very realistic. But it does add layers to what could happen, even if not in the same dynamics as real life.”

MAXIE WU ’28

“I don’t think I’m on a specific team. Each person has their own faults, and I don’t know what’s best for them. I’ve never really chosen one of the brothers, also because neither of them are my type, so I’m not biased. Some people say she can’t choose between them, but they often forget she was committed to a four-year relationship with Jeremiah. She never cheated, and she was genuine with her feelings. Canceling the wedding was messy, but it’s part of her coming-of-age story. She’s figuring life out, and at heart, she’s a good person. The finale was amazing; very cinematic. The song choices and camera work were great. It wasn’t super unexpected, but it all fell into place, and it was a comforting watch. Honestly, most people don’t watch the show for the plot, since they already know it. They watch for the vibes. Like Jenny Han’s “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before,” the plot is a little generic, but it connects with a specific audience of young teens. It’s relatable in some ways, even if a bit cringey at times. It really feels like the show of summer.”

CHLOE PARK ’27

“I’m uniquely on Team Denise because I love her characteristics and mentality. Her mindset and the way she approaches things are very similar to mine. When I first started watching, Team Denise didn’t exist, since it only came out in Season 3. As more characters were introduced, my favorites shifted. [Belly’s] decisions reflect what teenagers go through, figuring things out for themselves. Some people might have approached situations differently, but this is Belly’s journey, and she’s done a great job navigating it. I loved the final episodes, especially the one where Belly goes to Paris. The scenery was beautiful, but more importantly, she learned more about herself. As boarding students at a school like Andover, we can relate. Belly goes through this process without her mom’s help, and even though it’s a long journey, she handles it wisely. [This show has become popular] because many teenagers can relate to it. It touches the hearts of young people by reflecting experiences that feel real.”



D. GOMEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Arts & Leisure

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AMELIA DING '28

“I have a large cluster of keychains that look a bit worn because I’ve had them for quite a while, but to me, they’re not just old keychains, they’re a collection of memories. I have a Komi from Tokyo, a kangaroo from Australia that matches with my boyfriend, a bee from my friend Jane, a little bear from my mom when she visited Beijing Universal Studios, and a jellycat dog from my boyfriend. Many of them are gifts, which makes them even more meaningful, because it feels like I’m carrying pieces of love with me every day. They also show how thoughtful and caring my friends and family are, reminding me that I have so many people who care about me. Keychains aren’t just decorations or tools for convenience, they reflect your connections, relationships, and personality. Mine are all really cute, which shows that I’m playful, friendly, and extroverted, and that I love small, cute things.”

BENJAMIN PARK '29

“My keychain is very minimal. It’s a tiger and some coins that people used to use a long time ago. I didn’t customize it because, first of all, I’m a very minimalistic person. I’m not like those people who wear three or more keychains. And, a really close friend I had when I was living in Canada for two years gave this to me as a goodbye present when I was going back to Korea. It helps me remember the fun times that I had when I was living in Canada. It reminds me of the times when I was really jovial and I really enjoyed living in Canada for two years with my friend. It’s just a happy memory. I’ve had this for like four to five years so far and haven’t switched it. It has some sentimental value for me, and I don’t change my keychains often, I’m not that type of person.”

Keychains Carrying Memories and Meaning

BOSON BAI & CHARLIZE SOW

From Labubus to Smiskis to personalized charms, the keychains dangling from students’ backpacks across Andover are far more than accessories. Each trinket tells a story, representing fond memories of places, people, and interests. In a sea of similar backpacks, these charms stand out as subtle markers of individuality. They remind students, and those who notice them, that even the smallest objects can carry the weight of identity and connection.



DANIELLE HAN '28

“My keychain is a bunny with ‘Danielle 2025’ embroidered on its ears. I got it as a gift from my parents for my 16th birthday, and they personalized it with my name and the year I was born. This keychain means a lot to me because it’s a birthday gift from my parents, and it’s customized, which makes it really special. My keychain reminds me of my parents and how much they care about me, [and] of summer and my birthday, which are really happy memories for me. [The keychain is] really cute, and it reflects my love for life.”

DASHA GOMEZ '28

“I only have one keychain, but it’s very special to me. It’s a Smiski! It really fits into the simplicity of my backpack. I love collecting Smiskis. I have a whole shelf of them at home, and I’m a bit of a collector. My Smiski reflects that I want to come across as easygoing and simple. My particular figure is just standing with a cute little pose, and that reflects me [as well]. People use [keychains] to express themselves. It makes me happy when people compliment [my keychains]. Sometimes I’ll notice someone else’s keychain and think it’s cute, and those little moments brighten my day.”

SELENE XU '27

“I have a Labubu on my backpack. It’s a spring-themed one, wearing jeans, a hat, and has a flower on the clothing. It’s not one of those regular ones where the clothes are printed on, it actually has clothes. I also got a transparent case to protect it from getting dirty, especially since it has fabric. [I got this because] Labubus were really popular over the summer, and I thought this one looked nice. It also fits well with my backpack. [Overall, keychains] personalize your bag and help people not mix it up with others, especially in [Paresky] Commons. And they’re cute. Whenever I look at [my keychain], I feel happier. School is stressful, but seeing cute keychains makes me feel lighter and even a bit like a child again. People often notice [my Labubu] and comment, ‘Oh my god, you have that?’ It has started conversations with people I might not have spoken to otherwise, even if the conversations are short.”

Azzaam Abdur-Rahman '27 Channels “Impetuous” Energy Into “Pizzazz”

ELIAS JEON
& AUTUMN XIA

Styling a graphic-studded jacket and white jersey with orange accents, Azzaam Abdur-Rahman '27 completes his look with bright orange cargo pants, curating a distinct, colorful outfit. Abdur-Rahman possesses a style that is impossible to miss. Bold, spontaneous, and totally his own, Abdur-Rahman mixes 90s aesthetics with his own unique twist which he dubs “Azzaam pizzazz.” Abdur-Raman’s style started out with childhood hand-me-downs and school uniforms, but the real spark came from his dad’s fashion in a boy band. His dad’s iconic outfits inspired his love for 90s fashion, which Abdur-Rahman blends with childhood influences such as Batman and Spiderman to create his signature bold look. “My style is very spontaneous but there are of course some things that influence it like the media I expose myself to, like how could I not copy Batman and Spiderman? I take inspiration from my dad too. When I first started being fashionable, it was his Perfect Gentleman jacket from when he was in a boy band that became my staple clothing item. His fits in that band were so tough, if I could get my hands on those then that would be my whole look of the week. He’s definitely where my 90s inspiration comes from,” said Abdur-Rahman.

Previously attending a school with a uniform, Abdur-Rahman’s wardrobe was limited to simple and repetitious items. However, once he became unrestricted, he embraced bright colors and bold outfits, earning him nicknames and making him stand out in the halls. “I went to a uniform school for a while, and my uniform was basically the only clothes I had that whole time. My best fit at the time was my gym clothes, which was a blue button-up short sleeve shirt and black sweatpants. Once I gained consciousness though, I started to wear clothes like I do now, bright colors, neon jackets, [and] ripped jeans,” said Abdur-Rahman. He continued, “I became known for my color-coded outfits, people would call me a Minion or Banana Boy, a Snowman, or whatever else matched the color of my fit. Because my style is so spontaneous and I only go shopping for clothes once a year, I’ll find myself carrying the best parts of last year’s style into the next year. Like the colorfulness, that never went away.” Abdur-Rahman’s distinct wardrobe refreshes every year. Every time he buys clothes, he shops with intention, following a specific formula. “The ideal formula is an eye-popping jacket, matching pants, a shirt with a unique design, and shoes with all the colors of the fit included. Most of my outfits fit that formula, because I subconsciously only

buy clothes that match it,” said Abdur-Rahman. However, Abdur-Rahman is careful to not put too much consideration into his outfits. Rather, his personality inherently encourages him to gravitate to the unique clothes in his wardrobe. “I don’t really put together fits. I just put on something comfortable for the weather and I step outside and it happens to be fine every time. It’s more common for me to be wearing something unique than not. Sometimes I’ll wear regular clothes, because I ran out of unique ones. It’s not even intentional, I just barely own anything regular,” said Abdur-Rahman. Abdur-Rahman’s clothing picks may be subconscious choices, but his jewelry choices are filled with intention. Whether it’s his ring, chains, or signature headphones, they all seem to have some story as to how they were chosen. “I only have three pieces that I wear every day, which are my ring and two chains. I only wear these because they actually have meaning to me. I don’t like to get jewelry just for the look of it, [but] they just so happen to add the perfect touch to every outfit ... I only wear [these headphones] because my old ones broke, but now they’ve become a big part of my style for this year, and they’ll probably be gone by next year,” said Abdur-Rahman. Abdur-Rahman lets each year reshape his look, from



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Azzaam Abdur-Rahman '27 dubs his aesthetic, “Azzaam pizzazz.”

color-coded signature looks to broken headphones turned into accessories. That restless energy, his “Azzaam pizzazz,”

means his outfits are never static but always a reflection of where he is in life.

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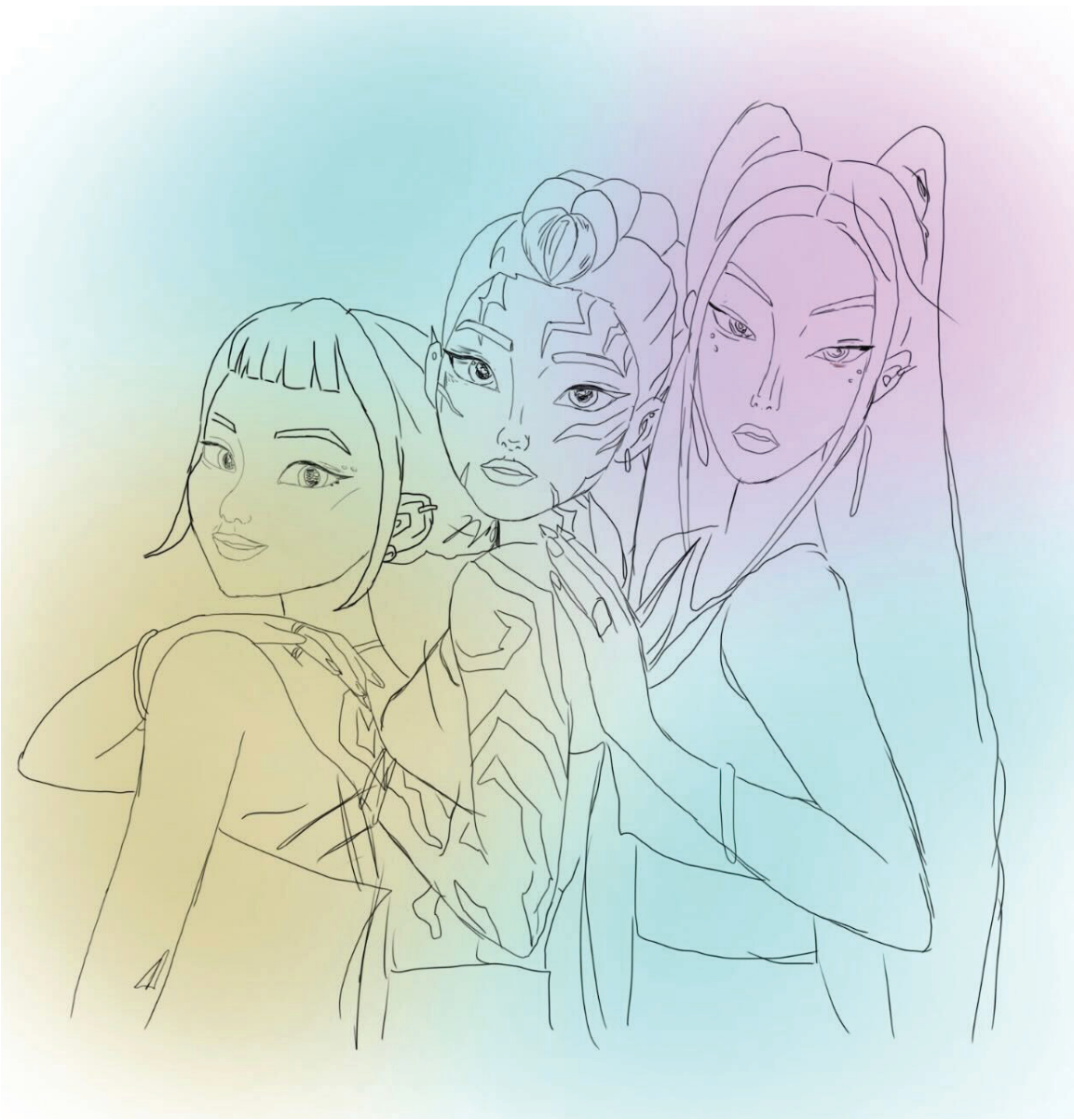
Soda Popping Style with a So-Disappointing Plot: A Review of KPop Demon Hunters

DANIEL LIU
& JONATHAN OH

We first pressed play on our Netflix app with low expectations, thinking that “KPop Demon Hunters” would be just another rashly-made film hopping on the trend of K-pop, a music genre which has seen a surge in global popularity over the past decade. Yet, as TWICE’s remix of “Takedown” began to play behind the end credits, we found ourselves pleasantly surprised with the movie and its execution. This is the power of “KPop Demon Hunters,” an irresistible pull which has allowed the movie to rise to Netflix’s most-watched film and hit No.1 on Billboard Hot 100 with “Golden.” Premiered on Netflix on June 20, 2025, the movie still currently stands as the top Netflix movie in the U.S. Filled with heartfelt themes of love and belonging, flashy action scenes, and an enchanting soundtrack, “KPop Demon Hunters” creates a stimulating film experience out of a mediocre plotline.

To start, the animation was amazing—fluid, expressive, and filled with vibrant colors, which complemented a style that faintly reminded us of the Miles Morales Spiderman movies. It perfectly captured both the everyday lifestyle of the characters and the action-packed scenes of idol choreography and demon decapitation. Even background details, like the neon lighting of the city at night or the bright glimmer of the concert stage, felt carefully designed to heighten the duality of idol life versus monster hunting.

The soundtrack was also put together extremely well and stood out as one of the best parts of the film. A mixture of catchy and cringey (in a good way), each song was a banger, and could be listened to during any occasion, whether it be a gym session, a carpool karaoke, or a sad shower. The film perfectly emulated the carefree, fun nature of K-pop mu-



sic, which is known for its carefully crafted blend of high-energy tunes, recognizable hooks, and dramatic melodies. Some songs from the track were pure adrenaline, the kind you could imagine blasting before a big game, while others leaned into melodrama, tugging at emotions in an exaggerated yet effective way. The music was not just background filler; it was the pulse that kept the entire movie moving, perfectly adapting

to fit into any given scene.

However, that was all the movie really had to give. Without the pretty animations and phenomenal music, you are really only left with a bare, spotty plot, and scuffed writing. Focusing only on Rumi and Jinu for the great majority of the film, the rest of Huntrix and the Saja Boys were left undeveloped. Both the Saja Boys and the other two members of Huntrix, Mira and Zoey, had so

MAXIE WU/THE PHILLIPIAN much potential to evolve the storyline, but instead were ignored as quickly as they were introduced. Their presence felt like they were there more for filler than for meaningful contributions, which was frustrating because their brief moments hinted at interesting dynamics that were simply abandoned without follow-up.

Even more frustrating was that during this heightened focus on Rumi and Jinu, their relationship

was not even developed fully. Although the chemistry was there, the entire back-and-forth between the two always felt rushed and fake. The overall lack of real, deep character building was very off-putting.

Moreover, the comedic elements, while entertaining at times, often contrasted awkwardly with the more serious or dramatic scenes. In one moment, you were watching the members of Huntrix eating ramyeon together happily, and the next, you were seeing how Jinu was manipulated to abandon his family. This uneven tone created a jarring experience, where viewers might find themselves laughing one moment and then suddenly expected to feel intense emotions the next.

With a constant feeling that the writers were shoving in everything they could into a 1 hour 50 minutes runtime, the film was left with no breathing room, jumping from scene to scene, almost overstimulating viewers with action. The story would have been better off as a series, with ample time to develop the secondary characters and fill the many holes unanswered in the movie. It is clear that the writers had ambitious ideas, but the execution fell short when weaving them into a cohesive narrative.

Ultimately, “KPop Demon Hunters” is a movie carried almost entirely by its style rather than its substance. Though the plot is weak, shallow, and filled with tropes, the songs are excellent, and it would be a lie to say that we didn’t have fun watching this movie. It isn’t a bad film by any means; it’s just a reminder that it takes more than a couple catchy songs to seal the honeymoon. In conclusion, we would rate this movie a solid six demon tattoos out of ten golden honeymoons. While the plot had its flaws, its energy, music, and visuals made it an enjoyable watch. And as a final note, Jinu’s cat-tiger spirit was really cute.

Quad Night Nourishes Students’ Stomachs and Spirit

ELIAS JEON &
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Last Saturday, students from all grades gathered for an evening packed with games, inflatables, dorm-run booths, and a strong sense of community. From first-time attendees to returning seniors, the event served as both a social hub and a celebration of Andover life. Once again, good food and bouncy houses proves to be a key in building strong connections.

For new students, Quad Night was instrumental in making new friendships in their Andover journey. Boson Bai ’29 was grateful for the camaraderie at the different attractions.

“Quad Night helps us build community because we are able to all come together to interact in one specific activity, helping us bond better because we are doing those activities all together. We can also reminisce and talk about those activities after we do them,” said Bai.

Among the crowds, there was a captivating rivalry between the two quads. Elliot Chai ’28 emphasized his appreciation of the cooperation and friendly competition between West Quad North and West Quad South. To him, Quad Night was a step towards future combined events.

“The unique part of [Quad Night] is that there are not a lot of



K. MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

Students enjoyed multiple inflated attractions at Quad Day, from bouncy castles to a corn maze.

other events that are as inclusive. It’s in West Quad North, but it’s also close to West Quad South, so it’s a unique thing that West Quad North and West Quad South can host together,” said Chai.

The festival collected huge crowds of students across grades and clusters. Travis Guan ’29

spoke about his reason for participating in Quad Night.

“It’s right outside our dorm, and I heard about it, so I was like, ‘Why not check it out?’ It’s a convenient place to go, and I wanted to go because of the food. I like food. Everyone likes food,” said Guan.

The festival itself offered activities with varying intensities, creating a unique atmosphere at each booth. Anay Mehta-Manghani ’29 was satisfied by the wide range of experiences offered, from racing up a tower to a stand-up comedy battle.

“Everyone was hyping [Quad

Night] up, so I thought I’d give it a look. Turns out it was extremely fun. My favorite part [of Quad Night] was the variety, there’s different things like the corn maze, golf course, good music, lots of people, and really good energy,” said Mehta-Manghani.

Apart from gigantic inflatables and recreational sports provided by the festival, students in both West Quad South and North dorms created their own stations. Junu Lee ’29, in particular, enjoyed these student run booths.

“I like the part that the dorms in West Quad can come up with their own games that represent them, and it’s fun to try out different kinds of games that different people come up with,” said Lee.

More than just a festive evening of food and activities, the event highlighted the value of shared experiences in building meaningful connections among students. In a campus environment that can often feel fast-paced and fragmented, Quad Night serves as a vibrant reminder that community thrives when students take the time to gather, engage, and celebrate the spaces they call home.

“It’s good for the community to get together and do these things, it’s a nice opportunity to socialize with everyone in the Quads. It creates a unique bond between your dorm, your quad, and your friends, everyone you know in the Quads. Also, I like fried dough,” said Guan.

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