

“A Guide To Protest At Andover” Sparks Conversations About Education on Current Events

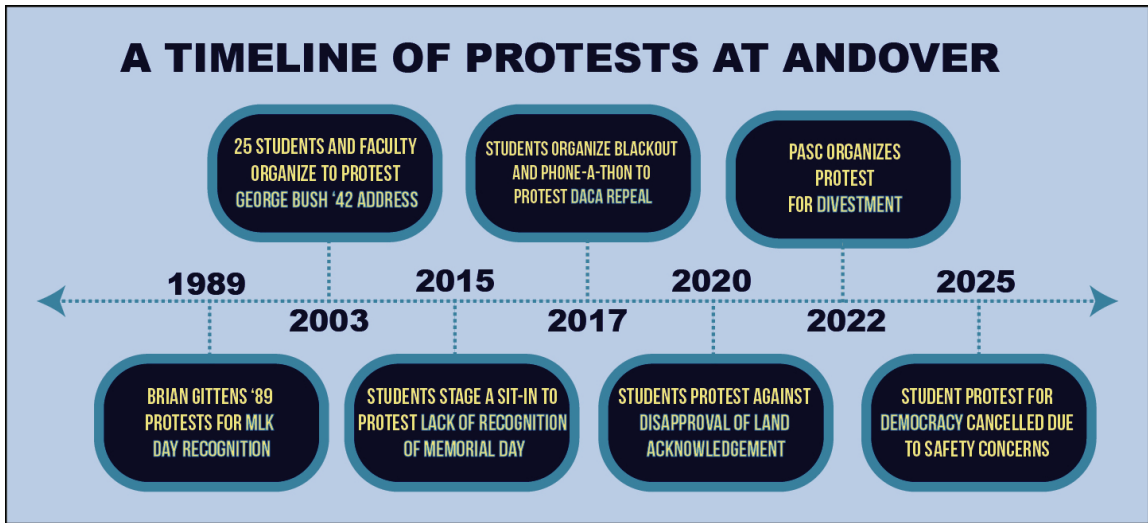


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY L.HEYD/THE PHILLIPIAN

STAFF REPORT

Following the cancellation of a student-led protest in October, former student Yara Handschin '27 reached out to hundreds of community members on November 7.

In her message, Handschin shared a document titled “A Guide to Protest at Andover,” with her own instructions for organizing demonstrations at Andover. She urged students to further engage in civil and political discussion in relation to the principles it upholds in the Blue Book.

“I want to encourage the student body of Andover to hold their school administration accountable to uphold the values it claims to possess. Making use of this institutions’ uniquely protected social positioning to exercise your right to free speech and social critique is incredibly important at a time where many people around the US are losing their ability to do so,” wrote Handschin.

Shloak Shah '26 shared that there is a desire from students on campus for framed education, even if it isn't always vocalized. He referred to an event, facilitated by instructors in the Department of History and Social Science, that garnered student attendance last February, titled “Breaking Down Today's America.”

“There's a lot of passive demand on this campus for not only more conversations about politics, but more informative conversations about politics. Last winter, there was this event where four or five History Department faculty and a couple dozen students [attended]. It was just a way for students to clear up some misconceptions they had about U.S. civics and U.S. politics,” said Shah.

Alfonso Gonzalez-Cano '27 hoped that Handschin's guide would be a step forward in discussing the administration's policies towards current events.

“I hope this sparks conversation in terms of the protest and on how the faculty [and] administration handle it. But

then again, I'm unsure as to whether it will, because oftentimes, it's easy for important things to get swept up in the busy end of life,” said Gonzalez-Cano.

During All-School Meeting (ASM) on November 10, Susan Esty, Dean of Students and Residential Life, encouraged students to properly follow the school guidelines for staging a protest in the Blue Book (pages 31-32). The Civil Discourse and Political Activity policies outline the procedure for organizing a demonstration on campus. In addition to being “required to comply with any requests or restrictions from the Academy or public officials, including but not limited to the instruction to disassemble, remove positives, or relocate off campus,” students must also “speak with their cluster dean prior to planning or engaging in any form of Demonstration.”

Continued on A5, Column 4

Jennifer Karlen Elliott '94, P '22, '24 '26 Named as 17th Exeter Principal

STAFF REPORT

Jennifer Karlen Elliott '94, P '22, '24 '26 was announced as Phillips Exeter Academy's 17th principal, succeeding Bill Rawson. After graduating from Andover, Elliott went on to attend Dartmouth College before returning to Andover in 2010. Elliott served multiple roles at Andover, including being an Instructor in the History and Social Science Department, and Assistant Head of School for Residential Life and Dean of Students, before leaving in 2022 to serve as Choate Rosemary Hall's Head of Students and Academic Life. She will be taking on her role at Exeter effective on July 1.

Elliott discussed how her feelings toward Andover and Exeter evolved throughout the years from her time as a student to when she was an administrator. During her time as Dean of Students at Andover, Elliott collaborated with Ex-

eter on how to address issues including the COVID-19 pandemic, student conduct, and all-gender housing.

“When I [came back] as a faculty member at Andover, it felt like the rivalry had shifted a little bit. It felt more like we respected the rivalry. We really admired each other. In the Dean of Students office in Andover, I did a lot of partnerships with the Dean of Students at Exeter. In so many ways, my feelings about Exeter shifted from one of intense competitiveness to more of deeper respect,” said Elliott.

Elliott continued, “I will say, I need to add some red to my wardrobe, and saying EA instead of AE is going to take some time for me to really have that roll off the tongue. It's not quite so instinctive for me. It's been fun to read about

Continued on A5 Column 1



COURTESY OF HELIOS HONG '25
In Spring Term of 2022, Jenny Elliot taught her last History 100B class.

Seniors Unwind at Senior Oasis



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY
Geza Labancz PG '26, Kishan Clarke '26, and MJ Gaines '26 created their own aroma therapies from a selection of different scents.

JUDY LIU & SOPHIA TOLOKH

Snyder Center transformed into a mini carnival as Seniors gathered for Senior Oasis, complete with popcorn stands, cotton candy machines, a candy bar, aromatherapy, massages, and more. Following the Vista Walk, Senior Cruise, and the Grit and Wit program, Senior Oasis aimed to help students unwind at the end of the term.

Taylor Ware, Associate Director of College Counseling and Upper and Senior Empathy, Balances, and Wellness (EBI) Course Head, began the tradition of Senior Oasis in 2019. The event, traditionally held with a carnival theme, is run as a collaboration with parent volunteers. Ware described the intent of the event.

“The idea of the oasis is a chance to bring the Senior class together to celebrate each other, and to take time out of the busy

pace of life here to take care of their bodies and their souls, and nourish their bodies with yummy food... We have gratitude notes that Seniors can write to each other or to adults, and then we have a board for them to sign with all their names,” said Ware.

Frank Hu '26, a Blue Key Head, elaborated on the various offerings at Senior Oasis. Though he decided not to get a massage as he had blue body paint for Andover/Exeter Day, he detailed the other offerings at Senior Oasis.

“Out of respect for people who were getting massages after me, I decided not to partake in the massages. That is too bad, but [another Blue Key Head] did and she left a lot of blue on the tables... I got a lot of food. I had a cup of boba. I had a lollipop, which was stuck behind my ear until Seventh period English. I had Sour Patch Kids. I had

Continued on A5, Column 1

Fall Trustee Weekend 2025

A Conversation with Trustee President Amy Falls: “Student Wellbeing is The Highest Priority for The Board”

KATE RODGERS & MICHEAL KAWOOYA

The Board of Trustees gathered on the Andover campus this past weekend for the first Trustee Weekend of the 2025-2026 school year. In a series of meetings, the Trustees discussed a range of topics, including the student experience at Andover. Amy Falls, President of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the board, emphasized their focus on supporting the well-being of the student body.

Falls stated the responsibility of the board in providing a well-rounded education to each Andover student. She also noted the Trustees’ goal of listening to and addressing the needs of community members.

“There's a lot of opportunity here, and we just want to make sure that students are set up to be resilient and succeed. We, as a board, need to hear from the adults and the students. We think of it as a promise every time a family sends a young person here. We're making a promise to give that young person an exceptional educational, emotional, social experience. And obviously, adolescence is a challenging time. Right now, there's anxiety, which is understandable, but we want to make sure that we're lifting up our community,” said Falls.

Falls recognized the stress that college admissions places on students, highlighting that the board hopes to promote a mindset shift on campus and a renewed confidence in the Andover experience.

“I'm a big fan of: it doesn't matter where you go, it's what you do. You want to go somewhere, but

there's two hundred colleges that are great. As a community, there can be excess focus on twenty of those two hundred. What I've noticed with myself and my own kids is that the education you get here allows you to thrive, and that's what matters. It's not the bumper sticker. I don't think you can possibly change the culture of what people want, but we can support students in knowing that, having confidence that what you're doing here is going to set you up to be a force for good and to be successful,” said Falls.

In response to this perceived stress, Falls shared that the Trustees are discussing long-term strategies to build community. She also reflected on recent projects that she believes bring students together, such as the opening of Falls Music Center last January.

“One of the things that's coming forward has to do with how we put kids together, and if we should rethink dorms, and whether a ninth-grade experience is a little different. There's a lot of deep thinking on how to support students,” said Falls.

She continued, “Part of the beauty of the [Falls Music Center] is it's giving people light and space to do stuff. Not everybody has to be going to the conservatory and getting recruited because they're the best violinists. Some people can just go and sing in the chorus because it makes them happy. That's where I want us to put our energy, joy [and] happiness.”

Elaborating on the priorities of the board, Falls noted conversations on student mental health

Continued on A5, Column 1

On Tang and LITW

Falls highlighted the Trustees’ discussions about the Tang Institute and the Learning in the World Program (LITW).

“We had a great review of the Tang [Institute], and how that should function, maybe changing the mechanisms to make sure that it's revitalized. Tang was really intended to have space for faculty to innovate, and also bring other faculty from other schools. It's like sharing the resources of Andover. We want to do that more systematically,” said Falls.

Head of School Raynard Kington detailed presentations from the Learning Steering Committee (LSC), a group of adults focused on long-term planning, as well as the LITW program.

“We had presentations from the [LSC] that is thinking about how we can support students better. We had a conversation about future directions for The Tang [Institute],” said Kington. “There were opportunities to get exposed to specific programs like [LITW]. It was a breakfast where we heard from students and the Director of the [LITW] Program.”

Sophia Tabibian '26 attended this breakfast with Trustees at Kemper Auditorium on Saturday, where she shared her experience participating in a LITW program to Switzerland.

“The trustees were really interested in understanding how the LITW program fits into the greater context of Andover's mission,” said Tabibian. “I know that a few of them actually went on their own [LITW] trips when they were at Andover and it was really exciting for them to see that the programs have expanded and have continued, thanks to Mr. Cutler. [The Trustees] were super excited to see that growth and to support it,” said Tabibian.

The Phillipian The oldest preparatory newspaper in the United States. Founded 1857. Vol. CXLVIII Phillips Academy		
Micheal D. Kawooya Editor in Chief	Arts Hluma Mangcu Stella Seong Penelope Tong	Illustration Angela Guo Nathan Wu
Katherine S. Rodgers Executive Editor	Commentary & Multilingual Camille Davis Grace Kim Abby Kim	Layout Gracie Aziabor Siona Chan Jess Jeon
Abigail Zhu Executive Digital Editor	Copy Sahana Manikandan Mira Phan Kendra Tomala Claire Tong	News Jeanne Kosciusko-Morizet Cade Rutkoske Prisha Shivani
Theo H. Wei Managing Editor	Digital Jay Jung Cam Manzo Andre Wu	Photo Kelvin Ma Ishaan Padmawar Mike Stout
Bailey J. Xu Managing Editor	Eighth Page Piper Lasater David O'Neill	Sports Alex Dimnaku Ethan Ly David Siahaan
Angela Zhao Chief Financial Officer	Graphic Design Lucille Heyd Aglaia Hong Claire Wang	Video Edward Chen Nathan Egbuna
Advertising Sydney Jan		
Business Sophia Lazar Philip Meng		
Associate Positions		
Arts Wendi Wei Daniel Zhang	Digital Elliot Chang Barrett Kim Charles Yu	News Felix Bret Saketh Lingisetty Kristen Ma Niki Tavakoli
Business Kachi Ikekpeazu Kai Wang	Eighth Page Grace Chen Thiago Jollon Gentry Thatcher	Photo Audrey Baeten-Ruffo Emmanuel Okeke Cindy Zhou
Commentary & Multilingual Melody Oh	Graphic Design Athena Gutierrez-Ewing Samson Gong	Sports Mathew Liu Emily Ney Ashley Suh Haoyu Zhang
Copy Edward Cha Isabela Doust Alexis Lee Jenna Liang	Illustration Gemma Park Mia Walker	Video Morgan Hsu Tiger Jing
Staff Positions		
Arts Daniel Liu Charlize Sow	Business Natalie Giancola Arden Muldoon Maggie Shu	Commentary Jeanne Kang Ian M. Kim
News Niccolo Lee-Suk Adelyne Liu	Photo Andrew Pizzi Nishi Amin	Sports Alex Godsey Eva Jackson
Eighth Page Konnor Fortini	Illustration Carina Paik	

Editorial

The Path Not Taken

A quarter of Andover students have received some type of disciplinary consequence, according to the 2025 State of the Academy (SOTA). Described as “Pathways,” school responses to student violations of community standards include three main categories: Dean’s Responses, Growth and Accountability Plans (GAPs), and Community Standards Conferences. As stated in a *Phillipian* article from 2024, through past overhauls of the “Levels” disciplinary system, Andover aims to focus on restorative justice instead of punishment. Yet, the success of this system relies on effort from both sides.

Though a broad range of situations can give rise to disciplinary responses like GAPs — from illegal room visitation to substance use — those three letters often invite hushed gossip and speculation. A student who received a GAP the night before can become a hot topic by breakfast. Facing what feels like constant scrutiny from peers and faculty, students may understandably feel isolated or embarrassed about receiving a disciplinary response. But this shame detracts from the very purpose of Andover’s Pathways system: encouraging us to take responsibility for our actions. Shame does not equate remorse, nor does it guarantee self-reflection. All shame does is motivate students to hide their mistakes.

GAPs are meant to uplift students by being restorative rather than punitive, supporting students through a series of meetings to identify their mistakes and move toward self-improvement. However, by not explaining what the GAP process is to new students, Andover may inadvertently prompt students to not be fully transparent with faculty members. Arriving on campus and living away from parents and childhood communities for the first time, students are prone to making mistakes. When SOTA asked the student body whether they have committed a major violation — “selling or providing drugs/alcohol/nicotine, bullying, hazing, major destruction of property, and sexual misconduct” — 13.3 percent of students answered “yes.” SOTA also revealed that 22.4 percent of students have consumed alcohol on and off campus. Furthermore, 42.7 percent of students have used AI at least several times a week without explicit permission from a teacher. Despite all these GAP-worthy

violations, only 8.3 percent of the student body has had a GAP. These statistics not only show a major disparity between the number of GAPs and the student body’s disciplinary violations, but reveal students’ lack of vulnerability with campus adults. In other words, students are afraid to come out and tell the truth.

While students do not want to get in trouble, this disparity may partially be due to a lack of communication by Andover to explain the disciplinary system, as only 6.1 percent of students say that they completely understand the Pathway’s disciplinary system. There is still room for more clarity with the student body regarding how the process is meant to help you, not harm you. As word-of-mouth and rumors dominate students’ understanding of the GAP process and its purpose, students may be inclined to lie. Furthermore, students may feel overwhelmed by the process because they do not know what will happen to them. Thoughts such as, “What will happen to me if I get a GAP? Will I be expelled?” or, “Will I harm my friends if I share my concerns with adults?” dominate students’ minds. There is no doubt that students who break the law or Andover’s policies understand that their actions are against the rules. However, the ambiguous and unregulated perception of what GAPs are hinders any inclination to be honest. If the administration explains the rehabilitative purpose of GAPs, students can more easily discern a way to reconcile with their actions.

We ought to also recognize that the Pathways system is designed to give students second chances. We should not take away from this second chance by having external voices interfere with our own growth and self-reflection. By not permanently holding us to one or two mistakes, the school gives us grace. Pathways lead to reform, not lasting punishment. We need to embrace its emphasis on self-reflection and rehabilitation. Simultaneously, the administration needs to make that emphasis clearer. And that can make all the difference.

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

Andover Spirit is Lacking

LARA KIM



COURTESY OF LARA KIM

Andover is filled with passionate students who take pride in the school they attend. Every day, I see my classmates in Andover sweat-shirts or sweatpants. When they pull out their phones, their blue card holders are easily noticeable, the big, blue “A” right in the center. Before Andover/Exeter (A/E) day in Commons, the Blue Key Heads glowed with persuasive excitement, selling T-shirts and blasting energetic music. However, when it came to expressing school spirit in actual events, students fell short.

One of the most prominent examples of Andover’s lack of participation is spirit week. Often, I would walk into class, only to see more non-participating classmates than participating ones. Even some of those who did dress up only did so for the “easy” days. I found the sight particularly upsetting because I sought extensive engagement in school spirit at Andover, coming from a public

school whose students showed little spirit. Upon arriving, I was so excited to see the difference between my old classmates at home and the proud, zealous ones here. However, while a notable difference in spirit was evident, it was not nearly as much as in Andover’s past years, which I witnessed through my sisters.

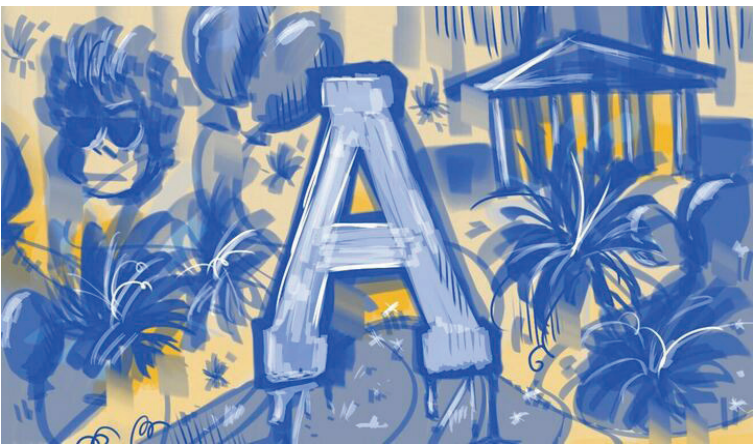
A prior disappointing event was the Halloween dance. My friends and I spent nearly an hour and a half getting ready together for it, only to find that we were five of maybe twenty to thirty people there. Where was everyone? I’d heard the dance was a popular event and hotspot for Juniors. But Borden Memorial Gym was deserted. The blasting, upbeat music, multi-colored lights, props, and photo booth — as wonderful as they were — could not disguise the lack of energy and people. Even when some students showed up, they promptly left after seeing the emptiness. What happened to

dancing and mosh pits? What happened to going out and having fun? It was an extremely disappointing outcome and disgraceful to those who put their time and effort into arranging it. The DJ who curated a list of iconic party songs most certainly would’ve gotten the crowd hype — if only there was one.

What happened to the dancing and the mosh pits? What happened to going out and having fun?

One could argue the reason for the low turnout at the Halloween party was due to the music choice. However, all my friends and I knew all the songs and took pleasure in singing and dancing to them. Yes, everyone has their own type of genre they like, but that

CARINA PAIK / THE PHILLIPIAN



is no excuse to blame the music, especially when the DJ was taking song requests. In reality, the gym was not bereft because of these factors. It was simply the result of deficient school spirit.

At A/E, I was even more disheartened. Originally, I was supposed to be in Virginia for a squash tournament on the weekend it was held. However, after much urging, I dropped out of the tournament to attend, because the last thing I wanted to do was skip the first A/E of my freshman year, which was apparently marked by a frenzied hype. So, I hopped on the bus with my friends, piling up in the back. Music was blasting, everyone was in high spirits, and the kind people around me lent their blue paint and helped me apply it to my face. For the first time in a while, I was extremely invigorated. The event itself was filled with fun, especially when we beat Exeter. I buzzed with energy from the tense rivalry between the two schools, and food warmed me from the cold. But by the time football rolled around, all of our momentum was lost. I sat in the bleachers with my friends, having gotten there early to secure good seats. As we moved further into the game, my heart sank from the sheer lack of spirit Andover students displayed. In the middle of the bleachers on our side, there was a widening gap where people had left mid-game. Perhaps it was because many believed we would lose;

however, all of our teams deserve to be cheered on, despite the outcome. Exeter students were chanting proudly, while barely any Andover students would engage when Blue Key Heads tried to arouse any form of hype, their voices straining and cracking from overuse. Even Andover alumni came to support, so how could we, as current students, not give it our all, too? Regardless of such an exciting A/E day, the ending — with its lack of school spirit — left a bitter taste in my mouth. Everyone knows we’re superior to Exeter. But please, Andover, let’s not give them a chance to beat us in one of the most important things: school spirit.

I applaud the individuals who always show up for Andover spirit. Whether it’s dressing up, buying wigs, or even dying their hair — a feat I am still in awe of — some students do try to demonstrate as much spirit as possible. In doing so, they shine brightly, filling me with admiration and motivating me to be more exuberant during events. Currently, winter A/E seems far away, but it will come soon. Hopefully, by then, Andover will come together and show not just Exeter (though especially them), but everyone, just how much pride we have in our school.

Lara Kim is a Junior from Berwyn, PA. Contact the author at lkim29@andover.edu.

The *Phillipian* welcomes all letters to the Editor. We try to print all letters, but because of space limitations, we enforce a 500-word limit. We reserve the right to edit all submitted letters. Letters must be responses to articles already published by *The Phillipian*. We will not publish any anonymous letters. Please submit letters by the Monday of each week to phillipian@phillipian.net or to our newsroom in the basement of Morse Hall.

To subscribe, email subscribe@phillipian.net, or write to *The Phillipian*, 180 Main Street, Andover, Ma, 01810.

All contents of *The Phillipian* copyright © 2025, The Trustees of Phillips Academy, Inc. Reproduction of any material herein without the expressed written consent of The Trustees of Phillips Academy, Inc. and the Editorial Board of *The Phillipian* is strictly prohibited.

CORRECTIONS:
Angela Wang took the photo for “Girls Cross Country Defeats Exeter in Final Home Meet.”
Isaac Leeper wrote the article “Boys Soccer’s Matches Against Tabor and KUA Show More Than the Scoreboard.”

The *Phillipian* regrets these errors.

“Growing Up,” According to Modern Media



Somehow, people of all ages can be drawn to the fascinating stories of adolescence. No matter how unrelated they are to our lives, we find a way to live our own stories through the characters in a novel or on TV. These are a part of a genre called coming-of-age, addictive for the role teenage years have on our lives. They highlight ideas like locking up your identity, your fears, and opinions, an unfortunate reality for adolescents in the 21st century, as it was for those of the past. The media, both modern and classical, reflects this by showing that adolescence didn't change all that much over time, and that society still expects us to dismiss our problems. Coming-of-age stories give us the feeling of being understood and heard – which is why we need them.

The genre clarifies the idea that everything will be resolved one day, and that the choices we make now will be the right ones.

Coming-of-age novels bridge childhood and adulthood. The treasured experi-

ence of relying on this kind of media as a coping mechanism during struggle is one every teenager should have. My first introduction to this genre was through a voracious obsession with Harry Potter and his misfit company, around the age of six. There was something magical about joining these young wizards as they learn to defeat evil and made mistakes in both friendship and magic. What touched me the most, though, was Harry's struggle to grow up and accept his identity as a wizard and the chosen one. Certainly, this concept of finding and accepting oneself is as important to 21st-century teenagers as it was to teenagers of earlier ages. Though social media and academic pressures weren't so prominent back then, we shared the same tumultuous adolescent period. There is a reason that, as impressionable youth, we look at Holden Caulfield in “The Catcher in the Rye” and justify his actions, while most adults would disapprove of his escapades in New York City. Adults often read coming-of-age stories to reminisce, yet they scrutinize how they acted in their adolescence. For teenagers, the genre clarifies the idea that everything will be resolved one day, that the choices we make now will be the right ones. Younger children look up at these stories and revel in how grown-up they will be one day, admiring, watching, and wondering.

However, modern coming-of-age books do something much more complex than just retelling tropes of close friendships and resisting parental authority. In fact, some of the most potent stories involve showing how young adults learn how to respond in the face of issues like mental health, sexism, and socio-economic barriers. As with “The Catcher in the Rye,” we notice that the main character holds misogynistic and retrograde views on women, often see-

ing them as objects. While in some ways, his mental health struggles are relatable, it's also hard to identify with a character with such opinions. Modern media emphasizes how such toxic views can affect a person instead, a mindset geared towards the diverse world we live in today. Such storytelling helps teens develop emotional intelligence while also acknowledging the differences that each person has during their adolescence. On the same tone, however, we must acknowledge the failures of modern media, as certain tropes can emphasize the wrong ideas.

These narratives want us to take the step into adulthood, to worry about our future excessively, and avoid mistakes — ideas that are already promoted in social media.

When asked if I enjoyed reading books by an acquaintance about a year ago, I replied with an enthusiastic “yes.” What I didn't say “yes” to, however, was hearing her go on about an unrealistic love triangle that the current “young adult” novel she was fixated on had. As she went on, I nodded, yet I was confused as to why this was her key takeaway from the book, which was marketed in the fantasy genre. Though romance was a subplot to a story about learning to control psychic powers at a special school, the main characters growing up seemed to be fixated on the idea that as they got older (fourteen, to be exact), romance was inevitable. In a rush to get along with her, I took up her recommendations, and was quite surprised at the toxic tropes



KAYTLYN XIAO / THE PHILLIPIAN

present throughout them. The idea that falling in love with someone can immediately heal your mental health, or that a lack of communication should be normalized, frustrated me when reading. I had never experienced this in the books I loved, and though I knew I had a more niche taste in literature, I hadn't expected such romanticization of harmful plot points in popular works. In all of these novels, there is an ever-present idea that characters act far beyond their age, with their attitudes to romance and familial relations. These narratives want us to take the step into adulthood, to worry about our future excessively, and avoid mistakes, ideas that are already promoted in social media. This shift, when the media is a critical factor in adolescent development, is detrimental to the thoughts of young people.

Though I have my complaints with the ways in which the coming-of-age genre has

changed, it is not to say we cannot indulge in unrealistic plots or whimsical ideas of what we could be. Instead, the young adult genre should be saturated with a variety of media, rather than being skewed towards unhealthy dynamics. The stories give meaning to our social awkwardness and identity exploration, encouraging us to speak up instead of keeping to ourselves. In truth, it is the powerful, omniscient media that shapes our views. We alone should decide when we step into adulthood, for it is not the media's place to pull our formative years away from us.

Medha Konda is a Junior from Tallahassee, FL. Contact the author at mkonda29@andover.edu.

Zohran Mamdani's Mayoral Victory has Major Implications for South Asians in America



Thirty-four-year-old Zohran Mamdani was historically elected this past week as the first Muslim mayor, first South Asian mayor, and one of the youngest mayors in New York's history. While the media has sensationalized Mamdani's ethnic and religious background, Mamdani's reach to voters has also been a hot topic. According to the Guardian, Zohran's novel campaign strategies proved successful as he secured over 50.4 percent of the total vote, more than the other two mayoral candidates combined. Voter turnout, particularly among young people, was uncharacteristically high. Even as a non-New Yorker, I must admit I smiled at an Instagram video of the end of Mamdani's acceptance speech. As Mamdani waved at the crowd, I could clearly hear the iconic instrumentals of “Dhoom Machale,” the titular track of the Bollywood film “Dhoom,” a franchise I had grown up watching. I swelled with pride at the reference to our shared

Indian identity. For South Asians, Mamdani's mayoral victory not only represents cultural recognition, but also validates their intersectional identities as Americans. For the U.S as a whole, it indicates the reinvigoration of immigrants against the xenophobic ideology of the current federal government.

Japneet Singh, the co-founder of “South Asians for Zohran” and participant in Mamdani's campaign, noted the surreality of a Muslim South Asian mayor as someone who grew up in a post-9/11 landscape. Another voter for Mamdani, Sehrish Munir, echoed similar sentiments.

Many South Asians in New York have historically faced marginalization, particularly after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Mamdani's victory promises a new era, one that celebrates immigrants for their contributions, rather

If the definition of “American” grows to accept immigrants more fully, the tide of future elections could shift drastically.



SHANNON CHISHOLM / THE PHILLIPIAN

than persecuting them.

Upon his election, Mamdani addressed the President directly, confirming his celebration of U.S. immigration and its centrality to New York City. Mamdani's unabashed pride for being an immigrant resonated deeply with many South Asians. A group of locals streamed Mamdani's speech from one of his favorite restaurants, “Kebab King,” where diners cheered “Mamdani Mubarak!” and reflected on their feelings of recognition and hope upon his election. This is the power that Mamdani's election represents for South Asians: it reinforces the community between them. Even the way the locals celebrated Mamdani's win, by eating South Asian food and speaking Arabic, spoke to the strengthening of their collective cultural identity.

Mamdani embraced New York's diversity in his campaign, switching between several languages, including Urdu, Arabic, and Hindi, to reach immigrant communities. As a result, there was a whopping 40 percent increase in South Asian voter turnout in the June primary, compared to the primary in 2021. As New York has become synonymous with the American Dream, it has simultaneously developed into a global community, something Mamdani understands like no other, being an Indian Muslim from Uganda. He has encouraged voters to continue infusing their experiences as Americans with their identities as immigrants. If the definition

of “American” grows to accept immigrants more fully, the tide of future elections could shift drastically. While this is an entirely different sentiment from that of the current federal government, the traction that Mamdani's campaign and subsequent election have garnered globally has the potential to reform American attitudes toward immigrant communities.

This is the power that Mamdani's election represents for South Asians: it reinforces the community between them.

In a time when democracy is under fire, Mamdani's election has the potential to shake up societal norms surrounding immigrants. While I don't know how Zohran Mamdani's mayoralty will play out, his appointment has already inspired South Asian-Americans to celebrate their ethnic cultures. Hopefully, Zohran Mamdani's appointment will lead to a more global America, and more importantly, a more inclusive country.

Simran Shah is a Lower from Birmingham, MI. Contact the author at sshah28@andover.edu.

Smile, My Boy, It’s Sunrise

IAN KIM



I fall in love with some last words, especially when they feel like they need to be heard now. Some of my favorites include Mary Antoinette, who said, “Pardon me sir. I meant not to do it” or “OH WOW. OH WOW. OH WOW,” from Steve Jobs. Last words tend to be the thesis sentence of someone’s life. My favorite is by Robin Williams, one of the greats of on-screen talent, who said in his very last movie, “Night at the Museum 3,” his last line on television: “Smile, my boy, it’s sunrise.” In a life so dedicated to pleasing and entertaining others, Williams suffered a great amount of inner tragedy, including childhood neglect, drug abuse, and addiction. He often hid these flaws from his performances to deliver joy and happiness to millions who came to his stand-up comedy shows and watched his movies. So when the world lost him on August 11, 2014, it was beyond devastating. Even so, his last message to the world was one of relentless optimism, telling another man to smile when there was nothing to smile about or for. At the moment, it was a ridiculous task to smile in a place where happiness seemed to have fled. Williams had asked the world to buy into blind optimism. And



DASHA GOMEZ / THE PHILLIPIAN

this was his parting message to the world: cheap optimism isn’t cheap at all.

If there is never an end to our struggles, how can we find fulfillment in our lives? I found the answer in the quote: “Smile, my boy, it’s sunrise.”

Similarly, Andover often still feels like a never-ending pursuit of happiness. Endless challenges punch you in the face just enough for you to have enough energy to stand back up after you’re beaten up.

Then we have to ask ourselves, where do we truly become happy? If there is never an end to our struggles, how can we find fulfillment in our lives? I found the answer in the quote: “Smile, my boy, it’s sunrise.” The simple line telling the man to smile indicates that even in the face of the grand uncertainty, one must find something worth smiling for. If we all believed and knew that we would fail every test we took, we would find little to no motivation to study. But it is the belief that studying will make us more capable and knowledgeable for a better grade that drives our forward momentum. It is also this blind optimism that pushes us through the rough days. Many days it feels like life is meaningless, and it is this optimism that we buy into blindly that tells us that there will be bet-

ter days ahead. Even though it may not be true or may be true much later than we want it to, an optimistic mind is necessary to keep pushing. As stated, whether we acknowledge it or not, we have already religiously bought into some aspects of blind optimism. With that being said, the improvements we need to make are to simply remind ourselves of this blind optimism that we carry. Simple affirmations and positive self-talk, such as “I can do this” or “It’s just going to take time,” can set our minds in the right direction. We have to believe that we can improve and that one bad performance is just a learning curve. By rewiring our thinking to accept setbacks as acknowledgement for growth, unrelenting positivity and hope will naturally follow. We have to believe in our

ability to perform and improve. And it is in friendships where we require ourselves to have this mindset of optimism. The belief that the other friend is also devoted to the friendship, the belief that both parties are emotionally comfortable, and the belief that the friendship is functional. And there’s nothing we can do but hope and believe.

Many days it feels like life is meaningless, and it is this optimism that we buy into blindly that tells us that there will be better days ahead.

No matter how minor it may seem, having a relentlessly positive outlook towards life has helped me through many situations and still helps me today. There are many factors in life that are out of our control, and worrying about them individually only drains the last bit of happiness out of our lives. Instead, we should let go and choose intentionally to ignore. When used wisely, this ignorance can bring us bliss in this never-ending race to find happiness on the other side. But we must all reckon with the fact that there is no other side, and that optimism and smiling are signs of positivity that keep us going on the only side we have. So my last words are these: Buy some cheap optimism; it’s always worth it. So smile. It’s sunrise.

Ian Kim is a Lower from McLean, VA. Contact the author at imkim28@andover.edu.

The Problem with the Ten Commandments in Texas Schools

ANDREW PARK



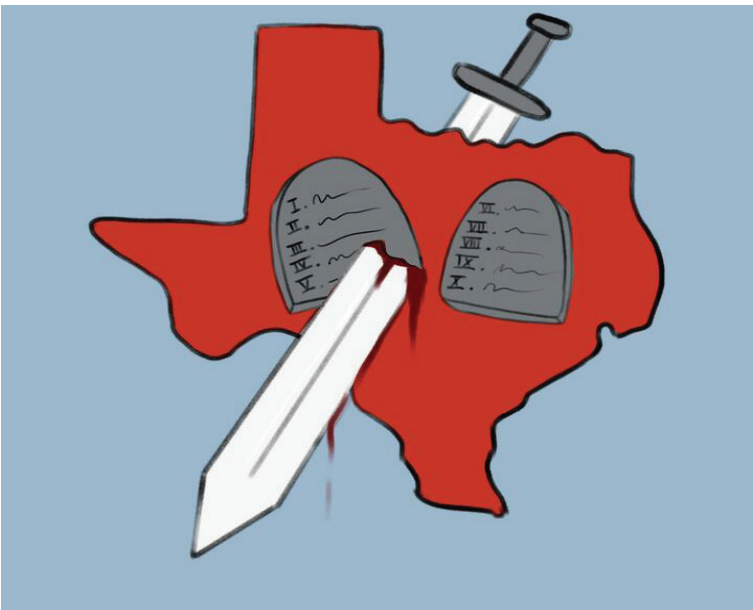
This May, the Texas government officially mandated the Ten Commandments to be placed in all public K-12 schools. Specifically, Texas Senate Bill 10 (SB10) states that “a public elementary or secondary school shall display in a conspicuous place in each classroom of the school a durable poster or framed copy of the Ten Commandments.” This Bill comes from a wave of American conservatives basing policies on Christianity, outlined quite clearly by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton: “From the beginning, the Ten Commandments have been irrevocably intertwined with America’s legal, moral, and historical heritage.” While advocates for this bill, like Ken Paxton, seem to see the Ten Commandments as evidence for the United States to be a Christian nation, I, as a Texan, see it as a clear violation of the Constitution’s statements on religion. I disagree with this wave of American conservatism, a claim supported by the First Amendment’s Establishment and Free Exercise Clause, which states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The amendment declares the influence of an

established religion on the United States as unconstitutional and forbids the federal government from imposing religious restrictions on individuals. Additionally, the 14th Amendment enforces selective incorporation of the Bill of Rights to state legislatures, leading the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses to apply to the actions of the states. Supreme Court cases such as “Lemon v. Kurtzman” (1971) set a standard for how much a state must distance itself from the promotion or creation of barriers to religion. The standard from Lemon is a three-pronged test; the law in question must be secular, its primary effect must not interfere with the advancement or inhibition of religion, and it must not excessively tangle government and religion. For the most part, the religious lives of Americans were separate from the governmental concerns of the United States, following the precedent of Lemon. However, as we see with this incident in Texas, the lines between the religion of an individual and the religious overreach of the government seem to be fading. In the past few decades, the Supreme Court, often in the conservative majority, has expressed a wish to revoke some of the actions of past courts regarding the separation of church and state. For example, Justice Clarence Thomas declared in a concurrence he “would take the logical next step and overrule the Lemon test in all contexts,” and “the Lemon test is not good law.” Similarly, Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote in a concurrence it was a “misadventure” and that it was to be “shelved” by the Court in “Kennedy v. Bremerton School District” (2022), and that the Lemon precedent was to be dismissed in the lower courts. In

a similar fashion, the Supreme Court has opened up general liberty regarding religion. For example, in “Carson v. Makin” (2022), the Court ruled (6-3) that Maine was not allowed to withhold state-funded vouchers, even when those vouchers were used for religious private schools. The use of vouchers, or state-funded financial aid for private K-12 school tuition, is on

Everyone should have the right to believe what they want, as reflected in our Constitution.

the rise in general, with Texas also opting for a similar system. I come from the Dallas area in Texas, a place I’ve lived in for 14 years and subsequently call home. Over those 14 years, the place has definitely changed, in the demographics, economy, culture, and more. So when this law started to mandate the presence of the Ten Commandments in schools, I instantly became concerned for my non-Christian friends back home. Dallas and nearby suburbs have a large South Asian population, reflecting the religious diversity of their K-12 student population. When my Hindu, Muslim, and any other non-Christian classmates go to school and see the 1st Commandment that says “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” wouldn’t they rightfully feel a sense of awkwardness and discrimination? As this new law affects all public schools in Texas, and consequently affects 5.5 million kids



TIFFANIE AN / THE PHILLIPIAN

in that system, some aversion was bound to appear. Along with social outcry, there is an ongoing legal opposition to the new law, including lawsuits. On August 20, 2025, the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction against the

The lines between the religion of an individual and the religious overreach of the government seem to be fading.

defendant in the case of “Rabbi Nathan v. Alamo Heights Independent School District.” This preliminary injunction prevents the defendants, or the public school districts listed, from enacting the government’s Ten Commandments policy. On September 22, 2025, the American Civil Liberties Union aided more Texas families in filing a lawsuit against their school dis-

tricts. This time, the defendants included Frisco ISD, the school district I was in last year. That lawsuit, named “Cribbs Ringer v. Comal Independent School District,” is now set to be heard by the Federal Appeals courts in January of next year. Everyone should have the right to believe in what they want, as reflected in our Constitution. However, Texas is misusing one of the greatest strengths of our country, the freedom of religion. Instead of cherishing the diversity, some state governments, like Texas’, choose to police it. While Ken Paxton may claim that religious texts inspired the nation’s founding, the Constitution was clearly designed to prevent the state-sanctioned religion that Texas’ new law promotes. The true strength of Texas, and the U.S., lies not in a government mandate, but in its vibrant collage of beliefs, a tapestry this law disrespects and threatens to unravel.

Andrew Park is a Lower from Frisco, TX. Contact the author at apark28@andover.edu.

Andover Community Member Share Their Experiences With Jenny Elliott

Continued from A1, Column 5

the school's histories and how much they've had in common from the very beginning. I see so many parallels between these two schools. I have a lot to learn about Exeter, so I need to figure out how to be a real student of the place, and make sure that I understand what makes Exeter so unique and distinct."

Back during her time as an Andover student, Elliott played lacrosse, squash, and field hockey, and was a Blue Key Head, as well as a board member of the radio club. Elliott spoke about her experience subsequently returning to Andover as a faculty member, noting how certain aspects of campus remained familiar to her.

"It was strange coming back... Mr. Murphy '84 was one of my favourite teachers, and I got to work with Mr. Murphy. I got to work with Mr. Gurry, I got to work with Ms. Dolan, I got to work with all these folks, and they would tease me that I needed to call them by their first name, which was a little bit of a transition," said Elliott.

Elliott continued, "It felt like coming home. Morse [Hall] smells exactly the same. And Borden [Memorial Gym] smells exactly the same. And when I got back, the squash courts were the exact same as when I was a student, and they used to be in Borden. But I loved [coming back]."

Paul Murphy, Instructor of Mathematics and Computer Science and former Dean of Students at Andover, previously taught Elliott in her Senior year. He described her as a very good student, and elaborated on a couple of her core qualities.

"[She is] very collaborative, very fun. She always had students at her center. She has a personality such that she sees the good in everybody, which is a great quality for the Dean of Students, and also then for Choate. I was looking for someone who had that quality... She's been in a couple of different places, and her experience will serve her well at Exeter," said Murphy.

Reflecting on her experience attending Andover with Elliott, Heidi Wall '94, Instructor in Mathematics and Computer Science, described Elliott's personality and character traits.

"As a student, she was outgoing and friendly, and as an adult,

she goes out of her way to connect with students and adults alike. She is warm, kind and empathetic. Having been a boarding school student and having worked in them for her whole professional life, she understands both the joys and challenges of residential schools... Exeter is incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated educator who is so committed to the well-being of students. I know she will lead the faculty with the same passion and drive that I have seen in her all these years," wrote Wall in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Exeter's Principal Search Committee was particularly attracted to these personal qualities of Elliott's. Janney Wilson, Chair of the Search Committee, noted in an email to *The Phillipian* that the interactions they witnessed when they visited Elliott on campus at Choate exemplified these aspects of her character.

"Another search committee member and I were able to meet with Ms. Elliott at Choate this fall and walk the campus with her. It was really great to hear her explain the thought process behind some of the changes she has led, and it was also terrific to see how warm and energetic she was in her interactions with the students and adults we encountered," wrote Wilson.

Andover's 15th Head of School, John Palfrey, described Elliott's many talents and abilities, noting that Elliott managed to juggle many differing aspects of her role on campus.

"She has unparalleled energy. She is someone that brings positivity and a can-do spirit in every room. She is incredibly hard-working. [At Andover] she was a classroom teacher, a coach, an advisor, [and] she had students in her dorm. She did every administrative job you could imagine, did them all incredibly well, and she did all those things at once. Part of it is just her incredible ability to engage in the life of the school in virtually every dimension... I am over the moon for her, her family, and Exeter. As an Exeter alum, and as her colleague at Andover, I can't think of a better example of the non-sibi spirit," said Palfrey.

Taylor Ware, Upper and Senior EBI Course Head and Associate Director of College Counseling, is Elliott's college best friend from Dartmouth. Ware emphasized that Elliott cares deeply about making change as a leader and has always greatly impacted everyone around her in all facets of her life.

"She wants everything she's a

part of to be better for the people who it affects," said Ware. "She's been really involved in working on another graduate degree, getting her doctorate through Vanderbilt University. She's doing all of that while she has this incredibly demanding position at Choate. While she's doing all the other things, she's also a mom to four incredible boys. And so she just continues to be all things to all people in this superhuman way. I have been in awe of her since I met her."

Helios Hong '25, a member of the last history class Elliott taught at Andover, described how Elliott focused on creating a positive space for her students. Drawing on his experiences, Hong shared how Elliott inspired him to forge stronger connections with his teachers.

"She had all of us write a letter to her basically explaining just how we're doing as freshmen, what we expect out of the class, and introducing ourselves to her in general. And then a week later, she wrote us back a letter to each one of us... replying to what we said in the letter... That was what set the tone for the class, [which] is that she really cares about each one of us students and that she really wants to hold that relationship with us," said Hong.

Hong continued, "Before I've always seen teachers as these very scary, distant figures, and from that experience, that was the first time I really got to share a more personal connection with a teacher."

Madeleine Mayhew '15 had Elliott as her squash coach, house counselor in Nathan Hale, advisor, and History 300 teacher. In an interview with *The Phillipian*, she shared a memory about Elliott on her graduation. She further expressed her belief that Elliott would be a great leader of the Exeter community.

"She handed me a card on my graduation that said 'She believed she could, so she did.' She embodies that for me. Jenny has been working for this for a really long time, and the whole entire world believes she could and now she's doing it. She deserves it more than anyone else... She is going to be the loudest cheerleader on the sidelines, she's going to absolutely energize the school. How lucky is the Exeter community that they get to experience that," said Mayhew.

Editor's note: Madeleine Mayhew was a former News Editor for The Phillipian, vol. CXXXVII

Students Speak on The Role of Political Discourse

Continued from A1, Column 3

Head of School Raynard Kington explained how student leaders have been trained to lead conversations on civil discourse and current events this year and in the past.

"We have had training. We get training for faculty about how to have these difficult conversations, and last year. We did training for student leaders as well. That was part of this effort of if we train enough people, then a lot of the most meaningful conversations aren't in a lecture hall, in Kemper [Auditorium], or an All-School Meeting. They're in the dorm common room or in a living room," said Kington.

While Shah, a proctor in Stuart House, acknowledged that student leaders received training about facilitating general communication amongst peers, he noted that such training did not specifically focus on conversations around current events.

"There are a lot of broader ideas or settings we're trained in about connecting with the students under our management, but none of it has been explicitly political. If you're going to make that kind of statement, you're suggesting that you're preparing students for the sorts of more consequential and more nebulous discussions, and that's just not accurate," said Shah.

Toni Elliott '27 emphasized that political discourse, though it can feel difficult, is crucial to fostering change. She explained that students often find it hard to discern what they are unaware of in the first place, making such conversations even more important.

"The conversations that are the hardest to have are the ones that we need to be having. Even if it's not an intentional avoidance of those topics, it still matters. The fact that we don't even realize that we're avoiding them speaks more to the fact that it's just not something that's talked about [on campus]," said Elliott.

Elliott suggested ways that administrators could improve student awareness of current events on campus. She described how political discourse can start with changes in campus culture that promote school-wide discussions.

"[Campus discourse] would have to come from more cultural changes, whether that's by having ASM speakers that are speaking on topics that would provoke more discussion, acknowledging events that are happening in school-wide emails, or having a polit-

ical news email that goes out once a week just to spark conversation... Just doing things that aren't explicitly geared towards forcing those conversations, but [encouraging] them, is definitely something that the administration could do," said Elliott.

Maya Tomlinson '28 echoed Elliott's sentiments, expressing that she wished that the administration hosted more measures geared toward facilitating political debate. Tomlinson proposed a few school-wide initiatives that could address this issue.

"I don't recall the administration or Andover as a school doing anything to foster political debate. The only place I've seen political discourse is [the] Current Events Club, and that is student-run and not directly supported by Andover's administration. During protected time or department meetings, [the administration] could set up spaces for people to discuss what they think. Hopefully, that would have larger attendance because it's coming from the school and not from a student-run club. It doesn't even have to be inherently political. It could just be discussing the current events in the world," said Tomlinson.

The school has offered framed educational programming on current political events, including a multi-part Presidential Speaker Series in 2024 and an event introducing the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict in December 2023.

Kington reflected on the Israel-Palestine event, which featured Frank Tipton, educator in Middle Eastern studies and former Andover Instructor in History. At the time, Senior administrators communicated that Tipton's presentation would be the first of several more covering the conflict. Kington shared why this was ultimately not the case. He also conveyed a willingness to implement more regular educational opportunities for students on current events.

"With the issue in the conflict in the Middle East, we tried to find other people, [but] it's not easy to get people to speak on these topics. I'm open to thinking about how we can do this more regularly and to decide upon a structure. We've been trying to think of other ways to do it. Certainly, some student clubs have played and continue to play a big role in having events, but we're open to suggestions. I actually think we probably should be doing more," said Kington.

Provided With Food and Relaxing Activities, Student Shared That They Were Able to Destress at Senior Oasis

Continued from A1, Column 3

a burrito. I had some samosas, and they were pretty fire," said Hu.

Evelyn Kung '26 noted the difficulty of the Senior Fall Term. However, she expressed that the Senior Oasis offered a relaxing time to spend time with friends and enjoy good food.

"I do feel more relaxed after. I was more happy because food makes me happy. It was very well done and they didn't run out of food. Also there were no lines, which I really liked because they laid out all the food. Everyone could just grab and go... I feel this is something I've heard about

since freshman year," said Kung. Ware underscored that Senior Oasis is designed for Seniors to take a break and decompress. Ware shared how such events are one way the school takes care of its students.

"It's really important to the school that students, especially Seniors, have time for self-care and time to step away from the active pace of life and celebrate each other and be with each other and take care of themselves because they work so hard. You all work so hard in the classroom and all the million things you're involved in. It's also really important to know it's good for you to step away from all that, and relax and take care of yourself. With the massages and the aromatherapy and all those

things, it's very intentional," said Ware.

As she reflected on their remaining time at Andover, Wylie Roossien '26 spoke on the bittersweet emotions she and many Seniors experienced.

"You never know when the last time you'll do something is. A lot of us have been talking about that today. This huge appreciation for this moment in our lives as Seniors and Fall Term is for many, the first last for a lot of things. I'm just very grateful for this community and everyone involved in making my experiences so special here," said Roossien.

Board of Trustee's Aims to Support Student Wellbeing

Continued from A1, Column 4

that occurred over the weekend. She shared that the Trustees were updated on Andover's partnership with the JED Foundation, a national organization focused on mental health.

"It's important for Trustees to have humility about our expertise... Generally speaking, most people are not as qualified as the people on campus. It is important for us to listen. We did have a presentation based on the work that's been going on with the JED Foundation, which are the real experts.

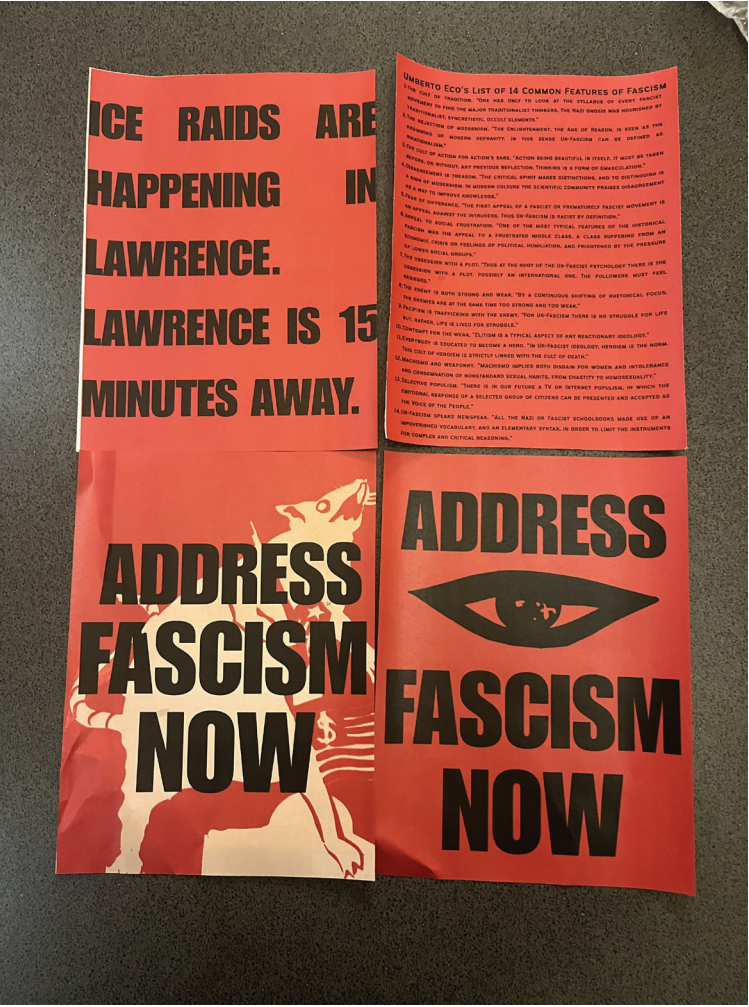
Student well-being is the highest priority for the board," said Falls.

She continued, "All schools are fighting this tide of external validation as opposed to building internal confidence. As Trustees, we are not going to change all of that, but we can try to make sure that we're listening, we're hearing, and we're supporting what changes may need to be made."

Falls commented on the importance of Andover adapting to the needs of present-day students, specifically regarding their well-being.

"This beautiful elm tree, which has been in my backyard for over a hundred years, just fell down. I was talking to the [landscaper], and he said, 'Well, the problem is

with carbon. There's more leaves now on the trees. There's more stress on these trees. If you've had the same person pruning for thirty years, you can't keep doing the same thing because the stress on the trees has changed. You have to address the new thing.' That's the challenge in an organization like Andover. We have deep traditions, many of which are very important, but the environment changes, too. You have to figure out what the baseline things I need to retain are because they're foundational. And how do I have to change my execution because the world has changed?"



K.RODGERS/THE PHILLIPIAN
Flyers with information on facism were placed on Paresky Commons tables on November 7.

10 Questions with Colin Phelan

REPORTING BY ELIZABETH SAKA & IAN S. KIM

Colin Phelan is an Instructor in History and Social Science, a coach for JV Boys Lacrosse and JV Boys Hockey, and a house counselor in Draper Cottage. Prior to his arrival at Andover, Phelan earned a one-year Fulbright-Nehru Scholarship, taught at Bengali Senior Secondary School, and led U.S. Embassy-sponsored “Access Programs” with communities around North India. Phelan’s hidden talent is slacklining, which involves balancing on a length of flat webbing tensioned by two stable points.



E.LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

What initially drew you to join the Andover community?

This school’s commitment to being intentionally diverse and educating Youth from Every Quarter are values the school really abides by and really attracted me in the application process. This was my first choice. I knew I wanted to work here for quite a bit as I was finishing up graduate school and I’m really excited to be here.

What sparked your interest in history?

I love history. I’m a big fan of narrative journalism as well, and creative non-fiction. An amazing thing about this place is that you can do interdisciplinary teaching. Maybe at some point, I could work with someone in the English Department to develop a course that is based on narrative journalism or creative nonfiction. I also love languages, and I think the discipline of history requires that you also know other languages in order to work in archives and interview people. I’ve enjoyed the discipline of history because I can ask questions about the past and simultaneously pursue my interests in language as well.

You’re fluent in Hindi and Urdu, and also a little bit of Persian and Spanish. What language would you want to learn next?

I’ve started doing Japanese on Duolingo, and I’m the second faculty member going on the Learning in the World (LITW) trip to Japan in the summer. I will most certainly not be fluent by then, but it’s fun to learn because a lot of times you can only really learn about a place, let alone the history of a place, by learning the language. [Learning Japanese] is very much an upward climb. It’s really difficult. Even with Hindi, it’s still in the Indo-European family, so grammatically it’s actually similar. Japanese is really hard, but I’m just getting started.

You wrote your dissertation on the connection between tourism development and Hindu nationalism in Uttarakhand. Would you say that tourism is more of a positive or negative force?

It’s complex. With tourism development in the region that I studied, there are a lot of economic benefits. People can gain economic and social mobility through this development and through these opportunities. [However], in this region as well, in my perspective, there’s been a little bit of a lopsided development of tourism in the region. That can be problematic, for example, during Covid-19, people stopped traveling entirely, when the region is so increasingly dependent [on tourism], and the money doesn’t come. Another example is in 2013. This region that I studied had a massive earthquake, and a lot of tourists said they were not going to go, so they had a couple of years where the tourist inflows went significantly down.

This region in India has not had as many economic opportunities in the past, so on one end, this can be viewed as a positive, but it’s not always resilient.

You wrote a book called “The Local School,” which paid tribute to the value of local schools and community. What inspired you to write it?

I spent some time living in parts of India with a couple of the people whom I discussed in the book. These people are two of my very close friends. I was inspired to write the book because of my experiences living, working, and studying in India after my undergraduate studies. I always knew I had a unique story that I was working with... I lived in eastern India in Cuttack and also in Delhi, and the most memorable part of the process was meeting these people, these two really amazing friends from whom I’ve learned, and about whom the book is largely based on.

You’ve previously stated

that there is a need for an education renaissance in America. How does this belief translate into your teachings or day-to-day life?

This was an observation I had when I was studying in a classroom in eastern India. Learning should be a lifestyle, and it shouldn’t be something that is transactional. One great thing about the students [at Andover] is that a lot of students are so curious and interested in learning for learning’s sake. That’s what education should be about. It should be exploring the world through your own eyes on your own terms and taking creative risks.

How did your experience as a Fulbright-Nehru scholar in Delhi shape your perspective on teaching and cross-cultural education?

I worked at a Delhi government school, which was awesome and essentially a public school. I really loved my experience there. I was able to learn about a

whole different education system and different types of teaching. I had a lot of students in my classes too, way more than I’ve had in my United States teaching experiences. That was both a challenge but also an immense opportunity. I speak Hindi, so it’s an amazing opportunity for me to grow in that regard as well and to use that in the classroom too.

What’s your go-to comfort food after a long day of teaching?

The first thing that comes to mind is the buffalo chicken pizza from Depop Pizza. I’ve only been here for a couple of months, but I’ve had it twice already. I’ve always loved buffalo chicken pizza.

Can you speak more about slack lining?

I’ve done [slack lining] in the town common and around campus a few times. I really enjoy it. I knew about it in high school, but I didn’t really do it. Then in college, I bought one, and I started doing it all the time, and made some friends through it. It’s really good exercise. It’s also really meditative. You get up there and you can’t think of anything except staying up.

Do you have a favorite hiking trail or spot? Solo hiking or hiking with friends?

There are some great hiking spots in the UK. The peaks aren’t as high, but it’s still really beautiful. It’s really fun hiking through pastures full of sheep and then having a nice fish and chips at a pub afterwards. I’ve also been fortunate to hike in Norway as well, during some winter hiking, which is really beautiful. Although it’s really dark, so I only had a couple hours to do it, but [there are] so many amazing places. I do a lot of hiking with my wife. We love to have adventures together, but with friends too.

Mature Themes Prompt Shift in Identity Show’s MLK Day Requirements

NICCOLO LEE-SUK & EDWARD KIM

The Identity Show will take a new direction this year, stepping back from its long-standing role in Andover’s mandatory Martin Luther King (MLK) Day programming for Juniors. Citing the production’s increasingly mature themes, administrators have shifted the requirement forward: beginning next year, the Class of 2029 will attend the show as Lowerers as part of their MLK Day curriculum, while this year the event is optional attendance-wise. The Identity Show invites students to explore aspects of their identities through writing and performance; during the course, students craft monologues about race, gender, family, or belonging,

eventually resulting in a live performance on MLK Day. Linda Carter Griffith (LCG), Associate Head of School for Equity, Inclusion, and Well-being, discussed the importance of the Identity Show. “Stories matter. Everybody’s story matters, and here you have high school students who have taken time to share their story with the world. Stories create empathy. It takes a lot of vulnerability and courage to be in the [Identity Show]. Our hope is that there are students in the course that can connect with stories, so that they won’t feel as isolated or alone [and realize they’re] not the only one going through something,” said Griffith. The decision to shift the audience was driven by concerns that the show’s more mature content should not be required viewing for Juniors.

Since this year’s 10th graders attended the performance last year, it will not be included in their MLK Day schedule. Allen Grimm, an Instructor in the Theatre and Dance Department, further explained the reasoning behind the change. “[The change] was not in response to some immature audience members. [However,] we have a lot of students on campus who don’t know how to behave in an event. Dean [of the Office of Community and Multicultural Development (CaMD), Aquila Winslow from CaMD, LCG from the Head of School’s office, my boss, [Theatre and Dance Department Chair,] Rob Lazar, and I got together and talked about how [the Identity Show is going], what’s changed, and whether it is evolving. As a group, [we] decided that the show has matured [as] the subject matter and content is more mature than ninth graders need at that point,” said Grimm. Ashiq Kibria ’26, co-director of this year’s Identity Show and a previous performer, mentioned that the shift in audience from 9th to 10th graders does not mean that 9th graders are not allowed to go to the programming, it’s just that it will not be in their mandated program. Kibria felt a change in the programming audience in the future made sense. “The [change in audience] makes sense as it helps make sure the performers are around an audience that is more comfortable and more open to aspects that they’re talking about...I wish students understood before attending the show that the performers are very vulnerable and they are trying to explore identity

and also teach others about themselves, too, so being attentive and paying attention is really important,” said Kibria. Returning lower and previous Identity Show attendee Natalie Giancola ’28 highlighted her takeaways from the show last year. “As a new freshman watching the Identity Show, I found it really inspirational because I saw all of these Lowerers who were being really brave and open and standing in front of a huge audience, and talking about all these aspects of their identity. I thought that was really inspirational. It helped me realize that being open about certain aspects of your identity is okay, and in fact, it’s necessary for community building,” said Giancola.

Veteran’s Day At Andover

Jesse Ehrenfeld ’96 Shares Importance of Challenge at Veterans Day ASM

OLIVIA TEMPLE & ADELYNE LIU

In honor of Veteran’s Day, this week’s All-School Meeting (ASM) featured Jesse Ehrenfeld ’96, President of the American Medical Association (AMA) and former U.S. Navy Commander. In his speech, Ehrenfeld spoke on the impact of his Andover experience in shaping his path towards medicine, leadership, and advocacy.

Ehrenfeld spoke on how overcoming obstacles and blocks is significant to character, first mentioning how he faced probation at Andover during his Senior year. Later, during his medical training Ehrenfeld became increasingly involved in advocacy, creating an Emmy-nominated documentary on health issues related to LGBTQ+ rights. Though the documentary was eventually not awarded an Emmy, Ehrenfeld noted how true achievement lies in commitment behind meaningful work.

“This realization hit me as I was sitting [at the Emmys], I was just as valuable as I was 5 minutes ago. The loss, or rather the failure to get that external validation, was just as instructive as the academic probation [at Andover] I’d gotten 25 years earlier. The Emmy was a test. It tested whether I was doing the work for the recognition or for the cause. The nomination really was a fleeting vanity, but the service was permanent,” said Ehrenfeld.

He continued, “Anybody who’s sitting here agonizing over your college results, your test scores, your social rankings, remember the Emmy. True value is not in the trophy that you get, but the effort that you put in and the commitment to the mission that drives you. If you allow your identity to be defined by what others award you, will always feel empty. The only validation that matters is the quiet knowledge that you showed up and did the work.”

Philip Molina ’28 reflected on Ehrenfeld’s words, noting that his speech focused on a personal shift in perspective. He mentioned that Ehrenfeld’s speech was greatly inspiring, allowing Molina to understand the importance of impact over tangible rewards.

“My main takeaway was doing the work not for the sake of doing it, the spirit of not creating a movie to win the Emmy, but for the impact that the movie will have. It showed me how he turned his life’s focus from the accomplishments and achievements that would manifest into

material things, versus what he could actually do for people. He shifted perspective to focus on the impact he was making, not just a trophy. That’s really powerful and inspiring,” said Molina.

Vera Pape ’29 added that Ehrenfeld’s message served as a reminder to focus on purpose rather than praise, and that fulfillment arises from staying true to one’s values.

“It’s really important to always try to help others, but also not look for others’ approval, which was a big takeaway. At one point, he was stuck looking for what others thought of him, but it’s really important just to know what you’re doing is right and just try to still do the right thing,” said Pape.

Ehrenfeld also reflected on how his Andover experience taught him the importance of humility. He noted that the pursuit of perfection can make vulnerability feel like a failure, a mindset that he had to unlearn in both medicine and military service.

“We’re taught here at this academy, subtly or overtly, that life is a straight line, that high grades lead to a great college, a successful career... The weight of responsibility, the expectation of being flawless, creates a situation where showing that vulnerability can feel like a professional or a moral failure [in medicine], and that’s where my Andover lesson of humility comes full circle. If I can’t accept my own small failures, how could I expect my colleagues or my patients to endure catastrophic ones? It was that commitment to humble, essential service that propelled me to seek out the most challenging environments, places where the stakes are unequivocally life and death, and where service required is fundamental and immediate,” said Ehrenfeld.

Additionally, Ehrenfeld’s speech aimed to address the purpose of obstacles in life. Soleil Williams ’27, noted that Ehrenfeld’s message resonated with her, relating to her experiences at Andover so far.

“Definitely considering that I’ve only been here for one year, I haven’t reached a block or obstacle as big as his described probation, but a big mental block of mine has just been coming here and feeling challenged... The fact that he can describe how amazingly he has done in his lifetime after having such a big block in high school, goes to show that no matter what I’m going through during this small period of time during high school, that I can still be bound for greatness because I have an ambition to reach,” said Williams.

KONNOR FORTINI & TRAVIS GUAN

Andover’s 16th Annual Veterans Day Program brought together Andover students, alumni, and faculty in a day of reflection and gratitude for those who have served in the armed forces.

Hosted by the Office of Alumni Engagement in partnership with the Andover and the Military (AATM) Committee, the program on November 10 was divided into two parts: a meeting held by the committee in the Underwood Room and a program and dinner in Kemper Auditorium. The second part featured a keynote address by Dr. Jesse Ehrenfeld ’96, U.S. Navy veteran and President of the American Medical Association.

Jennifer Savino, Director of the Office of Alumni Engagement and the organizer, explained that the program has grown to include both students and alumni and involves planning keynote speakers in advance. She emphasized the uniqueness of this year’s program as it marked the first All-School Meeting (ASM) with a Veterans Day speaker in more than a decade.

“Working with our alumni committee, we extend an invitation to our annual speaker about 10 months in advance in order for our veterans to coordinate their other commitments in order to come to campus. ...This year, we had a Veterans Day program that included an All-School Meeting and an evening dinner and program. We have not had the opportunity to have a Veterans Day All-School Meeting for more than a dozen years,” wrote Savino in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Founded in 2011, AATM aims to connect Andover alumni who have served in uniform with one another as well as with the broader Andover community. Captain Luis Angel Gonzalez ’97, committee chair and Commodore of Naval Surface Group Central, described their mission to strengthen connections between veterans and introduce students to national service

opportunities.

“What we are focused around is building the community of veterans and those who have served, as well as serving as a resource for the institution regarding national service opportunities here. One of the highlights of the program, besides the Veterans Day dinner that we hold annually, is the Erik Kristensen Scholarship for the summer seminar in order to bring individuals that might not otherwise be aware of the opportunities into the Andover fold so they can make decisions going on in the future about their own higher education,” said Gonzalez.

Drawing from his experience in medicine, academia, and the Navy, Ehrenfeld encouraged students to recognize that dedication to others can take countless forms. He emphasized that his time at Andover instilled the discipline and resilience that later guided his career in an interview with *The Phillipian*.

“I loved my time here. I’m grateful for my time here. As I’ve gone through my life and career, I recognize the path that my Andover education created for me. I learned a lot about myself outside of the classroom. That was really important. I also never at any point in my life worked as hard as I did when I was here at Andover; not in medical school, not in residency, not in the military, not when I was deployed. This was a place that really tested me and helped me understand how to manage my time,” said Ehrenfeld.

Sean Flynn ’27, an attendee, appreciated Ehrenfeld’s speech and explained how it deepened his understanding of what it means to serve. He found the address as particularly inspiring to him, noting its message that service extends beyond the battlefield and can take many forms within one’s community.

“Something I took away from his speech was that anyone can serve, no matter who, no matter what they do; it doesn’t have to be in the military, it can be anything. Anytime you do serve, it’s a commitment to the country and to our ancestors and to

our families... Everything we do and any position, any job that we will ever do, it’s all in response to that,” said Flynn.

William Ogle ’26 commented that hearing from alumni veterans during the program broadened his understanding of Andover’s connection to national service. He expressed his hopes for increased student involvement in Veterans Day programming and further discourse on military service moving forward.

“I used to think of service in pretty narrow terms: it was the military, the government, volunteering. But after hearing from people who’ve served in many different capacities, I see it more as a mindset. It’s about being willing to take on a burden for others,” said Ogle. “There isn’t much dialogue surrounding military service through the Andover community. I’d love to see Veterans Day continue to grow into a broader conversation on campus instead of a one-day event. It would be great to have more student involvement, maybe panels where students and alumni can speak about what service means in different forms.”

Ehrenfeld concluded his speech by reflecting on the broader meaning of service based on his personal experiences. He urged students to consider their actions and decisions in regard to the common good.

“As you all prepare to pick up the threads of your own life’s work, I would urge you to think about service in its broadest sense. Service isn’t just what you do for a living. It’s the spirit in which you live. Find your own way to answer that call, remembering that every single decision you make, from how you treat a peer to how you approach a complex moral problem, is a reflection of your commitment to the common good,” said Ehrenfeld.

Falls Classrooms to be Closed During Weekends Due to Uncleanliness

NICCOLO LEE-SUK & EDWARD KIM

Abbey Siegfried, Chair of the Music Department, emailed all students involved with private lessons or music ensembles with notes on the care of Falls Music Center. The email addressed messiness, specifically the prevalence of food waste being found in the building.

In response to the mess, the email announced that three classrooms would be closed on weekends effective immediately.

In an email to *The Phillipian*, Siegfried explained why this happened. She hoped that students would begin to take charge and accountability in keeping the space organized. Siegfried also discussed initiatives that would make it easier for students to clean up after themselves.

“[The closing of Falls Music Center classrooms] was prompted by an increase of us (and particularly our custo-

dial staff) finding Uber Eats and other food waste, spills not cleaned up, and disorder (moved furniture, projectors and sound systems left on, covers removed from pianos and instruments moved to different places, etc.),” wrote Siegfried.

Siegfried continued, “[We hope to see] that students are responsible for themselves and each other, respectful of the space and serve as leaders of positive change. We also are going to set up a ‘cleaning station,’ probably next to the Lost and Found for students so that if they do spill something or their snack leaves crumbs, etc, they are able to easily clean up after themselves.”

Some students agreed that the mess in Falls Music Center was getting to a point that necessitated intervention. Connor Chung ’29, a cellist, takes classes in these music classrooms. Although he noted students may not be able to use spaces that they prefer, he felt the policy was justified and would be effective.

“This email [closing the

classrooms] was justified. The mess can be a major hazard for students and faculty that are in the classroom as it’s also very disgusting, especially when you’re trying to learn or play and practice. Also, the janitors are being put to even more work than they have to do, which is very unfair... By making sure that students can only go in there when teachers are also in there with them, the mess will decrease,” said Chung.

Despite the relatively small impact of closing the classrooms over weekends, Philip Jeong ’27 felt that the email still was effective. Jeong saw Siegfried’s email as an extra reminder to take care of Falls Music Center in his daily life. However, he mentioned more changes could help keep Falls Music Center clean.

“Maybe [the department could implement] better signs on places they found a lot of food in. Like in the tables downstairs, they could [indicate] ‘please clean up after your food.’ Oftentimes people don’t make a mess because they want to, they just forget

about it. So putting signs like that will definitely help. That [would be] a good step in this process,” said Jeong.

Siegfried also discussed further measures that the department would take should the situation not improve, including changing Falls Music Center’s hours and banning all foods from the building. Nathan Chun ’28 shared thoughts on these potential changes.

“Honestly it’s quite reasonable to ban foods in Falls. There are other places to be studying while eating, and for the primary purpose of Falls, which is practicing, food doesn’t really work very well with that anyway. I really do hope that they don’t change the Falls [Music Center] opening hours, because we need to practice as musicians on campus. I don’t think that’s going to really be a very direct solution to the cleanliness issue,” said Chun.

Siegfried emphasized her overall goals for the Andover music community. She felt hopeful that the situation could be improved and that

students and faculty could together facilitate a more welcoming department atmosphere.

“Our goal for the music program at Andover and Falls Music Center is that it is a home for all. I want everyone to feel welcome, I want our program and beautiful building to be a space where students can come together and celebrate the arts and community. This situation is heartbreaking for all of us, yet we believe - especially if we can partner with student leaders - that it can be easily changed. Anyone who is involved in music understands the importance of working with others, the importance of respecting, listening to and honoring your music partners. We are asking everyone to live our values. We can do this!” wrote Siegfried.

DEMOCRATS HAVE SHUT DOWN THE 8P FOR 41 DAYS

Letter to The Government

By: Konnor Fortini

Dear Respected Government Officials,

I hope this letter finds you well, or at least finds you at all, considering “THE DEMOCRATS HAVE SHUT DOWN THE GOVERNMENT.” By the way, when I saw that I totally freaked, it really felt dystopian, how could these people take away our God given rights (not including birthright citizenship anymore)!

But, despite what I look like, I was born here. Believe it or not, I have the good old ‘Southern Cross’ hanging on my wall of my dorm, which I now call “Gate C17” because at this point I live closer to Logan Airport than my own family.

It has been 11 weeks since I last saw them. My mother’s voice sounds so different over FaceTime, partly due to the poor Wi-Fi in my home state of Idaho, partly because she’s tired of saying “Honey, just book another flight,” as if the entire airline system isn’t being held hostage by your budget debate. My dad has started referring to me as ‘our son, currently stranded in Massachusetts due to Federal Incompetence’ (however, I, for one, think you are amazing, powerful, massive, and cool).

You see, I cannot go home. Not because I don’t want to, believe me, I’d love to eat my parents’ ‘Asian Inspired Seared Tofu’ rather than the one at Paresky Commons, but apparently, when the government shuts down, so does the entire concept of airplanes moving in the sky. I mean hello, TSA agents! When did it all become about money? Whatever happened to the greater good? Like reunite this sweet little bird with his mama.

Family Weekend, I tried. I packed everything: clothes, textbooks, and even grey sweatpants, so the TSA would know I wasn’t hiding anything (they still patted me down anyway). I got so close, but when I reached the gate, the airline staff looked at my passport as though I had handed them a live grenade. “Oh sweetie, your flight is canceled” they chirped. I asked, “Okay...so when’s the next one?” They said, “When Congress reaches an agreement.” I asked if I could at least sit near the plane and think about home. They said no.

All I ask for is mercy. Can the strong, powerful, massive, and beautiful USA help a poor, little, quivering ol’ me? I just want to go home with the assurance that I can come back next term.

Until then, I remain a loyal student of democracy! If you read this, dear government, know that I still have faith. I believe that one day, perhaps before I graduate, you’ll stop arguing like those kids in BIO100 when the one politics unit shows up.

With love, patience, and a rapidly expiring I-20 form,
An International Student Who Just Wants His Dog In His Life

The Day History Was Made



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

The Eighth Page protests outside of Paresky Commons, recently remembering that there’s a world outside of 01810.

Things We Are Thankful For

We at the Eighth Page are big on the spirit of both giving and receiving. With that, we tend to favor the receiving end, so here is our newly updated list of things we are thankful for:

- White privilege - and Asian!
- The ability to peacefully protest
- INTENTIONAL diversity (you gotta know what you are getting yourself into)
- Winston Gong’s ‘26 constructive criticism
- Revocable consent (FRIES)
- Prapun Seth ‘25
- Ned Blackhawk’s enlightenment
- Teachers with fun names that oddly suit them (makes me feel like i’m in Harry Potter :))
- Gavin Newsom for once (we should redistrict the clusters so that all of the hula hooping abilities aren’t concentrated in Abbot iykwim)
- Squanto (wouldn’t be here today without him)
- Missionary (and much more) Rock
- PAPS for keeping us safe from drugs, crime, and anyone without a blue card!
- Electric Cars that make that harmonic noise
- Ear, Nose, and Throat doctors
- Jamaican Patois (for saving BVS once again)
- The Kama Sutra (we at Andover would be lost without it)
- Ellis Island for making Andover so great
- Girlfriends - Jane Jizzings and Winn-Dixie
- Clash Royale Berserker
- Stoicism books
- The five stages of Eighth Page associate grief
- John Smith
- Joseph Smith too

PA Football throws Exeter Game Because of Secret Underground Betting Ring Possibly Connected to Patriots Winning Streak

By: Nate Kreppner

Rumors ripple through Andover’s marble halls like a cold November wind. The Big Blue didn’t just lose to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter); they threw it. Whispers tell of a secret underground betting ring buried beneath the weight room in Borden Gym, where students trade playbooks for payouts and point spreads scribbled on Latin homework. Exeter moneyline (+1000), offered a lucrative incentive for the Big Blue to sell the game. Among the ring’s top conspirators is Prayer Young LeGoat, a PG from Methuen, MA, who operates a sportsbook between his optional classes. The scandal reaches absurd new heights when someone connects it to the Patriots’ suspicious mid-season winning streak, same plays, same signals, same sudden “comebacks.” Coincidence? Or collaboration? The coach pretends not to notice, claiming “the boys just lost focus,” but the dorm lights burn late with murmurs of Venmo transfers and locker room deals. By morning, Andover’s once-pristine legacy is tangled in a web of rumor, loyalty, and greed, and as the Patriots take another improbable victory on Sunday, everyone can’t help but wonder: who’s really calling the plays in New England?

Overheard On The Paths

"Shout out to all the homies on academic probation."

"Reveal the rainbow!"

"What’s Jennifer Coolidge doing here?"

"Won an Emmy moved my family out the projects... wait I didn't win."

"Told my husband if he doesn’t bring home an Emmy, he’s sleeping on the couch."

"We sleep together every night."

WRITE FOR THE EIGHTH PAGE

plasater26@andover.edu, doneill26@andover.edu, gthatcher27@andover.edu, tjollon27@andover.edu, gchen27@andover.edu



The Phillippian SPORTS

Volume CXLVIII | Number 25

good luck w/finals!!

November 14, 2025

Beyond the Scores: The Phillippian and The Exonian on A/E Weekend



A. BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Faces of spirited Andover students and alumni showed up to support Girls Volleyball.

STAFF REPORT

At Andover, on the eve of Andover/Exeter (A/E), students watched the athletic teams that prepare for the trip

to Exeter, Blue Key Heads — Andover's school spirit leaders — and multiple performance groups perform in a pep rally. Izzy Park '26, a Co-Head of the K-Pop club that performed at the pep rally, commented on the high energy environment

that viewers brought and described the significance of the event.

"The pep rally always has the most hype of all the performances we do. People are always getting into the dances, a lot of your friends are there.

It's always a ton of fun. Everyone's at the pep rally getting ready for A/E, and it's a super cool spirit moment," said Park.

The main event of A/E weekend is always the actual sports games, where this storied rivalry is revitalized with competition on the field. Jacob Shin '29, who participated in his first A/E day, complimented Exeter administrators' preparation for the event and highlighted student turnout at the football game.

"I thought the entire event was really well planned out, especially because Exeter and Andover are both big schools with a lot of kids to accommodate. The games were all scheduled in a way that let the students move in a relay. When soccer halftime started, we went to watch girls volleyball, and when their third set ended, we went back to watch the second half of soccer. The highlight of the day was the football game. Everyone was super excited for it, it was at the end of the day, and every student was there. It wasn't like people were dispersed between games. Everyone showed up for the big finale of the day,"

said Shin '29.

Rosemary Shin '28 found A/E to be a fun experience with her friends. She especially emphasized the Girls Volleyball game, in which Andover lost to Exeter 1-3, as a focal point of A/E.

"The energy of the crowds were great, especially in the Girls Volleyball game, that was a highlight for the spectators because both the teams were playing at a really high level," said Shin '28.

The school spirit at the A/E, according to Shin '28, was taken to the max by both sides. Specifically, she noted a prevalence of red and blue among the crowd.

"In all of the games that I went to, both Andover's and Exeter's student bodies were really energetic and spirited. I saw a lot of really cool face paint and school colors being repped. The energy was really great thanks to every individual and especially the Blue Key Heads," said Shin '28.

The A/E rivalry will take place once again this upcoming winter at Exeter.

Field Hockey Shutout Exeter 7-0 to End the Regular Season and Cruise to NEPSAC Semifinals, Defeats Taft 4-0 in Quarterfinals

EVA JACKSON & LUCY VINNAKOTA

SATURDAY 11/8	
Andover	7
Exeter	0
WEDNESDAY 11/12	
Andover	4
Taft	0

Field Hockey (16-0) beat Phillips Exeter Acadmey (Exeter) during this year's A/E. On Wednesday, the team squared up in its New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) quarterfinals match, beating Taft 4-0. The team finished the regular season undefeated; in fact, it let in a total of four goals throughout the season. The team hopes to make a deep playoff run and repeat as champions.

The team excelled in its A/E match, shutting out Exeter and winning by a large margin. Sophia Demeo '28 commented on the team's performance and scoring opportunities that allowed for so many points to be scored.



K.MA /THE PHILLIPIAN

Kimberly Duplessis '27 dribbles around opponents in dominant victory against Exeter.

"We played really well. We controlled most of the game and created a lot of good chances. We had a lot of opportunities to score, but we couldn't do a better job finishing them," said Demeo.

Passing has been a crucial part of the team's offense and overall style of play. On Saturday, the level of play seemed to drop in the middle of the game; however, the team bounced back to finish strong. Vanessa Hall '28 described the caliber of play through the game.

"We came out very strong. Because it is Exeter, it's a rivalry game. We were up 3-0 by the end

of the first half. We were moving the ball well, but at some point in the middle, we weren't passing as well as before. When we were not passing as well, we were giving them unnecessary chances, giving them the ball, and not really caring for it," said Hall.

Andover students filled Exeter's campus for A/E, creating a boisterous environment to support the team. According to Demeo, the number of spectators controlled the energy of the teams. Although Exeter had home turf advantage, Andover found its spirit in its audience.

"It was very hype. It was a lot

of people there since it was A/E. There were actually more people than I expected there, and they were cheering. The other team was especially hyped. They had a lot of energy and were very loud," said Demeo.

While the players had a high level of excitement and energy, they were determined to stay collected and in control. Cat Powers '28 described the team's calm mindset.

"The game wasn't frantic. It was pretty calm. We went in very level-headed, ready to go, and this was our last regular-season game, so we wanted to end on a high note," said Powers.

Key elements and standouts heavily influence the game's outcome. Powers elaborated on the team's performance and individual players, highlighting Hannah Herlihy '26.

"They were very calm and did a very good job moving the ball, getting passing going. Hannah especially got our passing moving. She was very good at organizing people and also moving in her transfers," said Powers.

The team played Taft for the first time this season in the quarterfinals. This caused their intensity to be high from the start, setting the tone for the game as they faced a mysterious opponent. Abigail Nager '27 commented on

the importance of their first goal and how it set the game off on the right foot.

"The first goal is a key moment, because we scored right away, which set the tone for the game, and made sure that we didn't let them think that they were in it, even if they responded," said Nager.

Since it was the first NEPSAC playoff game this season, the team's excitement and energy were palpable not only during the game but also in their preparation leading up to it. Nager described how some of her teammates decorated the stadium before the game, leading to a positive game environment.

"We were really excited to play, and some of the people who had seventh period off made decorations for the stadium, posters for everyone on the team, and wrapped banisters around. It was a good environment. It was also good because more people than usual showed up to watch, so it was overall a very positive and happy environment," said Nager.

Girls Field Hockey will play fourth-seeded Noble and Greenough in the NEPSAC Semifinals this Saturday.

Four Goals, Zero Doubt, Zero Concessions: Girls Soccer Outclasses Exeter at A/E Once More

NICHOLAS JUNG

SATURDAY 11/8	
Andover	4
Exeter	0

Girls Soccer (11-4-3) finished its season with a dominant victory against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) at this year's Andover/Exeter day (A/E), marking its 13th straight victory at A/E. Despite getting off to a slow start, play quickly ramped up as the team scored four goals and allowed none in from Exeter, wrapping up the season on a high note.

The team entered the game unsure whether it would be its last of the season, as several scenarios needed to fall into place for it to advance to the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) playoffs. Manager Papa Pantisil '26 described the energy heading into A/E and praised Co-Captain Wylie Roossien '26 for her leadership and consistent

cy not only at Exeter but throughout the season.

"On the bus, people were obviously excited and happy, but there was also a laser focus heading into the game, and that really showed on their precision and their accuracy on the field. For example, our Co-Captain Wylie was a phenomenal player in this match. She was laser-focused, really cared for herself and her teammates, and played with a winning mentality. More specifically, her accuracy is what makes her such a great striker," said Pantisil.

Ashley Dimnaku '28, a defensive midfielder who scored the final goal of the day, also recounted a team-building activity the team completed before the match and how it played a meaningful role in strengthening its chemistry heading into the game.

"We didn't know it would be our last game [of the season], but because it was A/E, we did some traditions. Each teammate wrote affirmations for every other teammate. Our coach then gave us printed letters from last year's varsity Seniors on the bus, along with the affirmations, and we



A. BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Co-Captain Wylie Roossien '26 scores two goals in shutout victory against Exeter.

read them before the game," said Dimnaku.

Carrying the aforementioned chemistry, the team scored in both halves of the game and conceded none, showcasing talent on both offense and defense. The team first found themselves on the scoreboard in the 29th minute

with a commanding goal from Emma Sharon '29 off a rebound by Elizabeth Wodarzski '27. Murathimeningai Daisley '26 highlighted Sharon's play.

"Emma Sharon, our [Junior], stepped up to score the opening goal at her first A/E. It was a huge feat, and it's also what set the tone

because we started scoring a bit later than what we were hoping for," said Daisley.

Dimnaku highlighted the strength and discipline of the back line that made scoring nearly impossible for Exeter. She noted that the team's collaboration and chemistry also played a huge role in the team's success.

"As a unit, we stopped them early in the midfield and didn't let them get too deep into our half. When the ball did get into our box, our center backs quickly cleared the ball. We connected passes, stayed unselfish, and kept possession," said Dimnaku.

Although Andover ultimately missed the NEPSAC playoffs, the team left the pitch proud of its season, filled with growth and new connections. Daisley reflects on the progress the team has made.

"Coming into this season, we had a lot of new players, [since] last year we lost a lot of Seniors. I'm really proud of how far we've come and how much chemistry we were able to develop in such a short time," said Daisley.

Girls Cross Country Emerges as Victors at Interschols

EVA JACKSON

Girls Cross Country competed at the New England Preparatory School Track & Field Association (NEPSTA) Division I Cross Country Championships (Interschols) at Taft this past Saturday, winning the Varsity race and placing second in the JV race.

Andover sent seven runners to compete in the Varsity race. Ultimately, Amelia Alvazzi '26 placed second in 18:38, Anya Budzinski '26 placed seventh in 19:34, and Sophie Stetson '29 finished ninth in 20:22. Corinne Spade '27 and Maddie Marshall '29 placed fifteenth and seventeenth in 20:49 and 20:52 respectively, rounding out Andover's top five finishers from the race.

As the team's last race of the season, Interschols was what the team had worked toward during the whole season, according to Co-Captain Chloe Song '26. Song commented on the team's focus on Interschols.

"We've been training all season, putting money in the bank. Interschols was always emphasized to us as where we want to



COURTESY OF CHLOE SONG

Girls Cross Country huddle before winning final race of the season.

peak and where we want to push the hardest because it's our most important race of the season. It's the time where you can best represent your team," said Song.

At the meet, Marshall described how supportive the team was of one another. Marshall shared how she was impacted by the support from the crowd and her teammates.

"Everyone was just cheering on their own, super loud. Our team is super supportive. You'll find your

teammates on the course just cheering you on as loud as they can. It makes it really easy to run fast because your whole team is behind you," said Marshall.

Before the race, the team walked through the course to get a sense of the layout. Song described the difficulty of the course and poor race conditions, as athletes had to run through muddy hay at some points in the course.

"We had to soak everything in on the day of when we did our

course walk. And the ground was soggy, too. The course was wet as well, and there were two points in the race super close to each other where there were mud puddles and you had to go through them. So, the terrain was tough, both because of the weather and also because Taft has a lot of hay," said Song.

The team tapered its training intensity before the race to optimize its performance. Hannah Jung '28, who finished 29th in the Varsity race in 21:32, recalled how the team prepared for Interschols and balanced athletics with the academic demands that come with the end of the term.

"The week leading up to Interschols, we lightened the mileage that we ran everyday and instead we focused on staying fresh and not getting burnt out in penultimate week. We had to get an adequate amount of sleep and stay sharp for Saturday," said Jung.

Jung added that the high stakes of the competition came with high levels of nerves and pressure. Since the team had driven three hours to Taft, it had to focus to perform its best.

"It was a little tense. We were all nervous and maybe a little jit-

ter[y] or tired from the three-hour bus ride. But we went in with the goal of having fun, knowing we tried our best and letting the results follow that," said Jung.

Song expressed that support from the team's coaches also helped it. As a Co-Captain, Song helped convey Head Coach Patrick Rielly's message to enjoy the race.

"We wanted to keep the girls relaxed, and we didn't want to put pressure on them. We wanted them to first and foremost enjoy the race and have fun because it can be hard to stay grounded on a stressful day like Interschols. That 'enjoy the race' mentality was what helped us race really well. The supportive and relaxed atmosphere that was encouraged by Coach Rielly was really helpful to our performances," said Song.

While the team's season is over, Alvazzi and Budzinski will race at the Brooks Northeast Cross Country Championships on November 29 in Boston, Massachusetts. Placing among the top ten competitors at the meet would qualify them for the Brooks National Cross Country Championships in San Diego, California.

Andover Boys Soccer Battles Exeter to a 1-1 Draw, Capping Season with Grit and Growth

ALEX GODSEY & BEN KAZLOUSKI

SATURDAY 11/8		
Andover		1
Exeter		1

Boys Soccer (2-4-11) closed out its season away at Exeter, tying with a final score of 1-1, keeping the A/E scoreboards even. Leading Andover was Co-Captain Liam Vitti '26, with an exciting set-piece goal to put Andover up 1-0 in the first half. Despite eventually letting up a goal and tying the match 1-1, Co-Captain Edrian Vargas '27 led a disciplined defense that held Exeter scoreless for the majority of the game.

Over the course of the season, Andover has experimented with several formations, adjusting the team's overall dynamics. The decision against Exeter to commit to an attack-heavy setup marked an aggressive shift in the team's playing style. Vargas described this formation and the opportunities it created for the offense.

"We have a very high press formation. Defensively, we were keeping them at bay. The center-backs could dribble, but all



K. MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

David Burt '28 fights for the ball in tie game against Exeter.

they could do was play balls over the top. We have very strong center-backs who could win these headers out of the air. We were able to keep the ball from entering our box a lot. Attacking-wise, we had a striker and two wingers, as well as two wing-backs that could help go up and invert into the midfield. So, by doing that, we pressured their outside backs on the flanks and isolated them, allowing us to win throw-ins near the box for Matt Shampine '26], as well as corner kicks and chances

to put balls into the box," said Vargas.

Vitti's goal in the first half came from one of the set plays described by Vargas. Vitti recalled this specific goal, emphasizing the moment and its impact on the team dynamic and the spectator environment.

"It was a big goal. We originally put the ball in a box off a corner, and then some ricochets happened. The ball got put down to Ethan, and then he took a touch, and it fell to me. I remember see-

ing the ball, seeing an open corner, and I hit it. It was a great feeling to score. The crowd erupted afterwards, which was pretty cool, and everyone went crazy. It was the goal we needed," said Vitti.

Despite only scoring one goal, the Andover offense had several opportunities throughout the game. Shampine shouts out Co-Captain Kai Myles '27 as the centerpiece of this offense, shouting out an incredible pass from the game.

"I would really shout out Kai. You can never forget about Kai. He facilitated the offense for us, and he was all around the field, in the midfield, and at the forward position. I got four or five perfect passes from Kai on scoring chances, and he was what gave us a chance to win the game. Near the end of the game, with about five minutes left, there was a ball in the air, and without even looking at me, he said, 'Matt, go.' I started running, and he hit a volley right to where I was running, and it was right to me. That's what he does. He's an all-around great player and one of the keys to our success," said Shampine.

On the defensive side of the game, Andover had success. This defense, led by Vargas, Michael Staii '27, and Tyler Tran '26 kept Exeter down for most of the game. Seeing this, Vitti praised the non-stop grit of the defense.

"We did a very good job staying organized defensively. Not conceding for the whole first half was really good, and then we did a good job playing out the full 90 minutes and giving it our all. Our defenders made several huge plays. They did not quit. There were so many clearances off the goal line. They blocked a lot of shots. They did so much great work. We were really locked in playing that full 90 minutes, and it was unfortunate we conceded, but we played a really good game," said Vitti.

As a rivalry game, this contest at Exeter was played on a big stage in front of a large crowd. Vitti described the atmosphere and how the positive energy of the fans boosted the team's play and hustle.

"It was really good to have the crowd behind us. It felt like we had a 12th man on the field, to be honest, and they drowned out all the Exeter fans. We could barely hear them. It was really great, especially when we went up and we scored. That really amped up the crowd. It only built up from there," said Vitti.

As the 2025 season concludes, Boys Soccer has seen growth throughout the season and looks to return next year with renewed energy.

Girls Volleyball Ends Season Strong Despite A/E Loss

GAURI BHAKTA

SATURDAY 11/8		
Andover		5
Exeter		11

Girls Volleyball (5-11) closed out its season on Saturday with a hard-fought 3-1 loss to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) in the annual Andover/Exeter (A/E) rivalry match. Having defeated Exeter at home earlier in the season, the team tried to carry that momentum over, but ultimately could not prevail. Despite the defeat, the team showcased resilience, defensive strength, and growth that has defined its second half of the season.

Reflecting on the game, Kaliah Fortune '26 emphasized the team's defensive effort and commitment in a high-pressure environment. Ashley Schuman '27, specifically, had a moment turning a broken play into a highlight-reel level moment, which Fortune commended.

"It's a lot harder to perform when there are obviously huge crowds that are cheering

against you, but we performed well. Our defense, particularly, was the best I've ever seen. Our liberos were doing crazy well, and our defense and blocks were crazy. There was one very broken play where somebody shanked the ball, and then somebody else went sprinting after it to the baseline and got it up, but it was straight up. Then our libero, Ashley, chased it and literally, with one hand from the baseline, swung at the ball, [bumping] it up, and it went from the baseline over the net. It was a crazy, insane save," said Fortune.

Jacqueline Li '27 echoed Fortune's admiration for the team's effort and energy throughout the match. She also noted that the match atmosphere fueled the team's intensity.

"At the beginning, there was a huge Exeter crowd, while we didn't have that many people. But later, as people trickled in, everyone was standing. Everyone was cheering. I really liked the atmosphere. At times it was distracting, but most of the time it really brought our team spirits up. And even though we lost, it was a really well-played game. We fought really hard [for] every point. We tried our best. We covered for each other.



A. PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN

Selene Xu '27 (left) and Nneka Ezeike '26 (right) celebrate with the team after winning a point.

We were always so supportive of each other, and the energy was just great," said Li.

The team had struggled to find its rhythm at the start of the season. For Sophia Fang '28, the match reflected how far the team had come since then.

"Our team performed at a higher level than usual because we knew the competition we were facing was going to be more challenging. Exeter's also our rival school, so we placed a

lot of importance on that game. Our team [was] really focused, and everyone performed their role to the best of their abilities, [which] really helped the team work cohesively and helped us put up a good fight against Exeter," said Fang.

The team developed a stronger team mentality and improved execution in high-pressure moments. According to Fang, the game against Exeter served as the ultimate showcas-

ing of the its improved teamwork and chemistry.

"At the beginning of the season, all of us placed a lot of emphasis on our individual mistakes. But this game, we all moved on pretty quickly if we did make a mistake, and we were just there for each other. Thinking about the team overall, that kind of mentality really improved. Also, skill-wise, we've gotten a lot better at serving consistently. We've practiced a lot of pressure serving in practice," said Fang.

Fortune reflected on the team's growth and the emotional end to a season that saw major development both on and off the court.

"It was so emotional at the end of the season because first of all, our team is mostly Seniors. [We will be] losing six Senior players, four Senior managers, and our assistant coach," said Fortune. "If you look back to the beginning of the season, we did not have that great of a record... But we turned it around. Since then, we've definitely played at a higher caliber. Now, we're running all these different plays, and our offense is doing crazy well. We've definitely grown insanely as a team."

ALL Students, Faculty & Staff
Invited to Apply!



DREAM IT,
THEN DO IT

With a \$100–\$10,000
Abbot Academy Fund Grant!

Have you attended the Faux African Wedding or a Flow Arts performance? These are just a few of the thousands of projects made possible with grants from the Abbot Academy Fund (AAF).

Think big—or think small! The AAF welcomes proposals for projects that demonstrate:

- CARING Foster a community of belonging!
- INNOVATION Invent creative solutions!
- BOLDNESS Envision new possibilities!

Share your ideas, get guidance: All grant applicants MUST schedule a brief meeting with AAF community liaison Christina Landolt (clandolt@andover.edu) OR attend a Conference Period drop-in session to chat with her about their ideas.

APPLY SOON! Deadline is Monday, November 3

Questions? Please email Ms. Landolt or AAF coordinator Belinda Traub (btraub@andover.edu). Start dreaming today!

LEARN MORE!

DREAMS & DONUTS
Monday, September 15
7–8 p.m. in the OWHL
Meet Ms. Landolt and recent student grant recipients, learn more about how to get funding, and enjoy cider and donuts.

DROP-IN INFO SESSIONS
Stop by Paresky, lower left, during these Wednesday Conference Periods:
September 17
October 1
October 15
October 29



Scan for AAF grant application and examples of past projects.

Phillips Academy
ANDOVER

Water Polo Exits Early in Playoff Birth

WES PHAM &
WYATT ORACCA CECIL

SATURDAY 11/8	
Andover	11
Greenwich	12

This past Saturday, fifth-seeded Boys Water Polo traveled to Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) to compete in the New England Preparatory School Athletic Council (NEPSAC) Boys Water Polo Championships. The team faced off against the strong fourth-seeded Greenwich Country Day School (Greenwich) team that held a record of eight wins and seven losses. With the pressure of the playoff game and a tough opponent whom the team had lost to a month prior by a score of 8-15, the team prepared for a difficult but exciting matchup.

During the quarterfinals, emo-

tions ran very high. It was the first round of playoffs, and neither team was ready to lose. Hugo Appen '27 recalled the atmosphere of the game as both players and the crowd were uncertain of its outcome.

"It was really fun, there were a lot of swings and leads. They were leading after the first quarter. We got the lead back in the second and third [quarters], but they took it at the end. At the very end, we almost came back, and the crowd was completely cheering. It was crazy because there was a fairly sizable crowd, and everyone was cheering because the game was so close," said Appen.

As Appen described, the game was very back-and-forth. This led to many players stepping up, creating plays, and showing out when the team needed it most. According to Victor Hillier '28, the Co-Captains Oliver Stabach '26 and Ethan Zhu '26 exemplified strong leadership capabilities that elevated the team's performance and kept morale high.

"[Our captains] definitely rose to the challenge and helped out a lot. Lincoln Tomlinson [27] played great defensively and stood out to me. He locked up their best player almost the entire game. I'll give our goalie, Hugo, lots of credit. He made incredible saves to keep our team in the game," said Hillier.

The team was firing on all cylinders throughout this battle, determined to stay in the tournament and advance. Appen stated that Hillier made a pivotal play towards the end of the third quarter that energized fellow teammates.

"We were either tied or we were up by one, but the game was hanging in the balance. Victor got the ball. With the clock winding down in the third quarter, he shot it from half court and made the shot, which gave us some momentum going into the fourth quarter and a lead," said Appen.

Tomlinson described the impact of incorporating new training into their practices just two weeks before the championship.

The team spirit allowed for new chemistry to shine through, even as the season came to a close.

"We spent the last two weeks of our season learning new plays, which we put into effect during the game. [We] experimented with new lineups to see player chemistry, and learned new skills specific to roles in-game. Players who play the set position would spend a bunch of time practicing getting the entry pass and dunking the ball, and those whose positions are on the perimeter spent a lot of time practicing putting shots up from range and all angles," said Tomlinson.

Going into the fourth quarter with the momentum from Hillier's goal, the team found itself trailing behind Greenwich. According to Hillier, throughout the week, because the team knew who it would be playing against, it practiced an aggressive strategy, pressing its opponents.

"Pressing is our strongest defensive play. That really helped us, especially in those last few

moments, or imagine stealing the ball, not once, but twice, in a span of a minute and a half," said Hillier.

Tomlinson described the team's strength as its ability to create quick turnarounds in plays that Greenwich failed to support. This allowed Andover to force Greenwich to lose crucial points and energy.

"We scored quite well on counterattacks, having the advantage when the opponents' defense wasn't set up well. We did a good job of converting these opportunities into points, and it was something we continuously beat [Greenwich] at," said Tomlinson.

Ultimately, the Boys Water Polo team fell to Greenwich. It ended its season with a 9-7 record. It hopes to take this loss not as a discouragement, but rather as motivation to push for next season in the aim of winning next year's championship.

Nine Seniors Sign to Colleges

HAOYU ZHANG

On Wednesday’s National Signing Day, nine Andover athletes signed binding National Letters of Intent (NLI) to seven colleges. This day marks their official commitment to competing athletically at the Division One Level at their respective colleges.

Maren Boyle ’26 and Lucy Parker ’26 committed to Boston College for field hockey, and Sarah Powers ’26 signed for ice hockey. Julian Rios ’26 signed to Stanford University for wrestling, while Wylie Roossien ’26 committed to the University of North Carolina for soccer. Charlotte Dorman ’26 signed to the College of the Holy Cross for lacrosse. Scarlet Glass ’26 committed to the University of New Hampshire for lacrosse, Lilly McNerney ’26 to Northeastern University for ice hockey, and Ainsley Muldoon ’26 to Georgetown University for crew.



A. PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN

Nine students made their Division I collegiate athletic commitments official on National Signing Day.

Boyle, who is a Field Hockey Co-Captain, shared her experience in the recruiting process. She acknowledged both the challenges of performing at a high level and the fun in finding the right school, and she also expressed her gratitude for this opportunity.

“When I had the opportunity to visit Boston College and meet the coaches and everything, I was just so excited and I just knew that’s where I wanted to go because of how much I loved the whole culture and all the people there. I was just so excited and happy about

the decision,” said Boyle.

Hanna Lisauskas ’28 rowed alongside Muldoon last spring. She expressed her support and pride for Muldoon on this special occasion.

“Ainsley is amazing. She is so sweet, one of the kindest people I know, and she is incredibly dedicated. We are all super proud of her, and I can’t imagine a better or a more deserving person for this,” said Lisauskas.

Dr. Sergia Hay, Instructor in Religion and Philosophy and house counselor in Whitney House, has known Boyle and Muldoon since last year when they joined the dorm during their Upper Year. She had come to give her support alongside her husband, Todd Hay.

“I’m really excited for Ainsley and Maren. I’ve known both of them since last year, when they were 11th graders, and they moved into the dorm. They’ve both done a lot of hard work, and it’s paid off for them. We’ve enjoyed seeing them participate in their athletic

endeavors. We watched Ainsley at the Head of the Charles this fall, and we’ve also attended a bunch of field hockey games for Maren and just been really excited to cheer them on. And so it’s just really thrilling to see them have this very special accomplishment,” said Hay.

Many teammates, family, and coaches came to support each athlete. Member of the Wrestling team Margaret Tsien ’26 attended alongside many of her teammates to cheer on Co-Captain Rios. While Rios had offers from numerous institutions, Tsien shared her praise for his final decision to commit to Stanford University.

“He is a really good captain, a very devoted wrestler, and a great friend. And he motivates the team and brings us together. He’s a really great guy overall. We’re all very proud of him,” said Tsien.

Playing Until the Final Whistle: Football’s Grit Shines Against Exeter

AVIAD AWA & JULIEN REQUA

SATURDAY 11/8	
Andover	16
Exeter	48

Boys Football (2-7) fell to Exeter in a 48-16 loss. Although unfortunate interceptions and an away environment factored into this game, the team showed glimpses of promise that they look to build upon going into next season.

Quentin Nicolaisen ’27 described the atmosphere of the game right before kickoff, noting the excitement of the team going into such an important game. He pointed out how the environment felt special and how that played into their game.

“Before the game there’s a special energy — we were all very excited. It was a bunch of the guys’ last game, and it was some of our first times playing in front of a big crowd. That definitely brought a good atmosphere to start the game, and it was a good motivating factor. There was an element

of wanting to represent the school well, especially since the start of the game. We were fired up, you know,” said Nicolaisen.

Nate Dubuc ’28 praised MJ Gaines ’26 for their performance on defense. Recovering a fumble and taking it for 40 yards, his play provided a boost of energy to the team, creating offensive momentum.

“MJ really stepped up. He talked to us before the game, and he was like, ‘This is where you got to show who you are, and you got to prove that it’s going to be you.’ That made a difference. So, him doing a great job on defense backed up his talk and words. Him stepping out and being an animal on defense gave us a good shot,” said Dubuc.

According to Nicolaisen, the team got off to a good start in the first quarter, but soon faced challenges along the way. Nicolaisen described the ups and downs of the first quarter of the game.

“In the first quarter we had a couple plays that were really important, and we got off to a pretty good start. We had one drive that ended in a field goal, and we had one fumble that we recovered, and that gave us some momentum in the start. But, we also had an interception right after the fumble,



A. PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN

In final game against Exeter, Michael Vallarelli ’27 attempts to escape a tackle.

ble, which took away a lot of that momentum. Our best plays were at the start of the first quarter, and then we declined from there,” said Nicolaisen.

Coming out of halftime with a score of 27-3, the team found confidence going back into the game. With the attitude of choosing to win the game, Dubuc explained the impact of the first half on the team’s morale.

“You know, either you’re going to push through and have the energy and passion come back and battle or you can just surrender. So I feel like they’re coming down at halftime and not having that energy that we had in the 1st quarter really, really was detrimental to our game,” said Dubuc.

Although a tough game, the team fought a hard fight until the end of the game. Kaden McNiece

’28 s highlighted the team’s mentality, focusing on the action throughout the fourth quarter.

“Our last touchdown was as the fourth quarter expired, with zero seconds left. It showed that we’re a group of guys that plays till the end, no matter what the score is. We were down 38 or 39 at the time, and we didn’t let that get to our heads. We were playing each snap, no matter what the score was, and I’m proud that we were able to get a touchdown right there at the end,” said McNiece.

McNiece also detailed the outlook of the season, where the team saw improvement from last year, and the confidence the team has going into the upcoming season. McNiece gave insight into how he hopes to gain a win throughout his time on the field.

“The biggest thing I’ll take away from this game is just don’t take anything for granted. You don’t know when your last game’s gonna be on the football field, and I certainly wouldn’t want mine to be a loss against our rivals. So next time I get the opportunity to play them, I’m gonna make sure that I can do everything I can do to get a win, and I think that’s how everyone feels on our team, so they’ll beat Exeter next time,” said McNiece.

What Comes After Fifth? Boys Cross Country Claims Gritty Finish at Interschols, Sets Sights on Next Season

TIGER WANG & ALEX GODSEY

Boys Cross Country concluded its season by placing fifth at Taft’s annual NEPS-TA Division I Cross Country Championships (Interschols). Leading the team was Charlie Gillick ’27, who took 15th place with a time of 17:12. Co-Captain Robert Budzinski ’26 followed just five seconds later for 19th place. Rounding out the team’s top five were Henry Zimmerman ’27 (17:50), Cameron Butler ’28 (18:10), and Aaron Blanchard ’28 (18:24).

The team left early in the morning for the three-hour drive to Taft, home of the most demanding course of the season. The course, notorious for its steep, exposed hills and valleys, combined with wet, harsh conditions, presented a challenge for all runners. Blanchard shared his experience racing at the meet.

“It was a really challenging course. One of the hardest courses we’ve run. There are two brutal laps. The second lap was killer for a lot of people when you knew you had to go back up that grueling hill. It was mentally taxing for many people. We all went into it slightly prepared, but the conditions were different from what we expected. There was a lot of standing water on the course. Going into the finish, my shoes were

so flooded with water,” said Blanchard.

These poor conditions heavily affected all the runners, including Gillick, who faced a setback that jeopardized his race. Despite the fall, Gillick still earned All-New England honors. Budzinski described this hitch, while praising Gillick for his performance.

“Charlie Gillick, who was the first finisher for our team, showed a lot of resilience in the race. He fell early on in the second mile and had to claw his way back. It’s really tough to fall in the biggest race of the season, so if you fall, it’s a hard thing to come back from. He worked his way up throughout the race, finished All-New England, and was the first finisher for our team. He ended up passing me at the end and having a really good sprint at the line, passing a couple of runners and getting every last point for the team, even when not everything went as planned,” said Budzinski.

Reflecting on the season after the culminating race, Boys Cross Country celebrated remarkable growth across its roster. Budzinski highlighted the efforts of Cameron Butler ’28, whose steady improvement was evident in his performance at this year’s Interschols compared to last season.

“I would like to shout out Cam Butler. He had a solid race, but more generally, in his

evolution of him this season, improved from the 18th man last year to 4th[this year]. His improvement over the last year, the way he’s really stuck with it and improved to become a critical scorer for us. We would not have been the team we were this year without him,” said Budzinski.

While the season began with uncertainty, having to rebuild after the graduation of the class of ’25, the team saw the emergence and development of several promising young runners. Sebastian Vermut ’27 echoed this optimism, expressing excitement for the steps that the team will take in the future.

“I’m really looking forward to seeing how this really young core of runners progresses. Of the varsity seven, only two are leaving, and of the five that scored, Robert Budzinski is the only senior who’s leaving. We have a lot of familiar faces to build upon our previous success. We’ve got many ’27s and ’28s who are going to train throughout the summer and have a great season, and many ’29s who were the X-factor this season, making a big difference. Those guys are only going to get stronger from here. I’m looking forward to next year and even the years after that. I’m excited to see where this team goes,” said Vermut.

The team closes out its season strong, appreciative of a great year, but with its eyes set on the future.



A.BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN



A.PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN



A.PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN

SCENES OF A/E



Bagnall

Family Dentistry LLC.



“The dentists as well as the staff were very friendly, and I felt welcomed from the moment I stepped into the office. It was a comfortable, stress-free experience that I would recommend to any PA student or Andover local! Truly the best dentist in town.”

- Sophia Lazar ’26

(978) 475-3997
www.BagnallFamilyDentistry.com

16 Haverhill Street • Andover • MA • 01810
info@bagnallfamilydentistry.com

ELEVATE YOUR LIFESTYLE



DRIVE OVER! - OR SCAN FOR A TOUR!



OPTIONAL ELEVATOR IN EACH HOME

Welcome to Clubview Estates at Andover Country Club. Elegant New Townhomes with Exceptional Interior & Exterior Design Features in a Beautiful Tranquil Setting. An Ideal Location in Historic Andover - Far from the Crowds, but Close to the Best of New England.

Homes Priced from: 1.5M
Inquire about Club Membership Opportunities



Spacious 2+ Bedroom 2.5 - 3.5 Baths with up to 3885 Sq. Ft. - 3 Level - 5 Stop Elevator Option - First Floor Primary Suite - Gourmet Kitchen - 2 Fireplaces - Living/Dining Room Great Room - Loft/Office - Deck and Patio 2 Car Garage - and Lower Level Walk-Out

Call Maura: (978) 809-5019
Visit: www.homesatandovercountryclub.com

BUILT & DEVELOPED BY: AWARD-WINNING YVON CORMIER CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

In Sound and Spirit, Big Blue Wrecks the Ex During Fall Pep Rally

CHARLIZE SOW & DYLAN KANG

ELISE ZHANG '26

“I performed with both (Asian Performing Arts Club) and (Hypnotiq). I’m the Co-President of APAC along with Marisol Tang [’26], and I really enjoy performing with APAC every year because we do K-pop for pep rally, so it gets everybody hype. We performed “Gabriela” and “Smart” this year, which are two pretty popular songs, and a lot of the audience actually knew the lyrics. It’s really easy to get lost in the hustle and bustle of just Andover business, but pep rally always grounds me back to Big Blue spirit. School spirit means this idea of togetherness and just really supporting everybody. Rallying together during pep rally is one of the best ways to show that unitedness. Before performing I was quite nervous and got in my head a lot, but once you’re performing and feeling everybody’s energy towards your performance, it’s really rewarding and grounding to know just how much support there is behind you.”

ALEX LIN '28

Students packed into Borden Memorial Gym [Borden] on Friday night for this Fall Term’s pep rally, a celebration of the Big Blue spirit before Andover/Exeter (A/E). Drumline entered first, the steady beat carrying across the gym as Blue Key Heads (BKHs) led cheers from the crowd. Performers and athletes waited along the sidelines, ready to take the floor and hype up the audience. Each group brought something different, from a soccer penalty shootout to glowing lights to dance numbers that had the crowd singing along. Between the chants, laughter, and bursts of applause, the evening brought students together in a shared celebration of what Andover spirit looks and feels like.



Blue Key Head Sarah Bae ’26, leads Pep Rally.

C. ZHOU/THE PHILLIPIAN

FRANK HU '26

“I’m one of ten Blue Key Heads [and] we were running the whole show, managing music, lights, cheering, and making sure everything went smoothly. Planning started about two weeks ago. We rehearsed a bunch, including dancing with Hypno and prepping chants and transitions, just making sure the show would go off without a hitch. It’s awesome seeing everything behind the scenes come together, it really shows you how much effort goes into the pep rally. School spirit is about showing up [and] when everyone does their part, it creates this crowd effect. It spreads, and it’s amazing to be at the forefront of that. The last twenty minutes before the rally, nerves were high, but once the lights went on and the Drumline started, you just felt all the pressure lift, and the energy took over. Even when things went wrong, like missing music or some teams not showing up, it all worked out, and seeing the crowd get hyped makes everything feel worth it.”

AVIAD AWA '28

“I performed with the Boys Varsity Soccer team. We held a little penalty shootout where we got kids from the crowd, one from each grade. It was a fun way to get everyone involved and see if they could make a long-distance goal. Last year I was just watching from the sidelines, so this year, actually being in [pep rally], it feels rewarding to see people cheer for you [and] see people actually show up to care. School spirit means everybody coming together for one purpose... it’s like All In Andover personified. Our performance might not have been the most polished, but we were just having fun, and that’s what really matters in the end. Even little moments, like one teammate missing a penalty shot, it was pretty funny, and the school’s reception made it all feel really rewarding.”

SHELBY AIME '28

“I performed with Hypno and Fusion, and it was a lot of fun dancing in front of the whole school, but honestly, really nerve-racking. Even though I’ve performed on big stages before, this felt different because it’s all students watching you, and you’re facing your own grade. It’s definitely more awkward to look people you know in the eyes while performing. Being part of this year’s pep rally was really fun, though. It’s such a good community and group of people to be around. A/E gives everyone the chance to come together against one common rival... Fusion’s style is Afro-Latin-Caribbean, which makes us stand out from other groups, and Hypno is more hip hop, so both bring different vibes to the stage.”

AVA SHU '27

“I performed with Drumline and we’ve been practicing for [Pep Rally for a long time]. We got Gunga to come [and] we planned a really exciting skit. Performing in front of everyone has always been an exhilarating experience because it’s almost like you as a person get to pop out of the everyday person that people see on the paths and you get to show people, ‘Hey I do this too,’ and ‘We’re going to get you excited for our school against Exeter.’ Performing can be a bit nerve-wracking at first, but once you get in it, you’re on autopilot and muscle memory kicks in. For one, [pep rally is] a place for everyone to gather and also celebrate the teams that will be playing against Exeter, and also a space for people to get hype, show their talents with dance groups, and a way for people to be excited and generate happiness.”

“Sylvia Reclaimed:” A Dance Between Myth and Modernity at Andover

COLIN LEE & AUTUMN XIA

Last weekend, spirits and gods came alive in the Rubio Theater during the “Sylvia Reclaimed” performance. The play, originating in 19th century France, draws on Roman mythology to tell the story of Sylvia, a nymph who serves the Goddess of the Hunt, Diana. The Andover rendition, re-written and directed by Kareem Lewis, [Instructor in Theatre and Dance] and acted out by Andover students, sought to incorporate students’ varying skill levels and display both modern contemporary dance and classical ballet.

Breanna Ren ’29, one of the huntresses, detailed how students prepared by slowly familiarizing themselves with the music and choreography after Summer break. Towards the end, students finalized the choreography by watching a set of videos sent by Lewis. Ren offered her take on the storyline in Lewis’ rendition before clarifying how it contrasts with the original.

“The storyline is different. First of all, it’s a lot shorter, and there’s a lot more simplicity in the characters. Sylvia is originally a guy. The story starts with the huntresses introducing Sylvia, and

then Sylvia being attacked by the tree forest. She slightly loses hope in her dreams, and that leads to an act with very depressing music, but then, the huntresses are able to cheer her up again. Her friend Aminta tells her to keep moving forward and that’s how the story continues,” said Ren.

Selene Park ’28, an experienced dancer in classical ballet, further described the process of developing the choreography. Park detailed how parts and choreography were distributed among the dancers, and explained how dancers refined Lewis’ suggested choreography.

“We took an audition [at the start of term] before Lewis provided a basic structure of what was going on. Then we mostly followed his opinion, but there were some parts where we wanted to add in to make it cooler, easier, more fit to the music, etc. I feel like that’s why it kind of worked out in the end... The part that I enjoyed the most was the finale. I know that act two is where I do my solo, and that’s the part that is supposed to convey Diane the most. However, the finale was a lot more upbeat and cheerful for me, and it also felt like a ballet gala, which is basically where you showcase all your skills without focusing on the storyline,” said Park.

Brynn Niewold ’28, an audience member whose sister Greer Niewold ’29 joined the production as an intermediate dancer playing the role of a forest spirit, stated her appreciation for Lewis’ skillful accommodation for differences in the cast’s experience with the medium. Niewold further complimented the integration of contemporary dance into the characterization of certain roles, as well as how the difference in styles was used to create a natural experience.

“You could tell that Mr. Lewis, the director, was trying to make sure that dancers of all levels could join. He made choreography that might have been more challenging for the dancers... I especially loved all the forest spirit scenes. They’re supposed to be evil, but I liked how their dancing was so rigid, and it was like how a tree would move. The forest spirits and the constellation spirits used more modern dance, as ballet isn’t so rigid but also because technique-wise ballet is more demanding. This way the dancers that were more experienced in ballet, like the huntresses, did ballet or more ballet elements, and the forest and constellation spirits had more modern aspects in their choreography,” said Niewold.



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Students performing in the Pan Athletic Center’s Rubio Theater.

Mari Uchino-Garcia ’29, another attendee at Sylvia, described her experience in the audience, sharing the scenes that left a lasting impression. She also mentioned elements of the performance that clearly demonstrated the intentional creative planning behind the show.

“The performance was rather striking. There were moments where there were big changes, like music turning off, lights turning off, silence, and dancers walking which was a big contrast

to the rest. There was also a mystical feeling with these like spirits and the ballet with their own unique bands and the way that they perform that was also really mystical. I could really see the creative aspect in it. It’s a great way of seeing the creativity of the performers and their director combining together and making something that everybody can really enjoy, and that was really wonderful to see,” said Uchino-Garcia.

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

Student Baton Shifts Soundscape in Fall Orchestra Showcase

DANIEL LIU &
OLIVIA TEMPLE

Last Sunday afternoon at the Falls Music Center, four campus ensembles concluded the Fall term with a program that moved from playful charm to symphonic thunder. The concert featured chamber works by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a prominent British mixed-race composer born in 1875, and a full performance of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, which drew a packed audience and steady applause.

Derek Jacoby, the conductor of the Chamber and Symphony Orchestras, described his favorite moments from the performance, noting how the nature of Beethoven's pieces required orchestra members to collaborate with one another.

"[Beethoven's climatic moments] are large and bombastic and massive and they have every person in the group working together at the same time. But then also the way that Beethoven gets to these large moments over long periods of time, things are swirling and taking left turns and right turns and gradually building up, so he really effectively leads us to these large moments so everybody, every single person on stage is working together," said Jacoby.

This particular program featured an example of carefully developed student leadership. In a rare occurrence for a regular term concert, a student took the podium for Coleridge-Taylor's opening movement, drawing notice

from audience members.

"For the first movement in the Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, we have a student conductor conducting that movement, which is great. This is Annabelle Wu, class of '26. She's been working on conducting for quite some time, and works hard at it. She is now to the point in her Senior year where having her conduct a performance like this is sort of the next appropriate challenge," said Jacoby.

Bruce Ru '28, who played violin and authored the program notes, added onto Jacoby's comments and emphasized what Wu's leadership meant within the ensemble culture.

"My favorite part of the performance was the student conductor, Annabelle Wu '26. She's a formidable woman. She conducted a movement of the chamber orchestra. From my experience, conducting is more than just being a musician. It's also about leadership and executive presence, and that is very important," said Ru.

Jess Jeon '27, concertmaster of Symphony Orchestra and a violinist in Chamber Orchestra, described the sharp musical contrast between the two halves of the program.

"I performed in the chamber orchestra and in the symphony orchestra. For Beethoven, it [has] a lot to do with Beethoven's suffering, especially as he was suffering, because it was written when his hearing in his left ear had been out. It's a very, very dark piece, but it's also really nice because there are some really melodic parts that contrast



E.OKEKE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Bruce Ru '28 introduces Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

with it," said Jeon.

Dr. Elizabeth Aureden, who conducts the Amadeus ensemble, highlighted the concert's breadth and the growth she saw from early fall to now. She emphasized the focus behind her group's contemporary selections.

"Our group played two contemporary pieces, and I always loved starting the year as much as I could with composers who were still alive. We were really working on just creating our ensemble and looking together. Really listening to each other, to think about how to play beautifully, quietly together, and

also, the fast rhythmic passages, just with lots of energy, and again, being connected with each other," said Aureden.

The concert's mood, performers said, came from the hours of preparation and the energy of a first-term showcase. Jacoby emphasized how the repertoire's turns and surprises push players to listen, adapt, and celebrate together.

"There are plenty of left turns, and plenty of things that are deceptive in ways you wouldn't quite expect. There is a surprise where in the third movement, when the main theme returns near the end, everybody, all the

string players are plucking their instruments rather than bowing them... There is a part in the fourth movement where all of a sudden, Beethoven time-warps back to the third movement and then time warps back to the fourth movement... Of course, the goal is to present the hard work that they all have done in the best light possible on that day in the performance," said Jacoby.

Editor's Note: Jess Jeon is a Layout Editor for The Phillipian.

Bikini Bottom Comes to Andover: Students Dive Headfirst Into SpongeBob, The Musical

RUBY LYN &
DANIEL LIU

Vibrant characters and colorful musical numbers are bubbling up in Tang Theatre as student performers showcase *SpongeBob: The Musical*. Overseen by director Natalya Baldyga, music director Abbey Siegfried, and choreographer Katherine Clark, cast members have been perfecting choreography, polishing harmonies, and preparing to bring Bikini Bottom to Andover. Promising a vibrant blend of humor, heart, and spectacle, the show premiered on November 13, with additional showtimes on the 14 and 15. This article offers a behind-the-scenes look at the musical's preparation leading up to opening night.

As both a history teacher and theatre director, Baldyga explained that her role is to make "the show [look] effortless, even though there's been a lot of work behind it." Baldyga shared the thought process behind choosing *SpongeBob* and reflected on her love for theatre.

"We wanted something full of joy because last spring was difficult for everyone. This show is very good-hearted, similar to the cartoon my child watched. It emphasizes community, inclusivity, friendship, and even science. It's silly and fun, but it also touches on values that are really important to me. This is the first term where I'm fully teaching history while directing, and it allows me to use all my skills and feel fulfilled as both an intellectual and an artist. Theater is unique because it's live. You can't cut or rewind. Everyone is on the

same ride together, for better or worse, which makes it special. Live performance creates a shared experience that's rare in our mediated world," said Baldyga.

For performer Aaralyn Lewis '29, balancing the various rehearsals has been a full and rewarding experience despite the time commitment. Lewis highlighted the collaborative environment of the musical and the friends she made through rehearsals.

"It's been busy in the theaters or in [the] Borden [Memorial Gym] dance studio or in the choir room. We've been [doing] different things to prepare. Sometimes we dance, sometimes we sing, sometimes we do everything all together. Especially since it's tech week now, it's getting a little bit more tedious, but it's really worth it. The most rewarding part has been getting to do this with so many other people. I've made a lot of really close friends through just doing this musical that I never really thought I would make. It was nice having this to bring us together, and even one of my prefects [from] my dorm is doing it. I live in Johnson [Hall], and that's brought me closer to her as well," said Lewis.

For Fiona Simeqi '27, who will star in the musical as *SpongeBob*, the production marks her second Andover musical after last year's *Chicago*. Simeqi echoed Lewis's appreciation for the welcoming and friendly cast and faculty.

"[Everyone's] super supportive. We love dancing each other's dances and singing each other's songs. We all cheer each other on. Even the adults in the theater department are excited and really open to talking with us



ELLE PARK/THE PHILLIPIAN

about what feels right for our characters. Once people know their stuff, and all the quick changes and set changes go smoothly, it's so satisfying when it finally clicks. I mostly just hope everything goes according to plan, no surprises. The musical [is] really about friendship and perseverance. It's something that can connect to a lot of real-life situations. I hope people walk away with a message of kindness and acceptance," said Simeqi.

For Baldyga, watching students take risks and embrace the absurdity of the musical has been one of the most rewarding parts of her work this term. She highlighted that she hopes this light-hearted

energy transfers over to the audience.

"One of the greatest joys has been seeing what students can do. I often ask them to be brave and silly in front of their peers, like dancing with giant sponges. Seeing their talent and the sense of community they've built has been incredible. The ensemble has supported each other, and watching them perform, especially as things come together, is very rewarding. I hope the cast enjoys performing and has a blast, and I hope the audience has fun watching. The characters are recognizable from the cartoon, and I want the experience to be joyful and entertaining for everyone," said Baldyga.

Rehearsing *SpongeBob*, for Lewis, has been a uniquely memorable experience, something she knows will stay with her long after the last performance closes out.

"I hope that the audience takes away that sometimes it's fun to be weird. *SpongeBob* is a really weird musical, and I was thinking when I first read the script, 'Oh my gosh, this is so weird. Why would I ever want to do this in front of so many people?' But I've been having a lot of fun doing it. It's one of the best experiences I ever had in my life. It's definitely gonna be top ten experiences I've had at Andover. This one's going to stick with me," said Lewis.

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

Arts in Brief: A Time of Reinvention

REPORTING BY CHARLIZE SOW

KENDRICK LAMAR AND BAD BUNNY RESHAPE THE GRAMMYS' GLOBAL SOUNDSCAPE

When the nominations for the 2026 Grammy Awards were announced on November 7, Kendrick Lamar topped the list with nine nominations, including “Album of the Year”, “Record of the Year” and “Song of the Year.” Bad Bunny followed closely, becoming the first Spanish-language artist to earn a nomination in all three major categories. The lineup signaled how far the Grammys have shifted toward embracing a broader musical scene, one where genre, geography, and language no longer create boundaries within pop music. Artists like SZA, Sabrina Carpenter, and KATSEYE round out the top contenders of this year’s nominations.

FASHION WEEKS GO DIGITAL

From Paris to Seoul, Fashion Week has entered a new hybrid era that blends in-person shows with digital platforms and AI-driven styling. Brands such as Balenciaga, Hanifa, and Coperni are experimenting with virtual runways and holographic models that let audiences experience their designs from anywhere in the world. In Paris, Coperni revealed a collection streamed through augmented reality that allowed viewers to rotate garments in three dimensions. In Seoul, designers used digital avatars to present streetwear inspired by gaming culture and futuristic materials. This season’s approach redefines luxury by showing that creativity in fashion now may depend as much on technology as on fabric or form.



GEMMA PARK/THE PHILLIPIAN

MOMA REINTRODUCES WIFREDO LAM TO AMERICA

Opening November 10, “Wifredo Lam: When I Don’t Sleep, I Dream” brings the Cuban modernist’s first major U.S. retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City. Spanning five decades of painting, the show charts Lam’s path from early cubist studies in Europe to his signature fusion of Afro-Caribbean spiritual symbols and modernist form. Many reviewers frame the exhibition as an overdue recognition of an artist whose work seamlessly blends history, identity, and innovation, into a single cohesive narrative. For MoMA, this exhibition broadens the scope of modern art by placing a Cuban artist of Afro-Caribbean heritage at the center of a conversation long dominated by Europe.

“WICKED: FOR GOOD” BRINGS THE MUSICAL SPECTACLE BACK TO THE BIG SCREEN

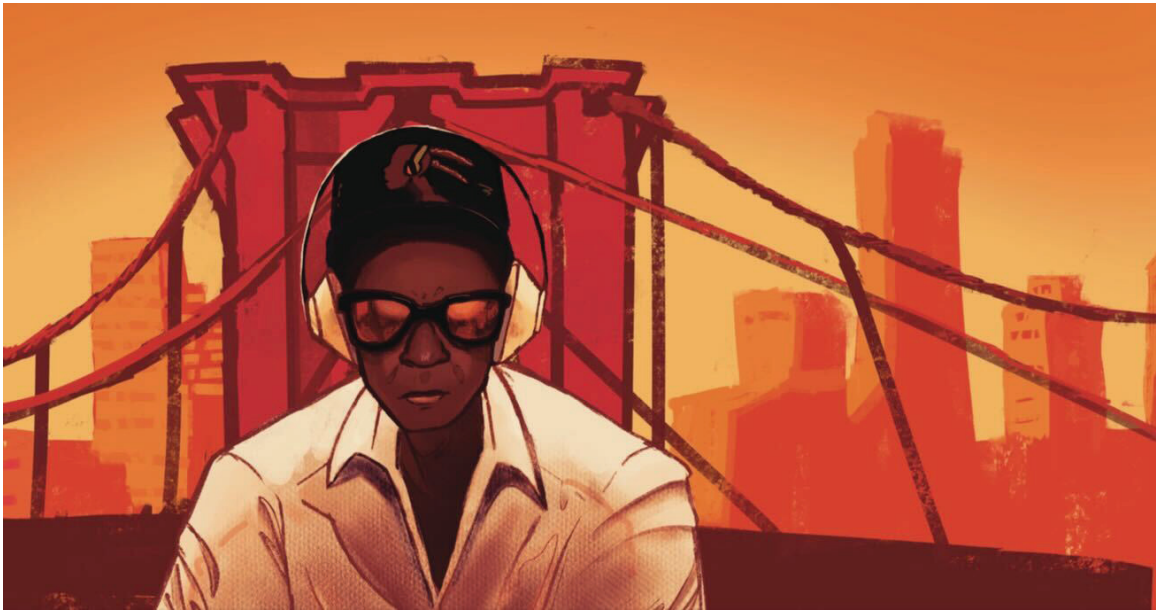
The first trailer for “Wicked: For Good” dropped earlier this year, offering a first look at one of 2025’s most anticipated films. Starring Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande, this sequel to the hit musical adaptation picks up years after the events of the first film. The preview features sweeping musical numbers, dramatic lighting, and party-like production design that hint at large-scale spectacle and emotional themes of identity and legacy. With a cast of new characters and bold visuals, “Wicked: For Good” aims to revive the grand musical cinema experience for a modern audience and test whether the genre can still deliver the same impact it once had.

Looking Down from Above: A Review of “Highest 2 Lowest”

NICCOLO LEE-SUK

“Wake up y’all! The king’s here.” Spike Lee’s “Highest 2 Lowest,” released in theaters on August 15 reimagines Akira Kurosawa’s 1963 film “High and Low” for a modern-day New York City. Starring Denzel Washington, A\$AP Rocky, and Jeffrey Wright, the film swaps Kurosawa’s 1960s Japan for a modern-day Brooklyn and follows a Black family caught between wealth, crime, and morality. However, while Lee’s version brims with excitement and energy, it falls short in communicating the overarching themes of classism and morality that Kurosawa so thoroughly explored.

The parallels are clear. Like “High and Low,” “Highest 2 Lowest” centers on a wealthy man — David King (Washington) — whose chauffeur’s son is kidnapped. But Lee turns a one-somber story into a chaotic, exhilarating portrait of New York City. The film’s standout scene is the money drop: King boards a crowded 4 train on the way to Yankee Stadium just as a Yankees – Red Sox game collides with the Puerto Rican Day Parade. When the train stops,



MARY LI/THE PHILLIPIAN

he drops the ransom from between cars and the cash is snatched by accomplices who weave through parade crowds on motorcycles while the cops try to keep up. The scene is full of color, sound, and movement, and shows the electrifying nature of Lee’s directing.

Yet where “Highest 2 Lowest” delivers in entertainment, it loses the original movie’s moral edge. Kurosawa’s “High and Low,” whose

name in Japanese literally means “Heaven and Hell,” tells a compelling narrative of class conflict. The kidnapper despised the wealthy executive Gondo (parallel to King) because his hilltop mansion symbolized his superiority complex. It isn’t a personal vendetta, but rather Gondo represents the cruel nature of capitalist society.

In Lee’s remake, the kidnapper, Yung Felon (played by A\$AP Rocky), shouts, “You

not God no more, n****—I am!” hinting at that same power struggle. But instead of diving deeper into class inequality, Lee shifts focus toward critiques of modern culture: social media addiction, shallow fame, and contemporary music. These touches obscure the film’s message. For example, King complains about his son’s phone use, lamenting that “real music” has vanished. The ending features a young artist named

Sula, meant to represent authentic art, performing a song that wins King’s approval. But Lee’s attempt to contrast “real music” with Yung Felon’s rap career feels forced. Sula’s success comes through privilege and connections, not talent alone, undercutting Lee’s own argument about authenticity and merit.

Some of the modifications Lee made in his film were necessary considering social implications and cultural differences. For example, Lee contrasts Kurosawa’s thorough detective force with a somewhat incompetent, complacent team of police. For Lee, the police aren’t necessarily trustworthy, especially from the perspective of the Black community, and this complicated relationship comes across further in his other films like “Do the Right Thing.” It’s one of several ways he adapts Kurosawa’s themes for a new era.

“Highest 2 Lowest” is a great movie, but it’s not a masterpiece like High and Low. It is vibrant and unmistakably Spike Lee, but it lacks the depth that made “High and Low” timeless.

WRITE FOR ARTS

hmangcu26@andover.edu, ptong26@andover.edu

sseong27@andover.edu, wwei27@andover.edu

xzhang28@andover.edu

Lillian Montalto

SIGNATURE PROPERTIES INTERNATIONAL

Leading

REAL ESTATE COMPANIES

IN THE WORLD

EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

LP

LUXURY PORTFOLIO INTERNATIONAL

BEST OF ANDOVERS

2025

TWO BLOCKS FROM PHILLIPS ACADEMY!

2 PUNCHARD AVE, #3, ANDOVER, MA

\$10,500/mo

3

3 F

1,913

- SHORT TERM RENTALS WELCOME!
- STUNNING PENTHOUSE SUITE RIGHT IN THE CENTER OF TOWN
- PRIVATE ELEVATOR AND TWO BALCONIES
- CLOSE TO EVERYTHING YOU COULD POSSIBLY NEED IN DOWNTOWN ANDOVER!

"Let me find you the perfect home while your children attend Phillips Academy!"

Proudly serving the Andovers for over 40 years!

440 S MAIN STREET
ANDOVER, MA 01810

FOR RENT

\$3,400/mo

3

2 F 1 H

1,252

HOME FOR RENT MOMENTS FROM PHILLIPS ACADEMY!

- FANTASTIC RANCH SITUATED IN AN EXCELLENT LOCATION
- RECENTLY RENOVATED KITCHEN
- LOWER LEVEL WITH FAMILY ROOM, OFFICE, & FULL BATH
- BACKYARD WITH NEWER DECK
- NEWLY ADDED AIR CONDITIONING

2 POWDER MILL SQ, #2B
ANDOVER, MA 01810

\$879,900

3

2 F 1 H

2,425

STUNNING MULTI-LEVEL TOWNHOME

- SOARING CATHEDRAL CEILINGS AND OVERSIZED DOUBLE-HUNG WINDOWS FILL THE SPACE WITH NATURAL LIGHT
- 2-CAR TANDEM GARAGE
- IN-UNIT LAUNDRY
- MINUTES TO DOWNTOWN ANDOVER, SHOPS, DINING, AND THE TRAIN

59 WILLIAM STREET
ANDOVER, MA 01810

\$2,895,000

5

4 F 2 H

7,919

SPECTACULAR ESTATE NESTLED ON CUL-DE-SAC

- SUNKEN FAMILY ROOM W/ STONE FIREPLACE & WATER VIEWS
- CUSTOM BUILT-INS, UNIQUE CEILING DESIGNS, & HIGH END FINISHES THROUGHOUT
- 1ST FLOOR PRIMARY SUITE
- BACKYARD RESORT W/ TENNIS COURT, POOL, & OUTDOOR KITCHEN

BUYERS

SCAN TO FIND YOUR DREAM HOME!

Lillian.AndoverHomes.com

Call Listing Agent,
Lillian Montalto today!

978.662.9700

TOP AGENT ON ZILLOW

SCAN TO VIEW YOUR HOME'S VALUE!

Lillian.AndoverHomes.com/Seller

SELLERS

32 Park Street, Andover, MA • 978.475.1400 • WeGetHomesSold.com • We're Local, We're Global!