



gang squad out :(

Senior Administration Details Andover's "Student Safety and Risk-Reduction Plan"

STAFF REPORT

Last Spring, the campus community lost Lucas Lee '25 to suicide. Since then, Andover's Senior administration has met every other Monday, working to create a "Student Safety and Risk-Reduction Plan."

Amy Patel, Dean of Health and Wellness, gave an overview of the senior administration's postvention plans. She described the necessity of implementing postvention after administrators had time to formulate a systematic response.

"Every organization should have a postvention. It's for when something tragic happens, often a death. It could be a death for any reason, but it's typically thought of in a setting of death by suicide. But it's a plan, because you've got to be systematic," said Patel.

Patel continued, "There's a ton of research and evidence about what ways you can respond to reduce further risk in a community and be most supportive. Then there's also a ton of data, unfortunately,

that's been acquired about some steps that can increase risk at a very vulnerable time for a community. We didn't have one in place. One of many things that we needed to do once there was a little bit of time after the Spring Term was to document what did we do? Where was there maybe an opportunity to do anything better?"

Patel elaborated on the student safety and risk-reduction plan, which centers around environmental risk reduction. This resulted in the netting installation in various campus locations, and the new policy limiting student access to medicine.

"The second document is a Student Safety and Risk-Reduction Plan. It's everything from environmental risk reduction, netting [in] stairwells, but also supervision in particular places, maybe reducing access to certain buildings, security monitors," said Patel.

Patel continued, "It's also

Continued on A5, Column 1

Sykes Wellness Center is open 24/7

Sykes counselors are available:

Monday-Friday – 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Additional counseling available through Riverside Trauma Center counselors.

Online crisis support is available 24/7: 8 free online counseling sessions for Andover students per year

To request a UWill counselor, email sykeswellness@andover.edu.

To access a UWill counselor 24/7, call **833-646-1526**.

Other resources:

The JED Foundation, UWill, The Trevor Project, The Steve Fund

A.ZHU/THE PHILLIPIAN

Tessa Hulls Presents Pulitzer-Winning Graphic Memoir "Feeding Ghosts"

SIMRAN SHAH & OLIVIA TEMPLE

Tessa Hulls, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "Feeding Ghosts: A Graphic Memoir," held a writers' workshop and lecture last Friday in Kemper as part of Mixed Heritage Awareness Week (MHAW). Hulls spoke on her struggles with her mixed identity, gender roles in American society, and how she uses graphic novels to express her emotions and life story.

Drawing inspiration from her own family history, Hulls explored how she expresses her identity as an individual of both Chinese and American heritage through her work. She connected this to how widespread polarization today enforces binaries.

"Being mixed in America is a constant sociology experiment. In a culture obsessed with forcing binaries, where does someone with a foot in both worlds and a home in neither fit in? If perspective depends on where you stand, and you stand in multiple places, then you can't help but think about the big picture. We're living in a moment where polarization has become extreme to a point that sometimes feels hopeless. We live in a moment where we see us versus them, black and white," said Hulls.

Hugo Appen '27, a student attendee of Hull's talk and a board member of Andover's mixed



Tessa Hulls presented on her graphic memoir "Feeding Ghosts." heritage affinity group, MOSAIC, expressed that his experiences with his ethnic identity mirrored Hulls'. Appen pointed to language as a potential barrier.

"Her experience as an Asian person in the United States [resonated with me], [as well as] a lot of the anecdotes about being mixed and how she felt outside of a box. I found her story similar to my mom's, because my grandmother immigrated from China as well. Especially the parts where she wrote about language and how learning Mandarin served as a way for her to try and break down these

Continued on A5, Column 1

Commentary, A2

"Between Engagement and Apathy"

The mental disconnection that results from a mandatory MLK day on.

Eighth Page, A8

Farewell

Piper and David say goodbye in the only way they know how: getting made fun of.

Sports, B1

Pushing Through the Mid-season Grind

Girls Basketball (9-5) won two and lost one to bring their post-winter break record to 5-1.

Chasing Dreams: José Hernández Reflects on Perseverance During MLK Day ASM

TEDDY STEINERT & JEREMIAH NUNEZ

José Hernández, an engineer and former NASA astronaut, took the stage of Cochran Chapel during All-School Meeting (ASM) honoring Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) Day. In his talk, Hernández detailed his life story and career path, urging students to view their dreams not as distant ideals but as goals achievable through effort and self-discipline.

Since watching the Apollo-17 moon landing mission at ten, Hernández dreamed of becoming an astronaut. Attributing his eventual success to persistence, he reflected on how he handled multiple rejections by identifying skills he was deficient in and working towards acquiring them.

"I found out that all the astronauts not only had the minimum requirements, but they were pilots. I wasn't a pilot. So guess what? I became one. They were scuba-diving rated. I wasn't scuba dive rated, so guess what? I got scuba-diving rated. A lot of them knew a third language... So I had to learn a third language, and guess what? I got an opportunity to travel to Russia and the nuclear nonproliferation arena. 25 trips [to Russia], five years of Russian language training, and on my 12th try, they said welcome to the 19th class of NASA astronauts," said Hernández in his talk.

Aquita Winslow, Dean of Community and Multicultural Development (CaMD), explained the thought process behind inviting Hernández to Andover. She touched on how his background and story aligned with the objectives for this year's MLK Day.

"When we think about what's going on in this country right now with immigration... It's really important that we not just center our conversation on one group, but make space to talk about lots of different groups. We wanted to center the Hispanic and Latino voices this year for students because we thought that was important," said Winslow.

Winslow shared that Hernández



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Just as he did to become an astronaut, José Hernández inspired students to chase their dreams, no matter the size.

dez had been invited to Andover at the request of several students. She encouraged input from the student body for selecting speakers for ASM.

"What was really important, though, is that José Hernández was a student request. We had students who really wanted him to come to Andover, and that's where it started. We always try to take student requests seriously.

A lot of the speakers we bring to campus come from students. There's always encouragement to say, 'Hey, can we get this speaker? I'd really like to hear from this person.' We really try to accommodate that," said Winslow.

Eden Dunleavy '29 reflected on Hernández's journey from a childhood dream to a concrete career. She expressed how his speech empowered her to transform her dreams and hopes into achievable and tangible goals.

"It's amazing to see everybody's journey from when they're a kid to when they finally are able to achieve their dream.

[His story] is really inspirational because space is so far away and

it feels like such a foreign concept that we don't really consider... All those [dreams] might seem really far-fetched and really far away. But then, after hearing him talk about his dream, it makes you feel like you can do what you want to do if you're determined and if you persevere," said Dunleavy.

Towards the end of his speech, Hernández shared a list of tips from his father, guidance for chasing his dream. Eddy Marrero '28 expressed appreciation for his advice, explaining how it gave him guidance to discover his life goals.

"It's helpful that he mentioned the six things to follow for success. It's a good mindset to have, but also knowing that someone like him had a goal from early on and that they were able to accomplish it is inspiring [to me]... I'm still working on finding what [I want to accomplish], but I think my dream is like [his], finding something that is really fascinating and that I can dive into," said Marrero.

Students Comment on Annual Mid-Year Reflection

NICCOLO LEE-SUK & DINA NAMJOO

Midway through Winter Term each year, Andover students complete a written reflection titled "A Letter to the Adults in my Life," where they reflect on their past year's experience. Following the reflection, students meet with their point person to discuss the reflection, which is eventually shared with parents and made available to campus adults.

Students were alerted of this year's reflection via email by Aya Murata, Assistant Dean of Students, on January 13. Murata encouraged Andover students to embrace this letter as an opportunity to reflect on their time at Andover, rather than as an additional obligation.

"The hope is that students feel that they can be vulnerable and honest in taking a hard look at themselves and where they're at," said Murata. "Most students, when they come here, pride themselves on their level of independence to a certain degree and feel very independent. But you can't be in a solo act. In this place you need to be able to lean on others. You gain a lot from those relationships and the interconnected web of being in relationships with others."

Several students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on their time at Andover. Philip Molina '28 noted that the reflection reminded him to be grateful in a demanding academic environment.

"At Andover, it's pretty easy to forget that being here is a privi-

lege, as it can sometimes feel like a burden with all of our classes and busy work. Stepping back and taking the time to actually appreciate everything about this place really made me grateful," said Molina.

As a new student, Chance Hernandez '29 expressed that the reflection's timing could be improved due to approaching mid-terms. Hernandez highlighted suggestions for the reflection.

"When I first saw this email, even though being introspective and aware of yourself and your goals is important, this wasn't given at the best time. It feels like we're just getting another thing to do that we need," said Hernandez. "It comes out of nowhere. I didn't know that I'd get one until the day that I got the email. There could be some more words spared to explain [its usefulness] for the person completing it," said Hernandez.

Some students noted that every student's mindset determines how personally valuable the reflection is. Frank Hu '26 viewed that students who approach the reflection openly were more likely to benefit, and found the in-person check-in an effective means of student support.

"It's really a mentality thing. If a student thinks that it's important to complete, then the student will get a decent amount out of it. But if it's just seen as busy work that you have to do, and you don't really take the time to think, then I don't think it's very helpful," said Hu.

Continued on A5 Column 1

The Phillipian

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Reflections from the departing members of *The Phillipian*, vol. CXLVIII.

"I've gotten used to texting my parents the PDF version of the paper every week. It's hard to say goodbye to something that I've structured much of my life around, and taken so much from. I truly believe there are few opportunities quite like *The Phillipian*, on this campus and beyond. This has been the defining experience of my high school years, from my first Commentary article to the most challenging weeks on UM, CXLVII, CXLVIII, and of course my Gang Squad, you've all become lifelong friends and have pushed me toward the person I want to be. To CXLIX, remember that no matter how all-consuming or world-stopping things may feel, it's never that serious." - M. Kwooya

"CXLVIII, there is truly no one else I would rather spend 8 hours with on my Wednesdays and Thursday nights. From Ms. Ainsworth's and Neil's fantastic snack spreads to blasting music and singing instead of editing articles like we should have been doing, the Newsroom has undoubtedly become my favorite place on campus. I have never been challenged so much, and there were weeks where I was fully convinced the paper would not get done. But through late nights, some skipped homework assignments, and admittedly some tears, it always did. *The Phillipian* has given me such a unique perspective on Andover and has allowed me to meet so many incredible people that I would have never known had I not decided to start writing my Lower year. *The Phillipian* has provided so much for me, and my high school experience would simply be incomplete without it. To OG sports — Nabilah, Angie, Sophia, Henry, Micheal '25, Theo, and David — you guys were such a fun group to begin my time in the Newsroom with. And to my dearest fellow UM members, I am so honored to have worked with such talented and dedicated people. You have made every moment so special, and I have never laughed harder. So to CXLIX, as you embark on your tenure, cherish every moment, because it will be done before you know it." - K. Rodgers

"Three years of Monday night board meetings later, coming to the Newsroom will never grow old. Whether it was Wednesday night snacks or late, late Thursdays (haha... SOTA...), I wouldn't trade CXLVIII for the world. I can't even begin to describe what you all have meant to me. Shutout to my day one Graphic editors, Heyon, James, and Caroline, and every person on each board I've gotten to interact with. Witnessing your unrelenting passion and care for this place has been infectious. To CXLIX, will your all into every hour spent in the basement of Morse and I promise, your dedication will return tenfold. Above all, do it with a smile :)" - A. Zhu

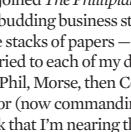
"You know, I went on my phone the other day and watched videos about the universe and cosmos. There is this theory that since the universe is infinite, then the exact same circumstances here on earth are happening somewhere else. Yet, I can't believe it. There is no way that an experience somewhere else in the universe is as special as my time on *The Phillipian* has been. Thank you Nabilah, Henry, Angie, Sophia, Michael W., David, and Kate for being great editors in the sports section. To CXLVIII, I loved talking with each one of you guys during board meetings, Tuesday Ed-Talks, and Wednesday newsroom hours. To my fellas on UM, we have been through so much this past year and I couldn't imagine this year without you guys. Thank you Ms. Ainsworth and Neil for all your help this year, you really have helped us so much and we couldn't do it without you. If I'm wrong, and another "*The Phillipian*" does exist, I would not hesitate to build a spaceship and travel there." - T. Wei

"As a news writer, the plip taught me about the grind. It also taught me literally everything I know about what journalism means to a community. To CXLVIII, we've had a crazy run together. *The Phillipian* is the best group project I could ever have dreamed of. I wouldn't trade a second of it. I'll miss having no Thursdays, agonizing over editorial, all the newsroom snacks, and getting to spend time (SO much time) with all of you. To the next board, your words matter. If you throw your heart into this paper and lead with intent (and with joy), you really can make a difference. Live laugh love newzzzzzzzz (shoutout to the best editor ever will and cathe), live laugh love *The Phillipian*." - B. Xu

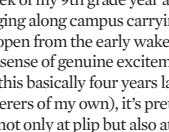
"Rehearsing my pitch over and over outside Marissa Michaels Hair Salon, getting kicked out of Irresistibles with Maggie, going to war with my 'favorite' business... Each of these has been core memories in my *Phillipian* journey. In the best way possible, our tenure has felt like ten-years, and I'm forever grateful for everyone who I've laughed and loved with under these colored tiles. To CXLIX: Be Passionate. Be Bold. Treasure the ones around you; As the room leaves with scribbled marks of each of us, so will you." - A. Zhao

Employment of Phillipian
Is this paper the best group project you've ever had?

Yes: 99.9% No(sota): 0.1%



- L. Heyd



- C. Wang

Employment of Phillipian
Is this paper the best group project you've ever had?

Yes: 99.9% No(sota): 0.1%

Topic: 10
Topic: 10
Topic: 10



CLARE WANG / THE PHILLIPIAN

MUAZ REZA



COURTESY OF MUAZ REZA

Walking through the halls of Samuel Phillips Hall or weaving through crowds at Paresky Commons, I'm constantly struck by how different everyone is in background, identity, and lived experience. This commitment to learning, which happens not just through books and instruction, but through exposure to perspectives that differ from our own, is Andover's greatest strength. Therefore, celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK), whose name remains inseparable from the relentless pursuit of inclusion and diversity, aligns perfectly with Andover's core mission of "Youth From Every Quarter." And while I'm confident that our student body affirms this concept intellectually, it appears the winds of apathy linger quietly with the falling snow. Among my friends, classmates, and people I've spoken to, some are content with Andover's commitment to uplifting marginalized voices. Many students are excited to either host or attend a workshop that aligns

Between Engagement and Apathy

with aspects of their identity. On the other hand, others are less enthusiastic at the thought of attending mandatory talks that chip away at their time to spend with friends or recharge after a (many would agree) grueling start of term. Therefore, many walk to their workshop begrudgingly, tuning out the speaker's words. As a consequence of mandatory reflection, students have stopped caring, resorting to simply showing up while remaining mentally disengaged.

I'm not here to disregard or demonize anyone for their lack of passion. I think most students fall somewhere in the middle of enthusiastic and apathetic, and that's perfectly normal. But I do find the spectrum of reactions to be fascinating. I attribute this phenomenon to performative inclusivity which is the active dramatization of diversity efforts, advocating for moral satisfaction rather than spreading awareness and grappling with the nuances of social justice issues. It manifests itself when institutions substitute diversity education with flashy ceremonies and student groups stage events rather than bring real awareness and while neglecting to do the concrete, uncom-

fortable work that brings about change. When public displays of inclusion replace sustained measures for promoting inclusion, it can feel more symbolic rather than lived, replacing sincerity with enthusiasm. Replacing real, grueling effort with overly idealistic displays of performity erases the struggle marginalized groups undertook to bring about our present reality. While the takeaway shouldn't be to make these events optional, this notion is worth noting. Andover's overemphasis on the slogan of diversity, rather than exploring what it actually entails, further removes students from authentically connecting with the efforts of diversity. It leads them to dismiss the importance of inclusion efforts, as their lived reality makes diversity an unshakeable pillar. Inclusivity becomes performative, not out of malice but often from overcompensation.

Additionally, the school's well-intentioned attempt to make MLK Day "On" a school tradition by compressing multiple workshops into one single day ends up simply being overwhelming and overly symbolic to the majority. This, in turn, contributes to students' feelings of fatigue or disengag-

MIA WALKER / THE PHILLIPIAN



ment. Students may feel that once MLK Day concludes, the work is over, the mental boxes of moral obligation have been checked, and all responsibility has been dissolved until the following year. Conversations about social justice become minimized to simply another task to finish, rather than a dynamic, evolving notion that should be discussed on a daily basis. Instead of awareness and action, performity and apathy remain when reflection is mandated.

If Andover truly wishes to commit to fostering an intentionally diverse community, then it must be willing to sit with the discomfort of the complexities it entails every day.

Reflection is not something that can be forced. It is not something that everyone reciprocates in equal measures. Topics like identity, class issues, and the prevailing history of race-based discrimination in the United States are complicated ones that cannot be resolved in a single day. Therefore, rather than compressing reflection to a single day, Andover should foster an ongoing, low-pressure environment that facilitates conversation. This might mean incorporating lessons on identity in the classroom or in student-led forums where opinions can be shared

freely. The CaMD Scholar program perfectly captures this notion — by shifting the conversation from mandatory to actively pursued. Through this expansion of the conversations held about diversity, themes of identity grow beyond obligation to genuine interest, facilitating the community that Andover prides itself on having.

If Andover truly wishes to commit to fostering an intentionally diverse community, then it must be willing to sit with the discomfort of the complexities it entails every day.

If Andover truly wishes to commit to fostering an intentionally diverse community, then it must be willing to sit with the discomfort of the complexities it entails every day. Therefore, it is vital to expand the conversation beyond just MLK day, but in the days that follow, when reflection is no longer required, and sincerity becomes a choice, not a requirement. Doing so doesn't have to be complex. Expanding programs like CaMD or forming new initiatives, based on an ever-evolving student body, can begin to propel our community towards authenticity. By doing so, Andover allows a greater proportion of its student body to add fragments of their identity to our community. When students are given the resources to engage on their own terms, diversity stops feeling abstract and, rather, becomes a palpable reality of our student body. This is how a diverse community sustains itself: through the warmth of active participation, blowing away the winds of apathy.

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MLK Day: An Incomplete Lesson

JACOB SHIN



As an international student, I was taught aspects of American society under an assumption of familiarity that was not always applicable to me. I learned about national holidays like the Fourth of July, cultural references such as the Super Bowl, and historical figures like Abraham Lincoln as abstract concepts, rather than an internalized culture. Similarly, the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) has always felt like a conceptual idea from a distant land to me. This remained persistent even during Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Andover. I have come to recognize that a genuine reflection on the principles commemorated on MLK Day requires more than appreciation; it requires space for students to wrestle with its meaning through sustained questioning and interpretation.

orchestrated to introduce students to a wide range of perspectives regarding justice, social advocacy, and perseverance. Performance ensembles and choir groups played music that resonated with students, expressing African American heritage in a way that extended beyond textbooks. We listened to José M. Hernández as he spoke about his failures and persistence on his path to becoming a renowned astronaut, a journey embodying the ideals of MLK Jr. through a global lens of resilience. Workshop speakers addressed topics such as Asian and African American experiences with police violence, and Andover's historical decision to divest against the apartheid. Through the commitment to these programs, the school provided opportunities for students to hold an appreciation for MLK Jr. and immerse themselves within his legacy.

We were positioned as observers rather than active participants in the conversation around MLK Jr.

Yet, despite the depth and intention behind these exercises, their structure nonetheless revealed an underlying limitation. Designed to be cohesive, the tight schedule of performances, speeches, and presentations left little leeway for students to independently explore the ideas being presented. Each individual experience was meaningful, and intro-

duced us to insights we would have otherwise not been exposed to. However, making MLK Day digestible for students while helping us "learn" it, prevented us from fully comprehending the struggles it represented. None of the ideas or discoveries presented during the day were derived from my independent cognition; they were my instructor's interpretations that I temporarily absorbed and would forget after a couple of months.

Recognizing the flaws of MLK Day raises an important question: Is it even possible to truly understand MLK's doctrine? Perhaps it is not supposed to be the goal of MLK Day to fully grasp every layer of such a complex cultural phenomenon. Even if a complete understanding is not feasible, allowing our questions to lin-

tions through a single lesson, but to challenge our assumptions about justice and equality. Its purpose should focus on provoking discomfort and questions because uncertainty compels us to want to know more.

Jacob Shin is a Junior from Seongnam, South Korea. Contact the author at jshin29@andover.edu.

MLK Day is not a day to check off a calendar or a lesson that ends with the bell. It is a reminder that understanding requires a student-driven effort to connect his philosophy to our daily lives. Some lessons are found not in the classroom, but in our relentless curiosity to learn more.

Jacob Shin is a Junior from Seongnam, South Korea. Contact the author at jshin29@andover.edu.

As students, we are led to believe that blind obedience to the system is the best approach to education. This, however, impedes our comprehension as we fail to pause and question the significance of the lessons we are taught. This neglect of critical analysis is a driving factor in why MLK Jr.'s virtues are never celebrated beyond the day of commemoration. To students, the structured and mandatory program scheduled for the day gives them the impression that such activities regarding MLK Jr. are merely lessons to passively absorb. As diligent students, we took each school-designated activity seriously, paying attention to student-led presentations and clapping at the end of every musical performance. But this rigid agenda of tasks only taught us how to engage under the instruction of another, without providing reasons or avenues for taking our insights beyond MLK Day. Engagement was performative rather than earnest, and the ideas we were meant to internalize stayed confined to the classroom instead of extending into personal responsibility or sustained involvement. This is not to say such supervision is fundamentally wrong. The curriculum was engaging and thoughtful, and intro-

duced me to insights I would have otherwise not been exposed to. However, making MLK Day digestible for students while helping us "learn" it, prevented us from fully comprehending the struggles it represented. None of the ideas or discoveries presented during the day were derived from my independent cognition; they were my instructor's interpretations that I temporarily absorbed and would forget after a couple of months.

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I Want to Change, I Need Your Help

IAN KIM



NISHI AMIN / THE PHILLIPIAN

This will be the only article in which I demand anything from you. Despite only being 21 days into the new year, I've noticed that I have yet to accomplish any of my resolutions. Through reflection, I've realized that the lack of execution of many resolutions is because I've kept many of these goals private. Therefore, I've chosen you to keep me accountable through this article. So feel free to tap me on the back to remind me or shout them at me whenever we cross paths.

I found the overarching theme of 2026 in the plethora of random articles I read on the internet: "Why Wait to Make a Difference?" Aligning myself with this message, my first resolution is to stop waiting to make a difference in my life or the lives of others. I want to eliminate the stage of waiting to better myself. Though this is often described as overthinking, I want to plainly label it as a lack of discipline that needs work on my part. At the end of the day, it is my duty to change my status quo into one that I can appreciate. It's less about the actions I take but the

mindset I find in myself to really make the most out of my day. Every day, when I lie in bed to go to sleep, I want to not have any regrets about the day before.

Academically, I want this to be a year where I can find time for my passions. In my endeavor for scientific research, I want to hone in on my passion for public health and continue to grow my projects centering on youth health advocacy and policy changes. For Commentary, I want to continue writing articles that bring me joy and draw inspiration from everyday moments. Often, I find myself reveling in the beauty of the little things that happen to me — such as heavy snowfall when I'm walking, a funny joke in class, or an intellectual conversation with a teacher — and I want this paper to be a place where I can express my appreciation for these small moments. Andover often rips away opportunities to appreciate and look back, and sitting down, reflecting, and typing up an article that is a piece of myself every week allows me the rare opportunity to see the week and life here in a more positive scope.

In a social sense, I want to get rid of the anxious voices in my head when I'm with my friends, taking a test, or answering questions. 2025 has given me the opportunity to meet some brilliant people who quickly became a very important part of my life. However, in this tumultuous period of constant adjustment and creation of bonds, I found it easy to get lost in the complexity of it all. Friendships and human relations are, to borrow the words of François Rabelais, a journey to a "great perhaps." Nothing is



SOPHIA KIM / THE PHILLIPIAN

known, and nothing can ever be known, and I want to utilize the social aspect of my life as a haven where I can truly let go and be me. I pride myself in being an authentic person and being the same person no matter the circumstance, and I want to continue to show my authentic self and be honest to people and expect authenticity in return. And frankly, I don't really know how I will do it, but I surely know that it won't be because I didn't try.

In terms of personal goals, I want this to be a year of self-fulfillment in different forms. I derive genuine joy when I accomplish the goals I set for myself, but, oftentimes, I fall short of my

expectations and begin to blame myself. This year, in everything I do, whether it be scientific research, writing, or hanging out with my friends, I want to think of it not as a task but as an opportunity for personal development. This will be tough, and it will undoubtedly be difficult to put up with this mindset. But this year, to be a better person, I will brave these challenges.

In this school, it can often be difficult to continue to think about all the hardships as a journey of growth rather than an endless continuation of tasks. I hope that in my vulnerability, many can find ways to reframe their individual journeys as op-

portunities for discipline and growth. In that sense of purpose will blossom a sense of pride and motivation in every task. Then there will come a natural change towards betterment and discipline.

I want to change. So that on December 31, 2026, when I'm looking forward to another New Year, I can tell myself: "I didn't wait to make a difference."

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"Youth From Every Quarter," But Unequal Starting Lines

ANDREW PARK



COURTESY OF ANDREW PARK

In Andover's constitution, there are many important values that our community holds close. One of these values is the "Youth from Every Quarter" promise. Since its inception, Andover has taken a once radical position to allow broader communities to apply to Andover. Once a geographic label for townships, "Quarter" expands to include the social, racial, and economic "quarters" of a globalized society. Administrations gradually progressed to a more diverse mix of students, eventually leading to the culturally rich Andover we know today. "Youth From Every Quarter" promises a more diverse educational institution, where "students from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences — including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and ability — learn and grow together." Through a promise to admit people from all backgrounds, this policy demonstrates that Andover believes merit is achievable from every background. While the community's wishes are genuine, Andover's commitment is hindered by the unequal starting lines of our society, which mold merit through wealth. While these inequalities are not the Academy's fault, it must actively bridge the gap by bringing wealth disparity into its internal conversation about talent. By acknowledging how

wealth molds merit, Andover can move beyond a passive diversity of background and toward an active equity of opportunity.

In meritocracy, a society bases its value on a person's merit, a combination of academic skill, demonstrated achievement, and individual character. Many capitalist countries, like our own, depend on meritocracy to sell the idea that hard work can lead to a life with better living conditions, comfort, and financial success. Similar success stories are commonly heard at Andover, such as how many CEOs started off with entry-level jobs and worked until they reached the top.

Wealth can become a proxy for opportunity.

Despite this hope, true meritocracy, which tries to exist in our country, is unfeasible due to each person's uneven starting line. In the eyes of the meritocratic system, education is one of the easiest ways to verify the level of skills a person has cultivated. However, the high-level abilities

required for admission are not formed in isolation but cultivated through access, support, and opportunity that exist disproportionately in wealthier families. As a result, merit appears individual, even when its foundations are structural. That is why when institutions like Andover — and the broader college admissions system — frame success as the outcome of skill and talent alone, reality becomes obscured. In most cases, children born into upper-middle to upper-class families do better in schools, as they are equipped with access to excess learning resources and stronger emotional growth due to the presence of parents. Often, more affluent families are able to have one parent at home, as one parent having a higher-paying job can cover the whole family's expenses. In contrast, those born into poverty or the lower class struggle with hunger, working earlier, such as in high school, and not having the same levels of access to books, mentors, or tutors. In fact, studies have found that different economic status leads to differing SAT results, with some researchers saying "being born wealthy is actually a better indicator of adult success in the U.S. than academic performance."

Andover's commitment to cultural diversity is evident, considering global admissions and the identity-based support in CAMD and the Brace Center. However, we must understand that diversity of cultural backgrounds does not always indicate a holistic diversity. Through the self-reported values in last year's SOTA, around 48 percent of Andover's student body comes from families that earn equal to or more than 250,000 dollars a year. To put that into perspective, these families, almost making half of all families, would be in the top one to ten percent of the general distribution of families in the U.S. Even with the "Unsure" category taking up 25 percent of the responses, the data reveals a significant concentration of wealth in our student body. Interestingly, this disparity persists despite the Need-Blind admissions and financial aid, which is received by 47 percent of the student body.

However, receiving financial aid doesn't always mean that the student comes from a low-income family. While the costs of tuition do allow for more families to send their children to places like Andover, the aid only addresses the barrier of tuition, not the barrier of opportunity. The merit which is

MARY LI / THE PHILLIPIAN

considered during admissions is shaped by years of the presence or absence of wealth. Additionally, despite the wish to separate tuition barriers from admissions, the SOTA shows that the student body struggles to reflect the socioeconomic diversity "Youth From Every Quarter" promises.

This disparity is not the result of failure in the individuals, but shows how wealth can become a proxy for opportunity. While affluent students face their own problems — busy or absent parents, higher expectations and pressures of the professional world — their socioeconomic status is a safety net. In their lives, wealth can become sources of education and growth, creating a stable environment. In comparison, in the lower "quarters," little, if any safety net, exists. The abundance of resources in higher income families are absent, with the path to merit hidden by a paywall.

In conclusion, "Youth From Every Quarter" is a promising ideal, but one which is complicated by the "meritocracy" present in our system. While the progressive change made by the leaders of our school has made great progress to make the student body diverse, unequal starting lines mean that merit alone cannot be credited to success. Andover should not discard merit-based growth, but instead embrace a more nuanced definition that accounts for unequal opportunity. If we truly want to progress more, our first step should be to thaw our social restrictions on talking about money's place in our lives. Andover should be a place where wealth can be transparent, not a forbidden subject. Once we start accepting that money and merit are intertwined, our own accomplishments can be understood with better context.

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Students and Faculty Comment on Communication Regarding Postvention

Continued from A1, Column 2

es. That's medication, but also drugs and alcohol. What training do we need to do for our adults? How do we support students accessing universal screens? And then substance prevention education?"

Among those involved in planning are Head of School Raynard Kington, Deputy Head of School Merrilee Mardon, Patel, and Susan Esty, Dean of Students and Residential Life.

Kington and Mardon declined to interview individually, but agreed to a group interview with *The Phillipian*, alongside Chief Communications Officer Tracy Sweet. Esty declined to interview.

Mardon stated that training for faculty has been part of the risk-reduction planning. This Friday, Andover invited Ellen Utley, psychiatrist and JED Foundation Boarding School Consultant, to the faculty meeting.

"[The] Columbia [Lighthouse Project] came in the fall. That was more about normalizing the idea that you could ask somebody how they're doing and that you could also ask, 'Do you feel like hurting yourself?'" said Mardon. "This training, we're working closely with Dr. Ellen Utley... She's going to do the training [about] how adults ask questions in ways that reach students, because sometimes students can shy

away from adults, so we need to build that habit."

Patel detailed how the Senior administration has been able to track patterns in student behavior and wellness with the school's new medication policy.

"That was one of the things that we thought we could update and align to what has now become more of the standard in schools, which is more close monitoring, an opportunity for connection to do a dose-by-dose check in with students. It doesn't take a long time, being able to proactively identify when something isn't going well or if there's a side effect or if somebody ran out of meds or if they lost them. That is generally the goal... to be able to have bi-directional communication with students who are taking medication," said Patel.

Patel continued, "We can see what percentage of students have picked up their medications on time and which ones have not. We could on an individual basis, figure out what patterns there are. If a student is noticing that they're having a harder time with a particular health issue, we can very easily look back and figure out, what's your compliance rate been in terms of taking the medication?"

According to Mardon, the risk-reduction plan aims to create forums where students, department chairs, and administrators can discuss academics and student well-being at Andover.

"This is my third year [here]. I've heard frequently from students that they wish they had more meaningful contact with adults, and they'd like to have more contact with department chairs, for example, and to just be in conversation about their learning and program... I know the department chairs know about it," said Mardon.

Chloe Song '26 noted how campus culture fixates on academic and extracurricular excellence. She noted how increased contact between students and department chairs could help students navigate Andover's high-stress environment.

"Andover is definitely a pressure cooker. It's really hard for a lot of students in terms of mental health. That's just a part of the culture and having everything on your plate leaves you susceptible to mental health struggles," said Song.

Song continued, "Students would get really involved in [forums]. And maybe that could help facilitate a more positive culture around academic pressure, and academic performance. I could see that becoming a part of Andover's student culture. But it needs to be ingrained for it to make a difference... Because ultimately, at the end of the day, what causes so much mental struggle for a lot of students is the pressure to do everything."

Song acknowledged that limited explicit communication about risk-reduction

measures, such as the netting, has generated criticism among the student body.

"All of a sudden there's netting in the Gelb [Science Center] and you're like, 'what?' Then you draw the quick connection, and you're like, 'maybe they should have said something about it.' You feel surprised [that] was their response after a tough Spring Term last year. The problem was the lack of communication. Maybe with communication... there wouldn't have been as much criticism," said Song.

Sweet raised concerns that formally communicating about the netting would isolate the netting installation from the rest of the school's risk-reduction measures.

"I do see this as a broader strategic approach. Our next communication to the community would be most valuable with everything stitched together so people can really understand how it relates. We're not isolating something like netting... It's that and so much more. I wouldn't want the community to misunderstand that as a central focus," said Sweet.

Kington expressed uncertainty about future plans to formally communicate about the netting.

"We were already in the process of consulting with outside experts, JED, to see if it made sense to do it now, after the fact," said Kington.

"We communicated through [The Phillipian's October 10] article, ['Netting

Installed in Several Campuses Buildings']. The changes have already occurred. I don't know if there's added value now in clarifying why we did it," said Kington. "It's a complicated question, how much you say [and] when."

Acknowledging the sensitive nature of the situation, Willow Wright '26 suggested that certain risk-reduction measures may appear less purposeful without explanation.

"The level of communication [is interesting] because they obviously are choosing to communicate some things over others. With the netting, it's assumed that we understand why it's there. It

glosses over some of the purpose of why it's there. It can be taken as unimportant, without knowing some of the reasoning and completely understanding why those protocols are in place. I know that [the administration doesn't] want to draw attention to events, which is difficult," said Wright. "When they do have a solid plan, it'll be useful to inform people."

Patel emphasized the administration's commitment to carrying out its various risk-reduction measures.

"It's important to know that [risk-reduction] is a multifaceted plan. This is not new and it's not going away. The emphasis is on making sure that everybody on this campus is involved in the well-being of our students and our community," said Patel.

Hulls Shared Her View on The Importance of Writing

Continued from A1, Column 3

was a testament to her strength and femininity.

"Every day, someone would tell me the same thing, [that] a woman can't travel alone. My own life didn't carry enough weight to serve as a counter-argument. These days, when someone tells me what a woman

can't do, I feel methodically researched glee over getting to prove them very, very wrong," wrote Hulls in her memoir.

Stephanie Curci, Instructor in English and an attendee, explained that she particularly enjoyed how femininity played a role in Hulls' story. Curci shared her appreciation for how Hulls' family dynamics echoed her own.

"I loved her stories of the adventures [Hulls referenced] to

give presentations about these early feminist adventures. The thing that resonated with me the most was the female lineage of being a daughter of a mother who has her own struggles that are not intertwined with her own mother's struggles, and [who's] figuring that piece out. I have some mental health issues in my family, so that part resonated with me. What one's responsibility is and what it means to care for somebody

with those issues," said Curci.

Francesca Dizon '26, Co-President of MOSAIC, helped to coordinate several events for MHAW, including the selection of Tessa Hulls as a speaker. As an artist herself, she highlighted where she found inspiration in Hulls' work.

"I asked [Hulls] about why it's important for her to create art and also write. I mostly turn to art because I feel as though I can't express many of these

facets of my identity through language, whereas she says that the way that she operates is through language. She only feels as though she can fully understand something when she can understand how to put words to it, and that's definitely a very rigorous process... That's very inspiring, and I can look to her to push myself in my practice further," said Dizon.

Students Share Opinions on Annual Mid-year Reflection

Continued from A1, Column 5

Hu continued, "In my Lower year, my conversation with my point person felt nice [as] someone was checking in on me. At a big school like Andover, it's easy to feel lost in the crowd. It's nice

to get a little bit of one-on-one attention just to make sure everything's all right and things are going smoothly."

Hannah Oh '27 expressed that the reflection tends to be more useful to lowerclassmen. Over time, though, she mentioned that its helpfulness diminished.

"For me, it was more helpful as a lowerclassman because it's

kind of hard and there were so many thoughts in my head. I feel like the mid-year reflection really helped me in my [Junior] and Lower years. But now that I'm an Upper, I'm in the groove of things so it feels like an unnecessary step that I have to take, but it's different for everyone," said Oh.

For Quentin Cynn '28, speaking with his point person was more

useful than writing the reflection. He explained that writing the reflection did not encourage him to reflect in the way a conversation would, and shared a potential change.

"I would scrap the essay part, and just have it be a longer conversation with your point person.

Because in a conversation you can't be idle, you have to actually

put thought behind your words. That's more helpful than just brain-dead writing. So if I had to change something it would be to do a 30-minute talk with your point person," said Cynn.

James Wilkerson Speaks on Male Mental Health



K.MA/THE PHILLIPIAN

James Wilkerson, Associate Dean of Students at Indiana University Southeast, delivered the talk "When We Cry: Navigating Male Mental Health" to all grades

last week. Wilkerson explored masculinity norms, the impacts of societal expectations, and the importance of emotional well-being.

Throughout his talk, Wilkerson frequently brought up personal anecdotes to make it easier for the audience to relate. Wilkerson explained the inspiration behind this choice and the origins of his presentation.

"When I did my first consent presentation, I was in a fraternity house basement. I tried to do this presentation like a law class. I'm looking at the crowd, and they just looked so bored, and I was bored doing it," said Wilkerson. "So, I'm like, let me go back to the drawing board and try something different."

He continued, "Instead of talking about weird, made-up examples, [I decided to] talk about the stories that I've dealt with in my life, because I'm no one special. If I dealt with this 20 years ago, you probably deal with it today. I can tell you a story from my life that you might relate to because you're going through the same thing. That's why I started adding my own stories in."

Wilkerson's visit was arranged by the Empathy Balance and Inclusion Program (EBI). He began his talk by discussing the moment Will Smith slapped Chris Rock. Brigitte Leschhorn, director of EBI, reflected on what she believed on Wilkerson bringing up that occasion.

"[Wilkerson] tried to get us to think about how in that moment, someone [who's] supposed to have this really clean image of a masculine and nice guy goes over and responds violently with an assault. He's trying to unpack what it means for all of us to witness that, where that comes from, and why we are all surprised," said Leschhorn. "It's really important for us to talk about the different

ways in which masculinity shows up, not in pop culture, but also in our lives."

Connor Chung '29 found the talk to be fitting during a time of the year he thought people find tough, considering the wintery conditions and workload. Believing that it's important "to learn about mental health," Chung reflected on Wilkerson's ability to keep the audience interested.

"My favorite part was just how engaging he was," said Chung. "I can see that he wrote multiple books, and so that voice that is a narrative in those books really carries over to his presentational voice, which I really liked about him. I'd say that was one of the most engaging [EBI speakers] I've had so far."

During his speech, Wilkerson used an analogy of a teacup.

Chung found it particularly memorable.

"The main takeaway of his analogy was how our stress is almost like a cup in which we can slowly let it out or we can dump it all out at once, which can lead to disastrous events such as sexual abuse, which is what he talked about, or like other things that might happen just because of all that built-up stress inside of you," said Chung.

Yui Takeuchi '26 related the contents of Wilkerson's talk to her experience as a camp counselor.

She reflected on the importance of gender identity and on ways she

could create an inclusive environment for others.

"My main takeaway was the importance of modeling behavior that can pull society away even just a little bit from the idea of toxic masculinity. The speech made me think about ways that I could improve on in terms of helping all of my campers identify and feel comfortable talking about emotions, regardless of gender," said Takeuchi.

Wilkerson also highlighted that, though his focus is on male mental wellness, other fields of mental health hold equal value. He discussed how male and female mental health hold parallel patterns.

"A lot of the things that you see when we talk about toxic masculinity do cross over to women as well. A woman can be a practitioner of domestic violence, just like a man can be, a hundred percent. Maybe some of the reasoning behind it could be a little bit different. Maybe you're coming from a different place as to why you did what you did, but I think toxic masculinity and toxic femininity are in the same chapter of the same book," said Wilkerson.

Wilkerson added, "There are female experts that can definitely do it better than I can. We have women speakers that you can hire to come to the school and speak directly to women in a very powerful and a very meaningful way. For me, I believe in staying in my lane."

10 Questions with Kiran Bhardwaj

REPORTING BY RIAANA BAJAJ AND JUNIPER KLOCK

Dr. Kiran Bhardwaj is an Instructor and Chair of the Philosophy and Religious Studies Department as well as a House Counselor in Double Brick House. In addition to teaching an Independent Project course for seniors, Bhardwaj also teaches Introduction to Ethics, Feminist Philosophies, and Ethics of Blame and Forgiveness. She has also completed several individual works, most recently "Giving Up on Someone" in The Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy and "The Kingdom of Ends as Ideal" in Human Dignity and the Kingdom of Ends. Bhardwaj is also a classically trained oboist.

As Department Chair of Philosophy and Religious Studies, how do you balance leadership with teaching and scholarship?

All of them nestle together really nicely. My department is really invested in thinking about how we can give students really wonderful experiences and pathways to show them that philosophy and religious studies can be for every student on campus. Talking and thinking about how to do our work as teachers is of central importance.

Leadership is obviously a different thing, but because I value my colleagues so much, it makes it really easy to work together. I am continuing as a scholar, but scholarship is something that I do just for joy. There's no expectation for faculty at Andover to do things along those lines.

It comes, again, nicely in conversation with teaching.

For example, many of my students are reading through texts that I find really useful to think about for my own research projects because they're squarely in the intersection of what I think is really interesting and what I think the Andover students find really interesting.

Do you have a childhood memory that has shaped you?

One thing I do appreciate about my childhood is that my family moved around a lot, and at the time I hated it. I am a flaming introvert and moving from place to place was always really, really tricky for me, especially since I was super shy as well. One of the things that I really value about it as an adult is the flexibility to step into new situations and to be able to find my feet and to have learned the skills of chatting with people whose experiences have been quite different from mine. That's something about my childhood experiences that have really shaped me.

What do you think is a common misconception about philosophy or philosophy as an occupation?

There's so many misconceptions about philosophy that I think are worth combating. One of which is that you have to be a genius or that you have to do it alone or that it has to be adversarial. A lot of people might have this image in their heads of people going at it and trying to outsmart the other and the smartest person wins. I think that's a really harmful perception of philosophy. It actually ought to be aimed towards working to repair your own and others' arguments. It can be deeply collaborative. We do our best work in progress rather than doing it all right



E.LIU/THE PHILLIPIAN

on the first draft. Those are some of the things that I think are really important about understanding philosophy at its best.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever received?

One of the best pieces of advice I've received, and this is something that is really applicable to the Andover student body too, is being willing to show things when they are imperfect, in process, and messy, and where you need others' help to workshop them [to] make them better. I think being able to show off things as they are in progress is a really important skill set. Learning to be comfortable to do that is a really important life skill.

Since you're a classically trained musician, what role does music play in your life?

I feel like it's really important to have third spaces. Places that aren't school, places that aren't home, but third spaces. For me, orchestra is one of those places. I play in a few different local orchestras. I play the oboe. I just find it's always this place for respite

and for creating something together with other people who I otherwise would never have come into contact with. I also found my husband in orchestra, which is also a really good fact.

One of your recent publications, "Giving Up On Someone," is about when and whether we should disengage from people who act wrongly. Why do you consider this such an important moral question?

We often take it to be a matter of discretion about whether or not we give up on somebody. We just say, 'Oh, I don't like that person, I don't enjoy being around them, I'm going to give up on having a relationship with them.' I actually don't think that it's a matter of discretion. I think there are moral criteria that matter, partially because we ought to be aiming towards moral solidarity with other humans and towards various kinds of ways of looking out for other people. I actually recommend fewer instances of giving up on people. My book is actually primarily addressed to people who are dealing with more petty or small scale harms, not large scale harms. In those kinds of

cases, folks have good reason to give up on their wrongdoers.

The interesting thing is when you see a bad interaction between two people and you think that one person is in the wrong, sometimes as a matter of solidarity, we give up on them and we alienate them or we try to never interact with them. I actually don't know if that's a way of being in good solidarity with the person who is wronged by them. I think instead we can often protect folks from bad behavior better if we continue to engage with people who are acting wrongfully.

What is a philosophical idea or principle that you strongly believe in or support?

One of the moral principles that I personally subscribe to is the importance of having respect for people as people. Seeing them as choice-makers, as the people who they are, and everything that is involved in respecting humans as humans.

You developed an ethics pedagogy for computer science and other technical classes. Why do you think ethics should be integrated into learning about technology?

That is a project that I have worked on with Dr. Zufelt from computer science, and I've worked with other computer science teachers. Full credit to them for being such amazing collaborators on that. The thought we had is if we want people who are creating technology to be able to do so well and effectively, thinking about ethics has to be part and partial of what you're doing all of the time as computer science students. It can't just be sort of like 'Okay, now it's the moment to think about ethics and then we go back to the real stuff, which is computer science.' It should be constantly a part and partial of what we do. One of the things that I really appreciate about my colleagues in computer science is they figured out ways in which ethics is already naturally in conversation with the technical skills or able to be in conversation with the technical skills that students are learning anyway.

They design projects that make sure it's always part of the story.

Can you talk about your interest in philosophical feminism?

One of the things that theories like philosophical feminism do for us is it helps us think about the ways in which our world is structured that can constrain or enable people based upon their identities. Of course, based upon their gender is one common concern for feminism. I actually think that there are resources, like conceptual resources, from feminist traditions and other similar traditions that can allow us to think about race or disability really effectively or really any other experience that can either constrain or enable people. Thinking about how to respond to structural injustice is something that I want in everybody's back pocket.

If there was one book you could recommend to someone who doesn't know anything about philosophy, what would it be and why?

I really like "Life is Hard" by Kieran Setiya. He's a philosopher, a really interesting one. He's talking about how philosophy can help us deal with the difficulties that we have in life. He has chronic pain and he talks about his experience. There are a number of different chapters on things that make life hard, like loneliness and things along those lines. That's a really helpful touchdown.



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Daisy Lopez Vargas '26's CaMD Scholar Presentation Unpacks Lived History of U.S.-Mexico Migration

BOSON BAI
& **IAN S. KIM**

Daisy Lopez Vargas '26 delivered her Community and Multicultural Development (CaMD) presentation, titled "Do I Run? Swim? Climb?", on Martin Luther King (MLK) Jr. Day. Through firsthand interviews and historical documentation, Lopez's presentation explored the stories of migrants and their experiences crossing the border between Mexico and the U.S.

For her project, Lopez focused on documenting migrants living in Los Angeles, California, where she grew up. Yasmine Allen, Instructor in Spanish and Lopez's faculty advisor, outlined the aspects of her project in an interview with *The Phillipian*. She spoke to the limitations of Lopez's timeline and her plans to expand her project into a more comprehensive documentary.

"Daisy had a three-pronged approach to her project, which was creating a documentary and vlogging about her process and journey, then of course synthesizing that information in a solid paper and presentation," wrote Allen. "Ultimately, Daisy would like to create a full-fledged documentary where she can share the stories of migrants and their reasons for crossing the border. Logistics and timing proved challenging, but she produced a great body of work in her presentation, which synthesized many facets of her research and expe-

riences gathering testimonial research."

Lopez's project required her to consider multiple factors during the documentation process. Lopez detailed the obstacles she faced along the way, particularly with gathering interviews.

"One of the hardest challenges [of my project] was trying to create a safe space for the people being interviewed. Many were very uncertain, even after agreeing. They needed reassurance that I would not share their faces, names, or where they live. Gaining their trust and showing that the space would be confidential was something I worked very hard to maintain," said Lopez.

Matt Robinson '27 found Lopez's historical context compelling, describing how it contributed to his understanding of the topic both in the past and in contemporary times. He discussed how her presentation underscored the importance of viewing events in modern history through a historical lens.

"It was an impressive presentation in that it was about crossing the Mexican border, but it managed to stay very historical and informative, and even though this topic has received a lot of attention recently, it was still all things I didn't know about it," said Robinson. "Learning more from a historical perspective can help us think more about the present and what is happening. So the best thing we can do is foster discussion so we can understand our modern world more. I hope that's

what it will do."

Ian Min '29 described how Lopez's presentation humanized the impacts of immigration policies and enforcement. He explained how her research resonated with those with similar experiences and provided a means of sharing them with others.

"People going through all of this with ICE [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] are real people who have real lives. You hear about this stuff on the news, but you don't really think that this could happen to one of your friends. Hearing directly from people who were there and how they experienced was really informative," said Min. "One of my friends, who is also a Junior, watched the presentation and said he wants to do something like this in a few years when he has time to research it because he had a similar experience with his family. It raises a lot of awareness that people didn't have before."

Shiloh Sharma '29 highlighted how the presentation raised awareness of related topics within the Andover community. She appreciated how Lopez encouraged her audience to broaden their knowledge of pertinent issues that affect people around and close to them.

"It will help more people understand the situation at hand, because a lot of people are not really informed about ICE raids since they think it doesn't affect them. But it affects everyone. Seeing that one day your friend is here and the next day they aren't is



ABAETEN-RUFFO/THE PHILIPPIAN
As a CaMD Scholar, Daisy Lopez Vargas '26 presented on U.S.-Mexico Migration.

"I would like to emphasize that Hispanic migrants are not the only ones going through this. My topic mainly focuses on Hispanic migrants, but others are going through this as well, and I encourage people to educate themselves on this topic... Focus on as many angles as possible. Showing a broad range of perspectives can be very impactful because you hear many different stories and understand why people do what they do. That was my focus when I was doing this project," said Lopez.

Voices of Leadership: MLK Day Workshops

REPORTING BY SOPHIA FANG & WINSTON WU

Every year on Martin Luther King (MLK) Junior Day, Andover pauses its regular schedule for a "day-on" where students engage deeply in a plethora of different topics, including identity, athletics, mental health, and art. The second half of the day includes a series of student and faculty-led workshops. Many of these workshop leaders explained how the workshops were an opportunity to share their passions and foster meaningful learning.

Ethan Liu '26 (he/him): "Meditation Through Improvisation: The Intersection of Jazz and Buddhism"

"The most rewarding part [of the workshop] was [conducting] the guided meditation sessions, because that's a new thing for me. I'm always the one listening to my Dharma teacher guide the meditation sessions. Being able to share that, being the one telling people what to do, and also seeing people's positive responses has been really fulfilling for me and pushes me to continue leading this club that me and my friend are starting this year, which is the Phillips Academy Buddhism Club."

Kelley MacKinnon '27 (she/her): "Crip Camp"

"I wanted students to understand that disability activism was a huge part of the civil rights movement. It's often overlooked, and disability rights aren't usually discussed at all. The fight for disability rights was a very large movement in the US, and it took a long time for disabled individuals to gain equal access. Also, accessibility benefits everyone, [including] elevators, curb cuts, ramps help people with strollers, temporary injuries, and many others. I hope students take away that accessibility benefits everyone."

Eric Denby, Instructor in History and Social Science: "Surveillance, Suspicion, and the "American": Red Scare Tropes in Today's Public Debates"

"I was inspired [to lead the workshop] by the parallels we're seeing between the 1950s communist paranoia in the United States and what is happening in the country today. The Red Scare was not only about government overreach, but also the "othering" of those that Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the House Un-American Activities Committee deemed un-American. With the current attacks on who gets to be citizens, I felt that we could connect a historical past to the present and possibly offer more context for understanding today's current political climate."

Kassie Bateman, Chair of Russian Department: "Changing the Game: Movie and Discussion"

"Many states in recent years have introduced bills that ban transgender participation in sports, particularly trans women in sports, and it's important that we understand the current situation and advocate for trans participation in sports. We are lucky to be at a school and in a state whose policies are inclusive and supportive of trans athletes. That is not the case in all states... For many of us, athletics is a big part of our lives and our identity. It's where we find joy and community. If we can give students the knowledge and language to articulate why transgender inclusion in sports is so important, we've made an impact."

Ayush Gupta '26 (he/him): "Build A Baby"

"The most important message or takeaway that I hope to leave students with is that science is never value-neutral. Scientific ideas, when they're mixed with power or fear or prejudice, can be used to justify real harm. We've seen that in the eugenics movement in the US, especially with forced sterilizations in states like California, and Nazi Germany did the same thing. By studying this history and engaging in these activities, students can see how in the modern day how quickly we begin ranking lives once genetic information is introduced. Human worth is not determined by our genetics. We have to start thinking about the ethics which come with these technologies that are emerging."

Alex Lin '28 (she/her): "Spectra: Shining Light on Queerness in STEM"

"Our workshop is about queer visibility in STEM. The discussion generated from the workshop was super valuable, since it's a space where people have chosen to come to the workshop. Everyone there is interested in hearing our topic, and in fact, Dr. [Raynard] Kington came to our workshop because he is also queer and a scientist!"

Nneka Ezeike '26 (she/her): "MLK Scholar Presentation: Narratives of America"

"We discussed how identity can impact how people view sensationalized headlines. There's a lot of polarization in the media, and without understanding how your identity shapes perception, people can fall for misinformation easily... Headlines are never neutral. The language we consume shapes who we empathize with and how we decide what justice looks like."

Maya Darville, Teaching Fellow in History and Social Science: "Dynamic Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement: Ella Baker, SNCC, and the Power of Student Activism"

"As a young Black woman from a small town in Georgia, my consciousness about topics like the Civil Rights Movement was always high. However, I never learned about the impact that Black women had on this movement... I hope students understand that impactful leadership isn't based solely on charisma or being the most emphatic voice in the room. Ella Baker shows us that real change comes from empowering the people around us, from building self-sustaining structures, and trusting young people to have the ability to lead themselves... I hope that students receive the message that they are capable of creating change themselves, not by awaiting the arrival of a hero, but by building the movements

that they would like to be a part of themselves."

Phinally

XLVIII NEWSROOM SUPERLATIVES

**MICHEAL**

Most likely to jump to put jeans on

**KATE**

Bennett ate her left brain in the womb

**BAILEY**

Most likely to have a high trophy count in Clash Royale

**THEO**

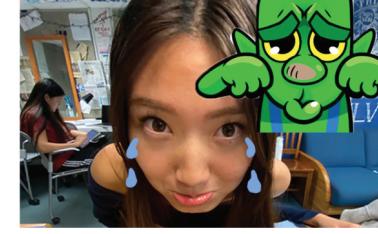
Most likely to be IVF engineered for max manliness/jawline

**ABBY**

Most likely to enjoy sniffing cheese

**ANDRE**

Most likely to beat chris fu in a singing competition

**ANGELA**tan ($\pi/2$)**HLUMA**

reincarnated 70 year old smoker

**CADE**

Cade "where my hug at" Rutkoske

**MATY**

Here for the participation trophy

**LUCILLE**

Most nonchalant

**GRACIE**

Where is my \$5 den gift card?

**JEANNE**
French AF**EDWARD**

Has a way with words

**ISHAAN**

WAYYYYYY too obsessed with explicit statues to be trusted around a camera

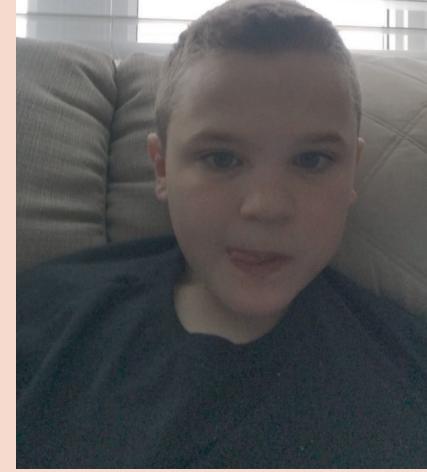
**CLAIRE**

Most likely to watch Turning Red and take everything to heart

Weeks Top Headlines

- *Dr. Kington Slams The Phillipian: Calls it "AI Generated Slop—and Not the Fun Kind."*
- *Gunga Clarifies That He Was Not The One.*
- *Adventurous Penguin Makes it All The Way to Exeter, Turns Back to Antarctica Instantly.*

In Honor of their Heated Rivalry, We Decided to Roast our Editors:



WRITE FOR 8p

plasater26@andover.edu,

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gchen27@andover.edu,

tjollon27@andover.edu

gthatcher27@andover.edu

David:
Would make a good Joker (minus jokes)
Young Dexter Morgan
Definitely knew what Heated Rivalry was this entire time
"Elite" Prospect, joined the 100 club recently
Theo Sifkas regen
Honorary ARC Coordinator
5'7 on skates
Teacher's pet ;)
In the Files.
Jong enthusiast
Sniffed the jong stains
Piss bomber
Future disgraced financier
Elephant walker
Diamond in the Ruff
JV Lax stud
Would choose backwards for inches
Politically inclined
Woke's worst nightmare
A protected classmember
Nepoed into the IRA
Bed rocker

Piper:
Skyler White
Future Grandmother of the Year.
Queer Literature Enthusiast.
Louisa Carter regen
Autistic little stud
tour guide of doom and despair
Will Ge romantic interest
Honey Badger
4'10" on skates
Jit (Jew in training)
Religious Affiliation:
"Exploring"
Dabbles in Islam
Bacon lover
From LA
Into anime cosplay (proof on 8p)
Loses sleep without sleep mask
Asked to be stricken from the files.
Professional therapist (Whet II Ham): FRosTBITE in my CROCs
"I just know I wanted nothing to do with dih cheese"
Did not pull out the glock in the 21 questions
Inventor of Kirkification
Looks so young someone would Leep on her IL and KG files
Gentle parent

Overheard On The Paths

- "Why did you beat your wife?"
- "My trauma cup....."
- "KG MIA WYA BBG GYBABITHBIBYMF"
- "Why is Jamal in my dorm?"
- "My current sidequest is"



The Phillipian

SPORTS

long live cxlviii

January 23, 2026

Girls Basketball Navigates Demanding Three-Game Stretch

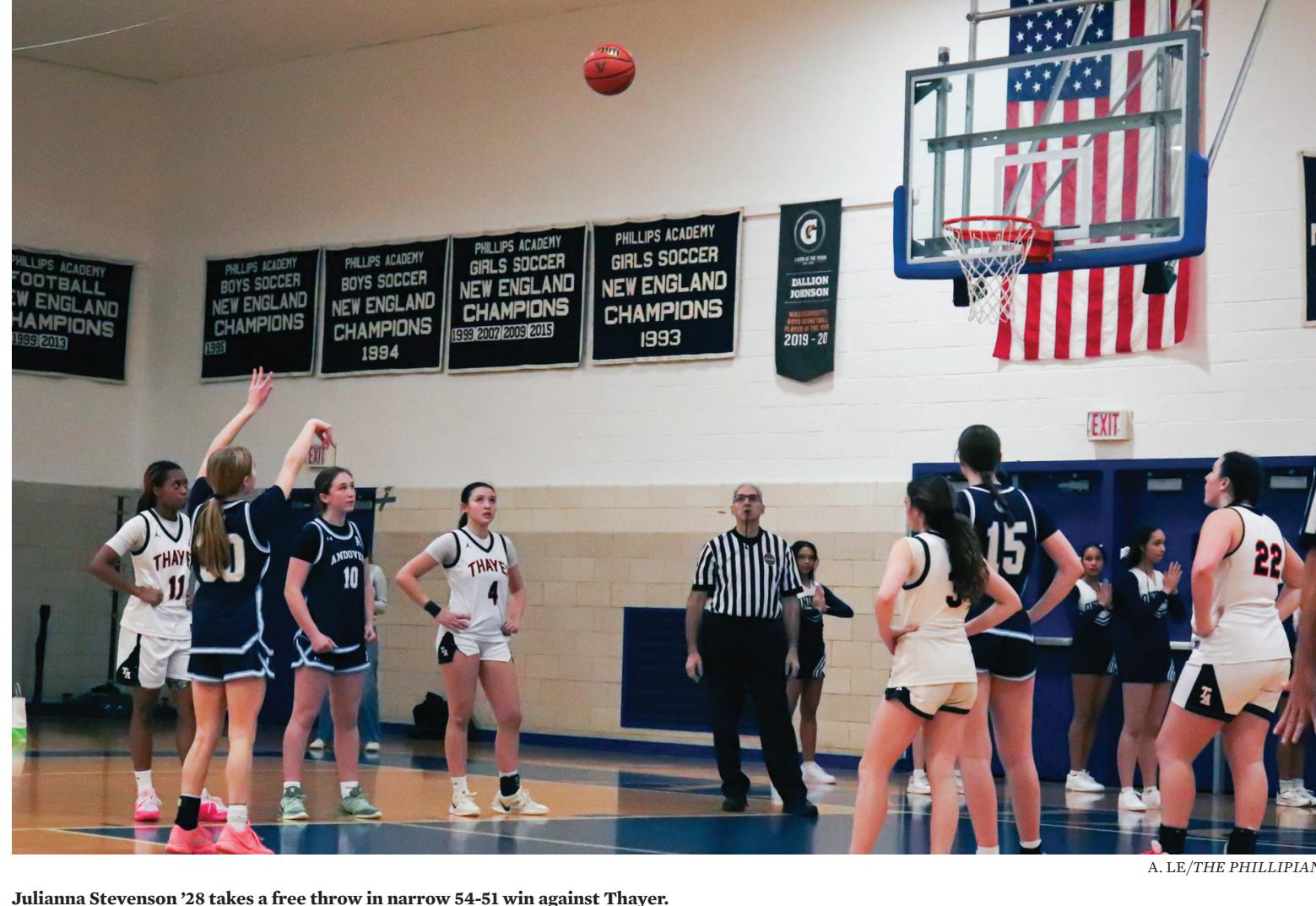
NICHOLAS JUNG

FRIDAY 1/16	
Andover	49
Governors	44
SATURDAY 1/17	
Andover	48
Milton	52
WEDNESDAY 1/21	
Andover	54
Thayer	51

Girls Basketball (9-5) continues to push strongly through the middle of the season. Since returning from winter break, the team has posted a 5-1 record in its last six games. Despite a loss against Milton Academy (Milton) on Saturday, they clinched two close games against Governor's and Thayer.

With a demanding week ahead, the team prioritized preparation and efficiency, focusing on watching film and making tactical adjustments rather than increasing intensity in practice. Sophie Stentson '29 explained how this approach helped players enter the matchup well-prepared.

"We knew we had three games this week, so we wanted to make sure we were fully prepared and weren't too worn out. We had pretty low-key practices going over plays and sets, and also watched a lot of film before this game. We paid attention to our defense and made sure it was almost perfect. We also learned [Governor's] defensive play, which helped us get a sense



Julianna Stevenson '28 takes a free throw in narrow 54-51 win against Thayer.

of what we were going to be facing, adjusting our offense to get the most opportunities to score," said Stentson.

Coming off a demanding win the night before, the team struggled to find its rhythm against Milton. Sara Damon '29 reflected on the team's energy, key performances, and areas for growth following the narrow loss.

"In the first half against Milton, we stayed pretty close, but we had a hard time getting our offense going. We had played a big game the night before, and that showed in our energy, especially on defense, which usually gets a lot of our points. In the second half, we came out with more energy, and our center, Emma Moore '28, got us going with three strong layups in a

row. We also weren't rebounding the ball the way we normally do, which took away some of our offensive opportunities. We ended up losing 52-48, but it's a game we can definitely learn from," said Damon.

On Wednesday, the team responded with resilience, bouncing back to secure another victory, this time against Thayer. Chloe Abou-Ezzi '27 reflected on the team's execution and composition in a tightly contested matchup.

"We played with a lot of energy and heart, and that was one of the key reasons that we won that game. Despite Thayer going on a couple of runs, we responded by going on our own runs and didn't let it beat us down. The game stayed tight for much of

the second half and was very intense, but we didn't let it get in our heads. We really lifted each other up after any bad play or mistakes," said Abou-Ezzi.

As the team transitions to a lighter schedule next week, it looks to refine execution and improve consistency on the court. Stetson shared what the team plans to emphasize as they move forward in the season.

"Our biggest thing to work on is just making sure we all know our plays 100 percent. In both Governor's and Milton, there was a little bit of struggle remembering some of the plays in the heat of the game. Our coaches talk about how we want to make sure we know our plays at 100 percent so that during games, when we're a bit nervous,

it's a bit faster," said Stetson.

In addition to improving in-game focus, Damon added that maintaining a high level of energy will be equally important for the team. She emphasized how group effort is crucial to pushing the team to victory.

"Moving forward, we just want to play with the same energy every game. At Andover, it's not just about the scoreboard. It's about how much effort everyone gives, and to win tough games, we all have to give 110 percent. Basketball is a team game, and we all have to give everything we have to be successful," said Damon.

Girls Basketball will continue its strong performance at home against Deerfield this Saturday.

Indoor Track Lights Up Quint-Meet with Stellar Performances

SARAH WANG

WEDNESDAY 1/21	
Andover Boys	149
Andover Girls	158

Indoor Track & Field hosted a quint-meet this past Wednesday against Governor's, Wilbraham & Monson (Wilbraham), Maria-napolis, Montrose, and Landmark School (Landmark). Overall, countless athletes set personal, school, and facility records. Eden Dunleavy '29 captured the Junior 300-Meter record in 42.48 seconds. Bennett Rodgers '26's mark in pole vault is currently the season's highest among all Massachusetts competitors in the event. However, these highlights are just the tip of the iceberg as many athletes showed remarkable effort across the board.

For many of Andover's Indoor Track & Field athletes, this meet marked their first performance after Winter Break. Robert Budzinski '26 mentioned how, although many athletes had modest expectations for this meet, they were still proud of their efforts.

"A lot of people didn't know what to expect, and a lot of people really surprised themselves. I know we had a ton of [personal records] in just the 300-Meter alone even though it had been a



Indoor Track & Field sees numerous personal, school, and facility records broken in latest meet.

long time since anyone had run that event. People got to see the hard training they did pay off," said Budzinski.

The team has been working hard in practice, both physically and mentally, with strong effort during workouts, along with developing a steady mentality and spirit. Adanna Obi '29 emphasized that attempts to center oneself before a race can affect the outcome, as well as efforts to unite the team.

"For meet warm ups, we do the same warm up we do in practice, but at the end of our warm up, we do a huddle up where we

do 'blue, hard body' and it unifies us together... I also learned to go out there, focus on myself, not get overwhelmed by being around a lot of people," said Obi.

Although Indoor Track & Field is primarily an individual sport, athletes engage in friendly competition alongside each other in a race to compete for their personal best. Obi mentioned how she appreciates how her teammates push her during practice. Tyler Baty '27 agreed with this sentiment, shouting out Russell McLaren [27] for leading by example to maintain strong form and ener-

gy.

"A couple days throughout the week, we will focus on block starts, putting it in slow motion to point out the little things... that can make or break your time. I would like to shout out Russell McLaren. This was his first time running the 4 by 400[-Meter Relay], and that's not an easy feat. He had a great second leg and gave us the lead," said Baty.

Having a mid-week meet, especially during mid-term week, can be challenging, as many students must transition from high-pressure academic environments to

focusing on their athletic performances. Budzinski described how he alters his state of mind to better accommodate Wednesday meets.

"Transitioning out of school mode to that can be pretty tough. Considering it was a meet on a Wednesday, it had a really good atmosphere. People got loud during the races, particularly during the 4 by 400[-Meter Relay], which is the last race. I remember looking over towards the high jump, and I heard a bunch of really loud cheering, and people were really excited. A kid jumped over six feet for the first time, so people were really excited about that," said Budzinski.

Personal records were set. Bailey Jean-Pierre '26 and Asher Egerton-Idheh '26 set a personal record of 6'0" in the High Jump, along with Lucien Herndon '28, who achieved a personal best of 5'8" in the High Jump. The 4 by 200-Meter Relay group consisted of Obi, Ela Budzinski '28, Lauren Signoriello '27, and Julie Chan '27, and they almost tied the Snyder Center record with a time of 1:44.83.

This meet boosted the team's momentum, exciting the smaller group of runners competing at Harvard University in the Greater Boston Track Club Invitational this Sunday, along with a full team meet next Wednesday against Austin Preparatory School and North Reading High School.

Co-Captain Noah Binkowski '26: A Steady Presence for Nordic Skiing

WYATT ORRACA-CECIL

Nordic Skiing Co-Captain Noah Binkowski '26 has been skiing for as long as he can remember. Despite having previously only had downhill skiing experience, Binkowski knew he wanted to continue skiing and did so by joining Nordic Skiing as a Junior.

Binkowski reflected on what he believes defines strong leadership and the intentional efforts he makes to support his teammates in his new role as Co-Captain.

"To me, leadership is about showing up in all facets. On the snow, I try to lead by example. When there's an opportunity to offer input to a newer member of the team, I do so without overstepping, while still supporting the coaches. I also make an effort to cheer as hard as I can when watching my teammates race. Off the snow, leadership is about making sure the team is welcoming and a fun environment to



E. CHAI / THE PHILLIPIAN

be around. I work well with my Co-Captain to make the team a strong, supportive group," said Binkowski.

Sebastian Vermut '27 shared how Binkowski's leadership exists

before his captainship formalized his responsibilities.

"This is my second year skiing with Noah, and it was a no-brainer for him to be elected captain. Even before he was officially a

[Co-]Captain, he had led quietly through his actions. He wasn't trying to be overly vocal, but he led by showing up on time, skiing consistently fast, and being a strong role model," said Vermut.

Beyond his leadership on the snow, Binkowski's impact is also felt in the way he supports his teammates day-to-day, particularly with the newer members of the team. Julia Xu '28 reflected on how his inclusivity and responsibility have shaped the team environment.

"As a leader, Noah is very inclusive to everyone on the team, regardless of skill level. He was very welcoming when I was a beginner skier on the team last year and also this year with the new members of the team. In terms of responsibility, he really steps up. A lot of times when we're practicing from the Nordic [Skiing] room, he and our other Co-Captain, Dylan [Siegel '26], will go back to help organize and set up the room so it's ready for practice the next day," said Xu.

Xu also highlighted Binkowski's presence and support during competitions and travel, noting his continued commitment of time and effort to the team even when he was unable to race.

"Both [Co-]Captains are always supportive at races, even when they're not competing. They were injured for the last two races but still came along to cheer on the team, which meant a lot, especially since Nordic [Skiing] bus rides are often an hour or longer and are a place where we and the co-captains connect and build team culture," said Xu.

While he does not plan to compete in college, Binkowski intends to continue the sport recreationally.

"Most of my plans are just to do this recreationally in the future since I don't have any plans to continue competitively in college. I enjoy a lot of outdoor winter sports so I imagine I will keep doing this for fun on occasion," said Binkowski.

Nordic Skiing Co-Captain Dylan Siegel, Leading with Compassion and Positivity

EVA JACKSON

Growing up in North Carolina, Co-Captain Dylan Siegel '26 was first introduced to Nordic Skiing during her first year at Andover as a New Lower. Joining Nordic provided this opportunity to form some of her closest relationships, helping her feel grounded in a supportive community across campus. Being Co-Captain this year, Siegel hopes to make a memorable impact on the team.

Siegel emphasized her gratitude for the community, especially to the coaches who helped Andover feel like home. She pointed out that whilst it can be difficult to make new friends and connect with people on campus as a new lower, the team helped her find her footing.

"I'm super grateful for it. I had a difficult transition in my Lower Year, being a new student. It was really nice to feel more grounded in a community on campus. Through Nordic, I developed closer relationships

with trusted adults, Mr. [Keith] Robinson and Dr. Latva-Kokko. They both helped [Mika] me feel more at home at Andover, along with the kids on the team," said Siegel.

Striving to give back to the community, Rianna Bajaj '29 described how Siegel has created the same "at home" environment she experienced. Bajaj gave insight into her experience as the only freshman girl on the team and how Siegel's support has impacted her.

"Dylan would talk to me and make me feel like I was welcome. She was very friendly and welcoming, and she was also super reassuring. I can ask her any questions that I want to about this sport, and she'll help me understand more about it," said Bajaj.

Bajaj pointed out that Siegel's support at the first race of the season allowed her to feel more comfortable and excited when racing. She continued that Siegel's approachability and friendliness set her apart from others.

"She's really friendly and welcoming, and she works with the



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whole team. She's really motivating as well. When we had our first race, she was telling us about how the races went for her when she first started, and she's just super supportive and friendly, and she really adds to the team's community and helps

make it such a strong community," said Bajaj.

As a Co-Captain, Siegel described that she now has the opportunity to shift the community through leading with compassion. She highlighted how she prioritizes leaving a posi-

tive impact on the community through making strong bonds with teammates.

"In warm-up lines, [I like] high-fiving people, or just cheering people on in general, setting a tone for the culture. It's something that I prioritize, trying to branch out to new people and run with different people. Especially encouraging communication and just trying your best. It's not about winning. It's more about the growth and forming of a community that prioritizes kindness, respect, and hard work," said Siegel.

Ansel Bartell '28 noted that Siegel is an effective captain due to her ability to be comfortable with everyone on the team, which allows her to push her teammates to improve every day.

"She's friends with everyone on the team. She's not afraid to speak her mind. She tells everyone what it is we're doing. If we're doing something wrong, she tells us how we can improve. I wouldn't say she has any problems addressing all of us," said Bartell.

NORDIC SKIING

HUGO SHEA '27

WESTMOUNT, QC, CA

NOAH BINKOWSKI '26

NORTH ANDOVER, MA

C

DYLAN SIEGEL '26

DURHAM, NC

SEBASTIAN VERMUT '27

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

ALFONSO GONZALEZ-CANO '27

SALITILLO, MX

CELINE LEE '28

SALEM, NH

CORA ROGERS '27

ANDOVER, MA

ELLIOT CHAI '28

ATHERTON, CA

RIAANA BAJAJ '29

MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA, IN

MATTHEW WEI '28

KATY, TX

JULIA XU '28

LEXINGTON, MA

ANSEL BARTELL '28

PLACERVILLE, CO

L YOUNG '27

DES MOINES, IA

LANDON MALONEY '29

NORTH HAMPTON, NH

NATHAN CHUN '28

BOSTON, MA

MAXIE WU '28

MIAMI, FL

DANIEL LIU '28

CLYDE HILL, WA

KATE BIRDSSL '26

LAKE OSWEGO, OR

MATT ROBINSON '27

ANDOVER, MA

HENRY WALL '27

ANDOVER, MA

BOSON BAI '29

BOSTON, MA

IRIS LIU '26

ANDOVER, MA

GAVIN FREEMAN '26

WEST LINN, OR

HANNAH JUNG '28

KATY, TX

CLAIRE BANCROFT '28

FISHERS, IN

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Wrestling Splits Home Meet Against Hyde and Roxbury Latin

BENJAMIN KAZLOUSKI

SATURDAY 1/17	
Andover	61
Hyde	18
SATURDAY 1/17	
Andover	35
Roxbury Latin	44

Last Saturday, Wrestling (10-2) hosted its third home meet of the season against Hyde and Roxbury Latin. Despite picking up its second loss of the season against Roxbury Latin, the team put up a strong display of effort in its matches, leading to a close final score.

Co-Captain James Bae '26, in a match against a Roxbury Latin athlete, was struck in the eye but still triumphed through a "technical fall," an automatic victory that takes effect when a wres-



C. ZHOU /THE PHILLIPIAN

Caleb Beroukhim '27 wrestles Roxbury Latin opponent.

tler outscores their opponent by scoring 15 or more points against them. Alongside describing this victory, Caleb Beroukhim '27 praised Geza Labancz PG'26, Serra Akyali '28, and Devin Akyali '29 for their impressive performances at the meet.

"Geza had his first heavyweight match and he ended

up hitting the [Roxbury Latin] heavyweight really quickly. Then at the lighter weights, Serra and Devin had two really great exhibition matches after the meet, where they both had hard fights, [and] they both came out on top with a pin," said Beroukhim.

Shock Ingram PG'26 reflected on the energy and support his

teammates gave while watching each other's matches. He pointed out how one of the team's strengths lay in its camaraderie and morale throughout meets.

"Everyone had energy. Everyone was excited. Everyone was ready to go, especially getting ready to go into the match. If they were in a good situation where they were about to turn the tide to get the win, everyone started shouting. The energy would just suddenly spike, and it became louder. Everyone's trying to cheer on their teammate and make sure they know they're doing the right thing and to keep on going," said Ingram.

Additionally, Ingram praised Christian Robinson '28 for his consistent progress throughout the season, continually building confidence and skill.

"I saw a big improvement in [Robinson's] wrestling style. He came out there a little more aggressively, looking strong, looking fast, looking focused and locked in. He had great setups, and he had great shots too. On top of that, he had some great finishes as well. He's quick on his

feet too. He wasn't just standing there moving side to side, he was actively moving, trying to look for angles to get a takedown," said Ingram.

Nicholas Marini '28 explained that the team looks to continue improving its endurance and general fitness in its future practices. He highlighted how Coach Kassie Bateman '06 has modified practices to improve stamina and gain more successful victories in future meets.

"We definitely have to work on conditioning. Coach Bateman mentioned that at the end of the practice as well. A lot of people are getting tired after the second period. So we [need] to work on that a little more. Being intentional in practice is a big thing. Coach Bateman says, 'If you practice perfect, then the match will go your way,'" said Marini.

Wrestling will compete at the Seabrooke Duals tournament at Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Saturday.

Boys Basketball Beats Tabor Academy and Dexter Southfield, Remains Undefeated

EVA JACKSON & NATHAN BYUN

SATURDAY 1/17	
Andover	67
Tabor	57
WEDNESDAY 1/21	
Andover	75
Dexter Southfield	70

Boys Basketball (10-0) played with resilience and composure during its hard-fought victories over Tabor Academy (Tabor) and Dexter Southfield (Dexter) this week, extending its exceptional record to ten victories. The team traveled to Tabor on Saturday and battled Dexter at home on Wednesday.

While starters each regularly score in the double digits, Kosi Udeh '27 shared that, against Tabor Academy, Co-Captain Jaylen Edmonds '27, Jabari Edmonds '27, and Zion Williams '26 were notably crucial to the team's victory.

"We consistently have four or the five of all five starters with ten or more points each. In Ta-

bor's game, Jaylen [Edmonds '27] had a huge momentum shift towards the end of the game. He hit a few big corner threes and a game-sealing steal with around three minutes left. [Jabari Edmonds '27] was really effective in transitioning and Zion [Williams '26] hit some really big shots towards the middle of the game," said Udeh.

Despite the team's win, it was challenged by Tabor poor court conditions and brash home crowd. Still, Jeremy Woodley '26 described how the team adjusted to these obstacles to emerge victorious.

"This game was important to the rest of the season because it was one of the few games where we really faced adversity. The court at Tabor was horrible, leading to multiple people falling. At one point, the game paused for around five minutes while the refs discussed what to do. It took some time to get adjusted, but other than that, we did everything we were supposed to do to win," said Woodley.

Woodley continued, "Our mentality going into the game was to play with confidence while remaining humble. Playing away brings such a different atmosphere and really makes the team feel like a unit. The crowd at Tabor was chirping and added stress, but ultimately, the talk from the fans and the other team



A. PIZZI /THE PHILLIPIAN

Kosi Udeh '27 looks to grab rebound in match against Dexter Southfield.

fueled us and made the game feel much more meaningful."

On Wednesday, the team faced off against Dexter at home, once

again facing a challenging matchup. Despite missing starter Nick Hailey PG'26, Andover relied on key contributions from multiple players to secure the win. Matthew Shampine '26 reflected on the team's key players throughout the game.

"We ended up winning 75-70, with Jabari Edmonds and Miles Clanton '26 each with outstanding performances, showing up in the absence of Nick Hailey '26, who has a hamstring injury," said Shampine.

The win was defined by a high energy that ignited the home crowd. Shampine pointed to a moment of grit and effort that he believed fueled the team's victory.

"The environment was electric, as the student section was on their feet for the exciting end of the game, and our bench was loud and enthusiastic," said Shampine.

Shampine continued, "My favorite moment from the game was Kosi Udeh '27 diving over three people for a loose ball late in the second half. It's those types of gritty plays that make good teams great, and that's what propelled us to be 10-0."

The team will face off against Deerfield at home on Saturday.

Nordic Skiing Takes on First Classic Race of the Season

JULIEN REQUA & ATHREYA YEGNESWARAN

In its second meet of the season, Nordic Skiing traveled to Holderness on Wednesday. Nordic Skiing awards points based on which teams have the lowest cumulative score, and Andover's boys placed fourth with 93 points in their division, while the team's girls finished in fifth place with 120 points. On the boys' side, Belmont Hill triumphed with 20 points; Holderness took the win in the girls' division with 14 points. Andover racers participated in their first classic race this season, a racing format based on a technique similar to walking or running on skis. The team's previous two meets were both in the skate racing style, where racers test their coordination and use their ski poles for propulsion. The new classic style of racing challenged the team in both endurance and form on a difficult, fast course following

recent snowfall.

The course, featuring tough hills and rolling flats, tested each racer, creating head to head battles for many members of the team. Hannah Jung '28 described being locked in a back-and-forth duel for nearly the entirety of the 5-Kilometer race, capturing the physical demands of the course and the competitive energy on the trails.

"I would pass [a competitor] on the flat areas, but she was really strong on hills. So it would be like a back and forth for the entire race," said Jung.

The meet stood out as especially exciting in the finishing stretch. Claire Bancroft '28 highlighted Gavin Freeman '26's closing sprint that gathered a supportive crowd that watched as he secured a strong finish.

"Gavin's [race] was a huge sprint to the end, ultimately beating two other racers. I was cheering him on with Julia [Xu '28] and Hannah, and I could see Matt [Robinson '27] cheering on the other side of

the track," said Bancroft.

Competing on a course freshly packed with snow and in the season's first classic style race, Bancroft provided insight on the team's energy leading up to the meet.

"The fresh snow made the whole team super excited to race. It was our first classic style ski race of the season, so it was a new experience to many people, including myself, but the beautiful course through the Holderness forest was amazing," said Bancroft.

For many athletes on the team, this meet was a test of adaptability, as the adjustment from skate skiing to classic, a style that focuses on sustained power on flats and up-hills, proved to be demanding. According to Jung, the team excelled and adapted quickly, securing multiple personal records.

"We all performed really well because there were a lot of PRs, [even] in the conditions of the weather today," said Jung.

The team featured sever-

al impressive performances, with multiple Andover racers finishing near the top. Sebastian Vermut '27 described the hard work and tenacity required for racers to remain at the front, pointing to examples of the team's standout results.

"Another really impressive performance was from Henry Wall '27. He's been racing since he was a freshman, so this is his third year right now, and he's put in consistent work year in year out," said Vermut.

Vermut also highlighted the influence of Co-Captain Noah Binkowski '26, recently returning from injury. His first race back was marked with a strong individual performance.

"[Noah has] been injured for a couple weeks. This is his first race back because this is the first race of the season. He did really well. He was all the way up there in really competitive spots which is really impressive considering he hasn't raced for almost a year now,"

said Vermut.

Nathan Chun '28 expressed gratitude for the team's motivating spirit, while also emphasizing the importance of team enthusiasm throughout the race.

"The biggest strength [of the team] is absolutely [its] spirit. Skiing has a pretty steep learning curve, so we need all the advice and help we can get from each other every day. I know I've really benefitted from the wisdom of more experienced people, and the culture of teamwork allows it to be easy to give back to. The enthusiasm of newer skiers has also been really cool to see, and some even started skiing full length [5-Kilometer] courses on their second race," said Chun.

Nordic Skiing will compete at St. Paul's next Wednesday.

Boys Swimming and Diving Simply Doesn't Lose

AVIAD AWA

Boys Swimming and Diving (3-0) dominated its back-to-back dual meets, facing St. John's Prep (the Prep) on Friday and subsequently competing at a doubleheader against Suffield Academy (Suffield) and Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) on Saturday. Strong individual showings from key athletes propelled the team to success.

Diver Daniel Matloff '28 described some of the practices leading up to the meets. There was emphasis on ensuring the team entered with confidence.

"We just did what we usually do. We practiced before and focused on the stuff we needed to get to in practice, mainly just doing what we needed and making sure that we felt ready with things that we might have previously not been as good at," said Matloff.

Swimmer Eric Chang '28 explained what the team felt facing up against St. John's Prep (the Prep), known for its depth. While the Prep has strong



E. OKEKE/THE PHILLIPIAN

Boys Swimming and Diving continues its undefeated streak against St. John's Prep, Suffield Academy, and Loomis.

swimmers, Chang emphasized how team members focused on themselves.

"[The Prep] is a really strong team, that's true, but our main goal was worrying about how well we could perform and not worrying about what they were

doing. We are undefeated so far, and hopefully will continue to be. The biggest thing was focusing on ourselves, trusting our training, and moving forward from there," said Chang.

Chang highlighted the importance of staying ready be-

tween the meets. He recalled how he recovered from his swims to ensure peak performance for race day.

"I'd say a big part [of using the downtime between meets] is warming down. [It's] similar to soccer. After every game, you guys have a cool down routine: stretching, massage guns ... All of that stuff really helps your body rewind and re-gear for the day after. Sleep is also another big thing. Sleep is your superpower, so if you don't sleep, you can't [perform]. Those are the biggest things that we did," said Chang.

Matloff praised Co-Captain David Frahm '26 for his outstanding performances. Having triumphed in his last four competitions, Frahm continued to dominate with high effort and attention to detail.

"David Frahm, shout out to him. He's on a four meet [winning] streak. For me, he just does what he does. He goes out there, and every single dive he tries to give it his 100 percent. He focuses on the little things, and it shows in meets," said

Matloff.

After Friday's meet, the team had to focus on preparing itself mentally and physically. Chang described the mentality shift in the team heading into the second half of the doubleheader.

"We just try and have fun. We always stay open-minded and positive, and what happens, happens. I don't really think that affects anything. Even if we perform badly, we can get back from that and perform awesome the next day," said Chang.

Diver Victor Hillier '28 provided a positive outlook on the team's future meets. He recapped some of the team's achievements.

"This meet really pumped the whole team up. Our top divers stepped up, winning and becoming great role models as the rest of the team looked up to them and tried to be more like them," said Hillier.

Boys Swimming and Diving will continue its season away at Deerfield Academy on Saturday, January 31.

Girls Swimming and Diving Extend Winning Streak Against Suffield and Loomis

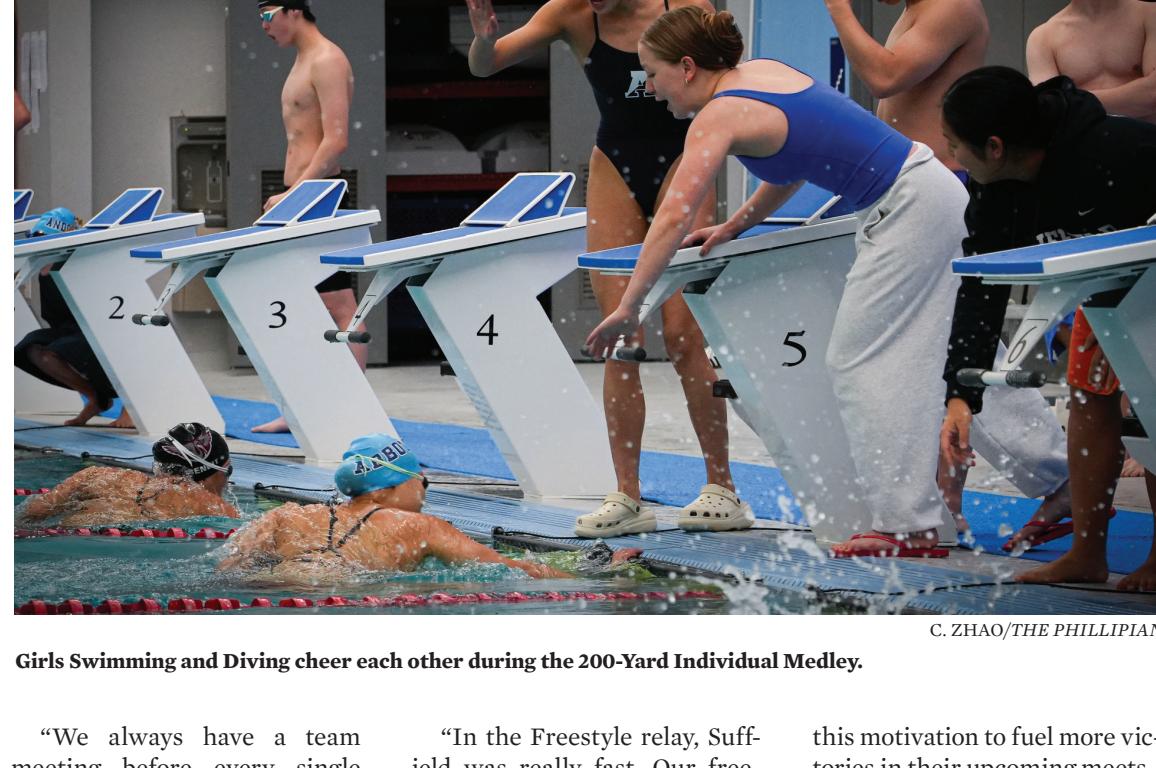
LUCY VINNAKOTA

Girls Swimming and Diving took home wins over Suffield Academy (Suffield) and Loomis Chaffee (Loomis) this Saturday. The swimming team extended its unbeaten streak to 2-0. This particular meet was highly important to sharpen its skills ahead of the Easterns Championships, the most anticipated meet of the season, coming up in the next few weeks. Divers also dominated the competitive field, earning top honors in each category.

Regardless of the sport, preparation is key to a team's success throughout a season. The team hosted practices not only during the school week, but also over the weekend. Swimmer Tina Jin '29 further elaborated on how this preparation carried the team to its win against Suffield and Loomis.

"We have been training pretty hard since the beginning of this season, so we have been having practices basically every day. There are some Saturday practices, and we have also been doing some pretty long and hard sets recently. Going into the meet, we were prepared," said Jin.

Chloe Ru '27 detailed how her teammate's actions positively impact the team's overall performance. She especially highlighted the impact of mood in the locker room before a meet and how it can determine results.



C. ZHAO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Girls Swimming and Diving cheer each other during the 200-Yard Individual Medley.

"We always have a team meeting before every single meet where we gather, and Coach [Hillary] Kavanagh gives us a motivational speech. The atmosphere is really supportive, and everyone always cheers for each other. Before this meet, we all gathered for a meeting just to talk about race strategies and just having fun," said Ru.

Despite the win, the team experienced some difficulties throughout the meet. To secure a relay victory, Jin specified that the team had to switch its tactics to overcome unexpected obstacles during the meet.

"In the Freestyle relay, Suffield was really fast. Our freestyle relay was, at some point, only seconds faster than theirs, and we wanted to win that 400-Yard Freestyle relay. That was a challenge. Individually, there are very speedy swimmers in both Loomis and Suffield, specifically Suffield in the 100-Yard Backstroke and the 100-Yard Freestyle," said Jin.

Especially with the few meets the team has on the calendar, Ru emphasized the motivation the team earned from beating both Suffield and Loomis. She shared how the team looks to utilize

this motivation to fuel more victories in their upcoming meets.

"Swim doesn't have a lot of meets in general. We only have four full meets in total, so this is our second meet and second win. We are on a winning streak, and it is just great because it sets up the mood for the rest of the season, and we are looking forward to winning more meets," said Ru.

Diver Hayley Fan '29 stressed the value of a supportive atmosphere when performing under pressure. She recalled the enthusiasm exhibited by others during the meet that helped her

improve her performance.

"I am glad to see so many people interested in diving, being engaged with the diver's performance, and really paying attention to scores and all of that. It is really exciting because before, diving, a smaller sport, definitely didn't get enough visibility, especially at the interscholastic level, so I was very excited to see so many people there and interested," said Fan.

Fan praised the biggest contributors on the diving team against Suffield and Loomis, teammates David Frahm '26 and Karla Safarikova '27. She highlighted their efforts and bravery to secure first place in their respective categories.

Fan said, "Our Captain, David Frahm, got first in the boys category, and an Upper on the team, Karla, also got first in the girls category. They both dove really well that day. Karla had a bunch of difficult dives in her list. For example, inwards one and a half, where you are jumping off the board, you are not looking forward, your back is to the water, and you have to flip forward. And, she does one and a half rotations and a tuck, which is a really difficult dive. David does a bunch of difficult dives too, and they both executed them beautifully and scored really well."

Girls Swimming and Diving looks forward to competing at Deerfield Academy on Saturday, January 31.

Boys Squash Shows Composure in Dominant Win Over Groton and Gritty Victory over Tabor

delivered in crucial moments.

Playing against a comparatively weak team like Groton, Boys Squash was able to give younger members of the team play time, which gave them valuable experience in competitive matches. Philip Meng '26 praised Wesley Pham '29, who competed in the seventh-seed position, for his grit in a tight match.

"I would like to shout out [Wesley], who played the [seventh seed]. It's the highest that he's played for the team, and he really showed up. He had a tough, five-game match, ending [the last game with a score of] 12-10," said Meng.

On Wednesday, JJ Luo '28 recalled how the crowd at Tabor was chanting, cheering, and trying to distract the players.

Luo described the atmosphere and also how he handled the crowd's attempts to distract him through his high level of play.

"Since the very first point, the entire place was just so loud.

The crowd really caught me off guard, and I lost my first game 4-11. Every single point that I lost, you could hear the building shaking. I couldn't even hear myself think, and we had to adjust to that. In the second game, I made sure that I had a good start to prevent the crowd from building momentum for the other kid. And after that good start, I was able to win the second game 13-11, and that shushed the crowd," said Luo.

Despite further rowdy behavior from other Tabor athletes beyond the courts, Andover's athletes stayed productive and patient, mentally preparing themselves for the game. Co-Captain Corey Shen '26 described the mindset of the team when in a competitive and stressful environment.

"Everyone on the team is very mentally tough, and I don't think heckling or talking bad about us is going to affect our mindset or how we plan our matches, but it was definitely

something that we weren't really used to. It started in the locker room, where there were hockey or baseball kids who were heckling. We obviously stood our ground. I was approached personally by a couple of them, and I just ignored them, brushed them off, knowing I had a bigger task to do, a bigger match to focus on. I just tried not to give them my attention, and when you don't give them much to react to, you have more power than them," said Shen.

Going into its matches on Wednesday, Boys Squash understood that its top three players were all facing unfavorable matchups, raising the stakes for the lower ladder. With the outcome hinging on the fourth-through seventh-seeded positions, the team rose to the challenge, securing the wins needed for a victory. Shen highlighted the overall effort in the matches, praising Co-Captain Ali Gamal '26 for his important comeback win.

"Ali knew his match was going to be a decider just based on rating and previous experiences. We also knew that his match would be the closest. He actually went down 0-6 in the first game, but he came back and nearly went on an 11-0 run. He made one error and ended up winning 11-7, but I thought that showed a lot of grit. All the other matches in the lower ladder were very difficult and I was really proud that we got the job done," said Shen.

Boys Squash looks to continue its momentum against Noble and Greenough (Nobles) on Friday and in its Saturday away match against Hotchkiss, Hopkins, and Phillips Academy Exeter (Exeter).

Editor's Note: Philip Meng '26 is a Business Manager for The Phillipian, vol. CXLVIII.

FRIDAY 1/16	
Andover	7
Groton	0
WEDNESDAY 1/21	
Andover	4
Tabor	3

Boys Squash (6-1) continued its strong season with a comfortable 7-0 win against Groton before battling through a tense and hostile road environment with a 4-3 victory at Tabor Academy (Tabor). The two games proved that the team could maintain composure under pressure, as younger players gained valuable experience and

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Resilience and Growth: Girls Varsity Hockey's Responses to Adversity

XAVIER HOWELL

Last Saturday, Girls Hockey defeated St. Paul's before falling to Lawrence Academy (Lawrence) on Wednesday. Despite the loss, the team demonstrated resilience and growth across both games.

Reflecting on Saturday's matchup against St. Paul's, Sienna Glass '27 acknowledged the team's slow start but highlighted their strong response. Specifically, she praised goalie Marie Lee '28 for her resilience, playing through a fever.

"We did a great job building back up and sort of maintaining our energy throughout the rest of the game. Marie Lee was playing with 104 degree fever. She definitely kept us in the game and was making some really important saves," said Glass.

In the game against Lawrence, Glass commended the team's overall effort but also identified specific areas for im-

provement. She highlighted Sarah Powers '26 for her energy and uplifting personality.

"There are a lot of areas for improvement, especially maintaining consistency and energy on the bench. But we did a great job as a team. We supported each other, and Sarah Powers stood out for her ability to hunt for the puck. She finds open ice, and she takes her lane. Also, her character off the ice, in the locker room, [and] in between periods — she's always uplifting and supporting everyone," said Glass.

Looking ahead, the team is focused on strategies to start stronger and sustain energy throughout the game. Glass mentioned enhancing pre-game concentration and bench dynamics.

"We just want to focus on being more concentrated before the first period. Something that we could really work on is getting each other riled up on the bench and just maintaining that energy."

Boys Hockey Looks to Bounce Back After Losses to St. Paul's, Exeter, and St. Sebastian's

TIGER WANG

FRIDAY 1/16	
Andover	1
St. Paul's	2
SATURDAY 1/17	
Andover	1
Exeter	4
WEDNESDAY 1/21	
Andover	3
St. Sebastian's	5

Coming off of a four-game winning streak, Boys Hockey (9-7) hit a rough patch as it entered a three-game losing streak. The team hosted St. Paul's and St. Sebastian's on Friday and Wednesday, respectively, before facing off against Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter) on Saturday.

Reflecting on the team's matchup against St. Paul's, Senji Kimura '29 noted its offensive struggle. Despite controlling the majority of the game with numerous shot attempts, Kimura said that blocked shots and a



Michael Barrett '28 shoots the puck in game against St. Sebastian's.

A. PIZZI/THE PHILLIPIAN

controversial first goal hindered its chances to win the game.

"We played hard. We played our game. Something that really troubled us was that we just couldn't really get shots to the net. St. Paul's was blocking almost every good chance we had. It definitely held us back."

They had probably 15 blocked shots that game. We just couldn't break their [goalkeeper] either. We won that game if you don't count the score sheet. We dominated them the whole time. [However], the first goal they supposedly scored was kind of questionable. I don't know if it went in or not," said

Kimura.

Kimura also highlighted Michael Barrett '28 for rising to the occasion on Friday despite lineup changes. He pointed to Barrett's versatility, playing in an unfamiliar lineup alongside David O'Neill '26 and Alexander Small '26 and contributing to the offense with his scoring capabilities.

"We're missing one of our top players, Alex Theodore '27, right now due to a hand injury. So, Michael had to step up and play on the line with people he hasn't really played with this season, David O'Neill and [Alex] Small. I saw him stepping up to

play that game and then score a goal too. It really showed how he can push through adversity because he doesn't really know what those guys are going to do," said Kimura.

With continuing struggles against Exeter, Edouard Lord '26 emphasized the tightly-knit team community. He believed that the team would get itself back on track and be able to perform at a great level once again.

"We're a tight group. We're not going to start pointing fingers or let losses separate us. We've dealt with some adversity already this year, but we've been able to come back stronger every

time and go on winning stretches again. So I'm not worrying at all. We'll get back to playing well just like how we were playing before," said Lord.

Max Krasovsky '27 shared that, in the team's game against St. Paul's, a success included its ability to score reproducible goals.

"We weren't bad in terms of putting the puck in the net. [We] scored three goals. Every single goal was one that we could replicate. So it's one thing you can build off of. So that was the main success today," said Krasovsky.

Reflecting on the team's recent struggles, Krasovsky shared areas for improvement. He emphasized working on specific defensive coverages and focusing on preparation for games.

"We're kind of stuck in a rut. We're in a three-game losing streak. What we can work on, from this game specifically, is to have guys picked up into the [neutral] zone more. That led to some of their goals just by guys who were uncovered. That's the most tangible thing we can change. Generally, we can also change how we are preparing for games. There are a lot of different things contributing to why we're kind of in a rough spot right now," said Krasovsky.

The team will look to bounce back at home on Saturday against Noble and Greenough.

Conditioned For Success: Girls Squash Delivers 7-0 Sweep

GAURI BHAKTA

WEDNESDAY, 1/21	
Andover	7
Tabor	0

Girls Squash (6-0) delivered a dominant performance this Wednesday, sweeping Tabor 7-0, showcasing depth across the ladder and demonstrating disciplined preparation. Despite travel challenges and limited warm-up time, the team maintained control in each match to secure a clean victory.

According to Olivia Wang '29, players relied on conditioning and strategy to close out matches efficiently. The match was also marked by intense pacing, as Wang recalled seeing only one other person compete.

"We did really well, even though we were only given five minutes to warm up because we got there late. We still performed really well and got a clean sweep. Our matches also went really fast. It was me and then Prisha [Shivani '26]. She did a great job. She won 3-0," said Wang.

In the days leading up to the match, the team placed a strong emphasis on fitness and intensity in practice. Judy Liu '29 noted how conditioning

was a central focus in preparation for competitive opponents.

"During our practices, we definitely worked harder. We would run sprints, do these '10-catch' exercises, which are side-shuffle conditioning, and do an ab circle during stretching," said Liu.

In addition to conditioning, the team emphasized composure and minimizing mistakes. According to Liu, this approach translated to steady play on match day.

"We were all working on staying calm under pressure and making sure not to make unforced errors, like on our serves. We really wanted to stay consistent, positive, and keep the plays mixed," said

Liu.

Throughout the season, practices have followed a consistent structure that balanced skill development, match experience, and conditioning. Isabella Tang '28 described practices beyond lineup matches; regular drills and conditioning remained central to practice routines.

"We've been trying to work on hitting more accurately and maintaining our fitness. We're strong this year, so we're just trying to keep playing our best squash. Otherwise, we usually do drills, conditioned games, some ghosting, maybe some match play, and we cool down together. Sometimes, fitness is incorporated too, like a core circle or something similar,"

said Tang.

In individual matches against Tabor, Wang emphasized adjusting strategies mid-game to capitalize on opponents' weaknesses. Specifically, she noticed her opponent's weakness and adapted to further capitalize on that shortcoming.

"When I was watching her hit, I noticed that her front game was weaker than her back game, so most of my points came from hitting to the front and playing drops. I'd say about 75 percent of my points came from drops," said Wang.

The team will travel to face Holderness on Saturday.

Alumni Athlete Feature: Jack Alexander '25

ETHAN LY

Previously a Co-Captain of Boys Soccer, Jack Alexander '25 now competes as a goalkeeper for Grinnell College's Division III Men's Soccer program. For the week of October 2, 2025, the Midwest Conference named him its Men's Soccer Defensive Performer of the Week after successive shutouts against Monmouth College and Ripon College. As a Senior at Andover, he was awarded the Schubert Key, given annually to a varsity athlete who excels in their sport and demonstrates exemplary leadership qualities. In the same season, Alexander was recognized with All-NEPSAC honors.

This fall, Grinnell College's soccer team made it to the finals in its conference's championship, ultimately falling to Lake Forest College. Alexander shared his enjoyment of competing collegiately and described the challenges of student-athlete life as familiar, even though it's his first year playing at the university level.

"I had a blast participating as a goalkeeper for Grinnell Men's Soccer this year. We ranked fairly well, losing in the finals of our Midwest Conference. I, myself, played

—

decent by my standards —



C. ZHAO/THE PHILLIPIAN

Former Boys Soccer Co-Captain Jack Alexander '25 plays Division III soccer at Grinnell College.

definitely could have been better in some areas. The best part has been that this fall, I was able to focus completely on soccer, which I attest to Andover's rigor. It's tough, but I have no doubts that it really prepares you to be a collegiate student-athlete. You have to balance your time to survive Andover and that's the exact same in college," wrote Alexander in an email to *The Phillipian*.

Grinnell, Iowa, where

Grinnell College is located, has a population of just around 10,000 people. Alexander mentioned that locals build the community, regularly attending games and offering personal support. He also emphasized that the strong team bond has defined his experience.

"The most enjoyable part is the community. Andover did it well with events like [Andover/Exeter] which will probably be the most fans I'll

ever have for one game. However, college contributes to a different kind of community. It feels incredible to see locals in this small rural town in Iowa consistently coming to our games, cheering loudly, and learning our names. Then there's also the immediate community of the soccer team, who have already become some of my closest friends," wrote Alexander.

As his time at Grinnell College continues, Alexander is

excited to continue seeking out new experiences through classes and unconventional activities.

"I'm looking forward to continuing to learn about this weird place I found myself in. I enjoy throwing myself into new environments (as I did for Andover) and so I did the same for Grinnell. This includes taking some weird classes (because why not?) and going on random side quests. You have plenty of time in college but I wish I did this a bit more in Andover as well. One of my favorite classes was pottery [Senior] year," wrote Alexander.

Alexander noted that he hopes Andover students value college sports, at all levels, for the sense of community they provide. He offered advice to athletes hoping to continue their sport past high school.

"I would appreciate it if Andover students knew that being a student-athlete isn't sacrificing your education. Yes, you need to be on top of things, but you will build an immense social circle of people not just wishing to support you but actively vouch for your success. If you like a sport and aren't done with it yet, play in college (club works great as well)," wrote Alexander.

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The Identity Show: How Experiences Shape Us

**TAYLA STEMPSON
& ALEXANDER TONG**

The Identity Show had its third and final run on Monday, January 19 in the Pan Athletic Center. The show was a culmination of individually written pieces surrounding unique aspects of the performers' identities, originally debuted in the Fall Term. Performers workshopped to bring the show to Andover, channeling years of lived experiences into an emotional display of human stories.

One of the themes that stood out in this year's Identity Show was the joys and perils of girlhood.

The all-female cast of the piece wore pink sweaters to represent how it is associated with femininity. Student Director Ashiq Kibria '26 touched on the motivation behind the theme's end goal.

"Most of the cast identified as female, and as one of the guys who participated, I felt it was really important to help bring this message forward, as oftentimes their voices aren't heard. We made sure to include many elements, specifically in the piece 'Girlhood,' to encapsulate the feelings of what it means to be a girl," said Kibria.

Many narratives resonated throughout the show, but one piece in particular left a lasting impression on both performers and audience members. Written and performed by Kamryn Cabrera '28, the story centered on her experience grappling with the emotional aftermath of

her brother's suicide attempt. Performer Mila Fan '28 appreciated the weight and vulnerability of Cabrera's work.

"[Kamryn's piece] is really raw, and I think that's a really brave thing to do, especially [in] a performance where it's about you. There's not been a show where it hasn't moved everyone to tears, and she's very brave for sharing [and] writing it. To be able to have such an impactful moment in the show is really and I'm glad we were able to do that," said Fan.

The show was crafted around each cast member's journey to where they stand in their identities today. These journeys included things like finding home, what they love, and themselves. Fan reflected on the process of bringing the skits and scripts to life and what the writing experience was like.

"Every time, they would give us a prompt, and then we would write a piece on the prompt. And so for me, I guess it was about thinking about what the prompt meant to me. We talked about where we're from, and my first thought was the city, sounds of the city, and then it just grew from there. I know other people talked about their family, and their culture, and their background. So it's interesting how one prompt can interact with all parts of identity, whether it's race, gender, culture, where you're raised, and language," said Fan.

The effort and extensive workshopping was not in vain. The prompts translated well to stage performance, and the aforementioned themes and



COURTESY OF PHILLIPS ACADEMY

Mila Fan '28 performing in The Identity Show.

experiences they explored within their pieces moved many. With an all-lower cast, many lowerclassmen were drawn to the show to support their friends and classmates. Philip Molin '28 discussed his observations in the differences between this and last year's Identity Show.

"In this year's performance, with the cast being made up of five Lower girls, their take on identity was super well done and centered around discussion. I found that compared to last year, there were many of them on stage at once interacting with one another, which really helped simulate real conversation. The themes of identity were very personal, but expressed civilized rage and being able to

let oneself go and be truly authentic on stage," said Molina.

Despite a stage relocation because of renovations in the Tang Theater, the hard work and preparation put in by cast, directors, and staff paid off. The open Friday show was met with raving reviews, and thunderous applause. The connection the performers made with the audience was apparent, according to audience member Penelope Jaramillo '28.

"I thought the atmosphere was great. Everyone was really invested in listening to these stories. It felt very encouraging and non-judgmental. We were laughing along when they told a funny story... and listening when something harder for them was being

shared," said Jaramillo.

The Identity Show could portray many different messages to all audience members, leaving viewers with a range of interpretations. When asked about this, the director Kibria said he had one thing in particular for the audience to learn from the show.

"I hope the audience takes away that it's okay to talk about your own identity, and no matter what the story is, they should be proud of it. I also hope that at least one person in the audience was able to sympathize or empathize and feels encouraged to share their story next year," said Kibria.

Negative Space, Positive Reception: "Other Things Uttered" by Hayes Prize Recipient Tommy Kha

**DANIEL LIU &
CHARLIZE SOW**

Thoughtful conversation unfolded throughout the Addison Gallery of American Art (Addison) last Thursday evening as the space hosted a book release party celebrating "Other Things Uttered," the catalog accompanying artist-in-residence Tommy Kha's first solo museum exhibition. The reception marked both the long-awaited arrival of the publication and an unofficial, bittersweet closing to an exhibition that has shaped artistic and academic conversations on campus over the past year.

The event drew a mix of Andover students, faculty, and local community members from beyond campus. Copies of the catalog lined the tables as Kha signed books and spoke with eager attendees. Laughter echoed against the gallery walls, pens hovered over freshly printed pages, and clusters of guests formed and re-formed as Tommy Kha moved through the gallery.

"It's exciting. We have advanced copies of my catalog done in collaboration with the curators here. We only have limited copies and I'm just going to do some signings until we run out. But I hope people get to check out the show before it closes. This is sort of an unofficial closing of Other Things Uttered. I like alohas though, so I hope this show will become something else and hopefully people get to see more and make their own pictures," said Kha.

The catalog launch was part of the Addison's newly established Hayes Prize initiative, which supports early-career artists by offering their first solo museum exhibition, a residency on campus, and a published catalog documenting their work. Over the course of his residency, Kha has become a consistent presence on campus. Dr. Rachel Vogel, the lead curator of the exhibition, highlighted Kha's character and student-centered approach.

"Tommy really wanted part of the exhibition to come from working with students. The work in the rotunda was

created with students in eight different classes last spring. He came to campus seven or eight times over the past two years and met with PA classes, Lawrence Public School classes, Middlesex Community College, and college photography departments. He is collaborative, open, warm, and friendly. He is always pushing himself and his work, and he is the ideal artist to work with," said Vogel.

For students, the event provided a rare opportunity to engage directly with a working artist whose work they had encountered in classrooms and discussions. Keita Narusawa '26 attended the reception after visiting the exhibition multiple times throughout the year.

"Each time I have been here, it has been very different. The first time, Tommy Kha was not here and we just looked at his art. The second time, he was here and many students attended. It was a big dinner where we asked him questions in a large group, and it felt very community focused. This time, there are a lot of people from outside of

campus who I do not recognize, but there still seems to be a communal atmosphere, which is nice," said Narusawa.

Narusawa noted the playful and creative spirit of Kha's exhibition, as well as the changes it underwent over time.

"His work is very playful and very self-aware. I was with a friend this time, and he pointed out that Tommy includes Balenciaga chips, which I had not noticed the first two times. That detail really stuck out to me as reflective of his personality. There were things that changed or that I did not notice the first time, like the wall mural of himself in one of the rooms or how he switched up images of himself," said Narusawa.

Curatorial fellow Ricardo Mercado emphasized that accessibility and community engagement were central goals of both the exhibition and the book launch, reflecting the Addison's broader mission as a public museum democratizing art embedded within the Andover community.

"One important goal is to make the museum an accessible space that anyone can

come to. We are free, which helps. Giving people the opportunity to meet a working artist and explore the themes he is developing in his work was the driving force behind this exhibition and program," said Mercado.

As Other Things Uttered approaches its January 25 closing date, the book launch offered a final gathering point for reflection, something Kha hopes viewers will take away from the exhibit.

"I hope [students] get to choose who they are at the end of the day. No matter what different subject matter my work goes through in the different rooms in the Addison, I hope that it shows there's different ways to arrive at ourselves and that it's okay to grow as a person and to change with the information that we attain. It's okay to make mistakes and be able to be resilient at the same time and learn and grow. Just be artists and be other things and be many things or be one thing, it's up to you," said Kha.



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Arts & Leisure

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LOTW: Olivia Isacson '26 Blends Heritage and Androgyny With Intention

**DANIEL LIU &
CHARLIZE SOW**

Pairing an airy, lace-trimmed red blouse with a pair of classic navy jeans, Oxfords, and simple but meaningful gold jewelry, Olivia Isacson '26 brings her heritage, style icons, and opinions on fashion into every outfit. To Isacson, fashion reflects both who she is and how she wishes to be seen, and every detail of her outfit entwines her fashion knowledge to her unique heritage.

Being Dutch on her father's side and Uruguayan on her mom's, as well as living in New York City and spending time in Paris, Isacson draws inspiration from a myriad of places. With her mom also working in the fashion industry, Isacson's wardrobe is a wondrous collection of style and meaning.

"My mom worked in Paris, so

I spent a lot of time there, so I'm really influenced by the navy blue and red color palette... she's inherently curated my style because so much of what I wear, she made... Because I grew up in New York, so I've learned to experiment with my style a lot, whether that be thrifting with my friends or walking around and seeing the variety of outfits; that showed me how to take risks," said Isacson.

Gender and presentation are important aspects of Isacson's style. She spoke about toying with the idea of masculinity and femininity in fashion:

"So many different parts of who I am and my ethnicity impact [my style] like New York, Uruguay, France, and Belgium to a certain extent... I make people little bit confused. I really like to toy with androgyny, like I can go really feminine or really masculine, but I'm always a little bit in between, which I really like. People associate different things with mas-

culinity or femininity, and I like to kind of [mess] with that a little bit, because I'm a woman, so even if I wear a suit or a button-down shirt, I still look feminine in it. I'm trying to question the way we dress," said Isacson.

A big part of Isacson's journey on discovering her style involves her twin sister Mia who is also a fashion enthusiast. Isacson noted how her sister keeps her accountable.

"My twin sister and I, we keep each other in check. The best thing about a twin sister is that we cut the BS. It's this built-in, honest critique that I don't think you can get from that many people," said Isacson.

Isacson voiced many of her stylistic opinions; with her signature pixie cut and red lip, she's a recognizable figure on campus. After discovering uniquely "her" accessories, such as hair, she gave advice for others trying to find their style.

"It's hard to have perfect hair all the time, perfect nails, and perfect makeup. Pick things that you like to do. I have actually no interest in [messing] with my hair. My sister, she'll spend hours curling her hair, but I have zero interest in it, so I cut it all off. But, I really like painting my nails... it's [helpful to focus] on certain parts of your aesthetic that you like to focus on... And that's fine, you can pick and choose. You can toy with your appearance... [I like] doing makeup more out of amplifying what I like about myself rather than [toning] down what I don't like," said Isacson.

After her own years of exper-



J. NUÑEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Isacson draws inspiration from a myriad of places.



J. NUÑEZ/THE PHILLIPIAN

Isacson toys with both masculinity and femininity in fashion.

imentation and figuring out her style, Isacson's advice boils down to being brave enough to take the risk to try something new.

"Andover is very unique because you can experiment with clothing and not have that many real consequences. Andover

doesn't have a dress code for a reason. They want you to try out new things, and they want you to play around with it more. So instead of just following what you think people will think looks cool, try it out and see what happens. See if you connect with it," said Isacson.

Social Rules & Pet Peeves: Campus Fashion Under Scrutiny

AUTUMN XIA

At 8:20 a. m. on a weekday morning, students walk across campus dressed in hoodies, sweatpants, and pajama bottoms. What seems like harmless comfort has sparked debate, with some students arguing that campus fashion reflects social pressure, blurred lines between public and private dress, and a diminished emphasis on intentional self-expression.

Sophia Zhan '28 identified a detail she found irritating: socks worn over leggings. She explained how her discomfort lies in how the trend violates her standards about which garments should remain hidden, and which belong on display.

"I first started noticing this in middle school and I just feel like it feels really uncomfortable. Socks shouldn't really be seen, they're almost like underwear for your feet, so they shouldn't be exposed outside," explained Zhan. "Leg warmers on top of leggings feels fine to me. [In] ballet, we wear leggings and leg warmers on top, and that's okay. As long as your socks stay underneath, I don't really care what happens."

Michelle Onyeka '27 focused her criticism on sagging pants, a trend she noticed immediately upon arrival on campus. She attributed the popularity of the trend to social media believing that "influencers 100 percent popularized it."

"I noticed sagging as soon as I touched base on campus in



September 2024. People let their pants fall so low that you can basically see their underwear. It makes me wonder if people have any decorum... it is uncomfortable for everyone around and it is also performative, like what's the point?" said Onyeka.

Anastasie Sycheva '29 identified the widespread wear-



ing of pajama pants to class as a trend she finds distasteful. Rather than advocating for the

behind trend-following and emphasized fashion as a form of creativity.

"There's a pretty big culture of wearing pajamas to school, which isn't the best. I get that it can be very comfortable sometimes and make school feel a little less uptight and rigid, but still, people should save pajamas for something to sleep in rather than to walk around in... I don't think I'd want to ban this fashion trend. I do want to ban the idea of trying to wear clothes just to fit in rather than to express your true self," said Sycheva.

Jason Cai '28 similarly criticized the so-called campus "uniform" centered on relaxed fits. He argues that the prevalence of hoodies and sweatpants diminishes fashion's role as a form of individual expression.

"People generally seem to be preferring relaxed fits. When UGGs, sweatshirts, sweatpants, and hoodies started becoming more mainstream, outfits began to feel monotonous and almost like a uniform. Its a low risk outfit that people are going to accept, and are not going to think anything of. People like it when things are predictable, so they choose lower risk options... I would greatly want to reduce the kind of fashion where you're not at all dressing because you like the clothes that you're wearing, but rather you're only dressing because you think you'll be able to get the attention of other people and make them pay attention to you," said Cai.

WRITE FOR ARTS

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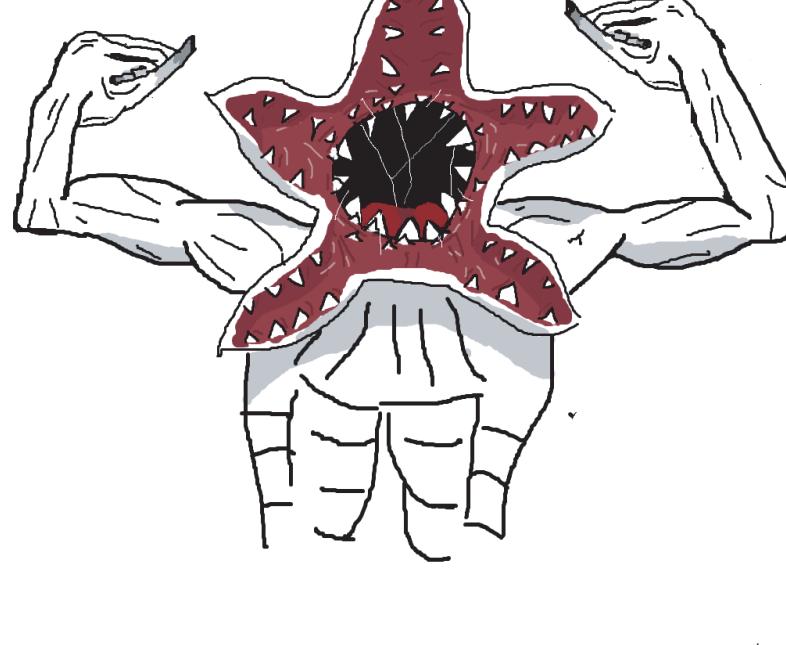
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Secret Ending or Bad Writing?: A Review of *Stranger Things* Season 5

ELLE PARK

Fans held their breath on January 7, and their eyes were glued to the screen as they reloaded the Netflix homescreen, clinging onto one hope: a secret final episode to Season 5 of *Stranger Things* would drop. Was the finale really fake? As the clock struck 12 a.m., January 7 ended with the disappointed faces of countless people. There wasn't any hidden ending: the Duffer Brothers were merely bad writers. The Duffer Brothers promised a rollercoaster of an ending, and gave us a toddler choo-choo train to ride. Excitement seemed to be removed from the Duffer brother's vocabulary, queer representation was ruined, once again, and the characters we've come to cherish were thrown away. The shining seed that *Stranger Things* was planted from sprouted to a gnarled, flopping plant. Disappointment ran through me as I watched the ending. It sucked.

As the finale rolled out, unanswered questions hesitated in the air. The plot twist we waited for never arrived: where were the promised deaths and heart-pounding sequences? Steep buildup over the seasons heightened to a teetering cliff, only to leave fans dissatisfied with the most predictable, uneventful ending that could've been written. Plot armor had enveloped the charac-



ALFONSO GONZALEZ-CANO/THE PHILLIPIAN

ters, padding us from feeling strong emotions for them. The lack of deaths wasn't about fans wanting characters to die — it was the unrealistic number of survivors that shattered the screen that separated fantasy from reality, and breaking the promise the Duffer Brothers made of a dark Christmas and emotional New Years. I didn't shed a single tear during the finale. The emotional outburst I was worked up for never arrived, leaving my pent-up emotions splattering over social media in the form of theories and rants.

how he treated Dustin and Jonathan as the two fought in the face of world-endangering threats. What were supposed to be two maturing men embodying courage and perseverance turned into two immature boys arguing about puddles whilst swimming in an ocean.

I still hold *Stranger Things* dear to my heart despite the ending. I remember how the first season swept me off my feet into the world of Hawkins and how I felt like I was growing up with the characters. Whenever they faced danger, my heart raced along with them. I celebrated their victories, cried about their failures, kicked my feet at romantic scenes, and cherished the memories I created with *Stranger Things*. It was the love I had for *Stranger Things* that drove my hatred for the ending. Dissatisfaction welled up in me as the final episode came to a close. The ending had to be fake. The Duffer Brothers' writing couldn't be that bad, right? Unfortunately, it really was that bad.

Personally, I believe in Conformity Gate: the ending really was fake, and Vecna had twisted the ending, manipulated our minds. Somewhere out there, Will and Mike got their much deserved ending, Jane is alive, and nobody lost their spark. Somewhere out there, they've escaped Hawkins and right now, are hiking up a verdant hill to see three vast waterfalls, spraying their shining faces with hope for a new start.

From Andover to the Archives of Rock, Warren Zanes '83 Reflects on Imperfect Art

HAYLEY FAN &
BENJAMIN PARK

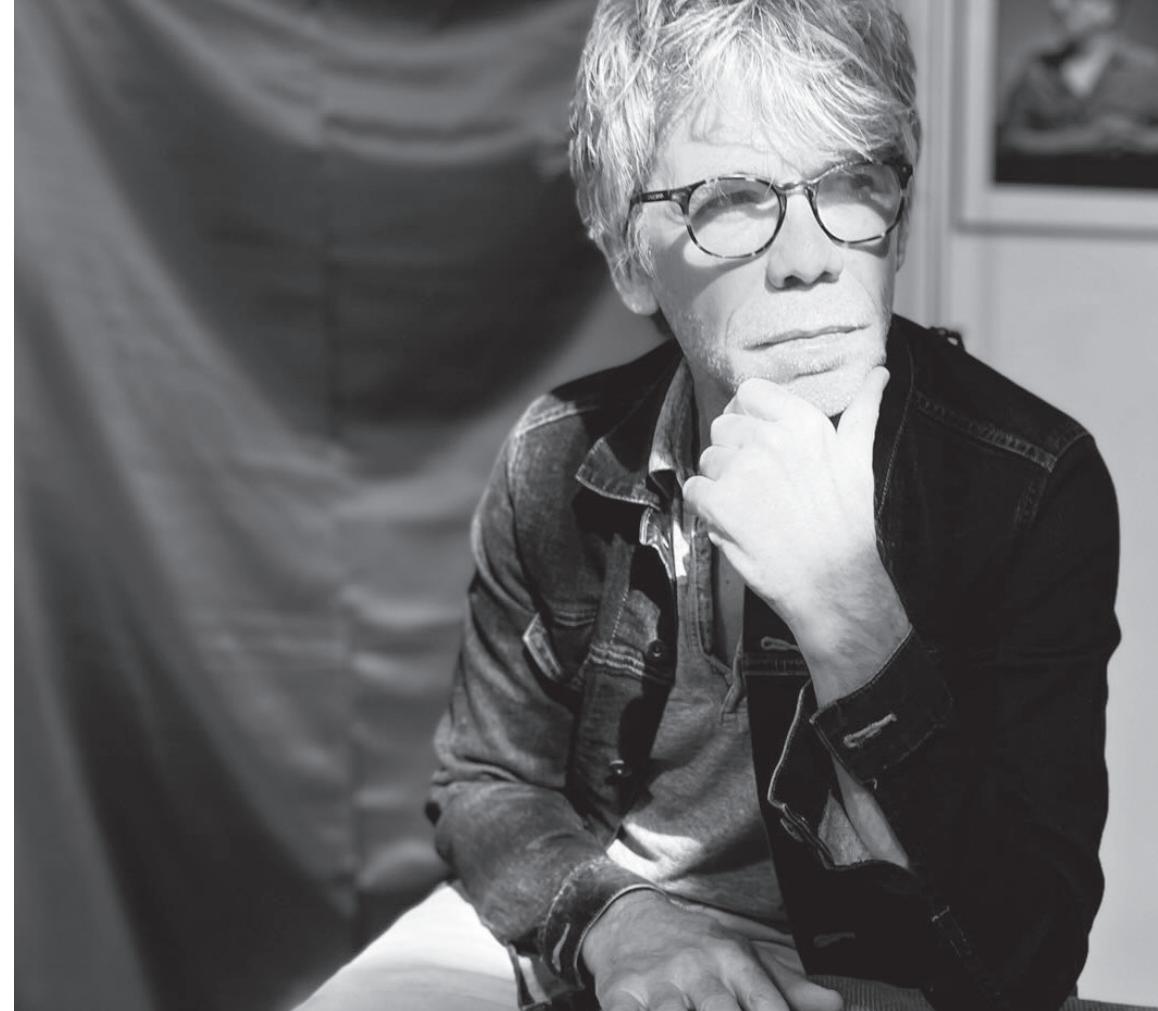
Before his writing reached bestseller lists or his music filled rock venues, Warren Zanes '83 was enrolled at Andover. According to Zanes, surrounded by classmates who appeared confident and motivated, he initially struggled to find his footing. That discomfort, however, became the starting point for a deeper engagement with learning and creativity.

Zanes is now a former musician and "The New York Times" bestselling author known for examining the human drive behind art beyond its polished surface. His work consistently returns to themes of learning, restlessness, and imperfection, ideas that first took shape during his years on campus. What began as an overwhelming environment gradually became a place where he learned how to listen, observe, and test his creative instincts.

"Andover started shaping me more overtly, my creativity, my ambition, my capacity to learn. And I discovered that I wasn't there to learn only from teachers, I was there to learn from the entirety of the community. Some of my best classes weren't classes at all," said Zanes.

At Andover, Zanes gravitated toward music and writing, often blending the two. He brought his interests into the classroom, unsure whether they belonged there, and learned how meaningful it could be to have that work taken seriously. One moment in particular reshaped how he understood validation and mentorship.

"In his novella writing class, I gave him a passage I'd written about Elvis Presley. In writing about Elvis, I felt like I was doing something that shouldn't be done, like I'd gone to class without my pants on. I just couldn't help myself. When Mr. [Ward Swift] Just said, 'I really like this Elvis stuff,' he opened a door for me as a writer that



COURTESY OF WARREN ZANES/THE PHILLIPIAN

Warren Zanes '83, photographed by Chris Hartford.

would affect me for years to come. He had a way of validating the student, this student, that was crucial to me. I didn't do great work, had miles to go, but he took pleasure in watching me make my way. What a thing to experience," said Zanes.

After graduating from Andover, Zanes did not follow a carefully constructed plan into the entertainment industry. His path into professional music came through chance, family connection, and a willingness to take risks. A phone

call during his college years redirected his trajectory and immersed him fully in the world of rock.

"My brother Dan, four years older, attended Andover for two years before going to Oberlin... I wasn't thinking I'd join [my brother's rock band], just that I loved the world they'd discovered... But I still remember the afternoon in Stuart when my brother called me, asking if I'd join his band. It was a total surprise... I was in 'The Del Fuegos' for the next five years, playing

making records, learning about the heartbreak of entertainment," said Zanes.

When his time with "The Del Fuegos" ended, Zanes shifted from performing music to writing about it. Over the following years, he published several acclaimed works, including "Petty: The Biography," "Deliver Me from Nowhere," and "Dusty in Memphis". Across these projects, Zanes focused on the internal forces that drive artists to create.

"Just like I was interest-

ed in so many of my fellow students at Andover, I'm interested in the musicians I write about. They're often quite driven, quite restless... It's like they're chasing something they won't ever get to, throwing off all of this creative work as they attempt to get there nonetheless. My aim is to find out what makes them so driven. There's often some factor in the past, some familial or social thread that helps us to understand just what it is they're trying to bring some peace to," said Zanes.

One of Zanes's most widely discussed books, *Deliver Me from Nowhere*, examines Bruce Springsteen's album "Nebraska", which originated as a rough bedroom recording. Zanes highlights Springsteen's decision to preserve the flawed original, arguing that its honesty ultimately gave the album its lasting power.

"That's a story that reminds me that sometimes the most powerful art is flawed, imperfect, unfinished. I can't think of a more timely message. In the age of AI and digital 'perfection,' we often lose the art's greatest strengths as we erase the human trace. Sometimes what's wrong with something is what's right about it. The artist just needs to work hard to be able to see when this is the case," said Zanes.

Reflecting on his work as a writer, Zanes emphasized intentionality in storytelling and the responsibility to leave readers changed by what they encounter. Whether writing about musicians or advising young writers, he returned to the idea that stories should guide readers somewhere meaningful.

"A story can't be a bridge to nowhere, you have to leave the reader in a place that matters in some way. After that it's just about how much time you have to get the storytelling job done. You can't tell them all. So choose the ones most likely to leave the reader in a place they've never seen," said Zanes.

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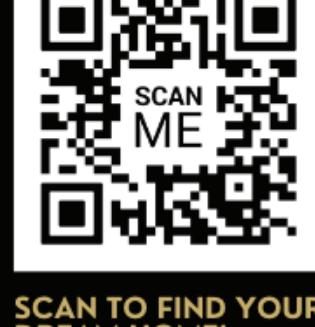
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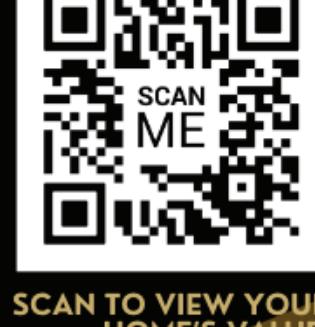
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