The Phillipian

Full weeks right after break NEED to be banned

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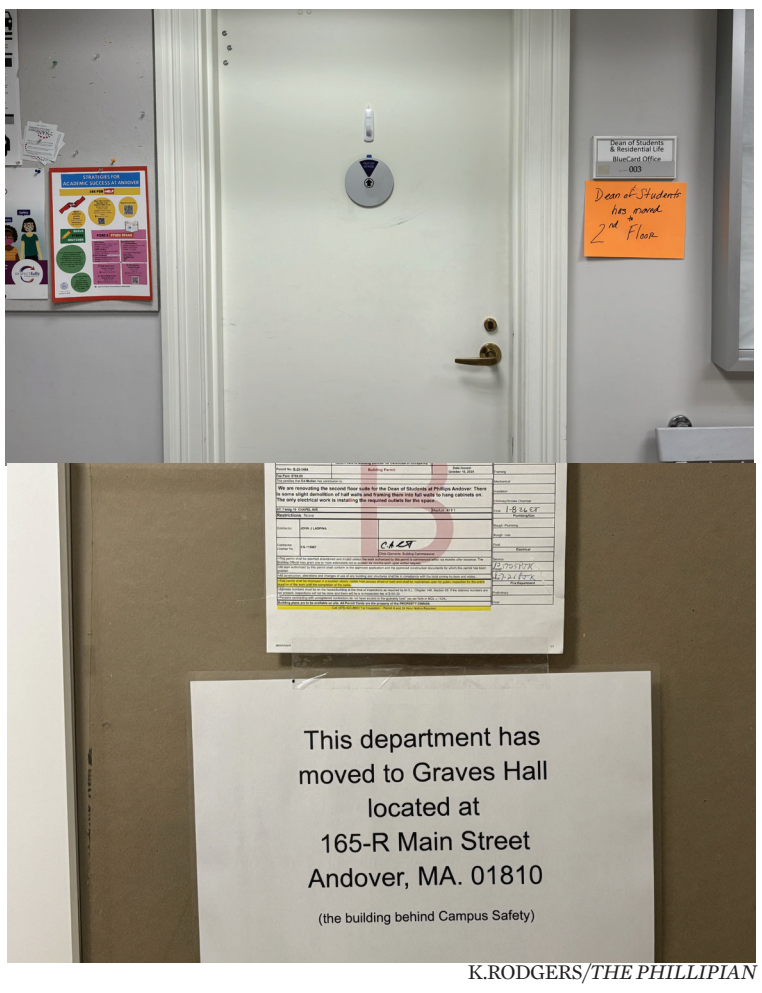
Dean of Students Office Relocates to the Second Floor of George Washington Hall

SARAH SUN & NICCOLO LEE-SUK



K.RODGERS/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Dean of Students moved to the second floor of George Washington Hall.

The Dean of Students Office has changed locations from the ground floor to the second floor of George Washington Hall (GW). The move is a part of larger office relocation in response to the new vacancy in former music building Graves Hall (Graves).

Susan Tsao Esty, Dean of Students and Residential Life, explained how the construction of Falls Music Center freed up significant space across campus, prompting campus organizers to reconsider the way various spaces are used. According to Esty, the offices that moved to Graves largely handle administrative functions that students rarely interact directly with.

"Graves has been around for a long time. It's a beautiful building. [The move] left a vacancy so that people who look at campus design could think about how to best use that space. There was a sense that it would be nice to have as much student activity close to each other so that it's easy for students to participate in different things and get to different spaces," said Esty. "That's why we moved offices out of this building across the street because students don't use Human Resources or the Business Office or the Comptroller's Office."

Despite the recent changes, future plans are not yet set in stone, with there being no major student-facing building changes in the foreseeable future. However, Esty noted the possibility of eventually converting GW into a student center.

"There is some appetite to have more student-focused things in GW," said Esty. "For instance, if we need more classroom space, then we could move different student-focused things out of other buildings into this building so that it would free up classroom space in other buildings."

She continued, "What I understand is there's a desire for there to be a student life hub like, [Paresky] Commons, [the Oliver Wendell Holmes Library], GW, [the Office for Community and Multicultural Development], all in a centralized place in the middle of campus."

Madelyn Esposito '27, is one day-student who often spent her free time in Graves. She stated how having a student-focused space could be especially beneficial for day students, who might be stuck on campus with limited places to relax.

"As a day student, it would also be nice if some sort of day student center were set up, as I know I've found myself stuck on campus on the weekends before without a place to go due to buildings being closed. We have the lockers and the mailroom area, but they aren't exactly the best places to take a break or get work done. Day student spaces could also help day students feel more included on campus, knowing that they have their own space they can go back to while on campus like boarders have a dorm," said Espotito.

A boarder, Daniel Matloff '28, mentioned that the moving of offices had minimal impacts on Andover students. Even though he doesn't frequent GW, he suggested that having a centralized location for student congregations could be beneficial.

"It's a good way to use it. It's really smart to move administration that's really not important to students further away from main campus so that space on main campus is opened up and free for students to use. It would be really useful. Right now, we have to rely

Continued on A5, Column 1

Ice Storm Leaves Students Slipping Into the New Year

CADE RUTKOSKE

After an overnight ice-storm Tuesday night, community members woke up to paths that had become dangerously icy. Early on Wednesday morning, students received an email from Dean Esty, Dean of Students, warning them about the treacherous pathways.

"The weather overnight has created icy paths and roads, and OPP crews are working to treat them," wrote Esty. "Use extreme caution as you travel about campus today. If you are a day student please travel safely and contact your advisor and cluster dean if you are delayed getting to campus."

Throughout the morning Offce of Physical Plant (OPP) worked to clear the paths, however many roadways around campus remained dangerous, prompting some teachers to postpone their class start times. Dr. Driscoll, Instructor in English, decided to delay the start time of her Indigenous Literature course. One of her students, James Gordon '26, recalled the postponed class.

"I woke up in the morning, checked my phone, and I was blessed to see that my teacher said class is going to start at 9 a.m. because there is too much ice on the roads and she wanted OPP to clear the paths. I went back to bed for 30 minutes," said Gordon.

Gordon remembered the icyness around campus. "When I was coming out of my dorm, I almost slipped because the steps were a bit icy," he said. "I saw someone, [slip]. It was like the banana cartoon meme where they slipped on some ice and fell on their back."

Dr. Chan, Instructor in Biology, sent a group message to Stimson Dormitory early Wednesday morning, warning students of the slippery conditions on their steep back walkway.

"I wasn't really out, but from my apartment window I could see that students were struggling to go up [our back pathway]. It's not necessarily because it was super icy, but it's also because they weren't equipped. Most of them were not wearing the right shoes," said Chan. "Some people refused to use the railing too. They were just walking like a penguin, or worse than a penguin."

Reflecting on the icyness of the paths, Dr. Chan commended OPP for their efficiency in clearing the paths.

"OPP actually did a pretty good job this morning. It was mostly clear, it's just that because it's cold, it freezes up very quickly," said Chan.

C.RUTKOSKE/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Students living in Stimson navigated the icy paths on their way to class.

Andover's 2026 Co-President Election Begins

COURTESY OF GRACIE AZIABOR

2025-2026 Co-Presidents Gracie Aziabor '26 and Phillip Meng '26 lead an interest meeting for aspiring candidates.

FELIX BRET

The first interest meeting for Student Body Co-Presidents at Andover was held for prospective candidates on Wednesday. According to Student Body Co-President Gracie Aziabor '26, the first round of voting in the election will take place later this term in February, with the final round and debate taking place early in the Spring Term.

"We hosted the interest meeting for all students who were interested in running in the election and we went over the commitments of the role with this group of students: the things that you're expected to do, and the behind the scenes work that maybe people aren't as aware about. We talked about the timeline for the upcoming election, and then we just gave them a few pieces of advice about drafting initiatives. Also just things that [Co-President] Philip [Meng '26] and I learned in this past year," said Aziabor.

She continued, "Generally the timeline has been pushed up a little bit to give candidates more time to draft their initiatives and meet with nec-

Continued on A5, Column 3

Tang Theater Under Renovation Until January 2027

STAFF REPORT

Tang Theater will be closed off to students and faculty until next year for renovations and roof construction. The Theater and Dance productions for the remainder of this school year and part of the 2026-2027 school year will be held primarily in the Pan Athletic Center and Borden Memorial Gym.

According to Rob Lazar, Chair of the Theater and Dance Department, renovations in Tang have been considered for a couple years. However, the full process, consisting of fixes to the roof and building code compliance updates, began this year.

"It's been on the docket as something that needed to get done ever since I got here [in fall of 2023], but I don't think the nuts and bolts of it or definitive start times, really got nailed down until last year," said Lazar. "You probably won't notice any changes. All of the construction is repair work."

Lazar continued, "The roof needs to be replaced, so they are basically taking the roof off and then putting it back on. As they take the roof off, they need to clear everything out of Tang because it's going to be exposed to the elements."

According to Katie Clark, Instructor in Dance, this year will still see "a full season [of shows]." She explained the ways that the theater department has worked around the closure of the main auditorium. She noted that most shows will occur in Steinbach Theater or Pan.

"There isn't a traditional curtain, like the heavy curtain that we would normally see on a main stage production. We've had to get creative. I think, yes, if you're looking for a traditional curtain up, curtain down performance that you would see in Tang, that's certainly an element that we're not going to be able to work with," said Clark.

She added, "Pan has a lot of technical capabilities. It's got a full lighting rig and sound capabilities. When we have a show there, we install a psych, which is the white curtain backdrop, and we've got a green room. It is limited on wing space and backstage space for big set pieces, so that's its biggest limitation."

Clark gave a run-down of this year's performance plan, highlighting the different spaces that will be used to host shows.

"We've got three shows happening in Pan this term and one in the Steinbach [Theater]. Then the spring will be even busier in Pan. We've got the Andover Dance Festival, the spring main stage dance concert, which will happen in the Rubio studio in Pan, [and] Two 901 projects. We've talked about a faculty-led play. [There's] lots of stuff happening in the spring, too," said Clark.

Some students expressed disappointment at the moving of this year's big musical, SpongeBob, to the fall term. One performer, Eliza Feygin '28 believed that the Tang repairs were necessary, yet expressed similar opinions.

"For me, I just got here this year. Because of the construction in Tang, all the new students who came in weren't able to audition for lead roles in SpongeBob. They held auditions last year because they were holding the musical in fall because of the construction. I was really looking forward to having that opportunity to go out for a big role," said Feygin.

Despite expressing sadness at the altered production schedule, Kaya Hurteau '27, a frequent performer, shared her excitement for a safer space. Hurteau explained that she also hopes for some minor enhancements.

"I definitely think Tang needs to be renovated, even if it's just for safety. Being able to trust the space you're in as a performer is really necessary," said Hurteau. "Sometimes it's probably harder for them to install newer technology when the theater is so old, so if that's something that can be repaired that would be really cool. Especially after seeing Falls [Hall], there's a lot of really cool things they can do with the new technology, the way a theater is built, and the way sound works in a theater, which are really interesting to me. I hope that they can do something along those lines," said Hurteau.

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"Grapes: To Eat or Not to Eat"
Regardless of their practicality, superstitions like eating 12 grapes on New Year's Eve foster optimism and fun memories with loved ones.

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Arts, B6
Girls Hockey went 3-1 at the Patsky K. Odden Tournament to end the year, but started 2026 with a 6-0 win over Governors.
Read about trend predictions for the new year, from longer-lasting, sustainable wardrobes to 2016-reminiscent styles.

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Editorial

The People, the Paper, the Place

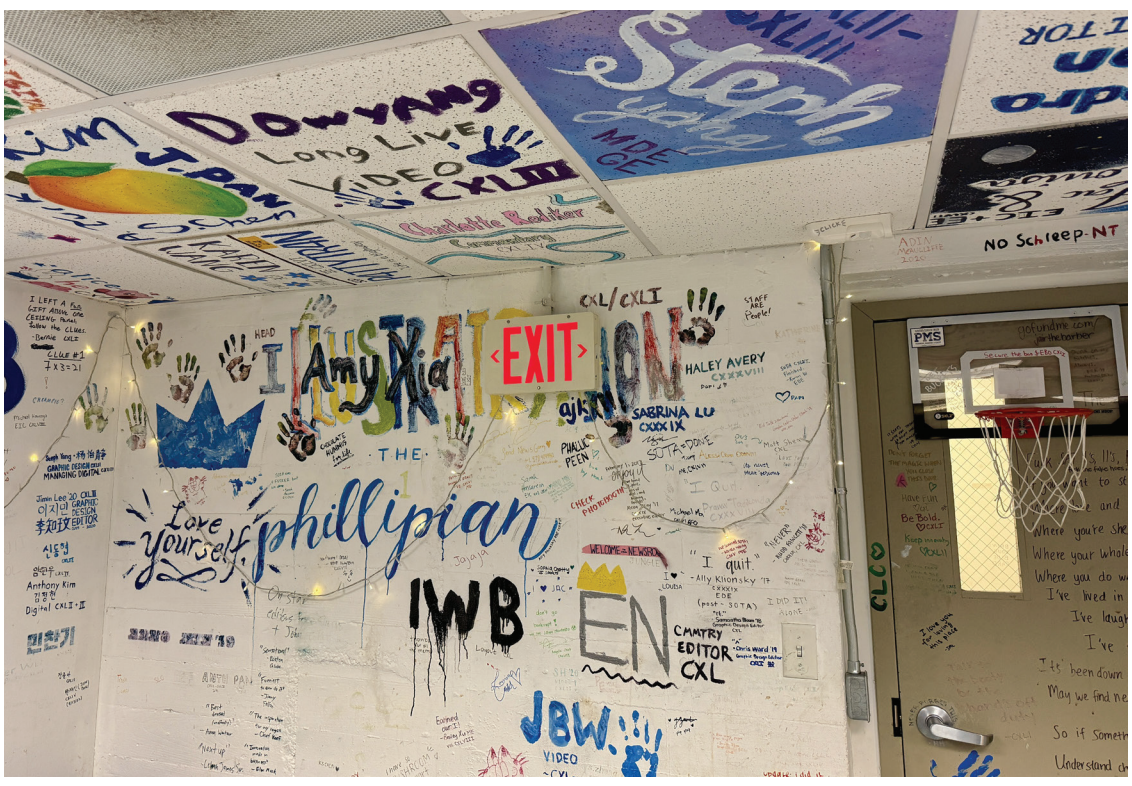
In *The Phillipian*'s newsroom, bold letters swathe every wall, ceiling, and desk. It's a tradition for departing *Phillipian* members to sign messages in the Newsroom. As they bid goodbye to the newsroom for the last time and welcome all new members to the paper's community, countless *Phillipian* alumni paint their names on ceiling tiles. Thousands of quotes — "take care of my home," "best of luck," or "sriracha isn't spicy" — embed warmth and love across this small 25 x 25 foot room.

However, as outlined in the 2016 Campus Master Plan, the newsroom will be relocated to George Washington Hall (GW), which is envisioned as a hub for student activities. While the relocation has multiple benefits and campus planners put in a lot of thought, we believe that the future generations of *The Phillipian* should have a say in the process. We also recognize that these changes have not begun to take place right now, and it's likely that no current student on campus will be on *The Phillipian* board to experience the newsroom being moved to GW. At the same time, we also acknowledge that change happens. Before Morse Hall, the newsroom was in the former Thomas M. Evans Hall (Gelb Science Center's predecessor), and before then, in Graves Hall. But we hope that if the newsroom moves, the collective memory and history captured on the walls of the current newsroom will be preserved.

As a space, the newsroom shapes *The Phillipian* and Andover's community. Accumulated on its walls are jokes, anecdotes, words of encouragement from one board of editors to another. We inherit this room from those who came before us, just as future students will inherit the paper from us. These tangible markers are a record of *The Phillipian*'s culture and what defines our community. It proves that past members shared the same inside jokes, experienced the same challenges, and were driven by a desire to be a part of something collaborative and larger, enduring even beyond our time in high school.

As anonymously written on the doorframe of the newsroom, "Don't forget the magic when you close this door."

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



Grapes: To Eat or Not To Eat?

LARA KIM

COURTESY OF LARA KIM

On December 31, my sisters and I sat under the table, frantically stuffing grapes into our mouths as the clock struck 11:59 p.m. The normal Spanish tradition calls for twelve grapes to be eaten before the first minute of the New Year begins. If done successfully, you'll be granted luck and abundance in life. The table part is simply to add extra luck. My parents had questioned whether eating grapes actually does play a part in the coming year's success. Why should it matter that green grapes bring good fortune, or red ones summon love, if their effects can't be scientifically proven? The fact is, many people do not eat them on New Year's Eve, believing that if they don't, their lives will magically improve overnight. Despite seeming impractical, partaking in this superstition provides an opportunity for positive goal-setting and making cherishable memories.

A year is plenty of time for one's life to change drastically. It brings unknown opportunities, new relationships, and at times, dire hardships. As a result, the future often frightens many people, which makes good superstitions all the more appealing. Eating grapes grants comfort to people with a hopeful promise that good things — college admissions, job openings, family health, romance — are coming their way, even if they might not actually happen. For example, last New Year's Eve, I knew I would soon submit my application to Andover. In preparation, I hastily ate those twelve grapes — green, of course. Although I will never know for sure whether those green grapes actually played a part in my acceptance or not, the notion of having luck on my side reassured me. This New Year's tradition may manifest in an actual desired outcome through a placebo effect. Believing in earnest that grapes would warrant success, these thoughts may emit positive chemical releases in our brain, boosting our confidence, increasing the likelihood of risk-taking, and even leading us to aim for more ambitious opportunities.

Besides, this annual ritual could also just serve as simple fun. The challenge of successfully eating twelve grapes in a minute is harmless and exciting to do with friends and family. Stories from friends and acquaintances say they're a popular activity at New Year's Eve parties, especially due to the easy setup. I recall my own family had been travelling for squash two years ago, but still wanted to include some festivity away from home in our tiny hotel room. So, this special superstition is not only supposedly lucky but also creates opportunities to strengthen bonds and forge memories you can fondly look back on.

ANASTASIE SYCHEVA/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

One could argue that because superstitions are not "real" and cannot be scientifically proven, they are pointless. There is no downside in believing something, so why not just eat grapes using that reasoning? The experience and joy obtained from the activity can also make it worth putting that extra investment in. After all, you are buying a fruit — not a mansion in the Hamptons. Others simply believe superstitions are nonsensical what-if's. Friends laughed in disbelief when I told them tying my right shoe's laces before the left one helped me win a squash match. Something so insignificant couldn't possibly affect any results. But what seemed pointless actually spurned confidence and comfort within me. In relation to the New Year's Eve tradition, if it can bring something small but positive to your life, then it is not futile.

Perhaps grapes really do bring good luck, or maybe they are simply just a delicious fruit. Regardless, the New Year's tradition surrounding them should not be denoted as a waste of time or useless. Just as you have probably said "knock on wood" once in your life or tried not to step on cracks for fear of breaking your mother's back, consuming grapes on the special day of the year brings hope and encouragement. So why not give the grapes a chance and stuff our faces full of food under the table?

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

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CORRECTIONS:

No One Grabbed the Mic. So I Did.

WOOJIN OH

COURTESY OF WOOJIN OH

On a Friday evening in September, I stood in Susie's with my friends, waiting for the microphones and speakers to be set up. It was karaoke night, and the room was filling up. My friends and I were having an excited argument about what song to sing. Some of us suggested Bruno Mars, while others mentioned Billy Joel. Despite my previous enthusiasm, I grew hesitant when I thought of actually singing before a large crowd. I wanted to sing, but I feared embarrassing myself in front of others. I surveyed the room to see how other people were feeling and recognized how others were coming up with song suggestions just like my friends and I were doing. However, even after ten minutes, no one actually stepped up to the stage to grab the mic, including myself. While I was still doubtful of my potential voice cracks on stage, I forced myself to ignore my paranoia and grabbed my friend's arms to step on stage. Although I made a couple of voice cracks and sang a few notes out-of-tune, no one gave any judgmental looks. Instead, the whole room cheered, enjoying the moment with me despite my imperfections.

After some reflection on that night, I realized that my hesitation to sing at the karaoke might have come from a struggle to fully trust my community. I had feared the risk of showing a side of me that wasn't my best, which overpowered my ability to trust the supportiveness of my peers. I also noticed that I might not have been alone in this tendency. During karaoke night, some of my friends were reluctant to sing together, shrugging off as they said, "Nah bro, I can't sing." Even outside of karaoke night, I have seen my peers turn away from their interests in sports or clubs, fearing that their lack of experience might cause embarrassment.

> Andover is a community that we can trust to not judge others for trying.

Andover provides ample opportunities for students to explore their passions and interests, ranging from small events like karaoke night to more significant ones like clubs and engaging with All-School Meeting (ASM) speakers. However, in an aspiring environment like Andover, imperfection sometimes feels like something we can't afford. This leads us to stay silent in class discussions and opt out of extracurriculars of interest with the excuse "maybe next time."

What we tend to overlook is that Andover is a community that we can trust to not judge others for trying. Thinking back to my revisit in the spring, I remember how every student in the audience watching the student-led talent show would chant and scream their lungs out to support their peers. If a dancer tripped on their landing or if a musician entered a beat early, the audience only grew louder with their cheers. It was this unwavering support for each other — that the crowd and the Blue Key Heads showed — that took my attention, and convinced me I wanted to belong to this community.

CAMILA CHEN/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Throughout my experience at Andover so far, I've seen this pattern everywhere. I remember on the first day of school, I asked for directions to Gelb Science Center three separate times during a passing period. Each time, I was met with an enthusiastic welcome to campus as they instantly recognized that I was a freshman. One of them even suggested walking there with me, and I had a friendly conversation with them along the way. Through these small acts of kindness to strangers and the ways we root for each other, the Andover community has shown me again and again that I could trust them. I just needed to believe it.

The next day, I forced myself to step up during a discussion about an artwork in English class. Despite my determination, some parts of my brain tried to shut my mouth, tempting me to stay in the comfort of silence. However, my hand was already raised without my noticing. As I shared, some nodded, some showed expressions of disagreement, but all of my classmates respectfully listened to my thoughts. By the end of the period, I no longer doubted, "Are my opinions valid?" Instead, I just spoke to my classmates and teacher as naturally as I would with my friends.

> Through these small acts of kindness to strangers and the ways we root for each other, the Andover community has shown me again and again that it was safe to trust them.

Wanting to achieve one's best could be a constructive mindset, but it shouldn't restrict proactiveness and risk-taking. In fact, the embarrassment that we fear is usually far less severe than what we imagine. Even if your few voice cracks or wild opinions about a passage made some people laugh, light embarrassment eventually gets diluted by the satisfaction of being fully involved. Our community is already ready to embrace all our trials — we just need to trust it enough to act.

Woojin Oh is a Junior from Frisco, TX. Contact the author at woh29@andover.edu.

New Year, Same Me…?

MEDHA KONDA

A. LEE / THE PHILLIPIAN

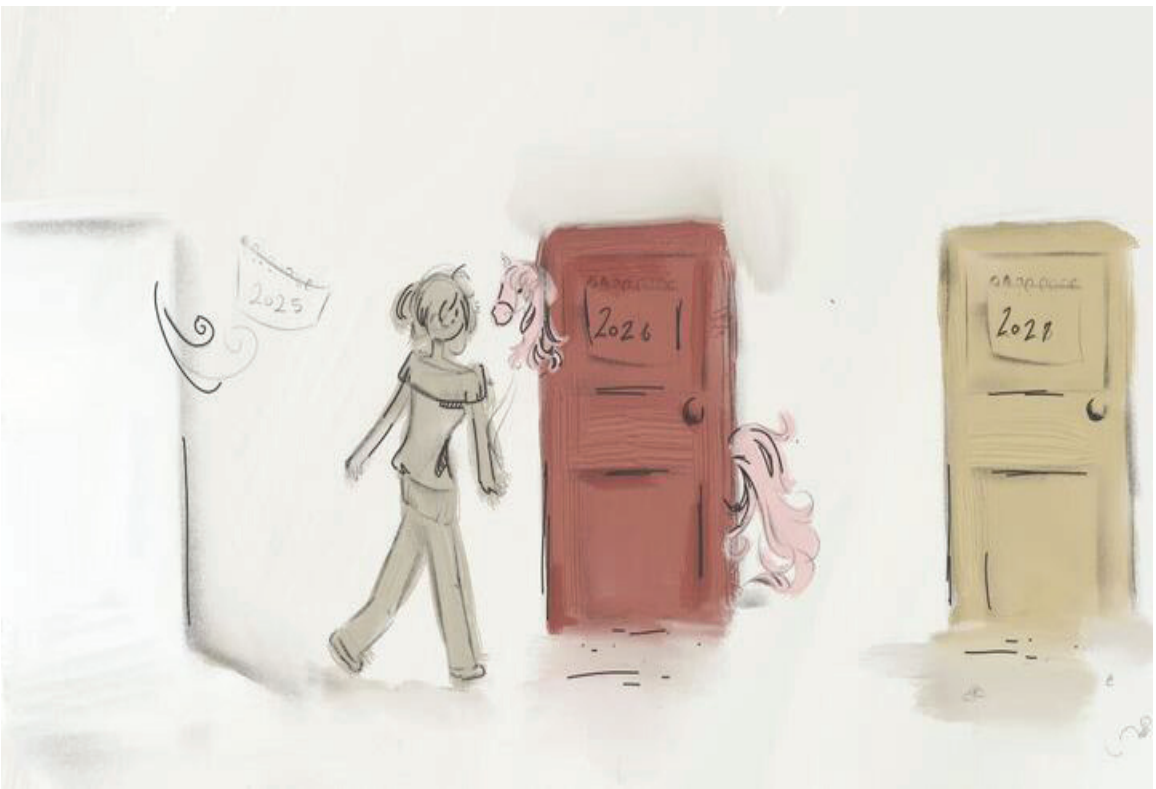
The day of New Year's Eve appears much like other days in the year, cleaning, cooking before parties, and exchanging messages with friends. As the clock draws closer to 12 a.m., the realization dawns that a new year is upon us; '25s turn to '26s on calendars, and summer break doesn't seem as far as previously thought. We'll be older, one step closer to adulthood, closer to detaching from our parents' house. We'll hopefully be a bit wiser, offering lessons to younger students whose parents tell them to look up to us. People tout their resolutions; you'll often hear "new year, new me" because a new year presents an opportunity to forget those embarrassing moments, when we got hit by a bike outside of Paresky Commons or proudly built an argument on an incorrect assumption, only to get fact-checked later. We try to scrub away childish things that were said or the bad grades we've received. Yet, there's some level of discomfort with maturing and aging. More things will be expected of us; there will be more responsibilities to shoulder. Shouldn't we be a bit worried too? Just as we had been getting accustomed to things, like the school year starting and the cold weather, the new year seems to arrive and throw us off, even though only one number's changed on the calendar.

As we try to present ourselves as being more mature and more patient, we often look far into the events of the new year in hopes of getting ahead on planning out goals. The reality is that this may cause us to incessantly worry about daunting tasks, like the dreaded Upper year or an upcoming driving test — they suddenly seem closer than they were just a few weeks ago. With the arrival of the new year, it's too easy to get lost in all that's to come; the good, like summer vacation, or even the scary things, like Upper year. Though New Year's is often associated with change, the reality is that nothing significant changes between December 31st and January 1st, so why does it suddenly seem that certain events are closer now than they were? We should keep ourselves grounded in the moments we experience now, whether it's a math test or messing around with friends, allowing our worries to subside.

> With the arrival of the new year, it's too easy to get lost in all that's to come

Holding a paper plate on New Year's felt the same as it's always been, with the same family-friends, the same foods, and the same cheers as the clock strikes twelve. This moment is one of many in my life that I can't imagine being different. Future-related anxiety isn't only about messing up in the future, but also the idea that with this comes a cost of changing relationships and dynamics. Upon seeing all of these kids I've grown up with, I felt that everything would be wildly different in the new year. That growing older is an imminent threat that'll take away these traditions we share — even when I didn't feel that way just two weeks ago. The truth is that these changes have been happening gradually; rather than just watching things unfold, I've been growing too. When I look back on previous years, I can't recall what I was scared of, because being focused on the present is confirmation that change worked out well. Instead of worrying about the day when New Year's will no longer be a shared tradition, this past time, I cherished the moments spent welcoming 2026 together. By enjoying the good in the present, we become less worried about change and acknowledge all the things that are special to us.

CARINA PAIK/*THE PHILLIPIAN*



Though the coming year will be teeming with uncertainty, tension, and enjoyment too, I find solace in knowing that certain moments, like the joy of New Year's Eve, will happen again. Though school years have passed and family has been close and far, my friends and I reconvene at the parks just like when we were three, rewatch shows on whoever's couch, and there will always be an excited puppy greeting me when I'm home. Even when the routines we experience may change, space for the new will open up. There are always things to anticipate in our daily lives, so we cannot remain stuck on a future that isn't much closer than it was before the new year. Let the constants in life and the joys of what's happening today calm our nerves about the future — because, much like years before, we won't always realize when change is happening.

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

Writing Isn't Dying. The Five-Paragraph Essay Is.

KONNOR FORTINI

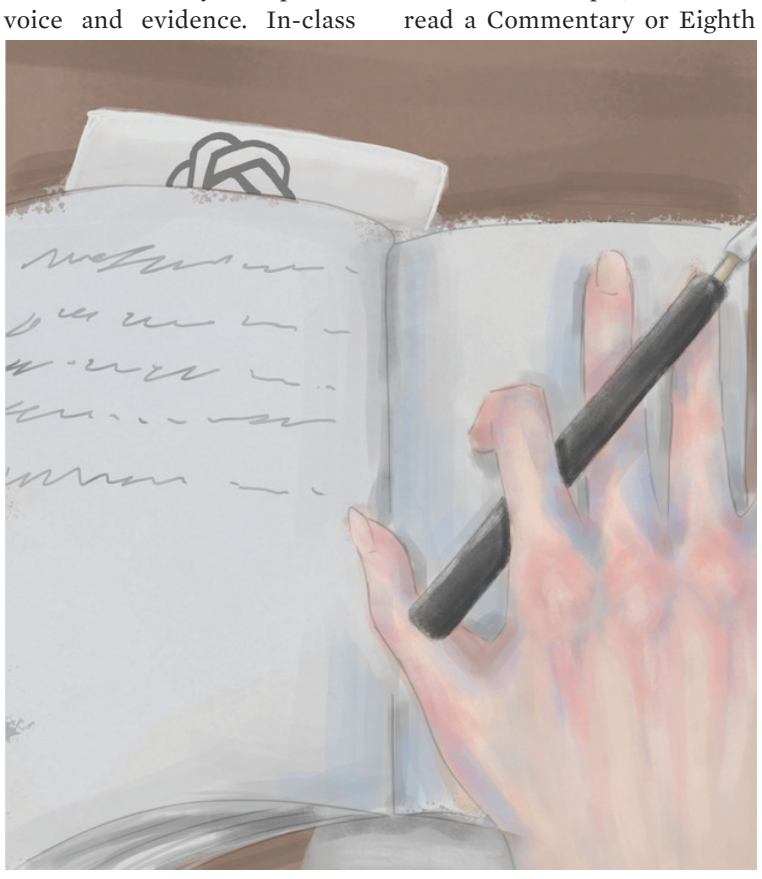
A. LEE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Every few years, a new machine appears, and someone declares an ancient human skill officially dead. Calculators were supposed to murder math. Google was supposed to euthanize memory. Now, with Artificial Intelligence (AI) that can produce a five-paragraph essay in the time it takes you to open your laptop, we're told writing is headed for extinction. Yet AI's effect on writing is not extinction; it will instead make original, creative writing more valuable while putting formulaic writing to bed.

AI can generate text. But writing isn't the same as producing text, in the same way that a handmade stuffed animal isn't the same as one produced by a factory machine. Both result in a stuffed animal, yet the care, detail, intentionality, and individuality are immediately apparent. When people say, "learning to write well will become obsolete," that applies mainly to the particular type of writing that is safe, engineered only to satisfy specific rubrics. In some cases, teachers rely on these formulas as students may lack the foundation to experiment creatively with organization. Still, these "foundational" structures will soon become superannuated as AI perfects this type of writing. Hence, AI is the natural predator of formulaic writing. If the average high schooler aims to write a satisfactory paragraph that meets the "three pieces of evidence" requirement, AI will almost always produce a better one. AI will make this satisfactory writing more common. It will flood classrooms, inboxes, and the internet with clean, soulless prose. Yet abundance doesn't equal obsolescence. It just means standard shift. Ergo, AI does not make all forms of writing worthless; instead, it marks the death of writing as a compliance exercise.

> AI can imitate the act of creating ideas with its collection of data; however, that's all it can do, as it can only generate an amalgamation of data.

Andover has already exhibited this shift. Humanities classes began moving towards unpolished yet original in-class writing. Teachers are now placing greater emphasis on "the idea" in line with the changing landscape of writing, where anyone can produce polished texts, but good ideas remain rare. AI can imitate the act of creating ideas with its collection of data; however, that's all it can do, as it can only generate an amalgamation of data. At times, it can surprise with something interesting. Yet ultimately, AI cannot write from life; it can only write from language that exists, and thus these ideas are being siphoned from the valuable ideas of others. Therefore, the market for good ideas becomes even scarcer. Some students have been upset because in-class writing is naturally messier. Yet, impromptu writing can capture thinking in motion with less focus on fitting a perfect five-paragraph shape and thus sacrificing intellectual risk-taking. While AI thrives in generating predictable but vague essays, the work becomes harder to outsource with your specific voice and evidence. In-class essays are not the only method to show original and creative thinking. Some other ways include oral presentations and defenses, projects that blend real-time visual creation with narration. In each of these formats, students are required to actively process information, take intellectual risks, and communicate in ways that are far more difficult to automate. For example, in Cryptography (CSC471), a computer science course at Andover, we students were tasked with creating a slide deck explaining what we learned up to that point and presenting it in that same class. For tasks that demand spontaneity, vulnerability, and genuine engagement, AI is less useful as a "shortcut."



KAYTLYN XIAO/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Thus, AI actually raises the bar for writing in terms of the articulation of creative content. For example, we don't read a Commentary or Eighth Page article in *The Phillipian* for precise grammar or flowery phrasings. You're impressed by the fact that someone noticed and communicated something relatable. The very human act of writing stems from bridging the author and the audience with authenticity.

Besides, AI cannot recreate one of the most valuable parts of writing: the process. Before the creation of the final product, writing consists of questioning what you believe, revising your beliefs for enhanced clarity, and organizing the understanding of your thoughts and values through the process. More than just words, writing is a style and a set of choices that originate from the author. It's the way a mind arranges language to communicate something uniquely its own, which AI cannot fully imitate by summarizing the general beliefs of people online.

> Impromptu writing can capture thinking in motion with less focus on fitting a perfect five-paragraph shape and thus sacrificing intellectual risk-taking.

AI will shift the emphasis of writing to originality. In the same way that a world with unlimited fast food makes a home-cooked meal more meaningful, a world with unlimited generated text makes human writing, one with risk, intention, and lived specificity, more valuable.

The five-paragraph essay may finally be on life support. But writing is not dying. It's being forced to become what it a ways should have been: original thinking made visible.

Konnor Fortini is a Lower from New York, NY. Contact the author at kfortini28@andover.edu.

The Resume Can't Hold Your Life

EMMA HONG

K. TOMALA / THE PHILLIPIAN

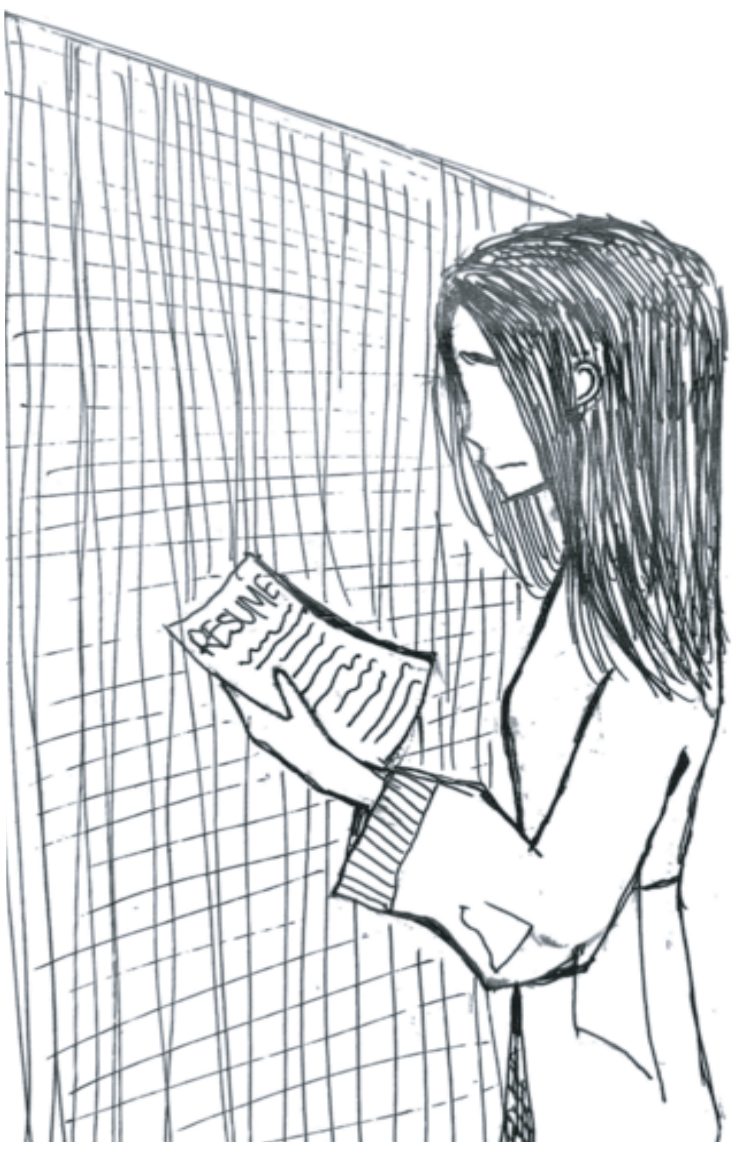
Although it sounds cliché and vacant, there is more purpose to adolescence than succeeding in school. Due to academic pressures, it can sometimes feel that we should feel guilty for having fun, as if it detracts from "truly" important things such as grades or extracurriculars. However, it is arguably the moments that do not translate into a resume that are filled with enjoyment, curiosity, and connection that shape your growth.

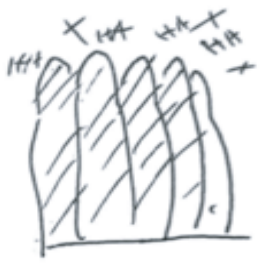
The period of adolescence should not be viewed solely as a process of becoming ready for adulthood. It should provide space and freedom to try, fail, change, and reflect in ways decentered from academics. This can allow teenagers to, ultimately, engage more intentionally with their lives: not just as students or applicants, but as developing individuals. Treating rest, creativity, or social connections as secondary can foster an unhealthy notion that they are optional or a luxury. Allowing space for enjoyment fosters balance and sustainability, making success more meaningful rather than just exhausting.

One reason this belief is pervasive is likely due to the measurability of academic success. GPAs and awards provide clear evidence of excellence, but personal development is rarely as quantifiable. Especially at Andover, where excellence is both expected and celebrated, it is easy to equate worth with productivity — the rigor of classes, the intensity of competition, and the culture of ambition can unintentionally reinforce the idea that every moment must be optimized for success. While this environment indubitably fosters discipline and intellectual growth, it can also blur the line between healthy challenge and toxic competition. Due to this, life skills — specifically learning how to form meaningful relationships — which are developed through experience, not rigorous training, are often valued less because of their perceived unproductivity.

However, reframing your understanding of success — especially in an environment like Andover — does not mean rejecting rigor or disengaging from goals. Rather, it means integrating intellectual rigor with personal fulfillment in a way that is sustainable. As young people, we are told at times that deep friendships or romantic relationships are distractions. However, through emotional intimacy with others, you begin to recognize your own patterns and needs: how you communicate, what you fear, how to compromise, and what you need to feel understood and validated. Therefore, these relationships should be viewed as not emotional add-ons to academic life, but as necessary for adolescents to develop emotional literacy. I remember feeling this myself on a Saturday night during spring term my freshman year — sitting on the lawn with friends who had become extremely important to me over the course of the year, talking and laughing together until sign-in despite us all knowing somewhere in the back of our head that we had homework to do. I realized then that these unstructured, joyful moments were not necessarily distractions from growth — they were the embodiment of growth. In that laughter, in the shared stories and quiet confessions, I learned a lot about myself and others.

> Understanding what fulfillment looks like for you is not indulgent, but rather practical.





DASHA GOMEZ/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

That being said, another understated but lasting aspect of learning how to navigate relationships during adolescence is knowing how you enjoy spending your time or having fun. This may seem inconsequential in the moment, but it can become surprisingly formative. What you experience and learn about yourself as a teenager can become the foundation for how you continue to rest, connect, and sustain yourself through periods of pressure in the future. Understanding what fulfillment looks like for you is not indulgent, but rather practical, equipping you with the ability to maintain a meaningful and livable relationship balanced with ambition for the rest of your life.

Ultimately, adolescence is not solely about checking boxes or accumulating accolades. It is also about cultivating a foundation for a meaningful life. Success in this period should not be measured only by grades, awards, or productivity, but by the depth of your growth — intellectually, emotionally, and socially. By allowing space for curiosity, joy, rest, and connection, adolescents can develop the resilience and self-awareness necessary to navigate both challenges and opportunities in their futures.

Emma Hong is a Lower from Iowa City, Iowa. Contact the author at ehong28@andover.edu.

Some Students Wish For Clearer Communication of Campus Changes

Continued from A1, Column 3

on random spaces on campus. So it would be nice to standardize everything," said Matloff.

Despite suggesting that the new space could be useful for student congregations, Matloff expressed some skepticism about its practicality as a student hang-out space.

"It would be cool to have a space really dedicated for student life and student happiness, [but] I think many would still remain in the library as their place of congregation, as it's just a more central location. In the cold winter months, people don't really want to walk all the way from the quad to GW just to hang out with friends," said Matloff.

Rosie Pan '28 agreed that Andover should expand its spaces for students to congregate. She spoke on how communication helps keep students informed about on-campus changes.

"If they are really adding more spaces and clearing up space for the students, I feel like that will have a positive impact overall. I don't see there being a big change, but I think that it's a good idea and that the initiative is well meaning," said Pan.

She added, "[I heard about the Dean of Students office being relocated] but it was just in passing, so I don't really know most of the details. I would not have known about most of the changes [laid out in the Campus Master Plan] otherwise, so maybe they could send these in an email."

Write for News!!!

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Aziabor Shares Excitment for Upcoming Election

Continued from A5, Column 1

essary people, but the timeline otherwise is quite similar to what you saw last year."

At Andover, Student Body Co-Presidents serve as facilitators between faculty and student voices, working with the administration to convey information and propose initiatives. Students running for Co-President present an agenda with a series of initiatives that they hope to implement. Aziabor discussed the club handbook initiative, the current Co-President's most recently implemented initiative.

"The club handbook that we published recently was a big thing. Clubs obviously are such a large part of student social life on campus and so Philip and my motivation behind getting that done was figuring out how we can make clubs run effectively. Also encouraging people to put themselves out there and join new clubs or start their own and get the tips and tricks of the process," said Aziabor.

Aziabor reflected on her time as Co-President at Andover, her hopes for the future, and expressed excitement for the upcoming election season.

"It's been such an honor to serve in this role. I've learned a lot about myself, I've learned a lot about the school," said Aziabor. "We wanted to figure out ways that we could help students make the most of their time here and connect in the best way they know how."

She added, "The election is going to be a fun experience. I'm excited for the class of 2027 to see what they provide, and I think we have a great group of candidates."

Editor's note: Gracie Aziabor is a Layout Editor and Philip Meng is a Business Manager for The Phillipian, CXLVIII.

New Year, New Aims: Students Share Resolutions for 2026

REPORTING BY OLIVIA TEMPLE & JEREMIAH NUNEZ

Starting the year with intention, students returned to campus reflecting on the previous year while setting resolutions for the upcoming, 2026 calendar year. Whether personal, academic, communal, or even social, students shared their goals for the new year, marking the start of change and a new beginning.

Adanna Obi '29:

My New Year's resolution is to take the advice that people give me, not as criticism, but as a way for me to become a better person. Especially older students, as it can help me to become a better student at Andover. Outside of school, I can take advice from parents or other people that I know, so that I can just be a better person.

Lucien-Sinclair Herndon '28:

My New Year's resolution is to eat all three meals at school. I live in Bartlet, which is one of the closest [dorms] to Commons, and I never wake up for breakfast. I usually skip lunch, and I just eat cereal sometimes. My eating habits on campus aren't that good, so I would like to wake up in the New Year more frequently, and find something to eat. Commons does have a lot of options, and I am a picky eater, so that is what I am trying to fix this year.

Will Ware '26:

My New Year's resolution is to keep my room clean. I am a Day student now, but I will be going to college next year, and I want to learn how to be a good roommate for my college years.

Jane Hlavaty '28:

My New Year's resolution is to stop scrolling, because I spend too much time looking down at the screen, and the new phone policy helped me to think about interacting with my peers more. It'll help me be more present every day and work. I will focus more without scrolling, and I can devote my time to other things [like] my hobbies like crafting. Maybe [I will] go back to my instrument.

Alex Love '29:

For 2026, my New Year's resolution is to drink less coffee. I've been drinking a lot of coffee recently. I started a couple of years ago, and it's not good for me, and caffeine consumption isn't good. So, I'm trying to cut caffeine out of my diet, and more specifically, coffee in the mornings. I will try to hold myself accountable, and I will have friends to help me.

10 Questions with Christopher Ishizuka-Wade '08

REPORTING BY IAN S. KIM

Christopher Ishizuka-Wade is an Instructor in the English department, a house counselor in Fuess House, and a coach of Boys JV Basketball. In his free time, Ishizuka-Wade enjoys reading, spending time with his family, playing video games, and playing Dungeons & Dragons.

E. LIU/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

What was it like to return to Andover as a teacher?

Growing up, I had never heard of boarding school. I grew up in Maine, and I had a really good public school education, but I remember coming here to visit because I was connected to the school through soccer. There was a coach at the time, Bill Scott, who was also a teacher here, and he invited me to campus to check it out. I remember coming down and thinking, "What the heck is this place?" What I really appreciated in all my classes was the faith that my teachers had in me, my ideas, and my ability to learn and think. That is the type of thing I am hoping to continue as an instructor [and] cultivate with my students.

How does coaching soccer differ from teaching in the classroom?

I have had soccer described to me at some point by a former coach as a series of problems to solve. When someone passes you the ball, there are all sorts of things to think about, like checking your shoulder to see who is behind you, if there is a defender, what the correct ball to play is, or how to position yourself defensively. Ultimately, coaching is about knowing your players really well and supporting them in the ways in which they are going to best be set up for success, and also appreciating the different things they can offer a team on and off the field. I think that it is similar to teaching in this way: thinking about all the different personalities in the room and the ways in which students are approaching or interpreting a text.

How would you describe your teaching philosophy?

I majored in English in college. I've always really enjoyed reading. I remember that in elementary school, the best day of the school year was the Scholastic Book Fair. I would look forward to that for weeks... There's a quote from Marcel Proust where Proust talks about how writing is an optical instrument through which the reader can read themselves. In other words, you're reading the book, and the writing is there to help you interpret yourself. I hope kids get out of reading that it's not just about trying to find some hidden meaning where you find the metaphor and unlock the box of the poem and then confetti shoots out. It's about being able to see yourself in it, even if you may not fully understand it.

If you could instantly acquire a new skill, what would it be?

Playing the drums. I have played music over the course of my life, but not well. When you watch a drummer, there is just nothing like it. I wish I could gain the skill of being able to split my brain into the different abilities required to do all the different parts of the drum at the same time, and do odd time signatures. That would be really cool, but I definitely don't have that ability.

What do you enjoy most about being a house counselor at Andover?

Working at a boarding school, it is amazing how lifelong friendships can happen right under your nose. [Scott] Hoenig, [Instructor in the Department of Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science,] does an awesome exercise where he says in an opening dorm meeting, "Look around; you are going to see someone in this dorm right now who is going to be your best friend or a lifelong friend." Everyone kind of shrugs their shoulders at first, but by the end of the year, everyone looks around and realizes it is true. Something really special happens in the dorm. It is cool to be a part of it.

What do you like best about teaching in the English department?

One of the most awesome things about being here is that there is so much autonomy in terms of what teachers choose to teach. I love how collaborative the department is. In the English department, we don't have individual classrooms or offices, we just have a communal lounge. It has been the best professional development of my career, walking into that lounge every day and seeing people who are masters of the craft doing amazing things. The collaborativeness and how game people are to just keep reading and learning is endlessly exciting.

If you could design a dream elective for the English department, what would it be?

Right now I am thinking a lot about time: our relationship to it, why it exists, and how we experience it. Those are huge existential questions I have no idea how to answer, but I would love to do something with novels that have elements of time travel or do things with time that are unexpected in terms of the narrative form.

What is one piece of advice you would give to students?

Go on walks. I have never had a good answer to the "advice" question, but all the best ideas I have had, and all the times I have really needed to reset my brain or get out of the dorm or office, I have gone on a walk. If I had started taking walks earlier in my life, I think I would have had a much better time.

Is there a misconception about English or writing that you wish more students would let go of?

I inherited the idea that English is about finding the hidden meaning and understanding what the author intended. A lot of my favorite books and poems I don't fully understand, but they make me think. A lot of the time, when an English teacher asks, "What do you think?" it is not because they are trying to guide the student to a particular answer. Generally, I don't know the answer, and hearing other people's cool and unexpected answers is the best part of the job. The pressure to find a "hidden meaning" is a misconception. However you approach meaning-making is good enough.

When students look back on your class years from now, what do you hope they remember?

That it didn't suck. I hope the class felt new every day in some way, whether it was sitting in a new seat, thinking about the text in a new way, or thinking about their peers and their work in a new way. I am super introverted, and I struggled in classes that were purely discussion-based because I felt too intimidated to say something. I try to come up with lessons that vary in structure so it feels like you're coming into class not knowing exactly what is going to happen. I hope that is a fun experience.

CaMD Scholar Anaya Qamar '26 Presents on Racialization of Islam in American Media

ADELYNE LIU & NICCOLO LEE-SUK

Anaya Qamar '26 kicked off this academic year's series of Community and Multicultural Development (CaMD) Scholar presentations with "The American Gaze: Media and the Racialization of Islam" on December 12 in Kemper Auditorium (Kemper). Qamar's presentation combined historical context with recent instances of Islamophobia in American multimedia, including news sources, caricatures, and videos.

Qamar began her presentation with an activity in which she showed two photographs from her childhood to the audience and asked them to guess where they were taken. One of the photos had been taken at the Islamic Center of Orange County, a mosque frequented by Qamar and her family. Qamar explained the mosque's relevance to her research.

"The reason why I decided [for this photo] to be in here is because this same mosque, ten years earlier, was the center of an FBI surveillance case that made it all the way to the Supreme Court. In this case, a government informant had disguised himself as a Muslim convert and secretly recorded worshippers inside prayer rooms and during spiritual processions. This history of Islamophobia and government- invented hate and oppression existed in the very place that my family and I had been living for years, and I had no idea, but this history of ingrained oppression and Muslim-American struggle should resurface," said Qamar.

Gina Finocchiaro, Protestant Chaplain and International Student Coordinator, served as Qamar's faculty advisor during the project. As part of the introduction to Qamar's presentation, Finocchiaro spoke to Qamar's research and writing process throughout the summer.

"Anaya shared how this topic spilled into all of her summer. Conversations with friends from home, shared movie-watching, research-related, with her family, talking through different pieces of it along the way. The best of our major works are always this way. They live alongside us for a time, and they emerge into being, carrying pieces of our lived experience informed by the perspectives of others and good, solid research. Anaya interrogated her research, always questioning if it was enough... Quickly, my role became just to be an encourager, a familiar role for me with Anaya," said Finocchiaro.

Matt Robinson '27, a student attendee, reflected on his takeaways from the presentation, noting the relevance to the Andover community. He shared how the presentation encouraged him to think more critically about bias in the media.

"One of the themes was encouraging more informed debate and making sure we're not silent and using our power as an institution to educate and our general standing in the educational world to bring greater attention to these issues and make sure that everyone gets the correct, unbiased information... It changed my perspective a lot. I hadn't thought about these issues and I didn't know the information. I haven't dived deep into this aspect, but it made me look at the way articles are written," said Robinson.

Qamar encouraged participation from the audience through frequent questions and discussions. Christian Ramirez '29 appreciated the interactive aspect of her presentation and explained how it made her points engaging to him.

"I really enjoyed the way that she incorporated the audience into the presentation, having us read and ask questions and even just share our thoughts. That kept me specifically more engaged. The ways in which she was able to articulate her thoughts and put that onto the audience as well was very impressive to me," said Ramirez.

For Manalee Chowdhury '28, the presentation offered an opportunity to better understand public perceptions of Muslim identity. Chowdhury noted that the chronology Qamar provided on government and media portrayal helped her recognize the experiences of those who share similar identities to her.

"I was lucky to grow up in a space where I wasn't bullied for my identity. I knew there was societal stigma, but I didn't necessarily feel like I faced a lot of the external pressures other students with my identity feel. It was more of a realization when I heard her presentation... I appreciate the way Anaya made that timeline and timeframe about how long this has been going on and how Muslims are starting to be seen as a group that are very anti-American when obviously the two coexist and intersect," said Chowdhury.

Qamar shared her hopes with the presentation in a separate interview with *The Phillipian*. Pertaining to her research and beyond, she stressed the importance of exploring different perspectives to gain a better understanding of certain topics beyond face value.

"I hope that people take away [that] when it comes to current events that involve portrayals of Muslims or treating Muslims it's important to see a variety and breadth of perspective regardless of what your own stance on a certain topic is. It's important to reach beyond that and question the media that's being fed to you or what you see on the news, because sometimes that's not the full picture," said Qamar.

HERE AND THERE: THE WORLD RIGHT NOW

REPORTING BY BOSON BAI & TRAVIS GUAN

Conflict: Bombing of Key Venezuelan Military Bases Leads to Capture of Maduro

On January 2, the United States Armed Forces carried out a special military operation to damage key Venezuelan military bases and capture the president of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro and first lady Cilia Flores. The order from President Trump to begin the mission came at 10:46 PM EST and lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes, according to the BBC. Several casualties on the Venezuelan side were sustained, with a large part of Maduro's guard being killed, military, and a few civilians, according to Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino. According to Al Jazeera, Maduro was an authoritarian ruler whose tenure was riddled with economic collapse, shortages, hyperinflation, allegations of electoral fraud and human rights abuses. Many Venezuelans, interviewed by the BBC, have expressed 'relief' and 'cautious hope,' expressing gratitude for his removal after years of hardship. Others expressed uncertainty and fear about what is coming next, and how the new power vacuum will be resolved.

Public Safety: Manmade Fire at Ski Resort in Switzerland Leaves 40 Dead

Early in the morning on New Years Day, a deadly fire broke out within the "Le Constellation" ski resort bar in Crans-Montana, Switzerland, injuring 116 and killing 40. According to SkyNews, the fire was caused by festive sparklers on top of champagne bottles coming too close to the ceiling. The fire's spread was aided by the misinstallation of insulating material in the bar's interior, as well as dryness in the region. According to CNN, the fire was caused by a flashover, which is when hot gasses spread throughout the ceiling and walls, causing flammable things in a room to reach their burning temperature.

Economy: AI Prevails, Causing Inflation in Computer Part Prices

The economic boom in AI has continued, with NVIDIA leading the charge. NVIDIA's data centers remain the primary cause of revenue. According to the New York Times, Nvidia controls about 90 percent of the market for the chips used in A.I. projects, and its financial performance has become a bellwether for the tech industry, which is investing trillions of dollars in big data centers all over the world. Random access memory, or RAM for short, has shot up in price due to the growing demand of AI. Steve Mason, a general manager of CyperPowerPC, says that RAM costs are quoted 500 percent higher than they were a few months ago. RAM used to be pretty inexpensive during 2024, being around $90-$120 for 32GB of DDR5. Now, the same RAM kit can cost up to $450. The shortage of RAM also extends to other PC parts; Solid State Drives (SSDs) and Graphics Processing Units (GPUs) are also affected by the extreme growth of the AI market.

Climate: 6.4-Magnitude Earthquake Rocks Philippine Sea, No Casualties Reported

The New York Times reported that a "strong," 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck the Philippine Sea on Wednesday. According to the National Herald, the quake occurred at 11:00AM local time with a depth of around 42 kilometers. Its epicenter was located roughly 47 kilometers east, off the coastal town of Manay in the Davao Oriental Province. Tremors stretched across large parts of Mindanao, raising concerns in nearby coastal and inland areas. However, no immediate reports of deaths, injuries, nor structural damage has been reported following the earthquake.

Science: 60,000-Year-Old South African Arrows Found to Contain Oldest Poison

Researchers at Stockholm University, led by Sven Isaksson, have discovered traces of poison on 60,000-year-old arrow tips originating from South Africa. The next-oldest trace of poison use was dated to 35,000 years ago, making these tips significant in preserving the earliest proof of poisoned weapons by tens of thousands of years as reported by The New York Times. According to Live Science, five of the ten arrows investigated contained slow-acting poisons that were likely derived from a species of tumbleweed. This would have weakened targeted prey by substantially draining their energy according to the Journal of Science Advances.

Politics: Trump Threatens to Seize Greenland

In a briefing on Monday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio reiterated President Donald Trump's renewed resolve to annex Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, through purchase. With abundant natural resources and its strategic position in the Arctic, Greenland has been a focus of Trump's since he first assumed office as stated by The Washington Post. NBC News reported that European allies warned the United States that Trump was violating international NATO treaties, and that they would "not stop defending" the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the island.

Students Reflect Experiences of Winter Break

REPORTING BY KAI OBATA & HELEN XIONG

After two weeks of classes, winter break offered an opportunity to rest, connect with family and friends, and seek new places and interests. Students reflected on how they spent their time off, sharing meaningful moments and experiences that defined their break.

Abigail Wang '27:

"I traveled back to [my home in] Qatar, went to Spain for a week, and then went back. I went sightseeing around Spain, going to churches, museums, and other well-known locations. I slept a lot when I got back... My most memorable experience was hiking up a mountain in the rain on Christmas to see a church that had been built on top of the mountain. It was pretty."

COURTESY OF ABIGAIL WANG

Abigail Wang '27 spent her part of her break siteseeing in Spain.

Ellie Su '28:

"The most important part of Winter break is the fact that you get to rest after the Fall Term, but I did other things as well. I went to Washington D.C. and saw some landmarks. I went to a math conference, and I ate at a restaurant together with my friends... I also attended an academic conference to see some friends and to attend lectures. I played with fireworks on New Year's Eve with my family. Spending time with my family felt the most memorable [to me] after the Fall Term."

Zachary Yuan '27:

I flew home to Hong Kong, and the food there was really good. My mom's cooking was amazing, and the weather there was nice, it wasn't that cold. There's this one noodle place, one of my favorite places, and I go there every time I go back. They have this special secret formula for the noodles, and you can't get it anywhere else. My family and I went to Australia for a week, and we tried kangaroo meat, which I didn't really like. I got to spend time with my brother. We went fishing and spearfishing, and we made sushi. I did celebrate the New Year, but I slept through the countdown because I was tired. The next day, my family went out to a nice restaurant.

COURTESY OF ZACHARY YUAN

From kangaroo meat to spearfishing, Zachary Yuan '27 explored Australia.

Advika Swamy '29:

My cousins came into town and we went to Snowport and visited Boston. We hung out at my house to play charades. My most memorable experience was just hanging out with my family because I haven't seen most of them in a while. I celebrated New Year's with my aunt, my cousin, and both my parents. We were watching TV and watching the ball drop.

Maya York '29:

Over break, I mostly slept in and stayed close to my home. I did some winter shopping and spent time with my friends and family. I visited my grandparents in Maine for Christmas. I also spent a few days in Vermont to ski and celebrate the new year. I hadn't skied in a few years, but it came back to me quickly and I remembered how much I love it. I celebrated the New Year with my family and friends. We watched fireworks, blew party horns, and ate twelve grapes, one for each month of the new year.

COURTESY OF MAYA YORK

Maya York '29 had a snowy holiday season visiting her granparents in Maine.

COURTESY OF ADVIKA SWAMY

Advika Swamy '29 visited Snowport in Boston with her cousins.

Congressional Approval is SO Last Year

Weeks Top Headlines

- *20 Years Away From Japanese Internment? Startling Connections to the Gilded Age*
- *Gas Prices Drop*
- *Despite Increased Efforts, Students Remain Heads-Down on the Paths*
- *Dean of Students Office Moves Up Two Floors, Over The River and Through The Woods*
- *Astrophysics Class Faces the Final Frontier: ASU KKG*

Eighth Page New Year's Resolutions

Out with the old, in with the new. To get with the new year (and in preparation of our impending purchase by CBS news), this leaked document shows what the Eighth Page will be leaving in 2025 and its goals for 2026.

Resolution
Make some money. It is not acceptable to still be broke after the Big Don's Liberation Day tariffs. After the Somalian daycare method was patched, options were limited. If insider trading on geopolitics doesn't work, there is one final resort. The password to the Eighth page OnlyFans account is TallAndTangy27.

Not get censored.

Make a video. The film medium has yet to be graced by an eighth page video.

Things the Eighth Page is leaving in 2025

Censorship
Not making videos

Ins:
Somalian Operating Daycares
Greenland
Nike Techs
Brown Portfolio Videos- Bonus points if it's a Double Brick Dorm Tour
Various Pyrotechnics
Sparklers- especially near flammable surfaces
Grooming
Discovering Stars and getting into college
Quarterzips + Matcha
Bushes
The Australian MLK Day Parade
The Big Thatcher
The Bull
Billy
Me in Japan
True College Girls

Outs:
Asking Congress for permission
Debates on college campuses
Political protest at flagpole
Old Couches
House parties
Pennies
Lebron 10 point games
Land Acknowledgements
Jimmy (Kimmel)
Public Arguments
Minneapolis
Peanut Butter
Hazing (non-consensual)

Overheard On The Paths

"If I won big on Polymarket, I wouldn't tell anyone, but there would be signs."

"True college girls are not getting with the big Thatcher."

"Yo, check out this thing I saw on Lemon8!"

"Rejection is redirection, deferral is lowkey blueballing"

"He told me to integrate his parts..."

Write for the 8p!

doneill26, plasater26, gchen27, gthatcher27, tjollon27

The Phillipian
SPORTS

new Year new You.

Volume CXLVIII | Number 27

January 9, 2026

New Year, Same Success for Girls Hockey

JULIEN REQUA & ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

FRIDAY 12/18	
Andover	1
Choate	0
FRIDAY 12/18	
Andover	7
Taft	1
SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	2
Tabor	0
SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	3
Loomis	4
WEDNESDAY 1/7	
Andover	6
Governors	0

A.BAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Co-Captain Keira Bruen '26 faces off opponent in shutout victory against Governor's.

Girls Hockey (6-1-1) ended its 2025 campaign with an impressive performance at the Patsy K. Odden Hockey Tournament held at The Taft School. The team finished with wins over Choate (1-0), Taft (7-1), and Tabor (1-0) before narrowly falling to Loomis in a tight 4-3 loss. Despite the setback in the final game, the team showed clear growth throughout the tournament. It then opened 2026 with a decisive win against Governor's Academy (Governor's) (6-0).

Reflecting on the weekend as a whole, Lauren Kennedy '28 emphasized development and chemistry as major takeaways for the team. Senior presence energized the team through quick movements, helping the team maintain focus during high-pressure situations.

"The games went well, and we grew as a team, which is also very important. Our seniors were very instrumental in our games at the tournament. Not only were they contributing on the ice, but they were also helping everyone get pumped up for the games," said Kennedy.

Jacqueline Louie '29 agreed with Kennedy's sentiment, noting the captain's positive attitude improved morale. She appreciated how central the Seniors were to the team's mentality.

"Their skill [is amazing]. They're all super good, so that lifted the team, especially on offense. Also, their energy [was great]. They were always positive and hyped up, [which helped get] us ready," said Louie.

In its narrow victory over Tabor, Co-Captain Keira Bruen '26 scored a goal that Kennedy claimed as one of the most memorable moments of the tournament. She also explained how it impacted the game.

"Keira Bruen's goal versus Tabor was really huge for us because it caused a big momentum shift in our favor and helped us get the win," said Kennedy.

Kennedy underscored the selflessness of the players as a major contributor to its success. She highlighted how the team made smart decisions in favor of collective success over individual brilliance.

"We did a really good job at playing as a team, and not being selfish. We made a few mistakes, but we did a really good job at not letting that affect us, and we kept playing our game," said Kennedy.

The team came back from break immediately into a game against Governor's, where it displayed strong defensive structure and aggressive attacking play. Goalkeeper Marie Lee '28 highlighted Louie's performance as impactful in the game.

"Our team did a great job of starting out 2026 strong and making a statement to the league. We got better as the game went on and used our speed to our advantage. We did an incredible job defensively, as we killed a five-on-three penalty, and I didn't get any shots during that thanks to my teammates in front of me. I always want to get a shutout, and I was able to do that today with my teammates helping out in front of me. Jackie Louie had her first varsity goal [as well]," said Lee.

Girls Hockey will play against Choate on Saturday, January 10.

Girls Basketball Builds on Holiday Tournament Performance

SARAH WANG & NICHOLAS JUNG

SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	59
Lawrence	46
SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	54
Hotchkiss	27
SUNDAY 12/20	
Andover	37
Suffield	49
WEDNESDAY 1/7	
Andover	52
Dana Hall	34

COURTESY OF ALANI RODRIGUEZ

Point guard Alani Rodriguez '27 controls the basketball in game against Lawrence Academy.

Girls Basketball competed in the Groton Holiday Tournament over winter break in December, defeating Lawrence Academy (Lawrence) and Hotchkiss to advance to the championship game against Suffield Academy. Despite a strong performance in its initial matchups, the team ultimately fell short. On Wednesday, Girls Basketball bounced back with a decisive victory over Dana Hall.

As part of the 51st Annual Groton Lawrence Holiday Tournament, Girls Basketball competed against a strong and highly competitive field of New England preparatory schools. Despite its defeat against Suffield in the championship game, the team had numerous unforgettable moments. Heading into the tournament, Andover memorized plays and committed to intense practices. Chloe Abou-Ezzi '27 detailed how the team prepared for the matchups and highlighted a key play that defined their approach.

"Going into the tournament, we mainly emphasized playing aggressively on defense and executing our plays on offense. In the week prior to the tournament, we focused on making sure we knew all of the plays like the back of our hand, making sure that we were putting in the most effort that we could. We've been working on one of our offensive plays since the season, and we got it down really well for the tournament and executed it just very well," said Abou-Ezzi.

Sara Damon '29 commented on Jules Stevenson '28's performance on the court, praising Stevenson's ability to influence the game beyond scoring.

"No matter whether [Jules is] making shots or not, she's drawing a couple of defenders every time she touches [the ball]. And what's so impressive is whether she's open or not, she's making the right play. And when she gets double-teamed, she's passing somebody else's open, whether it's our point guard, Alani Rodriguez ['27], hitting a three. She really made some great things happen," said Damon.

The first win of the tournament against Lawrence set the tone for the rest of the tournament. From that moment, the team knew that it wanted to make it to the championships. After its loss against Suffield Academy, Abou-Ezzi reflected on the team's development over the course of the tournament.

"Although the game didn't result in a win, we got so much better compared to the beginning of the tournament. It definitely showed our potential and showed how well we can play when we play as a team and when we believe in one another. We have built up a lot of team chemistry, and making it to the championships really boosted all of our confidence and raised our expectations for ourselves going forward," said Abou-Ezzi.

Despite returning from winter break just two days prior, the team jumped straight into Wednesday's matchup against Dana Hall. With a game plan focused on effort and hustle, the team, Co-Captain Laney Cafua '27 commented on the leadup to the team's victory.

"It's hard to play a game coming right off of break, but we came back right where we left off. You could tell that everyone on the team was committed to working over the break, so the transition was smooth. We stood out by approaching every play with intensity and drive. [Head] Coach [Jen] Weissbach said, 'New year, same us,' and that perfectly encapsulates how we wanted to go out during that game," said Cafua.

Looking ahead, Damon emphasized the importance of perseverance in every game, regardless of the score.

"One thing that we can really take away from this sequence of games is that no matter what the score is, we should always be keeping our heads up, whether it's on the bench or on the floor. There will be games where we're losing by 20, and there will be games where we are winning by 20, no matter which it is, coming out in the second half and playing like it's 0 [to] 0 is a big emphasis for all of us," said Damon.

Girls Basketball will look to build on its momentum when it hosts Choate on Saturday.

GIRLSSQUASH

Girls Squash Co-Captain Prisha Shivani ’26: Swinging with Dedication and Communication

GAURI BHAKTA

Girls Squash Co-Captain Prisha Shivani ’26 first picked up a squash racquet during COVID, exploring an alternative to tennis. What began as a practical switch quickly turned into passion. Now, as a co-captain, Shivani leads Girls Squash with steady, unwavering commitment to her teammates.

As a leader, Shivani focuses on how teammates respond during strenuous high-pressure matches, paying close attention to their morale and mindset as games wear on.

“Squash is mentally tough, especially when you’re battling through a long match. I try to be a steady presence and provide real support, not just at games, but also at practices. I want to be present and make sure no one feels alone through those moments,” said Shivani.

Shivani also went on to explain how her approach to leadership is shaped by her mindset as a player, emphasizing the importance of staying mentally focused during long matches and carrying that same attentiveness into supporting her teammates.

COURTESY OF ANDOVER EDITION

“I think as a player, I’m strong on the mental side. In matches that go to five games, I’m able to stay present and focused in my own match. I try to bring that into my leadership by putting as much emphasis on other people’s matches as I do on my own. Overall, I try to be a steady presence for the team and be there to help if someone needs it,” said Shivani.

Judy Liu ’29 described Shivani as being a reliable leader, noting how she is always there for her teammates regardless of match results or whether she is able to play that day.

“Prisha is a really active captain and is really dedicated to the team. Even if she is not playing, she shows up to every team brunch. She is always really positive and calm, which can be helpful for big tournaments or competitions. She has played a big part in making my experience on the team so fun, and she makes the team motivated, happy, and tough at the same time,” said Liu.

Liu also mentioned how Shivani and the other captains balance each other out well, pointing to the mix of Seniors and a Upper and how that combination brings both experience and growth in leadership.

“The captains balance each other out really well. Prisha and Evelyn are Seniors, and Minnie is a Upper. Minnie is getting into her new role as a Upper, while Prisha and Evelyn have more experience and more time on the team. You can see that they’ll be dedicated to it, that they’re responsible, and that they’re taught to be active,” said Liu.

Selene Xu ’27 highlighted Shivani’s ability to give constant and thoughtful feedback while also noting her approachability off the court, adding that her presence and encouragement help strengthen connections across the team and create a supportive environment.

“She has a very encouraging and funny personality. On top of that, she gives great feedback and communicates with the team and the coaches really well. I really admire her leadership. She gives everyone high fives when they come off the court. She’s like a beam of light in our team. You can talk to her about anything,” said Xu.

Looking ahead, Shivani hopes squash will remain a part of her life after high school, serving as both a way to stay active and a meaningful throughline as she moves into the next stage of her academic and athletic journey.

“I definitely want to continue playing squash. It’s a good way to stay active and also connect with people. So after high school, I’d like to still be on court, or hopefully on a club team in college,” said Shivani.

Editor’s Note: Prisha Shivani is a News Editor for The Phillipian, Vol. CXLVIII.

Building More than a Team: Co-Captain Minnie Kim ’27 Leads through Connection

ALEX GODSEY

Co-Captain Minnie Kim’s captaincy is built on fostering a supportive, tight-knit team. By building relationships with every teammate and organizing events that bring the team together, Kim has built a strong community that enables the team to thrive.

Starting as a convenient after-school activity, Kim followed her older sister and former Girls Squash captain Migyu Kim ’25’s path and began playing squash at 6 years old. Now, as a captain at Andover, Kim works to uplift the team through team chemistry. Kim elaborated on the roots of her leadership philosophy and described the type of team she strives to create here at Andover.

“I played on my middle school squash team, and that’s when I learned the foundations of what being a teammate was. Squash is a very individual sport, so it’s hard to find a team aspect. From that experience, I saw how important it is to have a strong team community and bond, and that’s what I love to bring to the Andover squash team,” said Kim.

At the core of this intention, Kim’s positive attitude becomes contagious, lifting up and inspiring her teammates. Robin Lukens ’28 noted Kim’s optimism, highlighting her mentality through matches and hard practices.

“Minnie is a really positive leader. That’s one of her best attributes. She’s really optimistic about all of our matches. She always has a winning mentality, but not in a negative, competitive way. It’s more about trying your best, and if we win, we win, and if we don’t, we can always improve and get better,” said Lukens.

Every year, Andover Squash travels to High School Nationals in Philadelphia to play the best teams in the country. Rachel Levitsky ’28 fondly recalled a moment when Kim’s leadership was evident, as she assured Levitsky before a big match.

“At nationals last year, I was really nervous to play. I was playing a match against a girl who was probably going to beat me, and I was having a lot of negative thoughts. Minnie sat me down and told me that I just needed to smile and have fun: it’s just a game. I took that to heart, and I ended up playing pretty well,” said Levitsky.

COURTESY OF ANDOVER EDITION

The team has four Juniors. Hence, as a small team, it is primarily made up of lowerclassmen. Ava Kung ’29 talks about how Kim welcomed her and the other new players to the team.

“Especially for me as a freshman, coming into a new team environment where everyone is already tightly knit can be difficult. She did a great job welcoming us from the start, and we all felt like we were part of the team,” said Kung.

A major part of building this environment, where the team works cohesively, is the bonding activities. Kim works to plan fun events with both the boys’ and girls’ teams, building a supportive community across the teams. Kim explained the ordinary and the unique activities the team does and the atmosphere it creates.

“We do all the normal team activities — team dinners, team brunches, and team pep talks — but I also love doing things outside of normal bonding. It’s really important that the boys’ and girls’ teams are close. We’re one team, and I try to find events where both teams gather in the same environment. We have winter traditions like gingerbread house making and white elephant. These small activities help create a really supportive relationship between the teams during the season, where each team cheers the other on,” said Kim.

Despite just being an Upper, Kim is already the backbone of Girls Squash. Minnie described her excitement about the team’s future and her future in squash.

“I hope to eventually be on a college team for squash, but for next year, I think we’re an incredibly strong team. We’re going to have an amazing next few years because I can see so much potential, strength and energy in the younger girls, and I know what they can do in the next four years,” said Kim.

Co-Captain Evelyn Kung ’26 Serves Leadership and Positivity on the Squash Court

WESLEY PHAM

Girls Squash Co-Captain Evelyn Kung’s ’26 unexpected rise from a recreational player to the Co-Captain she is today has been nothing short of meteoric. Kung recalled her deep admiration for the team, as well as the choices that led to her position in the Andover squash community all the way back from her Junior year.

“I decided to start in rec squash during my freshman year, because I thought it would be fun and that my tennis skills would naturally translate. I’ve wanted to be on the team since my freshman year, but I didn’t try out since it was my first year playing. However, ever since I made the team, I’ve loved it. I love the environment, and I love how supportive we all are to each other,” said Kung.

While the role of a Co-Captain includes pre-match speeches and leading by example through standout performances, strong leadership is also defined by qualities that are not immediately visible. Lara Kim ’29 described how Kung works behind the scenes to be intuitive and present, consistently supporting her teammates in a way that creates a lasting impact.

COURTESY OF ANDOVER EDITION

“Evelyn is always really quick to step up and help whenever anyone needs it. She’s always coming up with new ideas and leading team practices with detail. On top of that, she keeps the team atmosphere very happy,” said Kim ’29.

Co-Captain Minnie Kim ’27 reflected on the team’s deep respect for Kung’s consistent effort and caring outlook. Kim also spoke of Kung’s impact on team warm-ups for key matches throughout the season in terms of physical and mental preparation.

“A lot of the girls really respect her as a Co-Captain and value her leadership, and what she says is really impactful to the team’s perspective. Evelyn helps lead our warm-ups, and during our warm-ups, she’s giving pep talks, which are really impactful because she’s able to build up a lot of enthusiasm and energy among the team,” said Kim ’27.

When describing her leadership style, Kung explained how she enjoys bringing upbeat and supportive energy to every team experience, from small practices to national competitions.

“I love cheering everybody on. I’m always one of the loudest people cheering everyone on at New England’s and Nationals, and I always just try to keep a super positive attitude,” said Kung.

In addition to her leadership off court, Kung spoke on her own approach to the game, shaped by a willingness to learn from those around her. She pointed to the team’s collaborative and supportive environment as a key part of her development as a player.

“I would say I’m a pretty strategic player. I try to play according to my opponent’s strengths and weaknesses. I also really appreciate it when my teammates come to coach me during matches, and they’re like, ‘Hit low to her backhand or stop cross-dropping so much,’” said Kung.

When asked what she sees in the future regarding squash, Kung reflected upon what squash meant to her life at Andover, as well as possibly playing club squash in college.

“I’ve had so much fun with the sport throughout high school, even though I haven’t been playing for that many years. I’m definitely going to try and continue in college through a club team,” said Kung.

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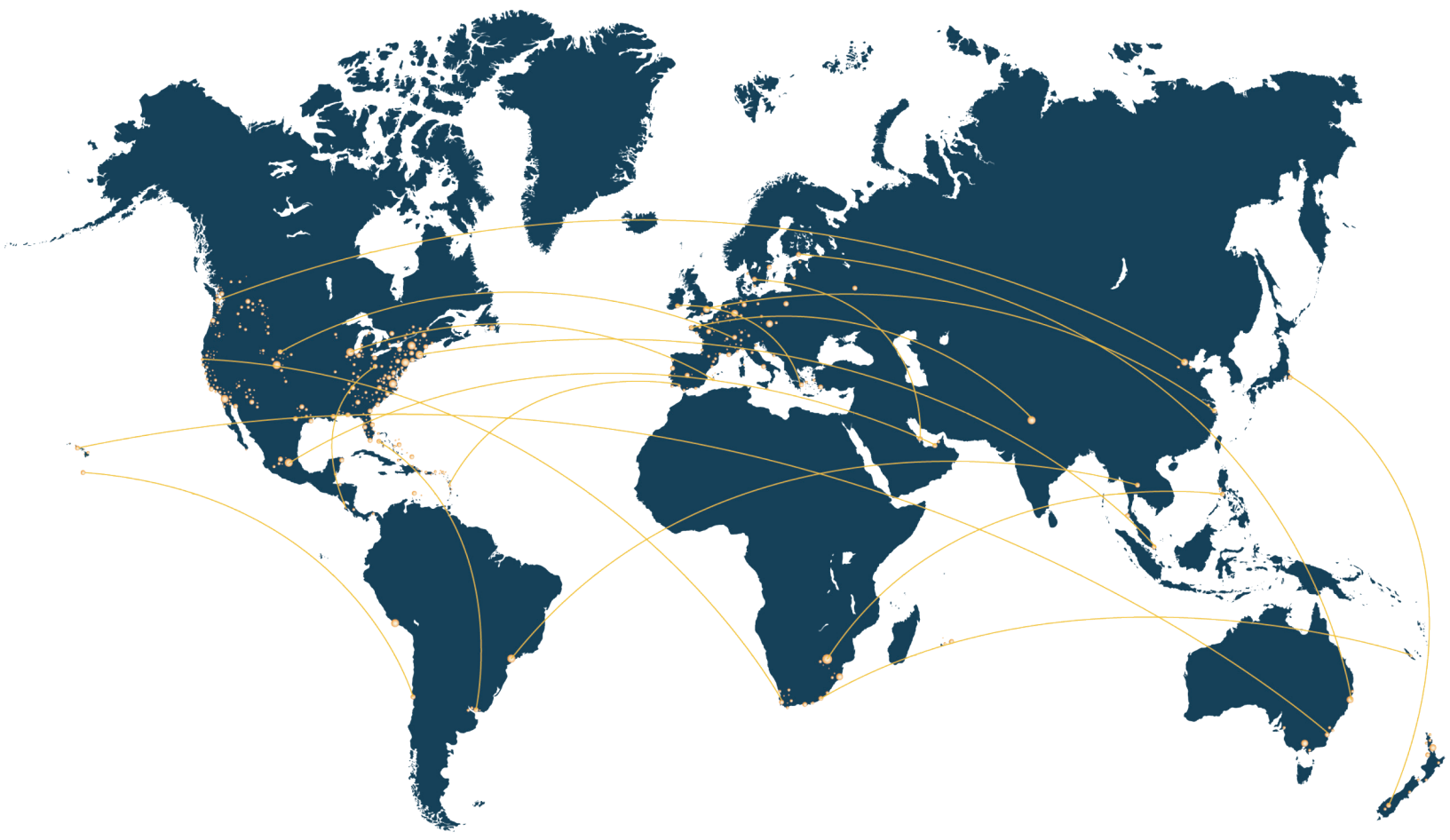

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GIRLS SQUASH

PRISHA SHIVANI '26 (C)
HOUSTON, TX

MINNIE KIM '27 (C)
BERWYN, PA

EVELYN KUNG '26 (C)
ANDOVER, MA

RACHEL LEVITZKY '28
WELLESLEY, MA

AVA KUNG '29
ANDOVER, MA

JUDY LIU '29
CAMBRIDGE, MA

LARA KIM '29
BERWYN, PA

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SELENE XU '27
ANDOVER, MA

OLIVIA WANG '29
ATLANTA, GA

ISABELLA TANG '28
NORTH ANDOVER, MA

MANAGERS:

JULIAN TAY '26
SINGAPORE, SG

CHLOE KASULE-WALLACE '26
UPPER MARLBORO, MD

WINSTON GONG '26
NORTH READING, MA

L.HEYD/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

BOYSSQUASH

Co-Captain Ali Gamal '26 Delivers Hype to Boys Squash

ALEX GODSEY

COURTESY OF ALI GAMAL

Boys Squash Co-Captain Ali Gamal '26 is known by his teammates to bring the energy of the squash courts. Growing up with a squash academy close to home, Gamal was introduced to the sport at the age of five and quickly fell in love. COVID-19, though, prevented him from pursuing squash deeply as academics became his primary focus. When Gamal came to Andover, he quickly bounced back into the sport, joining the Varsity squad that has since become a large part of his life. Now as Co-Captain, Gamal leads with an intensity that sets the tone for his teammates.

Leading the team, Gamal explained that he seeks to bridge the gap between squash's individual and team-oriented nature by energizing his teammates to unite behind the shared goal of representing Andover.

"It's difficult [with squash] being an individual and a team sport at the same time. Having that [energetic] environment at the courts is very, very important because, yes, everyone needs to focus on [their] individual [games], but we still need to keep in mind that we all fight for one team and play for Andover. The energy during practice and during the matches is very important to keep us motivated. We're not just playing for ourselves, we're playing for the team as well," said Gamal.

He continued, "Having that environment of energy is very important because, while we all need to focus on our individual games, it's still helpful to get some cheering from the team."

Gamal's energy creates massive impacts on the team, according to Jonathan Xu '28. Particularly in Andover's tight 3-4 loss against Deerfield Academy (Deerfield), Xu described the boost that he felt from Gamal's cheers and mentioned the importance of that hype during crucial matches.

"He does a good job keeping us positive and excited for our matches, especially when it's a tight match. An example would be [against] Deerfield, where all the games were close. Even if I'm playing on another court and I hear that he's being passionate, cheering, screaming, bringing the energy, I get some of that same feeling," said Xu.

Gamal also sets a passionate tone with his actions on the court. According to JJ Luo '28, the Co-Captain's playing style influences his teammates, who act to emulate his abilities.

"If you watch him on court, he gets into it. You'll see him diving, yelling, getting hyped up. Even when he's not the one playing and is just cheering for other teammates, he keeps that same energy. He's always like, 'Let's go, Let's go!' bringing that fire, and that motivates us to do the same, to give our all on the court and off," said Luo.

Luo also alluded to an anecdote from the Deerfield-Andover match, in which Andover won three of seven matches. Prior to the game, the team was nervous about the expected close scores. In Gamal's crucial match, he stepped up and completed a comeback that impressed his audience.

"At Deerfield, he played the sixth, multiple courts down, and I could still hear the energy he was bringing. He was loud. He won 11-9 in five games. One thing I've noticed about Ali over the past two years is that he never gives up. He was down 9-6 against Deerfield in the fifth set and won five points in a row. At 9-9, he dove and won the point. After he won the point, he looked at me and started banging on the glass, getting hyped up. I hadn't played yet, but his energy got me really hyped up," said Luo.

Despite having a younger team than in past seasons, Gamal believes that the squad's raw talent and preparation will translate to success. He also noted his excitement to captain the team alongside his fellow Co-Captains Corey Shen '26 and Alexander Yang '26.

"We have a pretty young team compared to the other teams, and we have a lot of potential this year. We've been training very hard, and I'm honestly looking forward to the season and looking forward to leading the team with Corey and Alex. It should be a good season," said Gamal.

It's Never Too Early: Boys Squash Co-Captain Corey Shen '26 Leads the Way in Squash

LUCY VINNAKOTA

COURTESY OF COREY SHEN

Boys Squash Co-Captain Corey Shen '26 has been playing the sport since the age of nine, starting as just another hobby and later becoming a lifelong passion. Coming from Hong Kong, where squash is extremely popular, Shen was already familiar with the sport going into Andover as a new freshman.

Despite being exposed to many sports from a young age, Shen found a special community in squash. He explained why he chose squash as his sport.

"I played a variety of sports, but squash is a really big sport in Hong Kong, and once I gave it a try, I realized that it was really convenient given its popularity. I dedicated all my time to it, so before coming to Andover, I was playing very competitively. I played six times a week, around two and a half hours every day," said Shen.

Shen elaborated on how his actions as a player strongly influence his leadership of the team. He emphasized that he models his mindset on many squash players he looks up to, hoping to pass a similar influence on to younger players in the program.

"When I first came to Andover, and in my Upper and Senior year, I saw a lot of potential in the younger players, regardless of whether they were on Varsity or JV. I wanted to carry myself in a way they could look up to and be a good role model for them. I have never been the most talented squash player, but I made it on my own, and I had to work hard to get where I am. I hope that other people view it in the same way, where they may start late or be the best squash player, but if they stick with it and work hard, they can become great," said Shen.

Every leader has specific distinctions that set them apart from the rest. This is evident in the way they carry themselves both inside and outside of practice. Shen detailed his leadership style and how he utilizes it to build team chemistry, even in a predominantly individual sport.

"On court or during training, I'm very serious and pretty hardcore. I've always made it a goal to arrive on time.

If anyone's late, the whole team does a punishment, which not only fosters discipline but also community building, as it is a way for us to hold each other accountable. That's really important to me because many people view squash as an individual sport, but in high school or even college, it is a team sport, and you have to hold each other accountable. You have to have mutual trust," said Shen.

Kevin Wu '29 explored how, as Co-Captain, Shen makes it his responsibility to create fun, inclusive exercises for everyone to enjoy. Especially as team events are foundational to bringing a community together, Wu highlighted Shen's off-season activities to strengthen the community.

"He is always leading team practices. During the off-season, he would hold captain practices every Wednesday. As a Freshman, that was really helpful, as I was able to get used to my teammates and feel the courts. He is also always holding us accountable. If we are a few minutes late, we have to run court sprints," said Wu.

Co-Captain Alexander Yang '26 emphasized how Shen's words of wisdom impact the team. He pointed out that the ability to speak well in a team environment is a great quality, especially as a Captain. When down a point in a tight match or simply having a bad day, someone who motivates and encourages is always highly valued.

"He is a really good motivational speaker. In between games, or just normally doing practices, he is always so encouraging and motivating, like if someone needs to just keep getting that shot back and taking that extra step," said Yang.

In terms of his future in squash, Corey plans to continue his journey into college while pursuing other interests as well. Shen specified how the sport will be incorporated into his everyday routine moving forward into the start of his first year playing collegiately.

"I'm fortunate enough to have been recruited to play at a D1 school. I'm not sure what I'll do with squash from there, but during school, I'm planning to go semi-pro while still focusing on my professional career in tech and finance," said Shen.

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Boys Hockey Breaks Through: Three Wins at Flood Marr and a Statement Victory Against St. George's

XAVIER HOWELL & LUCY VINNAKOTA

FRIDAY 12/18	
Andover	4
Salisbury	2
FRIDAY 12/18	
Andover	2
Nobles	1
SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	2
Deerfield	4
SATURDAY 12/19	
Andover	2
KUA	1
WEDNESDAY 1/7	
Andover	8
St. George's	4

M. STOUT/THE PHILLIPIAN

Matthew Piotrowski '27 and Boys Hockey attempt to defend title in the annual Flood Marr tournament taking place over winter break.

Opening on December 19 and closing two days later, Boys Hockey competed in the 60th annual Flood Marr tournament at Milton Academy over winter break. It was an exciting showing for the team as it finished in third place with three wins and one loss among a competitive field of prep schools. Despite losing to Deerfield, Boys Hockey was able to pull through against Salisbury, Noble & Greenough (Nobles), and Kimball Union Academy (KUA). The team also secured a decisive victory against St. George's just three days after returning from break.

Preparation is instrumental to the success of any great team. According to goalie Maxim Krasovsky '27, Boys Hockey exemplifies this by not only training hard in practice but also treating every game as if it were its last.

"For the tournament, we had the full two weeks of games before winter break, and we were trying to use those opportunities to get ready for the tournament.

They are regular hockey games, so it's not different in that sense... We've been working on our conditioning since the fall to be ready to play four games in three days," said Krasovsky.

Boys Hockey competed hard throughout its game against KUA, securing a win by just one goal. Leadership is crucial to performing well, according to Senji Kimura '29, who spoke about the responsibilities of the captains to keep team spirits and engagement high.

"We had a goal to finish and to go to the new year on a good note. That's what [the captains] really did push. They were really supportive after that and sent a text in the group chat, just telling us to get our focus back in and win that KUA game," said Kimura.

Kimura also named Edouard Lord '26 as a standout performer from the KUA game.

"Our goalie, Edouard Lord... only gave up one goal. He kept us in the game. He was one of the key reasons why we won. He just had a strong performance to end his Flood-Marr out," said Kimura.

After a setback, Krasovsky emphasized that the team takes a step back to reset. This allows each teammate to put in their full effort against opponents that other teams may not be able to emulate.

"Our game plan is to try and outwork other teams. We have three lines of really good players, so we try to use everybody and try to out-hustle and out-compete teams," said Krasovsky.

Kimura applied this mindset after a loss to Deerfield, sparking the team's winning attitude in consequent games.

"We got back on our feet and came back with strong win after the hard fought battle. It was mainly our captains who took charge of the ship. It was their last Flood-Marr, so they knew they couldn't lose. They wanted to end their last Flood-Marr tournament with a win. They had high expectations from last year since we won the Flood-Marr," said Kimura.

In Boys Hockey's game against St. George's, Russell Louie '27 detailed the team's strengths and weaknesses throughout.

"As soon as we got on the ice, we scored three [goals] within the start of the first period. That really propelled us and allowed us to gain some momentum. We were really good on the forecheck... moving the puck, getting shots, and challenging their goalie," said Louie.

He continued, "Even though we came out barreling down 3-0, we saw how quickly it could be reversed. We let a couple of goals in, allowing them to really narrow the gap, which should have been a game that we pulled away from."

As the game went on, Louie explained that the team realized how quickly a 3-0 lead could be reversed. However, a turning point, led by underclassmen Jack Cannon '29 and Nolan Roberts '28, helped the team regain momentum.

"A crucial moment was Jack Cannon coming through off the draw from Nolan Roberts, ripping one far side. That gave us some more heart, gave us some more light," said Louie. "Overall, everyone who scored added to the momentum, and whoever scored was taking shots and delivering hits and putting their body on the line for the team. It's really monumental in its own way."

Boys Hockey looks to compete against Choate on Saturday, after losing to Choate last year by just one point, scored in the final 10 seconds of overtime.

A Weapon On and Off the Squash Courts: Co-Captain Alexander Yang ’26

AVIAD AWA

Co-Captain Alexander Yang ’26 commands Boys Squash with an air of unspoken leadership. The team rallies around Yang, leaning on his guidance during practice and his amicable personality to thrive.

In Shanghai, Yang first picked up the sport in elementary school. But it was playing in middle school where he cultivated his love for the game and all of its inner workings. Being a part of a team then, he enjoyed forming close relationships with his teammates.

“I was in fifth grade, and I just heard about the sport. I was playing tennis back then. I thought [squash] was pretty cool, because back in Shanghai [it] wasn’t that popular, but I just wanted to try it out. I thought it was fun. It’s just a really cool sport because it’s such close quarters, and it’s really fast and intense. I also played team squash during middle school, and it made me realize how cool and beautiful it is to have a team, because they’re like your family. Being able to meet that team at Andover right now is definitely a dream,” said Yang.

COURTESY OF ALEXANDER YANG

As a leader, Yang maintains team morale by ensuring that even when he performs poorly on the court, he does not let that personal frustration affect his commitment to lifting up his teammates.

“I try not to let my performance, like how I’m feeling on a specific day, affect how much I try to help others. If I’m having a bad day, I don’t want to make others also feel like they’re having a bad day, so I still try to push myself to help others,” said Yang.

Teammate Philip Meng ’26, a close friend of Yang, highlighted the Co-Captain’s focused mentality both on and off the court. According to Meng, hours of studious work have sharpened Yang’s mind and elevated his game sense.

“I would describe Alex with two words: academic weapon. As someone who lives with him, I see how hard he works every single night working on his physics homework. I really see how determined and hard-working of a student he is. When it comes to squash, he’s always prepared and ready, and that comes from the amount of physics that he does each night. His mental strength has become so solidified and ironed,” said Meng.

Fellow teammate Jonathan Xu ’28 praised Yang’s poised demeanor, mentioning the grit and strong work ethic that Yang has developed over the years. Xu also described the Co-Captain’s understanding qualities as a leader.

“Alex is a very calm and collected individual on the team... I’m really impressed at how he’s able to balance his academic life along with his squash. He’s a really hard worker. He knows what he wants and always finds a way to get it. You can always rely on him to be understanding, and he’s aware of his role on the team. He does his job supporting other teammates like a friend,” said Xu.

Before competition, it is tradition for the team’s Co-Captains to list the team’s members. Having seen his previous Co-Captains do the same, he explained that he enjoys finally having the opportunity to perform that tradition himself.

“Before matches begin, we always do intros and are able to call out everybody’s names with my fellow [Co-]Captains. It’s really nice because I was part of the team since freshman year, and being able to see my past [Co-]Captains do that, I’ve always wanted to try that out,” said Yang.

Looking forward, Yang hopes to continue playing squash in college at the club level.

“I hope [to play at] the club [level], [because] it’s the sport I’ve spent so much time on already. I don’t want to give that up. Obviously, in college, I’m going to do that just as a hobby, [but] I definitely want to keep doing it,” said Yang.

Editor’s Note: Philip Meng is a Business Manager for The Phillipian, Vol. CXLVIII.

BOYS’ SQUASH

ALI GAMAL ’26 (C)
AL OBOUR, CAIRO, EG

COREY SHEN ’26 (C)
PASADENA, CA

ALEXANDER YANG ’26 (C)
LEXINGTON, MA

AARON BAI ’27
POKFULAM, HK

FRANKLIN KOZOL ’27
MELVIN VILLAGE, NH

JOHN-JAYDEN LUO ’28
RINGOES, NJ

PHILIP MENG ’26
HONG KONG, HK

WESLEY PHAM ’29
WELLESLEY, MA

THEO WEI ’26
NORWALK, CT

KEVIN WU ’29
SUDBURY, MA

JONATHAN XU ’28
PRINCETON, NJ

HARLEY ZHONG ’26
BROOKLYN, NY

MANAGERS:

SOPHIA TABIBIAN ’26
SAN FRANCISCO, CA

CLAIRE TONG ’26
WABAN, MA

A.GUTIERREZ-EWING/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Crossword Corner

BY ISHAAN PADMAWAR

1

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS
1 Family elder who may sneak you candy before dinner
6 Kidney-related, in anatomy textbooks
7 Burning bright, literally or figuratively
8 Valley where Hercules earned his first badge of honor
9 A curl you might tuck behind an ear

DOWN
1 The AAF provides Abbot _____s
2 To send someone elsewhere for answers
3 Studio Ghibli output, collectively
4 Female horses, scuba diving equipment company
5 Courtroom appeals

2

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS
1 English county or Tolkien homeland
6 Feels strong dislike for
7 French for "before," in time or order
8 Chaotic hand-to-hand fight
9 Falls from the sky in flakes

DOWN
1 Fake displays meant to deceive
2 Place of safety or refuge
3 Calvino of postmodern literature
4 Restore or begin again
5 Model rocket company with a famous motor catalog

1

1 G	2 R	3 A	4 M	5 P
6 R	E	N	A	L
7 A	F	I	R	E
8 N	E	M	E	A
9 T	R	E	S	S

2

1 S	2 H	3 I	4 R	5 E
6 H	A	T	E	S
7 A	V	A	N	T
8 M	E	L	E	E
9 S	N	O	W	S

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

2026 Trend Predictions: Ins and Outs

CHARLIZE SOW

With the new year in full swing, it's time to consider what we're ready to leave behind. Every year comes with its own set of trends that feel exciting at the moment and faintly embarrassing in hindsight. With the start of 2026, it feels like the right time to admit that not everything we collectively obsessed over in the past year actually deserves to follow us forward.

Throughout 2025, a flood of internet moments and various trends took over social media. Performative males, office sirens, Dubai chocolate, and "6-7" defined our feeds and felt inescapable. Labubus dangled from jeans, quarter zips became a new closet staple, and matcha lattes were suddenly everywhere. At first, these moments felt fun, niche, and creative, but after months of seeing the same looks and trends repeated again and again, the novelty wore off.

By the time 2026 came around and people began setting their New Year's resolutions, social media began to shift gears. Feeds flooded with throwbacks to 2016 and "2026 is the new 2016" became a phrase everybody seemed excited about. Yet the appeal wasn't necessarily about recreating 2016 exactly. It was more so about reclaiming the energy associated with it, a time remembered as lighter, messier, and less self-conscious. Whether or not that memory is entirely accurate, it reflects a growing desire to move away from the overly curated, performative aesthetics that defined the past few years.

SHANNON CHISHOLM/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

That shift has especially been visible in the fashion scene. Styles from the early-2000s era have been resurfacing, with brands like Hollister and Brandy Melville redefining fashion for a new generation. Lace-trimmed tops, frills, fur-lined jackets, and low-rise jeans are all pieces that have once felt outdated but have reentered everyday wardrobes, and it'll be exciting to see what other styles from the past begin to resurface again. It's safe to say that this nostalgic aesthetic is here to stay in 2026.

In this resurgence of nostalgia, it's clear that social media hasn't just influenced how we dress and view fashion, but also how we consume. The constant cycle of micro-trends have made it easy to buy into everything, often without thinking about longevity. Clothes were purchased for an event or a post, but then quickly discarded as trends went away. Over time, this pattern has made fast fashion and overconsumption harder to ignore. Because of that, sustainability in fashion has become necessary, not optional or idealistic. Brands like Reformation have gained traction by proving that clothing can be both stylish and more responsibly made, using recycled materials and emphasizing longevity over novelty. Moving into 2026, it feels likely that more brands rooted in sustainability will continue to gain attention, especially as people grow more selective about what they buy and why they're buying it.

After years of trend cycles, there's something grounding about choosing pieces that last, and choosing clothes that feel intentional rather than disposable. This may also explain the rise of business casual and minimalist dressing. Brands like Aritzia continue to grow by offering clothes that feel put-together without chasing trends. This aesthetic serves as a counterbalance to fast fashion and an attempt to build wardrobes that last longer than a single season and exist beyond the hottest trends on the internet.

Winter Wonderland's Silhouette: Andover Students' Winter Coats

AUTUMN XIA & JIA-YI ZHI

As frost begins to descend upon the edges of Andover streets and the last orange leaves cling to campus trees, winter coats reclaim their place in student wardrobes. Hugged close during late-night walks from the library or stuffed into Paresky cubbies, winter puffers have become the season's signature silhouette. Though puffers are the most commonly sighted type on campus, the variety of styles and colors on campus bring a bit of light to a monochrome time. Each winter coat encapsulates personal stories, carrying memories of comfort, and self-expression.

ANNA TINKOVA '26

"I have a pine green winter coat. It's a pretty classic style. It has one button in the front [and] it has two pockets. It's pretty warm, to be honest. I love it. I wanted to have something more original because most of the coats you see in stores are beige, black, sometimes they're white. I was like, 'Yeah, let me get something original.' Red screams Christmas; this also screams Christmas but in a better way. It's less Christmas-y, so you can wear it in fall [and] early spring, [and] it doesn't really scream 'Oh my god I forgot to take down the Christmas lights.'"

ANASTASIE SYCHEVA '29

"[My coat] is a purple and blue iridescent color. In some lighting, it looks more on the pinker side, while some other times, it's more [like a] darker blue. It's one of my warmer coats; I usually only wear it when [the temperature] is on the colder side. My mom got it for me from Lululemon because she thought it would be cute and warm. It's pretty good, honestly; I don't feel cold in it at all. I'd say my coat holds up to Andover winter pretty well."

SHANNON CHISHOLM '29

"[My coat from] Montclair is a ski jacket adjacent. It was actually my older sister's and she passed it down to me. I would describe it as puffy, black, and warm. I find black very versatile, and I feel very performative when wearing it. It handles the snow really well. The only issue is that my legs aren't covered as the coat stops mid-waist. I mostly wear this coat, but on rare occasions I wear my normal blue one which is a bit lighter. It's more similar to a raincoat as it's skinnier in a sense and not as puffy."

ANOUSHKA PANDEY '28

"Before I came to Andover, my family and I were in Portugal for winter break. We were walking through a market and it wasn't really on our mind [to get a jacket] as a goal. At one point, we thought it would've been nice to get one, so when we saw there were a lot of nice jackets, we decided to look for a coat that was nice, good quality, and warm. Coming to Andover, I think having the coat be a little longer would be nice. Overall though, it's held up pretty well. My puffer is not distinctive, but it's not the usual puffer either. There's fancy buckles, instead of buttons or a zipper, and that's pretty cool. The coat brings back the really fun moments I had with my family on the trip."

BREANNA REN '29

"My coat from Michael Kors is very long [and] warm. It's black with gold accessories and a fur trim around the hood. I like it because Andover is very cold and windy, and its length keeps me warm, which means it's great for Andover weather; I basically wear it every day. I'm from Vancouver, Canada, which is also cold but not as windy or snowy. That's why it feels a bit colder here than at home."

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"Chaos, Color, and Texture:" Mac Strong '27's Thrifty Style

DANIEL LIU & CHARLIZE SOW

Pairing a colorful patterned long sleeve shirt with True Religion jeans, Mac Strong '27 describes her style as "big and loud" with "chaos, color, and texture." Strong approaches fashion as something learned through observation, taking inspiration from movies, music, and subcultures around her. Rather than sticking to a fixed aesthetic, Strong has gravitated towards different styles over time. She described the skater and punk styles that influenced her through visual media.

"Growing up, I got really into skate-based movies. I watched Mid90s when I was in seventh grade. I got really into homemade skate videos for a while. Even though I never learned how to skate, I just really liked the aesthetic. Then I watched SLC Punk in the summer between seventh and eighth grade. I had gotten a pair of Doc [Martens (Docs)] for my birthday and I was really into them. I watched that movie and I literally wore them every single day because Docs are a really big part of punk subculture. That still has a place in my style now, but I'm not as obsessed with trying to stick to one specific aesthetic anymore," said Strong.

Strong now embraces the many stylistic phases she went through, citing them as the foundation of her strong sense of personal style.

"Sixth grade, I was wearing jeans from Justice and horrible Target kids shirts. I think to have good style, you have to have some really bad outfits for a year. When I first started thrifting, I would thrift these button-up vests [that] people wear in three-piece suits. I don't know why. Not the vibe. But that's okay. Now, I love a good sweater because of that phase. I think you can tell when people don't have personal style, when they never had a phase," said Strong.

Despite the evolution in her style, certain pieces have remained constant throughout the years. Strong's JNCO jeans, worn through multiple phases, serve as a physical record of time and experimentation.

"I'm not going to say I got on the JNCO jeans trend before everybody else, but I will say my jeans look lived in, and I do have JNCO jeans you can't buy on the website anymore. There's literally a phone imprint on the pocket. They look like I've worn them because I have. I've worn them for four years," said Strong.

Last year marked a period of experimentation and change for Strong, who began to incorporate more feminine elements into her style.

"Last year I wanted to be more feminine. I don't know why, but I [did]. I played around with silhouettes. I started wearing more patterns, cooler shirts. I experimented with my hair. I straightened it for the first time, and I couldn't do that until January last year. The whole year was a big style evolution because I was feminine as a little kid, then I went super masculine for like three years, and then I went back a little. I used to be more influenced by male aesthetics and more masculine stuff, but now I'm shifting a little bit," said Strong.

Strong highlighted the confidence and vulnerability needed to experiment with styles at Andover, especially as she began to incorporate more feminine elements.

"Wearing clothes that are different takes confidence. Performing femininity is vulnerable. The shift from masculinity to femininity was big for me. I had to find it within myself, because it's difficult, especially as a queer person. Andover is accepting, but it can be hard to break out of a mold you built for yourself. Andover is also not the most alternative place. I'm from a city, and my friends at home dress really alternative compared to what people think is normal here. I toned it down for a while," said Strong.

A close friend of Strong, Kai Mafunga '26, underscored Strong's constant reinvention as what defines her approach to fashion. While Strong returns to familiar staples, she resists settling into a single aesthetic, always taking risks with new pieces and silhouettes.

"When I met her freshman year, she was very much baggy all the way. Now she has branched out of that comfort zone and started experimenting more. Even wearing pants or tops that are considered tighter. She has just started to play with that more [which] is really interesting. I think she has gotten more comfortable expressing more feminine parts of herself," said Mafunga.

This year, Strong hopes to challenge herself to continue expanding her style, keeping her everyday outfits dynamic.

I. PADMAWAR AND J. NUÑEZ/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

Mac Strong '27 embraces the stylistic phases she's gone through over the years.

"But one thing I want to do this year is judge myself more, like I did in Eighth grade. Like, why are you wearing the same thing every day. Switch it up. It's easy here to get into a monotonous routine. Clothing is a way to make life more interesting when you're at Andover. Upper winter is the throes of madness, so I want to use clothes to keep my life interesting and make me feel sane," said Strong.

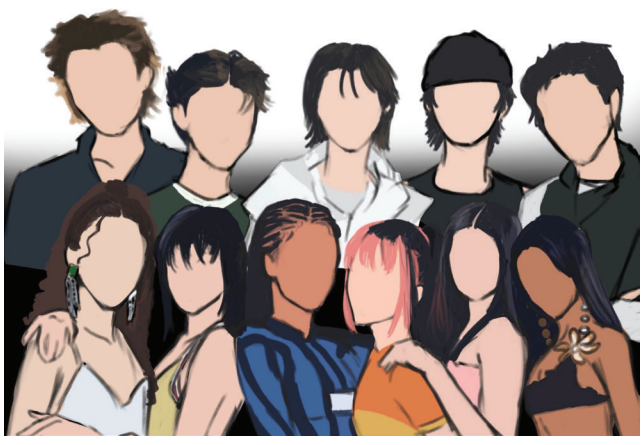
ARTS IN BRIEF: Best & Worst of 2025

REPORTING BY AUTUMN XIA & SOPHIA KIM

WORST MOMENTS OF 2025:

RUNWAY HOMOGENITY:

Despite some technological experimentation elsewhere, high fashion in 2025 often appeared creatively stalled. Winter collections across major fashion capitals were marked by recycled silhouettes, predictable color, and trend cycles that felt increasingly compressed. Seeking a strong market over brand development, a clear pattern/phenomenon in luxury fashion emerged, especially at Yves Saint Laurent and Dior: the tendency to offer innovative presentations in order to compensate for the lack of originality in the design itself. Elaborate set designs, digital enhancements, and runway concepts were deployed to create the illusion of uniqueness, even as the garments remained conservative to its copy in the brands' archives.



A DARING HEIST SHOCKS THE ART WORLD

The reported heist at the Louvre surprised people around the world and challenged the idea that famous cultural institutions are completely secure. Though the full details remain limited, the audacity of the theft made headlines instantly. The heist sparked intense discussion about museum security, the black market for stolen art, and the cultural importance of priceless works. Social media amplified the story, turning it into a global phenomenon where memes, news coverage, and serious analysis collided. Beyond the headlines, the event raised important questions: How do we protect shared cultural heritage? Who really "owns" art once it leaves its original context? Having been one of the most talked-about moments of the year, the Louvre heist became a symbol of the fragility of institutions we often assume are untouchable.

TIFFANIE AN/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

BEST MOMENTS OF 2025:

HYBE'S ROOKIE BREAKOUT YEAR :

In 2025, HYBE entertainment's influence was defined by rookies built for immediate global success, rather than legacy acts like they were in the past. CORTIS and KATSEYE emerged as symbolic successes, demonstrating how rapidly new groups can scale across markets. CORTIS' debut EP, "COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES," became one of the highest-selling rookie debuts in K-pop history, while tracks like "GO!" and "What You Want" topped global viral charts and entered Korea's major rankings. Just as notable was the groups' "young creator and choreographer" identity, with all members contributing from debut. KATSEYE followed a similar trajectory a year prior. They transitioned smoothly from survival show origins to mainstream pop recognition. This year, their single "Gnarly" broke onto the Billboard Hot 100, and their second EP, "Beautiful Chaos," debuted in the Billboard 200's top five. Viral streaming success, luxury fashion partnerships, and a record-breaking crowd at Lollapalooza all play a role in KATSEYE's rapid growth. Taken together, CORTIS and KATSEYE establish HYBE entertainment's future potential as well as ensuring their status as a hit-making label.

SUPERMAN SOARS AS A DEFINING BLOCKBUSTER OF 2025

Superman became one of the most significant film releases of 2025, dominating the box office and reestablishing the character as a central figure in modern pop culture. The film attracted massive audiences upon release, with packed theaters and strong word-of-mouth driving its continued success. Unlike many recent superhero movies that rely heavily on interconnected storylines, Superman stood on its own by emphasizing character development and clear storytelling. Its portrayal of Clark Kent balanced heroic action with vulnerability, making the character feel more human. Visually, the film impressed viewers with large-scale action sequences, detailed world-building, and a hopeful tone that contrasted with darker superhero trends of the past decade. Simultaneously, its themes of moral responsibility and choosing to do good resonated strongly in a time when audiences were looking for optimism. By appealing to both longtime fans and younger viewers discovering the character for the first time, Superman proved that legacy franchises can still evolve and inspire. Its success cemented it as not just a blockbuster but one of the defining cultural moments of 2025.

Arts & Leisure

The Phillipian Co.

"Wake Up Dead Man" Keeps The Knife Sharp

ELIZABETH QIN
& MADELYN SOONG

Ever wanted to see a movie that holds up both the abuses and graces of organized religion without letting either smother the other, and also has its lead detective say, very gravely, "Scooby-dooby-doo?" If so, Rian Johnson would like a word.

"Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery," released on Netflix on December 11 and given a limited theatrical run after, is the third installment of Rian Johnson's "Knives Out" series, featuring the world-famous detective Benoit Blanc. On the surface, the film is a classic whodunit movie filled with family secrets, sharp dialogue, and unexpected twists, but beneath that surface is a message about guilt, moral responsibility, and the power of belief to do both harm and good.

The film begins with Father Jud Duplenticy, played by Josh O'Connor, narrating a flashback of the events leading up to the murder of Monsignor Wicks, the church's preacher. Once the audience is caught up, Benoit Blanc is on the case, with O'Connor serving as this movie's de facto Watson. While they dig into the facts of the seemingly miraculous murder, secrets and bodies start to pile up, and Blanc can only hope he's not too late as congregants begin to confess.

Many detective series for the big screen established their reputations in print beforehand, lending their names appeal before they set foot on screen. In portraying Blanc in all three movies with such charm and gravitas, Craig makes it hard to believe he is not working with the mythos of names like Holmes and Poirot. "Wake Up Dead Man" only reinforces this impression, giving us more tidbits about the detective's life, like his relationship with his mother and with the church (both implied to be soured by homophobia).

ELLE PARK/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

However, in the third Knives Out movie, the cornerstone detective makes no appearance until a fifth of the way through the movie. Instead, the movie's emotional heart is O'Connor's Father Jud. In a media landscape populated by negative portrayals of the church, he shines as a heartfelt young priest trying earnestly to do good and connect with people through sincere worship. His character is awkward, but not so much as to turn the audience unsympathetic, and his and Blanc's almost buddy-comedy relationship keep the movie fun.

Previous "Knives Out" movies have been heavy on class commentary, and Rian Johnson makes no secret of his political leanings. While this film has its fair share of messages about wealth and power, its delivery is richer for its abandonment of previous love-to-hate-them caricature styling. The narrative of "Wake-Up Dead Man" is centered almost entirely on the mystery and its emotional consequences surrounding it. Each character and subplot is carefully introduced through Father Jud's abbreviated retelling, and it's hard not to feel disappointed we don't get to see more from an ensemble with the likes of Kerry Washington and Josh Brolin. While there are still moments of humor, they serve the story and don't distract from it. This gives the movie a more grounded and intentional feel overall.

The first act takes its time establishing the setting and characters, which may feel slow for some viewers, but this thorough introduction pays off as the mystery deepens. Once the investigation gains momentum, the film moves steadily, revealing clues at just the right moments. Some information drops feel like end reveals in and of themselves; Kerry Washington's hurt and betrayal of Vera is a standout even as her character is sidelined by the onwards-racing plot. The final act is tense and climatic, keeping the audience engaged without feeling too overwhelming or rushed. Although not every question is wrapped up, the resolution makes sense emotionally and thematically. If you're interested in a whodunit guessing game, this movie might not be for you; the culprit isn't extremely difficult to guess. However, in foregoing a big twist, the movie's finale emphasizes accountability and grace.

The movie's visual style shifts quickly between warm and cool tones as its lush interior sets contrast with outdoor scenes filmed in the UK. Within the church, a studio-built outdoor lighting rig shines, or doesn't shine, through the windows to emphasize "light" and "dark" in small conversations. It's a very obvious emotional cue, but it still draws the viewer in with the use of that contrast and the calculated composition in each scene. For a Netflix original, it feels incredibly classy and cinematic, richer in color and maturity than the neat but humorous establishing shots of "Knives Out." All of the visual style heightens the feeling of wonder as you discover more parts of the story.

"Wake Up Dead Man" is an incredible addition to the Knives Out series, drawing on themes and threads from previous movies while still standing on its own as a gorgeous piece of cinema with a fun mystery and a great leading performance from Josh O'Connor. If you want an afternoon of fun and a post-movie evening of reflection and recaps with friends or family, run, don't walk!— to theaters, or to your television.

Marty Supreme Christmas Day: Performative Ping Pong Pandemonium

SOOHAN CHO
& DANIEL LIU

As theatre lights dimmed and previews faded on Christmas Day, the Marty Supreme movie arrived, burdened by its massive reputation. Months of online hype, stylized trailers, and merchandise campaigns had framed the film as more than just a movie, perhaps a cultural phenomenon. From celebrities sporting various colorways of the highly-coveted Marty Supreme jacket to Timothée Chalamet filming promos on top of the Las Vegas sphere, Marty Supreme was the trendiest thing around.

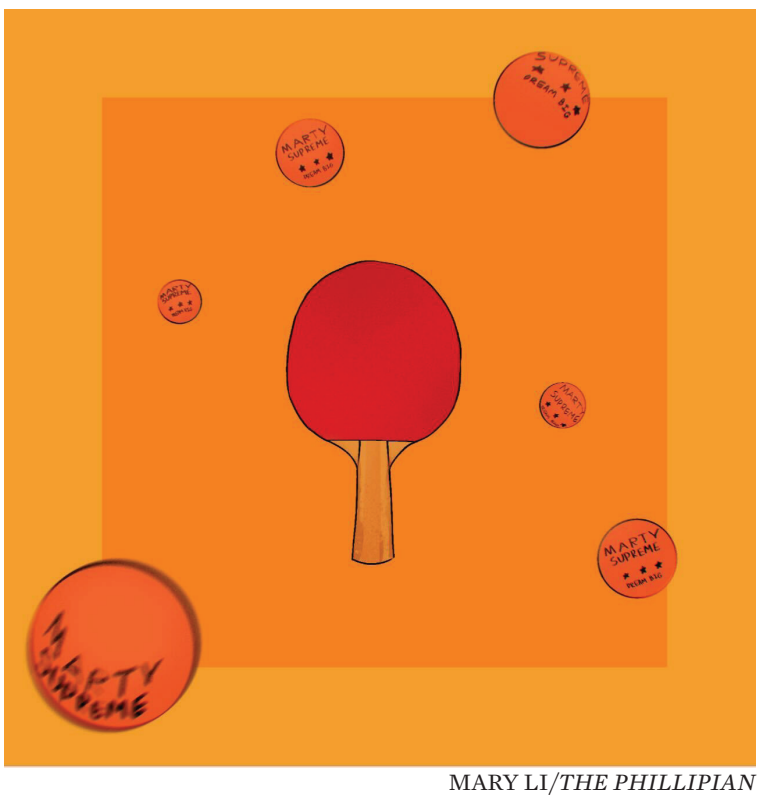
Unfortunately, the excessive PR made the movie seem engineered more for headlines and hashtags rather than actually good storytelling. Marty Supreme promised something bold and new, but what it delivered was far less cohesive.

The initial anticipation leading up to the screening was incredible. Before the movie started, the energy in the theatre was electric. People were whispering to each other about how "this was going to be THE movie of the year," and the trailers alone had convinced everyone that Marty Supreme would be a genre-defining experience. I was hyped. I thought I was about to watch something that would change my life.

However, that belief didn't last long. As the movie progressed, its fixation on style and glamor began to overshadow any attempt at original meaning. Every scene seemed to prioritize aesthetics over real substance, creating moments that looked important on the surface, but felt incoherent. The infamous scene where Marty agrees to get publicly spanked by a wealthy entrepreneur to secure funding for his ping pong match in Tokyo was unforgettable, but not in a good way. It was so over-the-top and humiliating that I felt uncomfortable just watching it, torn between laughing and disbelief.

Moreover, the plot itself is a mess, packed with confusing subplots and weird side characters. One moment Marty is hustling ping pong games in New York, the next he's involved in a shootout over a lost dog, and then suddenly he's in Tokyo for an exhibition match that somehow determines his entire career. Additionally, supporting characters, like Rachel and Milton, pop in and out with no clear narrative purpose

Then there's the dialogue. The film seems obsessed with sounding profound, churning out line after line that barely resembles real conversation. Scenes often break down into long dramatic speeches and monologues, as if the movie itself is preparing to be clipped into minute-long TikTok edits with Subway Surfers gameplay spliced underneath.



MARY LI/*THE PHILLIPIAN*

For lack of a better word, the movie was performative. Filled with dramatic monologues, lingering shots, and close-ups that seem like the director himself is leaning over your shoulder whispering, "Hey look at this. This part matters. Take this seriously." And too often these moments go nowhere. For example, the scene where Marty stares down his opponent before the Tokyo exhibition match, the camera lingers on his sweaty brow, the ball spins in slow motion, the crowd barely audible in the background. It's supposed to feel intense and monumental, but instead it just feels dragged out.

But don't get me wrong, there are flashes of brilliance. Chalamet is magnetic, Gwyneth Paltrow is solid, and the visuals, especially Tokyo, are stunning. The ending with Marty and his newborn's final reunion was genuinely emotional and heartfelt, a rare moment where the movie stops dramatizing and feels realistic.

Honestly, one of the strangest things about Marty Supreme was how much it made me care about ping pong, a sport I'd never thought twice about. Watching the matches on screen was almost addicting. The way Marty spun, smashed, and angled every shot made each point feel like life or death, my heart racing as the ball zipped across the table in slow motion. I later found myself staring at the ping pong table in my dorm's common room and thinking, "Maybe I should actually try this."

At the end of the day, Marty Supreme is exhausting, performative, and dazzling all at once. I left the theatre fascinated by ping pong, yet slightly bewildered. Sparks of brilliance exist, but they're buried under a mountain of style over substance. It's a bit overhyped, but you just can't stop looking. Like the number of stars on a ping pong ball, I rate this three out of five stars.

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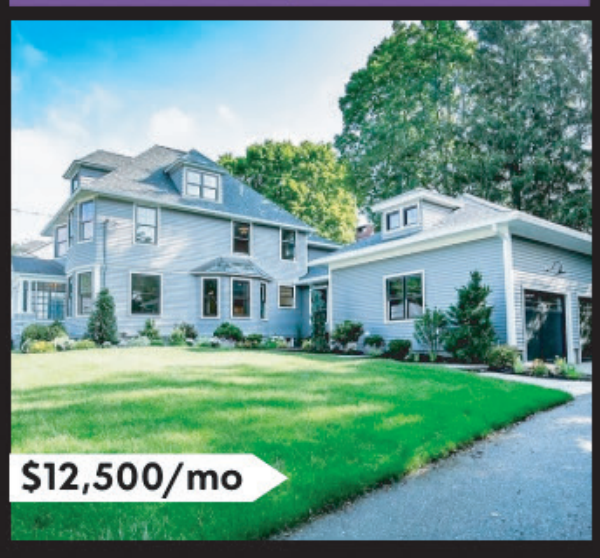

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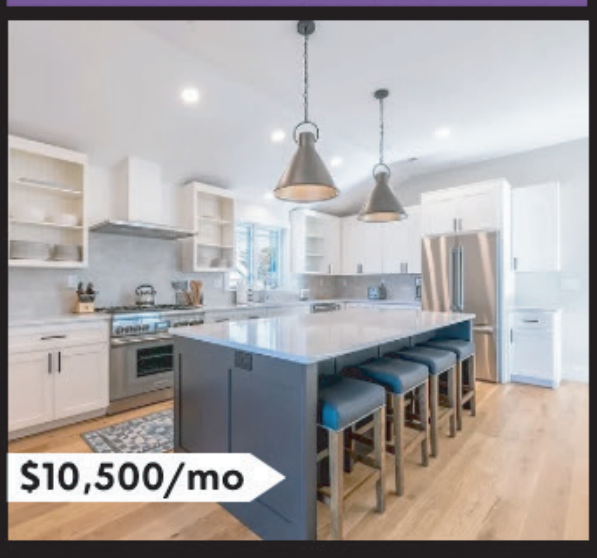

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